CLEVELAND, May 13, 1855.

A PROCLAMATION

And a warning voice unto all people, first to all Kings, Governors and Rulers in Authority, and unto every kindred tongue and people under the whole heavens, to whom this word shall come, greeting:

MOSES, ELIAS, ELIJAH and JOHN set forth and declare the word of the Lord unto you. Hear ye! hear ye! Lo the trumpet is sounding–this is the last and the eleventh hour–the day of the Lord's controversy with the nations of the earth and all the people of the earth; hear ye! Listen, O islands of the sea and hear the voice of the Lord unto all kings and rulers and to all that in every place that call on the name of the Lord.

A voice from mount zion, the city of the Living God–the day is drawing nigh–that awful day–behold this word is spoken by Moses, Elias, Elijah and John, to prepare the way for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, attended with ten thousand of his saints, taking vengeance upon the wicked and those who obey not the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Behold! prepare ye the nations, prepare, for the day of vengeance is near, the day of God Almighty, and the year of full release is come, when the hands of the wicked shall be broken off and the captive shall go free and men shall no longer make merchandize of you nor sport themselves in their own deceivings, while they feast with you.

The time, the set time to favor zion has come–so hear ye all nations of the earth when he setteth up an ensign upon the mountains and bloweth a trumpet, hear all ye people that liveth upon the earth in every nation and of every tongue, to

you this word is given to warn you to prepare. Let the priests and ministers and all professors of religion of every class and denomination of professors in the world give heed to this word, let the people give heed to this word and prepare for the day of vengeance of the Lord which cometh speedily upon the wicked, for, behold the pride of the kings of the earth shall be brought low and their haughtiness and arrogance shall be humbled to the dust, for there is but one King who is God forevermore, "the Lord of Hosts is his name," and he shall rule over the whole earth and all the earth shall be filled with his glory and the righteous and the poor of the earth, and them that dwell among men shall not any longer be ruled over by the haughtiness of the proud nor by him that oppresseth the poor or that oppress the hireling in his wages, for the earth now groaneth in wickedness and is filled with violence, and every altar has become poluted, and filthiness and darkness dwelleth in high places; the secrets of kings courts are being manifest and shall be revealed upon the house tops, for only see the profusion of human blood that is now running and is made to flow; and the many thousands of lives of innocent men, women and children that are sacrificed to gratify the ambition of kings, and their wicked and ungodly thirst for power, and for no just cause of righteousness that is of the Lord. Have they done this? Behold the cries and sufferings of fond mothers and orphan children that now ascend on high as a testimony against the nations of the earth, because that all have sinned and that cruelty and injustice has become the order of the day, and of injustice and ingratitude of all the governments of the earth until the voice of the angels and spirits of the dead and of just men made perfect through suffering speaketh from the dust to declare the council of God, and to put forth a warning voice that the poor in spirit, and that the believing and humble and contrite heart, and also the pure in heart may find rest to their souls through the means of the gospel, the everlasting gospel; and that the righteous may be gathered out from the wicked and stand in holy places. Then get you ye righteous and pure in heart to a place of refuge, the land of pure rivers in the valley of the mountains, even to the fields of the woods, to the place appointed of the Lord for refuge and for safety–to the mount

Zion that is beautiful for situation on the sides of the north;–and ye that obey this word shall be saved for behold this is the word of the proclamation that we, Moses, Elias, Elijah, and John have appeared unto many to declare unto them and now command it to be written and sent out unto all people that all who desire to be righteous and to know the true and living way, may know the set time of zions deliverance–her sons and her daughters; and that the millenial year is near at hand, when all they that do good shall dwell in the land and them that will do wickedly and will not hearken unto these things shall be cut off out of the land, as the Lord hath said, and as declared by the prophets of old.

Behold we say, let all the churches, let all the rulers of the land and governors begin to do justice, every one in their order, and to fill the judgment seat with honor and mercy and not with cruelty; for many are now in prison and in bonds because of false witness; and many are oppressed that are poor because of the rich. Lighten ye these burdens and give judgment according to law and justice and truth, and not according to what the rich shall say, or the proud, for all these things are sinful and an abomination in the sight of the Lord. Behold! this is the voice of Elijah unto you–the voice of the prophets, the voice of revelation–the voice of the spirit of God; and the voice of God that speaketh to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest when the Lord shall come he shall smite the earth with a curse and destroy all living from off the face of the whole earth. Let the priests give heed to the words of life as written in the bible and teach the people to deal justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly before God, to love one another and to be one, for, in so doing they fulfil the law and the prophets and seek not to divide or to become disunited in faith and doctrine–for, whatsoever divides or makes divisions in the land contrary to the gospel rule is not of the Lord, but must be of that evil one who was a liar from the beginning. But in your faith and in your doctrine be one as the gospel is one, so must all the true followers of Christ *be one* as the gospel is one, and as the spirit of Christ is one and ye must obey that law that Paul and Peter taught and that Cornelius the Gentile received

and that the Jews or some of them obeyed on the day of Pentecost; the same that the people of Samaria received when Philip the Apostle of Jesus Christ preached the things concerning the kingdom of God unto them; the same that Jesus the Lord commanded his apostles to preach and teach amongst all nations.

