

Section 22

The Book of Mormon taught the need for authorized baptism of accountable, covenanting believers. Section 20 added to it, further specifying the method and criteria for baptism. However, when some “very moral and no doubt as good people as you could find anywhere . . . came, saying they believed in the Book of Mormon, and that they had been baptized into the Baptist Church,” Joseph did not know what to tell them. He asked the Lord and received section 22.¹

Sixteenth-century reformers were pejoratively called Anabaptists (“rebaptizers”) when they followed the Biblical practice of immersing accountable believers, including people already baptized as infants. The American Baptist leader Francis Wayland defended this practice. “We consider ourselves not to *baptize again*,” he wrote, “but to baptize those who have never submitted to this ordinance.”²

Section 22 makes the same case. The Lord declares that “old covenants” are “done away” because he has restored “a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning” (D&C 22:1). So even a man baptized an hundred times would

¹ Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, November 2, 1873, 16:293–94. Also see “[History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 \[Draft 2\]](#),” p. 38, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 23, 2020.

² Francis Wayland, *Notes and Principles on the Practices of Baptist Churches* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, 1857), 98.

not have entered the “straight gate” by obeying an irrelevant law, by “dead works” (vv. 2–3). The Lord gave the new covenant because of these dead works.

Oliver Cowdery preached that until the Lord restored authorized baptism, “the ordinances of the gospel have not been regularly administered since the days of the Apostles.”³ His teaching was understood by converts who flocked to the restored covenant. It was unpopular to others.⁴

³ “The Golden Bible,” *Painesville Telegraph*, November 16, 1830, [3].

⁴ “Mormonism,” *Painesville (OH) Telegraph*, February 15, 1831, [1]; Thomas Campbell, “The Mormon Challenge,” *Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831, [2].