

# JOSEPH SMITH AND THE STRUCTURE OF MORMON IDENTITY

STEVEN L. OLSEN

IN 1838, JOSEPH SMITH reduced to written form the sacred experience which led him to establish Mormonism.<sup>1</sup> This narrative relates a series of heavenly visitations which Smith said had begun eighteen years earlier and had continued until 1829. Although Smith drafted earlier and later accounts of these events, only the 1838 version has been officially recognized by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Smith commenced his official *History of the Church* with this narrative. It also appeared in an 1851 collection of sacred and inspirational writings published by the Church in the British Isles. The permanent status of this text in Mormonism was secured in 1880 by its canonization at the hand of John Taylor who had recently succeeded Brigham Young to the Mormon Presidency. Since its canonization, the "Joseph Smith story," as it is known among Mormons, has become a primary document for the explication of Mormon doctrine and the introduction for many proselytes to the Church. The text has come to demand the loyalty of orthodox Mormons and has become one of Mormonism's most sacred texts.

Remarkable is the contrast between the official status of the 1838 version and the general neglect by the Church of the other accounts. This difference in status cannot be explained by the historical accuracy of the respective accounts. Despite some serious challenges to the chronology of the official account, Mormons have firmly defended its historicity, even though several of the non-canonized versions do not suffer from these perceived historical inaccuracies.<sup>2</sup> Neither can this distinction be demonstrated by the degree of complementarity of the different versions. Although some inconsistencies exist among the accounts, no official attempt has been made to supplement the canonized version with many rich details from the other versions.<sup>3</sup> Finally,

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STEVEN L. OLSEN is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at the University of Chicago. This material was presented at the fifteenth annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, Canandaigua, New York, May 1-4, 1980.

despite the principal use of the official version to validate Mormon doctrine,<sup>4</sup> other versions could conceivably perform these didactic functions as well. In short, the Mormon Church seems to view the 1838 "Joseph Smith story" as an account apart, a different kind of narrative from the other versions, even from those written by Smith himself. This exclusive and inviolate position reinforces its sacredness in Mormonism.<sup>5</sup>

One possible reason for the considerable contrast in the Mormon attitude between the canonized and all other accounts is their respective relation to Mormon identity. That is, the unquestioned loyalty to the official version may be an expression more of Mormon ideology than of Mormon historiography or theology. One of the most important roles of this text in Mormonism may be the manner in which it articulates Mormonism's self-conscious mission to mankind.

The social and humanistic disciplines abound with studies of the significance of sacred narratives, often called creation myths, for the expression and maintenance of cultural identity.<sup>6</sup> Meaning in such narratives has been found to be communicated through symbolic as opposed to propositional logic. That is, sensory elements in the story connected with objects, images, persons and places are combined and recombined in discernible patterns which give the story cultural significance considerably greater than that given by the events themselves. As Alan Heimert has observed,

To discover the meaning of any utterance demands what is in substance a continuing act of literary interpretation, for the language with which an idea is presented, and the imaginative universe by which it is surrounded, often tell us more of an author's meaning and intention than his declarative propositions.<sup>7</sup>

This imaginative universe or these symbolic patterns constitute the structure of a narrative. This article will seek to analyze in the context of Mormon identity the structures used by Smith to express, and thereby interpret, his early sacred experiences.

Although many structural theories have been developed, the structuralism of Jean Piaget possesses two distinct advantages for the present study.<sup>8</sup> In the first place, Piaget sees "structuring" as the human process of imposing greater degrees of order upon and deriving additional levels of meaning from preexisting oral, visual, material, written and other cultural traditions. From this perspective, the Joseph Smith story becomes as much the reflection of Smith's perceptions and intentions within an expanding Mormon world-view as the description of a series of historical occurrences.

Secondly, Piaget identifies three characteristics of a well developed symbolic logic, namely wholeness, transformation and self-regulation. These provide the model with a method of analysis and criteria of falsifiability which allow for a level of scientific rigor unattainable from more impressionistic structural theories.

