The Mormon Reformation of 1856-1857

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THE MORMON REFORMATION
OF 1856-1857

A Thesis
Presented to
the Department of History
Brigham Young University
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

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by
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Howard Clair Searle
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CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR THE MORMON REFORMATION

The "Great Reformation," which spread quickly throughout the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1856 and 1857, was a strenuous effort to promote a moral and spiritual awakening among the members of the Church in Utah. To understand the conditions that gave rise to this wave of religious enthusiasm, one must be familiar with the stormy early history of the L. D. S. people.

The Establishment of the L. D. S. Church

The founder of the Church, Joseph Smith, was born under pioneer conditions in Vermont and spent most of his life on the frontier. The Church had its beginnings in western New York, where the Smith family had moved to clear new land and secure a more suitable livelihood.

The spiritual condition of these early settlers in New York became a matter of great concern to the religious leaders of the day, and in the early 1800's a religious crusade was started to "convert the unconverted." In 1820 this revivalist movement reached Palmyra, New York, where the Smith farm was located, and under the impetus of the eloquent and frenzied preaching Mrs. Smith and three of the children joined the
Presbyterian Church. Joseph, then fourteen years of age, listened to the conflicting arguments of the different preachers, and became greatly confused and troubled, for he felt that all the contending sects could not be right. While laboring under this tremendous problem, Joseph one day read the following passage from the first chapter of James in the Bible: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." He reported that this passage came with great power to his heart, and he solemnly resolved to ask God for wisdom.

In accordance with his determination he retired to a grove of trees near his home to pray. He relates the following vision that came as an answer to his supplication there:

I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me....

When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other, "This is my Beloved Son, Hear Him!"

...I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong....

Joseph Smith was also told that if he were faithful, the fulness of the gospel would be restored through him at a future time.

Three years after this first vision young Joseph Smith

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1The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), p. 48.
reported a visitation by an angel who announced himself as Moroni, an ancient prophet and historian of the people who lived on the American Continent. The Angel revealed to Joseph the hiding place of a volume of metal plates which he declared contained not only a history of the ancient inhabitants of the American Continent, but also a fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to Joseph's account the angel visited him on subsequent occasions until he was able to obtain the plates and translate them into the English language. This record, known as the Book of Mormon, was published in 1830 and became the basis of much of the doctrine of the Church.

The following year on April 6th the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized at Fayette, New York with six members. Because of their acceptance of the Book of Mormon, the members of this church were referred to by outsiders as "Mormons" and the Church itself as the "Mormon Church." Under the direction of Joseph Smith, missionary work was zealously undertaken and the membership increased at a rapid rate.

The Church in Ohio and Missouri

The members of this new faith suffered much persecution because of their unique beliefs and claims, and it soon became necessary for them to join the move westward and settle in Ohio. The headquarters of the Church was established at Kirtland near the shores of Lake Erie.

From Kirtland, Ohio the Latter-day Saints branched
out and established settlements at Jackson County, Missouri, then on the extreme western frontier. They believed this land was to be a place of their inheritance where they could establish Zion and become a mighty people, and with great industry they began to clear the land and establish homes. This Mormon ideal was not to be realized at this time, however, for friction soon developed with the Missourians who resented the Mormon social and political unity, their Yankee background, and their exclusive claims to Jackson County as their promised land. As political, religious, and social differences were agitated, mobs were organized that soon began pillaging the Mormon settlements. The church leaders were tarred and feathered, and hundreds of the Saints were forced to leave their homes. The mobsters were resisted on a few occasions, but this only increased the intensity of their raids. The citizens of neighboring Clay County, who had their sympathy aroused by the outrages committed against the Mormons, invited them to make temporary homes in their vicinity until they could find a permanent place to live. The offer was accepted and the Saints built temporary log cabins and worked for the old settlers to make a livelihood.

In December of 1836 the Missouri legislature created Caldwell County out of the wild unbroken prairie country to the northeast of Clay County and designated it as a "Mormon County." The legislature saw in the plan a method to dispose of the Mormons and isolate them out of the way, but the church members regarded it as a great opportunity to establish their
homes unmolested. With new hope the Saints bought lands and
began to lay out their cities. In two years Far West, the
chief settlement of Caldwell County, had a population of five
thousand. Much of this growth was due to an influx of Saints
from Ohio, including the Prophet Joseph Smith, who came in
1838.

As the number of Latter-day Saints in Caldwell County
increased, friction again developed, and the persecution was
repeated. The Saints appealed to the state for protection,
but the Governor, Lilburn W. Boggs, took his stand firmly
against the Mormons and in October 1838 issued the following
order: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be
exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the
public good."\(^1\) This order so encouraged the mobsters that they
collected a large force and marched on Far West. The Leaders
of the Church were forced to surrender to this approaching
mob-militia and subsequently fell into the hands of General
Samuel D. Lucas. They were given a court martial that night
and sentenced to execution the next morning but were saved by
the bold action of General A. W. Doniphan who sent word to his
superior officer, General Lucas, that it was "cold-blooded
murder" and he would not obey the order.\(^2\) Doniphan was never
called to account for this insubordination.

\(^1\)Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City:
Deseret News, 1905), III, 175.

\(^2\)Ibid., 190-91.
The most tragic episode in the Missouri persecutions, and one that had its repercussions at Mountain Meadows, Utah during the period of the Mormon Reformation, occurred when a band of ruffians fell upon a little settlement at Haun's Mill. Some of the Saints escaped in the woods, but a group who hid in an old blacksmith shop were attacked with out mercy. Eighteen were killed, including several women and children, and a number were seriously wounded.

The Church in Illinois

Forced to find another home the Saints again turned their hopes toward the frontier. This time they chose a swampy mosquito-infested section on the banks of the Mississippi in Illinois for their future home. The city of Nauvoo was built here and in five years became the largest city in Illinois with a population of fifteen thousand. Nauvoo was busy and prosperous and soon aroused the jealousy of the non-Mormons in Illinois. The Mormons voted as a unit, and not finding the party policies of either the Whigs or the Democrats fully acceptable to them, they remained independent and soon aroused the ill-will of both. Persecution broke out again when the Nauvoo City Council ordered the destruction of an anti-Mormon newspaper which was being published by a group of men who had been excommunicated from the Church. Public reaction was very violent, and in a short time several of the officials of the church were arrested and confined to the Carthage jail in Illinois, under promise of protection until their trial could
be arranged. The mobs would not wait for the action of the court; on June 27, 1844 they attacked the jail and killed Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum.

The Church did not disintegrate with the death of its prophet, as expected by the mobs, but instead the members took increased devotion in the work of establishing the "Kingdom of God."

The Exodus to Utah

There followed a series of organized raids upon the homes of the Latter-day Saints until Nauvoo was no longer safe. Brigham Young, the successor of Joseph Smith, arranged a truce with the mobs in which he promised to move the Saints en masse from Nauvoo in the spring, but the burnings were started again during the winter, and by February 20, 1846 most of the city's inhabitants had been forced to abandon their homes and take shelter across the Mississippi in Iowa. These fugitives moved slowly across Iowa, and near the present site of Omaha they established Winter Quarters, their western outpost for this first year. Exposure and disease took a heavy toll at Winter Quarters, and over six-hundred persons were buried there in the following months.

For years the Church leaders had been studying the west in order to select a place where the Mormons might live unmolested. Brigham Young had obtained all the information he could from the western trappers and explorers, and he became especially interested in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. In 1847 he led the first company of pioneers toward the
Rocky Mountains, and when he first arrived and looked over the valley, he was certain he had found the right place.

This first company was followed by several other companies, so that about eighteen hundred people arrived in the embryo city of Salt Lake the first year. The next year four thousand more arrived, and as additional companies made the arduous trek to Utah, Brigham Young began a systematic colonization of the surrounding valleys. Towns were started wherever water could be obtained, and within a few years settlements dotted most of the inhabitable regions of the Great Basin. One thin line of settlements stretched along the western half of the Old Spanish Trail all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

A territorial government was organized for Utah in 1850 with Brigham Young as the first governor, but this government did not operate as smoothly as was hoped. The non-Mormons who were appointed by the federal government were, from the beginning, a source of friction. The Mormons felt they were being governed by men who did not represent the people of Utah, while the Gentile officials resented the unquestioning allegiance the Mormons gave to Brigham Young. They often sent out reports that the Mormons were insubordinate and even traitorous—reports which ultimately persuaded President James Buchanan to install a new set of officials and send an army to Utah to quiet the "rebellion." He made this decision in the early part of 1857, at the time when the religious movement known as the Great Reformation was sweeping through
the Mormon Church.

Conditions That Prompted the Reformation

The Reformation was designed, not to make proselytes, but to call to repentance those who were already members of the Church. The Latter-day Saints moved to the Rocky Mountains to be apart from the world and establish the Kingdom of God, and although they believed that they had separated themselves physically from the sinners of the world, they still felt the need to be free from sin. It was apparent to the leaders of the Church that a spiritual awakening was necessary, and the Reformation was inaugurated to meet this need.

For many years the members of the Church had lived under camp conditions, and the constant moving, unrest, and physical fatigue that accompanied this manner of living caused some laxity in moral discipline and physical cleanliness. During the exodus across the plains and later in the young Utah settlements the necessary facilities for bodily cleanliness were not always available, and many of the Saints became negligent in keeping themselves clean. There was much filth in many of the peoples' houses, barns, and yards, and those in responsible positions became quite concerned over the situation.¹

The Saints accepted the commandment from the Lord to "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy," but they often

failed to live up to this profession of their faith. In crossing the plains, they were often forced to travel on Sunday to reach water or obtain feed for their stock, and even after they reached Utah such things as cricket fighting, irrigation, fence mending, and harvesting infringed upon the sanctity of the Sabbath Day.  

The irregularity of the peoples' lives was also a contributing factor in the neglect of private and family prayers. The Church regarded prayer as essential to one's spiritual welfare, and any neglect of this important principle could not be taken lightly.

When the first settlements were made in Utah, Brigham Young established the policy of community ownership of the vital resources. Such things as timber, water, grazing land, and some fields were owned jointly by all the people to be used by all according to their needs and their fair share. This stress on community ownership encouraged many in abusing personal property rights. Some men cut more than their share of timber, and others put their brand on any stray they found in the common pasture. Necessity often encouraged the use of food, cattle, and teams by men other than their owners and without the owners consent. This habit of trespassing on other peoples property rights may have been justifiable at times, but more often it was nothing but stealing.

Because of the lack of entertainment in the earlier years of settlement in Utah some of the Church members devel-

\[1\text{Ibid.} \quad 2\text{Ibid.} \quad 3\text{Ibid.}\]
oped the habits of card playing, checkers, and telling humorous stories that were often of doubtful propriety. Brigham Young had encountered these habits in the journey across the plains and rebuked the companies for it. On May 29, 1847 he said:

For a week past nearly the whole camp has been card playing, and checkers and dominoes have occupied the attention of the brethren, and dancing and "hoeing down"—all this has been the act continually. Now, it is quite time to quit it.¹

The Church encouraged wholesome recreation, but any questionable pastimes or excesses were severely rebuked.

There seems to have been some increase in sex sins among the church members during the unsettled years of the exodus and early settlement of Utah.² Travel on crowded steamboats, night travel, and the long march across the plains with all classes in constant and close contact presented temptations that were ruinous to many. The Church at this time was under attack for the practice of polygamy, and any sex violations among the Saints were seized upon by anti-Mormon writers to discredit the morals of the Church. This caused the Mormon leaders to regard any sexual sin with great alarm, for they desired to free the Church from all charges of licentiousness. Sexual sin, which the Latter-day Saints had always considered next to murder in its seriousness, was fiercely condemned in many of the church gatherings, and enemies of the Saints immediately pointed to these denunciations

¹Ibid., 184. Quoted from Wilford Woodruff's Journal.
²Ibid., IV, 121.
by the Church leaders as an indication of a low state of morals among the Mormons.

Comparison of Mormon and Non-Mormon Morality

From this enumeration of the sins of the Latter-day Saints it should not be assumed that they were a particularly wicked or immoral group. Most of the Saints upheld the Puritan standards of their fathers and were striving for absolute righteousness. They held sin in greater abhorrence than many people and became alarmed over any breaking of God's laws.

Many non-Mormons visited Utah during the period just before the Reformation and have written of the moral conditions they observed. Although the condemnation of polygamy was general, many competent witnesses found little fault otherwise with the conduct of the L. D. S. people. William Chandless, an English traveler who came to Utah in the early 1850's, wrote the following after his return to England:

Apart from their practice of polygamy—which, it may be said, perhaps, gives a vent for sensuality—the Mormons are not a licentious people...anything like systematized or public prostitution would not be tolerated for a moment. A liquor-law, enforced pretty strictly, compels sobriety: which virtue is, therefore, no subject for praise. Swearing, at least blasphemous swearing, in the public streets is prohibited under pain of five-dollars fine for each offense; the fine is scarcely ever imposed, but violation of the law is uncommon, and very rarely in public or private do you hear an oath.

Theft, even of petty things, such as vegetables or fuel, is prevented not by prosecution, but by the known rule, that if a man steals two or three times he is ordered to leave the country or become honest for good....

Not that the Mormons ever pretend there are no bad men among them; nay, agreeably to their principles they will tell you that a Mormon, if bad, will be worse than other men, because he sins against greater light and knowledge, and after receiving the Spirit of God. Confirmatory of
this, I have met at Salt Lake with two or three proper
scoundrels; but, taking the people all round, I consider
them as moral, industrious, fair-dealing, and hospitable
a set, as one is apt to fall in with.1

Lieutenant J. W. Gunnison, who resided among the
Saints for one year in an official capacity, has given the
following report of moral conditions:

Infidelity and licentiousness are held up for abhor-
rence....

We may add that the community had every appearance of
good morals, so that any equal number of persons in the
states can scarcely exhibit greater decorum.2

Remy and Brenchley, who visited Utah prior to the
Reformation, give this description of moral conditions in
their two volume work about the Mormons:

The whole of this small nation occupy themselves as
usefully as the working bees of a hive...Neither grog-
shops, gaming houses, nor brothels are to be met with.
There are no such resorts among the Mormons. The only
places of public assembly are the temple, the schools,
the drill-ground, and from time to time the Social Hall,
where they have dancing and singing, where theatrical
representations are given, and scientific and historical
lectures are delivered. There is never any disturbances
in the streets, brawling is unknown; criminal charges
also are rare, and the courts, by the admission of the
federal judges, have scarcely anything else to do, but
settle disputed debts.

At night not a woman is to be met with in the streets,
which is worthy of remark among people where the number of
women exceeds that of men and where it might be assumed
that polygamy would lead to greater freedom of manners.3

Richard F. Burton cites the strictness of many of the
laws of the Territory as an indication of how the Latter-day

1William Chandless, A Journey to Salt Lake (London:

2J. S. Gunnison, The Mormons (Philadelphia: J. P.

3Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, A Journey to Great
Salt Lake City (London: W. Jeffer, 1861), pp. 197-199.
Saints regarded many immoral practices. He quotes the following sections of the Territorial laws:

Sec. 32 Every person who commits the crime of adultery shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding twenty years, and not less than three years; or by fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and not less than three hundred dollars; or by both fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the court....

Sec. 33 If any man or woman, not being married to each other, lewdly and lasciviously associate and cohabit together; or if any man or woman, married or unmarried, is guilty of open lewdness, and designedly make any open and indecent, or obscene exposure of his or her person, or of the person of another, every such person so offending shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding ten years, and not less than six months, and fine not more than one thousand dollars, and not less than one hundred dollars, or both, at the discretion of the court.

Sec. 34 If any person keep a house of ill fame, resorted to for the purpose of prostitution or lewdness, he shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding ten years, and not less than one year, or fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, or both fine and imprisonment. And any person who, after being once convicted of the like offense, shall be punished not more than double the above specified penalties.

Sec. 38 If any person import, print, publish, sell or distribute any book, pamphlet, ballad, or an printed paper containing obscene language, or obscene prints, pictures, or descriptions manifestly tending to corrupt the morals of youth, or introduce into any family, school or place of education, or buy, procure, receive, or have in his possession any such book, pamphlet, ballad, or printed paper, picture, or description, either for the purpose of loan, sale, exhibition, or circulation, or with intent to introduce the same into any family, school, or place of education, he shall be punished by fine not exceeding four hundred dollars.¹

Burton also states that there was strict enforcement of the laws against immorality. He says: "Stripes, or, at best fine and imprisonment, will punish fornication, and the penalty of adultery will be death.... The offenses against chastity,

morality, and decency are exceptionally severe."\(^1\)

In October 1856 a non-Mormon citizen of Utah wrote the following letter to the editor of the Mormon, a periodical published by the Church in New York:

It is death, by law of the Mormons, for a man to seduce another's wife or daughter, and several I have been informed have met their fate by committing such deeds. The Mormons believe in plurality of wives, but those who have them must take care of them, support them and their children, and not go after strange women.

They will not suffer their women or daughters to be seduced, neither will they suffer any house of prostitution, so numerous in the cities of the States, to exist there. A libertine or prostitute is looked upon by the Mormons as a curse to society and not fit to live; and woe be unto the man or woman that undertakes to practice iniquity in Utah. They prefer their daughters marrying with those of their own faith; but I know there is but little opposition to their marrying a Gentile, if he be but a honorable man...

...I like to see fair play and equal rights, and I do know from experience and positive knowledge, derived from living among the Mormons, that they are basely lied about in the States. I have seen articles published in the States about them in Utah that had not the least foundation in truth, especially in the New York Herald.\(^2\)

Both of the above quotations state that the crime of adultery was punishable by death. This was not the punishment prescribed in the Territorial laws, and when near relatives took the law into their own hands and killed the offender, they did so without the sanction of the Church and were dealt with according to the laws of the land. In the few cases of

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 252.

\(^2\)"Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Archives of the L. D. S. Church Historian, Salt Lake City. A day-by-day, looseleaf, history of the Church from 1830 to the present, containing clippings from published matter, transcripts of original documents, and typed or hand written entries. Entry of Oct. 20, 1856, p. 1. Hereafter cited as "Journal History."
this type that occurred in Utah the courts were found to be quite lenient.¹

From the foregoing quotations it would appear that the sins among the Mormons that prompted the Reformation were no more serious that those present in many other communities of the United States.

The Objectives of the Reformation

Although the morals of the Mormon people may have compared favorably with those of other people of the United States in 1856, there was still a need for improvement if the Saints were to live up to the standards of the religion they had embraced. Members of the Church accepted the injunction from the Savior to "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect;," and they were striving to draw nearer this goal. The purpose of the Reformation was not to make the Saints as good as other Christian people but to make them the best people under heaven. President Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to Brigham Young at this time, explained the objectives of the Reformation as follows:

With regard to this people, I know that they are the best people on the earth, but there is more or less alloy among them which we hate. The Savior said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net that gathereth all kinds of fish; and I believe that parable holds good in our day, with regard to the gathering of the people that are caught by the Gospel of the Son of God, through the practical preaching of the Elders. I believe this from observing the unwise sayings and doings of some who profess to be Saints.

I am aware that the world, because we are not all

¹Roberts, op. cit., IV, 131-35.
strictly living our religion, will imagine, as a matter of course, that we are bursting to pieces up here, and will say, "That is what we like; we told you that if you would let the 'Mormons' alone they would all burst to pieces." We can, by taking an unrighteous course, burst ourselves to pieces, but they cannot burst us to pieces, if we do right, that is certain, for they tried it when there were but eight or ten in the Church...Now they flatter themselves that we shall burst under the weight of our own conduct, but I will tell you that we are after the evil doers.

If the Bishops and Teachers will go to work, together with every officer in the Church, we can soon find out those who are not disposed to do right....

Elder Wilford Woodruff explained to a congregation assembled in the Tabernacle that the Lord expected more of the Latter-day Saints than he did of other people because He had delivered the Kingdom of God into their hands. He preached:

The Lord has given you the keys of the Priesthood with all the blessings pertaining to it—as great and as mighty a work as ever was committed to any man on the earth, and that too in the midst of the last dispensation and fulness of times. The Lord requires us to prepare this generation, both Jew and Gentile, either for salvation or damnation through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the administering of the ordinances of the House of God, and we go to sleep! The Apostles go to sleep—the Seventies go to sleep—the Elders of Israel close their eyes to slumber, and we the only people God has on the earth, upon whose shoulders He has laid the responsibility of performing this great and mighty work!

