The Lectures on Faith: An Authorship Study

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Abstract
The Lectures on Faith, important since 1834 to the theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are of disputed authorship. In an attempt to ascribe the lectures to their true author from five possible candidates, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, and W. W. Phelps, the use of 738 function and other words in the lectures was compared with the use of the same words in known writings of the candidates.

The study showed that Sidney Rigdon’s use of function words corresponded very closely with that in Lectures One and Seven, and fairly well with Two, Three, Four, and Six. Joseph Smith’s use of function words matched closely those in Lecture Five, with some evidence of his having co-authored or edited Two, Three, Four, and Six.

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the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. Authorship and History of the Lectures on Faith. The 'Lectures on Faith': A Case Study in Decanonization. LecturesOnFaith.com is a project that is entirely owned, and maintained by oneClimbs.com. LecturesOnFaith.com is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also called the Mormon Church or LDS Church). Lectures on faith. Prepared under the Direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith Delivered to the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio, 1834-35. Deseret Book Company Salt Lake City, Utah. They can be studied with great profit by all gospel scholars."fn. In a discourse at Brigham Young University, Elder McConkie quoted certain portions of the lectures that dealt with the Deity and praised them as follows: "In my judgment, it is the most comprehensive, intelligent, inspired utterance that now exists in the English language-that exists in one place defining, interpreting, expounding, announcing, and testifying what kind of being God is. My analysis of the Lectures on faith [sic] leads me to three somewhat tentative conclusions: First, although Joseph Smith did not write the lectures as they appear in the 1835 version, his influence can be seen in images, examples, scriptural references, and phrasing. Second, Sidney Rigdon may well have prepared them for publication; however, the style throughout is not consistently his. Third, the lectures in their published version represent a compilation or collaboration rather than the work of a single person."Characteristics of Joseph Smith’s Style and Notes on the Authorship