Piaget's first principle, wholeness, requires that the structure of a narrative be completely developed within the story. In the same way that a good story

includes all relevant elements for its complete exposition, an adequate symbolic logic must be fully expressed within the narrative.

The symbolic structure of the Joseph Smith story exhibits the quality of wholeness. Briefly, the structure of the text is based on the dynamic contrast between two pairs of opposed yet fundamental concepts in Mormonism, namely Kingdom/World and heaven/earth.<sup>9</sup> The Joseph Smith story symbolically expresses the ideal Mormon relation between these two binary oppositions. That is, the Kingdom/World distinction is magnified and the heaven/earth distinction is diminished throughout the narrative until the Kingdom overcomes the World and heaven and earth are united. These developments are wholly contained within the narrative.

Piaget's second characteristic, transformation, suggests that the events of the story are ordered not only in chronological and geographical sequence but also in terms of the text's symbolic logic. In the words of the anthropologist Edmund Leach, "the chronological sequence is itself of structural significance."<sup>10</sup>

Two transformational principles operate within the Joseph Smith story to produce the ideal relationships between the Kingdom and the World, on the one hand, and between heaven and earth, on the other. The first principle, evolution, is the process of creating a new condition from a quite different and outmoded condition. The evolutionary process in the Joseph Smith story symbolically creates the ideal Kingdom/World contrast. The Kingdom overcomes the World in the narrative by destroying the World's institutions, eliminating the World's influence on members of the Kingdom, and ceasing all communication with the World. The Kingdom establishes itself in the narrative through the evolution of an institutional framework of action with the Kingdom and the regeneration of the individual in the ideal image of the Kingdom.

The second transformational principle of the Joseph Smith story is dialectics, that is, the process of increasingly approximating an ideal state through the resolution of contrasts. Dialectics operate in the narrative to symbolically unify heaven and earth. This is accomplished through the resolution of two pair of contrasting elements characteristic of the heaven/earth opposition, namely light/dark and high/low.

Piaget's third characteristic of a well-developed symbolic logic is self-regulation. Self-regulation refers to the patterns in the narrative, which are analogous to meter and stanzas in poetry and rhythm and movements in music. These patterns help set the mood of the story and reinforce its meaning.

The most obvious rhythms in the Joseph Smith story consist in the division of the narrative into three vignettes, each of which is characterized by a significant heavenly manifestation. More specific devices of self-regulation in the text include repetition, series, climax, and denouement.

The first vignette (vv. 1-26), known to Mormons as the "First Vision," finds young Joseph searching for God's true religion but being confused and bewildered by the organized churches of his day. Strengthened in his resolve to find the truth, Joseph retires to the woods near his home to ask God directly

the whereabouts of the truth. During the prayer, he is assailed by an evil presence which nearly causes his destruction. At the point of Joseph's abandonment, the evil is dispelled by a glorious light in which appear two heavenly beings, identified as God the Father and Jesus Christ. They instruct the lad to avoid all modern religions.

Three years pass before the second vignette begins (vv. 27–54), during which Joseph has been adversely influenced by his friends. Wishing to be cleansed of the resulting taints, Joseph withdraws to the security of his bedroom to seek God's forgiveness. His prayers are answered by the appearance of an angel named Moroni who calls Joseph to restore the Kingdom of God to earth.

The third vignette (vv. 55–75) opens with Joseph digging for buried treasure. Unsuccessful at this enterprise, he withdraws from the working world to begin translating sacred records which Moroni has entrusted to his keeping. This translation is eventually published as the Book of Mormon. Wishing to verify the accuracy of the translation, Joseph sends a sympathetic neighbor, Martin Harris, to Professor Charles Anthon. The professor first attests to the accuracy of the translation, but upon learning of its reputed source, he withdraws his approval in disgust.

Following this rejection, Joseph immerses himself in the work of the Kingdom, and God rewards him first by providing him a scribe, Oliver Cowdery, to assist in the translation, and second by sending the resurrected John the Baptist to authorize Joseph and Oliver to baptize each other and anyone else who believes them. The Joseph Smith story ends with Joseph secure in the heavenly Kingdom he has just restored, yet increasingly persecuted by former friends and strangers alike.

