

## Restored Covenant, or Broken Covenants?

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### I. Introduction

Recently a new Book of Mormon is circulating among the Restoration saints, entitled the "Restored Covenant Edition". It is being extensively promoted as superior to any previous edition, and is being widely accepted by many of the Restoration saints and others. A new principle of the gospel is being taught in addition to the traditional "Six Principles of the Gospel" taught historically by the Restoration Movement. Along with these, there are also a number of other doctrines currently being taught as greater enlightenment to the Saints. This class will attempt to give an overview of these teachings from a historical RLDS perspective.

The new doctrines being discussed in this class are being promoted among the saints as a "restored covenant". In so doing, they preach that the Church of former days was operating under a broken covenant which must now be corrected. However, the truth is that the Reorganized Church has been operating under God's blessings according to the Lord's covenant, at least until the present liberal apostasy. In reality these new doctrines represent a departure from the established word of God, and are in a sense a violation of the covenants upon which this church was formed.

### II. RCE Book of Mormon vs. 1908

The Restored Covenant Edition of the Book of Mormon (RCE) has recently been published by Zarahemla Research Foundation (1999). It uses a poetic style of verse arrangement, which many believe makes it easier to read. It also contains thousands of textual variations from the 1908 edition, which most Restoration Branches have adopted as part of their standard of faith. Supporters of the RCE believe that this new edition is superior to all previous editions of the Book of Mormon because, they claim, it goes back to the Original and Printers manuscripts for corrections to the text. Further, it is claimed that a greater spiritual power is associated with the RCE than with any previous edition. A rejection of this new book is said to be a rejection of light and truth, with associated spiritual judgments upon its detractors.

Following are some of the claims made for the Restored Covenant Edition of the Book of Mormon:

- "The RCE represents more light and truth than any other edition ever published."
- "The RCE represents more manifestation of Jesus Christ than any other."
- "The RCE is a form of judgment to all Book of Mormon believers."
- "If you reject this now, your personal window of opportunity may have passed."
- "If we make full use (response) of what we have, we will ride into Zion as eagles."
- "If you give an evil report of the RCE, you will have to wander in the wilderness [like the children of Israel] and may miss out on Zion."
- "The RCE is the original spirit of the Restoration."
- "The Lord is getting ready to re-restore the Restoration. The RCE is the call 'all aboard' It's a line in the sand."

This last statement about being a "line in the sand" suggests that there will be a division among the Saints over this issue. Since the RCE is being portrayed as superior to the 1908 edition, and since many Saints

are accepting it as a new standard of faith, it bears serious investigation. Is the work what it claims to be? Are the textual changes in the RCE far superior to the 1908 edition? Are the Saints justified in promoting or accepting this new edition as a replacement for the 1908 edition? Is the spiritual authority associated with this book greater than with any previous edition? I believe the answer to these questions is, No.

My position on the RCE is that the book itself is not greatly better or greatly worse than the 1908 edition. If it is better in some respects, then the Saints should be free to examine it and accept or reject it for themselves. If its poetic arrangement of verses makes people want to read the Book of Mormon more, it may be beneficial. The troublesome aspects with the RCE are fourfold: a degree of hypocrisy or double standard in promoting it as superior to others; the division which is being caused among the Saints over mostly trivial differences of wording; the rejection of prophetic leadership and common consent in both the early Restoration and Reorganization; and an unjustified spirit of accusation which is brought against the latter-day Saints both early and modern.

### **II.a. Editions and Manuscripts**

In producing the RCE, extensive comparison was made with every original manuscript and previously published edition, except the RLDS 1963 Readers Edition. The text of every edition contains slight differences from each other. A very brief description of these sources is listed below.

- **Original Manuscript (O)** -- the handwritten copy dictated by Joseph Smith, and written by various scribes including Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Emma Smith. Only about 25% of this manuscript has been preserved, since much of it was destroyed through water damage in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House.
- **Printer's Manuscript (P)** -- Copy of **O** manuscript made by Oliver Cowdery in preparation for printing the 1830 edition, for the printer E.B. Grandin.
- **1830** -- First edition published by the Church, in Palmyra, New York.
- **1837** -- Second edition published, in Kirtland, Ohio. The preface to this edition states, "the whole has been carefully re-examined and compared with the original manuscripts, by elder Joseph Smith, Jr. the translator of the book of Mormon, assisted by the present printer, brother O. Cowdery..."
- **1840** -- Third edition, Nauvoo, Illinois. The title page to this edition states, "Carefully revised by the translator."
- **1874** -- First RLDS edition, Plano Illinois.
- **1892** -- Second RLDS edition, Plano Illinois.
- **1908** -- This edition incorporated some changes from the **O** and **P** manuscripts, but retained most of the corrections made by the Prophet Joseph in 1837 and 1840. This is the "Authorized Edition" of the Reorganized Church according to church law, as will be shown below.
- **1953** -- This printing is almost identical to the **1908** edition.
- **1992** -- RLDS, completely new, computer generated layout of the 1908 edition.
- **LDS** -- 1981 edition, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
- **TL** -- 1990 edition, Church of Christ (Temple Lot).
- **B** -- 1970 Third Edition, Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite).

### **II.b. What changes were made in the RCE?**

Despite the fact that there are tens of thousands of textual changes in the RCE, there are only a small number which introduce any significant change to the meaning of any passage. Of the few verses that do effect any minor change in meaning, there are none which would impact our faith in Jesus Christ or affect

our former understandings of the gospel. In many cases the RCE version of a specific verse may clarify a particular point of view, but that point of view could be readily understood from the 1908 edition.

By far the most controversial change made in the RCE is the removal of "the Son of" in several key verses relating to Jesus Christ and His relationship with the Heavenly Father. These are according to the Original manuscript, which were changed in 1837 and retained in the 1908 edition.

<u>1908 Edition</u>	<u>RCE Edition</u> (and Original manuscript ??)
1Ne 3:58 ...Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of <b>the Son of</b> God...	...Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of God..
1Ne 3:62 ...Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even <b>the Son of</b> the Eternal Father	1Ne 3:62 ...Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father
1Ne 3:193 ...the Lamb of God is <b>the son of</b> the Eternal Father...	1Ne 3:193 ...the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father...

