

“Every Man Walketh in His Own Way”: Individualism, Revelation, and Authority in the Ohio Period

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The various ways in which early Church members responded to Joseph Smith’s revelations in the Ohio period (1830–38) show how revelation gives individuals agency and accountability and highlights the tensions between choosing one’s own will or submitting to the will of God.

In December 1830 the Prophet Joseph Smith received a short, powerful revelation in New York. “A commandment I give unto the Church,” the Lord spoke, “that it is expedient in me that they should assemble together at the Ohio.” The New York Saints could do nothing but “choose” to obey or disobey (D&C 37:3–4). Some tried to halt between the choices. When Joseph Smith gathered the fledgling Church of Christ, not yet a year old, for a conference in Fayette, New York, in January 1831, the Lord rendered that option impossible. Newel Knight remembered that “it was at this conference that we were instructed as a people, to begin the gathering of Israel, and a revelation was given to the prophet on this subject.”¹ The revelation painted a vivid apocalyptic picture of the destinies awaiting those who believe and obey compared to those “who will not hear my voice but harden their hearts, and wo, wo, wo, is their doom” (D&C 38:6). The revelation empowered the Saints with knowledge of divine will, which enabled them to make a choice informed by inevitable consequences. To survive impending spiritual destruction the Saints must gather to Ohio (see D&C 38:32).

Thus the first gathering of the Restoration occurred in north-eastern Ohio, the geographical embodiment of early America’s defining cultural characteristics. Carved from the Northwest Territory

after the Revolutionary War and populated by a flood of New Englanders, Virginians, and Carolinians, Ohio exemplified how “a complete democratic self-government was actually realized and put into practice.”² Observers witnessed a decline of deferential politics, an increased awareness of the evils of slavery, and the stunning growth of religious denominations, especially those that appealed to a democratized populace—Methodism, Baptism, and Campbellism. In this setting Joseph Smith received dozens of revelations from the Lord that portended controversy.

Americans had overwhelmingly decided that God no longer dictated revelations as He had done to Moses. The French observer Alexis de Tocqueville spoke for mainstream American culture when he wrote, “It is unnecessary that God himself speak in order for us to discover sure signs of his will.” Rather, “it suffices to examine the usual course of nature and the continuous tendency of events.”³ Americans of Joseph Smith’s day had new “articles of faith.” First, it was self-evident that Providence willed the inevitable progress of His creation, obvious in America’s democratization and manifest destiny. Cultural historian Andrew Delbanco explained an article of American faith in the 1830s. “Pride of self,” he wrote, “once the mark of the devil, was now not just a legitimate emotion but America’s uncontested god. And since everyone had his own self, everyone had his own god.”⁴ Tocqueville considered such individualism the essence of American culture in 1831. Delbanco believes that as Americans exalted the individual, they rid their consciousness of a personal devil; the triumph of the self was the death of Satan. Tocqueville scholars Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop articulated another of America’s articles of faith: “The true beginning of American democracy is the dogma of the sovereignty of the people, a dogma logically incompatible with the acceptance of any authority, including traditional religion.”⁵ For this reason, Americans acknowledged that God had spoken to prophets but rejected the premise that He would speak again. Though there were plenty of visionaries and prophets in the 1830s, their revelations were “moderate” and ambiguous, tending to facilitate, not challenge, individualism.⁶ Unlike Old Testament prophets, American prophets generally typified rather than confronted cultural norms. Some were apostles of what Ralph Waldo Emerson called “self-reliance.”⁷

In 1831 Americans were remarkably religious, but precious few still believed in the kind of revelation received by Old Testament prophets or documented in the Acts of the Apostles—what Terryl Givens calls dialogic revelation.⁸ “Prayer,” writes Givens, “frequently and dramatically evokes an answer that is impossible to mistake as anything other than an individualized, dialogic response to a highly particularized question. The conception of revelation as a personalized, dialogic exchange pervades the Book of Mormon—as well as the life of the Prophet Joseph—like an insistent leitmotif.”⁹ Yet most Bible believers rejected Joseph’s claims outright. It puzzled Joseph, who had no doubt about the efficacy of asking and receiving in the most explicit and literal terms, that “such is the darkness & ignorance of this generation that they look upon it as incredible that a man should have any intercourse with his Maker.”¹⁰

