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EDITORIAL

David M. Morris

Editor

Once again, it is with great pleasure that we publish another issue of the *International Journal of Mormon Studies* (IJMS). This issue brings together a combination of scholars from different parts of the world and academic disciplines. Drawn from Mormon and non-Mormon perspectives, the articles found herein provide interesting insights to Mormonism globally, encouraging further attention and examination. Following on from the successful *European Mormon Studies Association* (EMSA) conference in Torino, Italy (2009), we have published here many of those papers that were presented during that conference. We are grateful for the submissions and support.

Like all aspects of modern life, and the worldwide recession, financial constraints have not left a journal as this and organisations such as EMSA untouched, and we are particularly grateful to those who have supported us financially, who no doubt would prefer that we do not mention them by name. We are, nevertheless, grateful. As editor I am particularly indebted for the efforts of Kim Östman and Zachary Jones who not only bring a professional and academic eye to this journal, but also selflessly give of their time and talents. We also extend our appreciation to those who blind peer reviewed the articles and took time to review publications that have an international flavour. We hope as an editorial board that you will enjoy the contents of this issue.

FATHER, JESUS AND LUCIFER IN PRE-MORTAL COUNCIL¹

Douglas J. Davies

How does one establishment deal with another establishment? Does it concede rank to others or assert rank over them? Much depends, of course, on the nature of the 'establishment' concerned, as to whether it exists at the apex of the power-base of a society or merely as a subsidiary institution, and much depends on the stage of development of institutions as they relate to each other as, just now, in the relationship between nation states within the European Union. In England, currently, the very 'establishment' of Parliament, for example, has been seriously depleted in popular opinion because of the disclosure of expenses of members of Parliament, and this following shortly after the depletion of the popular status of bankers and financiers following the global 2008-2009 credit-crunch. Or, again, the Roman Catholic Church has, for example, suffered as an 'establishment' within Ireland and the USA following issues of sexual wrongdoings on the part of some priests. Other issues surround the relationship between religious institutions as 'establishments' and their wider social environments as with the Church of England, as part of the English 'establishment', which seems to be perilously poised around a variety of issues concerning sexuality, gender, ordination, and religious authority. Much could also be said about medical 'establishments' and popular concerns over euthanasia and assisted suicide. In all these cases the issue of context is of paramount importance.

So, Mormonism in Britain for example, despite having been a religious group in Britain for a hundred and seventy or so years, can hardly be regarded even as a player in the field of religious 'establishments', an assertion that needs to be understood against a cultural background in which the Church of England's formal status as the established church in England is now even questioned while Roman Catholic identity still stands uncertainly. In today's world the churches play off each other and also against other religions, especially Islam, in terms of social relevance and potential political usefulness, reminding us that

¹ Plenary Paper at *European Mormon Studies Association (EMSA) 2009 Conference*, Turin. I thank EMSA for their invitation to deliver this paper, also The Huntington Library, California, for a Fellowship, and The British Academy for valuable research support.

political power in the formal as well as informal sense remains a dominant factor in notions of 'establishment'. Behind all such establishment-attitudes towards others and of others towards establishments lie sets of values that help constitute what sociologist Max Weber described as an 'orientation to the world', the way a group's ideas and actions, doctrines and ethics, interplayed in the face of social realities.²

Apostasy, betrayal and obedience

In this paper I highlight just one cluster of ideas and their related actions that influenced Mormonism's orientation to the world in the nineteenth century and which still retains a degree of significance today, viz., apostasy, betrayal, and obedient activity. Here much could, and probably should, be said describing Mormonism's rise from sectarian status to an American sub-culture and established church in some American contexts and to its status in some other countries as a questionable sect or even a 'cult' in the popular sense of that word. Its status in all those contexts influences its relationship to associated 'establishments' and theirs to it. Consideration could also be given to how bureaucratic USA-Mormonism with its sense of assured American status seeks to operate in other countries where its endemic establishment status is low or non-existent.

