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Preface to the Lectures on Faith

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Preface

To the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:*

We deem it to be unnecessary to entertain you with a lengthy preface to the following volume, but merely to say that it contains, in short, the leading items of the religion which we have professed to believe.

The first part of the book will be found to contain a series of lectures as delivered before a theological class in this place, and in consequence of their embracing the important doctrine of salvation, we have arranged them into the following work.

The second part** contains items or principles for the regulation of the church as taken from the revelations which have been given since its organization, as well as from former ones.

There may be an aversion in the minds of some against receiving anything purporting to be articles of religious faith, since there are so many now extant; but if men believe a system and profess that it was given by inspiration, certainly the more intelligibly they can present it, the better. It does not make a principle untrue to *print* it, neither does it make it true not to print it.

Viewing this subject to be of importance, the Church, through its servants and delegates, the High Council, appointed your servants to select and compile this work. Several reasons

*The 1835 edition says, "To the members of the church of the Latter Day Saints," one of the names it was known by at that time. The current name was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith on 26 April 1838 (see D&C 115:4). We have deleted the 1835 "Dear Brethren" reference to the School of the Elders.

**From 1835 to 1921, the Lectures on Faith were the "first part" or "Doctrine" of almost all of the editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. The "second part" referred to here is the "Covenants and Commandments" in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Since 1921, only the "second part" has remained as the Doctrine and Covenants (see Dahl's "Authorship and History" herein).

might be adduced in favor of this move of the Council, but we add only a few words. They knew that the church was evil spoken of in many places—its faith and belief misrepresented, and the way of truth thus subverted. By some it was represented as disbelieving the Bible, by others as being an enemy to all good order and uprightness, and by others as being injurious to the peace of all governments, civil and political.

We have, therefore, endeavored to present our belief, though in few words, and when we say this, we humbly trust that it is the faith and principles of this society as a body.

We do not present this little volume with any other expectation than that we are to be called to answer to every principle advanced, in that day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed and the reward of every man's labor be given him.

With sentiments of esteem and sincere respect, we subscribe ourselves your brethren in the bonds of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Joseph Smith, Jr.
Oliver Cowdery
Sidney Rigdon
F. G. Williams

Kirtland, Ohio, February 17, 1835.