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A Letter from Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery

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A LETTER

FROM

JOSEPH SMITH TO OLIVER COWDERY.

DEAR BROTHER,

HAVING learned from the first number of the *Messenger and Advocate*, that you were, not only about to "give a history of the rise and progress of the church of the Latter-day Saints;" but, that said "history would necessarily embrace my life and character," I have been induced to give you the time and place of my birth; as I have learned that many of the opposers of those principles which I have held forth to the world, profess a personal acquaintance with me, though when in my presence, represent me to be another person in age, education, and stature from what I am.

I was born (according to the record of the same, kept by my parents), in the town of Sharon, Windsor co., Vt. on the 23rd of December, 1805.

At the age of ten my father's family removed to Palmyra, N. Y. where, and in the vicinity of which, I lived, or made it my place of residence until I was twenty-one—the latter part in the town of Manchester.

During this time, as is common to most or all youths, I fell into many vices and follies; but as my accusers are, and have been forward to accuse me of being guilty of gross and outrageous violations of the peace and good order of the community, I take the occasion to remark, that, though, as I have said above, "as is common to most or all youths, I fell into many vices and follies," I have not, neither can it be sustained, in truth, been guilty of wronging or injuring any man or society of men; and those imperfections to which I allude, and for which I have often had occasion to lament, were a light, and too often, vain mind, exhibiting a foolish and trifling conversation.

This being all, and the worst that my accusers can substantiate against my moral character, I wish to add that it is not without a deep feeling of regret that I am thus called upon, in answer to my own conscience, to fulfil a duty I owe to myself, as well as to the cause of truth, in making this public confession of my former uncircumspect walk and trifling conversation;

and more particularly as I often acted in violation of those holy precepts which I knew came from God. But as the "Articles and Covenants" of this church are plain upon this particular point, I do not deem it important to proceed further. I only add, that I do not, and never have, pretended to be any other than a man, "subject to passion" and liable, without the assisting grace of the Saviour, to deviate from that perfect path in which *all* men are commanded to walk!

By giving the above a place in your valuable paper, you will confer a lasting favour upon myself as an individual, and, as I humbly hope, subserve the cause of righteousness.

I am, with feelings of esteem, your fellow-labourer in the gospel of our Lord,

JOSEPH SMITH.

LIVERPOOL:

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