We will now consider how these events are expressed by Joseph Smith in an imaginative universe or symbolic structure which defines Mormonism's self-conscious identity. The Kingdom/World dichotomy is symbolized most dramatically by the demise of the major institutions of the World. In the first vignette, institutionalized religion is overcome by the Kingdom. As the narrative begins, Joseph has no other concern in life than to find God's true church. Instead of truth, Joseph experiences hypocrisy, contention and confusion among the "different religious parties" of the day and feels himself unable "to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong."

To seek an answer, Joseph removes himself from the religions of the World and in a grove of trees near his home communicates with two heavenly beings. They repeat four times the answer to his question of the whereabouts of the true religion. Joseph is told a) he "must join none" of the existing churches; b) "that their creeds were an abomination"; c) "that those professors [of religion] were all corrupt"; and d) again not "to join with any of them" (vv. 19–20). Although Joseph alludes to "many other things" (v. 20) he learned during the "First Vision," the divine condemnation of existing religions is the only information included in the text.

Following his experience with the heavens, Joseph defends his newfound truth not only to the minister of the sect which had once attracted him (v. 21) but to "professors of religion" in general (v. 22) and to the very "powers of darkness" (v. 20) which had so recently nearly proven his demise. From this point in the text, Joseph has no further contact with organized religion. As far as the Kingdom is concerned, this institution of the World has been negated.

The society of the World is at issue in the second vignette. For three years after the "First Vision" Joseph mingles with "all classes of men" (v. 27) and in "all kinds of society" (v. 28). In defending his supernatural experiences, Joseph is persecuted by "those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly . . ." (v. 28). These associations lead Joseph into "all kinds of temptations" (v. 28). Although he confesses that such "foolish errors" and "foibles of human nature" were not serious (v. 28), he seeks forgiveness of God after having withdrawn from the society of the World. His visitation from the angel Moroni takes him out of the World to define his initial status in the Kingdom—translator of sacred records (vv. 34–35). Following his experience with Moroni, Joseph has no further social contacts with any worldly associate. In short, the coming of Moroni negates the society of the World.

The third vignette contains two encounters between the Kingdom and the World. As with previous encounters, the representative of the Kingdom is adversely affected by his involvement with the World. God, however, provides him a means of escape. First of all, Joseph becomes involved with the economy of the World. Although, he is not alone in this enterprise, Joseph refers to his fellow workers only in occupational terms. He does not relate to them in the text as companions or friends (v. 56).

This get-rich-quick scheme earns Joseph nothing but the reputation of being a "money-digger." Embarrassed, he withdraws from the economy of the World and begins his mission to the Kingdom. From this point in the text, Joseph never again encounters the World's economies. God, however, provides for his temporal needs by sending a "farmer of respectability," Martin Harris, with the "timely aid" of fifty dollars (vv. 60–61).

Once Joseph has begun his mission in the Kingdom, the narrative has him no longer personally involved with any institution of the World. As a result, it is Martin Harris who takes a portion of the translated manuscript and some transcribed characters from the plates to a professor of education for verification. The professor approves of both until he learns of their reputed source. Hearing that they came from an angel, he withdraws his support, stating that "there was no such thing now as ministering of angels" (v. 65).

This response climaxes the widening Kingdom/World opposition. At this point, the distinction has become categorical. The World is now the arch-enemy of the Kingdom in principle as well as in practice. Reconciliation between them is no longer possible. Consequently, no further contact with the World is sought by the Kingdom. As far as the Kingdom is concerned, the institutions of the World have been overcome.

From the perspective of the World, however, the principle of opposition becomes the practice of persecution. As the Kingdom progressively overcomes the World's institutions, the World increasingly mobilizes against the Kingdom. Opposition to the Kingdom comes first from a single Methodist preacher (v. 21) and then from "professors of religion" as a group (v. 22). In the second vignette, the source of persecution has expanded to include "all classes of men, both religious and irreligious" (v. 27). By the third vignette, "persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get [the plates] if possible" (v. 60).