Go ye forth all ye messengers and all ye people and obey these things, the true order of God, the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and thus shall ye find deliverance in the day of trouble and in the day when great famine and plague and pestilence and great calamity and wrath shall fall on all the disobedient and the unjust and then shall ye because of thy faith in that which is good, be received up into higher spheres of intelligence into the celestial kingdom of God for this is the order of the glory of God and the law of Mount Zion, which is also the law of love and which is also the law of God, that all who believe in God may be one as the Father and the son are one–one in heart, one in faith, one in doctrine and one in spirit, for such is the state and condition of the spirit and union of the saints that are of the general assembly and church of the first born, the city of the Living God: and such also is the faith of all that come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant and to God the judge of all the earth, and all are one in faith and in doctrine, and in him God. There is no division at all, and therefore all the true children of God will see eye to eye and will dwell together in love, observing all the law and the commandments, justice, judgment, mercy and truth. Behold! this is the voice of Elijah that speaketh unto you all ye people of all the earth. Behold I am as the voice of one that crieth in the wilderness, "prepare ye, prepare ye the way of the Lord and make his paths straight." And it is I that speaketh these words; a warning voice unto all cities; go ye out of them ye that are righteous and dwell not in all this land of iniquity, for judgments and the plague shall fall upon the wicked and scarcely can the righteous dwell in the land except ye feed the poor and clothe the naked for a curse will the lord your God pour out upon the unjust, and the man that giveth false weights, and have thus robbed the poor, the Lord will judge. And in righteousnes will the Lord judge the earth, and in judgment will the Lord send down his great

wrath upon the people. And from the clouds, fierce lightnings, and excessive rains, and them that deal treacherously, shall be cut off without mercy, and then again the clouds shall refuse to give down their rains, and in time of want your rivers shall be dried up and famine shall be in all the land, and so shall the Lord punish the wicked who have oppressed the poor, and robbed them that are of a contrite heart, and take away from them of their goods and of their horses and of their cattle and of their stores and their meat and their grain shall spoil and a blight and a curse shall be upon all the unjust and them that do wickedly. And for the evil they have done will I the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob reward them double for all of their wicked deeds and for their unjust judgments. And for their false measures and for their false weights and for all of their treacherous dealings, saith the Lord, and them that speak lies with their neighbors, and that cheat and defraud his neighbor, and that oppress the hireling in his wages, will the Lord remember in the day of his great wrath upon the earth, and in his sore displeasure will he vex the whole land and the people thereon shall mourn and cry aloud for mercy. But as they have measured out to others and would not give heed to that which was just, nor in mercy forgive those that had trespassed against them, neither will the Lord have mercy upon them nor forgive them, but will laugh at their calamity and mock when their fear cometh.– And many signs will the Lord cause to appear in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapors of smoke, while many that are righteous shall go forth and prophecy and declare the truth unto the people, and some that are pure in heart shall be gathered into the fold of the good shepherd and find favor in the sight of the Lord.–But be ye wise servants and harmless as doves for many false spirits have gone out into the world and will deceive many; and thus shall ye know them by their fruits, for all they who are of the division are false spirits, for the Lord is not divided nor can any prosper who are of the division: for where there is no union, the power of darkness and that of the evil one will prevail: therefore it is the commandment that ye love one another, and if ye love one another, then will ye worship one God and be one. By