Do you wonder that Prophets get up here and chastise, and draw the sword of justice and hold it over our heads? I do not. I wonder that our children at the fireside do not rise up and prophesy, with a voice like thunder and in flames of fire, unto their fathers and mothers, and unto the people of Israel.

Brigham Young felt that the Mormons should be above the evils that were present in most communities of the world.

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1 *Journal of Discourses* by President Brigham Young, his Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and others, 26 volumes (Liverpool: Asa Calkin, 1858), IV, 72.

He gave the following chastisement to the Saints:

...I feel mortified when we have to say "Reformation," yet such is often the case. And many times when people have received and enjoyed great light and intelligence, the things of this world choke the good word, thorns and thistles spring up, and they seem to have but little root in themselves. The sun rises and scorches the tender plants that seem to be growing in them, and we have to cry to the people, "Reform, Reform, REFORM," when in reality it is a disgrace that such instruction should ever be necessary. It is a great disgrace; it is mortifying to angels....

For us to be repenting and reforming is really a disgrace....

Many of the Saints in Utah had sacrificed a great deal for the sake of the Kingdom. They had left property and loved ones behind and had endured the bitter persecutions of Missouri and Illinois. They had willingly undertaken the long journey to Utah and had tried to do their duty in making the desert "blossom as a rose." After these tests of their faith they thought it strange that they should now be called upon to affect a great reformation. The Deseret News carried the following editorial at the onset of the Reformation to explain the need and purpose of the movement and dispel some of the objections:

To the world it may seem strange that reformation is needed where there are none to molest us in our religion, in a country throughout whose broad borders there is not a single brothel, grogshop, or gambling hell; where murders, assassinations, highway robberies, arson, husband and wife killing and other high crimes are unknown to our court records; and where even one lawyer could not make a living, at fair rates, by attending to the whole of the small amount of litigation among this numerous people. And, perhaps, some saints have deemed reform uncalled for at present, not being sufficiently faithful to at all times see afar off.

1Ibid., 265.
But we are often like passions with other people, and when commodious buildings are multiplied, when numerous fields are enclosed and the comforts and luxuries of life accumulate around us, we are prone to slacken the faith and energy engaged in producing them, and to measurably forget our indebtedness for the peculiar privileges and blessings in our possession.

Prosperity and ease tempt to remissness in duty, to neglect of secret and family prayer, to unlawful indulgence of thought, word and act, to laying aside weapon after weapon and shield after shield of the gospel armor, until there is little or no defence against the assaults of the adversary. Hence the necessity for reformation, and we rejoice that the people are so zealous in a work of so much importance.

The devil cares but little how near a person walks to the line of ALL truth, provided he does not walk directly in or upon it, for from the day of his sermon to Eve in the garden of Eden he has indulged in mingling truth with error, sugaring o'er the evil to suit the morbid appetites of those to whom the whole truth is unpalatable. And this mingling system, working upon human weakness, has separated the human family from their God, filled the world with conflicting creeds and notions, and caused the devil to rejoice as he viewed the four quarters of the earth shrouded in the darkness of his teachings.

Most wisely has it been said, 'ye cannot serve both God and Mammon,' and most heartily do we rejoice that wherever our Home Missionaries labor they report an alacrity on the part of the people to arouse from that spiritual lethargy too often induced by the cares of this world. We have come from distant and various climes on purpose to worship the Lord our God; we are blest with a locality where none hinder us from doing good, with Counselors holding the keys of eternal life and freely imparting the wisest of timely counsels; and through obedience can enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost, the assurance of a resurrection with the just and the blessing of eternal lives.

It is not, therefore, so much a matter of wonder that reformation should take a strong hold upon the people, but it will be strange at first thought, should it stop short of making our mountain homes too strait for the few wicked and abominable now in our midst, or short of that point which will insure peace, truth and righteousness to fill our valleys like an overflowing stream. Some deem it hard to be a saint, but it is harder to be a sinner, even in this time, and in the next no human skill can portray the vast difference of the reward.1

1Deseret News, October 22, 1856.
Many of the Church leaders and members looked upon the Reformation as a preparation for coming hardships and trials. The Saints were to repent and put their houses in order to avoid the judgements of the Lord. Esaias Edwards made the following entry in his diary at the time of the Reformation:

...There has been a great reformation during the Last fall and winter such as has not been since we have in the vallys of the mountains And the first Presidency is urging us to santify and purify our selves against the day of trial which is Just at hand which they say wiil try every saint both man and woman I do not know what we wil have to pas through and I am not much concerned about it But my prayer to God daily is that I may be enabled to stand in the day of tribulation and adversity for it is my cheifest desire on this Earth Ma God Bless all the true hearted Saints with the like Blessings. [sic]

In an address in the Bowery at Salt Lake City on September 21, 1856 President Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young's first counselor, compared the Saints to the peoples of the Book of Mormon. He based his sermon on the twelfth chapter of the Book of Helaman, and in speaking of the ancient inhabitants of America he said:

...They were led into a land away from their enemies, and the Lord blest them exceedingly; yet the only way that He could keep them within due and proper bounds, so that they would live their religion, so that they would be humble before their Maker and their God, was to let afflictions come upon them.

...When we read the Bible and the Book of Mormon, we are led to contrast the proceedings of the former day Saints on this continent with the travels and course of this people: and to reflect that many of us have been rooted up and driven some five or six times, and that last of all we are driven here into the valleys of the Mountains, a thousand miles from every body, where God

has let us come to worship Him, to carry out His designs.... Are not this people running into pride? Are they not filled with discord, contention, broils, and animosity? Have they not forgotten their God and their covenants....

Let us rise up as a people and turn unto the Lord our God with full purpose of heart, and, peradventure, our sins may be remitted and forgiven, and blotted out....

The next Sunday President Kimball was not satisfied at merely hinting that the Saints were worthy for the Lord to "let afflictions come upon them." He declared in unmistakeable terms:

...If you do not repent and lay aside your wickedness you will go to hell. I tell you that there is nothing that will turn away the wrath of God and the chastenings that are to come on this people, if they do not repent indeed; now mark my words.

There has been too much said here, by br. Brigham and his brethren, to fall to the ground unnoticed, and you must observe every word of it.

Similar warnings were given by Brigham Young and Jedediah Grant, the other members of the First Presidency. They believed that there were many trials ahead for the Saints, and if they would claim the blessings of the Lord during these trying times, they would have to purge out the wickedness among them. Later events established the prophetic insight of these warnings for within a year of these utterances the Saints were sorely tested by food shortages, the Mountain Meadows massacre, Indian troubles, and an army of the United States that marched against them.

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1 Journal of Discourses, IV, 45-49.

2 Deseret News, October 8, 1856.
CHAPTER II

THE INCEPTION AND SPREAD OF THE REFORMATION

Early Suggestions of a Reformation

Jedediah Grant of the First Presidency, who later became the prime motivator in the Great Reformation, was one of the first of the Church authorities to suggest that a general reform of the Kingdom was in order. In a sermon given at a conference in Provo on July 13, 1855 he declared:

The Church needs trimming up, and if you will search you will find in your wards certain branches, which had better be cut off. The Kingdom would progress much faster and so will you individually, than it will with those branches on, for they are only dead weights to the great wheel....

I would like to see the works of reformation commence, and continue until every man had to walk the line.... Purify yourselves, your houses, lots, farms, and everything around you on the right and on the left, then the Spirit of the Lord can dwell with you.¹

President Brigham Young in his sermons to the Saints at the Bowery in Salt Lake City in the later months of 1855 often spoke out against conditions among the Saints and the need for reform in many practices.² He was greatly saddened because of the people's ingratitude toward their God. He accused some of being willing to black the boots of the devil and stressed the importance of maintaining home missionaries

¹Ibid., October 24, 1855.
²Ibid., Set. through Nov. 1855.
to root out these evildoers from the society of the Saints. When one of these home missionaries, John Hovey of Payson, was accused of overzealousness in calling the people to repentance, Brigham Young supported him and announced that "there was likelihood of too little confessing rather than too much, and only in the event that the people were confessing more stealing, swearing, lying, and swindling than they were guilty of," would he advise Hovey to change his methods.\footnote{Andrew Love Neff, \textit{History of Utah 1857 to 1869}, ed. Leland H. Creer (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1940), pp. 548-49.}

Even though definite plans for the Great Reformation cannot be detected in the sermons of the Church authorities, it is apparent that such a movement was in harmony with their desires for the welfare of the Saints.

Inauguration of the Reformation at Kaysville

On Saturday September 13, 1856 President Grant and President Joseph Young of the First Council of Seventy, in company with four home missionaries, Elders D. D. Hunt, Gilbert Clements, Thomas Grover, and William Willes, held a quarterly conference at Kaysville, Davis County, that continued through the next four days, The \textit{Deseret News} reports this conference as the beginning of the Reformation and contains the following description of the proceedings at the first meeting under the caption "Great Reformation:"

...The proceedings were opened in the usual manner. President Joseph Young delivered a discourse on the necessity of faithfulness in the kingdom of God. Br. Willes spoke on the unity of the faith, and pleasures of
associations with the saints....

President Grant arose and stated, that he had come with his brethren, under the counsel of Prest. Brigham Young, to build up churches, and delivered a discourse on faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, exhorting the Saints to be patient, and not hurry the conference, to learn to let the things of the kingdom of God be first, and all other things in their times and seasons.

Meeting adjourned till 2 p.m.¹

Two more sessions of the conference were held on Saturday, one at two o'clock and one at seven P. M., with the home missionaries preaching on gospel topics. William Willes contributed to the religious fervor of the meetings by singing his improvised words to several favorite hymns. At the Sunday morning session President Grant spoke on topics that were to become the theme of many sermons during the Reformation. The minutes of the meeting state:

Prest. Grant followed, remarking that the Lord would not hold parents guiltless who neglected to inform the minds of their children. He delivered a soul-stirring address on the text of Br. Brigham, "Saints, live your religion;" holding sacred their covenants, observing cleanliness in their persons and dwellings, setting their families in order, carefully cultivating their farms and gardens, and not to feel so anxious to have more land than they could attend to themselves; to gather into and build up the fort and settlement, and concluded by praying that all those who did not feel to do right might have their way opened to leave this people and Territory, and that those who did not come forward and do their first works, repent and be baptized, let them be unto you as heathen men and publicans, and not numbered among the Saints.

Prest. J. Young remarked that he fully responded to the sentiment of Prest. Grant observing that the spirit of avarice would lead many of this people down to darkness and apostacy.²

At the Sunday afternoon meeting the speakers dwelt

¹Deseret News, September 24, 1856.
²Ibid.
on some more of the basic doctrines of the Reformation:

Prest. Grant called upon the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins; advised that the teachers in each district of the ward report to the bishop at least once a month the standing of the members. He threw out a number of texts for the brethren to preach upon, calling upon Br. Clements to take up the subjects of repentence and baptism.

Elder Clements delivered a discourse on the necessity of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, and commencing a general reformation, faithfully paying their tithing in kind, attending to the duties of family worship, and the royal law: "Do unto others as you wish they should do unto you;" and dwell at some length upon rebaptism.

Bishop Allen Taylor arose, and said that he wished at all times to be obedient to counsel, and exhorted the Saints to follow in the same course.

Prest. Grant spoke at length upon the necessity there was on the part of the Saints to purify and sanctify themselves preparatory to their attending to the ordinances for their dead in the House of the Lord; to purify their lands, their houses, their persons, and dedicate themselves and their substance to the Lord. Upon calling for a vote as to whether they were willing to renew their covenants, it was given unanimously.¹

After the Sunday evening meeting, at which animated addresses were delivered by Presidents Grant and Young, the conference was adjourned until seven A. M. the next morning when it reconvened at Weinel's mill to attend to the ordinance of rebaptism. The early morning assembly proceeded as follows:

Animated addresses were delivered by Presidents Grant and J. Young. The twelve teachers of the ward were called upon to pray and speak in turn, which they did under the influence of the Good Spirit, in power. Powerful testimonies were delivered....

The Bishop and his counselors expressed their great joy at the proceedings of this conference. During these proceedings the sick were administered to and children blessed by Elders Willes, Clements, Curtis, Allred, Henderson and others, in the school room adjoining the bowery.

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
Prest. Grant delivered a powerful address, at the conclusion of which he called upon all the home missionaries to arise in turn and bless the people, which they did in the name of the Lord, and by the power of the Holy Priesthood poured forth the blessing of the new and everlasting covenant on the congregation. Every heart was made glad and the people were deeply affected by the power of God.¹

In a later reference to the Kaysville conference given six weeks later in the Tabernacle at Salt Lake City, President Grant made the following comment:

This makes me think of a circumstance that occurred when we went to Kaysville to preach the reformation, under the direction of brother Brigham. There was a dark and dull spirit there which was not very congenial to our natures, and brother Joseph Young felt life in him, he was full of the Spirit. After staying a couple of days, he said to me, "Brother Grant, they feel cold, and I guess we had better go to Farmington, preach there, and go home." After a while I said to him, "Do you know how I feel about it? In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I will never leave this land, until this people surrender. I will hang the flag of the Lord Jesus Christ on their doors, and there shall be a siege of forty days. Then let every man storm the castle, and rule against the bulwarks of hell, and let every Elder throw the arrows of God almighty through the sinner, and pierce their loins, and penetrate their vitals, until the banner of Christ shall wave triumphantly over Israel. Shall we give up, and let the wicked and ungodly overcome us? No, in the name and by the power of God we will overcome them. We will cleanse the inside of the platter and have Israel saved, through the name of Jesus Christ, and by the power of his word."²

This first conference of the Reformation at Kaysville was to serve as a pattern for conferences that followed. Some additional procedures were adopted and became customary as the movement grew, but there was never much departure from this prototype.

¹Ibid.
²Journal of Discourses, IV, 74.
Responsibility for Beginning the Reformation

In commencing the conference at Kaysville President Grant stated that he had come "under the counsel of Prest. Brigham Young to build up churches." In his Bowery address six weeks later he said he had gone to Kaysville "to preach the reformation, under the direction of Brother Brigham." About two weeks after the Reformation commenced Wilford Woodruff, one of the Council of Twelve Apostles, wrote a letter to his co-worker, Orson Pratt, and stated: "The Presidency of the Church have commenced a great reformation among this people in the valleys of the mountains." Who may have been the first to propose the Reformation can not be determined, but it seems clear that when it was started it was a unified action of the First Presidency and not the responsibility of Jedediah Grant alone, as some have assumed. Even though President Grant was acting under the direction of Brigham Young, he did use his own initiative in fulfilling his assignment. A statement made by President Grant the day after the close of the conference in Kaysville is reported as follows:

Prest. Grant said that Brigham Young told him to go to Kaysville and attend their conference, and to tell the people to live their religion; and when he got there he felt like baptizing and confirming them anew into the Church.

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4 Deseret News, October 1, 1856.
Rebaptizing and confirming the people was not an innovation at this conference but had been practiced for many years.¹

The Reformation Carried to Farmington

After the Tuesday morning meeting in Kaysville, Presidents Grant and Young and the home missionaries traveled five miles to the south east and called a meeting for six-thirty P. M. in the upper room of the courthouse in Farmington. The following occurred at this gathering:

Prest. Grant said that he, in connexion with the home missionaries, had been laboring for the last four days in the ward southwest [northwest] from Farmington, with the most gratifying results, having baptized, confirmed and blessed over four hundred persons, and blessed many children. That the spirit and power of God had been manifested in a wonderful manner, and expressed a hope and wish that when the people of this little village were put to a similar test, he could find as good clay and as good material as he had found in Kaysville; and hoped that the time would not be procrastinated beyond our next quarterly conference, some time next month, when a similar test would be made in this village.

Prest. Joseph Young made some very good remarks on the same subject.

Bishop Hess remarked that he was glad the time was near when a reformation was to commence, and said he wished it was to-morrow. He had felt the necessity of it for a long time.

Prest. Grant said that the spirit in him said stay to-morrow, and if need be the next day, and commence the work of reformation as they had in the ward north, and so continue through the wards south, from here to Great Salt Lake City. That he would send a messenger to Prest. Brigham Young with an invitation for him to come, or to send some others to assist. Requested the congregation, if it was their wish for them to stay and commence preaching and baptizing, to rise, when the whole assembly rose with a sudden rush.²

Pleased with the desire of the Bishop and the people to have

¹Roberts, op. cit., II, 286-287.
²Deseret News, October 1, 1856.
the Reformation preached, President Grant remained in Farmington and held meetings for the next two days. A few highlights of the conference there were reported as follows:

Elder Willes preached on the necessity of the Saints' keeping themselves clean and pure, both in body and spirit. Prest. Grant said...if the men are right they can direct their wives and children right, and will know how to correct them in love, and how to chastize their children in mildness. They will also understand how to sanctify themselves, and how to keep the Sabbath. Study good books, read the Bible, Book of Mormon, Book of Doctrine and Covenants. Awake and be baptized for the remission of sins, and sanctify yourselves.... Dismissed by Prest. Grant, to meet for baptism at 2 p. m.

2 p. m.
Met at the mill race north of the Fort wall.
Singing. Prayer by Prest. Grant.
After entering into covenant, with uplifted hands, to keep all the commandments of God, inasmuch as they were made known, four hundred and six persons were baptized by Prest. Grant, Bishop Hess, and Elders D. D. Hunt, Gilbert Clements, John S. Gleason and D. A. Miller.1

Another meeting was held on Wednesday evening, but the confirming of the rebaptized was left until the next morning when the ward members reassembled in the upper room of the courthouse. Excerpts from the minutes of the meetings on Thursday follow:

For want of room the children were sent to the lower rooms to be blest, while those that were re-baptized were being confirmed.
After the confirmation and blessing of the children, Prest. Grant directed that four of the teachers should pray in succession, and then four others speak, until all had prayed and spoken.
After the teachers had prayed and spoken, Prest. Grant said he was satisfied with them...that we would dismiss till 2 o'clock, and that during the intermission we would repair to the waters for baptism.
This day the people were ordered to fast... 2

During the intermission thirty-nine additional persons

1Ibid.  2Ibid.
were rebaptized and later confirmed at the beginning of the afternoon meeting. According to the conference minutes this meeting was a sacrament service:

While the bread was being broken, Prest. Grant asked if there were any in the house that could not fellowship all that had been baptized, when all hands were raised in token of union and fellowship.

While the sacramental emblems were being passed, a number of the sick were administered to.

Prest. Joseph Young remarked...that Bro. Brigham says, "think not that the citizens of Kaysville and Farmington are sinners above all others in this Territory, for except they repent in Great Salt Lake City they shall likewise perish." I saw bro. Brigham lately, and he would have been glad to come here, but press of business prevented him. I often feel concerned about Brigham, for I know that the many cares he has concerning this people weigh heavily upon him. My constant prayer to God is, that his life may be long spared to this people....

Prest. Grant remarked that we ought to produce and manufacture everything that we need to eat or wear, and ought to do something to support the home missionaries....

Prest. Grant blessed the Bishop, his counselors, the teachers, the choir, the people and all the home missionaries, in the name of Jesus; and said that the home missionaries had preached by the power of God....

Reformation Preached in Salt Lake City

On September the 21st, the next Sunday after the conferences at Kaysville and Farmington, President Grant was back in Salt Lake City and along with the other members of the First Presidency preached the Reformation to the Church members who gathered together at the Bowery for morning and afternoon meetings. Brigham Young gave two sermons during the day in which he stated:

I feel to call upon this congregation to know whether any of them, or whether all of them, wish salvation. If they do, I have the gospel of salvation for them; and I

1Ibid.
call upon the people to know whether they are the friends of God, or only of themselves individually. I do not know of any better way to get an expression from the people, as to whether they wish the gospel preached to them...than to have the brethren and sisters, those who so wish and desire, manifest it by rising upon their feet. You will observe those who do not rise. (The vast congregation all responded by standing up.) Take your seats again. You have manifested that you want to be Saints, and I am happy for the privilege of talking to such people.

When we get the font prepared, that is now being built, I will take you into the waters of baptism, if you repent of your sins. If you will covenant to live your religion and be Saints of the Most High, you shall have that privilege, and I will have the honor of baptizing you in the font, or of seeing that it is done....

Well, I just say my brethren and sisters...a separation must take place; you must part with your sins, or the righteous must be separated from the ungodly....

We need a reformation in the midst of this people; we need a thorough reform, for I know that very many are in a dozy condition with regard to their religion; I know this as well as I should if you were now to doze and go to sleep before my eyes.

