

Douglas J. Geilman

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ÉTOILE DU DÉSÉRET,
PUBLICATION OF THE FRENCH
MISSION, 1851–52

ON June 26, 1850, in the company of five other missionaries, John Taylor—Apostle, missionary, writer, and editor—dedicated France for the preaching of the gospel and formally organized the French Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By the spring of 1851, Elder Taylor perceived that a Latter-day Saint periodical written in French would provide valuable assistance to him and the other missionaries in France and the Channel Islands. Consequently, the *Étoile du Déséret*¹ (Star of Deseret) was inaugurated. Although historians have noted that John Taylor published a periodical during his mission to France, little more has been said about the publication. Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to look at John Taylor’s writings in the *Étoile du Déséret* as a record of his leadership of the Church

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in France and his efforts to teach readers the doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The *Étoile du Déseret* reflects the circumstances of the time in which it was written. Consequently, a brief overview of information concerning the *Étoile du Déseret*, including its historical context and details about its production, provides valuable perspective for modern readers seeking to understand the periodical's importance.

Missionary work in France began during a time of political tumult. The monarchy of King Louis-Philippe fell in February 1848 and a newly elected legislative assembly formally proclaimed the Second Republic on May 4 of that same year. Following the demise of Louis-Philippe's monarchy, many rights that had long been suppressed, including complete freedom of the press, reasserted themselves, and anyone could establish a newspaper. Unfortunately, in an effort to increase his political power, the first elected president of the Second Republic, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte,² quickly worked to curtail the rights the French citizenry had reclaimed for themselves in 1848. However, John Taylor arrived in France while there was still liberty enough to publish a periodical.

Some of the restrictions put in place by Louis-Napoléon hampered Elder Taylor and the other missionaries from the beginning. Limits placed on proselytizing in France were unlike anything Latter-day Saint missionaries had experienced previously in America or Great Britain. Preaching could only be done freely in dedicated church buildings; otherwise, permission for assembly had to be granted by a city's mayor each time the missionaries

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desired to hold a meeting.³ Clearly, the missionaries could not rely upon the spoken word to spread their message as much as they had in other fields of labor.

Second, the Latter-day Saint missionaries were limited by their inability to communicate freely in French. Taylor's companion, Curtis Bolton, was fairly fluent in French as a result of living in France for several months as a young man.⁴ Even so, the challenge to preach the gospel in a foreign language was daunting. In a letter to the *Millennial Star*, Elder Taylor wrote:

It is difficult on account of language, &c., to commence, yet the work will roll forth. Meanwhile we shall do what we can and leave the event with God.

Brother Howell [a missionary who had been preaching in France prior to the arrival of John Taylor, Curtis Bolton, and others] who has been labouring here, is a faithful good man, and has laboured with indefatigable zeal, yet, from want of books, and being but imperfectly acquainted with the language, he has, like ourselves had many difficulties to contend with. Brother Bolton speaks the French, but has not as yet had the courage to address a congregation in that language. Our principal aim, for the present, will be to get some into the Church who can preach it, and set them to work. In the mean time we are doing what we can with those we can make understand.⁵

Concerning his own language difficulties after more than eight months in France, Taylor expressed the following in a letter written to Brigham Young:

It is I can assure you no easy task to establish the gospel in a foreign land among a people whose language you do not

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understand & whose prejudices customs, laws, & religion, are so dissimilar to ours. There is a very natural difference between reading a language & speaking it, & some of our professedly learned men cut but a sorry figure when they come to test their education by practice. Br. Bolton has been of great service to me in this as he speaks the language. Don't laugh when I tell you that I have preached a number of times to French congregations in Paris in their own language, or rather partly so for I can assure you mine is very bungling French.⁶

The difficulty with the language, along with having no printed material to distribute, led Elder Taylor to state in a letter to the *Millennial Star*, "We find we are very much embarrassed for the want of books in the French language. I purpose writing some immediately on the first principles of the Gospel, so that we can circulate them among the French."⁷ True to his word, shortly thereafter John Taylor prepared his first Latter-day Saint tract to be published in French, entitled *Aux Amis de la Vérité Religieuse* (To Friends of Religious Truth).

A few months later, Elder Taylor desired to produce a full-fledged periodical. He described this objective to Brigham Young: "I purpose on my return [to France] to publish a paper to be issued monthly I shall forward them to you, & shall be pleased to exchange with the *Deseret News*. . . . I purpose calling it 'L'Etoile de l'Occident' (The Star of the West)."⁸ There is no indication why John Taylor later adapted the name to the *Étoile du Déseret*, although the revised name does reflect the periodical's purpose more clearly.⁹

A periodical would remedy to some degree the challenges that the missionaries faced. First, printed material had the potential to spread the message of the gospel farther and faster than

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missionaries could, due to the restrictions the government had imposed on preaching activities. Second, with the help of able translators, John Taylor could present powerful gospel messages in print using flawless French—something he was unable to do in public discourse. Consequently, in the spring of 1851, Elders Taylor and Bolton turned their attention to the publication of the *Étoile du Déséret*.

