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.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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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, An 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-

stated in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in January 1843.

Following Joseph Smith’s death in 1844, Pratt supported the right and responsibility of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to preside over the Church. In 1847 he was a member of the Pioneer Company traveling to the Great Basin. On July 21 of that year he and Erastus Snow were the first of that company to enter the Salt Lake Valley. Several days later he preached the first sermon there. His journals are an important source for pioneer history.

From 1848 to 1851 Pratt presided over the Church in Europe. In addition to his many responsibilities regarding proselytizing, immigration, and editing the LDS MILLENNIAL STAR, he wrote and published sixteen pamphlets in defense of LDS doctrines. These include his treatises Divine Authority, or the Question, Was Joseph Smith Sent of God? (1848); The Kingdom of God (1848–1849); and Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon (1850–1851).

When he returned to Salt Lake City, Elder Pratt was assigned by President Brigham Young to publicly preach a sermon announcing the doctrine of plural marriage at a special missionary conference in August 1852. Following the meetings he was assigned by Brigham Young to publish in Washington, D.C., a periodical in defense of plural marriage. The twelve-month run of The Seer in 1853 provides the most detailed defense of the doctrine in LDS literature.

In 1856, again presiding over the European Mission, Elder Pratt produced additional pamphlets on specific gospel principles. Eight tracts were issued separately, then bound together in 1857 under the title Tracts by Orson Pratt. . . . After Brigham Young’s death in 1877, Pratt was assigned by John Taylor to help prepare new editions of the modern LDS scriptures. He had provided much of the critical work for the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, and he did the same for the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon (dividing it into chapters and verses and adding references), and for the 1879 American edition of the Pearl of Great Price.

Throughout his life Orson Pratt pursued his strong interest in mathematics and astronomy. In 1866 he published his major mathematical work, New and Easy Method of Solution of the Cubic and Biquadratic Equations, and in 1879 issued Key to the Universe. In these works and in various lectures to many early LDS audiences, he was a positive force in the scientific education of the American pioneers. By the time his last scientific work was published, he was suffering from diabetes. He preached his last public discourse on September 18, 1881, and died on October 3 in Salt Lake City. He had married seven wives and fathered forty-five children.

Elder Pratt’s greatest impact upon the Church came through his precisely written theological studies. Within each work he moved carefully from one axiom to the next, developing his position with the same exactness he used in presenting a mathematical proof. His concern for definitiveness and his ability to simplify, to reduce things to their lowest common denominator, made his written works valuable to missionaries defending the faith in mission fields throughout the world.

Orson Pratt’s religious pamphlets grew out of a missionary context. Their importance lies partly in the extended arguments and “proofs” for the central tenets of LDS theology. In most of his writing, however, he was an elaborator, a systematizer, and a popularizer of LDS thought, rather than an innovator or an originator. In almost every area he learned the substance either directly from the Prophet Joseph Smith or indirectly from his dynamic and visionary older brother Parley, also an LDS apostle and author. Orson Pratt was at his best in developing the ideas of others and expanding them into fully elaborated statements.

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