

How We Got the Doctrine and Covenants

Lesson 1: Come, Follow Me, Doctrine and Covenants 2025, 3 January

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Introduction

The Doctrine and Covenants is the contemporary revelatory record of Joseph Smith, capturing much of the word of the Lord as he received it. We gain a great appreciation for the beauty of the text and the blessing it is to have it as we gain insight into its origins and developments over time.

The History of the Doctrine and Covenants

It's very helpful when studying a book to know something of its origin. The Doctrine and Covenants has an interesting and long history, with significant changes to the book as little as a few years ago. This lesson will cover the history of the book. For more details, refer to the excellent work *How We Got the Doctrine and Covenants* by Richard Turley and William Slaughter referenced in the "Works Referenced" section below, and the various references in the *Joseph Smith Papers* books and website. See also the Church's excellent scripture history page on <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/about-the-scriptures/history?lang=eng>.

Original Manuscripts and Early Copies

With the Bible, we have no original manuscripts, only copies of copies passed down over the years. With the Book of Mormon, we have part of the original manuscript dictated by Joseph Smith and written by scribes (much of it was destroyed as it lay in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, which leaked water over the forty years it was there).¹ With the revelations and other documents in the Doctrine and Covenants, the story is different, because we have some of the original documents and early copies and some written very soon after the original was recorded. Others were carefully copied into record books for safekeeping.

An example of an original document is the account of the vision in the Kirtland temple recorded in Joseph Smith's journal by Warren Cowdery, who likely got the account from Joseph or his brother, Oliver, and recorded it very soon after the actual event. He wrote it in the third person (as was his habit) but later it was changed to first person and included in Joseph Smith's history.²

Another example is the letter Joseph Smith dictated to his fellow prisoners who acted as scribes, Caleb Baldwin and Alexander McRae, while in Liberty Jail, that later became Sections 121, 122, and 123. This was done on 20 March 1839, with the original letter preserved in Church archives.

In the early days of the Church, many members copied Joseph's revelations by hand, treasuring these latter-day words from heaven. Missionaries carried such copies with them and taught them to interested listeners. In some cases, these copies are the closest to the originals we have, such as Edward Partridge's copy of D&C 4³ or Oliver Cowdery's copy of D&C 5.⁴ In some cases, missionaries without personal copies memorized revelations so they could recite them as needed.

Manuscript Revelation Books

An enthusiasm for the written word led to a desire to publish the Prophet's revelations and other critical Church documents very early in the history of the Church. As early as July 1830, Joseph Smith began collecting his revelations for publication. He was assisted by both Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer in this work,⁵ who were also his scribes for the

¹ *JSP*, R5, xxiv.

² *JSP*, J1, 217-223.

³ *JSP*, D1:9-13.

⁴ *JSP*, D1:13-22.

⁵ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:2.

early work on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, which began at roughly the same time (June 1830). The loose sheet revelations were copied into record books. For many of the revelations in these books, these early copies are the only source, with the originals likely discarded once they were recorded in the books.⁶ There are two such books, called today “Revelation Book 1” and “Revelation Book 2,” with the former labeled “Book of Commandments and Revelations” and the second “Book of Revelations” or “Kirtland Revelations.”

Revelation Book 1 was mostly written by John Whitmer with some by Oliver Cowdery. William W. Phelps and Sidney Rigdon and perhaps others made editing marks. The original cover is lost, probably when the pages were cut from the book during editing. A later cover was added (not attached) that includes the label “Book of Commandments and Revelations.” The book has 208 pages today but had more originally; 18 pages are known to be missing with perhaps more missing from the back (probably blank). It contains about 110 items, most revelations. John Whitmer started the book either in the summer of 1830⁷ or March 1831⁸ and continued recording items in it until he and Oliver Cowdery left for Missouri in late 1831 to use it to print the Book of Commandments. Additional items were later added, up to July 1835. In fact, Revelation Book 1 was kept up to date better than Revelation Book 2, even though it was mostly in Missouri, away from Joseph Smith. It contains 64 of the 65 items in the 1833 Book of Commandments and 95 of the 103 sections in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. It came back to Kirtland in May 1835 and was used to print the Doctrine and Covenants there. It contains 11 revelations not included in either the Book of Commandments or the Doctrine and Covenants, though four of those were later added to the Doctrine and Covenants (Sections 77, 87, 103, and 105). It starts with an introduction apparently composed by John Whitmer: “A Book of Commandments & Revelations of the Lord given to Joseph the Seer & others by the Inspiration of God & gift & power of the Holy Ghost which Beareth Re[c]ord of the Father & Son & Holy Ghost which is one God Infinite & eternal World without end Amen.” The first revelation record is D&C 3.⁹