Although most rejected modern revelation, some individuals did not. The democratizing impulse to exalt individualism and suppress divine authority left many Americans with a deep emptiness. They were dissatisfied with the new articles of faith. Their instincts suggested that they could commune with God in ways not compromised by the widespread attempts to relocate divine authority. They were willing to hear from a sovereign God. Yet counterfeit voices were everywhere, created by rapid democratization, individualism, and a deep anxiety inseparable from newfound freedom. These same forces ripened the field and made it ready to harvest. Americans left empty by individualism longed to hear authority from the heavens.

More than to any particular doctrine, believers flocked to “the Book of Mormon’s real radicalism,” which, Givens wrote, “is in the way it emphatically models, chronicles, and then enacts a version of divine discourse that contests prevailing theologies of revelation.”¹¹ From the brother of Jared to Moroni, the Book of Mormon prophets speak to the Lord and the Lord speaks back. The primary import is not so much in what He says but how He says it—in a way that undeniably proclaims a personal, anthropomorphic, and authoritative God (see Ether 3:6). And then Moroni invites readers to enact the same scenario for themselves, promising that if done with real intent, communion with the Godhead is assured (see Moroni 10:4–5).

This empowering doctrine of revelation appealed to Americans who were disenchanted with individualism and its concomitant rejection of dialogic revelation. Continuing revelation reenacted the biblical model of direct revelation from God, which circumvented disputing opinions symptomatic of individualism. But believers in such revelation were a small minority. Americans overwhelmingly rejected dialogic revelation. Givens cites a variety of reasons, “including fear of irrationalism, the perceived sufficiency of the canon, the concern to preserve the integrity of individual agency, and, perhaps most emphatically, theological resistance to anything tending toward anthropomorphism” (the ascription of human form to God).¹² All of those reasons distill into a concern over the location of authority. Dialogic revelation is undemocratic. It sets forth God’s will and expects to be obeyed. It violates all democratized articles of faith. It offends individualistic culture.

While Tocqueville was in Ohio observing American individualism, Joseph Smith was receiving revelations that demanded, in the voice of the Creator and Redeemer of mankind, the sublimation of the individual, largely by calling for social unity and economic cooperation. A fine example is the first revelation Joseph Smith received in Ohio. Through Joseph, the Lord spoke to a recent convert, the prosperous Painesville hatter Edward Partridge (see D&C 41:9–11). This undemocratic document assumes both the power and prerogative to bless and curse, to include and to cast out, to make and declare law, and to bring lawbreakers to an impending, inevitable judgment. It cares nothing for the idea of separating legislative, judicial, and executive powers but assumes them all. It repeatedly refers to “my law” and calls for an assembly not to debate and create law but “to agree upon” law dictated by revelation. Moreover, it commands specific action for Partridge to “leave his merchandise” and spend his whole effort executing the divine law (D&C 41:2–3, 9). One could hardly find a more countercultural document in 1831 than this.

The revelation that followed these commands to Partridge called for economic and social arrangements antithetical to the American norm. Rather than speculating in western land, Saints were to pool their resources so that everyone could be amply supplied (see D&C 42:33). Rather than dividing into self-interested factions, Saints

were commanded emphatically to be one, politically, economically, and socially (see D&C 38). Further revelations continued to pointedly undermine individualism: “Ezra Thayre must repent of his pride, and of his selfishness, and obey the former commandment” to share his farm with Saints migrating from New York (D&C 56:8). Newel Whitney should be ashamed of his “secret abominations, and of all his littleness of soul” (D&C 117:11). William McLellin must send his money to Missouri, stop being lustful, and spend his time as a missionary, seeking the salvation of others (see D&C 66). Examples are numerous. Most forceful is the Lord’s November 1831 prediction of an apocalyptic end to individualism: “Every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall” (D&C 1:16). There is no manifest destiny here; no inflated estimates of society’s perfectibility or the inevitable progress of mankind. The revelations paint a grim picture of American society in the 1830s (see D&C 38:11–12).