Strictly speaking, the RCE Edition is not incorrect in its theology in these verses. It is clear throughout all three books of scripture that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of our Heavenly Father; but he is also described as being a Father and He is one with His Father. A familiar verse oft-quoted at Christmas time is Isaiah 9:6 -- "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

However, even if the RCE edition is technically correct then by the same argument the 1908 edition is also correct. I believe that the Prophet Joseph changed these verses in the 1837 edition to avoid what could have been a damaging comparison with Catholicism ("Mary the mother of God"), and to avoid lending undue credibility to the doctrine of modalism (often referred to as "One-God doctrine"). Modalism is defined as, "regarding the Father, Son, and Spirit as modes (forms) of one Being, and not as persons, thus denying personal distinction in the Trinity."

The Church has always been fairly Trinitarian in belief, which is to say, belief in one sovereign God while at the same time recognizing the unique personality and roles of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit within the Godhead. To restore these verses in 1st Nephi back to a modalistic form is to add fuel to the fire of this controversy, which has troubled the church throughout history, and it circumvents what appears to have been the Prophet's wisdom in making these corrections. This issue alone is enough to cause some people to reject the RCE.

Quite a number of other changes were made in the RCE, which are of lesser import than the ones already discussed. Below is a summary of several types of changes. Examples of each are given in the Appendix of this study<sup>1</sup>.

- Verses where the RCE differs from **O** and **P** manuscripts and all other editions
- Verses where the RCE retains corrections in 1837 and other editions, rather than originals
- Verses where the **O** and **P** manuscripts differ -- which one is correct?

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<sup>1</sup> See also the book *A Comparison of the Book of Mormon Manuscripts & Editions*, Zarahemla Research Foundation, © 2000, for a complete list of changes in all editions.

- Verses where the meaning is changed significantly
- Verses where the RCE, or the **O** and **P** manuscripts, differ from Isaiah quotes in the Bible
- Verses where Hebraisms were restored to the text
- Verses where the personal pronoun ("who") was changed to "which" in the RCE
- Verses where the RCE introduces an error in verb tense, pronoun agreement, etc. Often this is claimed to be "good Hebrew".
- Verses where the restoration to the original manuscripts restores archaic or Middle English forms which obscure the meaning in modern English
- "Strait" vs. "Straight" -- Example showing many of the above points, and demonstrating how the RCE (and also the Book of Commandments) does not always contribute to the proper interpretation of scripture.

There is a Book of Mormon prophecy that speaks against "they that make a man an offender for a word" (Isa 29:31; 2Ne 11:157). It is not our purpose to make believers in the RCE offenders because of these changed words -- they are free to accept it, which should not in itself affect our judgment of them. However, supporters of the RCE appear to be making men "offenders" when those who question the RCE are denounced in strong terms as "rejecting light and truth", based on words that do not necessarily have greater light.

Further, it seems hypocritical and making "offenders" to condemn Oliver and/or Joseph Smith for changes in the 1837 edition. Many of these editorial changes are still retained in the RCE edition, and a few new ones are introduced. If such changes were wrong in 1837, then why are they okay for the RCE? Conversely, if it is okay to introduce any change in the RCE from the Printers and Original manuscripts, then why are the 1837 changes said to be "damaging"?

### **II.c. Why was the Book of Mormon modified?**

Several reasons are presented by supporters of the RCE for why the Book of Mormon text should be returned to the Original and Printer's manuscripts.

**First**, is that Joseph Smith gave the original by revelation and that any variation from the original is therefore wrong. For this reason editorial changes, particularly extensive in the 1837 edition, are said to be "damaging". However, there is good reason to believe that the original manuscripts might not always be the most accurate.

1. Since the process of translation took place in a short period of time, usually said to be between 60 to 90 days, it seems reasonable that errors could have occurred in the transcribing process. We should not be required to hold the Prophet to strict inerrancy under such conditions.
2. The Printer's manuscript as a copy of the original is known to have contained errors.
3. Both the Original and Printer's manuscripts contained errors, archaic spellings, incorrect or archaic uses of singular/plural verbs, and awkward sentence constructions. Some of these have been corrected in later editions. The fact that the **O** and **P** manuscripts had errors must be acknowledged even by RCE supporters, because the RCE edition retains editorial changes and does not follow either manuscript in literally hundreds, if not thousands, of verses.
4. Even if the Original manuscript were perfect, we only have 25% of it remaining, so the remaining 75% is not available for comparison.
5. The Book of Mormon itself disclaims that possibility that even the original plates might have contained mistakes of man, which should not detract from the authority of the book (Title Page of the Book of

- Mormon; Eth 5:23-28). If Joseph had been given insight to correct verses that were in error on the originals, the later editions would therefore contain more truth.
6. The Prophet Joseph was involved with the editorial corrections of 1837 and 1840, as evidenced by the introductions to both editions (quoted above). It was after these editions were published that Joseph made the statement, "the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth"<sup>2</sup>. This would suggest that editorial and prophetic license was exerted by the Prophet and translator to provide divinely authorized corrections and refinement to the text, to make it better suited to the English language and perhaps correct errors. If corrections were deemed necessary, who better than the Prophet to make those changes?
  7. If the prefaces to the 1837 and 1840 editions were a lie perpetrated by Oliver Cowdery, as some have suggested, the Prophet had seven years in which to publicly renounce the statement and take the necessary action to restore the Book of Mormon to the 1830 edition and/or the original manuscripts. Rather, we find that Joseph spent time even as late as 1842 reviewing the Book of Mormon for any necessary corrections<sup>3</sup>.
  8. Ebenezer Robinson wrote the following concerning the preparation for printing the Book of Mormon in 1840, which shows that Joseph did know about the changes in the 1837: "Brother Joseph and I immediately went to work and compared a copy of the Kirtland edition (1837) with the first edition (1830), by reading them entirely through, and I took one of the Kirtland edition as a copy for the stereotype edition."<sup>4</sup>

**Second**, it is claimed that editorial changes removed Hebraisms, or characteristic Hebrew writing forms, from the text which would have been a greater witness to the book's truthfulness. The restoration of those passages provides a better witness to the Book of Mormon's Hebrew nature. A full answer to this charge would require an extensive study which is beyond the scope of this particular class.