Revelation Book 2 has 152 leaves, about 12” by 7.5”. On the front is written “Book of Revelatio[ns]” and a later title was pasted on the spine reading “Kirtland Revelations.” It contains a number of revelations, one vision, and one journal-like note. The first entry is “The Vision,” what we today call D&C 76, dated 16 Feb 1832 (though recorded in March 1832 in the book). It was probably started in February 1832 and was used through November 1834. Like Revelation Book 1, it was used as a source document for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The primary scribe is Frederick G. Williams, counselor in the First Presidency and the Prophet’s main scribe during this time.¹⁰ Other entries are made by Orson Hyde, Oliver Cowdery, and Joseph Smith. Editing was done by William W. Phelps and Sidney Rigdon. It includes eight revelations not canonized (so not found in the Doctrine and Covenants).¹¹

After 1835, additional revelations were mostly recorded in Joseph Smith’s journals, making those the main source for these later works.

The Evening and the Morning Star

The first printing of the revelations of Joseph Smith were not in book form, but newspaper. While typesetting the Book of Commandments in Independence, Missouri, William W. Phelps also started a newspaper called *The Evening and the Morning Star*. This was a challenging undertaking as the nearest other print shop was 120 miles east and paper was very hard to come by.¹² When Joseph Smith went to Missouri in the spring of 1832, he brought paper for the Book of Commandments and the newspaper with him. The first issue came out in June 1832 and included what is today D&C 20 and 22 and parts of D&C 45. Though Joseph had given Phelps and Oliver Cowdery the charge to “Make all necessary verbal corrections” to the revelations, Phelps was especially careful to change very few words from Revelation Book 1, mostly adding punctuation and making copyediting corrections.¹³ Some of the revelations printed in the *Star* were not in Revelation Book 1 initially; they came by way of letter or other document from Joseph Smith directly, such as when he visited

⁶ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 12.

⁷ Joseph Smith’s history records that at this time, he and John Whitmer began to “arrange and copy the revelations” Joseph had received. See [JS History, vol. A-1, 50](#).

⁸ John Whitmer was called as Church historian, replacing Oliver Cowdery; see D&C 47:1-3.

⁹ *JSP*, R1, 3-8.

¹⁰ Williams also was the principal scribe for the Joseph Smith Translation from early 1832 to the end in July 1833.

¹¹ *JSP*, R1, 307-311. For those interested in learning more about the uncanonized revelations, see Smoot and Passantino, *Joseph Smith’s Uncanonized Revelations*.

¹² Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 21.

¹³ *JSP*, R1, 8.

Missouri. One of these was D&C 76. In the Revelation Book 2 (probably the oldest copy), Frederick G. Williams had titled it “The Vision.” When John Whitmer copied it later in Revelation Book 1, he didn’t use the title but referred to it as, “A vision of Joseph & Sidney.” In the *Star*, Phelps simply called it “A Vision.”¹⁴

During the fourteen months of the *Star*’s existence in Missouri, they printed twenty-six revelations, nineteen in full and seven in part. They also published articles that quoted from other revelations not otherwise printed. For most members of the early Church, their subscription to the *Star* was the first time they had seen Joseph Smith’s revelations in print.¹⁵

The 1833 Book of Commandments

In May 1831, then 39-year-old William W. Phelps quit his job as editor of three newspapers in New York and moved to Kirtland, Ohio, to offer his services to the Church. He had read the Book of Mormon given him by Parley P. Pratt and been convinced of its truth but had not yet been baptized. The next month, the Prophet received a revelation on Phelps’ behalf, stating that he was called “to do the work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools in this church” (D&C 55:4). He was baptized shortly after that revelation and left with Joseph Smith and others for Missouri.¹⁶ While there, the Lord said that Phelps should stay in Missouri to be “a printer unto the church” (D&C 57:11). Accordingly, he traveled to Cincinnati to purchase a press, brought it to Independence, built a printing house (also his family’s home), and began printing the first Church newspaper, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, as mentioned above.