In this paper, however, I focus only on the topic of apostasy as an element within nineteenth-century Mormonism's orientation to the world, approaching it through the doctrinal narrative-myths of the Council in Heaven and of group-experience on earth. I do not mean to argue that doctrine creates ethics in a linear, simple, cause-effect fashion, but I do think they are important as mutually creative forces. Moreover, I think that doctrinal ideas flourish or die depending upon the way they reflect people's real-life situations; and to speak of such human experience is to emphasise the importance of the emotional dimension of life and its place in scholarly studies of religion.³

The Heavenly Prelude

In Mormon thought the important role of abstract 'principles' is often encountered in the personified forms of 'relations' between peo-

² Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Methuen, [1922] 1963), p. 149.

³ E.g. John Corrigan, (ed.) *Religion and Emotion, Approaches and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2008.

ple.⁴ This was so in early Mormonism in the image of the opposition between Jesus and Lucifer in the Latter-day Saint (LDS) version of a pre-mortal Council in Heaven that became the basis for an analysis of the notions of betrayal and apostasy, concepts that helped frame the issue of evil in LDS thought. This perspective influenced earlier Mormonism's attitude towards 'Gentile' political-religious power-centres depicted as Evil Babylon set against holy Zion. Apostasy, indeed the Great Apostasy, deemed to have existed from the Christian sub-apostolic period combined with a degree of LDS millenarian Adventism to engender a negative view of worldly powers, including those of Great Britain and its Empire. The opposition over the plan of salvation that emerged between Jesus and Lucifer in heaven became the basis for discussing the idea of evil on earth, not least in cases of betrayal and apostasy. And here I deploy both these terms because I see a strong family resemblance between them, with betrayal applying to interpersonal relationships and apostasy to the relationship of an individual with an institution. Although apostasy does, primarily, refer to the dynamics of 'establishment' it also raises its head more personally in cases where a spy is often referred to as one who 'betrays his country'. There the institutional and personal overlap. In the well-known religious context of Jesus, however, we speak of him as betrayed by individuals, indeed by his friends and disciples. In terms of the history and sociology of religion, however, there was no apostasy because he had no church organization as such.⁵

I appreciate, of course, that an LDS reading of Jesus and his disciples as a church would see this differently on the basis of faith that Jesus had founded a church amongst his followers. Again, from a sociological perspective, Joseph Smith was in a different position from Jesus, for he had founded a church and could be both betrayed as an individual by other individuals known to him and could also encounter apostasy in those who renounced his church.

Mormonism's own theological reflection on apostasy on earth seems to begin with the idea of Satan as the persecutor of Christ's church. In the *Doctrine and Covenants* for example, the motif of Babylon is invoked within Joseph's enhanced interpretation of the biblical parable of the

⁴ Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 6.

⁵ But see, for example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer ([1949] 1955:47-54) for a Protestant reflection on the guilt of apostasy within the faithful believer.

sower, the wheat and the tares.⁶ Interestingly, the Index to the *Book of Mormon* and the *Doctrine and Covenants* applies the word apostasy to numerous contexts in which the word does not itself occur but which depict all sorts of disobedient spiritual hard-heartedness, perhaps the classic case being 2 Nephi 28 with its wide-spread account of the devil. Its editorial chapter-synopsis uses the word Apostasy despite its textual absence, thus indicating the word's status as a dominant verbal symbol within the LDS worldview of a Great Apostasy upon earth.

Satan, himself, appears at various points to oppose God's obedient servants as, for example, just after Moses receives his encounter with God, in which he not only beheld the divine glory but was, himself, 'transfigured before him':⁷ Satan appears and tempts him. This reflects the biblical text of Jesus' temptations after his baptism but with the major exception that after a discourse in which he ponders his own abilities to discern the evil Satan, Moses commands Satan to 'depart hence' at which point there ensues a distinctive form of spiritual conflict. Satan cries with a loud voice and 'ranted upon the earth', claiming that he is the Only Begotten and that he should be worshipped. Amidst this onslaught Moses comes to 'fear exceedingly' and sees the 'bitterness of hell'. The battle of good and evil is well and truly joined but Moses calls upon God and receives strength to command Satan's departure. Now Satan begins to tremble and Moses, strengthened still further, invokes the name of the true 'Only Begotten' and commands Satan to depart, which he does.⁸

This encounter of good and evil by an LDS Moses reflects Joseph's account of his own engagement with evil told in the First Vision when he is overcome by a power 'of astonishing influence' that prevented him from speaking, when a 'thick darkness gathered around him' and he felt as though he 'were doomed to sudden destruction' at the hands not of some 'imaginary' entity but of 'the power of some actual being from the unseen world' possessing a power Joseph had 'never felt before in any being'.⁹ An 1835 account has Joseph referring to his

⁶ *Doctrine and Covenants*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), Section 86:3.

