

community values, to let their voices be heard, and to work for, in legal ways, limits being placed on the dissemination, broadcast, sale, and rental of illegal pornographic materials.

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VICTOR B. CLINE

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## POSTEARTH LIFE

See: Afterlife

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## POVERTY, ATTITUDES TOWARD

For Latter-day Saints, as for all Christians, attending to the needs of the poor is service to God (Matt. 25:31–40; Mosiah 2:17; D&C 42:38) and an expression of the greatest spiritual gift, the attitude of charity (1 Cor. 13:13). King BENJAMIN explained in the Book of Mormon that, as a result of true repentance, people are filled with the love of God and the desire to administer to those in need (Mosiah 4:16). It is no excuse that “the man has brought upon himself his misery,” for all are beggars dependent upon God, who gives generously (Mosiah 4:17–23). Benjamin required that the poor also carry this attitude and covet not—those who cannot give are to say in their hearts, “I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give” (Mosiah 4:24–25). Giving to the poor is essential to retaining a remission of one’s sins and walking guiltless before God (Mosiah 4:26). Anyone who cries unto God sends up a petition in vain without giving “to those who stand in need” (Alma 34:28).

In 1935 the Church established an extensive welfare services program to assist those in need. In addition, all members of the Church are encouraged to give their time and resources wherever possible. Efforts to help the poor are designed to relieve suffering by supplying immediate needs

(cf. Luke 10:29–42; 16:19–39), to build self-sufficiency through employment, and to teach people to give willingly (D. McKay, *CR* [Oct. 1941]:54; see WELFARE SERVICES). Widows or orphans are to be provided for (James 1:27; D&C 83:6), especially those destitute because of persecution (D&C 42:30, 39; 52:40; 104:14–18). Indolence on the part of those who are able to work is condemned (Prov. 20:4; 1 Tim. 5:8, 13; D&C 42:42); the poor are to contribute their own labor, whenever possible (Deut. 15:7–11; 24:19; 2 Thes. 3:10). Through the efforts of all living the gospel law in an ideal society worthy of the presence of the Lord, there are “no poor among them” (Moses 7:18; Acts 4:32–35; 4 Ne. 1:2–3; D&C 42:30–33; see ZION).

Those who willingly give to the poor are promised many blessings, including eternal life (Luke 18:18–23; Matt. 25:31–40), deliverance (Ps. 41:1), forgiveness (Alma 4:13–14), happiness (Prov. 14:21), material rewards (Prov. 19:17; 28:27; Jacob 2:17–19; Deut. 24:19), and answers to prayers (Alma 34:28). Strong condemnations are repeated against those who refuse to share with the poor (2 Ne. 9:30; D&C 56:16). Caring for the poor is a significant moral challenge and obligation (Deut. 15:11; *CWHN* 9:193).

Under the LAW OF MOSES, the poor were to be treated generously (Epsztein, pp. 108–134). The corners of fields were left for them to reap (Lev. 19:9–10; Deut. 24:19–21); the produce of the land every seventh year was given first to the poor and the stranger (Ex. 23:10–11; Lev. 25:3–7); loans to the poor were interest free (Lev. 25:35–37; Ex. 22:25–27); Hebrews sold into bondage to other Hebrews were emancipated and generously supplied after six years of service (Ex. 21:2–6; Deut. 15:12–15); and the tithes not used by the Levites were given to the poor (Deut. 14:28–29; 26:12–13). Still, this did not absolve the responsibility to do more if another remained in need (Deut. 15:11).

The law of CONSECRATION, revealed to Joseph Smith in 1831 (D&C 42), invited the members to give all they possessed to the Church, receive back what they needed (their stewardships), use what they received to provide for themselves, and give their surplus to the Church. These surpluses and the residues of their inheritances were held in the BISHOP’S STOREHOUSE and used first to help the poor (Cook, 1985). Latter-day scriptures speak warnings equally to the rich and to the poor: “Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your sub-

stance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls. . . . Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands!" (D&C 56:16–17).

Most fundamental, however, is the generosity of individuals. As a minimum, most Latter-day Saints believe they should fast for two meals (twenty-four hours) each month and give the equivalent of these two meals, or more, as a FAST OFFERING. In addition, many believe they are expected to do more, to contribute to organized charities and to give personal assistance in the form of money, training, and encouragement (*see* ECONOMIC AID; HUMANITARIAN SERVICE).

[*See also* Wealth, Attitudes Toward.]

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DAVID J. CHERRINGTON

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## PRATT, ORSON

As a member of the first QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES of the modern dispensation, Orson Pratt participated in almost every phase of the Church's history from 1830 until his death in 1881. As a missionary, editor, pioneer, and pamphleteer, he was one of the most influential leaders of the Church in the nineteenth century.

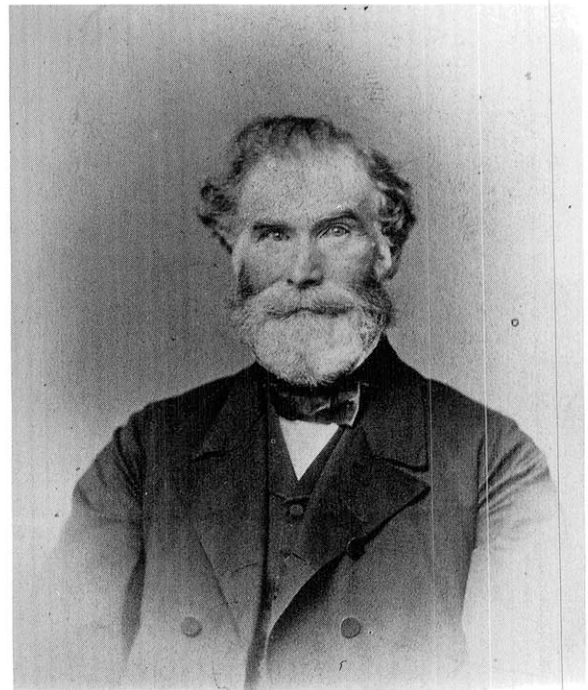
Pratt was born September 19, 1811, at Hartford, Washington County, New York. At the age of eighteen he began seeking a RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, and within a year he had been taught the gospel by his brother Parley P. PRATT, who had himself recently joined the Church. On his nineteenth birthday, Orson was baptized into the Church by his brother.

Orson Pratt spent his first years in the Church on a variety of short-term missions in the eastern United States and Canada. He also attended the SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS in Kirtland, Ohio, marched to Missouri with ZION'S CAMP in 1834,

was ordained one of the Standing High Council in Missouri (July 1834), and in February 1835 was chosen as a member of the newly organized Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

From 1839 to 1841 he participated in the very successful MISSION OF THE TWELVE TO THE BRITISH ISLES, spending much of his time in Scotland. At Edinburgh in September 1840, he published his first missionary tract, *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions*. An important pamphlet, it contained the first *public* recording of Joseph SMITH'S FIRST VISION and also summarized basic LDS beliefs, a list that bears some resemblance to the 1842 ARTICLES OF FAITH in the WENTWORTH LETTER of Joseph Smith.

Orson Pratt's return to America in 1841 thrust him into a maelstrom of rumors and gossip in Nauvoo: that the Prophet Joseph Smith was teaching PLURAL MARRIAGE. His reactions to the situation led to his excommunication in August 1842. However, after several months of seeking the truth regarding both Joseph Smith's revelations and the newly introduced practice of plural marriage, Pratt accepted both with such assurance that he spent the rest of his life in their defense. He was rein-



Orson Pratt (1811–1881), apostle, pioneer, author, scientist (pictured here c. 1865). Photographer: G. Wunsch.