On 1 November 1831, at a conference of the Church held at the John and Elsa Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, Joseph Smith received a revelation commanding that “the book of my commandments” be published to the “inhabitants of the earth” (D&C 1:6). The Lord designated that revelation as “my preface” (v. 6) to the book. After the revelation was received (which witnesses said was dictated by Joseph line by line in their presence while the Prophet gazed out the window and Sidney Rigdon wrote), Oliver Cowdery asked how many copies should be printed. It was optimistically determined by the conference that 10,000 was the goal,¹⁷ twice as many as the Book of Mormon’s first printing and an amount that would in truth impoverish the small Church. Such was their excitement and commitment to getting the revelations into the hands of Church members. Those attending a subsequent conference voted that the revelations were “worth to the Church the riches of the whole Earth.”¹⁸ (Later, 30 April 1832, the Literary Firm, including Joseph Smith, determined to lower the print run to 3,000 because of the financial situation of the Church,¹⁹ still an ambitious goal.)

Asking those at the conference to seek a testimony of the revelations as the Three Witnesses had done for the Book of Mormon and provide a similar testimony, a discussion arose about the language of the revelations.²⁰ In response, a revelation on 2 November 1831 chided them for “fears in [their] hearts” which was why a Three Witnesses-like experience was not received (D&C 67:3), and gave them a test: pick the “least” among the revelations in the proposed Book of Commandments and the “most wise” man there, and have him attempt to write a similar revelation (D&C 67:6). William E. McLellin, a learned teacher (though “having more learning than sense,” said Joseph Smith²¹), accepted the challenge, but failed to produce. This was testimony enough to many there, and their witness was written and added to the book—five that day and thirteen more later when the manuscripts arrived in Missouri for printing.²² Later, that same testimony was included in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants but with the names of the Twelve Apostles attached instead of the original eighteen (see Introduction, 2013 Doctrine and Covenants).

W. W. Phelps went to work typesetting and printing the book in December 1832. He set the type in book form, under the title *Book of Commandments*. By the summer of 1833 he had printed five signatures, or about 160 pages of the book, nearly fully printed (a signature being a large single piece of paper with sixteen printed pages on each side, ready to fold and cut; no cutting or binding was done because the plan was to send the printed signatures to Kirtland for binding).²³ That took the work up to what we today call D&C 64:36—ending in the middle of the verse. A sixth signature was planned but never printed. Upset by some of the things Phelps had printed in his newspaper, particularly about slavery

¹⁴ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 26; *JSP*, MRB, 415, 243.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Harper, *Making Sense*, 194-195; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 183-184.

¹⁷ [Minute Book 2, 15](#); also, Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 27.

¹⁸ [Minute Book 2, 18](#); also, Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32; *JSP*, MRB, xxvi-xxvii.

¹⁹ [Minute Book 2, 25](#); Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 46.

²⁰ Harper, *Making Sense*, 233.

²¹ [JS History, vol. A-1, 162](#).

²² Harper, *Making Sense*, 236; *JSP*, MRB, xxviii.

²³ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 31-32; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:6.

(Missouri being a pro-slave state), and incensed by inflammatory articles and a tract called “Beware of False Prophets” written by a Reverend Benton Pixley,²⁴ a mob of several hundred gathered and attacked the printing house on Saturday, 20 July 1833, destroying the press, the printed pages, and Phelps’ home.²⁵ A few people jumped in and grabbed some of the pages, including the two Rollins sisters, Mary Elizabeth (14) and Caroline (12).²⁶ These few copies were later bound, thus producing a handful of copies of the Book of Commandments.²⁷ Only about 24 copies survive today, including Mary’s which is at the DeGolyer Library of Southern Methodist University, and a handful owned by the Church, including Wilford Woodruff’s copy where he hand wrote the rest of Section 64 plus other revelations and several hymns on blank pages in the back. Each copy is worth perhaps \$1,000,000.