Despite the increased opposition, the World's influence on the Kingdom wanes as its institutions are negated. In the first vignette, Joseph is ignorant, isolated and powerless as a result of his involvement with the World. In the second vignette, the World affects only his moral integrity. Joseph's involvement with the economy of the World leaves him embarrassed and penniless but does not assail his character, and the involvement with the education of the World results only in disappointment. The narrative suggests that as the World mobilizes in opposition to the Kingdom, its influence on the Kingdom declines.

Joseph's patterns of communication in the text reinforce this logical progression. In the first vignette, Joseph discusses his spiritual experiences only with the World, in the form of sectarian preachers (vv. 21–22). He comes no closer to communicate his experiences with trusted family members than to inform his mother that her religion was "not true" (v. 20).

The second vignette finds Joseph's communications exclusively with "those who ought to have been my friends" (v. 28). After the visitation of Moroni, however, Joseph initiates open communication with family members and ceases direct communication with the World. In the words of Joseph, Moroni "commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the visions and commandments which I had received" (v. 49).

The World, however, is still informed of the activities of the Kingdom, but only in an oblique manner, as indicated by the use of the passive voice in the text: ". . . no sooner was it known that I had [the plates], than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me" (v. 60). Joseph also indicates that by this time profane communication or "rumor with her ten thousand tongues was all the time employed in circulating falsehoods" about the Kingdom (v. 61).

After Joseph begins to translate the sacred record and after he becomes authorized to enlarge the Kingdom through baptism, communication with the World ceases altogether, and communication within the Kingdom, including that between heaven and earth, becomes well developed.

Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before thought of. In the meantime we were forced to keep secret the circumstances of having

received the Priesthood and our having been baptized, owing to a spirit of persecution which had already manifested itself in the neighborhood (v. 74).

In short, as the Kingdom grows, the institutions of the World—religion, society, economy and education—are destroyed until the Kingdom has no more use for the World. The adverse effects of the World upon members of the Kingdom are also progressively eliminated. The increasing rift between the Kingdom and the World is seen as well in the mounting persecution of the Kingdom by the World and in the decreasing communications between them.

In the process of destroying the institutions of the World, the Kingdom recreates the individual in the ideal image of the Kingdom. In this respect, Joseph Smith becomes the model of conversion in this sacred Mormon text. In the first vignette, Joseph describes himself as ignorant of the truth and unable of himself to find it: “. . .so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong” (v. 8). The “two Personages” in the “sacred grove” give Joseph sufficient knowledge not only to satisfy his own yearnings but to withstand the opposition of the “great ones of the most popular sects of the day” (v. 23) and the very “powers of darkness” (v. 20). After receiving this knowledge and throughout the rest of the narrative, Joseph never lacks for confidence or resources in establishing the Kingdom.

The second vignette is concerned with Joseph’s moral integrity. His involvement with the society of the World results in his committing “many foolish errors” and displaying “the weaknesses of youth, and the foibles of human nature” (v. 28). Joseph’s repeated visits with the angel Moroni assure him of his acceptance by God. From this point in the narrative, Joseph shows no evidence of any faults in his character.

In the third vignette, Joseph acquires the trait of sociality. Until this point in the narrative, Joseph’s companions have been either worldly as with “those who ought to have been my friends . . .” or temporary as with his father and Martin Harris. Oliver Cowdery becomes Joseph’s first companion in Kingdom building, assisting the Prophet to translate the plates. Not until Oliver begins his service does Joseph use the first person plural to describe his activities in the Kingdom (v. 68).

A final quality acquired by Joseph in coming to personify the Kingdom is power. Although he experiences the great power of the Kingdom from reading the Bible (vv. 11–12), he does not possess a portion of that power until John the Baptist confers on him the “Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys [authority] of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. . .” (v. 69). Upon being baptized, Joseph also receives the Holy Ghost which becomes an unexpected key of knowledge in establishing the Kingdom.

Joseph's experiences with the Kingdom withdraw him from a declining World and initiate him into the emerging Kingdom by developing in him the qualities of knowledge, purity, sociality and power. By the end of the narrative, Joseph has acquired not only these traits himself, but also the mechanisms in the form of baptism, Priesthood and the Holy Ghost to extend the qualities of conversion to all who will accept the Kingdom.