PRODUCTION OF THE *ÉTOILE DU DÉSÉRET*

Even with his previous experience in producing newspapers in Nauvoo, Taylor could not singlehandedly publish a periodical in France. In addition to the language difficulties described previously, he was frequently away from Paris conducting Church business in England and working to establish a mission in Germany as well. Consequently, he relied on Bolton to handle logistical matters such as translation and working with the printer, and to ensure sufficient content for each issue of the periodical. Bolton in turn relied upon one of the earliest converts in Paris, Louis Alphonse Bertrand, to review translation work done by others or to provide translations himself.

Bertrand was an invaluable resource in the production of the *Étoile du Déséret*. He spoke English fluently, and he was intelligent, not to mention a revolutionary and a communalist.¹⁰ After traveling the world, including living in the United States for a number of years, he returned to France to study and became involved in the political affairs of his home nation during the 1848 revolution.¹¹ At the time of his introduction to John Taylor and Curtis Bolton, he was working as the editor of the political section of *Le Populaire*, a communist journal published in Paris.¹² In addition to the doctrines he learned from the missionaries in

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Paris, he was converted through the instrumentality of Orson Pratt's *Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*.¹³

Due to John Taylor's lack of French language ability, some have claimed that Bertrand must have been the primary author or at least the driving force behind the *Étoile du Déseret*, but careful examination of the periodical reveals that this was not the case. Bertrand worked primarily as a translator and wrote only one original piece that appeared in the twelfth and concluding issue. It is reasonable to state, however, that the periodical could not have been what it was without his help.

In the end, twelve issues of the *Étoile du Déseret* were published between May 1851 and December 1852. Information gleaned from Bolton's journal, from Taylor's report of his mission to Europe, and from the *Étoile du Déseret* itself gives reason to suppose that anywhere from three to five hundred copies were printed of each issue.¹⁴ The only other information about the readership of the *Étoile du Déseret* comes from a letter written by Bolton to Brigham Young, in which Bolton states that "our little 'Etoile or Star of Deseret Newspaper' is finding its way slowly among the people,"¹⁵ suggesting that the periodical was available to at least some of the general public. In all likelihood, this was accomplished by placing copies in local *cabinets de lecture*, or reading rooms.

For a small entrance fee, individuals could enter these *cabinets de lecture* and read books or newspapers as long as they wished during hours of operation. One author estimates that by 1850, Paris alone had 209 such reading rooms.¹⁶ An experienced journalist such as Bertrand would have advised Elders Taylor and Bolton of the importance of placing copies of the *Étoile du Déseret* in such facilities if they wished to enter the domain of mass communication and thought in Paris at the time.

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The work of Bolton and Bertrand for the *Étoile du Déséret* was invaluable; in fact, the periodical could not have existed without them. They translated much of its content and handled many technical details of publication. Furthermore, Bolton wrote several articles for it, and Bertrand contributed one original piece, along with a number of hymn texts. Analysis of their contributions to the periodical over the course of its existence shows personal growth in each of them: for Bolton, from junior companion to an Apostle to the President of the French Mission, and for Bertrand, from new convert to counselor in the mission presidency. However, this paper will focus uniquely on Taylor's writings in the *Étoile du Déséret*. A detailed study reveals that he used the periodical to lead the Church in France and to instruct all readers, whether Church members or not, in the doctrines of the gospel. Because the writings were for the most part original to the *Étoile du Déséret*, this paper contains summaries of Taylor's articles. The purpose of these summaries is not to merely restate Elder Taylor's work, but to provide insight into his mind and testimony by quoting significant passages and emphasizing salient points of his reasoning.

THE PURPOSE FOR TAYLOR'S WRITINGS
IN THE *ÉTOILE DU DÉSÉRET*

The front page of the first issue served as an introduction of the periodical and effectively outlined its diverse purposes. Taylor wrote:

A while ago I had the opportunity to publish an abridged recitation of the origin, progress, establishment, persecutions, faith, and doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I intended to publish another similar work giving more

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particulars of our doctrine, our organization, and our current position. But, after reflection, and after coming to agreement with my friends, I thought that it would be preferable, for the accomplishment of my purposes, for this work to take the form of a collection [of articles]. Consequently, we will put forth a journal similar to this one from time to time which will not only accomplish the goal which I had originally intended, but will also give news that we are currently receiving from the Great Salt Lake Valley, in the State of Deseret.¹⁷

He then explained the purpose of starting a new publication by stating that there were few French publications on Latter-day Saint doctrine and that Latter-day Saints were scarcely known in France. His goal, consequently, was to remedy both defects.

