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Appendix A: Preface to the 1952 RLDS Edition of the Lectures on Faith

Author(s): Israel A. Smith

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In Volume I of our *Church History* we find reference to “Lectures on theology for publication in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which the committee appointed last September now compiling.” These lectures were published as part one of the first edition (1835) of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants and had a place in that book and in some of the earlier editions sponsored by the Reorganized Church.

In that first edition (1835) the members of the First Presidency published a “preface” from which we quote:

The first part of the book will be found to contain a series of Lectures as delivered before a Theological class in this place [Kirtland, Ohio], and in consequence of their embracing the important doctrine of salvation, we have arranged them into the following work.

Through recent years occasional references have been made to these “Lectures on Faith” as they were entitled in the book itself, and we frequently have received inquiries about them.

*This preface, published by The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1952, was written by Israel A. Smith, RLDS President.

To what extent the views expressed in these Lectures are interpretations under inspiration or otherwise of the Prophet Joseph Smith is a matter left to conjecture, because the record is not explicit on that point. What implications may be indulged with respect to the question because those “theological” classes were held as a part of the “school of the prophets” is also left to conjecture.

During the Kirtland occupancy references to the work of the “school of the prophets” were found in the *Messenger and Advocate*, in one of which the Prophet Joseph is quoted as saying:

During the month of January, I was engaged in the school of the elders, and in preparing the Lectures on theology for publication in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which the committee appointed last September [1834] were now compiling.

In view of this statement, and the fact that Joseph Smith was one of the committee on selection and publication that arranged and printed the Lectures as a part of the first Doctrine and Covenants, if we cannot with full assurance hold that the Lectures were his interpretations, we must infer, I believe, that they received his approval or endorsement.

In reprinting these Lectures we do so for their historical value mainly and do not present them with any thought that the church has ever expressly or specifically or by implication endorsed everything in them. Let them be read in the light of the facts as above stated.

Israel A. Smith