this rule then, shall ye know all the true saints of God and all true and false spirits, for they who are of the true faith will keep the commandments and laws of the great king but the false spirits will seek to pervert the right ways of the Lord and to deny the only true God and our Lord Jesus Christ whom he has sent, nor have any to go to the land of Jerusalem as shall they who are of the Jews in their sins and unbelief; nor have ye to go to the wilderness or to the deserts or barren lands, but ye shall first go to your closets and bow before the Lord–confessing all your sins; and then shall the righteous go out of Babylon and go to the broad valleys and plains of the Mountains, and to the wide spread plains of the west; and there shall ye find pure rivers of water, abounding with fish, and broad spread *fields* and *plains* that shall yield an abundant harvest of the good things of this earth–grain of every kind for the riches and comfort of man, and for food for the beasts of the field. And so will the Lord give safety to his people that obey all his commandments and that will keep the law of his celestial kingdom, when the great hail from the Lord, the weight of a tallent, shall fall upon the wicked. Behold! I am Elijah that speaketh to you, O ye people of all the earth. Begin ye from this hour to deal justly and to love mercy and to show mercy unto others, and to do the works of the law as well as to say. Behold why do ye say and do not? for so the Lord hath spoken that no one can enter into the kingdom of God unless they shall keep the whole *law* of the kingdom of God; for the curse tarrieth not, and into every house shall this voice and proclamation be sent. And also it shall be sent out into all the land, and to them that are afar off, and to every city, and among all people, and they who will not receive it, and give heed to its just and reasonable requirements and obey the holy and heavenly commands, and turn from their sins and wicked thoughts, rendering unto God the things that belong to God, and to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, with all due holiness and praise, forgetting not to feed the poor and to love God with all their heart, more than gold or silver or any thing that is of this world's vain glory, shall a curse devour, and your families shall die and the plague shall be in your dwellings, and your children shall be taken

away from the evil to come; your cattle and your horses shall die in their stalls and in your fields; and your riches and all your goods shall take wings and fly away, like the wind; and ye shall feel the devouring worm by night and by day, and like a canker shall it eat and no power can stay its devouring ravages. But to them who will give heed to my voice, I the Lord God that made the heavens and the earth and did preserve my people Israel in the wilderness, and that fed them upon heavenly manna, will be their Angel to guide them and to teach them, and will watch over them for good.

Behold, again I say, I am Elijah, and it is the Lord that speaketh. I have come to declare these words, and my commission unto you, my friends, for my spirit have I given to many to understand the scriptures and to set in order the house of God. Yet but a few have understood this work, and unto them have I given more abundantly of the knowledge of that power by which the great prophecies are revealed that have been spoken of by the prophets concerning that marvelous work that should open the eyes of the blind and confound the wisdom of the wise men of this generation. And to my servant and friend whose name is held in sacred remembrance in the councils of the just, and who is called the messenger of the covenant, and who was first called among the sons of Ephraim to set forth in order the dispensation of the fulness of times–he it is to whom the key of knowledge has been given to go forth in the power of Elijah, and to bear off the ark of the Lord in wisdom and in power; for he shall be filled with light and his bowels shall be as a fountain of knowledge; and none shall gainsay or resist his words; nor shall he be confounded, and he shall divide the inheritance to the saints by lot, when Zion shall be established in the glory and power of her king. And all who *know* the power and glory of this work of the gathering up of the sons of Israel for Zion and for the organization of the Church and house of the Lord, shall know this servant and messenger when they hear his voice, for he speaketh the words of Elijah, and is sent to do the work of Elijah, and feareth not to sacrifice, that the kingdom and the glory thereof might be one. And this my servant is now standing in your midst, and ye know him not. And I now have come

to speak to you that are friends, as friends; but to the wicked, as to the wicked–that they may repent; and to the righteous that ye may have eternal life. And if they who are rebellious will turn their hearts to their fathers, and their children will turn their hearts to God, they shall have life also. I am now surrounded by many good Angels and Spirits that bear with me the keys of knowledge, and who have in charge with me this great work, and who are angels that dwell in the presence of God. Therefore we come from the presence of God to bring unto you this Proclamation, with glad tidings of great joy to all that shall believe and obey the truth; for them that will obey these words shall have eternal life. But to the disobedient and the rebellious, there is no promise of blessing and safety in all this land. We come to administer to you in spirit, for our bodies are not yet risen from the dead; yet still we are bodies of spirit, or have spiritual bodies. Behold we go to the prisons of the dead, and preach un to them the gospel that they may also obey the law of God, and therefore obtain a mansion of glory in the Celestial Kingdom of GOD.

There is but one glory where God and Christ is, and no one can enter there unless it is by sacrifice, and obedience to a celestial law, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many glories of the lesser spheres belonging to a lower class of spirits that dwell in darkness and the polutions of sin, but none of these can abide the glory of the Father and of the Son, because they have not desired in their hearts to enjoy that glory, nor have they obeyed the whole law of God, which law is the great law of love, and which is also the law of Mount Zion, the only straight and narrow path, which is faith in God and in his Son Jesus Christ, which leadeth to the kingdom of immortal glory. So declare ye and give this testimony that all may hear and believe the gospel,–that all that will may come and partake of the waters of life freely.