Suffice it to say, most of the known Hebraisms have been retained in all editions through the 1908. The very knowledge of Hebraisms came through examination of editions prior to the RCE and thus we have sufficient evidence that it is a Hebrew book. To introduce more Hebraisms into the text, especially ones that may obscure the meaning of the scripture in our English version, is redundant and counterproductive. At the very best, restoring the Hebrew nature of some verses could be beneficial for study or reference purposes, but not when the resulting text is forced upon the Saints as if imperative to spiritual growth.

**Third**, one justification of restoring the text is given from 3rd Nephi 10:34-41. This passage is where Jesus called Nephi and asked him why it was not written in the Nephite record about saints being resurrected at the resurrection of Christ. Nephi remembered that fact had not been recorded, and made the necessary correction. But this example shows, not that the original record was superior, but rather proves that the original needed divine correction. If one were to compare Nephi's original record with the later copy, they would have been found to be different. There are some in the church today who would advocate returning to the original, thus losing the benefit of the additional revelation of Jesus.

This scripture actually lends itself to demonstrating the opposite conclusion -- that is, the original printing of the Book of Mormon was improved through the prophetic leadership of Joseph Smith in 1837 and 1840, many of which corrections have been retained in the 1908 edition.

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<sup>2</sup> November 28, 1841; *Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 4, page 461.

<sup>3</sup> "Saturday, 15th (1842). I commenced reading the book of Mormon, at page 64, American stereotype edition (the previous pages having been corrected), for the purpose of correcting the stereotype plates of some errors which escaped notice in the first edition." *RLDS History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 569.

<sup>4</sup> Ebenezer Robinson, *The Return 2* (May 1890), Pg.259.

## **II.b. 1908 Edition is the "Authorized Edition"**

Church law is clear that the 1908 edition of the Book of Mormon, along with the Doctrine and Covenants and Inspired Version of the Bible, are the only "authorized" standard works of the church. All other books or materials must stand on their own merit. This represents the common consent of the RLDS Church, as expressed through conference action. No other work can legitimately claim superiority to the standard works of the church unless they "come in at the door", so to speak, and are approved by the Lord's prescribed method of common consent (D&C 25:1b; 27:4c).

The following General Conference Resolutions (GCR) are summarized below. The full text can be found in the reprint of the "Rules and Resolutions" available from Restoration Bookstore.

- GCR 368 Adopted April 15, 1892  
"Resolved, That we recognize the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants as the only standard works of the church; and it is our opinion that every other book, pamphlet, or other publication, should simply rest upon its own merits, the church being responsible only for that which it authorized to be done, or which it accepts after it is done."
- GCR 568. Adopted April 6, 1906  
Authorized a committee to prepare a standard Book of Mormon with uniform verse numbering.
- GCR 602. Adopted April 7, 1908  
"Resolved, That we accept and indorse (sic) the report of the subcommittee and make it the report of the general committee on the work of reversification of the Book of Mormon.  
Resolved, That it be the sense of this committee that in the publication of the new work we follow the corrections of the Book of Mormon so as to make the new work in accordance with the original manuscript and the Kirtland edition of the Book of Mormon published by Pratt and Goodson, of 1837, that the work may be completed as corrected by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery...."
- GCR 993. Adopted April 13, 1956.  
Conference approved the publication of a Reader's Edition, with updates to the language to provide more clarity. The First Presidency clarified this resolution:  
"We wish to recommend that if the motion having to do with editorial changes in the Book of Mormon is approved, it be understood that we will continue to publish the Authorized Version of the Book of Mormon and that any additional version will stand on its merits in relation thereto."

After the 1966 edition was published, it was printed with the phrase "Authorized Edition" on it. The Conference of 1966 ordered this phrase removed, and thus reconfirmed that the 1908 edition was the only Authorized Edition of the church (GCR 1058, Adopted April 23, 1966).

Thus, any other book, including any other edition of the scriptures, which differs from the standard works of the Church must stand on its own merits. The RCE was neither authorized through common consent, nor has it been accepted by the Church through any conference vote. Thus it is presently a violation of our church law and covenants to promote it as being superior to the standard works of the church.

### III. Additional Principle of the Gospel?

Another new doctrine that is being promoted in classes along with the RCE, is an additional principle of the gospel of Christ. The new principle is referred to as "Making a covenant", which is said to be synonymous with "Come Unto Christ" or "Become as a little Child". This principle of "making a covenant" is said to come before baptism, and is distinct from the baptismal covenant as traditionally taught by the Reorganized Church.

The Restoration Movement and the Reorganized Church have taught the so-called "Six Principles of the Gospel", which are: Faith, Repentance, Baptism (water and Spirit), Laying on of Hands, Resurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment. The Church has taught that once a person has accepted the gospel with faith and repentance, they make a covenant in the waters of baptism, and they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost through laying on of hands as a confirmation of that covenant.

The new principle being taught is presented as a newly discovered Book of Mormon truth, which all of our forefathers before the present generation have overlooked. It is claimed that this truth, of having Seven Principles instead of six, represents greater enlightenment, that it restores part of the gospel that hasn't previously been understood by the Church, and thus calls into doubt the gospel as taught by apostles and prophets throughout the Reorganization and the Restoration. In fact, supporters of this new principle go so far as to say, "Six Principles is a false doctrine -- Seven is the number of perfection." It is further claimed that this new principle can be found in Hebrews 6:1-2 as part of a seven-item Hebrew list, instead of a six-item list of principles.

The teaching on this subject is causing some Restoration saints to doubt their original conversion to Christ and the covenants that they believed were made in the waters of baptism years ago, since they hadn't been taught this key principle, so-called. This new doctrine is not only presumptuous in its implications, but is also incorrect in many of its details.