You are losing the spirit of the gospel, is there any cause for it? No, only that which there is in the world. You have the weakness of human nature to contend with, and you suffer that weakness to decoy you away from the truth, to the side of the adversary; but now is the time to awake, before the time of burning....

Whether the world is going to be burned up within a year, or within a thousand years, does not matter a groat to you and me. We have the words of eternal life, we have the privilege of obtaining glory, immortality, and eternal lives, now will you obtain these blessings? Will you spend your lives to obtain a seat in the kingdom of God, or will you lie down and sleep, and go down to hell?

I want all the people to say what they will do, and I know that God wishes all his servants, all his faithful sons and daughters, the men and the women that inhabit this city, to repent of their wickedness, or we will cut them off.

Reformation Preached in Centerville and Bountiful

Continuing his plan of carrying the Reformation from

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1Journal of Discourse, IV, 43. 2Ibid., 51.
Kaysville southward into Salt Lake City, President Grant, again accompanied by Joseph Young and the home missionaries, traveled northward to Centerville and began a conference there on Thursday September 25th. After one day of preaching Jedediah Grant was not satisfied with the response of the people, and as a result the following occurred at the Friday morning meeting:

Prest. Grant said that he had considered the matter, and deemed it best to postpone baptism for the present, that the people may have time to prepare their minds, that they may be benefited by the administration of that sacred ordinance.

Prest. J. Young and Elders Willes, Clements and Johnson coincided with Prest. Grant's views, and made appropriate remarks.

Bishop Smith regretted the condition of the people; proposed a fast day and other measures, to prepare the people for baptism; and expressed a great desire to fulfil the duties of his office.

Prest. Grant instructed the Bishop and officers of the ward to cut off every person that would not keep the commandments of God; to put their houses in order; to appoint a fast day for the 16th of October next; to keep a correct account of all that do and those who do not attend the fellowship meetings which are to be held every Sunday, up to the day appointed to hold the fast; and that the officers and all good men assist in carrying out those instructions, that the ward may be purified from all evil and characters. Urged the people to attend their fellowship meetings, and adjourned the conference to the 16th of Oct., 1856.¹

Thus cutting short the work of the Reformation in Centerville the Elders continued their course south toward Salt Lake City, stopping at Bountiful, Davis County, for their next conference. The following minutes of the meetings at Bountiful indicate that the preaching was more spirited and severe than at the previous conferences:

¹Deseret News, October 8, 1856.
Elder Joseph Johnson addressed the meeting, on the subject of the reformation.

Elder J. Gates followed on the same subject. Told the people that they were guilty of ingratitude, that the anger of the Father was kindled against them, and that immediate repentance with fasting and prayer and a return to their duties with full purpose of heart, could alone save them from destruction.

Prest. Grant addressed the meeting, charging the people of Bountiful with being as cold as the ice of the Polar regions; that they had been in a deep sleep, and were still asleep. Reprimanded their slackness in assembling at meetings, and felt, from the unmistakable evidence around him, that the people were in a state of apostacy.

Prest. J. Young bore testimony to the truth of Prest. Grant's remarks, and felt satisfied there were causes in the ward to justify every reproof.

Elder T. Grover testified to the necessity of the reproofs that had been given, and that a lack of the Holy Spirit in Bountiful was too apparent for a man of God to be mistaken; and exhorted the people to cast away their avarice and covetousness, and begin to seek after the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

Elder Clements called upon the people to awake from their lethargy, and if they desired salvation, listen to the voice of the President, "live your religion."

Prest. Grant showed the people wherein they had sinned, and the necessity of an entire immediate reformation. Called upon all to repent and turn to the Lord their God, with broken hearts and contrite spirits.\(^1\)

The preaching continued all day Sunday at Bountiful with the people being warned that "stringent measures must be enforced to effect the reformation so necessary."\(^2\) President Grant expressed his firm conviction "that over half the meeting had never been converted."\(^3\) Because of these circumstances President Grant took the following action at the Monday morning meeting:

After asking the congregation some questions, Prest. Grant said that he did not feel free to baptize the

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\(^1\)Ibid.  \(^2\)Ibid.  \(^3\)Ibid.
people in their present condition, but requested the Bishop and his counselors to right up the ward; and when the work of preparation was accomplished he would come and baptize them. Blessed the Bishop, his counselors, and the people, and prayed the Lord to soften their hearts, and prepare them for the work of regeneration and salvation.1

During the conference at Bountiful President Grant had decided to resume the conference he had adjourned at Centerville. He sent several of the home missionaries there to complete the work of the Reformation while he conducted the conference at Bountiful. Consequently, there were special conferences in session at both places on Sunday, September 28th, and inasmuch as the two wards were only a few miles apart, President Grant was able to travel the short distance north to Centerville for the Sunday afternoon meeting there. The people gathered in the schoolhouse, and the work of the Reformation continued in the following manner:

Prest. Grant explained our duties in relation to the renewal of our covenants, and then asked the Bishop and his counselors whether they were willing to covenant, in the name of God Almighty and his Son Jesus Christ, and in the presence of holy angels, the servants of God and all men, to discharge their duties in the office and calling where-unto they were called, according to the ability that God should give them. This they did with uplifted hands. The High Priests, Seventies, Elders, Priests, Teachers, Deacons, male and female members, with uplifted hands, made covenants to discharge all duties pertaining to their respective callings, and to keep all the commandments of God, according to the ability that God should give them.

Many acknowledged their faults, with a great desire to amend, renew their covenants before God by baptism, and receive the Holy Ghost.

Prest. Grant was much pleased with the spirit that the officers had manifested, and with the desire manifested

1Ibid.
for the Spirit of the Lord. Spoke of the spirit that was here on Friday...and of the different spirit prevalent on the present occasion. Wished the people to come forward on Monday morning at 9 o'clock, to renew their covenants by baptism.¹

President Grant returned to Bountiful later in the afternoon and was not present in Centerville for the evening meeting or the following baptismal service which took place on Monday morning:

Short addresses were delivered by Elders Willes, Johnson and Clements, on the manner persons should conduct themselves during the administration of the ordinance of baptism.

Bishop Smith made a few remarks, and prayed that the Spirit of the Lord might rest upon the penitent and faithful.

Meeting dismissed for half an hour to prepare for baptism.

At the water's edge, after singing, Elder Gates asked the congregation if they were willing to again make covenant to keep the commandments of God, to which all cheerfully responded with uplifted hands. Two hundred and thirty-one persons were baptized by Elders Gates, Willes, Johnson and Clements, and Bishop Smith and his counselors.²

After suspending the conference at Bountiful on Monday morning President Grant and Joseph Young came to Centerville and arrived in time to participate in this confirmation service at two o'clock P. M:

Prest. J. Young felt happy to meet on such an occasion; dwelt upon the solemn covenants the Saints had made, and said it would be better for the Saints had they never made such covenants if they did not abide them....

Prest. Grant confirmed the Bishop, his counselors and others; and the Elders proceeded to confirm the remainder of the congregation.

Prest. Grant made a few remarks; blessed the congregation, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the authority of the Holy Priesthood; blessed their lands,

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
their flocks, their substance, even all they had, and all the Saints responded with a loud amen.

Thus we have had a time ever to be remembered by the Saints now residing in Centerville. The Spirit of the Almighty seems to be lit up in the countenances of all; and each one seems desirous to become a brother and a friend. 1

The work of the Reformation was not finished in Bountiful until over a month later. A group of home missionaries were finally sent there on November 1st to hold a special conference. Excerpts from the minutes of the conference follow:

Elder Ferguson called the attention of the people to a sense of their duties, and called upon them to signify their willingness to keep the commandments of God and live their religion.

The request was responded to with an unanimous aye.

... the people assembled at the water's edge. Elders McAllister and Ferguson began the baptizing, and called to their aid Bishop Stoker. 2

One of the home missionaries who participated in this special conference, J. D. T. McAllister, gives this additional information about the conference in his diary:

...10, A. M. Meeting was addressed by us all...at 2 o'clock we met at the water's edge and Baptised between two and three hundred person who felt to renew their Covenants and keep the Commandments of God. at 6 o'clock met at the School house and Confirmed those who had not it attended to at the waters edge, then administered the Holy Sacrament, after which we all Spoke to the people. The Holy Ghost was with us, and we rejoiced exceedingly at 12 o'clock midnight we dismissed the meeting.

...We left Bro Holbrooks. (where we stoped while in Bountifull) and went to Great Salt Lake City. Called at the President's office and reported ourselves to President J. M. Grant, then dispersed to our homes...[sic]

1Ibid. 2Ibid., November 19, 1856.

On September 28th, the Sunday of the two conferences at Centerville and Bountiful, the cause of the Reformation was also being furthered in Salt Lake City where Heber C. Kimball told the Saints in the Bowery:

There is a Reformation proposed; it has already commenced in the north, and the people there are repenting, that is, they say they repent; and many have gone forward and been baptized for the remission of their sins.

But, brethren and sisters, you may go forward and be baptized, and say you repent, and receive the laying on of hands, and if you do not repent and lay aside your wickedness, you will go to hell. 1

The Reformation in Spanish Fork

Simultaneous with these Reformation meetings in the northern part of the state, a three day conference was in session sixty miles south of Salt Lake City in Spanish Fork. The conference was presided over by Patriarch John Young, who was assisted by Elder J. V. Long and two home missionaries, Elders Daniel D. Hunt and Joseph G. Hovey. A few highlights of the conference were reported as follows:

Patriarch John Young spoke on the necessity of a reformation among the Saints throughout the valleys of the mountains.

...Elder Hovey...exhorted the saints to repentance, and to go forth into the waters of baptism for the remission of their sins; to set their houses in order and prepare themselves for the celestial law.

Patriarch John Young exhorted the saints to live their religion, for if they did not they would get into darkness and apostatize.

Elder Hovey followed...and exhorted the brethren to make every thing straight before they go into the waters of baptism.

Elder Hunt requested those who wished to renew their

1Deseret News, October 8, 1856.
covenants by baptism to meet at the Fort to-morrow, at 8 a. m.

Patriarch John Young enjoined upon the saints to observe the utmost decorum and reverence, while the sacred ordinance of baptism was being attended to. After prayer and a few preliminary remarks, br. Hovey baptized Bishop John S. Butler and his counselors.... About 400 persons were immersed.... Confirmation was attended to in the Bowery.... The Spirit of God was poured out to a great degree, and peace and happiness characterized the assembly.1

Spread of the Reformation throughout Utah

By the end of September, 1856 the Reformation had gained a great deal of momentum which was soon to carry it throughout the settlements of the Territory. In Salt Lake City it was preached at practically all public gatherings. The following occurred on September 29th:

There was a general parade of the Nauvoo Legion; never so poor a turn-out before. The legion was addressed by Lieut. Gen. Daniel H. Wells, with much spirit and energy, on the necessity of reform in the military as well as the religious.2

On September 30th Wilford Woodruff gave a report on the progress of the Reformation to that date in a letter to his fellow apostle, Orson Pratt:

The Presidency of the Church have commenced a great reformation among this people in the valleys of the mountains. I have never heard as strong sermons delivered to the people as have been preached unto them of late. The Presidency are weighing the people in the balances, and are calling upon them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

President Grant has gone into the Northern Counties, and is preaching and baptizing whole Wards, and building up Churches. I presume the same course will be pursued

1Ibid., October 22, 1856.

2"Journal History", entry of September 29, 1856.
in the Wards in this City. The people begin to feel more than ever that they are dealing with the Spirit and power of God, and the holy Priesthood. Yes, the Latter-day Saints begin to feel that they are dealing with a Spirit that can reach the hearts, know the thoughts and intents thereof, and try the souls of men. The people are called to sanctify themselves before the Lord, that we may be prepared for the work of our God.¹

The work of the Reformation was facilitated in Salt Lake City by the completion of a baptismal font which was located near the Endowment House on Temple Square. The Presidency of the Church presided at the dedication of the font on October 2nd, and the next Sunday the work of the Reformation continued at an accelerated pace.² Crowded meetings were held in the Bowery in the morning and afternoon and the Saints were addressed by members of the First Presidency and several of the home missionaries. At 5:30 P. M. the people gathered at the new baptismal font, and a "great number" were baptized by Presidents Young and Kimball.³ Those baptized were confirmed afterward under the direction of President Grant.⁴

The Semi-annual conference of the Church convened in Salt Lake City on October 6th, but at the opening session the preaching of the Reformation became secondary to the more pressing matter of arranging relief for the Willie's and Martin's handcart companies that had been trapped by

¹Ibid., entry of September 30, 1856. Quoted from the Millennial Star 18:794.

²Ibid., entry of October 2, 1856.

³Ibid., entry of October 5, 1856.

⁴McAllister Diary, p. 89.
early snows on the Sweetwater. However, the conference records indicate that his neglect of the Reformation was only temporary. George Laub recorded in his diary:

...Now in the Month of October 6th 1856 Conference the First Presidency made a Call for 40 teems as their first Buisness of Conference for to goe Back on the Road to assist the hand cart Company...Now the teems was made up to the Call & Conference Continued But from that time forth the First Presidency Commenced Crying repent repentance and the arrows of the almighty was then hurled to Every heart through out the territory....[sic]

Wilford Woodruff directed most of his remarks at the conference to the subject of the Reformation. He said:

I want now to say a few words upon the subject of our reformation. The Presidency have called upon us to reform our ways, to renew our covenants and commence to live the lives of Saints....I say then that they have called upon us to put on the whole armor, to reform our conduct. Men having authority have called upon us to forsake our wickedness and our follies...they have told us that we were asleep as a people, and we have been told of the condition that we are in by the Prophets of God....

You may take the Twelve, and the Seventies and High Priests, and all the other quorums, except the First Presidency, and they have been more or less asleep. I believe the First Presidency have been awake or they would not have known that we were asleep, and they now think that it is time for us to awake and arise from our slumbers, and I feel so too.

...Almost all the male members in this land bear the holy priesthood of the Most High, and yet at the same time we have had more stealing, more lying, more swearing in one year than there should have been in a thousand.... Why, we have violated our covenants which we made at the waters of baptism....

I believe that the majority of the people are ready to wake up; I believe that they already begin to feel the reformation spirit in them, and it is certainly time for there are great events at our door...we should never be asleep but be ever ready to do the work of God and to build up his kingdom, for the day has now come when we must awake and become the friends of God; we must not

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allow anything to stand between us and our God or we shall be cut off.¹

The Sunday after Semi-annual Conference the intensity of the preaching in Salt Lake City had not decreased. The Bowery was the scene of two spirited meetings at which the authorities spoke very bluntly. In the forenoon Jedediah Grant said:

...We want to see the spirit of reformation in the people; we wish them to have it in practice in their houses; not only to talk about it, but to practice upon it.

...There are too many who like intoxicating drinks, tobacco, filth, dirt and meanness [sic]. Some like to break the Sabbath, to brand another's ox, which they find on the range, and to occasionally steal a little; there are some here who will steal, when they have an opportunity.

I wish to inform the new-comers that if they want to find the finest and best men in the world they are here; and if they want to find the meanest, most pusillanimous curses that the world can produce, we have them here. We have here some of the most miserable cusses that ever the Almighty frowned upon, for it takes an apostate Mormon to be a mean devil.

...I desire to see men reform in their acts, and not say, 'let our neighbors be converted,' but let them say, in the name of Israel's God, 'the reformation shall be carried into our houses, to our children, and we will take it home with us and will gird on our armor and go ahead in the cause of God,' for this is what we are sent here for.²

A severe spirit of retribution seemed to characterize a conference that was held at the Jordan Mill Branch, West Jordan, on October 15th and 16th. Soon after the conference began a man was cut off from the Church "for reviling against the Bishop" and the next day a man and his wife were excom-

¹Deseret News, November 26, 1856.
²Deseret News, January 7, 1857.
municated for "unbelief and reviling against the authorities."¹ Ninety-three people were baptized, and after confirmation the following manifestations were reported:

The congregation seemed to lighted up with the Holy Ghost; they prophesied, spoke in tongues, had the interpretation thereof, and the blessings of the Almighty God rested upon them.²

Patriarch John Young and three of the home missionaries had conducted the conference at West Jordan, and at its conclusion they took their journey in a southerly direction and resumed the work of Reformation in Lake City, or American Fork, where they held a conference from October 18th to 22nd. After raising their hands to heaven "as a sign that they would keep their covenants," over two hundred persons were immersed and confirmed.³ Spiritual blessings similar to those at West Jordan were reported as follows:

Many of the brethren and sisters bore testimony of the good time already come. Prophesyings, visions, speaking in tongues and interpretations, and every heart felt the penetrating influence of the Holy Ghost.⁴

On October 25th this same group of Elders arrived in Pleasant Grove where President Joseph Young joined them for a conference that set an endurance record by extending over a period of six days. Elder Hunt felt that the conference should be adjourned until the people should prepare themselves by repentance, but when Patriarch Young asked the people whether they wanted the conference to continue "all

¹Ibid., October 29, 1856.  ²Ibid.  
³Ibid., November 5, 1856.  ⁴Ibid.
answered Yes."¹ At the conclusion of the evening session on the fourth day Patriarch Young finally proposed rebaptism and the next morning three-hundred-and-two persons were re-baptized and confirmed.²

Discourses were given in the Tabernacle at Salt Lake City on November 2nd with President Brigham Young and Grant giving lively sermons on the Reformation. President Young made the following relevant remarks:

You may ask me whether there is a need of reformation. Yes; and if I were to dictate you how to reform I should have to tell the old story over again, as I already have hundreds of times. First, reform as to your moral character, dealing, walk, precepts and examples. Reform first morally, before you get down before the Lord and plead with Him for the visions of eternity to be opened to your understandings, before you ask for the vail to be taken from your eyes. First reform in your moral character and conduct one towards another, so that every man and woman will deal honestly, and walk uprightly with one another, and extend the arm of charity and benevolence to each other, as necessity requires. Be moral and strictly honest in every point, before you ask God to reform your spirit.

If the people in their present situation and mode of dealing in this city, to say nothing of those out of the city, all go to work now and have meetings and call upon God to get the spirit of reformation, but sing and pray about doing right without doing it, instead of singing themselves away to "everlasting bliss," they will sing and pray themselves into hell....³

The First Presidency called a Priesthood meeting at the Social Hall in Salt Lake City for the evening of November 3rd. On the stand were Presidents Young, Kimball, Grant, J. Young and several of the apostles. In this assembly a catechism was introduced which was to become an integral part

¹Ibid., November 12, 1856. ²Ibid. ³Journal of Discourses, IV, 58.
of the Reformation. The following description of the meeting is from John Powell, one of the participants:

After singing and prayer, Pres. B. Young had the doors locked. He then said, "I am about to question the brethren, and I charge them in the name of Jesus Christ to answer the truth. Those who cover up their sins the curse of God shall be upon them."

He then drew from the breast pocket of his coat a long slip of white paper, and read the following questions, calling upon the brethren to answer them as they were put.

1st- Have you shed innocent blood or assented thereunto?
2nd- Have you committed adultery?
3rd- Have you betrayed your brother?
4th- Have you borne false witness against your neighbor?
5th- Do you get drunk?
6th- Have you stolen?
7th- Have you lied?
8th- Have you contracted debts without the prospect of paying?
9th- Have you labored faithfully for your wages?
10th- Have you coveted that which belongs to another?
11th- Have you taken the name of the Lord in vain?
12th- Do you preside in your family as a servant of God?
13th- Have you paid your tithing in all things?

To all these questions the brethren answered.

President Brigham Young then said, "There are some brethren who have confessed to sins they have not done."

"I am happy to say there is not so much sin as I expected." Said if the brethren repented and done those things no more, they now started with a clean page, but if they did those things again their former sins would be accounted unto them.

At this meeting I saw the power of the Priesthood and felt the same as I never saw or felt before.1

As the Reformation grew older, this catechism grew longer until some versions of it contained as many as twenty-six questions.2 Even though the people had sometimes been

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questioned in previous Reformation meetings and the ward teachers had asked certain questions from time to time, there is no evidence that such a catechism was used prior to November, 1856.

The Death of Jedediah Grant

The Reformation probably lost its most enthusiastic supporter and diligent worker with the unexpected death of Jedediah Grant. Notice of his death was given as follows in the Deseret News:

A MIGHTY MAN HAS GONE TO REST

President Jedediah M. Grant, second Counselor in the First Presidency, died in this city at 20 minutes past 10 p.m. of December 1st, 1856 after a short illness.