Joseph Smith’s unusual revelations might have made him just one more voice in the wilderness—a “doomsayer,” a prophet on the periphery of the culture—if his revelations had not struck a responsive chord in the souls of thousands of followers, if they had not initiated one of the most impressive proselyting programs the world has ever seen, and if they had spurned American politics.¹³ But the revelations were powerful motivators. In a few weeks in late 1830, according to the Painesville *Telegraph*, missionaries converted nearly one hundred in northeastern Ohio.¹⁴ The same prejudiced paper noted by the following spring the arrival of “about two hundred men, women and children of the deluded followers of Jo Smith’s Bible speculation.”¹⁵ By the next year, missionary John Murdock had converted about seventy more.¹⁶ In April 1836 Lucius Parsons wrote to his sister from Kirtland that she would probably be proselyted “this summer as 100 or more have, or are about, starting out in all directions to bring to Zion all who will believe in their doctrine.”¹⁷ The gathering converts became an ever-increasing percentage of Kirtland Township residents until they gained a slight majority in 1837.¹⁸ The revelations compelled the Saints to

gather and to go far afield to proselyte, and in so doing they would confront and condemn individualism in themselves and in their culture generally. That process proved painful, a crucible of discipleship.

When the Twelve Apostles were ordained in February 1835, Oliver Cowdery gave them a charge to “cultivate great humility” and “beware lest your affections be captivated by worldly objects.” Then, after promising the Apostles that they could commune with God if they overcame the carnal world, Cowdery made a few remarks “with regard to superiority”: “The ancient apostles sought to be great; but lest the seeds of discord be sown in this matter; understand particularly the voice of the Spirit on this occasion. God does not love you better or more than others. . . . You are as one; you are equal in bearing the keys of the Kingdom to all nations.” More emphasis on their specific apostolic ministry to outlying converts and the larger world, together with repeated warnings about pride, followed. “Remember you are young men,” Cowdery said.¹⁹ Indeed the eldest of the Apostles was no more than thirty-six at the time, and together they formed a body of diverse personalities shaped by varied educational experiences, social refinement, affluence, and prejudices. As commissioned, the Quorum embarked on a mission to the eastern United States in May 1835. In anticipation they tried to answer Cowdery’s charge by humbly seeking revealed advice from the Prophet and by committing to seek the Quorum’s welfare (see D&C 107).²⁰ They made efforts to submit their individual wills to God.

During the apostolic mission at least two Apostles, Orson Hyde and William McLellin, criticized Sidney Rigdon, for which they were disfellowshipped, pending reconciliation. That reconciliation was accomplished on September 26, 1835, when they “frankly confessed and were forgiven” at a council meeting “to take into consideration the case of the Twelve.”²¹ Still rumors persisted that some Apostles had murmured at the hardships their mission placed on their families and on themselves. In response to this situation, Joseph received a revelation on November 3, which was read to the Apostles on November 5.²² The Lord chastened Hyde, McLellin, and other Apostles specifically and charged them with inequality and self-serving behavior. Hyde and McLellin “expressed some little

dissatisfaction” with the revelation, “but after examining their own hearts,” Joseph Smith’s journal says, “they acknowledged it to be the word of the Lord.”²³ Apostle William Smith, Joseph’s brother, was also chastened specifically for explosive behavior a week earlier, when he argued with Joseph publicly during a high council meeting on October 29.²⁴ The November 3 revelation speaks to young, often impetuous, individualistic Apostles whose high status increased their vulnerability to arrogance and offense. The Apostles are reminded of their original commission to be united, selfless, and humble. The revelation makes these attributes prerequisite to receiving the anticipated endowment of power. It strives to shape these young men into a Quorum of holy Apostles commissioned to be servants of all.