INSTRUCTIONS SPECIFIC TO LATTER-DAY SAINTS

In addition to informing non-Latter-day Saint readers about the existence of the Church and the peculiarities of its doctrines, Elder Taylor proposed to use the *Étoile du Déseret* as a method of communication with the Saints. In the first issue, he declared, “Our publication will also have the advantage of giving instruction and consolation to our brothers in Italy, Switzerland, and the French-speaking Channel Islands, in addition to our brothers in France.”¹⁸

As an example of giving instructions to Church members, a letter bearing the title “To the Elders and Saints throughout France, Switzerland, Italy, and the Channel Islands” appeared in the fifth issue of the *Étoile du Déseret*, dated September 1851. Acknowledging that business in England and elsewhere had kept him from contributing to the periodical in recent months as much

as he would have liked, John Taylor pledged, “I will try to arrange my affairs in such a way that I might constantly communicate something to the Etoile. . . . My greatest wish is to place, from time to time, before the eyes of our readers, the doctrines and the principles of the Church, so as to give to the Saints instruction and complete comprehension of their position as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”¹⁹

This declaration shows the reader Taylor’s persistent and compelling desire to preach and expound doctrine. In this particular article, he reminded Latter-day Saints of their responsibility to carry the message of the gospel throughout the world. He counseled the elders to avoid preaching about the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but rather to declare the first principles and ordinances of the gospel—faith in the Lord, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. After encouraging all members to be engaged in the service of God, Taylor stated, “By the principles that God has revealed to us, a man may develop his mind, increase his faculties, and know his true position before God, men, and the world.” Taylor then declared that a group of such individuals would be prepared for the coming of the Savior.²⁰

In addition to the counsel that he personally gave to the French-speaking Saints of Europe, as he had indicated in the first issue, Taylor also included materials in the *Étoile du Déséret* that came from Deseret. The third issue of the *Étoile du Déséret* was dedicated almost entirely to the Fifth General Epistle of the First Presidency of the Church, giving French-speaking Saints the opportunity to read the prophet’s words in their native language.²¹

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TAYLOR'S DOCTRINAL ARTICLES

More than any other type of article, however, Taylor contributed doctrinal expositions to the *Étoile du Déseret* that could serve equally as an introduction to the Church for those unfamiliar with it and as foundational instruction for new members. These articles addressed an educated audience familiar with biblical Christianity and popular philosophies. In a logical, precise manner, Elder Taylor led his readers step by step from the intellectual and religious attitudes of the day to an understanding of Latter-day Saint beliefs.

Each of John Taylor's doctrinal articles is individually a complete statement. Considered as a collective whole, however, they reveal a carefully planned doctrinal development. In the first issue, he began with an article introducing readers to the Book of Mormon. Subsequent articles sequentially exposed readers to doctrines of Church organization, modern revelation, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and man's potential to receive an inheritance with God in the celestial kingdom. Consequently, Taylor shaped his articles in the *Étoile du Déseret* into a gospel primer, a resource to which investigators and new Church members could turn to progress solidly in gospel understanding.

The first of these articles, "On the Book of Mormon," clearly addressed a public unfamiliar with this volume of scripture. He opened his treatise by presenting scholarly discoveries that indicate Hebrew influences found in Native American artifacts, including scrolls containing quotations from the Old Testament. Taylor continued the introductory segment by pointing out Israelite traditions among the American Indians, as well as among certain peoples in Mexico. He affirmed, "According to the Book of Mormon, there were truly Israelites, Christians, and pagans in ancient America."²²

The second of three installments of “On the Book of Mormon” built on the theme of ancient Israelite settlement on the American continent. After a brief discussion of ancient American ruins, Elder Taylor stated: “These facts are more than enough to reveal the existence of one or more nations infinitely superior in intelligence and civilization to the current natives of this continent.”²³ He then asked if one could find proof that those advanced civilizations were part of the lost tribes, and replied that the Book of Mormon alone offers evidence that indeed they were.

The conclusion of John Taylor’s article about the Book of Mormon appeared in the third issue of the *Étoile du Déséret*. Bringing his argument from intellectual, scholarly materials referenced in previous installments, John Taylor now shifted to scriptural evidence for the validity of the Book of Mormon. He listed a number of peculiar blessings promised to Joseph’s family by Abraham and Moses, and demonstrated their fulfillment in the Book of Mormon.