The funeral will take place in the Tabernacle, at 10 a.m. of the 4th inst., when Pres. Brigham Young will address the assembly, if his health and the state of his feelings permit.

The demise of Prest. Grant has cast a deep gloom over our city; stores are closed and the ordinary avocations of business suspended.¹

President Grant's obituary in the Deseret News gives this explanation of the cause of his death:

During the last six months of his sojourn with us, he labored most indefatigably and beyond his physical endurance, in starting and rolling forth that reformation which is sweeping through our settlements, and kindling a fire in Zion which will be joyfully felt by the remotest Saint and cause sinners to fear. These pre-eminently useful labors were followed by that brief though severe illness which freed his spirit from its earthly tenement, to join Joseph in a more enlarged sphere of action, and where he can bring to bear a greatly increased ability to aid in ushering in the reign of peace and righteousness upon the earth.

... died, as he lived and counseled, with his 'armor on and burnished.' And though all Saints deeply feel his departure, yet they can fully realize that it

¹Deseret News, December 3, 1856.
redounds to his and our 'infinite gain.'

The following quotations from George Laub and Wilford Woodruff show that they shared the conviction that President Grant's death was the result of his exertions in the Reformation:

Jedediah M Grant went fourth with all his might preaching & crying repentance and trimming & Hewing as he went along teaching Cleanliness & for the people to Strive to get the holy ghost. thus he went forth preaching repentance & Baptizing the people till he wore himself Down with Exertions and took Sick and died the First day of December. [Ed] 2

WE CANNOT SLEEP. I do not wonder that calling on the people to wake up has killed one man and it will kill more if we do not respond to the call; mortality cannot endure the visions of eternity that rests on them when they look on the Priesthood and see the position they are in; it has nearly laid brother Young in the grave; he felt he could not live until some man rose up and started the work of reformation. 3

Although President Grant was only forty years old at the time of his death, his health could not hold up under his strenuous labors in the Reformation. There were times when he preached vigorous sermons three times a day practically every day for several weeks. Some of the meetings he attended extended far into the night thus detracting from his rest. He often stood in the cold water of mountain streams for hours while baptizing people, even after autumn had brought a chill to the mountain air. Heber C. Kimball administered to him just before his death "to strengthen

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1Ibid., December 10, 1856.
2Laub Diary, p. 95.
3Journal of Discourses, IV, 147. From a sermon by Wilford Woodruff on Dec. 21, 1856.
his lungs,"¹ indicating that his sudden illness may have been pneumonia.

Grant was Salt Lake City's first and only mayor up to this time, having served in that office since 1851. Because of this civil office his funeral was accompanied by a long processional, comprised of bands, the military, his staff, and his relatives. At the funeral in the Tabernacle, which was two hours late in starting because of the procession, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball were the only speakers. President Kimball gave the following interesting account of a visit he made to the Grant home during the last hours of his colleague's life:

I went to see him one day last week, and he reached out his hand and shook hands with me; he could not speak, but he shook hands warmly with me. I felt for him, and wanted to raise him up, and to have him stay and help us whip the devils and bring to pass righteousness. Why? Because he was valiant, and I loved him....

I laid my hands upon him and blessed him, and asked God to strengthen his lungs that he might be easier, and in two or three minutes he raised himself up and talked for about an hour as busily as he could, telling me what he had seen and what he understood, until I was afraid he would weary himself, when I arose and left him.

He said to me, brother Heber, I have been into the spirit world two nights in succession, and, of all the dreads that ever came to me, the worst was to have to again return to my body, though I had to do it. But O, says he the order and government that was there! When in the spirit world I saw the order of righteous men and women....He would mention one item after another and say, "Why it is just as brother Brigham says it is; it is just as he has told us many a time."²

After the death of Jedediah Grant the work of the Reformation did not slacken. Those engaged in the work went forward with renewed determination, and others were called

¹Ibid., 135. ²Ibid.
to assist and sent out in every direction to complete the crusade.

The Reformation Preached in the Legislature

The headquarters of the Legislative Assembly for the Territory of Utah was moved from Fillmore to Salt Lake City for the session that convened in December, 1856. The Reformation had become such a dominant issue by this time that even the Legislature devoted much of its time to it. On December 18th and 19th the Legislature organized but "not much business was done except preaching...." After the Christmas recess the following occurred on Friday, December 26th:

...The House went into the council Chamber where President H. C. Kimball was preaching with great power being filled with the Spirit of God. Nearly all the members spoke all being filled with the spirit the meeting last till dark. The power and testimony of the Elders of Israel exceeded any thing that I have seen in many a day. It was truly a pentacost--

Two members of the legislature made these entries in their diaries for Tuesday, December 30th:

30 Both houses met in joint session & Pres Kimball required every member to repent of his sins and be baptized for remissions of same, before any business could be done, preparations were then made and all the members repaired to the Endowment House, were baptized in the font, confirmed & all were made to rejoice.

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1Laub Diary, p. 95.


4Haight Diary, p. 122.
Joint session met in committee of the whole on the State of the Reformation and passed an unanimous resolution to repent of and forsake our sins and be re-baptised for their remission and in conformity therewith went to dinner then repaired to the font filled it with water and some fifty-five were baptized I was baptized by F. D. Richards one of the Twelve and confirmed under the hands of A. P. Rockwood & Thomas Grover. There was an unusual out poring of the spirit of God manifested in joint session on this occasion during the Preaching of Presidents B. Young & H. C. Kimball. [sic]

In later meetings of the Legislature the Reformation was not neglected for "the remainder of the session was passed in doing much business and preaching reformation."2

The Reformation Reaches Remote Branches and Missions

The work of reform with its impressive symbol of rebaptism for the renewal of covenants not only spread quickly through the settlements of Utah but "to all the branches and conferences and missions of the Church."3 The comprehensive nature of the movement is indicated by the following entry in the diary of Goudy E. Hogan:

My son, Brigham Goudy Hogan, was born March 30th 1856. This was in the days of reformation when all Israel was called on to reform and acknowledge their faults and make restitution to those they had wronged and be rebaptised and confirmed. There were a great many Elders as well as the first Presidency and 12 Apostles among the people preaching to repent. [author's underlining]4

Henry Boyle, a missionary in California, was engaged in the activities of the Reformation there in January, 1857. He recorded:

1Stout Diary, p. 387. 2Haight Diary, p. 122.
3Roberts, op. cit., IV, 126.
Homestead House—Sun. 11. I preached here this afternoon followed by Elder Shearman. We scored it to the "luke warm" saints here. I think we waked them up a little, for I heard some of them say they were going to be rebaptised.¹

One of the most isolated branches of the Church was located at Fort Supply in Wyoming. Because of a severe winter that year, the Reformation reached this outpost a little later than the other Mormon colonies only a few months before the Fort was burned in the path of Johnston's Army. John Pulsipher, who was living at the Fort at this time, recorded the following:

On Sunday May 10, Pres. Bullock said the time had come, to criticise this people—and asked bros. Robinson, Crandall & Thompson to assist so the four sides of our Fort were all waited on at the same time.

CATECHISM

I will record some of the questions that were asked:

Eighteen Questions are listed

It has been my rule in life, that when I injure any person, to make it right with them, then it is easy to keep right.

Myself and wife were Catechised by Bro. Thompson. It was a satisfaction & consolation to hear the work of the servant of the Lord that had a right to speak in his name—Saying that my sins were forgiven me & inasmuch as I do right—they should be remembered against me no more forever. The blessings of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, a numerous posterity—Wisdom knowledge & great faith were promised me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

...Sunday 17, after a good meeting we assembled on the bank of Smith's fork of Green River a little east of our Fort & most of us were baptized. I was baptized by Elder Isaac Bullock, for remission of sins & renewal of Covenants & confirmed by Elder Thomas Jankins—Edwon Whipple & moses Sanders laying on hands. [sic]²

The many rebaptisms performed in the English mission


in 1857 are an indication that the work of reform was being
effectected there. An example of this is recorded by one of the
missionaries, John Lyman Smith:

I baptized several and re-baptized about seventy-five
persons. In September 1857, I went to London and spent
six weeks laboring in the London pastorate, preaching
on an average of eight times a week.  

The Duration of the Reformation

Because of the great number of people who accepted
the invitation of the Elders to be rebaptized, some had to
wait until the snow and ice melted so the outdoor streams
could again be used for this purpose. In February many were
rebaptized under the same conditions as the following young
lady:

In the winter of 1856 and 57 the Reformation began,
all were called to repent of their sins, ask forgiveness,
were caticized then rebaptized. I was then 14 years
old, was baptized in February. Chunks of ice were floating
in the mill race where we were baptized. These were
enthusiastic times and many confessions were made. [sic]

By the end of February, 1857 the work of the Great
Reformation had evidently passed its peak. George Laub re-
corded:

...Repentence was Cryed Long & Loud & the peoples
Sins ware Set before them of Various Cinds which Caused
Conviction in near Every heart & preching Continued till
febuary and the people rounded to to Serve the Lord
their god. [sic]

1John Lyman Smith, "Diary," MSS (Copied by the B. Y.
U. Library, 1940), p. 32.

2Lucy H. W. Flake, "Diary," MSS (Copied by the B. Y.

3Laub Diary, p. 95.
There were many of the wards in Salt Lake City that were still engaged in the work of the Reformation during the month of March. The following rebaptisms were performed there on the dates given:

On Monday the 2nd of March 1857 I with all the Presidents and Teachers in the ward were baptized by Bishop Rawleigh and confirmed at the water's edge.

On the following Thursday and Friday the whole ward was rebaptized and confirmed in the school house....I was scribe to record their genealogies and rebaptism.\(^1\)

**Thursday March 12, 1857** Fine weather. At eight o'clock A. m. The Brethren & sisters from the first fieve blocks of this ward Some 200 in number assembled at the school house & commenced our march led by our bishop & his counsel to the waters of baptism in City Creek Some 60 rods above Prest. Kimball's Residence. Here in the presence of High Heaven & our Brethren we had the privilage of renewing our covenants to live our religion from this time hence forth, & forever & of going forth in the waters of baptism & haveing all our past sins weaknesses remitted no more to be remembered against us in as much as we live faithful from this time forward... I was called to assist in confirming I was baptised & confirmed By Bro. John T. Caine....

**Friday March 13/57** Fine day again. Bro. Orin & family came up from his farm & I accompanied them to the water of baptism where we found the Saints from the remaining four blocks of the ward assembled. The Choir were present & sung some beautiful hymns before the baptiseng commenced. \(^2\)

**March Sat 14 1857** this day I was babbtized in the slough by brother John McDonald and Confirmed by Brothers Robert Watson and Chas L. Smith.... \(^3\)

It took until May for the Reformation to reach Fort Supply, Wyoming. The missions of the Church were engaged in

\(^1\)O. B. Huntington, "Diary," MSS (Copied by the B. Y. U. Library, 1942), II, 110.


the work of the movement a few months later than this.¹

On June 7, 1857 Brigham Young addressed the Saints in the Bowery. He said that "within the last six months, comparatively a hundred tons of care and anxiety" had been removed from his shoulders and indicated that most of the objectives of the Reformation had been reached by this time.²

The diminishing references to the Reformation in the sermons of the General Authorities and in the Deseret News indicate that by the time of this June sermon by President Young the activities of the Reformation had mostly subsided, although there was still constant effort to maintain the religious enthusiasm that had been generated through the previous winter's labors.

¹See page 50. ²Journal of Discourses, IV, 348.
CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF THE REFORMATION

Repentance

Since the primary objective of the Reformation was to separate the people from their sins the principle of repentance became the dominant doctrine of the movement. Repentance as taught by the Elders of the Church consisted of five things: (1) confession of sin, (2) forsaking sin, (3) forgiving others of their sins, (4) restitution for all wrong done, (5) never returning to sin. These factors of repentance are enumerated in the following record of October Conference which was held in Salt Lake City in 1856:

At the Oct. conference the heads of the Church preached the necessity of a reformation among the Saints by confessing their own sins against God and their brethren, [sic] and forsaking the same and by forgiving the sins of others and making restitution for all wrongs as much as possible. This glorious work of reformation and restitution soon commenced in G. S. L. City and spread with rapidity to all the branches of the church. All who confessed and restored were re-baptized for the last time for the remission of their sins. In this reformation, I began to weigh myself in the scales of righteousness and soon found myself wanting in many respects; and saw more the necessity of forgiving my enemies than I ever did before and came fully to the determination to root out every prejudice in my heart against them if any there was remaining, and hold no feelings against them but of the best kind.1

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Heber C. Kimball stressed the importance of these elements of repentance in the following sermon in the Bowery at Salt Lake City on October 12, 1856:

I am satisfied that it is the good pleasure of our God that a reformation should take place in the hearts of all Israel. I do not believe that there is any man or woman here so good but what they can be a little better. There are good people, there are those that we call the best. My feelings and exertions, for this people and for all the house of Israel, are and have been to the end that we may be all of that class which we denominate the best.

The spirit of reformation has been upon me all the while; but for the last six months that spirit has in a more particular manner moved upon the Presidency of this church, and they have cried unto you as with the voice of an earthquake and commanded you to repent and forsake your follies. Their voice has been like the voice of thunder unto this people, calling upon them to repent and turn unto the Lord their God.

But what is the use of a person's being baptized, until they first confess and forsake their sins, and make restitution where they have injured any one? If persons have lied, it is their duty to repent and retract their false statements, and confess their lies. If any have stolen, it is for them to repent and steal no more; also to restore fourfold, where it is required. I have my doubts whether a man or woman can be saved upon any other principle, for this was the doctrine of Jesus, the Son of God; and it is the doctrine taught in these latter days.

...Satisfaction must be made to the one injured, or baptism will be of no benefit; the Holy Ghost will not ratify that act, until I have paid the debt.

...Do not be baptized and then take an unrighteous course, but repent of and forsake all sin. I have nothing in my heart to preach to this people but faith and repentance, and to teach them to have confidence in God....

A month later at the Tabernacle President Kimball said:

Last evening I attended the High Priests' quorum, and perhaps there were a hundred or a hundred and fifty High Priests present. In that meeting brother Brigham gave permission to the members of that Quorum to be

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1Deseret News, January 7, 1857.
baptized in the font; but he objected to any one going into that font to be baptized for the remission of sins, until he had actually repented of and made restitution for the sins he had committed. If any of them had done anything wrong, he wished them to confess to those they had aggrieved or injured, and make restitution; and wherein they had committed sins and violated their Priesthood and their covenants, they must make satisfaction to those they had injured; and not step into that font, until they have done these things.

That is the course to take; and how do you expect to get a remission of your sins, and be forgiven by the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, so that you can have the Holy Ghost rest upon you, unless you repent and make restitution or restoration, and make atonement for the sins that you may have committed?

I pray to my Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, that the High Priest or any other person that attempts to go into that font without previously making restitution for such evil as he may have committed, may be cursed and withered until he does make restitution.1

Jedediah Grant was probably the most outspoken of the Church authorities in urging the people to confess their sins. He was displeased with persons who would not readily confess or admit their sins and warned such individuals in these words:

I sometimes confess men's sins for them, and they will get up and parry off. I confessed a man's sins here lately, and he supposed that I did not know what I was talking about. If he had corrected me a little further, I would have told all his sins; I would have told the things that were in his very heart; and if he parries again, I will come out more pointedly than I did then.

In some of the wards men will rise up and confess their sins, and after a week's reflection, they will go to meeting and commence parrying, and make themselves as good as an angel....2

There was such great pressure exerted upon people to confess their sins during the Reformation that Brigham Young observed; "There are some brethren who have confessed

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1Journal of Discourses, IV, 50. 2Ibid., 74.
to sins they have not done."¹ This pressure also induced
many to confess their sins promiscuously and thus do themselves
and others great harm. Because of these abuses of the prin-
ciple of confession, Brigham Young made the following pro-
nouncement in the Tabernacle on November 9, 1856:

...Confess your faults to the individuals that you
ought to confess them to, and proclaim them not on the
house tops. Be careful that you wrong not yourselves.

...I do not want to know anything about the sins of this
people, at least no more than I am obliged to. If persons
lose confidence in themselves, it takes away the strength,
faith and confidence that others have in them; it leaves
a space that we call weakness. If you have committed a
sin that no other person on the earth knows of and which
harms no other one, you have done a wrong and sinned
against your God, but keep that within your own bosom,
and seek to God and confess there, and get pardon for
your sin.

If children have sinned against their parents, or
husbands against their wives, or wives against their
husbands, let them confess their faults one to another
and forgive each other, and there let the confession
stop; and then let them ask pardon from their God. Con-

fess your sins to whoever you have sinned against, and
let it stop there. If you have committed a sin against
the community, confess to them. If you have sinned in
your family, confess there. Confess your sins, iniquities,
and follies, where that confession belongs, and learn to
classify your actions.

Suppose that the people were to get up here and confess
their sins, it would destroy many innocent persons. Does
Texas know about it? No, nor you about one another, if
you will be wise and confess your wrongs where they ought
to be confessed, and keep the knowledge of them from every
person it ought to be kept from. In this way you will
have strength against the enemy, who would otherwise
buffet you and say, "Here is your wickedness made manifest,"
and would overcome you and destroy all the confidence you
have in yourselves and in your God.

...Take a wise course; do not be foolish. I want you
to reform, for there is need of it; though the world
knows nothing about it. They hate us for the truth's
sake, and seek to destroy us; and I say to them, go it

¹Powell Diary, p. 58. See page 44.
ye cripples, while you are young; for the day is coming in which you will find yourselves as badly crippled as ever the "Mormons" were.¹

In connection with their exhortations to never return to sin the Elders often repeated the following teaching contained in the **Doctrine and Covenants** of the Church:

And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.²

George Laub reports the teaching of this principle during the Reformation as follows:

Now the people was weid in the ballences and all ware found wanting in one thing or another So the had nearly all gone to Sleep as the ware luled by Satans Craftyness Now while the people have and are repenting the Lord Spoke again by the mouth of his Servent Brigham Young that if The People would repent and Confess their Sins the Should all be forgiven But if the did not repent the Curse of god Should rest upon them & if the repented & then turned Back again to their former ways all their former Sinns Should Come upon them again But now all their Sins Should be forgiven Save the Shedding of Innocent Blood But all the others.... [Sig]³

Cleanliness

The Church leaders held the conviction that filth and spirituality were incompatible, and, therefore, repentance in moral and spiritual affairs could not be complete and effective unless it was accompanied by repentance in matters of personal and community cleanliness. As a result, physical

¹*Journal of Discourses*, IV, 78-80.

²*Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), p. 133.

³Laub Diary, p. 95.
purity was urged by the Elders, and again Jedediah Grant
spoke out boldly for reform in this matter. On November 2,
1856 in the Tabernacle he stated:

Some here keep their children too dirty for admission
into a district school where I was raised; and in some
houses the towels look as though they had passed Noah's
ark, or had been used by some of the inhabitants of Sodom
and Gomorrah, and the knives and forks have the appearance
of having been rusting since Adam was driven from the
garden of Eden.

I want to see the people wake up and reform, forsake
all their evil habits and everything that is dark, loath-
some and impure. I want to see them eschew all dirt, and
filth, and degradation, and cease profaning the Sabbath,
and the name of the Lord God of Israel...I tell you that
the Gentiles would be shocked at the filth and dirt of
some of the sons and daughters of Israel, and feel offended
to associate with them; I mean that portion of the Gentiles
that are pure in their moral habits.

I want to see the people repent, as the President said
this morning, and make a reformation in their lives, in
their doings, and in keeping their houses, farms, and
everything they have, clean and tidy.

... We talk about daughters rivalling their mothers. How
many daughters have we that know how to spin, make butter,
keep hairs and flies wings and legs on one plate, and the
butter on the other....

...You may talk of reform, you may preach upon a virtuous
life, upon cleanliness, upon God and the Holy Ghost, but
while there is filth around the house, filth in the yard,
and in every part of the city, your preaching will not
amount to much. Some people are never contented unless
the cow yard is under their noses, the hen coop in the
parlor, and the privy in the kitchen, that is if they
have any privy.