The Apostles were refined by economic hardships as well. Land values in and near Kirtland skyrocketed as migrants gathered in response to Joseph Smith’s revelation (see D&C 37), and transportation advances made markets more accessible from 1831 to 1836. But the corresponding proliferation of mercantile establishments and industry veiled unstable economic footings, including a potentially devastating domino effect of goods purchased and sold on credit. Apostles Lyman E. Johnson and John F. Boynton operated one of several mercantile firms, selling goods bought on credit. Apostle Orson Pratt and his wife Sarah lived in the Johnson and Boynton store in September 1836, where Orson likely worked.²⁵ Kirtland investors formed the Kirtland Safety Society in November 1836, hoping to pool and liquidate their resources (mainly real estate) and thereby position themselves to pay their short-term debts. The Ohio legislature refused to charter new banks, however, leading the Safety Society to restructure itself into a joint-stock company renamed the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company on January 2, 1837. Optimistic investors disregarded the legislature and poured capital into the Society, hoping to keep it solvent. Unchartered, however, the Safety Society never escaped doubts that it could redeem its paper currency.

When a national banking panic ensued in May 1837, vicissitudes of the unregulated market undermined the Society completely. The unbridled economic optimism fell, generating anxieties that led to accusations and counteraccusations of impropriety.²⁶

This opposition was accompanied by a growing dissonance within many Saints who were wrestling with the tensions between individualism and revelation.

Joseph Smith, meanwhile, defended himself against charges that he was responsible for creating a pervasive “spirit of speculation in lands and property of all kinds.” The *History of the Church* says that “evil surmisings, fault-finding, disunion, dissension, and apostasy followed in quick succession.” “No quorum in the Church,” the record continues, “was entirely exempt from the influence of those false spirits who are striving against me [Joseph Smith] for the mastery; even some of the Twelve were so far lost to their high and responsible calling, as to begin to take sides.”²⁷ As the economy soured and personal interests were threatened, individualism heretofore bridled by obedience to revelation chafed under divine authority.

At this point many in Kirtland chose their will over God’s will and attempted to discredit the revelations. On May 23, 1837, Elder Parley P. Pratt charged Joseph Smith with “lying, deceiving, and taking advantage of one’s neighbor,” in connection with a land transaction.²⁸ On May 29 Elders Orson Pratt and Lyman E. Johnson filed a complaint against Joseph Smith.²⁹ As 1837 wore on, Joseph’s scribe Warren Parrish and Apostle John Boynton led efforts to discredit Joseph Smith. Both men were vested in the Safety Society, and in the wake of its failure Joseph Smith became the scapegoat onto whom they projected their frustrations. Both men claimed the bank had been founded on revelation. Its failure, therefore, released them from obligations to obey Joseph Smith. During a September 1837 conference, Boynton “attributed his difficulties & conduct to the failure of the bank, stating that the bank understood, was instituted by the will & revelations of God, & he had been told that it never would fail, let men do what they pleased. Pres. Smith then arose and stated that if this had been published, it was without authority, at least from him. He stated that he always said that unless the institution was conducted upon righteous principles it could not stand.”³⁰ Boynton was cut off from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, as were similarly disaffected Apostles Luke and Lyman Johnson, whose economic interests suffered from Kirtland’s economic reversal.³¹

Apostles Parley and Orson Pratt were also hurt financially, but they submitted to revealed authority and were reconciled with Joseph Smith. By the September 1837 conference, Orson was on his way to a mission in New York. Parley, by his own account, had gone "to brother Joseph Smith in tears, and, with a broken heart and contrite spirit, confessed wherein I had erred in spirit, murmured, or done or said amiss. He frankly forgave me, prayed for me and blessed me." By this experience, wrote Parley, "I learned more fully to discern and contrast the two spirits, and to resist the one and cleave to the other."³²