Elder Taylor then gave a brief recitation of the events of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, citing scriptures that prophesy of those same events, such as Psalm 85:11, which declares that truth must come forth out of the earth, and Isaiah 29:18–19, which states, “And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”

To summarize and draw all of his assertions together, Elder Taylor declared:

Of all that has previously been stated, we must conclude that at the time of the coming forth of this book, a great work must begin and be accomplished on the earth, that the Lord must

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reveal an abundance of peace and truth, give new revelations, dissipate error, restore the house of Israel to its own lands, and prepare a people for the Second Coming of the Messiah. . . . Let us observe, before finishing this article, that the situation of these people on the American continent, the testimony of many historians about their habits and customs, the scriptural prophecies concerning their land and their writings, the coming forth of these writings and the object of their coming forth, are assuredly proofs as strong, rational, and conclusive as any other circumstance of which we are aware.²⁴

This article serves as an excellent example of John Taylor's ability to skillfully marshal facts into a persuasive presentation. His preliminary discussions of artifacts and ruins in the first two installments served to stimulate curiosity about the American West, one of his favorite themes to draw European listeners into discussion. However, he never abandoned his purpose to declare gospel truths. Elder Taylor's use of the intellectual curiosity of his readers as a door to bring them to a spiritual conclusion demonstrates his powerful intellect as well as finely honed reasoning and preaching skills.

The next doctrinal article also appeared in the first issue. Entitled "On the Organization of the Church," it outlined the structure of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by describing every priesthood office from prophet down to deacon. After recounting each position in detail, Elder Taylor stated, "We declare that the fear and the love of God are the foundation of all of our actions, spiritual as well as temporal."²⁵ Further emphasizing that the love of God is the only incentive for Latter-day Saint priesthood service in the Church, John Taylor included the following chart:

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The expenditures of the administration of the Church are as follows:

The President of the Church and his two counselors receive for their services Fr [French Francs] 0 00

The twelve Apostles, and the members of the high councilFr 0 00

The Seventy, High Priests, Bishops, Elders, Priests, Teachers, and DeaconsFr 0 00

TotalFr 0 00²⁶

The chart shows Taylor’s wry humor.

One doctrinal article, entitled “On the Necessity of New Revelations,” provides perhaps the greatest insight into the mind and testimony of John Taylor of all of his contributions to the *Étoile du Déséret*. This article appeared over the course of seven installments.

To justify the need for a new church as described in his previous doctrinal article, “On the Organization of the Church,” Taylor referred readers to the pamphlet “To Friends of Religious Truth,” published at the beginning of his ministry in Paris. He reminded readers that in the pamphlet he mentioned discovery of ancient records, ministering of angels, and the organization of a new Church that conforms to the model of the primitive Church and enjoys all of the gifts of the Spirit. He also asked readers to recall that he spoke of the power of God being manifest to the children of men, and that the message of this new Church needed to be proclaimed to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

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Taylor acknowledged the challenge of accepting such a message: “I know that an announcement of this sort is of the nature to produce astonishment among men, that it is contrary to their customs and opinions, and that it tends, at first, to give birth to doubt and unbelief.” Nonetheless, he reminded readers that the scriptures admonish believers to “prove all things and to hold fast to that which is good.”²⁷

After establishing that scientists and explorers advancing new truth typically endured persecution, Taylor called attention to prophets who received the same treatment. Noah was ridiculed until the day the rains came upon the earth, Moses was rejected by Pharaoh and even at times by the children of Israel, and Jesus himself was crucified. Following these examples, Taylor concluded, “Men have been generally hostile to any message coming from God. . . . That which has been previously stated [in this article] teaches us the necessity of not judging any work without seriously investigating it, so as to not reveal ourselves as fighting against God.”²⁸

After challenging his readers to study his claims, he declared that this article would demonstrate that new revelation had to exist, or else even the Bible could not be true:

We find in our day a great number of doctors and professors of Christianity who claim that we no longer need revelation, that the canon of scripture is full, and who immediately reject even the mention of new revelation. I ask these people to think carefully and to examine if it is not possible that they are in error. Is the Christianity that they profess a true representation of the pure gospel established by our Lord? Are their progress and their influence proportional to that which existed anciently? Show me the beauty, the harmony, the unity, the brotherly

love, and the power that attended the primitive church. Where are the development of spiritual gifts and the manifestations of the Spirit of God? Where is the spirit of prophecy, the gift of healing, the visions, and the revelations that were anciently the inheritance of the Saints? . . .