⁷ *Pearl of Great Price*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), Moses 1:11.

⁸ Moses 1:21-23. The 'Only Begotten' in this context would seem to refer to the still awaited Christ.

⁹ *Joseph Smith History* 1:15-16.

tongue feeling swollen in his mouth preventing speech and also to a noise as of someone walking behind him.¹⁰

My inclination in this paper is to see the source of that evil power inhering both in the rebellious narcissism of Lucifer in the pre-mortal council's deliberations over the plan of salvation and also in his subsequent fall as Satan. This origin of Satan, grounded in his disobedient agency, provides one clear focus on the issue of evil in LDS thought. Here I specifically avoid the phrase 'the problem of evil' because LDS argumentation does not follow the paths of theodicy much frequented by many other Christian traditions that have practically conventionalised the phrase. This argument is not, I think, irrelevant to the very nature of the Mormon 'establishment', of how it related historically to dissidents of various kinds and to other 'establishments'. As we will see, this orientation to the world was even applied by LDS to America itself following Joseph's death, interpreted as a murderous lynching.

As a complementary comment on my theme let me recall that, at the first EMSA conference in England I suggested that the Plan of Salvation occupied a position in LDS thought which mirrored the role of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in historical Christianity. At the second conference in Finland I developed that further by bringing this Heavenly Council alongside the two narratives of Christ in Gethsemane and of Joseph Smith's First Vision to argue that, together, these formed the core theological charter for LDS theology. Now I emphasise the point that Lucifer-Satan-Evil appears in all three of these paradigmatic scenes of Mormonism, interpreting that appearance, its intentions and actions in terms of apostasy, and seeing that act as a key idiom of evil within LDS thought. To put this suggestion at its sharpest we might say that the problem of evil in Mormonism is the problem of apostasy. Theologically, this made the ethical concern over persons and their choices, not least their 'activity' within the institutional establishment that is set against Satan, of prime importance. Lucifer, whose name originally denotes being a 'light-bearer', a bright 'son of the morning' then, became Satan, the personified image of evil, the prime apostate.¹¹ As an important aside, here, I note that in my previous conference papers I did not dwell upon any ritual expression of these Heavenly Council motifs, nor will I

¹⁰ Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1980), p. 159. Cf. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by his Mother* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996), p. 105.

¹¹ Isaiah 14:12.

do so today, but rather consider public texts that reveal paradigmatic scenes that interplay and depend upon each other in the matrix-building process of LDS theology.

Case Study

As we move to consider some basic contexts of apostasy I reiterate the previous mention of emotions, for I wish to stress that evil is felt, experienced and encountered, it seldom remains only as a theological abstraction. The emotional root of fear, in particular, as well as driving that sense of despair that brings fear to bear on the very hope of survival often underlies a sense of evil. With this personal arena in mind I recall last year's conference where I cited Heber C. Kimball, shortly after landing on his crucial first mission to England in 1837–38, reporting attacks from Satan's evil forces. Kimball, and here we should recall him as one claimed as 'the first Latter-day Saint in Europe', encountered the devil and his forces very early after his arrival.¹² While it would be too great a stretch of rhetoric to identify these demonic forces as the European 'Establishment' there is some point in interpreting such a reported encounter in terms of 'spiritual politics'. Kimball's emotions were stirred by evil in the form of devilish possession. Later, back in the USA, Joseph explained to him that it was precisely because he was announcing the gospel in this new place that he was so attacked.

Certainly, it is important to note in this perceived onslaught that it was in the name of Jesus that the Apostle opposed Satan and evil spirits. Theologically speaking this echoed the charter narrative of the Heavenly Council in which Jesus and Lucifer play major roles. Once they had taken their separate paths it was inevitable that opposition would ensue between them, an opposition that took the LDS notion that there is an inevitable opposition in all things into a sharply personal, interpersonal, direction that would include the apostate arena.¹³ To mention this notion, indeed this principle of opposition, is to highlight the importance of chapter two in the second Book of Nephi in which these themes of good, evil, and agency are enunciated, where there is reference to that 'angel of God' who 'had fallen from heaven' to 'become a devil'.¹⁴ In that

¹² Edward L. Kimball, 'Heber C. Kimball', in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, (Ed.) Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), p. 782.