Brigham Young reported a formative episode he experienced in Kirtland, probably in late 1836 in the same series of events that carried away Boynton, the Johnsons, the Pratts (temporarily), and many others. He found fault with Joseph's financial judgment then promptly repented. "It was not for me to question whether Joseph was dictated by the Lord at all times and under all circumstances or not," Brigham said. "I never had the feeling for one moment, to believe that any man or set of men or beings upon the face of the whole earth had anything to do with him, for he was superior to them all, and held the keys of salvation over them. Had I not thoroughly understood this and believed it, I much doubt whether I should have ever embraced what is called 'Mormonism.'" Brigham continued his deeply penetrating point: Joseph "was called of God; God dictated him, and if He had a mind to leave him to himself and let him commit an error, that was no business of mine. . . . It was not my prerogative to call him in question with regard to any act of his life. He was God's servant and not mine." Then this very telling statement from Brigham: Joseph "did not belong to the people but to the Lord."³³

In 1836 Truman Coe, pastor of Kirtland's Old South Church, called Mormons "abject slaves to the spiritual rule of their leaders. All their affairs, small and great, are directed by special revelation. By a miserable attempt to ape the language and style of scripture, they clothe their commands with the authority of heaven; and the people have nothing to do but to hear and obey."³⁴ But Coe misunderstood the frustration revelations produce in those who believed but were unwilling to obey. The revelations did not enslave the

early Saints but rather empowered them. They gave actors something to act upon. For instance, having been commanded not to commit adultery, William McLellin nevertheless “indulged himself in his lustful desires” and was held accountable by a bishop’s court in May 1838.³⁵ He had, as Joseph Smith wrote of him, “disobayed [*sic*] the voice of him who is altogether Lovely for a woman.”³⁶ So Coe could more accurately have said that Joseph Smith’s revelations left his hearers with nothing to do but obey or disobey. The revelations actually forced choice rather than smothered it. The discomfort that revelations caused in Kirtland was that people had to act upon them. They left no possibility for neutrality. The revelations did not accommodate individualism. They placed as much *power* to determine one’s destiny in individuals as America’s articles of faith. But they did not put *authority* in the people. Legislative, executive, and judicial authority remained in the Almighty and His authorized servants.

Since early America vested authority in the majority of the people, the concentration of authority in Joseph’s revelations seemed dangerous. It was dangerous to individualism. If Zion had succeeded, Babylon’s cult of self would necessarily have failed. Indeed, people vested in individualism could only ignore the revelations’ alternative claim to authority until the critical mass of believers became politically powerful and therefore too great to ignore. The most poignant tensions, meanwhile, were found inside individuals who wrestled with the implications of personal agency. When they chose to disobey revelations they believed came from God, they had to tolerate or somehow relieve the cognitive dissonance that inevitably followed.

Many in this predicament worked hard to rid themselves of the inevitable agency and accountability these revelations placed upon them. McLellin was joined by John Boynton, Symonds Ryder, Ezra Booth, Warren Parrish, and a host of others who opted for individualism over obedience. Their actions bespoke the creed “*My* will be done in heaven as it is on earth,” and they came to loathe the way Joseph’s revelations frustrated their desires and undermined their self-worship. They contrast with Brigham Young, who responded positively to the way the revelations located agency in him. He did not, therefore, find fault with them or try to discredit Joseph

Smith. Indeed, Brigham articulated clearly the authority of revelation and revelators, be they mere mortals. The location of authority in the appointed servants of an infallible, accessible God made sense to Brigham, whereas authority diffused among the people or deposited solely in ancient texts seemed pragmatic but ultimately impotent—a ruse.

Powerful cultural currents and the exercise of individual agency led to the democratization of northeastern Ohio, the triumph of individualism, and the rejection of revelation. Brigham’s faithful perspective was exceptional among the Saints. The tensions between individualism and the authority inherent in Joseph’s revelations escalated to the point that in January 1838 he received a revelation in Kirtland telling him to “let the Presidency of my Church, take their families as soon as is practicable . . . to the west; . . . Let all your faithful friends arise with their families also, and get out of this place.”³⁷ When a few of the faithful remained behind, halting between service of self and obedience to the revelation, Joseph received another revelation that declared neutrality impossible and forced them to choose for themselves whom they were going to serve (see D&C 117).