I want the people to wake up to a sense of their duty,
and begin to serve God and repent of their sins, repent
of every improper habit.1

In company with Brigham Young, President Grant attended
a Reformation meeting held in the Seventeenth Ward School-
house in Salt Lake City in October of 1856. At this gathering

1Journal of Discourses, IV, 73-74.
he made these rather blunt remarks regarding cleanliness:

> It is your duty to keep clean. I have given the Teachers a new set of questions to ask the people. I say to them, ask the people whether they keep clean. Do you wash your bodies once in each week, when circumstances will permit? Do you keep your dwellings, out-houses and door yards clean? The first work of the reformation with some, should be to clean away the filth about their premises. How would some like to have Prest. Young visit them and go through their buildings, examine their rooms, bedding, &c.? Many houses stink so bad that a clean man could not live in them, nor hardly breathe in them. Some men were raised in stink, and so were their fathers before them. I would not attempt to bless any body in such places. You may inquire why I talk so. Can you talk in a better style about dirt, nastiness and filth? If you can, I cannot, and at the same time make people feel enough upon the subject to put away their filth and be clean. If you want me to speak smoother, do better and keep cleaner. Were I to talk about God, heaven, angels, or anything good, I could talk in a more refined stype, but I have to talk about things as they do exist among us.¹

**Catechism**

The catechism used during the Reformation was a check list to assist the Bishops and missionaries in their questioning of the Saints and to aid people in their repentance. The earliest list of questions used contained thirteen questions, but this was soon lengthened to twenty-six. Church members were catechized to determine their worthiness for rebaptism and if sins were revealed "it was required of all those who had been guilty of any of those sins to confess to those who had been wronged and make restitution to their satisfaction."²

The catechism is not mentioned in the first Reformation meetings held in Davis County and was apparently introduced

¹Deseret News, February 4, 1857.
²Morris Autobiography, p. 75.
later, in November 1856, at Salt Lake City.\(^1\) As the Reformation progressed an inquisitional pamphlet was prepared containing these questions:

Have you committed murder, by shedding innocent blood, or consenting thereto?
Have you betrayed your brethren or sisters in anything?
Have you committed adultery, by having any connection with a woman that was not your wife, or a man that was not your husband?
Have you taken and made use of property not your own, without the consent of the owner?
Have you cut hay where you had no right to, or turned your animals into another person's grain or field, without his knowledge and consent?
Have you lied about or maliciously misrepresented any person or thing?
Have you borrowed anything that you have not returned, or paid for?
Have you borne false witness against your neighbor?
Have you taken the name of Deity in vain?
Have you coveted anything not your own?
Have you been intoxicated with strong drink?
Have you found lost property and not returned it to the owner, or used all diligence to do so?
Have you branded an animal that you did not know to be your own?
Have you taken another's horse or mule from the range and rode it, without the owner's consent?
Have you fulfilled your promises in paying?
Have you taken water to irrigate with, when it belonged to another person at the time you used it?
Do you pay your tithing promptly?
Do you teach your family the gospel of salvation?
Do you speak against your brethren, or against any principle taught us in the Bible, Book of Mormon, Book of Doctrine and Covenants, Revelations given through Joseph Smith the Prophet and the Presidency of the Church as now organized?
Do you wash your body and have your family do so, as often as health and cleanliness require and circumstances will permit?
Do you labor six days and rest, or go to the house of worship on the seventh?
Do you and your family attend Ward meetings?
Do you preside over your household as a servant of God, and is your family subject to you?
Have you labored diligently and earned faithfully

\(^1\)See pages 43 and 44.
the wages paid you by your employers?
Do you oppress the hireling in his wages?
Have you taken up and converted any stray animal to your own use, or in any manner appropriated one to your benefit, without accounting therefor to the proper authorities?1

Following the above questions the catechism contained these instructions as to its use:

In answer to the above questions, let all men and women confess to persons they have injured and make restitution, or satisfaction. And when catechising the people, the Bishops, Teachers, Missionaries and other officers in the Church are not at liberty to pry into sins that are between a person and his or her God, but let such persons confess to the proper authority, that the adversary may not have an opportunity to take advantage of human weaknesses, and thereby destroy souls.2

At earlier Reformation meetings there had been occasions when people had been catechized in groups, but according to this letter of Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, dated January 31, 1857, this practice was abandoned in favor of individual questioning:

We have appointed two or more "Home Missionaries" to each ward in this city, and drawn up a list of questions to be asked the Latter-day Saints. Those missionaries go from house to house, and examine every individual therein separately; and, as a consequence, we have had this people examining themselves minutely; much honest confession and restitution have been made. Many of those who are called Saints have found out that they had spoken evil of one another and of the Priesthood; that they had lied, and doubted some of the revelations given through Joseph Smith....3

The catechism became one of the essential elements of the Reformation and was so widely circulated that it reached some of the most remote branches of the Church.4

1Morris Autobiography, pp. 74-75. See also Neff, op. cit., pp. 549-50.
2Neff, op. cit., p. 550. 3Ibid., p. 553.
4See page 49
Rebaptism

During the Reformation the Church members were urged to demonstrate their repentance and desire to renew all their religious obligations and covenants by receiving the ordinances of rebaptism and reconfirmation—so named because they were a repetition of the baptism and confirmation received by each member upon his entrance into the Church. Rebaptisms of this type should not be confused with the rebaptisms of persons who came back into the Church after apostatizing or being excommunicated. Joseph Smith established the principle, which is still observed by the Church, that a person's baptismal covenant is loosed or revoked by the power of the Priesthood through excommunication, and only by being baptized again could such an individual be considered a member of the Kingdom of God. Such baptisms—even though often referred to as rebaptisms by Church writers—are basically different from the ones that were performed during the Reformation for Church members who already had a valid baptism on the records of the Church.

A precedent for the rebaptism of Church members was established during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, although the practice never became Church wide in his day. Probably the first rebaptism in the Church was that of Frederick G. Williams who received his first baptism when he joined the Church in 1830. In 1837 when the Saints were living at Kirtland, Ohio, Williams' faithfulness became a matter of
dispute, but no official action was taken by the local High Council of the Church to excommunicate him. About a year later he renewed his Church obligations and according to Joseph Smith the following took place on August 5, 1838:

"President Rigdon preached in the afternoon, and several were confirmed among whom was Frederick G. Williams, who had recently been re-baptized." ¹ This baptism was apparently performed to show Williams' repentance and desire to become more faithful in the Church even though his previous baptism was still valid. Persons were also rebaptized during Joseph Smith's time for the purpose of healing. Joseph Smith gives this account of a rebaptism of this type:

Tues. 4 [1842] Emma is very sick again. I attended with her all the day, being somewhat poorly myself.

Wed. 5 My dear Emmas was worse. Many fears were entertained that she would not recover. She was baptized twice in the river, which evidently did her much good.²

Emma had been baptised previously at Coalesville, New York in 1830.³

James Sloan, a clerk of the Church at Nauvoo, Illinois, records the following instructions given by Joseph Smith in April Conference of 1842 regarding rebaptisms:

Baptisms for the dead, and for the healing of the body must be in the font of the Nauvoo Temple, those coming into the church and those rebaptized may be baptized in the river.⁴

The rebaptisms performed during the Great Reformation were not the first performed in Utah. Under the direction

¹Smith, op. cit., I, 55. ²Ibid., V, 167-68.
³Ibid., I, 89. ⁴Ibid., IV, 586.
of Brigham Young nearly every member of the Church who came to Utah during the early settlement of the area was rebaptized. These rebaptisms started upon the arrival of Brigham Young and the first company and were performed as follows:

President Young must have taken quite seriously such irregularities of the camp of the Pioneers... for he now proposed to them a solemn renewal of their covenants to righteousness, a new avowal of their acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ by baptism, President Young himself to set the example. This was first proposed to the Twelve and their immediate associates, then to the camp...

The proposition was joyfully and very generally accepted by the saints. This procedure, however, must not be regarded as casting any doubt upon the validity of their original baptisms, or repudiation of it as a sacrament. It was only to make more solemn the renewal of covenants with God.

Rebaptisms began on the sixth of August, 1847, with Brigham Young receiving the rite first, followed by the Twelve Apostles. They were all confirmed at the water's edge. The feeling of the Saints on this occasion is expressed as follows by Wilford Woodruff:

We considered this a duty and a privilege as we had come into a glorious valley to locate and build a temple, and build up Zion--we felt like renewing our covenants before the Lord and each other.

Two days later three hundred of the pioneers were rebaptized in City Creek at an early morning service commencing at six o'clock.

These first pioneers were not the only ones to be rebaptized upon arriving at their new home in the west, for

1Roberts, op. cit., II, 286-87. 2Ibid. 3Ibid. Quoted from Wilford Woodruff's Journal MSS. 4Bancroft, op. cit., p. 265.
the practice was continued from that time forward. All who
came to establish the kingdom of God were expected to redden-
cate themselves to the Lord through rebaptism. In 1853
Brigham Young explained this policy in the following exhor-
tation in the old Tabernacle:

I will refer again to the brethren and sisters who
have lately come over the plains. My counsel to them
today is, as it has been on former occassions to all who
have come into these valleys, Go and be baptised for the
remission of sins, repenting of all your wanderings from
the path of righteousness, believing firmly in the name
of Jesus Christ, that all your sins will be washed away.
If any of you inquire what is the necessity of your being
baptised, as you have not committed any sins, I answer,
it is necessary to fulfill all righteousness.
I have heard some of you cursing and swearing, even
some of the Elders of Israel. I would be baptised seven
times, were I in your place; I would not stop teasing
some good Elder to baptize me again and again, until I
could think my sins forgiven. I would not live over
another night until I was baptised enough to satisfy me
that my sins were forgiven. Then go and be confirmed,
as you were when you first embraced the religion of Jesus.
That is my counsel.1

An early settler to Lehi, John Bushman, makes the
following entry in his diary in 1852:

The authorities decided that all that came to the
valleys should renew their covenants by baptism. So
all the Bushman family were rebaptized, and the Saints
did enjoy a rest from their enemies for ten years.... 2

Rebaptism at this time was not confined to the new
settlers in Utah but was practiced in many branches of the
Church where the presiding authorities felt the people needed
to renew their faith and activity in the Church. This entry
of February 8, 1847 in the diary of Elder O. B. Huntington,

1Journal of Discourses, II, 8-9.

2John Bushman, "Diary," MSS (Copied by the B. Y. U.
a missionary to England, explains the use of rebaptism among the English members of the Church:

The saints were more lively there than I could have expected, they being visited very seldom by any of the Elders. They were ready, many, for rebaptism but I could not attend to it then, and thought it best to let them consider upon it and the more get ready to go at once. Now it was almost a general thing through England that the Saints were being rebaptised, for they had many and mostly become old and cold and it required a renewal of covenants and fresh works together with more faith and diligence, to give the work new impetus and revive the drooping spirits of the saints, and the work generally. 1

Although rebaptism during the Reformation was not a new practice it was apparently more concentrated and general than it had been prior to that time. Ward and stake records of the Church indicate that practically all members of the Church received this impressive rite, after which they were reconfirmed for the reception of the Holy Ghost. The following baptismal prayer—which may have been introduced prior to the Reformation—was used during the movement and shows that by this time the meaning of the ordinance had been extended to include a remission of sins: "Having been commissioned by Jesus Christ, I baptize you for the renewal of your covenant and remission of your sins." 2

Even though people were supposed to have been baptized "for the last time" 3 during the Reformation, this did not mark the end of the ordinance in the Church. The practice of rebaptizing new immigrants continued, and the rite was still performed for individuals or groups who were believed to be

1Huntington Diary, I, 114.
2Deseret News, January 7, 1857.
3Johnson Diary, p. 56. See page 54.
slipping in the faith.¹

The Law of Consecration

During the Reformation an attempt was made to stimulate participation in the law of consecration, which had been practiced earlier in the Church at Kirtland, Ohio and Independence, Missouri but was abandoned because of persecution and the inability of the Saints to live this difficult principle. This law was first given to the Church by Joseph Smith in 1831 and contained the following basic principles: (1) the earth and all it contains belongs to the Lord, (2) members of the plan deed their property to the bishop over their community and as stewards receive back a special deed to their inheritance, (3) all surplus over and above the needs of the family are turned over to the Church for the care of the poor and community improvements, (4) inheritances are apportioned to each family according to its size, needs, and ability to utilize and improve the property, (5) products and services are bought and sold on a competitive basis in the usual manner.²

When the law of consecration was first revived in Utah in 1854 the people were asked to transfer all legal

¹Howard C. Searle, "The Practice of Rebaptism in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (A paper contained in a compilation made by the B. Y. U. Library of research performed in Alma Burton's class, "Special Problems in L. D. S. Church History"), pp. 93-98.

right and title to their property to Brigham Young, the
Trustee in Trust for the Church. A law was passed in the
territorial Legislature which made these transfers valid.
Property thus deeded to the Church became tax exempt and
could not be bought or sold without the consent of the Trustee
in Trust.¹

In 1855 Brigham Young made this announcement of his
intention to promote the plan:

It is time the privilege of consecrating their prop-
erty was given to the people, it is the will of the Lord
they should enjoy this blessing and privilege, those who
choose to hand over their property, to whom? To Him
who has given them every thing they possess; He owns all
they possess, and they have no property, more or less,
only that which actually belongs to the Lord, and he
deals it out and bestows it where it seemeth Him good.²

In spite of these efforts to establish the law of
consecration, it was still not generally accepted in 1856
and the Reformation afforded an opportunity for the renewed
emphasis of this principle. Heber C. Kimball encouraged the
Saints to support the system in these remarks made in the Old
Tabernacle in March, 1857:

In regard to deeding over your property, no one compels
you to do it, the trustee in trust does not, God does
not; but He says that if you will do this, that and the
other things which He has counselled for our good, do so,
and prove Him. He goes to work and proves us, as we go
to work and prove one another under various circumstances.
The Lord says, cast in your tithes, and then your offerings.
Tithing is one thing, and offerings are another. And when
that is done, consecrate your property to the Church, and
make strong the hands of our President, and he will handle
and distribute it to the best advantage. We are to be
tried in all things, like unto Abraham, and God even told

¹Neff, op. cit., pp. 532-542.
²Deseret News, June 20, 1855.
Abraham to offer up his son Isaac...it will be just so with the property deeded over to the Trustee in Trust; every man becomes a steward, and puts out his property to usury. The principle of consecration is to hold property secure and in the channel of blessings and increase. Our property should not be dearer to us than salvation, and should freely be put to the best use for building up the Kingdom of God....

...Let every man render over his property with an eternal deed that cannot be broken; throw it all into the big reservoir. Suppose that one puts in one drop, another two, another ten, and another a hundred, do you not see, when you throw in your property—your substance—into one reservoir, that it makes us all one, and that you cannot become one without this principle? ...Brother Brigham is the chief Apostle of Jesus, and he is our President, our Prophet, and our leader, and we the Twelve are his brethren, and you have got to lay down your substance at their feet, as the Saints did in the days of the ancient Apostles of Jesus.

Look at Ananias and Sapphira. I have heard you read their history a great many times, and talk about it. You may do as you have a mind to. In one sense, we do not care whether you lie, or tell the truth. If you tell the truth and do right, who is blessed? Is it any one but yourselves?

You have got to render an account of everything you have, for we are all stewards....

Despite such vigorous promotion on the part of President Kimball and others, the observance of the Law of Consecration never became very extensive during the Reformation. The following entry in the journal of Joseph Fish gives a brief but clear sketch of the practice of the principle during this time:

The reformation, as it was called, commenced with us in the fall of 1856 and continued through the winter. Much preaching was done, everyone was re-baptized, and the Saints were required to observe the laws of God more fully....The law of consecration was being observed, and all who wished to be saints consecrated or deeded their property to the President of the Church. I obeyed this

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1Journal of Discourses, IV, 249-51.
law and consecrated my holdings on the 15th of November, 1856. There was nothing more done about this law and this move was the end of the matter. I was re-baptized the 16th of November, 1856, and went away and obeyed the requirements with determination to try to serve God. I felt a strong desire to so order my life that I might become useful.¹

The sincerity and deep devotion of those who participated in the Law of Consecration is demonstrated by this account of George Morris:

On the 12th of August ¹[1857] I went to the recorders office and deeded my property over to the trustee in trust of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, according to the Law of consecration, the value of which was 2880 dollars. This was done to manifest the good will I had and respect for the Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God upon the earth which I claim to have an everlasting interest in. My feelings were at that time that if all I had was needed for the advancement of the cause of truth and righteousness and for the building up of the Kingdom of God upon the earth that I was ready to deliver it over and get a tent, move into it and starve again, whenever it might be called for by the proper authority. ¹[sic]²

The Sacrament

The sacrament was administered to the Church members at most of the Reformation conferences, but this ordinance was delayed until the presiding authorities made sure that the people had repented, made restitution for their sins, and been rebaptized for the remission of sin. The sacred and solemn nature of the sacrament covenant was stressed, and the people were warned about partaking of it unworthily.

President Heber C. Kimball explained the reforms that were


²Morris Autobiography, pp. 76-77.
desired in connection with the sacrament in these statements in the Tabernacle on November 9, 1856:

I will now touch upon another point. Our Bishops are now breaking bread, the emblem of the broken body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and I say let every one who is guilty of sins they have not repented of, and made restitution for, refuse to partake of that bread, also of that water, (which is an emblem of the blood of Jesus that was spilled for the remission of our sins,) until they have repented and made restitution; for unless you do, you shall drink damnation to yourselves, until you make restitution. I do not care who the persons are.

Some of you, doubtless, have been guilty of committing more or less sin, of being more or less rebellious to the authorities of this Church, and to the Priesthood and government of God, and then coming and partaking of this sacrament. Do not such persons comprehend that they are drinking damnation to themselves? Why would persons wish to partake of this sacrament, when they know that they are unworthy?

I want to warn you and forewarn you not to trifle with this ordinance, nor to indulge in any unwise conduct. I desired the opportunity of telling you my feelings before this bread is dedicated and consecrated. I do not consider that it is dedicated and consecrated to any person that cannot eat it with an upright heart, or to one that will eat it and then live in a course of rebellion against God and His authority.

I forbid all unworthy persons partaking of this sacrament; and if such do partake of it, they shall do it on their own responsibility, and not on mine. In partaking unworthily, a person is corroding and destroying himself, not me. This ordinance is administered on condition of your living in righteousness, and of your hearts being true to your God and to your brethren.

Do I feel as though I wanted to dance? No, I never want to go forth again in the dance, until the spirit of reformation if rife among the people. Neither do I want to see any man or woman partake of this sacrament, when they are living in open rebellion against God, against his government, and His servants.1

Plural Marriage

There was, as Winslow Farr put it, a "great deal of

1Journal of Discourses, IV, 80.
marrying going on in time of reformation."¹ Many were urged
to live the law of eternal marriage and plurality of wives,
which had been given to the Church through Joseph Smith.²
Not only was there an increased participation in this prin-
ciple, but reforms were requested in the families of those
already engaged in plural marriage. President Young was very
concerned about the contention in many of these families,
and in a Reformation speech in the Bowery on September 21,
1856, he made this startling proposition:

Now for my proposition; it is more particulary for
my sisters, as it is frequently happening that the women
say that they are unhappy. Men will say, "My wife,
though a most excellent woman, has not seen a happy day
since I took my second wife;" "No, not a happy day for a
year," says one; and another has not seen a happy day for
five years. It is said that women are tied down and
abused; that they are misused and have not the liberty
they ought to have; that many of them are wading through
a perfect flood of tears, because of the conduct of some
men, together with their own folly.

I wish my own women to understand that what I am
going to say is for them as well as others, and I want
those who are here to tell their sisters, yes, all the
women of this community, and then write it back to the
States, and do as you please with it. I am going to give
you from this time to the 6th day of October next, for
reflection, that you may determine whether you wish to
stay with your husbands or not, and then I am going to
set every woman at liberty and say to them, Now go your
way, my women with the rest, go your way. And my wives
have got to do one of two things; either round up their
shoulders to endure the afflictions of this world and
live their religion, or they may leave, for I will not
have them about me. I will go into heaven alone, rather
than have scratching and fighting around me. I will set
all at liberty. "What, first wife too?" Yes, I will
liberate you all.

I know what my women will say: they will say, "You

¹Winslow Farr, "Diary," MSS (Copied by the B. Y. U.

²Doctrine and Covenants, pp. 239-45.
can have as many women as you please, Brigham." But I want to go somewhere and do something to get rid of the whiners; I do not want them to receive a part of the truth and spurn the rest out of doors.