¹³ *Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 2 Nephi 2:11.

¹⁴ 2 Nephi 2:17.

chapter an opposition is also set up between the emotions of joy and misery. Misery as the lot of the fallen angel, indeed it was to be 'misery for ever' that pressed him to seek 'the misery of all mankind'.¹⁵ By an important contrast, the 'fall' of Adam and Eve—grounded in their agency, the capacity given them by God to act for themselves—still left them with their agency intact such that they are 'free to choose liberty and eternal life through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to ... the power of the devil'. But as that well-known chapter indicates, the one key outcome of Adam's fall was that people 'might have joy'. Here, then, the idiom of fall and salvation is played out in terms of opposition of goal, of freedom of choice amongst the fallen, all contextualized in the emotions of destiny: of misery and joy. Tellingly, the Garden of Eden is depicted as a place of 'innocence', a state devoid both of 'joy' and of 'misery', a condition in which they also did 'no good'. Eden is emotionless! Theologically speaking, it is interesting to see at that point of an eternally enduring impending Eden, devoid of good action, of joy and of misery, the verse: 'But behold all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things' (v. 24). In one sense it is a text that describes nothing, leaving agency with Adam and Eve, yet it indicates a grand narrative sustained by wisdom and knowledge. This, of course, is but one creative development of the ancient and developing Jewish-Christian tradition of fallen angels and their engagement with humanity.¹⁶

The Temptations of Joseph

Joseph Smith, in turn, is also caught up in this grand narrative in ways that, similarly, include experience of evil. Several texts tell of his encounters as when Oliver Cowdery describes a 'Remarkable Vision' that combines experiences dated September 21 and 22, 1823, involving the angelic visitor coming first to Joseph's own room and subsequently confronting him en route to find the hidden plates at Cumorah. Pub-

¹⁵ 2 Nephi 2:18.

¹⁶ See Richard Godber, *The Devil's Dominion, Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan, A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Blake T. Ostler *Exploring Mormon Thought: of God and Gods*, vol. 3. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2008); Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

lished in successive numbers of *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*,¹⁷ this told how Joseph was prevented by an angel from gaining the plates because his thoughts were focused more on his own potential for gain than on the divine purpose. When in the presence of divine glory Joseph beholds 'the prince of darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates' with the outcome of being able, ever after, to know the opposition of 'the two powers', the forces of good and evil.¹⁸ These accounts give a combined sense of coterminous temptation, warning, and spiritual education. Cowdery's official *Millennial Star* account furnishes an unvarnished description of Joseph's wilfulness in seeking gain and in forgetting the high commission received from the angelic messenger. He writes, 'do not understand me to attach blame to our brother: he was young and his mind easily turned from correct principles'. This was, indeed, a period of spiritual education, 'of solemn instruction from the heavenly messenger': Cowdery describes how Joseph received a 'shock ... upon his system, by an invisible power, which deprived him, in a measure, of his natural strength'.¹⁹ As Joseph gives himself to prayer the darkness is dispelled. Here, the traditional Protestant motifs of obedience to God, of sinful selfishness, and of forgiveness are combined with motifs of darkness and light to emphasize the duality of the 'two powers' of good and evil. What is, perhaps, significant here is the way an entire mode of discourse has developed around the motifs of divine and satanic influence.

These episodes resemble Christ's wilderness temptations whose Synoptic Gospel accounts²⁰ begin with Mark's dramatic two verses on the Spirit driving Jesus into the wilderness with the wild beasts following his baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, on how he was tempted over forty days by Satan, and on how 'the angels ministered to him'.²¹ Luke includes dialogues between Jesus and the Devil in temptations to quell

¹⁷ *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* (hereafter *Millennial Star*), vol. 1, no. 6, p. 150. Also *ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 7, p. 175.

¹⁸ Oliver Cowdery, *Letters by Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps on the Origin of the Book of Mormon and the Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (Liverpool: Thomas Ward and John Cairns, 1844), p. 41.

¹⁹ *Millennial Star*, vol. 1, no. 7, p. 175-76.