Newspapers and the 1835 Doctrine & Covenants

With the press destroyed in Missouri, printing efforts shifted to Kirtland, led by Oliver Cowdery and Frederick G. Williams. After Oliver Cowdery purchased a press in New York for \$800, in December 1833, Williams picked up publishing *The Evening and Morning Star* and also started a new publication, *The Latter-Day Saint Messenger and Advocate*. Both publications printed more of the Prophet’s revelations and reprinted some that had previously been printed in the *Star*, with corrections and even additions. Since the organization of the Church had progressed since 1832 and more revelations had been received, especially in relation to consecration, the older revelations were updated to reflect that new light and knowledge. All of this was done under the direction of Joseph Smith. Orson Pratt said that Joseph “was inspired in several instances to write additional sentences and paragraphs to the earlier revelations . . . the Lord did truly give ‘line upon line, here a little and there a little’ the same as He did to a revelation that Jeremiah received, which after being burned by the wicked king of Israel, the Lord revealed over again with great numbers of additional words.”²⁸

On 15 June 1835, Joseph Smith asked the Saints to provide “all the means or money you can” to “print the New Translation [of the Bible, now the Joseph Smith Translation], together with all the revelations which God has been pleased to give us in these last days.”²⁹ Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams worked together to collect, edit, and prepare the revelations for publication.³⁰ In May 1835, W. W. Phelps arrived in Kirtland from Missouri, and was immediately given charge of printing the revelations, assisted by John Whitmer.³¹

Several lectures given during the School for the Elders in the winter of 1834-35 were added to the beginning of the volume.³² Church members considered these theological lectures “doctrine.” Combined with the revelations and commandments, the book received a new title, Doctrine and Covenants. The new book went to press in June 1835. On 17 August 1835, with Joseph Smith out of town, the 284 pages of the book (printed but not yet bound) were presented by Oliver Cowdery to a conference for a sustaining vote. It was declared “as the rule of their faith & practice” and was accepted by each quorum voting in turn, followed by a general vote of all members. Thus, a new canonized book was added to the Latter-day Saint works of scripture.³³

John Whitmer testified that he had been present for many of the revelations “and was satisfied they come from God.” Levi Jackman, representing the high council in Zion (Jackson County) said that he had examined the revelations and “firmly believes them as he does the Book of Mormon or the Bible.” Newel K. Whitney testified that he knew they “were true, for God had testified to him by his holy Spirit, for many of them were given under his roof & in his presence through President Joseph Smith Junr.”³⁴ The Twelve Apostles, most of whom were on missions at the time, included their written testimony of the truth of the book, which is still printed today at the beginning of the Doctrine and Covenants.

²⁴ Allen and Leonard, *The Story*, 84; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:6.

²⁵ *JSP*, MRB, xxix; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 222-224; the mob also attacked the local Mormon store and blacksmith shop and tarred and feathered Edward Partridge and Charles Allen.

²⁶ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 35.

²⁷ Woodford, Robert J., “[The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants](#),” 37; Millet and Jackson, *Studies in Scripture*, 6; Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 35-36.

²⁸ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 41-49; Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:7.

²⁹ *JSP*, D4:345-347.

³⁰ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 51.

³¹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:9.

³² These were each titled “Lecture on Faith,” and the collection was later called “Lectures on Faith,” by which they are still known today.

³³ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 55-56.

³⁴ All three quotes from *JSP*, MRB, xxx.

The printed pages were sent to Cleveland, Ohio, for binding, and by the second week of September 1835, the Doctrine and Covenants was sold to members for the cost of one dollar.³⁵ Many of the printed books sold but not all, perhaps because of the sacrifices made to build the Kirtland temple and the general poverty of the Saints. When the Kirtland print shop burned down in 1838, it probably took the unsold copies with it.³⁶

William W. Phelps spoke for many when in the August 1835 issue of the *Messenger and Advocate*, he wrote:

Since the commencement of this work, even in Missouri, where, just before it was ready to come out, it fell into the hands of a mob, our anxiety and exertions have been unabated, to put [it] in the possession of the Saints, and all who feel a desire to be saved. We have greatly desired that this little sacred volume might go into the world, that the inhabitants thereof might know what the Lord as about to do in the last days. We know that that word of the Lord is sure, and never fails, and, as faithful servants to him, living in the hope of a glorious resurrection with the just when the righteous arise to meet him in the cloud, we bear testimony that the revelations therein are true and faithful.³⁷