#### III.a. Basis for the doctrine

Following is a very brief overview of the basis for this new "third principle", as taught by its promoters. It comes as a result of comparing several verses in the Book of Mormon.

3 Ne 12:33 "...Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and **come unto me** and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost..." (also 3Ne 9:92, and others). In many Book of Mormon verses, "come unto Christ" is listed between repentance and baptism.

3 Ne 5:39 "...Ye must repent, and **become as a little child**, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in no wise receive these things." By comparison with 3Ne 12:33, "become as a little child" is said to be synonymous with "come unto me" or "come unto Christ".

Mos 3:8 "and now, because of the **covenant** which ye have made, ye shall be called the **children of Christ**, his sons, and his daughters." Making a covenant is shown to be synonymous with "become as a child" in this verse, and therefore equated with "come unto Christ". Thus the new principle after repentance is "make a covenant".

Mos 9:41 "what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that **ye have entered into a covenant** with him." That is, those who were being baptized at the waters of Mormon had already made a covenant before their baptism, so there is an additional step of covenant-making implied before baptism.

Heb 6:1-2 "...repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." It is claimed that

"of the doctrine" is a separate principle from "of baptisms"; the new principle is said to be equivalent with the "covenant"; and together they make a seven part list in the Greek.

### **III.b. Response from the Scriptures**

A covenant is a mutual, solemn vow which establishes a perpetual relationship of trust between two or more parties. We can see these aspects of the covenant relationship demonstrated in many examples, perhaps most clearly in the marriage covenant.

In responding to this new "covenant step" of the gospel, we must make it clear that we are not speaking against the idea of making a covenant. Our covenant relationship with Christ is the most important aspect of our lives, and is a central theme of the gospel. As we learn more about what a covenant is, and how covenants were practiced among the ancient Hebrews, new insights from the scriptures may help us understand our covenant better. However, the posturing of this additional principle as something new and better does not have a great deal of credibility when compared with the scriptures and the church's traditional teaching.

#### **Baptism is a covenant**

The scriptures are clear that baptism is a covenant. Section 20, which was given in context of baptism in this church, says "all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing, and this [baptism] is a new and everlasting covenant; even that which was from the beginning. Wherefore, although a man may be baptized an hundred times, it availeth him nothing... for it is because of your dead works, that I have caused this last covenant, and this church to be built up unto me...."

Further evidence comes from other scriptures, that the gospel we are to preach includes primarily the "first principles" of faith, repentance, baptism, and laying of hands:

D&C 39:2 "This is my gospel: repentance and baptism by water, baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost"

D&C 32:2f-3a "repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins ... and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. Behold, verily I say unto you, This is my gospel".

Mni 8:29 "the firstfruits of repentance is baptism"

D&C 17:21e "baptism is administered to those who repent"

A Hebrew covenant required the death of the victim in order to be valid (Heb 9:16-17). Part of the Hebrew covenant-making process was to make a blood sacrifice. Baptism is symbolically equated with death (Rom 6:4-6); thus, baptism is included in the covenant, not outside it.

In the Hebrew wedding ceremony, there were considered three parts to the covenant: the betrothal, the public ceremony, and the consummation (or bringing forth of the firstborn child). These could easily be related to the first principles of the gospel that the Saints have always been taught -- faith and repentance represent the betrothal or initial joining with Christ, baptism is the public ceremony, and receiving the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands is the consummation where we are made one with God's Spirit within us and a new person is created within us after God's image.

### **Waters of Mormon**

The argument from Mos 9:41 implies that the people had already made a covenant before their baptism. However this is incorrect based on the context of the verse. The people at the waters of Mormon were "**desirous** to come into the **fold of God**, and to be **called his people**". This shows that they had not yet come into the fold of God, and they were not yet called his people.

It is a covenant statement to be "called his people". One of the steps in the Hebrew covenant was the exchange of names. God is called our God, and we are called His people. Jeremiah 31:33 says, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." So we know that the people at the waters of Mormon didn't have a covenant before they were baptized, because they weren't yet "His people".

It is also a covenant statement to be part of the "fold of God". Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheepfold...I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved..." [John 10:7-9]. It is also a Book of Mormon truth that the door or "the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water: and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost" [2 Ne 13:24]. Since the people at the waters of Mormon were not yet in the fold of God, and therefore had not yet come in at the gate, then it stands to reason that they didn't have a covenant until after their baptism.

The only thing that stood between those people and coming into the "fold of God" and being "called His people" was their baptism. Thus, their baptism was they key to making their covenant, because after their baptism "they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward" [Mos 9:49]. They were now called His people, and were in the fold of God as a result of their baptism -- thus baptism is the key covenant-making step.

### **Hebrews 6:1-2**

The interpretation of Hebrews 6:1-2 as described above was that "of the doctrine" is an additional gospel step based on patterns in the Greek New Testament. This is incorrect according to the sentence construction of this passage. The actual Greek language doesn't contain any of the "of"s that are found in our English editions which might indicate separate principles. The words "faith", "repentance", "doctrine" (or instruction), "laying on (of hands)", "resurrection", and "eternal judgment" are written in a tense known as genitive singular, which means those words are singular and refer back to the word "foundation". "Baptisms", on the other hand, is a plural noun literally meaning "washings". It is a complete phrase that can be literally translated "instruction about washings" or "doctrine of baptisms". So no new principle exists here.

Further, to say that teaching or doctrine is identical with "making a covenant" is to trivialize what it means to make our covenant with Christ. It is truly a perversion of the gospel to say that instruction, or the acquisition of knowledge, is equivalent with establishing a covenant relationship. Many today seem to believe that gaining more knowledge will help us attain more spirituality, but in fact the opposite is often true. The scripture says "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1Cor 8:1); and "When they are learned, they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves" (2 Ne 6:59).