²⁰ Unlike the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, John stresses John the Baptist as herald of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus as the Lamb of God and the Son of God. He does not actually say that Jesus was baptized nor give any account of any wilderness temptations (John 1:19-35).

²¹ Mark 1:12-13.

hunger, gain fame and test God's protective power, after which the devil 'departed from him until an opportune time'.²² Matthew much resembles Luke.²³ While there is an obvious difference between these temptations, in which Jesus does not but Joseph does sin in some way by experiencing 'temptation to fame and fortune' there remains a similarity in their depiction of a personalized encounter of good and evil. Someone chosen by God is presented with choices. Jesus remained untouched while Joseph stumbles but without ultimately falling, for he 'looked to the Lord in prayer and as he prayed darkness began to disperse from his mind and his soul was lit up as it was the evening before', when the angel also visited him, 'and he was filled by the Holy Spirit'.²⁴

USA Apostasy

To these person-focused contexts we might add the public world, especially Mormonism's early experience of the 'establishment' in the sense of USA Federal law as a frame for Joseph's death interpreted as a kind of sacrifice or, more especially as a martyrdom. Here I use this motif of Joseph's martyr-sacrifice as its own example of apostasy, albeit using that word in an expanded and particular sense of what I will call 'cultural apostasy'. For, from the contemporary LDS perspective, it is possible to see the American social context of the mid-late 1840s as a kind of cultural apostasy – in the sense of a renunciation of responsibility on the part of proper authority. The killing of Joseph whilst in legal custody was understood as an abdication of justice. The failure of civil society to give early Mormons their legal due and the protection of the State under the law is well expressed, for example, in one of Eliza Snow's poems as she opposes the celebration of American Independence, and here we will not ignore the emotional indexes of her discourse.

Shall we commemorate the day
Whose genial influence has pass'd o'er?
Shall we our hearts' best tribute pay
Where heart and feeling are no more?

Shall we commemorate the day,
With freedom's ensign waving high,

²² Luke 4:1–13.

²³ Matthew 4:1–11.

²⁴ Oliver Cowdery's account of the event is given in *Millennial Star*, vol. 1, no. 7, p. 176.

Whose blood–stained banner’s furled away,
Whose rights and freedoms have gone by?

It is heart–rending mockery!
I’d sooner laugh midst writhing pain,
Than chant the song of liberty
Beneath oppression’s galling chain!

Columbia’s glory is a theme
That with our life’s warm pulses grew;
But ah! She’s flown–and like a dream
The ghost is fluttering in our view!

Eliza, a plural wife of Joseph, and now his earthly widow, speaks of freedom’s dying groans, a death knell as protection faints, justice cowers, and the country’s victor–wreath fades. Her final recourse is to God and certainly not to Federal authorities:

Better implore His aid divine,
Whose arm can make his people free,
Than decorate the hollow shrine
Of our departed liberty!

In what was regularly described as ‘mobocracy’, we are presented with the wider sense of betrayal of liberty, of a kind of ‘cultural apostasy’. And that negative evaluation was accentuated whenever Joseph’s death was invoked as martyrdom. Joseph’s killing was, however, advantageous to Mormons, enabling them to identify it with Jesus’ death and within a total picture of LDS destiny. Had Joseph died naturally or through one of the frequent fevers of his day that link with Christ could not have been forged as Eliza Snow expressed the outcome.²⁵

For never since the Son of God was slain
Has blood so nobly flow’d from human vein.

Shades of our patriotic fathers! Can it be,
Beneath your blood–stained flag of liberty.
The firm supporters of our country’s cause
Are butchered while submissive to her laws.

²⁵ 'On the Assassination of General Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith Presidents of the Church', *Millennial Star*, vol. 5, no. 4, p. 53.

We mourn thy Prophet from whose lips have flow'd
 The words of life thy Spirit hath bestowed.
 A depth of thought, no human art could reach
 From time to time, roll'd in sublimest speech
 From the celestial fountain, through his mind,
 To purify and elevate mankind.