1844 – Second Edition

In 1841, a member in Nauvoo, Ebenezer Robinson, who had published the third edition of the Book of Mormon and a Church hymnal, began to set type for a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.³⁸ Seeking to know if having a private party print the book was the right direction, in January 1842, Joseph Smith received a revelation directing that the Quorum of the Twelve be put in charge of printing for the Church.³⁹ After a year delay, typesetting continued, but with proofing help from William W. Phelps, the new edition was ready for printing in June 1844.⁴⁰ Tragically, before it was completed, on 27 June 1844, Joseph and Hyrum Smith were murdered in Carthage Jail and John Taylor was seriously wounded.

When the volume finally came out later that year, it added what is now Section 135, an announcement of Joseph Smith's martyrdom, likely co-authored by Taylor and Willard Richards, who was also in the jail that day but miraculously not wounded. To fit it in without adding more pages, it was set in smaller type between the final section and the index in the back of the book.

This second edition was mostly the same as the 1835 edition,⁴¹ but included seven additional revelations (today Sections 103, 105, 112, 119, 124, 127, and 128) and John Taylor's testimony (135), as indicated above.⁴² Because it was set using stereotypes (permanent type), it could easily be reprinted, and it was in both 1845 and 1846.⁴³

Other Editions

1845

Initially, Church leaders wanted to control printing to presses owned by the Church. When Brigham Young and other members of the Quorum of the Twelve were on a mission in England in 1838-39, Brigham wondered if the Doctrine and Covenants should be printed and shared with the world or just be kept with the Saints? They had seen how some of the revelations were misperceived by their enemies in Missouri, so the question was an important one. He wrote Joseph Smith for advice. It took months, but finally in December 1840, Joseph wrote, encouraging them to print the Book of Mormon, the hymnbook, and the Doctrine and Covenants. However, the answer took so long that most of the Twelve had already left, so nothing happened in the short term.

³⁵ Robin and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:10; Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 56.

³⁶ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 59.

³⁷ *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (August 1835), 170, quoted in Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 59.

³⁸ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 61-62.

³⁹ *JSP*, J2:38; the result was that Joseph Smith and John Taylor were put in charge of writing and editing, with Wilford Woodruff running the business of the print shop, that the Church acquired for \$6,600 from Ebenezer Robinson one week after the revelation. See Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 62.

⁴⁰ *JSP*, R2:640.

⁴¹ The most notable change was the renumbering of sections after 66; the 1835 edition had inadvertently numbered two sections as 66 (*JSP*, R2:641).

⁴² Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 136 n20.

⁴³ *JSP*, R2:641.

Several months after the Prophet's death in June 1844, Wilford Woodruff left for a mission in England to take charge of printing and emigration there. He planned to publish the Doctrine and Covenants as part of that effort. However, in March 1845, he found out that a member of Sidney Rigdon's new church was working on printing it and securing the copyright in England. Woodruff quickly moved ahead with publishing an edition of 3,000 copies in England and was able to secure the copyright for the Church on 7 June 1845.⁴⁴ This version was the main one used for many years even by members in the United States, because as the Saints moved west, it took time to get established there.

Other European editions were published in 1849 and 1854 by Orson Pratt, but these were identical in text to the 1844 Nauvoo edition.⁴⁵

1876

Under the direction of Brigham Young and the First Presidency, apostle Orson Pratt, as Church Historian and Recorder, prepared a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants that included extensive changes, resulting in a book much like what we use today. He added twenty-six more revelations, including one by Brigham Young, many of which he pulled from Church archive materials to which he had access as historian (today Sections 2, 13, 77, 85, 87, 108-118, 120-123, 125-126, 129-132, 136). He put the real names in parentheses after the code names used in the earlier editions to protect the people involved. He changed the order of the revelations and divided them into smaller verses, resulting in the verse numbering we still use today.⁴⁶