To make all of these things real, to uncover all mystery, to conquer all doubt, and to dissipate the thick darkness that covers the face of the earth, to reassemble and make permanent the union of the people of the Lord, to affirm the kingdom of God, and for the accomplishment of the prophecies, I will show that we absolutely must have new revelation, and without it, the Scriptures that we already have could not be fulfilled.²⁹

To illustrate his point, Taylor included several examples from the Bible to demonstrate that revelation was central to its creation and to the lives of those mentioned in it. He referred to the commandment that Noah received to build an ark and the commandment that Lot received to flee from the plain, demonstrating that both Noah and Lot needed to apply their individual commandment in order to be saved from destruction. Had Lot built an ark or had Noah simply left the plain, both would have perished.³⁰

Over the next several installments of this article, Taylor demonstrated from the Bible that a kingdom must be established, an ensign must be raised to the nations, a new covenant must be made, Israel must be gathered, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, the Jews must possess it, and the Lord would plead with his people face to face. “Revelations will lead to more revelations,” he said, “and the power of God will be fully manifest.”³¹

In the last installment of this treatise, he reasoned that those who deny the gift of prophecy do not follow the true gospel:

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Certain ministers have gravely remarked to me that it would be extremely dangerous to continually have revelations of prophecy and manifestations of the power of God in the Church. It really is too bad that these ministers did not live in the time of the Apostles, for they could have given Jesus Christ and His disciples instructions in this area so as to stop them from teaching such things. As for myself, I have always understood that Jesus and his Apostles were the teachers of the pastors, and not their students. . . . Poor Humanity! Poor doctors of a world which calls itself Christian! Are they so blinded by their pride and presumption that they desire to put God out of the question and present themselves as the only interpreters of the Gospel, of the Word, and of the designs of God, with their jargon, with all their divisions, their contestations, and their quarrels?³²

In conclusion, he declared that belief in the Bible necessitates belief in continuing revelation: “If one accepts the testimony of the Bible, I believe that I have amply demonstrated in this treaty that we will have new revelations, whether men believe it or not. And ‘. . . if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.’”³³

In a doctrinal article entitled “On Baptism,” Elder Taylor asked and responded to six significant questions concerning the ordinance, with each question becoming a section of the article:

- Who were candidates for baptism in the days of our Savior and his Apostles?
- What was the mode for baptism being employed at that time?
- What was the object of baptism?
- Was this doctrine to be taught universally?

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- Who was commissioned to administer this ordinance?
- Does any person have the right to change this ordinance?³⁴

In speaking of who was baptized by Jesus and his Apostles, Taylor emphatically stated that those baptized were adults who could fear God, who could believe, and who were ready to confess their sins. In response to those who justified infant baptism by pointing out that Jesus blessed little children, Taylor bluntly asked, “What relationship is there between blessing and baptism? None.” Furthermore, he refuted the position that infant baptism replaced circumcision by saying, “As this is only an assertion without the least proof, and as circumcision was only for males while baptism is for all, I will put this question aside until someone can bring me some arguments to support it.”³⁵

The second question concerned the correct mode of baptism. Taylor pointed out that the baptisms described in the New Testament all took place by immersion, for those being baptized descended down into the water for the ordinance, and then got up out of the water. Furthermore, he appealed to Paul’s description of the symbolism of the ordinance, which states: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Finally, he declared, “These things are so clear that it would be superfluous to accompany them with commentary.”³⁶

In response to whether the doctrine of baptism was intended to be universally taught, Taylor referred to Mark 16:15–16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Elder Taylor went on to comment about this passage: “If we count ourselves among those living in this world, and if we profess to believe in Christ,

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this must apply to us. . . . It is precisely because the world has distanced itself from this doctrine and has abandoned the other principles of the gospel that there has been the need for the gospel to be communicated anew from heaven, and that the same principles were re-established on the earth to be proclaimed to all human beings.”³⁷

By this time, the general informational tone which typified many of his earlier articles had disappeared. Without directly saying so, Taylor challenged the precepts of the Catholic Church—precepts that figured prominently into the thoughts and traditions of his audience in France. He affirmed two ways that the authority to baptize is received: either by an unbroken and uncorrupted chain of authority from the Apostles to the present day, or by being restored to man directly by revelation from God. He testified that Joseph Smith truly received his authority under the hands of holy angels and that he and the other missionaries had come to France bearing that true authority.³⁸

The final question addressed in this work was, “Does anyone have the right or the authority to change this ordinance?” Taylor mused:

Did not Jesus give to his disciples the power to bind on earth, saying to them that it would also be bound in heaven? Yes. And did not he say that whatever they loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven? Yes. But I do not think that he gave them permission to change any permanent law. . . .

