

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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namely, that “the glory of God is intelligence” (D&C 93:36).

Equated with “light and truth,” such intelligence by nature “forsake[s] that evil one” (D&C 93:37). It cannot be simply identified with conventional measures of “intelligence” or with the Greek philosophic idea of a pure, immaterial, and self-directed intelligence, a concept that was very influential in medieval theology. For Latter-day Saints, the attainment of INTELLIGENCE must be integrated with the labor of shaping the material world and binding together families and generations, for “the elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33). To the doctrine that “the glory of God is intelligence,” one must add God’s statement to Moses that “this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

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Etienne Gilson’s *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1938) provides an excellent discussion from a Thomistic standpoint. Hugh W. Nibley, in “Educating the Saints” (in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, edited by T. Madsen, Provo, Utah, 1978), cites quotations from former Church President Brigham Young to praise intellectual improvement as essential both to individual salvation and to building the kingdom of God. For an interesting attempt to set forth LDS revelation as harmonious with the evidence of reason, see Parley P. Pratt’s *Key to the Science of Theology* (Salt Lake City, 1973). Though somewhat confined by the categories of nineteenth-century science, Pratt exhibits much of the distinctive potential of Mormon belief for engagement with scientific cosmology. Leo Strauss, in “Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections” (in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, ed. T. Pangle, pp. 147–73, Chicago, 1983), emphasizes the difference between the life of rational inquiry and the life of pious obedience.

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REBAPTISM

Once a person joins The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, circumstances requiring rebaptism are unusual. In current policy and practice, a person would be rebaptized only in two cases: (1) if membership records were irretrievably lost and no other proof of membership could be established; or (2) if an excommunicated person qualified for reentry into the Church. As members partake of the SACRAMENT weekly, repenting of sin, their baptis-

mal COVENANTS are renewed and rebaptism is unnecessary.

One enters into membership in the Church only through BAPTISM by immersion for the REMISSION OF SINS by one holding the appropriate priesthood, regardless of any prior baptism or initiation ordinance. Latter-day scriptures refer to baptism as a NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT. It is the ordinance received by one who accepts the gospel of Jesus Christ, with the promise that proper baptism opens onto the path that leads to eternal life. But baptisms performed outside the framework of the restored priesthood are of no avail for one who wishes to enter in at the strait gate and onto that path (D&C 22:1–2).

Rebaptism is rare among Latter-day Saints in modern times. Historically, however, many members were rebaptized as an act of rededication. This was first practiced in Nauvoo and was continued in the Utah Territory. Rebaptism served as a ritual of recommitment but was not viewed as essential to salvation. Members often sought rebaptism when called to assist in colonization or to participate in one of the UNITED ORDERS. On some occasions, the Saints were rebaptized as they prepared for marriage or entrance into the temple. Early members also rebaptized some of the sick among them as an act of healing. Because of misuse by some Church members, all such practices of rebaptism were discontinued in 1897.

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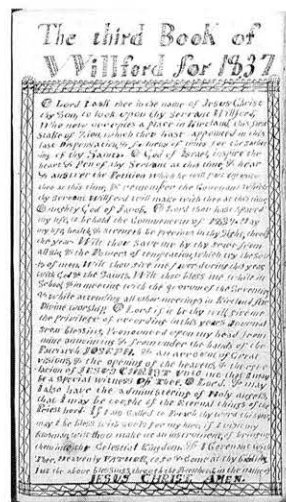
RECORD KEEPING

The keeping of records is done in response to a direct commandment from the Lord and is considered a sacred trust and obligation. “The matter of record keeping is one of the most important duties devolving on the Church,” said Elder Joseph Fielding SMITH (p. 96). Indeed, the very day the LDS Church was organized, the Prophet Joseph SMITH received a revelation: “Behold, there shall be a record kept among you” (D&C 21:1). This requirement apparently has been the same in every DISPENSATION. The Pearl of Great Price states that a BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE was first kept in the ADAMIC LANGUAGE, and Adam’s children were taught to read and write, “having a language that was pure and undefiled”; therefore, it was given unto many “to write by the spirit of inspira-

tion” (Moses 6:5–6). ENOCH, seventh in descent from ADAM and the father of Methuselah, also kept a record and commented upon the divine prototype of it: “For a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God” (Moses 6:46). Abraham continued the practice, affirming that “records of the fathers” had come into his hands and stating, “I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me” (Abr. 1:31). Such records are of three types: (1) accounts of God’s dealings with his children (the scriptures, for example); (2) records of religious ORDINANCES; and (3) histories of nations and peoples, including personal histories.

SCRIPTURES. Prophets have been commanded to write scripture. For example, Moses in his time received a great revelation concerning the creation of heaven and earth with the divine imperative, “Write the words which I speak” (Moses 2:1). Those words are largely preserved in Genesis in the Bible. During Jeremiah’s difficult mission a king desecrated a scroll containing some of God’s revelations and the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, “Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll” (Jer. 36:27–32). Jeremiah and his scribe did so, and those words are in the book of Jeremiah.