1879

Two years after Brigham Young's death, Orson Pratt returned to England and published another version, using the text of the 1876 edition but adding footnotes, cross-references, and a full index. They used a new technology called electrotypes and made the new Doctrine and Covenants match the new Book of Mormon in size, type, and layout, making the two more unified. An extra set of electrotypes plates was brought to Utah, allowing the same version to be published there the next year (1880) as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Church. This version was sustained in General Conference in October 1880 (along with the Pearl of Great Price, becoming the fourth canonized volume of scripture, and President John Taylor as the new Church president). The 1879 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants became the standard edition for more than four decades.⁴⁷

1908

Still using the text of the 1880 edition, the Church added President Wilford Woodruff's declaration on plural marriage (the Manifesto) and a concordance for the 1908 edition.⁴⁸

1921

Following a new edition of the Book of Mormon, President Heber J. Grant asked several apostles who had worked on that project to create a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. This work was led by Elder George F. Richards and supported by Anthony W. Ivins, Joseph Fielding Smith, James E. Talmage, and Melvin J. Ballard. Changes included:

- Revised footnotes
- Two-column text format
- Introductory statements with each section
- An updated index and concordance
- A list of Sections in chronological order
- Changed section numbers from Roman numerals to Arabic, as it is today (1, 2, 3, etc.).
- Most significantly, they removed the seven Lectures on Faith which had been included since 1835 but had never been voted on as scripture.

This edition became the standard text of the Doctrine and Covenants for the next sixty years.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 75-79.

⁴⁵ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 81.

⁴⁶ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:13; Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 81-89.

⁴⁷ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 91-99.

⁴⁸ Woodford, "[The Historical Development](#)," 92-93; Millet and Jackson, *Studies in Scripture*, 16.

⁴⁹ Robinson and Garrett, *A Commentary*, 1:13; Woodford, "[The Historical Development](#)," 93-96; Millet and Jackson, *Studies in Scripture*, 17-18; Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 104-108.

1981

Under the direction of President Spencer W. Kimball and the Scriptures Publication Committee, led by apostles Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, and Bruce R. McConkie, the Church first published an LDS edition of the King James Bible in 1979. Following that, it was determined to do the same effort for the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.⁵⁰

This new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants included:

- Extensive updates to footnotes (new numbering system to match the Bible cross-references to all standard works, and a three-column format)
- Explanatory section headings and verse summaries
- Historical notes, maps and other study aids
- Running heads across each page
- A new explanatory introduction
- The significant addition of sections 137 (vision of the celestial kingdom by Joseph Smith) and 138 (vision of the redemption of the dead by Joseph F. Smith). Both of these revelations were initially added to the Pearl of Great Price in 1976 but then moved to the Doctrine and Covenants in 1979. Also, Official Declaration—2 (June 1978 revelation on the priesthood by Spencer W. Kimball) was added. Some textual changes were made to the revelations, the most notable of which was the removal of ‘code’ names in many of the sections that were first included to protect Church leaders but which had long since lost their usefulness.⁵¹

2013

Taking advantage of new scholarship and learning from the Joseph Smith Papers project, as well as technological advances in digital formats, the Church issued a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants that updated chapter headings, dates, and other factual corrections.⁵² One important change is that the online (on churchofjesuschrist.org) and electronic versions (available through Library app) are updated as needed without waiting for a major print run, so as new information is discovered or corrections on dates or other factors are found, the electronic versions are always the most up-to-date versions available. The Church publishes detailed accounts of what they have changed since 1981.

Works Referenced

For text notes:

RB1 – Revelation Book 1, from *JSP*, MRB:8-405.

EMS – The Evening and the Morning Star, June 1832-May 1833, from *JSP*, R2:202-299.

1833 – Book of Commandments, printed in 1833, from *JSP*, R2:13-193.

1835 – Doctrine and Covenants, printed in 1835, from *JSP*, R2:311-635.

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⁵⁰ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 111.

⁵¹ Turley and Slaughter, *How We Got*, 112-120.

⁵² See a general description of the changes here: https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/english/pdf/scriptures/approved-adjustments_eng.pdf; with a detailed comparison of the 1981 and 2013 editions here: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/english/pdf/scriptures/detailed-summary-of-approved-adjustments.pdf>.

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