It is evident, according the preceding information, that this doctrine was of the highest importance. But, did the Apostles have the right or the authority to alter this doctrine? No. . . . That which God has instituted for the human family is without fault: His plan of salvation is perfect. God created the Gospel,

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and the Gospel has for its objective to guide the human family back to heaven. And no one has the right to change or alter its ordinances without incurring the wrath of God.³⁹

The last original article John Taylor commenced for the *Étoile du Déséret* was entitled “The Gift of the Holy Ghost.” Apparently, Church business in Germany and the abrupt conclusion of his mission in France prevented him from completing it, as Curtis Bolton wrote the last two installments under this title. The purpose of this work was to correct false notions new Church members may have had concerning what to expect after having received the laying on of hands. Elder Taylor affirmed:

We believe that the gift of the Holy Ghost must be possessed in our days, just as it was in the time of the Apostles. . . . We believe in revelations and prophecy, in the gift of healing, in the gift of tongues, in visions and diverse gifts, and that one cannot possess these things without the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . We believe in the Holy Ghost in all its fullness, its strength, its power, its greatness, and its glory; but at the same time we believe this in a rational manner, reasonable, consequential, and scriptural, and not according to the false ideas, the extravagant imaginations and the traditions of men.⁴⁰

After this straightforward summary of Latter-day Saint beliefs about the Holy Ghost, Elder Taylor examined the correct meaning of the gifts of the Spirit and how they are manifest among those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁴¹

Elder Taylor’s final contribution to the *Étoile du Déséret*, “Sons of God,” was a translation of a piece he wrote for the *Times and Seasons* published Monday, January 16, 1843.⁴² This article

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served as a finale to the doctrinal teachings contained in all his preceding articles.

The focus of Elder Taylor's argument is that one must earn the right to become a son of God by believing in him and by receiving the true gospel. He asserted, "There is a very material difference between a servant and a son; the ties that bind a father and son together are much more sacred, and binding than those which unite a master and servant. A father feels bound to his child by paternal ties, to his servant he does not: a father expects from his child a filial and an affectionate regard; but he expects a servant merely to do his work, and pays him for his services."⁴³

In the second and final installment of this piece, Elder Taylor resumed by discussing the difference between a son and a servant:

A father reveals unto his son his purposes and designs, he does not acquaint a servant with them: a son inherits his father's property, a servant does not—having received his wages he has no further demand. Hence the reason of Paul's remark, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son then an heir of God through Christ," and hence also the reason of our Savior's remark John xv.—"Henceforth I call you not servants but friends" (they were his brethren, and God their father) "for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." . . . Christ had revelation, and they had revelation also; because he revealed his Father's will unto them, and they were placed in a situation to know the mind, the will, and purposes of God through the sonship. The great distinction was that a servant did not know what his Lord did, and a son did know; thus we see that a son

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of God has revelation, a servant has not, and this is the grand difference between the sectarians, and the Latter-Day Saints.⁴⁴

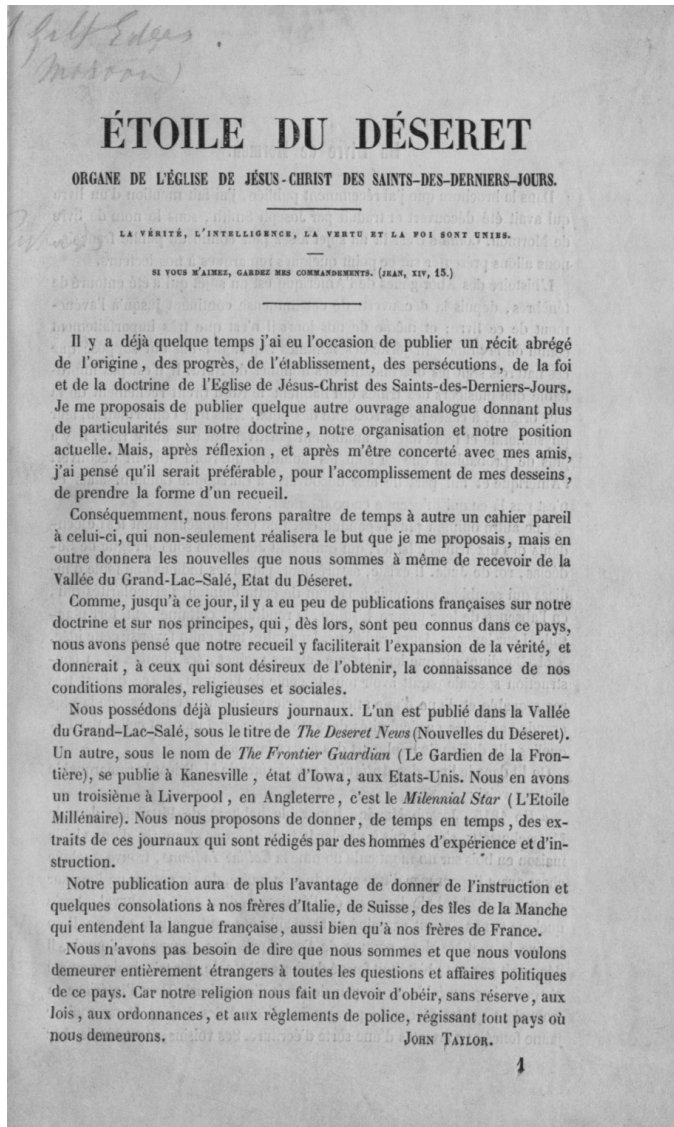
He acknowledged that many in the Christian world since the time of John desired to serve God, but without proper knowledge, they could never be more than servants. This led to Elder Taylor's emphatic conclusion:

So at the present day it will be found that however devout, and sincere the children of men may have been; that it is necessary that they should come to the standard that God has set up, for the salvation of the human family in these last days; repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and have hands laid on them for the gift of the Holy Ghost, by those whom God has ordained, before they can receive the adoption of sons, participate in the glories of the gospel, and receive an inheritance in the celestial kingdom of God.⁴⁵

With this piece, Elder Taylor's "gospel primer" was complete. One who read all of his articles would have learned about the Book of Mormon, the organization of the Church with priesthood authority and continuing revelation, the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, and the eventual goal of the plan of salvation: to return to the presence of God and to receive of his glory.

CONCLUSION

The *Étoile du Déséret* gains historical value when readers recognize that it was written to address the needs of the French Mission at the moment of publication. It is one half of a dialogue: the voice of priesthood leaders responding to the



Title page, *Étoile du Déseret*, vol. 1, p. 1. (By permission of L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah)

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circumstances the Church faced as each new issue was published. The fact that Elder Taylor decided to represent the Church in print demonstrates his awareness of the cultural climate in mid-nineteenth-century France and his desire to remedy his weakness in the French language; however, it should be noted that printed preaching has distinct disadvantages in comparison to the spoken word. Masterful as his written sermons were, Taylor could not be sure those who read the *Étoile du Déséret* understood the messages he desired to express. Consequently, the absence of dialogue between teacher and learner limited the converting power of his messages and underscores the fact that no teaching tool can ever replace the teacher.

Despite the wonderful insights historians gain about the early French Mission from the *Étoile du Déséret*, many questions remain: What impact did the periodical have upon those who read it? Did it accomplish the objectives of its authors? Unfortunately, no currently known records exist to give any answers. For modern readers, perhaps the greatest value of the *Étoile du Déséret* lies in the fact that it brings to light some early writings of John Taylor, many of which were published only in French. He carefully chose the topics he addressed, leading readers through a deliberate progression of ideas that would help them understand—and hopefully believe—the message of the Latter-day Saints.

Upon his return to Salt Lake City from Europe, Elder Taylor said, “We have filled [the *Étoile du Déséret*] with all that is good for the people to read, that it may be a standing work for years to come.”⁴⁶ Those who read it today experience a vivid example of mid-nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint proselytizing and gain appreciation for the leadership, intellect, and testimony of John Taylor.

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NOTES

1. Pronounced approximately *eb-TWAL doo day-zay-RETT*. The *Étoile du Déséret* was among the earliest foreign-language periodicals of the Church. It was preceded by two publications in Welsh—*Prophwyd y Jubili* (*Prophet of the Jubilee*), which ran from 1846 to 1848, and *Udgorn Seion* (*Zion's Trumpet*), which began in 1849 and ran through 1853 (Ronald D. Dennis, *Zion's Trumpet: 1849 Welsh Mormon Periodical* [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1999], xv–xviii).
2. Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was the nephew of Napoléon I.
3. B. H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963), 210.
4. Occasionally, Curtis Bolton recorded information in his journal concerning his stay in France approximately twenty years earlier (see Curtis Edwin Bolton, as cited in Cleo H. Evans, ed., *Curtis Edwin Bolton, Pioneer Missionary* [privately published, 1968], 43, 57a).
5. John Taylor, “Letter to the Editor,” *Millennial Star*, September 1, 1850, 270.
6. John Taylor to Brigham Young, March 13, 1851, Brigham Young Collection, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Original spelling preserved.
7. John Taylor, “Letter to the Editor,” *Millennial Star*, September 1, 1850, 270.
8. John Taylor to Brigham Young, March 13, 1851, Brigham Young Collection, Church History Library.
9. The “Star” portion of the name reflects a connection to other Latter-day Saint periodicals from the early years of the Church, and particularly to the *Millennial Star* in England at that time.
10. Bertrand’s life is extensively documented by Richard McClellan in “Louis A. Bertrand: One of the Most Singular and Romantic Figures of the Age” (honors thesis, Brigham Young University, 2000).
11. See Louis Alphonse Bertrand, *Mémoires d'un Mormon* (Paris: Collection Hetzel, 1862), 7.