### **III.c. Reorganization has taught the covenant**

Those who say that the Reorganization has never taught the covenant relationship are simply mistaken; or worse, they are seeking to elevate their own teachings by putting down our forefathers and heritage of

beliefs. The Reorganization has always taught that salvation comes through obedience to the gospel principles, and that a covenant is made in the waters of baptism. These basic principles were taught according to a solid interpretation of the scriptures including Hebrews 6:1-3, as shown above. The same gospel taught by the Reorganization can also be found very early in the Restoration as well (see Appendix to this paper).

The gospel taught by our ancestors in the Restoration and the Reorganized Church carried a mighty power of the Spirit confirming the truth to thousands of converts; in conveyed the power of God unto salvation, which is a mark of the true gospel (Rom 1:16; 1Thes 1:5); those who were baptized understood they were making a sacred covenant with Jesus Christ, even up to the present-day teachings in the Restoration Branches. It is contrary to common sense and good judgment to bring an implicit accusation against those of whom the Lord approved.

#### **IV. Spirit of Accusation**

One of the themes presented along with the RCE and the new principle of the gospel is that the church has been in transgression from the early 1830's until the present day. This is used to justify the departure from orthodox RLDS teachings which modern critics wish to make. Some points raised in this regard are:

- The claim that the so-called "condemnation of the church" mentioned in Section 83:8 has never been revoked;
- The changing of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, which is said to have taken away the "higher" or celestial law;
- The false notion that the first mission to the Lamanites in 1830-1831 was an example of disobedience because the missionaries went to Kirtland and baptized Sidney Rigdon and his followers, instead of going straight to Missouri;
- Calling into question the truth of the recorded Kirtland Temple endowment experiences of 1836;
- And, the allegation that the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants introduced a sort of polytheism, which has continued to the present day. This issue includes the rejection of Joseph Smith's experience in the grove in which he described "two personages", simply because it wasn't printed until 1842.

All of these issues promote the same longstanding spirit of accusation brought by critics of the Reorganized Church through the years. They call into question the authority and truth of the Lord's true successor to the original church (the Reorganization) as evidenced by numerous testimonies. The first three issues have been addressed earlier in classes at Zarahemla Branch.

The fourth<sup>5</sup> issue is a natural result of the belief, held by some, that by 1836 the church was in great transgression. They find it impossible to admit that the Lord could bless the Church under that supposed condition with such a spiritual outpouring. They point to the later transgression of the Apostles, and the control of the Times and Seasons after Joseph's death to promote Brigham Young's agenda, and imply that the entire account of seeing fire on the Kirtland Temple and the associated blessings were at best, exaggerated. Sadly, this brings a spirit of disbelief against the true work that God did perform in the Kirtland Temple. It contradicts the testimonies of the Spirit received by many of those early converts that the power of God was manifest in the church through spiritual gifts and blessings, even until recent times in the RLDS Church.

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<sup>5</sup> (NOTE: Not all of the supporters of the RCE promote these last two positions, the Godhead and denying the Kirtland experiences. However some do, and a number of Restoration Branches have recently been dealing with contention on all these related issues from some of their members.)

The fifth issue deals with the Godhead, which has been a continuing source of discussion and contention in the church for many years. The Godhead and the church's teaching on the subject could fill an entire class. Only one point will be mentioned, relating to Joseph's vision in the grove.

There are extant at least six different accounts of Joseph's vision in the grove. They were written at different times during Joseph's life, under different circumstances, in order to share his early experiences. In each of these accounts, the fact that Joseph understood two personages is either stated explicitly, or in one case it is implied. The one in question is the very earliest account dated 1831-1832 from the LDS Archives. In that account Joseph wrote that he saw "the Lord". This does not say there weren't two personages, but they are not mentioned explicitly. Later in the account the Lord (Jesus) spoke of being crucified for the world and that He will come "clothed in the Glory of my Father", showing that the relationship between the Father and Jesus Christ was clearly understood by Joseph in this vision account just like all the others.

## V. Conclusion

All of these teachings discussed in this paper are being presented in classes and other settings in Restoration Branches throughout the country. They are being presented in total as "100% word of God". Claims are made that indicate if the Saints don't accept this as being 100% word of God they are somehow missing the key to Zion. Not only are there serious flaws in this position from a scriptural and historical point of view, the very statements themselves are coercive.

Besides the dubious nature of the truth of these new doctrines, these issues are also contributing to the general disunity and contention among the Restorationist Saints. Romans 16:17 warns us to "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." It seems that this two-fold combination of division and doctrinal error is something of which to be wary.

Many of the Restoration Saints are not ready to cast a spirit of accusation against the spiritual leaders of our past. They are not prepared to deny the Spirit of Christ which has manifested itself upon the early leaders of the Restoration and Reorganization. They recognize that the covenants which have been taught by the Reorganized Church are according to the gospel of Christ.

Some among the Saints seem to have become as the Athenians of old, who "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21). In this time of darkness and spiritual confusion, it behooves us to remain true to the proven principles of the gospel, and not run after claims of truth that take us away from our heritage. We would do well to remember the counsel received by the Church, through common consent, at the 1879 General Conference.

"...it is clear to us that it is destructive to the faith of the church, and inconsistent with the calling and dignity of the ministry, to decry, disclaim, preach or teach contrary to the revelations in said Doctrine and Covenants, or to arraign them in such a way that the faith of the people of the church is weakened and they thereby distressed.

"We are further of the opinion, that the elders should confine their teachings to such doctrines and tenets, church articles and practices, a knowledge of which is necessary to obedience and salvation; and that in all questions upon which there is much controversy, and upon which the church has not clearly declared, and which are not unmistakably essential to salvation, the elders should refrain from teaching..." (Conference Resolution 222).

## Appendix

### Examples of Changes made to RCE Edition

Following are a few examples of various types of changes in the RCE. There are many examples that could be given both in favor and against the RCE. These are just a sample of some which change the meaning or illustrate a point. "CBMM" refers to the book *A Comparison of the Book of Mormon Manuscripts and Editions*, showing all the edition differences.