We shall visit you again soon, and declare unto you more of the words of life; for we have many things to say to you, my friends, when ye are strong and able to bear it. Remember, remember, my friends, the words of life that we have spoken unto you. We now subscribe,

MOSES, ELIAS, ELIJAH and JOHN.

NOTES ON THE DOCUMENT

H. Michael Marquardt

THE FOREGOING IS A RECREATION OF THE RARE PAMPHLET, *A Proclamation,* published and distributed by Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. The current presentation is based on a photocopy of the only known surviving example of the document, which resides in the archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. In this reproduction, the transcription is mine, and the text was set by Connie Disney of Signature Books in the same font, style, and dimensions as the original, retaining typographical idiosyncrasies such as word spacing, use of small capital letters and italics, misspellings, and the decorative flourish on the first page.

The first two words on page 6 are difficult to read, but a close examination shows them, in all probability, to be "this rule." The type on the bottom third of the first page of the original has faded but is nonetheless readable. The original has the following archival inscription at the top of the first page: "Proclamation, May 13/55, Martin Harris to All People."

Readers may be struck by the humane message of the proclamation regarding care for the poor. However, that message is diluted by the overall apocalyptic context. For instance, the text is ascribed to the "spirits" of Moses, Elias, Elijah (notwithstanding the latter are the Greek and Hebrew names, respectively, for the same biblical figure), and John, who remarkably sign their names at the end of the document. Their message is a warning to gather to Zion prior to the predicted calamities accompanying the end of the world. One cannot escape the obvious conclusion that Martin Harris himself is the intended end-of-times figure designated as the "messenger of the cove-

nant." Readers may also note that the angels have some difficulty maintaining consistent pronouns.

However, these are first impressions, and it gets more interesting when one considers the historical context. For instance, a well-known diarist, Stephen Post, wrote that the revelation was received, not by Harris directly, but "through a Miss Sexton a Spirit medium of Cleveland" (Post journal, Oct. 5, 1855, LDS Archives). This was the same medium through which Joseph Smith's brother William had previously received a revelation. Post became aware of the circumstances surrounding this document when "Br Harris read his proclamation" to an assembled group of Kirtland Saints.

Another contemporary of Harris recalled the following:

> One day, when working for me, he [Harris] handed me a leaflet that he had got printed, taken from some of the prophets, telling of a wonderful person that should appear and draw all men after him. I looked it over and returned it to him. He said, "Who do you think it refers to?" I said, "Why, of course, it refers to you." He looked very much pleased, and said, "I see you understand the scriptures" (Christopher G. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences,* Marshall Printing, Marshalltown, Iowa, 1893, 44).

Reverend Samuel F. Whitney, brother of LDS Bishop Newel K. Whitney, mentioned that Harris at one time claimed to be Elijah:

> All the time Martin was in Kirtland boys eight years and older would gather about him and dispute with, and annoy him in various ways. Martin claimed to be Elijah and when annoyed would curse them (Statement, Mar. 6, 1885, in *Naked Truths about Mormonism,* Jan. 1888, 3, Beinecke Library, Yale University).

Stephen H. Hart stated the following about Harris:

> Martin, when closely questioned about the plates from which the "Book of Mormon" purports to have been taken, would say he saw the plates by the eye of faith. He often compared himself to Enoch, Elijah, Paul and other Bible persons. I never doubted that he was insane on Mormonism (Statement, Nov. 1884, ibid., Apr. 1888, 3).

This sentiment was corroborated in December 1856 by Emma Smith Bidamon who said she considered Harris to be "an honest man, but not naturally as noble and firm in his mind as some" (Edmund C. Briggs, "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," *Journal of History,* Jan. 1916, 455).

Harris sent a copy of the proclamation to Brigham Young with the following cover letter:

> [E]nclosed I Send you A Proclamation as you will discover by reading it given by Moses, Elias, Elijah, and John—you no doubt will recollect of a favor asked of me—of the lone [loan] of Some money upon the ground of relationship and in the name of god. I now make an appeal to you in the name of god and Command you in the name of god to Publish the Revelation I send you in your deseret news or in some of your public Journals Published in the vall[e]y that the word and Commandment of the Proclamation may go to all the world (Aug. 13, 1855, emphasis omitted, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives; photo in *BYU Studies,* Fall 1984, 427).

Not unexpectedly, Brigham Young declined to have the proclamation printed.

The content of the pamphlet is representative of a long history of visionary and revelatory experiences claimed by Harris, some of which are mentioned in my "Martin Harris: The Kirtland Years, 1831-1870," in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* Fall 2002, 1-40, along with other details of Harris's personality and life.

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