

Doctrine and Covenants Editions

Taken from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*
(1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992),
Some very minor changes made by this compiler

The Doctrine and Covenants contains revelations from God as given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and later Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and includes other inspired writings and doctrinal declarations accepted as scripture by the Latter-day Saints. The first edition appeared in 1835. Later editions incorporated additional revelations and reference aids. The Doctrine and Covenants has been translated into many languages, though the English edition is the official version.

By the fall of 1831, Joseph Smith had recorded seventy or more revelations, most of which contained instructions to Church members. In a special conference held November 1, 1831, in Hiram, Ohio, the Church decided to publish a selection of these revelations, or "commandments." A new revelation was received on that occasion as "my preface unto the book of my commandments," from which the title of the 1833 compilation, the **Book of Commandments**, may have been taken (D&C 1:6). This publication was never completed; a mob destroyed the Independence, Missouri, press and all but about a hundred unfinished copies in July 1833. These few copies of the Book of Commandments were circulated within the Church and were often called the "Book of Covenants," in reference to the lead section, which had circulated widely in handwritten versions as "The Articles and Covenants of the Church." Received the day the Church was organized, this revelation is now section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

THE 1835 EDITION

Shortly after the unsuccessful 1833 effort to print the Book of Commandments was stopped, plans were made to publish the revelations in Kirtland, Ohio. Renamed the *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, the book was presented to, and accepted by, the members of the Church in an August 1835 conference as the word of God. The change in name to Doctrine and Covenants reflected a change in content. Unlike the Book of Commandments, which contained revelations only, the Doctrine and Covenants was divided into two parts. The new first part consisted of seven theological presentations now known as the Lectures on Faith but then titled "On the Doctrine of the Church of the Latter Day Saints." The part including the revelations published previously, the original preface, and a number of new revelations not in the 1833 compilation, were titled "Part Second, Covenants and Commandments." The title of the Doctrine and Covenants reflects the subtitles of these two parts.

In preparing the 1835 edition, Joseph Smith and a committee appointed to the task on September 24, 1834 (*HC* 2:165, 243-44) edited the revelations that had formerly appeared in the Book of Commandments. They corrected scribal and printing errors and occasionally clarified the text. They added explanations of the duties of officers that were new in the Church organization since the earlier revelations were received. They also combined some of the revelations to simplify publication and corrected grammatical problems.

The 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants contained 103 sections, though two sections were inadvertently numbered 66, so that the last one's number was printed 102. Sections 1-100 were revelations to Joseph Smith. Section 101 prescribed practices for marriage. Section 102 stated the appropriate relationship of the Church to governments. These two sections were not revelations but

were included as expressions of belief of the Church at that time. Oliver Cowdery (and possibly W. W. Phelps) wrote them, probably in response to critics of the doctrines and activities of the Church. Although Joseph Smith subsequently endorsed the statement on government, there is evidence that he opposed including the statement on marriage from the beginning, and it was eventually removed (in the 1876 Edition).

THE 1844 NAUVOO EDITION

By 1840 the Church needed a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The 1835 edition had sold out, and Joseph Smith had received additional revelations. The new edition appeared in Nauvoo shortly after the death of Joseph Smith in 1844. The eight newly added revelations are numbered sections 103, 105, 112, 119, 124, 127, 128, and 135 in the 1981 edition. The metal printing plates from the 1844 edition were used in the 1845 and 1846 reprintings.

THE 1845 LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND, EDITION

In 1847, Brigham Young led the members of the Church to the Salt Lake Valley, where they had no facilities to print books. In 1845 Wilford Woodruff printed 3,000 copies of the Doctrine and Covenants in England for the growing LDS population in the British Isles. This edition included the new revelations published in the 1844 Nauvoo edition. Other Church representatives arranged reprintings in England in 1849, 1852, 1854, 1866, and 1869 and shipped most of the 1854 printing to Salt Lake City because of very limited facilities for printing there.

THE 1876 EDITION

In 1876 Orson Pratt, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Church historian, acting under the direction of President Brigham Young, prepared a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in Salt Lake City. He divided each revelation into verses and added twenty-six revelations not previously included. They are now sections 2, 13, 77, 85, 87, 108-11, 113-18, 120-23, 125, 126, 129-32, and 136. Since section 132 contained information about plural marriage inconsistent with the 1835 article on marriage, the latter was eliminated.

THE 1879 EDITION

Three years later, Orson Pratt published another edition in England in which he added footnotes to the text. He also requested permission from President John Taylor to drop the "Lectures on Faith," but was instructed that, though the time might come to do this, it was not yet. This edition was published in 1879 in England and in 1880 in Salt Lake City from duplicate plates. President George Q. Cannon, a counselor in the First Presidency, presented this edition to the members of the Church in a fiftieth jubilee conference held in **October 1880**; they accepted the book as scripture.

From 1880 to 1920 the Church published at least twenty-eight printings from this edition. Beginning in 1908, each printing included a concordance and excerpts from President of the Church Wilford Woodruff's "Manifesto," an official declaration ending plural marriage.

THE 1921 EDITION

In 1920, President Heber J. Grant assigned a committee of six members of the Council of the Twelve to prepare a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The major change in the 1921 edition was the removal of the "Lectures on Faith," and other articles which were not considered to be revelations. The committee also revised the footnotes and divided the pages into double columns. Even though the name of the collection had been changed in the 1835 edition to signal the addition of the "Lectures on Faith," it was not changed back when the lectures were deleted. The 1921 edition was the standard until 1981.

THE 1981 EDITION

A committee appointed by the First Presidency of the Church directed the publication of a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1981. New features included completely revised footnotes and rewritten introductory headings for each section. Two additional sections and a second official declaration were also incorporated. Section 137 is a portion of a vision of the Celestial Kingdom given to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple on January 21, 1836. Section 138 is a vision about the redemption of the dead given to Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church, in 1918. Official Declaration-2 is the 1978 announcement by the First Presidency that all worthy male members of the Church can be ordained to the priesthood.