<b>RCE</b>	<b>1908</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1Ne 1:95 Behold <b>thou shalt</b> go up to Jerusalem again,	1Ne 1:95 Behold <b>ye shall</b> go up to Jerusalem again,	CBMM footnote says "switching pronouns of address to/from plural and singular = a Hebraism..." However, this is false -- "thou" and "ye" can both be plural or singular.
2Ne 2:19 Wherefore, the fruit of <b>my</b> loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write;	2Ne 2:19 Wherefore, the fruit of <b>thy</b> loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write;	The 1908 agrees with Genesis 50:31. This is a quote of the prophecy to Joseph in Egypt from the Lord. "Thy loins" refers to the seed of Joseph in Egypt.
1Ne 3:12 the Lamb of God, <b>which</b> should take away the sins of the world.	1Ne 3:12 the Lamb of God, <b>who</b> should take away the sins of the world.	Personal pronoun "who" was changed to "which" in many cases. This is old style English.
1Ne 3:26 <b>And it came to pass that I, Nephi</b>	1Ne 3:26 I, Nephi	Restored 47 times throughout the RCE edition.
1Ne 3:165 when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the <b>fullness</b> of the gospel of the Lord	1Ne 3:165 when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the <b>plainness</b> of the gospel of the Lord	"Fullness" is possibly better. But "plainness" agrees with other verses in context (3:168-174,179,183-184). The CBMM footnote says that the term plainness "does not occur elsewhere in the Book of Mormon", which is misleading.
1Ne 3:167 thou seest the <b>formation</b> of a great and abominable church (also 1Ne 3:139-141, 236 "formation", "founder")	1Ne 3:167 thou seest the <b>foundation</b> of a great and abominable church (also 1Ne 3:139-141, 236 "foundation")	The RCE may change the emphasis to point more toward rise of the Catholic Church. However, it de-emphasizes the fact that this "great and abominable church" (Babylon) has been founded on the devil since the beginning, of which the Catholic Church was just one example.
1Ne 4:14 the house of Israel was compared unto an olive tree, by the Spirit of the Lord which was in our <b>father</b> ;	1Ne 4:14 the house of Israel was compared unto an olive tree, by the Spirit of the Lord which was in our <b>fathers</b> ;	"Fathers" refers to many of the prophets which spoke of the parable of the olive tree. "Father" refers to Nephi's father (Lehi), since he is speaking. The 1908 is more correct.
1Ne 4:60 and the devil is the <b>preparator</b> of it;	1Ne 4:60 and the devil is the <b>foundation</b> of it;	Does the Devil prepare hell for the wicked, or does the Lord (Gen 7:44)?
1Ne 6:37 to him whom the <b>nations</b> abhorreth (Original manuscript says "nation")	1Ne 6:37 to him whom the <b>nations</b> abhorreth	The RCE chose to follow the <b>P</b> manuscript and all printed editions. However, they did not follow the <u>Original</u> manuscript, which agrees with Isa 49:7. Why?
1Ne 7:23 they [Israel] shall be gathered together to the lands of their <b>first</b> inheritance;	1Ne 7:23 they [Israel] shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance;	Israel's <u>first</u> inheritance was the land of Israel. Are the tribes of Joseph (Manasseh and Ephraim going to be gathered there? No. (D&C 108:6) Will Manasseh be gathered to their first inheritance in Central America, or to Zion in the Centerplace?

2Ne 1:8 the Lord hath <b>consecrated</b> this land unto me	2Ne 1:8 the Lord hath <b>covenanted</b> this land unto me	CBMM footnote says "restores consistent with vv. 11,58; 2:3; 7:30." However, covenanted goes along with the previous verse (2Ne 1:7).
2Ne 3:11 I know that if ye are brought up in the <b>right</b> way ye should go, ye will not depart from it.	2Ne 3:11 I know that if ye are brought up in the way ye should go, ye will not depart from it.	CBMM footnote says "passage was weakened when word removed". This does seem to be the case.
2Ne 5:58 The Lord God hath <b>opened</b> mine ear	2Ne 5:58 The Lord God hath <b>appointed</b> mine ear	Quote from Isa 50:5. The 1908 and Printers manuscript agree with the IV, the RCE and Original manuscript agree with KJV.
2Ne 9:2,6 <b>seraphim</b>	2Ne 9:2,6 <b>seraphims</b>	Quote from Isaiah 6. RCE correctly renders seraphim, which is plural already in Hebrew and agrees with Isaiah, but contradicts <b>P</b> and 1908.
2Ne 11:8 there is none other people that understand the things <b>of the prophets</b> which were spoken unto the Jews	2Ne 11:8 there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews	RCE (and <b>P</b> ) may restore part of a chiasm in verses 4-14.
Jacob 3 (many verses) <b>saith</b>	Jacob 3 <b>said</b>	Restores old style English, rather than more modern "said" in many verses as corrected in 1837.
Enos 1:10 And he <b>saith</b> unto me, because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast <b>not</b> heard nor seen	Enos 1:10 And he <b>said</b> unto me, because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast <b>never before</b> heard nor seen	"Hast not heard nor seen" contradicts the text, because it is the Lord speaking to Enos. "Never before" implies more clearly that he had never heard the Lord before this experience.
Enos 1:11 And many years <b>passeth</b> away before <b>that</b> He shall manifest Himself in the flesh	Enos 1:11 And many years <b>pass</b> away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh	"Before that" could lead to an incorrect interpretation of the verse. In reality, it is an unnecessary archaic form of English grammar.
Mos 5:66 the hilts thereof <b>hath</b> perished	Mos 5:66 the hilts thereof <b>have</b> perished	RCE restores old style English from <b>P</b> , but creates verb tense disagreement.
Mos 7:117 nor thy daughter, <b>nor</b> thy manservant	Mos 7:117 nor thy daughter, thy manservant	RCE disagrees with every manuscript and printed edition, <u>and</u> Exod 20:10 (English and Hebrew). CBMM footnote states "completes pattern". This is an example where a "Hebraism" was created where no manuscript even supported it.
Mos 8:49 those that <b>art</b> still publishing peace!	Mos 8:49 those that <b>are</b> still publishing peace!	Creates verb tense disagreement ("art" is second person singular, "those" is third person plural).
Mos 9:176 his people <b>were</b> desirous to be baptized ( <b>P</b> and 1830 say " <b>was</b> ")	Mos 9:176 his people <b>were</b> desirous to be baptized	This is a case (among thousands) where the 1837 revision was retained in the RCE.