The parallel between Jesus as the Son of God and Joseph the Prophet is firm. Their deaths manifest a 'paradigmatic death', both crucifixion and martyrdom involving the shedding of blood and virtually guaranteeing a degree of exchange of attributes between each event for subsequent believers.²⁶ Later Mormon comment would note how Joseph 'like his master, Jesus' had 'sealed his testimony with his blood' and was 'instrumental in the hand of God in opening the door of salvation again to fallen man'.²⁷

Indeed, retaining the Kimball connection we find David C. Kimball, an early President of the Seventies, describing Joseph as one who, 'gave himself a sacrifice for the people he dearly loved—he would die rather than they should be slain—he gave his life for theirs'. For Kimball, Joseph knew that in leaving for Carthage 'he had seen Nauvoo for the last time' and 'gave the text from which his funeral sermon was to be preached'. Kimball adds: 'Here then was love'.²⁸ In other words his sacrifice stood full contrary to betrayal or apostasy.

Betrayal and Apostasy

Betrayal was described by Joachim Wach as 'the sinister act of the disciple'.²⁹ In LDS terms it also embraces the cardinal sin of 'rebellion against legitimate authority'.³⁰ That quotation from the *Millennial*

²⁶ Christopher Justice, *Dying the Good Death, The Pilgrimage to Die in India's Holy City* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 235; Applying T. N. Madan's usage to Vinoba Bhave's death, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. T. N. Madan, 'Dying with Dignity', *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 35, no. 4 (1992), p. 425–32.

²⁷ Elder Septimus Sears, *Millennial Star*, vol. 26, no. 34, p. 553.

²⁸ Cf. 1 Nephi 11:8–9, 21–22. Love extolled and typified in a white tree.

²⁹ Joachim Wach, 'Master and Disciple: Two Religio-Sociological Studies'. Reprinted by University of Chicago Press, *The Journal of Religion*, vol. XLII, no. 1 (January 1962), p. 5. Sociologist of religion taking jealousy as a key motivating emotion in betrayal.

³⁰ *Millennial Star*, vol. 18, no. 15, p. 227.

Star of 1856 is telling in that it combines the features of betrayal and apostasy that I tried to separate in my introduction. For early Mormonism was both a deeply interpersonal and an institution–membership based body. The rise of a Mormon sub–culture, especially in Utah, has made some of these issues much more complex as Terryl Givens shows in his splendid study *People of Paradox*. There he rehearses a 1993 statement of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve on apostasy, which repeatedly stresses public opposition to the church or its leaders and errant teaching or lifestyle practice such as plural marriage.³¹

Returning to the similarities between Jesus and Joseph in death, however, it is but a short step to their similarity in betrayal. For, without an analysis of this betrayal–apostasy theme much of the Plan of Salvation, and several crucial aspects of early Mormon history, would remain unintelligible. For such an analysis it might be useful to construct a ‘betrayal–apostasy’ scale devised on the basis degrees of obedience–disobedience. This could begin with perfect obedience and move to what we might call repentable disobedience before reaching unrepentable disobedience. Jesus displayed perfect obedience to his heavenly father in heaven and on earth but was betrayed on earth by his disciples. Joseph Smith, we may assume, was obedient to the father in the pre–mortal realm prior to his mortal life as a ‘choice’ spirit–child of God. Nevertheless, he engaged in repentable disobedience as various accounts of his life surrounding the obtaining of the metal plates of revelation showed. Lucifer–Satan, however, engaged in that unrepentable form of disobedience in heaven and furthers it in his influence on earth.

Just how disobedience, betrayal and apostasy differ would require greater exploration than I give it here, but one clear element involves the degree to which others are involved. Apostasy, though an act against an institution, will also involve an abandonment of associates and friends. In this sense all apostasy will involve betrayal but not all betrayal involves apostasy. It is betrayal that is foremost in the gospel accounts of the treatment of Jesus, but it is apostasy that frames how Joseph and the claims and practices of his Church were treated. This is, in fact, an important issue that could be explored further when comparing and contrasting early Mormonism with early Christianity. Apostasy, embedded in that ‘orientation to the world’ of Weber cited earlier in

³¹ See, Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox, A History of Mormon Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 236 for First Presidency Statement on Apostasy of October 1993.

this paper, occupies a serious place in nineteenth-century Mormonism, it is even stronger than the issue of betrayal in biblical texts.³² When Willard Richards and John Taylor write to British Saints from Nauvoo on July 9th, 1844, they say that ‘for some months past we have been troubled with the wicked proceedings of certain apostates in our midst who have striven to overthrow the Church’.³³ Their wickedness has not succeeded, indeed ‘their designs have been frustrated by wise and judicious management on the part of the prophet and the Saints’. To have a reference to the Prophet is quite telling here, since he was already dead, but it serves a double role of marking the importance of church organization established prior to his death, and to a sense of his ongoing influence over the thought of the Apostles.