The evolution of the Kingdom is manifest, finally, on an institutional level in a series of activities having increasing significance for the Kingdom. The first activity, namely instruction, characterizes the Kingdom through the first two vignettes. The "First Vision" and Moroni's repeated visitations are wholly concerned with giving Joseph "instruction and intelligence . . . respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his Kingdom was to be conducted in the last days" (v. 54).

After Joseph receives the plates, the focus of institutional activity shifts to production. That is, Joseph now applies the instruction he has received to produce the first material evidence of the Kingdom's restoration, namely the Book of Mormon.

With the coming of John the Baptist the institutional activity of the Kingdom begins to shift once more from production to reproduction. That is, the Kingdom has evolved to the point at which others can begin to share in its growth. The ordination and baptism of Joseph and Oliver initiate this stage of the Kingdom's expansion.

In sum, the symbolic evolution of the Kingdom in the Joseph Smith story consists of destruction of the institutions of the World and the concurrent construction of the Kingdom. The former consists of the demise of the World's institutions, the World's influence on the Kingdom and its communication with the Kingdom. The latter involves creating the individual member in the image of the Kingdom and developing a framework of institutional activity consistent with the Kingdom's ultimate scope.

The second principle of systematic transformation in the Joseph Smith story is dialectics, which integrate the contrasting elements of heaven and earth in the text. The unification is symbolized first in the contrast of illumination, or light/dark dichotomy. As Joseph prays in the woods to find God's truth, "thick darkness gathered around" him. This darkness signals the presence of "some actual being from the unseen world," whose power causes Joseph nearly to "sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction." Yet "just at this moment of great alarm," a pillar of light appears to dispel the darkness. Joseph reports, "It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound." Within the light are "two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description" (vv. 15-17). A more powerful contrast between light and dark could not be imagined than that which introduced Joseph to the Kingdom.

The light/dark contrast in the coming of Moroni is striking, but less so than in the "First Vision." Moroni comes to Joseph at night, which is simply the absence of light, not the presence of evil. The contrast is further muted by



the light gradually dispelling the darkness. Joseph reports, "a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday" (v. 30). Joseph also uses language less sublime in describing Moroni's appearance than the "First Vision." Joseph describes Moroni's robe as having "a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen" and Moroni's countenance as being "glorious beyond description, and . . . truly like lightning" (vv. 31–32).

In the final manifestation of the Kingdom, John the Baptist appears to Joseph and Oliver during the day. The only contrast between the glory of the Baptist and the surrounding daylight is that John "descended in a cloud of light" (v. 68). Not only is the contrast minimal but it is made without further textual elaboration. In the three successive light/dark oppositions in the narrative, the contrast decreases and is the least at the point in the story when Joseph and Oliver are inducted into the Kingdom. In short, the resolution of the light/dark dichotomy symbolizes the union of heaven and earth which the restoration of the Kingdom was effecting.

Confirmation of this symbolic pattern exists as well in the opposition of elevation, or the contrast of "high" and "low." In the "First Vision," Joseph describes the "pillar of light" as appearing "exactly over my head" and descending "gradually until it fell upon me" (v. 16). The contrast between Joseph's position, namely "lying on my back, looking up into heaven," (v. 20) and the position of the "two Personages," "standing above me in the air," is considerable.

In the second vignette, Moroni appears somewhat elevated above Joseph, but less than the "two Personages." In Joseph's words, Moroni "appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor" (v. 30). The final vignette mentions no specific distinction in elevation between John the Baptist, on the one hand, and Joseph and Oliver, on the other. The only suggestion of a difference is that John lays his hands on Joseph and Oliver to confer on them the "Priesthood of Aaron" (vv. 68–69).

As the Kingdom becomes established, two of the principal symbolic distinctions between heaven and earth, namely light/dark and high/low, are eliminated. The evolution of the Kingdom also destroys all effective opposition so that by the end of the Joseph Smith story the Kingdom is secure in its foundations and optimistic in its directions. At the conclusion of the narrative, Joseph "prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation."