### **Strait vs. Straight.**

The words "strait" and "straight" were changed in many places in the RCE edition. These changes provide a good example of many of the issues listed in this article.

The definition of "straight" is without bend or curve, not crooked, honest, correct. The definition of "strait" is narrow, limited, confining, strict, rigorous. In the English translation of the Bible, these definitions are

used consistently with each occurrence of each word, and are translated correctly from Greek and Hebrew according to their respective definitions.

We find from the Bible is that each verse describing the "str\_\_t path" uses the word "straight". For instance, John the Baptist was called to "prepare the way of the Lord and make His paths straight" (Matt 3:29; Mark 1:2; Luke 3:4,10; John 1:24; Isa 40:3-4). The saints are commanded to "make straight paths for your feet" (Heb 12:13).

On the other hand, each Bible verse which speaks about the "str\_\_t gate" uses the word "strait". For instance, "strait [narrow, strict] is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life", as contrasted with the broad path (Matt 7:22-23; Luke 13:24).

So from this, there seems to be a principle: The path is straight (not crooked), but the gate is strait (narrow, confined). God doth not walk in crooked paths (D&C 2:1a), but the gate by which we should enter is very strictly defined -- repentance, baptism, and reception of the Holy Ghost (2Ne 13:24). The straight path leads to the strait gate.

When we look at the Doctrine and Covenants and original 1908 edition of the Book of Mormon, these two words are used consistent with the Bible almost all of the time (with very rare exceptions). However, on many occasions the RCE changed the use of the two words to be inconsistent with this pattern.

Interestingly, the Book of Commandments in every case uses these two words incorrectly according to the Biblical pattern, including an obvious error in BofC 2:1 (D&C 2:1). The Book of Mormon Original and Printers manuscripts contain many incorrect usages of these words in their proper context. This shows to me that someone involved with the early revelations had a tendency to use the words "strait" and "straight" incorrectly. Both the Doctrine and Covenants and the later editions of the Book of Mormon were corrected according to inspired understanding of the scriptures, to make them consistent with the Bible and the word definitions. To change this and return to an incorrect version would be wrong. Here are just a few examples:

1Ne 2:63 "strait and narrow path". CBMM footnote says this is correct spelling, and that "strait" and "narrow" is a synonymous word pair (Hebraism). Perhaps it is, but maybe the Lord really did intend to say "straight" (not crooked) and "narrow", as in every edition from 1830 through 1908. Here's another thought: if the Rod of Iron follows the path, and the path is not straight, then is the Rod of Iron crooked too?

1Ne 3:8 "make His paths straight". Here, the **O** and **P** manuscripts use "strait" but every other edition including the RCE corrects this to agree with the Bible (Isa 40:3). Why is it proper to contradict the original manuscripts in this case, but not in 1Ne 2:63?

2Ne 3:58 "make my path strait before me". The RCE goes back to the **O** and **P** manuscripts, different from all printed editions. This contradicts many verses, including Hebrews 12:13 "make straight paths for your feet". Why would we ask God to make our path constricted? Isn't God's way always strict, without our asking? Isn't Nephi asking God to make his path straight, meaning making the way easier before him to follow God's ways?

Why did the RCE create inconsistencies? In many cases it is because the Printer's Manuscript used the words incorrectly. In fact, the Printer's manuscript never used the word "straight" -- not one single time. In at least a few cases, the Printer's manuscript changed the Original manuscript's "straight" to "strait" incorrectly. In other cases, the **O** and **P** manuscripts were both wrong, such as when Nephi made an arrow

out of a "strait stick" (1Ne 5:28). The RCE and every other edition corrects this error, making it a "straight stick".

Now consider this: the Printer's manuscript was incorrect in 1Ne 5:28, as well as the Original. We only have the Original Manuscript for about 75% of the Book of Mormon. How many other cases is the Printer's manuscript incorrect, where we do not have the Original manuscript to compare with? We have no way of telling. And yet the RCE has chosen to follow the Printer's manuscript in many cases.

### **Quotes from history showing the "Six Principles" teaching in the early Restoration**

And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance; faith in Christ the Son of the living God; and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the head of the parents, for this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized: and their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands: (D&C 68:4)

Paul, in enumerating the principles of the doctrine of Christ in the sixth of Hebrews, places amongst them the imposition of hands. Faith, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit, with signs following those who believe, was then the gospel which the apostles preached... (Elders' Journal, Oct 1837, Stephen Burnett, Vol. 1 Pg.11)

And now to show our doctrine on this subject, we shall commence with the first principles of the gospel, which are repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands. This we believe to be our duty, to teach to all mankind the doctrine of repentance, which we shall endeavor to show from the following quotations:

(followed by many quotations from the Bible, along with commentary very much in harmony with the doctrine taught by the Reorganization)

These quotations are so plain, in proving the doctrine of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, I deem it unnecessary to enlarge this letter with comments upon them -- but I shall continue the subject in my next.

JOSEPH SMITH, jr.

(Messenger and Advocate, Sept. 1835, Joseph Smith "To elders of the church," Vol 1, Pg.179-182)

We shall find, by a careful examination of the word of God, that they preached, first, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, repentance, or a sorrow for, and a forsaking of sin; third, baptism, or an immersion in the water; fourth, remission of sin, that they may be pure in heart; and fifth, the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, five steps or principles, in their regular order, are indispensably necessary in order to be initiated into the gospel or into the kingdom of heaven, or to be adopted into the family of God, and made an heir and a joint heir with Jesus Christ: faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sin, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost.

(Messenger and Advocate, May 1837, A Cheney "The Gospel," Vol 1 Pg.498)

We would also remark, that no man has a right to usurp authority or power over any church, nor has any man power to preside over any church, unless he is solicited and received by the voice of that church to preside. -- Preach the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance toward God, baptism in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, laying on of hands for the gift of the holy Ghost, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement.