Near the time of Jeremiah’s vicissitudes, the Book of Mormon prophet LEHI took his family and fled from Jerusalem into the wilderness in 600 B.C. He was commanded by the Lord to send his sons back to Jerusalem to obtain certain plates of brass that had been kept by his forebears. The plates were engraved with the genealogy of Lehi’s family, the five books of Moses, and writings of the prophets down to Jeremiah (1 Ne. 5:11–14). LAMAN and NEPHI₁, two of the sons of Lehi, tried to get Laban, the keeper of the plates, to give them the plates or to exchange them for certain other treasures, but Laban refused and sought to kill Lehi’s sons. Eventually Laban himself was condemned of the Lord and slain (*see* SWORD OF LABAN), for “it is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief” (1 Ne. 4:12–13). Thus the plates were procured and preserved, and they provided the cultural and spiritual foundation of the Nephite civilization in their promised land in the Western world (Mosiah 1:3–5; DS 2:198).



A page from Wilford Woodruff’s journal (1837). From the earliest days of the Church, members have been exhorted to keep historical and personal records. One of the most prodigious journal writers was Wilford Woodruff, who kept copious journals for over sixty-five years.

After his resurrection at Jerusalem, Jesus Christ appeared to the Nephites and personally emphasized the importance of record keeping. He provided them some of the revelations given to MALACHI. The Lord then commanded NEPHI₃ (the record keeper at the time of Jesus’ advent and a descendent of the first Nephi) to bring out the records kept by the Nephites. He examined them and reminded Nephi that Samuel, a Lamanite prophet, had testified that he (Christ) should arise from the dead and prophesied that at Christ’s resurrection others would also arise and appear to many. Jesus then inquired, “How be it that ye have not written this thing . . . ? And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded” (3 Ne. 23:11, 13).

RELIGIOUS ORDINANCES. Just as the doctrines and commandments from God must be recorded, so also must the responses and actions of the children of God be written. Prophetic scriptures warn that God’s children will be judged out of sacred records kept both on earth and in heaven. Those responsible for keeping the records on earth are charged to make them as accurate as possible. Ordinances such as baptisms, confirmations, ordinations to the priesthood, patriarchal blessings, en-

dowments, and sealings—all should be precisely recorded. Financial records of donations are especially carefully preserved, such as the TITHING record. Earthly and spiritual conduct is to be measured by the things written (Mal. 3:16–18; Rev. 20:12). The Prophet Joseph Smith affirmed, “Our acts are recorded, and at a future day they will be laid before us, and if we should fail to judge right and injure our fellow-beings, they may there, perhaps, condemn us; there they are of great consequence, and to me the consequence appears to be of force, beyond anything which I am able to express” (*TPJS*, p. 69).

To qualify for eternal blessings, each person must come unto God through Christ, make commitments and covenants through certain ordinances, and have them properly recorded. Those who have died without hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ must have the ordinances of salvation and exaltation performed in their behalf (*see* BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD), and record keeping is vital for all such ordinances performed in the Church. Vicarious ordinances can be performed only for individuals properly identified through dependable records. The Church sponsors programs to locate and microfilm family records worldwide and make them available to members and others in their genealogical research and FAMILY HISTORY work. Many members are involved in such research and in vicarious service in the TEMPLES of the Church in behalf of the dead. It is all done in the faith that whatsoever is done by proper authority, in the name of the Lord, truly and faithfully, and with accurate records kept, is established on earth and in heaven, and cannot be annulled, according to the decrees of the great Jehovah (cf. D&C 128:9).

HISTORIES. Church members are counseled to include personal histories among the records they keep. All such records are valuable in the preservation and transmission of culture within each family, and they often have an impact broader than anticipated by those who write them. Nephi, who wrote a history of his people as commanded by God, did anticipate its benefit to others, saying, “I write the things of my soul. . . . For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children” (2 Ne. 4:15).

President Spencer W. KIMBALL offered this challenge: “Get a notebook . . . a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may

quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies” (1975, p. 5). Parents may not see, in the present moment, the potential value of what they write in a personal journal, nor can they predict the response of their descendants to it, but anyone who holds the journal of an ancestor can testify of the joy in possessing it. Minimally, parents should record accurately special events such as dates of birth, marriages, ordinations, and deaths. While it is not necessary to write everything that occurs each day, things of a spiritual nature and other happenings that arouse poignant feelings should be recorded (*see* JOURNALS). One parent recounted with regret, “I remembered [a] . . . spiritual experience I had had years earlier, just before my baptism. I hadn’t written that in my journal, . . . and now I couldn’t remember enough details of the story to retell it. I wanted to share that event with my son—and because I hadn’t recorded it, I could not” (Espinosa, p. 24). President Kimball promised: “As our posterity read of our life’s experiences, they, too, will come to know and love us. And in the glorious day when our families are together in the eternities, we will already be acquainted” (1980, p. 61).

Record keeping has resulted in the creation of sacred scriptures of incalculable value; records of ordinances done and covenants made will have eternal significance; and the histories of nations and individuals have helped throughout the ages in the developments of civilization.

[*See also* Genealogical Society of Utah; Granite Mountain Record Vault; Historians, Church; World Conferences on Records.]

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