The symbolic logic of the Joseph Smith story expresses a fundamental aspect of Mormonism's self-conscious identity. Mormons believe that the religion founded by Joseph Smith embodies the Kingdom of God restored to earth following a long separation of man from the truth. According to Mormon reckoning, this heavenly kingdom in temporal form is destined to overthrow the kingdoms of the World and literally transform the earth into heaven. In

other words, the 1838 Joseph Smith story not only experientially confirms much of Mormon theology, it symbolically defines its self-conscious identity.

None of the other versions express Mormon identity so simply yet so completely and elegantly as does the 1838 account. In fact, no other Mormon document can serve so well the role of cultural charter or creation myth. Smith's introduction to the 1838 version suggests that he intended to compose an official charter when he began to write.

Owing to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposing and designing persons in relation to the rise and progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . I have been induced to write this history, to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts . . . so far as I have such facts in my possession (v. 1).

By integrating fundamental aspects of Mormon historical, theological and ideological consciousness into a simple narrative form, the Joseph Smith story becomes the model testimony among a people whose declarations of faith are often expressed in experiential terms. The text also establishes Joseph Smith as the model convert to a religion for which "overcoming the world" and "establishing heaven on earth" are as significant for the individual member as for the entire church. These slogans have been used throughout Mormon history to validate its theology, ethics, social organization and cosmology. Because the ideal Mormon relations between the Kingdom and the World and between heaven and earth are symbolically expressed in the Joseph Smith text, the narrative provides Latter-day Saints with an interpretive framework to order their lives and make meaningful their social and religious experiences.<sup>11</sup> The use of the text as an absolute marker of Mormon history and doctrine is largely a function of its ability to articulate the structure of Mormon identity.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith Jr., *The Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978), pp. 46–57, originally published serially in *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Illinois), 15 March–1 August 1842. Numbers in parentheses throughout this article refer to the verse(s) in the Joseph Smith text from which the information was taken.

<sup>2</sup>E.g., Reverend Wesley P. Walters and Richard L. Bushman, "Roundtable: The Question of the Palmyra Revivals," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4 (Spring 1969), pp. 60–100.

<sup>3</sup>James B. Allen, "Eight Contemporary Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision: What do we Learn from Them?" *The Improvement Era* 73 (April 1970), pp. 4–13; Paul R. Cheesman, "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating Joseph Smith's Early Visions" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1965).

<sup>4</sup>James B. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's 'First Vision' in Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Autumn 1966), pp. 29–45.

<sup>5</sup>The Durkheimian tradition has viewed sacred phenomena as those which are separated and protected from mundane existence by ritual and moral imperatives, Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1915).

<sup>6</sup>Michael Lane, ed., *An Introduction to Structuralism* (New York: Basic Books, 1970); Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* I, II (New York: Basic Books, 1963, 1976); *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 1968 ed., "Myth and Symbol," by Victor Turner.

<sup>7</sup>Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Jean Piaget, *Structuralism*, trans. Channah Maschler (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970).

<sup>9</sup>For present purposes, "Kingdom," "World," "Heaven" and "earth" are roughly equivalent to "sacred," "secular," "spiritual," and "material," respectively.

<sup>10</sup>Edmund Leach, "The Legitimacy of Solomon," in *Genesis as Myth and other Essays* (London: Cape Editions, 1969), p. 79.

<sup>11</sup>See Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 193–233.



“COME AND KISS ME, MY PRETTY MAID.”

*Do not deceive yourselves. Do not believe Mormonism is content to rest in Utah. Slowly, surely, the monster is stretching abroad its horrible body. Cautiously those small green eyes, full of cunning, are watching each opportunity [sic] for advance; and from its fanged tongue drops the poison of its accursed creed. The power of its institutions is more wonderful, more absolute, than was ever the Inquisition.*

*Salt-Lake Fruit: A Latter-Day Romance. By An American [William Loring Spencer]. Boston: Franklin Press, 1884, pp. iv-v.*