....Tell the gentiles that I will free every woman in this Territory at our next conference. "What, the first wife too?" Yes, there shall not be one held in bondage, all shall be set free. And then let the father be the head of the family, the master of his own household; and let him treat them as an angel would treat them; and let the wives and the children say amen to what he says, and be subject to his dictates, instead of their dictating the man, instead of their trying to govern him.

Let every man thus treat his wives, keeping raiment enough to clothe his body; and say to your wives, "take all that I have and be set at liberty; but if you stay with me you shall comply with the law of God, and that too without any murmuring and whining. You must fulfill the law of God in every respect, and round up your shoulders to walk up to the mark without any grunting...."

Sisters, I am not joking, I do not throw out my proposition to banter your feelings, to see whether you will leave your husbands, all or any of you. But I do know that there is no cessation to the everlasting whinings of many of the women in this Territory; I am satisfied that this is the case....

If I had only wise men to talk to there would be no necessity for my saying what I am going to say. Many and many an elder knows no better than to go home and abuse as good a woman as dwells upon this earth, because of what I have said this afternoon. Are you who act in that way, fit to have a family? No, you are not, and never will be, until you get good common sense....

Prepare yourselves for two weeks from tomorrow; and I will tell you now that if you tarry with your husbands, after I have set you free, you must bow down to it and submit yourselves to the celestial law. You may go where you please, after two weeks from tomorrow; but remember that I will not hear any more of this whining.1

The freedom promised to the wives by Brigham Young was freedom from all the covenants and obligations of their marriages.

As President of the Church, Brigham Young exercised the power of binding and loosing eternal marriages in heaven,2 and although he threatened in this address to use this power to

1Deseret News, October 1, 1856.

2Doctrine and Covenants, p. 243.
free all the plural wives, there is no record of anyone requesting this freedom. No further mention of the proposition can be found in the records of October Conference which convened two weeks later.

Excessive Spirit of Excitement

During any religious revival or crusade, when religious zeal is openly manifest, there are usually some who are carried away by their emotions to extremes in word and action. That such was the case during the Reformation is attested by the following accounts of two Elders in Salt Lake City:

It was required of all those who had been guilty of any of those sins to confess to those who had been wronged and make restitution to their satisfaction. While this was going on there was a great deal of wildfire got out among those who were appointed to preach the reformation. It is my candid opinion that if it had continued much longer that there were those among them that would have left the jumping, screaming, ranting Methodists all in the shade, but it was considered that it had gone far enough. The people were all rebaptized for the remission of their sins and the renewal of their covenants.¹

In that year what was called the Reformation took place, and made considerable excitement and done some good. Extremes as a rule were not good, and there were many extremes connected with that reformation. That was in the year 1856.²

This spirit of excitement reached the little branch of the Church at Fort Supply, Wyoming where the following incident occurred:

...What is generally termed as the reformation took

¹Morris Autobiography, p. 75.
place a general toching & Rebaptiseing among the first
that arrived at our place in the spring was one...full
of a wild fire Spirit that I had had no experence with
I therefore accepted it as the proper Spirit to be in
possession of but felt Sorry that we were so far behind
our bre of the S L Valley commenced Strugleing by prayer
for the purpose of coming into possession of the Same
Spirit but my exertion in that direction Seemed to be
removeing me farther from my desired object I fasted &
prayed the effects of which was a Spirit of meekness
humility charitiableness had no desire to injure even a
worm of the dust at the Same time became convinced that
the Spirit that... he was in possession of & had instilled
into Some others was not the correct one...about two
thirds of our Branch Council were in possession of the
same Spirit as himself & the scenes that transpired did
not meet with my approval at the time & appear ludicrous
to me now their were two or three good Solid men in the
council older than myself that were fully aware that the
Spirit of the majority was not desirable & that things
were carried to extreme but did not seem disposed to
openly express their feelings I did & thereby brought
down his wrath... upon myself during which time he pro-
nounced numerous curses upon me all of which I endured
for a Season but continued to freely express my opinions
as we met in Council about every night The proceedings
became tiresome to me & concludeing that forbearance had
ceased to be a virtue I commenced to retaliate... he had
expressed it as his opinion that my case religiously was
hopeless that I would never be rebaptised & finally makeing
those remarks before the council in my presence I boldly
resented and during my remarks looked him squarely in the
eyes advancing up close to him informed him that I would
last longer in this Church & Kingdom than he would within
two years he took one of his wives & went to the States
leaveing two of his wives to look out for themselves
have heard nothing of him Since....[sic]

The extreme spirit of the Reformation did not go
unnoticed by the General Authorities of the Church. Elder
Lorenzo Snow of the Council of Twelve cautioned against the
external excitement and show of the Reformation in these
remarks in the Tabernacle on January 18, 1857:

There is a necessity of our being more industrious,

1Henry Weeks Sanderson "Diary," MSS (Copied by the B.
many of us, in getting into the spirit of this reformation more than what has already been received. There is a danger of our being satisfied with a superficial advancement, with merely advancing on the surface. We talk of walking in the light of the Spirit and of feeling it upon us, but do we do these things? We ought to dig deep into the things of God, lay our foundation upon the rock, until we come to that water which shall be in us an everlasting fountain of eternal life in the midst of the people in this reformation. When the Elders stand forth in the various ward meetings, prayer meetings, the general assembly meetings, and when the Bishops exercise themselves in the power of their Priesthood, and feel pretty themselves, there has all along been this fact, these circumstances, a certain overwhelming spirit which the people feel more or less; and there is a spirit of excitement attending the exercise of those powers. Some individuals, I am fearful, do not partake of the spirit of this reformation any more than the external effect that it has upon them; there is nothing more than show, by the power that is around them and that is being exercised among them. With some it is simply the popularity of the reformation, if I may be allowed that expression, for the reformation has become very popular.

If a person does not see the necessity of a reformation, he is set down as being grossly ignorant. But few people would have the boldness to say that there was no necessity of a reformation in this day, when the people know that it has become popular. We ought to be careful not to be carried away with popularity alone, but lay a good, a strong foundation to build upon, and know precisely the foundation of this reformation, and get the Spirit ourselves, and not be satisfied to walk in the light as it is shadowed forth by others; we should have it incorporated with our spiritual organizations. We should not merely rest satisfied with the necessity of this reformation, but we should have the spirit of it within ourselves.1

Spirit of Severity and Retribution

In the excessive excitement of the Reformation there were many harsh and severe statements and actions, which are usually regarded as wanting when measured by the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ.2 In September of 1856 Wilford

1Journal of Discourses, IV, 185.
2Roberts, op. cit., IV, 126.
Woodruff wrote: "I have never heard as strong sermons delivered to the people as have been preached unto them of late."¹

Heber C. Kimball made no apology for this severity in this remark made in November 1856:

All the fault I have to find with myself, and I presume all that God has to find with me, is because I have sometimes held back and resisted His Spirit; and so have my brethren, for if we would yield to it at all times we should be ten times more severe than we now are.²

Jedediah Grant, who was sometimes very severe in his own preaching, gave this justification for the censorious preachments of the Reformation:

Am I to blame for scolding the people? Not at all. Is brother Heber? Not at all. Is he to blame for chastising an unruly wife? No...

What will be the result of the chastisements given to this people? I answer, if they heed them, they will bring them into the true path. It is the situation of the people that prompts the teachings they now receive from God's servants. If all the people did right, they would not be chastised at all...if all the people in a Ward do right, will the Bishop chastise them: No; but if they do not do right, the Bishop is placed under the necessity of coming forth, clothed in armor and power of the Almighty, to put them right, and of calling upon the teachers to assist him in this work. And when the people repent and are found to be on the right track, the Bishop lays the rod on the shelf.

This is the case with brother Brigham. Does he chastise this, that, and the other man, because he likes the job? No. You know that he is mild, and is a father to this people; and were I to take any exception to his course, it would be on account of his being so merciful. Why? Because he is more merciful than I am. When he extends mercy to the people, he deals it out more lavishly than I would, unless the Lord should lead me as he does him. I have not so much mercy, so much of God and eternal life in me as brother Brigham has in him...

Brother Brigham is a father to Quorums of this Church;

¹ "Journal History," entry of Sept. 30, 1856.

² Journal of Discourses, IV, 83.
and when the people are right, has he a disposition to chastise them? No, he has a fatherly feeling to bless them, and so has brother Heber. I do not know whether I have as much of that feeling as either of them, with regard to the Church, but I do not suppose that there is a man of the earth that is fonder of children than I am. If I do not like old people so well as some do, I like children well enough to balance the deficiency.

...When a man is wrong and will turn round and do right, I love him better than I did before. We do not feel like casting you off, like casting you into the mire, and saying "God Almighty damn you." "Get out of the mud and may the Lord bless you" is what we say. I had rather bless ten men than curse one. I am not led to curse, but I am led to chastise iniquity, to bring to light that which is wrong among the people; but I do not want to curse them.

I am not of that class that believes in shrinking; if there is a fight on hand, give me a share of it. I am naturally good natured, but when the indignation of the Almighty is in me I say to all hell, stand aside and let the Lord Jesus Christ come in here; He shall be heir of the earth; the truth shall triumph, the Priesthood and Christ shall reign.

...When you are right we will cease to chastise, we will cease to rebuke; we will cease throwing the arrows of the Almighty through you, we will cease telling you to surrender, to repent of all your sins. But until you do this, we will continue to throw the arrows of God through you, to hurl the darts of heaven upon you and the power of God in your midst; and we will storm the bulwarks of hell, and we will march against you in the strength of God of Israel...we expect to triumph; and in the name of Jesus Christ, we do not mean to surrender to evil. ¹

Evil doers were not only warned that they would be cursed by the Lord, but on frequent occasions they were told that they would be cut off from the Church and the society of the Saints if they did not speedily repent. In spite of these severe warnings, there were actually few excommunications during the Reformation.²

¹Journal of Discourses, IV, 85-87.

²Andrew Jensen, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History Co., 1901), pp.60-61.
Blood Atonement

The spirit of retribution reached its extreme in the preaching of the doctrine of "blood atonement," as it has come to be known. One of the leading Church historians, B. H. Roberts gives this explanation of the doctrine:

Among the things to be regretted in connection with the "Reformation," and from which the church has suffered much, through misapprehension of her real attitude in respect of the matters involved, are certain extreme and unqualified utterances of some of the leading elders of the church on what it has become custom to call "blood atonement;" by which is meant, as commonly represented by anti-"Mormon" writers, a claimed right on the part of the church to shed the blood of men guilty of heinous crimes, such as murder, adultery, and apostasy; and which, since such acts may not be done openly, an by legal authority vested in the church, then secretly, by assassination.  

The doctrine of blood atonement was preached on a few occasions prior to the Reformation, but some of the strongest expressions of the principle, and those to which Mormon critics have taken the greatest offense, occurred at the commencement of the work of reform in 1856. On September 21st, just a week after the Reformation began in Kaysville, Jedediah Grant preached as follows in the morning meeting in the Bowery in Salt Lake City:

Some have received the priesthood and a knowledge of the things of God, and still they dishonor the cause of truth, commit adultery and every other abomination beneath the heavens, and then meet you here or in the street and deny it. These are the abominable characters that we have in our midst, and they will seek unto wizards that peep, and to star-gazers and soothsayers, because they have

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1Roberts, op. cit., IV, 126.
no faith in the holy priesthood, and then when they meet us they want to be called saints.

The same characters will get drunk and wallow in the mire and filth, and yet they call themselves saints and seem to glory in their conduct, and they pride themselves in their greatness and their abominations.

They are the old hardened sinners, and are almost—if not altogether—past improvement, and are full of hell, and my prayer is that God's indignation may rest upon them, and that he will curse them from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet.

I say that there are men and women that I would advise to go to the President immediately, and ask him to appoint a committee to attend to their case; and then let a place be selected, and let that committee shed their blood.

We have those amongst us that are full of all manner of abominations, those who need to have their blood shed, for water will not do, their sins are of too deep a dye.

You may think that I am not teaching you Bible doctrine, but what says the apostle Paul? I would ask how many covenant breakers there are in this city and in this kingdom. I believe there are a great many; and if they are covenant-breakers we need a place designated, where we can shed their blood.

... ...........................................

Brethren and sisters, we want you to repent and forsake your sins. And you who have committed sins that cannot be forgiven through baptism, let your blood be shed and let the smoke ascend, that the incense thereof may come up before God as an atonement for your sins, and that the sinners in Zion may be afraid.¹

When the Saints reassembled in the afternoon for another meeting in the Bowery, Brigham Young repeated the doctrine that had been preached by his counselor in these words:

There are sins that men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon the ground, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense would atone for their sins, whereas, if such is not the case, they will stick to them and remain upon them in the spirit world.

I know, when you hear my brethren telling about cutting people off from the earth, that you consider it is strong doctrine; but it is to save them, not to destroy them.

¹Deseret News, October 1, 1856.
Of all the children of Israel that started to pass through the wilderness, none inherited the land which had been promised, except Caleb and Joshua, and what was the reason? It was because of their rebellion and wickedness; and because the Lord had promised Abraham that he would save his seed. They had to travel to and fro to every point of the compass, and were wasted away, because God was determined to save their spirits. But they could not enter into his rest in the flesh, because of their transgressions, consequently he destroyed them in the wilderness.

I do know that there are sins committed, of such a nature that if the people did understand the doctrine of salvation, they would tremble because of their situation. And furthermore, I know that there are transgressors, who, if they knew themselves and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness would beg of their brethren to shed their blood, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further; I have had men come to me and offer their lives to atone for their sins.

It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it can never remit. As it was in ancient days, so it is in our day; and though the principles are taught publicly from this stand, still the people do not understand them; yet the law is precisely the same. There are sins that can be atoned for by an offering upon an altar as in ancient days; and there are sins that the blood of a lamb, or a calf, or of turtle doves, cannot remit, but they must be atoned for by the blood of the man.

That is the reason why men talk to you as they do from this stand; they understand the doctrine and throw out a few words about it. You have been taught that doctrine, but you do not understand it.1

These same teachings were stressed in other Reformation meetings. Although the complete addresses of President Grant in Centerville were not recorded, it was reported in the minutes of the meetings that he "inquired whether there were any in the congregation that had committed sins that could not be remitted by baptism, if so he forbid their coming

1Journal of Discourses, IV, 53-54.
to the water as candidates for the administration of that ordinance."¹ On February 8, 1857 President Young explained blood atonement to some length in a talk in the Tabernacle. During his discourse he said:

The time has been in Israel under the law of God, the celestial law, for it is one of the laws of that kingdom where our Father dwells, that if a man was found guilty of adultery, he must have his blood shed, and that is near at hand. But now I say, in the name of the Lord, that if this people will sin no more, but faithfully live their religion, their sins will be forgiven them without taking life.

...Now take a person in this congregation who has knowledge with regard to being saved in the kingdom of our God and our Father, and being exalted, one who knows and understands the principles of eternal life, and sees the beauty and excellency of the eternities before him compared with the vain and foolish things of the world, and suppose that he is overtaken in a gross fault, that he has committed a sin that he knows will deprive him of that exaltation which he desires, and that he cannot attain to it without the shedding of his blood, and also knows that by having his blood shed he will atone for that sin, and be saved and exalted with the Gods, is there a man or woman in this house but what would say, "shed my blood that I may be saved and exalted with the Gods?"

All mankind love themselves, and let these principles be known by an individual, and he would be glad to have his blood shed. That would be loving themselves, even unto an eternal exaltation. Will you love your brothers or sisters likewise, when they have committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their blood? Will you love that man or woman well enough to shed their blood? That is what Jesus Christ meant. He never told a man or woman to love their enemies in their wickedness, never. He never intended any such thing; his language is left as it is for those to read who have the Spirit to discern between truth and error; it was so left for those who can discern the things of God. Jesus Christ never meant that we should love a wicked man in his wickedness.

... I could refer you to plenty of instances where men have been slain, in order to atone for their sins. I have seen scores and hundreds of people for whom there

¹Deseret News, October, 8, 1856.
would have been a chance (in the last resurrection there will be) if their lives had been taken and their blood spilled on the ground as a smoking incense to the Almighty, but who are now angels to the devil, until our elder brother Jesus Christ raises them up—conquers death, hell, and the grave. I have known a great many men who have left this Church for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but if their blood had been spilled, it would have been better for them. The wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbid this principle's being in full force, but the time will come when the law of God will be in full force.

This is loving our neighbour as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved spill it. Any of you who understand the principles of eternity, if you have sinned a sin requiring the shedding of blood, except the sin unto death, would not be satisfied nor rest until your blood should be spilled, that you might gain that salvation you desire. That is the way to love mankind.1

This doctrine of blood atonement seems to have been a theoretical consideration only during this period of the Reformation, for there is no reliable evidence that would indicate that these principles were ever acted upon or made a part of the Church polity.2 Brigham Young admitted that the Priesthood of the Church at that time could not execute such a law of retribution when he said:

The wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbid this principle's being in full force, but the time will come when the law of God will be in full force.3

Another admission by Brigham Young that the Church was not required to take life is made in this paragraph:

1Journal of Discourses, IV, 219-220.


3Journal of Discourses, IV, 220. See page 83.
The time has been in Israel under the law of God, the celestial law, for it is one of the laws of that kingdom where our Father dwells, that if a man was found guilty of adultery, he must have his blood shed, and that is near at hand. But now I say, in the name of the Lord, that if this people will sin no more, but faithfully live their religion, their sins will be forgiven them without taking life.  

Brigham Young's statement, "I could refer to plenty of instances where men have been slain, in order to atone for their sins," has been cited as evidence that he directed the actual practice of blood atonement during the period of the Reformation. However, a careful study of all President Young's remarks on the subject indicates that he was probably referring to examples from the scriptures which he had pointed out in part on previous occasions. From the evidence available it seems fair to conclude that if anyone did violate the divine injunction, "thou shalt not kill," the responsibility for such an act must rest upon the individual and not upon the Church.

Music and Poetry

Since the time of its inception the Church had such able writers as Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, and Eliza R. Snow to provide appropriate verse for every mood of the Saints. With this tradition it was only natural that during the Reformation...

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1Ibid., 219. See page 83.
2Ibid., 220. See pages 83 and 84.
3Ibid., 53-54. See pages 81 and 82.
4Penrose, op. cit., pp. 37-44. See also Roberts, op. cit., IV, 133-36.
mation the feelings of the Saints should find expression in verse and song. At the first Reformation meetings in Davis County, William Willes had provided music by singing his improvised words to several hymns. Following are typical verses from Elder Willes songs:

Hope of Israel
Fear not ye Saints of latter days, our "Father's at the helm;"
With patience walk in wisdom's ways, no foes can overwhelm;
We hear their threats, but heed them not,
They envy us our happy lot;
In Deseret we're free to act, and magnify our calling.
[Four more verses follow]

The City I love So Well
Tune--"The Mormon Boy"
When first I saw the city, 'twas low, in a low place,
Big tears of joy swelled in my eyes, and trickled down my face;
My heart felt cheer'd, my hopes rose high,
As long as I live I will think of my home in the city I love so well.
[Followed by six more verses]

On October 24, 1856 a lengthy poem entitled "God Remembers Zion" was read before the Literary and Musical Assembly in the Social Hall at Salt Lake City. It was published in the Deseret News a short time later under the caption "A Psalm for the Times of Reformation." It began by reviewing the early history of the Church and ended with these verses pertaining to the Reformation:

He blessed the parched land again, and drove away the devouring insects; for He loves His people; but they neglect His prophets' counsels: whom he hath ordained to remember Zion.

1Deseret News, September 24, 1856. See page 24.
2Ibid. 3Ibid.
So He inspires His servants Brigham, Heber, and Jedediah; and gives them the sword of truth: and they command the people to reform from their evil and filthy ways; for He remembers Zion.

Repent, reform, and renew your covenants; is the cry of God to His people: let every quorum, and every Saint in the church obey the words; for He remembers Zion.

He will have a pure and holy people on this land; and make them obedient to His laws: they must have the Holy Ghost in their hearts to serve him: for He remembers Zion.

Humble yourselves, therefore, oh, ye Saints of the Lord; and come with contrite hearts before Him: that His servants may bless you in His name; for He remembers Zion.

Then will your praises be accepted of Him, and ye will grow in strength and power; until His enemies are subdued: and you will gain eternal lives, and full salvation from your Father; for He loves and remembers Zion.¹

The following verses, which seem to express the fundamentals of the Reformation very well, were composed by Henry Maiben for singing at the Thirty-seventh Quorum of Seventies' meeting at Seventies' Hall on December 6, 1856:

Reformation
Tune--"Paddy Miles."

