



Appendix: Sources Used in This Book

There are a variety of sources from which the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith are drawn, including the *History of the Church*. The following material is provided to help you understand these sources.

Sources of the Prophet's Teachings

The teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith included in this book are drawn from the following types of sources.

Sermons. This book quotes extensively from the discourses given by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The way in which these sermons were recorded is very different from the way sermons were recorded for later Presidents of the Church. Church Presidents who came after Joseph Smith used scribes to record in shorthand their addresses to Church members. When electronic recording devices, such as tape recorders and motion picture film, became available, these were used to record the precise words delivered by Church leaders.

During the lifetime of Joseph Smith, however, shorthand was not in widespread use. Therefore, the sermons he delivered were recorded imprecisely in longhand, generally by scribes, Church leaders, and other Church members. Almost all of Joseph Smith's addresses were given extemporaneously, without prepared texts, so the notes taken by those who listened to him constitute the only record of the discourses. While some lengthy reports of his addresses exist, most are summarizations of the messages delivered by the Prophet. Unfortunately, there is no record for many of the discourses given by Joseph Smith. Of the more than 250 sermons he is known to have delivered, reports or notes taken by scribes or others cover only about 50 of the sermons given.

Articles. Some of the Prophet's teachings in this book are drawn from articles that Joseph Smith designed for publication in Church periodicals, including the *Evening and Morning Star*, *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, *Elders' Journal*, and *Times and Seasons*.¹ Joseph Smith wrote or dictated some material for publication. Also, he frequently directed a scribe, another member of the First Presidency, or another trusted individual to write an article regarding specific matters he wished addressed. The Prophet would then endorse the text, having approved it as representing his thinking, and publish it under his name. For example, this book quotes from several editorials published in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842. During an eight-month period of that year, from February to October, Joseph Smith served as the editor of this periodical and frequently published articles signed "Ed." Though others helped to write many of these articles, the Prophet approved them and published them in his name.

Letters. This book quotes from many letters written or dictated by Joseph Smith. This book also quotes from letters approved and signed by Joseph Smith that were partially or completely prepared by others under his direction.

Journals. The Prophet's journals are a rich source of his teachings. Though his journals are extensive, he actually wrote in them himself infrequently. Instead, he directed that his journals be kept by scribes, under his supervision, allowing him to focus on the pressing responsibilities of his calling. Just prior to his martyrdom he stated, "For the last three years I have a record of all my acts and proceedings, for I have kept several good, faithful, and efficient clerks in constant employ: they have accompanied me everywhere, and carefully kept my history, and they have written down what I have done, where I have been, and what I have said."² The Prophet's scribes recorded journal entries in third person and in first person, as if Joseph Smith himself were writing.

Remembrances of others. This book quotes from the recollections of those who heard the Prophet speak and later recorded his words in their journals and other writings. After the Prophet's death, Church leaders and historians made great efforts to collect and preserve such writings and to record previously unwritten

recollections about the Prophet. Such sources have been used only when the person actually heard the words that he or she recorded.

Scriptures. This book quotes from Joseph Smith's teachings and writings that were later canonized as scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price. Such canonized writings include instructions he gave on doctrinal subjects, visions he recorded, and letters and other documents he wrote. This book quotes from these canonized teachings and writings when they provide insight into doctrines presented in this book.

History of the Church

Many of the Prophet Joseph Smith's sermons and writings included in this book are quoted from the *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, which is referred to in this book as the *History of the Church*.³ The first six volumes of the *History of the Church* present the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from its beginnings until the death of Joseph Smith. This history primarily describes events and experiences connected with the life and ministry of Joseph Smith. It is one of the most important sources of historical information about the Prophet's life and teachings and about the development of the early Church.

Joseph Smith began preparing the history that ultimately became the *History of the Church* in the spring of 1838 to counter false reports being published in newspapers and elsewhere. The completion of his history was a subject of great concern to him. In 1843 he said, "There are but few subjects that I have felt a greater anxiety about than my history, which has been a very difficult task."⁴

The *History of the Church* is based on the Prophet's recollections, journals, and other personal records. It presents a daily narrative of the Prophet's activities and significant events in Church history. It also includes reports of the Prophet's discourses, copies of revelations he received, articles from Church periodicals, minutes of conferences, and other documents.

Joseph Smith remained involved in preparing and reviewing his history until his death. However, he directed that most of the work be done by others, under his supervision. Reasons for this include his lifelong preference for speaking or dictating his thoughts, rather than writing them down, and the constant demands of his ministry. The Prophet's history for July 5, 1839, records, "I was dictating history, I say dictating, for I seldom use the pen myself."⁵

By June 1844 the history was written through August 5, 1838. In Carthage Jail, shortly before he died, the Prophet charged Elder Willard Richards, his chief scribe at that time, to continue the plan of compiling the history.⁶ Elder Richards and other men who had been close to the Prophet continued the history as directed until Elder Richards's death in 1854. Then the work of compiling the history was done or directed primarily by Elder George A. Smith, a cousin and close friend of the Prophet, who was ordained an Apostle in 1839 and became Church Historian in 1854. Many others who worked in the Church Historian's Office also assisted with the compilation.

