

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

By 1860, Mormonism had enjoyed a presence in Great Britain for over twenty years. Mormon missionaries had experienced an unprecedented success in conversions and many new converts had left Britain's shores for a new life and a new religion in the far western mountains of the American continent. With the unprecedented success of the Mormons had come tales of duplicity, priestcraft, sexual seduction and uninhibited depravity among the new religious adherents. Thousands of pamphlets with sensational titles such as, *The Gates of the Mormon Hell Opened!...*, *Appalling Disclosures! Mormon Revelations, Being the History of Fourteen Females...*, *The Prophets; or, Mormonism Unveiled*, and, *Female Life Among the Mormons* were sold or given to the British populace as a way of discouraging people from joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (commonly called Mormons).<sup>1</sup>

As with most other aspects of history, the creation of English anti-Mormon pamphlets did not occur within an historical vacuum. The publication of cheap street literature had been a popular means of communicating ideas and defending causes since the sixteenth century. Indeed, by the seventeenth century, there was a veritable tidal wave of printed literature in circulation in England. This collection of printed matter included such items as broadsides, ballads, catchpennies, chapbooks, and pamphlets.<sup>2</sup>

These items of literature provided the medium of communication and entertainment for those of the lower classes. Printing flourished in the