By dictating such revelations, Joseph, as Richard Bushman wrote, “forced the question of revelation on a culture struggling with its own faith.” He gave “God a voice in a world that had stopped listening.”³⁸ That voice is the boon and balm of anyone with a willing mind. Yet, like a two-edged sword, it indicts those “who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles.” The Lord’s voice is “unto all.” One can run but not hide. It will penetrate every heart, locating power to act in each individual while maintaining authority, and all this in preparation for “the day,” ere long, “when the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man” (D&C 1:2, 10, 14).

NOTES

¹“Newel Knight Autobiography,” in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 4:64.

²George W. Pierson, *Tocqueville in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 566–67.

³Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 6–7.

⁴Andrew Delbanco, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1995), 106.

⁵Mansfield and Winthrop, “Editor’s Introduction,” in Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 83.

⁶Ann Kirschner, “‘Tending to Edify, Astonish, and Instruct’: Published Narratives of Spiritual Dreams and Visions in the Early Republic,” *Early American Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 216; Richard L. Bushman, “The Visionary World of Joseph Smith,” in *Believing History*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and Jed Woodworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 199–216.

⁷David M. Robinson, ed., *The Spiritual Emerson* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 83.

⁸For religiosity, see Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁹Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 217.

¹⁰Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 2: Journal, 1832–1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 66.

¹¹Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 208.

¹²Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 213.

¹³Susan Juster, *Doomsayers: Anglo-American Prophecy in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

¹⁴Painesville *Telegraph*, November 16, 1830, 3, and November 30, 1830, 3.

¹⁵Quoted in William G. Hartley, *Stand by My Servant Joseph: The Story of the Joseph Knight Family and the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 113.

¹⁶Milton V. Backman Jr., “The Quest for a Restoration: The Birth of Mormonism in Ohio,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 347.

¹⁷Lucius Pomeroy Parsons to Pamela Parsons, April 10, 1836, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

¹⁸These percentages were drawn from data in Milton V. Backman Jr., comp., *A Profile of Latter-day Saints in Kirtland, Ohio and Members of Zion’s Camp 1830–1839* (Provo, UT: Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1982), Appendix A, 83.

¹⁹Oliver Cowdery, “General Charge to the Twelve,” in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 2:194–98.

²⁰Ronald K. Esplin, “The Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve to Mormon Leadership, 1830–1841” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1981), 161.

²¹Kirtland Council Minutes, September 26, 1835; Esplin, “Emergence of Brigham Young,” 167–68.

²²Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:63–65.

²³Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:143–48.

²⁴Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:56–59.

²⁵Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 49.

²⁶Dale W. Adams, “Chartering the Kirtland Bank,” *BYU Studies* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 467–82; Marvin S. Hill, Keith C. Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, “The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1977): 391–475; D. Paul Sampson and Larry T. Wimmer, “The Kirtland Safety Society: The Stock Ledger Book and the Bank Failure,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 427–36; Scott H. Partridge, “The Failure of the Kirtland Safety Society,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 437–54.

²⁷Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:487–88.

²⁸Parley P. Pratt to Joseph Smith, May 23, 1837, published in *Zion’s Watchman*, March 24, 1838.

²⁹Lyman E. Johnson and Orson Pratt to the bishop and his council in Kirtland, May 29, 1837, Church Archives, Salt Lake City.

³⁰Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book* (Salt Lake City: Collier’s, 1996), 184–87; see also Warren Parrish to the editor of *Zion’s Watchman*, in *Zion’s Watchman*, March 24, 1838.

³¹Evidently these Apostles were released from the Quorum for “leaving their calling to pursue” other occupations (Collier, *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 185; Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt* [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985], 51).

³²Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), 168.

³³Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1857), 4:297.

³⁴Milton V. Backman Jr., ed., “Truman Coe’s 1836 Description of Mormonism,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1977): 353.

³⁵Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:31.

³⁶Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, June 6, 1832, in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 264–65.

³⁷Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:255.

³⁸Bushman, “A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-first Century,” in *Believing History*, 273.