One important task of the compilers of the *History of the Church* was editing and preparing original documents for inclusion in the history. Their work involved making light editorial revisions to almost all original documents included in the *History of the Church*. The compilers corrected misspelled words and standardized punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Additionally, in some cases, the compilers of the history made other changes to original documents. These changes can be divided into three categories:

1. *Combining accounts.* Many of Joseph Smith's discourses were recorded by more than one observer. In some instances, the compilers of the *History of the Church* combined two or more accounts of the same discourse into a single version.
2. *Changing accounts from third person to first person.* Many accounts of the Prophet's teachings and activities were recorded in third person. These accounts were written primarily by his scribes, but some accounts were taken from the writings of others who knew the Prophet and from newspaper articles.

As the compilers of the *History of the Church* worked, they wrote the history in the first person, as if the Prophet were writing. This required that some third-person accounts be changed into first-person accounts.

3. *Adding or changing words or phrases.* Many of the original notes taken of the Prophet's sermons are brief, incomplete, and disconnected. In some of these instances, Church historians reconstructed the Prophet's sermons based on the available records, drawing also upon their memories and experiences with the Prophet. This work sometimes involved adding or changing words or phrases to fill in gaps and clarify meaning.

All of the compiling and writing of the *History of the Church* was done under apostolic supervision and review. The history was read to members of the First Presidency, including President Brigham Young, and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, some of whom had been intimately acquainted with the Prophet and had heard the original addresses. These leaders approved the manuscript for publication as the history of the Church for the period of time it covers.

In August 1856 the history was completed through the time of Joseph Smith's death. The history was published in serial form in Church periodicals in the 19th century as the "History of Joseph Smith."⁷ Later, the history was edited by Elder B. H. Roberts, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, and was published between 1902 and 1912 in six volumes. It was titled *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.

The men who compiled the history attested to the accuracy of the work. Elder George A. Smith said: "The greatest care has been taken to convey the ideas in the Prophet's style as near as possible; and in no case has the sentiment been varied that I know of, as I heard the most of his discourses myself, was on the most intimate terms with him, have retained a most vivid recollection of his teachings, and was well acquainted with his principles and motives."⁸

Elder George A. Smith and Elder Wilford Woodruff declared: "The History of Joseph Smith is now before the world, and we are satisfied that a history more correct in its details than this,

was never published. To have it strictly correct, the greatest possible pains have been taken by the historians and clerks engaged in the work. They were eye and ear witnesses of nearly all the transactions recorded in this history, most of which were reported as they transpired, and, where they were not personally present, they have had access to those who were. Moreover, since the death of the Prophet Joseph, the History has been carefully revised under the strict inspection of President Brigham Young, and approved of by him.

“We, therefore, hereby bear our testimony to all the world, unto whom these words shall come, that the History of Joseph Smith is true, and is one of the most authentic histories ever written.”⁹

In this book, the Prophet Joseph Smith’s discourses and writings are quoted from the *History of the Church* unless the original discourse or writing was not included in it. When this book quotes from the *History of the Church*, the endnotes include information about the original discourse or writing, including the names of those who recorded the Prophet’s sermons. The endnotes also indicate when the compilers of the *History of the Church* drew upon their memories and experiences with Joseph Smith to change words or add words or phrases to the original report. Such additions or changes are noted only when they affect the meaning of the quotation. Minor editing changes are not noted.

The book titled Joseph Smith—History, as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, is an excerpt from the first five chapters of the first volume of the *History of the Church*.

Notes

1. The *Evening and Morning Star* was published in Independence, Missouri, from 1832 to 1833, and in Kirtland, Ohio, from 1833 to 1834. The *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* was published in Kirtland from 1834 to 1837. The *Elders’ Journal* was published in Kirtland in 1837, and in Far West, Missouri, in 1838. The *Times and Seasons* was published in Nauvoo, Illinois, from 1839 to 1846.
2. *History of the Church*, 6:409; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on May 26, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Thomas Bullock.
3. The *History of the Church* has been referred to as the *Documentary History of the Church*.

4. *History of the Church*, 6:66; from “History of the Church” (manuscript), book E-1, p. 1768, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
5. *History of the Church*, 4:1; from “History of the Church” (manuscript), book C-1, p. 963, Church Archives.
6. See letter from George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff, Apr. 21, 1856, Salt Lake City, Utah; in *Historical Record Book*, 1843–74, p. 219, Church Archives.
7. The “History of Joseph Smith” was published in the *Times and Seasons* from Mar. 15, 1842, to Feb. 15, 1846. It was continued in the *Deseret News* from Nov. 15, 1851, to Jan. 20, 1858. It was reprinted in the *Millennial Star* from June 1842 to May 1845; and from Apr. 15, 1852, to May 2, 1863.
8. Letter from George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff, Apr. 21, 1856, Salt Lake City, Utah; in *Historical Record Book*, 1843–74, p. 218, Church Archives.
9. George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff, *Deseret News*, Jan. 20, 1858, p. 363; paragraph divisions altered.