Oh! now is the time for us all to be proving
Ourselves and determine to whom we belong--
Whether God or the Devil our spirit is moving,
And which we desire, to do right or do wrong:
For the hour is approaching when those who've neglected
To weigh up themselves, will by others be weighed
In a balance by which ev'ry fault is detected,
And even the thoughts of the heart are displayed.

Chorus
Then--let's wake from our slumbers,
And rise up in numbers,
And prove that we're servants and saints of the Lord!

The word has gone forth that it is the intention
Of those who now lead us this people to prove,
And where they discover the seeds of dissention,
To take proper measures the cause to remove--
That is, they've resolved on a grand revolution
In moral, as well as religious complaints;
And mean to eradicate sin and pollution
And sinner themselves from the midst of the Saints.

¹Ibid., November 5, 1856.
'Tis surely no fable our teachers are telling—
   The time has arrived when the Saints must be pure;
Not only each person, but even each dwelling
   Must really be clean, or it cannot endure:
Then woe to all those who love filth and corruption,
   Whose thoughts and desires are to evil inclined;
But joy and rejoicing without interuption,
   All lovers of truth will eventually find.

Yet still there is mercy for those who have faltered,
   If they will give proof of their honest intent,
That what has been wrong in their lives shall be altered—
   Confess all their faults and sincerely repent;
To make them feel free, they will be permitted
   To enter the font and be baptized again,
Whereby they may have all their past sins remitted,
   Unless blood is needed to take out the stain.

Then who is so foolish as not to take warning,
   While mercy's extended to those who repent?
'Twould be worse than madness for us to be scorning
   The counsel which for our salvation is sent.
Oh! let us then come to a fixed resolution,
   No matter what may be to us the expense,
Wherin we have wronged to make full restitution
   And live our religion in every sense.¹

The following interesting lines were written in the
diary of Joel Hills Johnson to explain his reaction to the
sermons he had heard on repentance during the earlier meetings
of the Reformation:

By enveys court I have been tried
While scandal sat there to preside
   With those I love indeed
Who thought themselves in concience [sic] just
To seize and drag me in the dust
   With none my cause to plead.

But God who heard the oppressed ones cry
Has looked on me with pittyng eye
   And saved me from their snare
While I forgave them all their wrongs
And pray for them, and raise my songs,
   To him in praise and prayer.
'Tis God like to forgive, and man likes to retain
Of me my foes shall have, no just cause to complain

¹Ibid., December 31, 1856.
Forgive them—yes I will forgive
My foes both small and great
For evil they shall good receive
And love receive for hate.
And thus fulfill the law of love
The Lord to us hath given
When he decended from above
And marked the path to heaven.¹

¹Johnson Diary, p. 56.
CHAPTER IV

THE EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION

Reaction of Non-Mormons

Coincident with the Reformation, which seemed to produce greater harmony and unity within the Church, there was an increased opposition from without as the Saints' enemies "waxed worse and worse."\(^1\) Although there were other more vital factors involved such as friction with the non-Mormon Territorial officials and opposition to polygamy, the Reformation contributed to the anti-Mormon sentiment which culminated in the arrival of Johnston's army in 1857 to quell the so called "Mormon Rebellion." One historian of this period of Utah history has made this observation:

In awakening the Saints to their duties, the Reformation also seemed to set them more directly against the Government officials who, they felt, were ruling without consent of the governed. Thus frictions were aggravated and tensions became more strained.\(^2\)

In his report of March 30, 1857 to the Attorney General of the United States -- a report which produced a tremendous effect upon the public as well as the government --

\(^1\)Jesse W. Crosby, "Diary," MSS (Copied by the B. Y. U. Library, 1940), p. 89.

Judge W. W. Drummond, a former Utah Territorial official, asserted among other charges that the Church took the "lives and property of persons who may question the authority of the Church."\(^1\) In making this charge Judge Drummond was apparently capitalizing on the doctrine of blood atonement as preached during the early part of the Reformation. Although emphatic denials were published in response to many of Drummond's charges, his report was still widely accepted and undoubtedly influenced President Buchanan in his decision to send an army to Utah.\(^2\)

The Reformation was not forgotten during the years that followed the Utah War. Because of its defects and controversial elements it became a vulnerable point of attack for several of the enemies and critics of Mormonism, who were busily engaged in producing a stream of lurid literature for circulation in the East. These writers did not limit themselves to the fair criticisms of the Reformation, but misconstrued the facts and even introduced erroneous material to suit their purposes. Following is an excerpt from the most comprehensive of these anti-Mormon versions of the Reformation:

In all nations, and in almost every age, something has been heard of "reform." Mormonism had also its "Reformation." But there was nothing in common between the notable reformations in the world's history and that which is inscribed in the annals of the Rocky Mountain territory in 1856. The Mormon writers have been studiously silent about the "Reformation" in Utah, and here the Author would have

\(^1\)Neff, op. cit., p. 448-449. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 451.
gladly passed it by; but he feels that, furnishing as it
does a clue to some of the worst crimes which blacken the
page of American history, its tale of horrors imperatively
demands a place in this volume.

While many important features in the lives of the Utah
Saints will pass away and be forgotten, the "Reformation"
will be remembered for ever. It was the outburst of the
worst elements of fanaticism—a fanaticism at once blind,
dangerous, and terrible, but at the same time the natural
result of the teachings of the Tabernacle.¹

The above account continues with a "graphic sketch—never be-
fore published—from the pen of an eye-witness," who is reported
as a resident of Salt Lake City. An account of the first
Reformation meetings is given in which Jedediah Grant is re-
ferred to as "Jeddy." It is asserted that Bishops were whipped
for being "old fogies" and not being strict enough in making
the Saints pay their tithing. Quotations from the leading
Elders on the subject of blood atonement are given, and it is
alleged that the principle was secretly practiced.² The home
missionaries are arraigned as immoral, ignorant men and are
charged with the following abuses of the catechism:

Elders were sent to the various settlements and sta-
tioned at certain places, whose duty it was to excite
people to confess their secret sins and reveal their
private conduct to them and the bishops. Teachers were
appointed in every ward and for every block, whose duties
were to pry into every secret and learn the private history
of every family. Men, women and children were asked the
most indelicate questions about private actions and secret
thoughts. Husbands were asked inconvenient questions
about relations with their wives, and wives about their
husbands, by rude and ignorant teachers, and 'counsel'
was given accordingly. Girls were counseled to marry
into polygamy to old men 'that they might be saved,' for

¹T. B. H. Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints (New

²See also J. H. Beadle, Polygamy or the Mysteries and
young men were 'not tried' in the kingdom and could not 'save' the girls; and in many instances young women were forced to break off engagements with young men whom they loved, to gratify a bishop's preference, a missionary's feelings, or a great elder's desires.

A catechism was printed by authority of Brigham Young and a copy of it was put into the hands of every missionary, elder, bishop and teacher, who catechized with unblushing effrontery every member of the Church. Those refusing to answer were cursed and reported at the bishops' meetings as worthy to be disfellowshipped, and those who honestly told their feelings were likewise reported to the authorities, and became objects of attack and abuse at the public meetings, while their private characters became topics of scandal and gossip.

The confessions of the Saints were texts for discourses, and curses were hurled on them publicly. The revelation of sins wormed out of them by the catechism and other methods adopted were astonishing, and a lower state of morals was discovered to exist than even the best informed could have suspected.1

This anti-Mormon account of the Reformation closes with the following enumeration of its negative results:

The 'Reformation' wrought more evil than good, and it is now regarded by the best men in the Church as the height of folly and fanaticism. To Jedediah—a positive, impulsive, bigoted man—it became a monomania; but it brought Brigham, Heber, and others into its spirit willingly, as it is more consonant with the feelings of ignorant, untutored zealots to condemn, debase, and degrade others, than to lead them to virtue, goodness, and a higher life by noble precepts and loving teachings.

The 'Reformation' was employed as a means to compel hundreds and thousands to engage in the practice of polygamy; and it was hinted and secretly taught by authority that women should form relations with more than one man. Bigotry, intolerance, and tyranny were fostered by it; weakness, folly, and sins were publicly exposed; mutual confidence was destroyed; bad feelings and suspicions were engendered; self-righteousness and egotism were manifested by many; sensuousness in matters of religion, and materialism were its characteristics; spirituality and piety were condemned; and narrow, low, exclusive dogmas were received as the sublimest truths.

When the excitement of fanaticism had died away, and calm reflection enlightened the minds of those in authority; when they had seen and learned the evil effects of the movement, they deeply regretted the part they had

1Ibid., pp. 294-95.
taken in it, and Brigham Young himself has frequently said in public that he was 'ashamed of the Reformation.'

Because of Utah's isolation, distorted accounts of the Reformation found credence in the public mind and continued unchecked for many years. Such writings contributed to the ill-will felt toward the Mormons throughout this period of their history.

Reaction of the Church to Certain Doctrines and Practices

When time had magnified the benefits and shortcomings of the Reformation, later Church leaders felt a need for clarifying or modifying the Church's position on some of the controversial doctrines and practices of the movement. This action by the Church was prompted, not only by the recognized defects in these teachings and practices, but by the severe criticisms that were made of them by those outside the Church.

With the frequent repetition of the ordinance of rebaptism during the Reformation and for many years afterward, there were many Church members who no longer appreciated the sacred nature of baptism at the hands of the Elders, and as a result tried to substitute rebaptism for sincere repentance. Because of this deterioration in the concept of baptism for the remission of sins, Elder George Q. Cannon, first counselor to Wilford Woodruff, made the following declaration at the October conference of the church in 1897:

We hear a good deal of talk about re-baptism, and the

\(^1\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.} 300.\)
First Presidency and Twelve have felt that so much rebaptism ought to be stopped. Men, when they commit sin, think if they can only get the Bishop to rebaptize them, they are all right and their sins are condoned. There is no such thing in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is repentance from sin that will save you, not rebaptism. If you have been baptized then, if you commit sin, repent of the sin, confess it, and make the confession as broad as the knowledge of the sin...do not imagine that when you commit sin you can slip into the waters of baptism and you are all right again. Do not delude yourselves, brethren and sisters. Sinners be not deceived by such a fallacy.¹

With announcements like this from the General Authorities of the Church there was a decline in the number of rebaptisms until the practice finally ceased as an ordinance of the Church. The final cessation of rebaptism came about the turn of the century during the Presidency of Joseph F. Smith. He expressed the attitude of the Church at this time toward rebaptism quite clearly in the following article that appeared in the Improvement Era, a monthly organ of the Church, in August 1917:

The question has been asked why "rebaptism" was established in the day of the Prophet Joseph Smith and why it was continued for a number of years in Utah under the direction of President Brigham Young, and why it is now abandoned?

There is really no such thing in the church as "rebaptism." Baptism as we understand it, is one of the cardinal principles of the gospel, commanded primarily for the remission of sins and secondarily as the door by which we enter the church...The ordinance of baptism was known and practiced in ancient Israel and in all ages of the world as one of the essential ordinances of the gospel where the gospel has been found on the earth. It is just as necessary today as at any other period in the history of the world, for without it the sinner cannot receive a remission of his sins and be admitted into the

¹Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1897), pp. 68-69.
Kingdom of God.

As already stated baptism is for the remission of sin on the part of those who have not come into the church, and the door by which they enter. Those who have been baptized and confirmed members of the church who transgress may receive the remission of their sins through the atonement of our Savior on conditions of their humility and repentance without again entering the water of baptism. Should a person sin to that degree that it would be necessary to deprive him of his membership in the church, it would be necessary, of course, for him after repenting to again enter the church through baptism.

"Rebaptism" as understood in the question has not been done away, for even today where persons feel that they have transgressed to such a degree that they cannot conscientiously claim membership in the church, and request baptism, even as new members, in order to be restored to fellowship among the Saints, their request may be granted. It is unnecessary, however, to rebaptize persons merely as a renewal of their covenants every time they transgress in order that they may obtain forgiveness, for this would greatly cheapen this sacred ordinance and weaken its effectiveness. One baptism by water for the remission of sins should be enough, and there are other means by which sins may be forgiven those who have made covenant with the Lord, provided they do not sin away their right to a standing in the church.  

President Smith's stand on the doctrine of rebaptism is confirmed by James E. Talmage, one of the Apostles of the Church, who published the following during President Smith's administration:

A repetition of the Baptismal Ordinance to the same individual is allowable under certain specific conditions. Thus, if one, having entered the Church by baptism, withdraws from it or is excommunicated therefrom, and afterwards repents and desires to regain his standing in the Church, he can do so only through baptism. However, such is a repetition of the initiatory ordinance as previously administered. There is no ordinance of rebaptism in the Church distinct in nature, form, or purpose, from other baptism: and, therefore, in administering baptism to a subject who has been formerly baptized, the form of the ordinance is exactly the same as in first baptisms. The

expression "I rebaptize you" in place of "I baptize you" and the additions "for the renewal of your covenants" or "for the remission of your sins" are not authorized. Dictates of reason unite with the voice of the presiding authorities of the Church in discountenancing any departures from the course prescribed by the Lord; changes in ordinances given by authority can be effected only by authority.

Repeated Baptisms of the Same Person are not sanctioned in the Church. It is an error to assume that baptism offers a means of gaining forgiveness of sins however oft repeated. Such a belief tends rather to excuse than to prevent sin, inasmuch as the hurtful effects may seem to be easily averted. Neither the written law nor the instructions of the living Priesthood designate baptism as a means of securing forgiveness by those who are already within the fold of Christ. Unto such, forgiveness of sin has been promised on confession and repentance with full purpose of heart; of them a repetition of the baptismal rite is not required; and, were subjects of this class repeatedly baptized, unto them remission of sins would in no wise come except they repent most sincerely. The frailties of mortality and our proneness to sin lead us continually into error; but if we covenant with the Lord at the waters of baptism, and thereafter seek to observe His law, He is merciful to pardon our little transgressions through repentance sincere and true; and without such repentance, baptism would avail us nothing.  

From the foregoing it is quite clear that the rebaptism of Church members as practiced during the reformation, was later regarded by the Church as an unnecessary and unauthorized addition to the ordinances of the Church.

Some of the statements made during the Reformation on blood atonement have been regarded by later Church officials as "extreme and unqualified." That there are crimes for which God has prescribed the shedding of the offenders blood,

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1James E. Talmage, The Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1943), pp. 142-45.

2Roberts, op. cit., IV, 126.
has been generally accepted by the Church since the time of Joseph Smith, but certain ramifications of this principle, as taught during the Reformation, have not enjoyed such acceptance as Church doctrine.¹

The concept, that a flagrant sinner can make an atonement for his sins through the shedding of his own blood, has always been a controversial issue among students of Church theology. It seems to lack the necessary scriptural support to clearly establish it as Church doctrine, and it also appears to fall short in some of the things required of an official Church doctrine.²

One phase of this doctrine of blood atonement, which has been regarded by later Church leaders as a departure from previously established Church policy, was "the unfortunate implications that the Church of Latter-day Saints, or individuals in that Church, may execute this law of retribution."³ For the Church to inflict any type of corporal punishment was considered by succeeding Church authorities as a violation of these instructions given to the Church by Joseph Smith:⁴

And now, behold, I speak unto the church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come.

¹Ibid., 130-36.


³Roberts, op. cit., IV, 130. ⁴Ibid., 131.
And it shall come to pass that if any persons among you shall kill they shall be delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land.

And if a man or woman shall rob, he or she shall be delivered up unto the law of the land.

And if he or she shall lie, he or she shall be delivered up unto the law of the land.\(^1\)

According to further policies established by Joseph Smith, the only action the Church was authorized to take against serious offenders was to cast them out, or excommunicate them.\(^2\)

The Church's later position toward this part of the doctrine of blood atonement is defined most clearly in the following manifesto, issued by the Church in 1889:

We solemnly make the following declarations, viz.:
That this church views the shedding of human blood with the utmost abhorrence. That we regard the killing of a human being, except in conformity with the civil law, as a capital crime, which should be punished by shedding the blood of the criminal after a public trial before a legally constituted court of the land.

We denounce as entirely untrue the allegation which has been made, that our church favors or believes in the killing of persons who leave the church or apostatize from its doctrines. We would view a punishment of this character for such an act with the utmost horror; it is abhorrent to us and is in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of our creed.

The revelations of God to this church make death the penalty of capital crime, and require that offenders against life and property shall be delivered up and tried by the laws of the land.

We declare that no bishop's or other court in this church claims or exercises civil or judicial functions, or the right to supersede, annul or modify a judgment of any civil court. Such courts, while established to regulate Christian conduct, are purely ecclesiastical, and their punitive powers go no further than the suspension or excommunication of members from church fellowship.

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\(^1\) *Doctrine and Covenants*, pp. 61 and 79.

Although suggestions were made during the Reformation that the Church should be the agency for shedding the blood of serious sinners, there is no reliable evidence that would indicate that these suggestions were ever acted upon.

In 1890 the Church officially changed its position regarding the practice of plural marriage, which had been so vigorously promoted during the Reformation. At this time the President of the Church, Wilford Woodruff, issued a manifesto which gave the following explanation of the Church's action in this matter:

Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise.

There is nothing in my teachings to the Church or in those of my associates, during the time specified, which can be reasonably construed to inculcate or encourage polygamy; and when any Elder of the Church has used language which appeared to convey any such teaching, he has been promptly reproved. And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.

This manifesto was presented to the people of the Church at October Conference in 1890, and the motion was made that the Church "accept his declaration concerning plural marriages as authoritative and binding." The vote to sustain


2See pages 84 and 85.

3Doctrine and Covenants, p. 257. 4Ibid.
the motion was unanimous, and plural marriage was discontinued as a Church practice.

Possible Influence on the Mountain Meadows Massacre

On September 11, 1857 a group of Indians and some white men from the southern Utah settlements attacked a company of Arkansas emigrants at Mountain Meadows, a narrow valley some five miles in length located three hundred and twenty miles to the south and west of Salt Lake City. Between one hundred fifteen and one hundred twenty men, women, and older children were slain in a most treacherous manner. Only seventeen very young children were spared from the slaughter.

This most regrettable episode in Utah history is very difficult to analyze because of the many conflicting testimonies of witnesses who were most interested in exonerating themselves, and the fact that not one of the Arkansas emigrants survived who was old enough to relate the events accurately. Attempts have been made to implicate Brigham Young and the Church in the affair, but now it is generally conceded that it was the work of an aroused, perhaps overwrought, group of Southern Utah Mormons, among whom John D. Lee was the most prominent in the crime and later bore the punishment for it.¹ Although those responsible for this black deed were greatly influenced by such things as fear of the approaching army of the United States, the outrages of the emigrants themselves

as they passed through the state, and revenge for earlier
Mormon persecutions at Haun's Mill and other settlements of
the Saints in Missouri, it must be admitted that the Refor-
mation may have contributed to the excitement and intolerance
that precipitated this disaster. Juanita Brooks in her
Mountain Meadows Massacre makes this observation concerning
the effects of the Reformation:

In the fall of 1856, the Mormon leaders initiated a
movement known as the Reformation, which was a vigorous
call to repentance among the people. In every town and
hamlet, even in the distant forts where only a few families
lived, appointed missionaries catechized each person in-
dividually...In general the effect of this movement was
to arouse the people to new religious consciousness, but
for some who had lived through the persecutions of Missouri
and Nauvoo and whose covenants included a hope that God
would avenge the death of the Prophet and the sufferings
of His Saints, the Reformation served to encourage fanati-
cism. It also helped to cement their group solidarity
and make them feel that Zion must stand together against
the sins of the world.

