

Using Barbour's categories and terminology, a few key questions could be asked: Can our realistic interpretation of the world be extended to a full scientific realism? What is the relation of this world to the previous one and to the future one? Are God's physics the same as ours but more refined? What kind of truth have we found? Further, how does the scriptural promise that we keep the knowledge we gain here relate to science? If our enterprise of science (i.e., developing better explanations of increasingly diverse and obscure observations) is similar to God's science, could we not, therefore, jump immediately to new scientific levels by God's gift of a few laws of physics? Or does our science, like our moral progress, require step-by-step addition of knowledge?

These questions are difficult enough, but perhaps the best approach to them is in Barbour's technique of language analysis. It sometimes seems that our abhorrence of dogma or theology in the Thomist sense nourishes our predilection for linguistic imprecision. By using key words loosely, we allow flexibility of interpretation but we also invite sloppy thinking. What is the information content of words like "light," "truth," and "intelligence" in Mormon theology? "Spirit" in common usage differentiates something from "matter"; how are we to read Joseph Smith's "spirit is merely a more refined form of matter"?

When we think of the general problem of science and religion, there is really no one solution. There can be no set of reconciliations broad enough to cover both subjects, but there can be good resolutions within smaller parts which will give satisfaction. There is a particular need in the Church for scientists to analyze and synthesize their own experiences and then to suggest ways to integrate these two means of interpreting the events of the world and the scriptures. Fear is the only dividend of avoiding the issues.

Both science and religion are attempts to interpret our experience. Not all people have experiences in a scientific structure, nor do all have religious experience sufficiently clear to provide contrast and conflict. Nevertheless, Mormons, more than most, should be interested in acquiring knowledge of the sort that will allow them to understand, in the broadest sense, the world—physical and spiritual—around them. Ian Barbour's book is a good beginning toward such an undertaking.

J. Golden Kimball: Apostle and Folk Hero

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The Golden Legacy: A Folk History of J. Golden Kimball. By Thomas E. Cheney. Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine-Smith, Inc., 1973. (Originally published by Brigham Young University Press, 1973.) 155 pp. \$6.95.

Even before his death in 1938 at the age of eighty-five, J. Golden Kimball had become the most talked about of all Mormon churchmen. He was himself cognizant of his reputation, and when a nephew told him, "Well, Uncle Golden, I heard another J. Golden yarn today," he scoffed, "I'll bet the damn thing isn't genuine. Seems like all the stories told these days are either about me or Mae West." To

what extent the spare, high-voiced ex-cowboy may have played up to his legend is not considered in this unpretentious but valuable compilation of Kimball's sayings, witticisms, retorts, pungent passages from sermons and talks, and salty stories about him. In his addiction to plain speaking spiced with mild profanity, Kimball posed a problem to Church authorities. But they readily saw his value, for Kimball could reach his audiences, keep them awake where his fellow-elders put them asleep, and arouse the Latter-day Saints to prodigies of giving and working for the cause. To brethren in a ward complaining they had no time to work on the chapel and no money to buy lumber, Kimball admonished, "Now you can't build a church on bullshit. . . . If we get this church built, you have got to put your ass behind you and look ahead." According to the yarn the brothers responded vigorously and completed the church.

Success in prosecuting the Lord's work and contrition for his human foibles of dropping cusswords and snitching an occasional cup of coffee are two hallmarks of Kimball tales. As Golden reportedly observed, "It's pretty hard to ask a fellow to start learning new speech this late in life." So the Church, and his present biographer, a Mormon professor, emphasize Kimball's good heart and genuine piety and accept good-naturally his venial lapses. Cheney presents Kimball as a meek repentant saint, assured of salvation by virtue of his humility and dedication to the Church.

In terms of folklore, J. Golden Kimball is a local character and the stories about him are classifiable as folk anecdotes. The local character deserves much more consideration than he has received from American folklorists. In brief, the character is an "original," a deviant personality whose quirks, eccentricities, odd mannerisms or behavior patterns clash with accepted conventional norms and inspire talk in the circle of his acquaintances, who repeat little humorous stories about his sayings and doings. Such characters run a gamut of roles, from the village idiot to the elder statesman, but whatever their social status, they are splashed with color. The comic tales they generate are anecdotes, and twice-told anecdotes that show evidence of variation from oral usage are what I term folk anecdotes. An anecdote is told as a presumed actual incident occurring to a real person. In the folk process, a body of anecdotes growing around a character will move toward apocrypha in two ways: by variant tellings of a more or less verifiable incident, and by absorption of wandering tales that get attached to likely figures.

Both of these mechanisms operate in the J. Golden Kimball cycle. An example of the first is the anecdote involving Golden and a motorist who knocked him down. Golden's irate comment as he picked himself up and shook his fist at the speeding driver is recounted by Cheney in five forms, from "The son of a bitch, he has no respect for the priesthood" to "They don't know the difference between a Gentile and the Lord's anointed." An example of the second is a story previously linked to Abraham Lincoln and now pinned on Golden. A mad dog rushed at Golden, who jabbed it in the throat with a pitchfork. Its owner angrily demanded why he had shoved the tines down the animal's throat. "Because that's the end he came at me with," replied Golden. Either of these episodes could have transpired, or again neither may have taken place as described. The folklorist depends on the available evidence. Cheney refers the latter anecdote to the Lincoln cycle, without a reference, and nowhere in his volume does he cite comparative examples. Hence his work must be regarded as a source-book rather than a finished product.