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12. Communist ideas of mid-nineteenth-century Europe were not yet Marxist in nature. They focused on the pursuit of a utopian society and would be more correctly described as communalist in nature. However, *Le Populaire* was described in its time as a communist journal.
13. See Bertrand, *Mémoires*, 7.
14. See Bolton, as cited in Evans, *Curtis Edwin Bolton*, 57, 60, and 83; John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 1:20; and *Étoile du Déséret*, 48.
15. Curtis Edwin Bolton to Brigham Young, August 30, 1851, Brigham Young Collection, Church History Library.
16. Claude Pichois, as cited by Maria Adamowicz-Hariasz, “From Opinion to Information: The Roman-Feuilleton and the Transformation of the Nineteenth-Century French Press,” in *Making the News: Modernity and the Mass Press in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed. Dean de la Motte and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 162.
17. John Taylor, untitled contribution, *Étoile du Déséret*, May 1851, 1. All translations are those of the author, unless otherwise noted.
18. John Taylor, untitled contribution, *Étoile du Déséret*, May 1851, 1.
19. John Taylor, “Aux Elders et aux Saints, répandus en France, en Suisse, en Italie et dans les îles de la Manche,” *Étoile du Déséret*, September 1851, 72.
20. John Taylor, “Aux Elders et aux Saints,” *Étoile du Déséret*, September 1851, 73–75.
21. “Cinquième Epître Générale de la Présidence de l’Eglise de Jésus-Christ des Saints des Derniers Jours,” *Étoile du Déséret*, July 1851, 33–43.
22. John Taylor, “Du Livre de Mormon,” *Étoile du Déséret*, May 1851, 4.
23. John Taylor, “Du Livre de Mormon,” *Étoile du Déséret*, June 1851, 18.
24. John Taylor, “Du Livre de Mormon,” *Étoile du Déséret*, July 1851, 48.
25. John Taylor, “Sur l’organisation de l’Eglise,” *Étoile du Déséret*, May 1851, 13.
26. John Taylor, “Sur l’organisation de l’Eglise,” *Étoile du Déséret*, May 1851, 14.
27. John Taylor, “De la Nécessité de Nouvelles Révélations,” *Étoile du Déséret*, September 1851, 69.

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28. John Taylor, "De la Nécessité de Nouvelles Révélations," *Étoile du Déséret*, September 1851, 71.
29. John Taylor, "De la Nécessité de Nouvelles Révélations," *Étoile du Déséret*, September 1851, 71–72.
30. John Taylor, "De la Nécessité de Nouvelles Révélations," *Étoile du Déséret*, October 1851, 86. Incidentally, Elder Taylor also used this same example in an article that was published on November 1, 1847; see *The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 34. This repetition demonstrates the continuity of Elder Taylor's thought and manner of presenting the gospel to those who claimed to believe in the Bible but rejected the idea of continuing revelation.
31. John Taylor, "De la Nécessité de Nouvelles Révélations," *Étoile du Déséret*, February 1852, 150–51.
32. John Taylor, "De la Nécessité de Nouvelles Révélations," *Étoile du Déséret*, March 1852, 165–66.
33. John Taylor, "De la Nécessité de Nouvelles Révélations," *Étoile du Déséret*, March 1852, 166.
34. John Taylor, "Sur le Baptême," *Étoile du Déséret*, November 1851, 98.
35. John Taylor, "Sur le Baptême," *Étoile du Déséret*, November 1851, 99.
36. John Taylor, "Sur le Baptême," *Étoile du Déséret*, November 1851, 101–2.
37. John Taylor, "Sur le Baptême," *Étoile du Déséret*, November 1851, 104.
38. John Taylor, "Sur le Baptême," *Étoile du Déséret*, December 1851, 128.
39. John Taylor, "Sur le Baptême," *Étoile du Déséret*, January 1852, 143.
40. John Taylor, "Le Don du Saint-Esprit," *Étoile du Déséret*, January 1852, 135.
41. John Taylor, "Le Don du Saint-Esprit," *Étoile du Déséret*, January 1852, 138.
42. John Taylor, "Sons of God," *Times and Seasons*, January 16, 1843, 73–76.
43. John Taylor, "Les Fils de Dieu," *Étoile du Déséret*, March 1852, 174. This translation comes from the original version of the article published in the *Times and Seasons*. Original punctuation preserved.

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44. John Taylor, “Les Fils de Dieu,” *Étoile du Déséret*, April 1852, 177. This translation comes from the original version of the article published in the *Times and Seasons*. Original punctuation preserved.
45. John Taylor, “Les Fils de Dieu,” *Étoile du Déséret*, March 1852, 179.
46. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:21.