Anti-Mormon writers have frequently made the charge
in the past that the Mountain Meadows massacre was the direct
and natural result of the preaching of blood atonement during
the Reformation. The sermons on this subject were published
in the Deseret News and were obviously available for the
consideration of the Saints in southern Utah, however, a
careful examination of these preachments will show that even
in their most far reaching implications they can hardly be
said to justify such cold-blooded murder. There is a vast
difference between the shedding of blood under the direction
of God's Priesthood as punishment for proven crimes, as

1Brooks, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
proposed by the advocates of blood atonement, and the unauthorized sanquinary butchery of men, women, and children for unconfessed and unproven sins. The doctrine of blood atonement was never intended by the church to supersede the decree of Sinai, "Thou shalt not kill," which had been reiterated for the Latter-day Saints in their Doctrine and Covenants. It is also apparent that the doctrine of blood atonement was intended to remain a theoretical consideration only at that time, for Brigham Young pointed out that the law was not "in full force" and that sins could be forgiven at that time "without taking life." Any assumption on the part of those responsible for the massacre that they had the right to "blood atone" for the sins of the Arkansas emigrants must be considered as a muddled and perverted concept of this theological principle. One Utah historian has said on this point:

"...It is obviously a perversion and distortion of their theology to argue or insist that the Mountain Meadows Massacre had its origin in an orthodox conception of the doctrine of blood atonement. Muddled thought often, however, leads to the perpetration of dark deeds. Misconceptions in this instance may temporarily have blinded some to the path of rectitude and honor. No worth-while correlation exists between the theological doctrine of self-imposed blood atonement and the crime of murder, except in the distorted imagination of hostile-minded, loose-thinking critics, and the addled brain of John D. Lee who, like other criminals, sought desperately for a pretext which would seem to explain and justify the wanton killing of countrymen."

That Lee may have held such a distorted concept of


2 Neff, op. cit., p. 413.
blood atonement is indicated by this report of his visit to Brigham Young on September 29, 1857:

Brother Brigham while speaking of the cutting of the throats of women and children by the Indians down south, said that it was heart-rending; that emigration must stop, as he had before said. Brother Lee said that he did not think there was a drop of innocent blood in their camp, for he had two of the children in his house, and he could not get but one to kneel down in prayer-time, and the other would laugh at her for doing it, and they would swear like pirates.\(^1\)

In 1872 Lee was visited by J. H. Beadle, a traveling newspaper correspondent, and in an ensuing interview Lee is reported to have said:

It is told around for a fact that I could tell great confessions, and bring in Brigham Young and the Heads of the Church. But if I was to make forty confessions, I could not bring in Brigham Young. His counsel was: "Spare them, by all means." But I am made to bear the blame.... Bad as that thing was, I will not be the means of bringing troubles on my people; for, you know yourself, that his people is a misrepresented and cried down community. Yes, a people scattered and peeled, whose blood was shed in great streams in Missouri, only for worshiping God as he was revealed to them; and if at last they did rise up and shed blood of their enemies, I won't consent to give 'em up.\(^2\)

In spite of these statements by Lee it is still extremely difficult to determine the exact part that any misconceptions of the doctrine of blood atonement may have played in inciting the Mountain Meadows massacre. The Deseret News for March 24, 1877 suggested that Lee may have planned it "because of erroneous and distorted views of true principles."\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Roberts, op. cit., IV, 161. Quoted from Wilford Woodruff's Journal, entry of Sept. 29, 1857.

\(^2\)Brooks, op. cit., p. 140.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 158. Quoting the Deseret News, March 24, 1877.
However, it should be remembered that Lee and the other men involved are the only persons who could know their motives in performing the crime, and in giving testimony later, with burning consciences and as suspected murderers, it is possible that Lee and others may have tried to justify their acts under the pretext of blood atonement. It must be admitted that although none of the General Authorities of the Church can justly be accused of planning or ordering the massacre, still they must bear the responsibility for their extreme and unqualified remarks on blood atonement to the extent that these utterances may have actually confused and misguided the perpetrators of the tragedy at Mountain Meadows.

Effect upon Individuals

The evidence available indicates that the vast majority of the Church members received a moral and spiritual boost from their participation in the Great Reformation. Many of the conference clerks described the renewed spirit and rejoicing of the people, and the Elders presiding expressed their satisfaction at the repentance and progress of the Church members.\(^1\) A great number of the Saints expressed their favorable reaction to the Reformation in testimony meetings that were held, and a few have recorded their impressions in their diaries and journals. The following is typical of these diary entries and was recorded by John S. Woodbury of Salt Lake City after his rebaptism and reconfirmation:

\[^1\text{See Chapter II.}\]
...The spirit of peace & joy filled my Soul & the spirit of prophesy & I felt well & to thank & praise the Lord God of Israel & to be perfectly passive in his hands & to go forth with a joyful heart to do what ever I may be called upon to do from this time hence forth & forever haveling the Kingdom of God & his righteousness first & foremost Believing that all other things (Wives & children, houses & land, &c, &c, will be added in the own due time of the Lord I rejoice that I am counted worthy to carry the message to the sons & daughters of men & offi- ciate in the ordinances pertaining to the eternal priest- hood....[sic]

Two weeks later Woodbury spoke in the Sunday evening meeting of his ward as follows:

I spoke of the renewal of our covenants by rebaptism & the necessity of keeping our covenant inviolate that we shall be left without the excuse if we break them haveing now gone forth into the waters of baptism with our eyes open. Spoke of the satisfaction I had had (sic) felt in ha (sic) haveing the privilege of being at home in this time of reformation. Said that when upon my mission among the nations of the Earth & after (sic) & heard of the good times the saints were enjoying...but I am thankful that I have been with you the past winter have had great joy & feel that (sic) can appreciate in a measure the society of this people & feel determined to live my religion from this time hence forth & forever. I know that Mormonism is true & that those who are placed to lead us are men of God...[sic]

The following interesting lines were written by Joel Hills Johnson after he had participated in the work of reform:

February, 14, 1857, Today I feel more to forgive and love my enemies and to rejoice and press forward in the work of the Lord than I ever did in my life before. The reformation having brought many principles of truth and virtue to my understanding that I never before understood or realized. For which I feel to thank my Father in heaven. Although through the wrong precepts and examples, I have formerly received, and lies, vanities and things of no profit that I have inherited from my Gentile Fore- fathers, I may have neglected some of those holy principles, for which I have repented with all my heart, and feel the forgiveness and approbation of my Heavenly Father, and am determined to never knowingly violate any principle

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1Woodbury Diary, p. 489. 2Ibid., pp. 489C-489D.
of the Holy religion that my soul loves through the assistance of Him Whose servant I am.
I will praise the Lord My God forever,
And will sing to his praise a thousand songs
For when I have strayed He hath redeemed me,
And in mercy forgiven each tresspass,
He hath bound up the wounds of my heart
Made by envy in the house of my friends,
He hath saved me from the hands of my foes,
And wiped away all my sorrows and tears
He hath lifted me up in His mercy
When I was forsaken and cast to the ground
He hath appointed my head with gladness
And my board He hath spread with His bounty
He hath given me women and off spring
And hath blest me with Priesthood and power
For which I will praise His name forever
And shout Hosannah to God and the Lamb. [sic]¹

After being rebaptized in a slough in Salt Lake City, Charles Walker wrote down this description of his feelings:

...I feel good the Spirit of God is with me and I rejoice exceedingly and feel a determination to go on in the work of God the Saints are going to do better and a great reformation has taken place are being evaulized and the spirit of God is resting on the people and are rejoicing that the God has again Showed mercy unto them. [sic]²

The Reformation had an unexpected effect upon a few persons who were actually over sensitive to the admonitions of the Elders and First Presidency. The reaction of two such individuals, Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow, is explained as follows:

Through all the latter months of 1856, the work of the Reformation was going on. There was quite a universal spirit favoring the highest and purest standard of life. Men of a sensitive and religious nature found within themselves an excessive conscientiousness that sometimes made them imagine they were sinners because of a state of perfection they saw, but could not feel. Such a condition brought with it doubts and misgivings. Some of the very best men in the Church felt their unworthiness and shrank

¹Johnson Diary, p. 57. ²Walker Diary, p. 2.
from responsibilities which they imagined others could fulfill better than they. President Woodruff records at this time that he and Lorenzo Snow called upon President Young and offered to surrender their apostleship. They had received it at his hands and were willing to give it up in favor of any one that the President might think more competent and more worthy. President Young expressed his perfect satisfaction with them and his confidence in their integrity and labors, and gave them every assurance of his love and blessing.  

Although most of the Saints benefited from the Reformation, there were a few upon which it did not have the desired effect. As stated previously there were a few who were excommunicated;  

2 there were still others who apostatized or left the Territory completely. The following accounts refer to some of these individuals who were not in harmony with the requirements of the Reformation and, consequently, would not obey its injunctions:

Each person was chastized by the Bishop, and where he had done wrong required to make it right. This caused some wrong-doers to apostatize, but it humbled others and they tried to improve.  

3 ...Then many ware Called and Sent forth in every Direction till the Strong...Holds of Saten ware Broken and the people meny Did repent and turn to the Lord and those that do not feel to repent are preparing to leave the territory.  

4 Effect upon the Church

On November 1, 1856, after the Reformation had been preached for about a month and a half, F. D. Richards wrote

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2See page 79. 3Fish Journal, pp. 7-8.

4Laub Diary, p. 95.
from Salt Lake City to some of the Elders who were abroad and described the following changes in the general attitude of the Church membership in that locality:

About a week before we arrived, a work of reformation had been efficiently started, and we were just in good time to share its cheering effects with the people. As good an evidence of this as I can offer, may be found in the fact, that on Sunday and Monday, at a conference of the Presidency and others, to raise between fifty and sixty teams to go and bring in our brethren coming by the hand-carts on the Plains; whereas, on the last Sunday ...a few remarks from brother Kimball, to a congregation of this city only, induced one hundred and fourteen to give their names to furnish teams, and one man put down fifteen yoke of cattle. The change in the feelings of the people is indeed wonderful already, and yet it has but just begun...A thorough waking up has commenced, that much reach the habitation of every Mission and Branch of the Church throughout the earth.1

By January of 1857 the fruits of the Reformation were more apparent, and there were others who began to observe its effects upon the Church generally. John Pulsipher who was stationed at Fort Supply, Wyoming has preserved this information:

January 26—Bro. W. Fish & Thomas Jenkins arrived from the valley on snow shoes brot us letters from friends dated from 1st to 6 January. Father wrote that all is going on finely. The reformation work is doing great good uniting the people. Much of the power of the Lord is manifest Believes some great event is at hand. Advised me to be obedient to those that preside over me & encourage others to do so. 2

During the first six weeks of 1857, Brigham Young made the following references to the progress and accomplishments of the Reformation up to that time:

The "Reformation," as it has been called, has begun,

1Neff, op. cit., pp. 552-53. 2Pulsipher Diary, I, 97.
not a change in our religion, nor of the principles revealed from the heavens through Joseph, but a change in the practices, and an arousing of the people from habits of lethargy, and its salutary influences are already perceptible.\footnote{Neff, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 553. Quoted from a letter from Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, then in England.}

Now, brethren and sisters, will you live your religion? How many hundreds of times have I asked you that question? Will the Latter-day Saints live their religion? I am ashamed to say anything about a reformation among Saints, but I am happy to think that the people called Latter-day Saints are striving now to obtain the Spirit of their calling and religion. They are just coming into the path, just waking up out of their sleep. It seems as though they are nearly all like babies; we are but children in one sense. Now let us begin, like children, and walk in the straight and narrow path, live our religion, and honor our God.\footnote{\textit{Journal of Discourses}, IV, 220.}

In June of 1857 when most of the excitement and labors of the Reformation were over, President Young made these remarks in the Bowery in which he gives his appraisal of the reforming measures of the preceding winter:

I am exceedingly thankful that the excessive labours that have been upon me are not on me now as they have been. The Spirit of reformation has taken hold on the people; it has kindled the fire of the Almighty in Mount Zion to burn out many of the ungodly that could not stand it, and they have fled. I feel happy; it is a rest to me. I feel as though I should endure yet for many years. But the labour that has been upon me in observing the grovelling backwardness of many of the Latter-day Saints, to see where they were going, was indeed hard to be endured. It is not long since many of our Bishops and other leading men in this community could not tell a Saint from a devil. Do you not suppose that that danger is before me all the time? But within the last six months, comparatively a hundred tons of care and anxiety have been removed from my shoulders; and I hope that his fire will continue to burn among this people until those poor, miserable curses—those poor, miserable gentlemen, shall all leave us. I pray that the fire of God may burn them
out. I pray for this continually.¹

Wilford Woodruff's evaluation of the Reformation is given in this paragraph from his biography:

There were those, however, in those days who were not so conscientious and by nature so upright. They took advantage of the repentant and humble condition of others. They exercised authority that was unjust and harmful. The dangers of the excesses of a certain class began to be felt and restraint was put upon them. When the movement had accomplished the good intended and dangers arose, the Reformation subsided and has gone into history with a mixture of evil with a vast amount of good. Elder Woodruff records his belief that the Reformation had a great effect for good upon the lives and the conduct of the people. It also had a tendency to separate those who were insincere and untrustworthy.²

Considering the fact that the Reformation was designed to correct error and evil within the Church, it must be admitted that it accomplished a great deal in the direction of this objective. It is generally acknowledged that the moral and "spiritual tone of the entire Mormon Commonwealth was markedly raised."³ Although the main results of the Reformation were beneficial to the Church, there were certain by-products of the movement that were injurious to many Church members. Notwithstanding the fact that they were usually motivated by the loftiest of ideals, there were many zealous Churchmen who erred on the side of severity and retribution. During the excitement of the movement many extreme things were said and done that were later a source of regret when a

¹Journal of Discourses, IV, 348.

²Neff, op. cit., p. 554. Quoted from Matthias Cowley, Wilford Woodruff (Salt Lake City, 1909).

³Ibid., p. 554.
calmer atmosphere prevailed. In evaluating the Reformation it must be kept in mind that in fairness to any people, they should not be judged by their extremes alone, but by their normal and customary conduct as well. The following quotation from a Latter-day Saints historian is an excellent statement of this principle:

I am not so blind in my admiration of the "Mormon" people or so bigoted in my devotion to the "Mormon" faith as to think there are no individuals in the Church chargeable with fanaticism, folly, intemperate speech, and wickedness; nor am I blind to the fact that some in their overzeal have lacked judgment; and that in times of excitement, under stress of special provocation, even "Mormon" leaders have given utterances to ideas that are indefensible. But I have yet to learn that it is just in a writer...to make a collection of these things and represent them as the essence of that faith against which said writer draws an indictment.

"No one would measure the belief of 'Christians,'" says a truly great writer, "by certain statements in the Fathers, nor judge the moral principles of Roman Catholics by prurient quotations from the casuist; nor yet estimate Lutherans by the utterances and deeds of the early successors of Luther, nor Calvinists by the burning of Servetus. In all such cases the general standpoint of the times has to be first taken into account." --Edeshiem's life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, preface p.8.

A long time ago the great Edmund Burke in his defense of rashness expressed in both speech and action of some of our patriots of the American revolution period said; "It is not fair to judge of the temper or the disposition of any man or any set of men when they are composed and at rest from their conduct or their expressions in a state of disturbance and irritation." The justice of Burke's assertion has never been questioned, and without any wrestling whatever it may be applied to "Mormon" leaders who sometimes spoke and acted under the recollection of rank injustice perpetrated against themselves and their people; or to rebuke rising evils against which their souls revolted.1

Although the benefits of the Reformation probably

over-balanced the harm, still its shortcomings did not go undetected, and as a result the future reforms of the Church have followed a course of greater moderation, patience, and benevolence.
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THE MORMON REFORMATION
OF 1856-57

An abstract
of a Thesis Presented to
the Department of History
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Howard Clair Searle
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ABSTRACT

This study was made for the purpose of determining the causes, course, nature, and effects of the "Great Reformation" that spread quickly throughout the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the latter part of 1856 and the first months of 1857.

The Reformation was designed, not to make proselytes, but to bring to repentance those who were already members of the "Mormon" Church. The movement was prompted by a degree of laxity on the part of the Church members in moral discipline and physical cleanliness—caused in part by the constant moving, unrest, and physical fatigue that accompanied the pioneer's exodus to Utah and their struggle for survival during the early years of settlement. Because of the strong and frequent denunciations of sin made at the inception of the Reformation, some have concluded that the Mormons were a particularly corrupt group. The Latter-day Saints accepted the injunction from the Savior to "be ye therefore perfect," and a comparison of their morals with those of similar groups indicates that the sins which aroused the Mormons to action and prompted the Reformation were no more serious than those present in most communities across the country.

The Reformation was inaugurated on September 13, 1856 at a Quarterly Conference in Kaysville, Davis County, and in
the next three weeks spread rapidly to Farmington, Centerville, Bountiful, and Great Salt Lake City. Jedediah Grant, second counselor to President Brigham Young, was the dominant personality in the initiation of the movement and continued as its prime motivator until his excessive exertions in the work caused his death in December 1856. In spite of the loss of its most energetic supporter the Reformation continued unretarded through the winter of 1856–57. By May it had reached even the most remote branches of the Church in the West and many of the missions abroad. Most of the excitement and labors of the crusade were over by June of 1857, and it passed into history with a mixture of a vast amount of good and some evil.

The main theme of the Reformation was repentance, which according to the preaching of the Elders at that time consisted of: (1) confession of sin, (2) forsaking sin, (3) forgiving others of their sins, (4) restitution for all wrong done, (5) never returning to sin. A great deal of pressure was exerted on people to induce them to confess their sins, and this resulted in some promiscuous revealing of sins that harmed many persons before it was corrected by Brigham Young.

The preaching of the Reformation dealt a great deal with many of the more practical aspects of living. Among the reforms of this nature that were emphasized was the requirement for greater personal and community cleanliness. Church leaders, who held the conviction that filth and spirituality were incompatible, strongly urged the people to bathe more regularly, wash their clothes and bedding when needed, and
clean up their houses and yards.

During the early part of the Reformation a catechism was introduced to aid people in their repentance. It was designed to cover a wide area of a person's conduct and usually consisted of twenty-six questions which were used to catechize each individual separately. The questions were asked by the Bishops or home missionaries, and if sins were discovered the person was required to confess them to those concerned and make restitution to the satisfaction of those who had been wronged.

After Church members had been catechized they were asked to demonstrate their desire to reform by submitting to the ordinance of rebaptism for the remission of sins and a renewal of covenants. Practically all the members of the Church received this impressive rite, after which they were reconfirmed for the reception of the Holy Ghost. Although rebaptism during the Reformation was not a new practice in the Church, it was apparently more concentrated and general than it had ever been prior to that time.

During the Reformation an attempt was made to revive the Law of Consecration which had been practiced earlier in the Church in Ohio and Missouri under the direction of Joseph Smith. In accordance with the requirements of this principle many faithful church members deeded over their property to the President of the Church, but no further action was taken to fully establish the law and the whole matter was dropped at that point.
Church members were also asked to live more fully the law of eternal marriage and plurality of wives. Not only was there an increased participation in this principle, but reforms were also requested in the families of those already engaged in plural marriage. Brigham Young was so disturbed with the contention and complaining in some of these polygamous families that he threatened to free all wives from their marriage covenants who would not agree to be subject to their husbands and live in harmony without whining and backbiting. There is no record of any women accepting this proffered freedom at this time.

The Reformation was often attended by an excessive spirit of excitement that often led to undesirable excesses. Some extreme things were said and done that were later a source of regret when a calmer atmosphere prevailed.

A spirit of severe retribution characterized some of the proceedings of the Reformation. Wilford Woodruff reported that he had never before heard such strong sermons delivered to the people. A few persons were excommunicated; some apostatized; and all those who would not repent and comply with the requirements of the Reformation were urged to leave the Territory. This spirit of retribution reached its extreme in the preaching of the doctrine of "blood atonement.

According to this doctrine those guilty of the most heinous crimes had lost their claim to forgiveness through the atonement of Christ, and therefore their only hope for a satisfactory reward in the world to come was through the shedding of
their own blood as an atonement for their sins. In some sermons it was even asserted that the Priesthood of the Church should be the agency for shedding the sinner's blood, as was the custom in the time of the ancient Patriarchs and Moses. This doctrine of blood atonement was apparently a theoretical consideration only at this time, for there is no reliable evidence that would indicate that the principle was actually practiced.

As a result of this study the following seem to be a fair appraisal of the effects of the Reformation: (1) The Reformation helped increase the tension between the Latter-day Saints and those outside the church and contributed to the anti-Mormon sentiment of the period. (2) Because of non-Mormon reactions or shortcomings in the principles themselves, the Church later clarified or modified its position in regard to certain doctrines and practices of the Reformation. (3) The excitement and intolerance of the Reformation as well as the concept of blood atonement may have been contributing factors in the tragic Mountain Meadows massacre of 1857. (4) A majority of the individual Church members received a moral and spiritual boost from their participation in the Reformation. (5) Many Church members suffered harm from the errors, extremes, and severity of the Reformation. (6) The Reformation had a tendency to separate from the Church those who were insincere or disobedient. (7) The moral and spiritual tone of the Church generally was apparently improved through the Reformation.