Apostasy was deeply significant because the organization itself was believed to have been of divine origin now miraculously restored after the long period of Christian history inaugurated by an Apostasy following shortly upon the death of Jesus and of his original apostles. Apostasy and Restoration were partner concepts. Much of Christian history had thus been a history of apostasy, albeit allowing for some good people being influenced by the Spirit of God in other denominations, and doing as much good as was feasible in the absence of the Holy Priesthood and its ordinances from the earth. Recognition of the Restoration and of Joseph as its mediating prophet was all the more important because of this. Accordingly, to betray him and apostatise from his movement was doubly vile, replaying the ‘Great Apostasy’ of earlier Christianity and, I suggest, the opposition in that heavenly council.

This orientation to the world also helps explain the importance of the *Book of Mormon* and of the *Doctrine and Covenants* being given formal recognition through ‘testimony’, as with the ‘Testimony of The Twelve Apostles to the truth of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants’ as found in today’s edition.³⁴ For testimony is the opposite of betrayal and apostasy. It depends, above all else, on the trustworthiness and reliability of those concerned, and this is all the more important in the kind of society in which Joseph Smith lived within which formal education or status conferred by family or wealth was far from widespread, leaving the issue of an individual’s worth down to matters of character. This is often

³² Douglas J. Davies, *Private Passions* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2000); Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

³³ *Millennial Star*, vol. 5, no. 4, p. 77.

³⁴ *Doctrine and Covenants*, ‘Explanatory Introduction’.

the case in traditional modes of society where a person and many aspects of their life are known to many. In the more mobile world of early Mormonism there was no guarantee that everyone would be so known but, whenever possible, local church leaders often sought dependable sources to vouch for individuals. This is one reason why so many formal and legal statements were made on the character of Joseph Smith and, contrariwise, why issues of his reliability, claims of his engaging in gold-digging and superstitious forms of treasure-seeking were rife. Character mattered when the medium of a message emerged from an individual's narrative and not from formal educational processes. In other words much institutional capital was invested in a person's trustworthiness. And this is why defectors were defined as apostates, having begun as witnesses to the truth they subsequently denied it and, in so doing, stood as examples of moral evil for a system so dependent upon true witnesses. They resembled Satan, described in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as 'the great persecutor of the church ... the whore of Babylon'³⁵ who, in Joseph's interpretation of the biblical parable of the wheat and the tares is the enemy who sows weeds in a field planted with wheat.³⁶ And Lucifer-Satan is the worst of apostates whose motivation was and remains fired by rebellion—indeed, 'the very basis of Lucifer's power is rebellion'.³⁷

Traitors deeply pervaded early Mormonism with Reed Peck,³⁸ for example, telling how Sidney Rigdon inveighed against such a traitor group in the church, citing 'the Cowderies, Whitmers, Lyman Johnson and some others', and reckoning that a secret meeting was called in Far West by two of the prophet's 'greatest courtiers, Carter and Huntington' that wished to 'kill these men that they would not be capable of injuring the Church'. This was opposed by one of the Apostles. Peck tells how Rigdon preached strongly from Matthew 5 on 'the salt of the earth' and 'undertook to prove that when men embrace the gospel and afterwards lose their faith' it becomes a 'duty ... to trample them under their feet'. Rigdon informs the congregation that there are people trying to 'destroy the presidency, laying plans to take their lives' and exhorts them to rise

³⁵ *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 86.

³⁶ Matthew 13:24-30.

³⁷ *Millennial Star*, vol. 18, no. 15, p. 225.

³⁸ Reed Peck, *Memoir of Reed Peck*, Huntington Library (mss HM 54458), (1839), pp. 22-27; Also in, *Peepstone Joe and the Peck Manuscript*, (New York: Cake, 1899). Peck describes an engagement with a person who told him that 'if Joseph Smith should tell him to cut my throat he would do it without hesitation' (1839:31).