BRIGHAM YOUNG, HEBER C. KIMBALL, JOHN E. PAGE,  
WILFORD WOODRUFF, JOHN TAYLOR, GEORGE A. SMITH.

(Times and Seasons, Vol.1, Pg.14)

Letter from Joseph Smith Jr. to Isaac Galland from Liberty Jail, 1839

"And again we believe in the doctrine of faith, and of repentance, and of baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. We believe in the doctrine of repentance, as well as of faith; and in the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins as well as in the doctrine of repentance; and in the doctrine of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, as well as baptism for the remission of sins; and also, in like manner, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. Now all these are the doctrines set forth by the apostles, and if we have any thing to do with one of them, they are all alike precious, and binding on us. "

(Times and Seasons, Vol.1, Pg.54 - Pg.55)

on the evening following I met a still larger number at Mr. Benbows and preached unto them the first principles of the gospel, viz: faith in Christ, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift of the holy ghost by the laying on of hands, after which I administered the ordinance of baptism unto six persons...

Wilford Woodruff

(Times and Seasons, Vol.2, Pg.327)

SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 16TH, 1841.

The indications of the morning promised a beautiful day. At 10 o'clock A. M. a large concourse of the saints assembled on the meeting ground and were addressed by Pres. Joseph Smith, who spoke at considerable length....

He then made some observations on the first principles of the gospel, observing that many of the saints who had come from different States and Nations, had only a very superficial knowledge of these principles, not having heard them fully investigated. He then briefly stated the principles of faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, which were believed by some of the religious societies of the day, but the doctrine of laying on of hands for the gift of the holy ghost, was discarded by them.

(Times and Seasons, Vol.2, Pg.429-430)

The word of the Lord to the citizens of London of every sect and denomination: and to every individual into whose hands it may fall showing forth the plan of Salvation, as laid down in the New Testament: -- namely, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ -- Repentance -- Baptism for the Remission of sins -- and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Presented by two of the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints.

(Times and Seasons, Vol.2, Pg.535)

We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

We believe that these ordinances are 1st, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; 2d, Repentance; 3d, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; 4th, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. (From the famous "Wentworth Letter" from Joseph Smith, summarizing the church's history and principles of the gospel, Times and Seasons, Vol.3, Pg.709)

#### WHAT DO THE MORMONS BELIEVE.

This is a question often asked, and the following sketch from the pen of Elder Adams, the big gun of Mormonism in these parts, will throw some light upon the subject:-

...The first principle of Theology as held by this church, is faith in God the Eternal Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, who verily was crucified for the sins of the world, and who rose from the dead on the third day, and is now seated on the right hand of God as a mediator, and in the Holy Ghost who bears record of them the same to day as yesterday, and forever. The second principle is Repentance towards God; that is, all men who believe in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are required to turn away from their sins, to cease from their EVIL DEEDS, and to come humble before the throne of grace with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. The third principle is Baptism by immersion in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins with the promise of the Holy Ghost, to all who believe and obey the gospel. The fourth principle is the laying on of the hands in the name of Jesus Christ, for the gift of the Holy Ghost. This ordinance is to be administered by the apostles or elders of the church, upon all those who are baptized into the church. Through these several steps of faith and obedience, man is made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and numbered with the children of God. Through this process man is adopted into the church and kingdom of God, as one of his saints; his name is then enrolled in the book of the names of the righteous, and it then becomes his duty to watch, to pray, to deal justly, and to meet together with the saints as oft as circumstances will admit of it; and with them to partake of bread and wine in remembrance of the broken body, and shed blood of Jesus Christ; and in short, to continue faithful unto the end, in all the duties which are enjoined by the law of Christ. Fifth, it is the duty and privilege of the saints thus organized upon the everlasting gospel, to believe in, and enjoy all the gifts, powers and blessings which flow from the Holy Spirit. Such for instance, as the gifts of revelation, prophesy, visions, the ministry of angels, healing the sick by the laying on of hands in the name of Jesus, the working of miracles, and in short all the gifts as mentioned in scripture, or as enjoyed by the ancient saints.

This is a brief outline of the doctrine of this church, and we believe that it is the only system of doctrine which God ever revealed to man in a gospel dispensation, and the only system which can be maintained by the New Testament.

(Times and Seasons, Vol.4, Pg.141)

And as to the celestial glory, all will enter in and possess that kingdom that obey the gospel, and continue in faith in the Lord unto the end of this days. Now, therefore, I say unto you, you must cease preaching your miraculous things, and let the mysteries alone until by and bye. Preach faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; the laying on of the hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost: teaching the necessity of strict obedience unto these principles; reasoning out of the scriptures; proving them unto the people. Cease your schisms and divisions, and your contentions. Humble yourselves as in dust and ashes, lest God should make you an ensample of his wrath unto the surrounding world. Amen.

Hyrum Smith

(Times and Seasons, Vol.5, Pg.474)

I have now answered most of your questions. Those that are not answered will be embraced in what I have answered, and in what few remarks I may yet make. One thing I would mention, before I proceed, concerning what we preach. Faith, we consider, the first principle of the gospel; repentance, the second; baptism, for the remission of sins, the third; and laying on of hands, for the gift of the Holy Ghost, the fourth.

(Messenger and Advocate (Jun 1837) John Taylor, Vol 3 Pg.514)

#### THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

THE resurrection of the just, though one of the greatest promises of the Lord, in the gospel, is, we think, less understood, by the world at large, than many other things revealed to man, by his holy prophets. At present, excepting the church of Christ, which the world calls Mormonites, we do not know of a single sect that holds to, or has faith in the resurrection of the just in the flesh; or, in other words, a church or society that mean and hope, by obeying the commands of God in all things; by repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands; hold out faithful to the end, and after death, rise, when the Redeemer comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory....

W.W. Phelps

(Evening and Morning Star, Dec 1832, William Phelps "Resurrection of the Just," Vol 1 Pg.49)