'and rid the county of such a nuisance'. Joseph Smith is then said to have offset this call to violence saying that he did not want the brethren 'to act unlawfully but he will tell them one thing. Judas was a traitor and instead of hanging himself was hung by Peter (who also killed Ananias and Saphira):³⁹ with this hint the subject was dropped for the day. Peck describes how the culprits fled, leaving their wives and families behind for a time. Westergren refers to this 'Salt Sermon' of June 19th, 1838, as well as a sermon on the 4th of July, 1838, by Rigdon, as forcing Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, W. W. Phelps and others to 'flee Far West for the town of Richmond in Clay County' in reaction to this 'new, rigid structure of church discipline, completely contrary to the spirit of the restored gospel'. He also saw Rigdon's influence as helping to 'precipitate the Mormon War in Missouri in 1838-39.⁴⁰ Less controversial, and at quite a different level of intensity, missionaries in Germany could add to their report of 'false brethren' who had sought and effected their imprisonment in Hamburg their sense that 'perils amongst false brethren are of the most grievous kind of trials'.⁴¹ Indeed, recalling how 'false brethren' had 'betrayed our Saviour' they could see how a similar pattern of 'falsity and deceit' had beset Joseph and Hyrum and that people 'professing to be brethren, have brought most of the evils upon the Saints'.

Conclusion

Such issues of apostasy and betrayal, as well as martyrdom and sacrifice, helped forge Joseph Smith's complex identity, ever mindful of the matrix of similarity with the life of Christ and his early experience of a devilish onslaught.⁴² This onslaught is interestingly absent in some contemporary church materials, including the 2004 CD presentation of

³⁹ Reed Peck (1839:57); Tells how Smith 'talks of dissenters and cited ... the case of Judas. Saying that Peter told him in a conversation a few days ago that he himself hung Judas for betraying Christ' (p. 55). In an exchange with John Corrill who opposed some of Joseph's ideas, Smith said he would prevent Corrill from entering heaven and 'stand at the entrance myself' and use 'fisty cuff in doing'.

⁴⁰ Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), pp. x, 22.

⁴¹ *Millennial Star*, vol. 16, no. 35, pp. 552-53.

⁴² David Catchpole, *Resurrection People* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), p. 141. Israel's resurrection beliefs originated in the context of God's vindication of the Maccabean martyrs two centuries before the time of Christ as 'a homegrown response to the human tragedy of martyrdom'.

The Restoration in which everything is light and nothing darkness, everything joyous and nothing negative let alone perilous. This itself might indicate a lack of sense of opposition to the Church amongst key leaders and may indicate a degree of success reflected in growth and the often noted size of today's institution. In the absence of an embattled mentality the need for negative symbols decreases.

Nevertheless, the apostasy syndrome did deeply affect the nineteenth-century church's orientation to the world and its establishments as a concluding example will demonstrate. I take it from Parley Pratt's letter to Queen Victoria, written from Manchester in England in May 1841. This reminds the Queen, whose Empire was already rather extensive, of the biblical figure of Daniel and his prophetic image of the kingdoms of the world likened to a great statue in which her empire is but 'one of the toes'.⁴³ Pratt informs her that 'the Lord God of Israel hath sent his angel with this message' that people may prepare to meet his coming kingdom. Pratt signs his letter, 'Your majesty's humble Servant and Loyal Subject', but she is left in no doubt that Christ's millennial coming will soon change the political nature of the world and her Empire within it.⁴⁴ This gives an accurate impression of the theological ethos of Mormonism in what turned out to be the last years of Joseph's life. Today, LDS approaches are less prophetic and more bureaucratic, operating more on the basis of contacts between major corporations with Elders as Chief Executive Officers than as denouncers of evil empires. Nevertheless, such changes in emphasis upon Lucifer-Satan that have occurred in the orientation to world establishments at large still do not mean that the apostasy syndrome is irrelevant within the Mormon establishment itself as leaders relate to segments of the membership, not that these symbols do not remain available as part of Mormonism's pool of potential orientations to the world, whether institutionally or personally.

⁴³ Daniel 2:31-35.

⁴⁴ Letter to Queen Victoria from Parley P. Pratt, 1841, pp. 2, 4, 8.