DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

On the Cover: Sunny Belliston Taylor,
Front: *The Frontier is No More*, mixed media,
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is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of world religious thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

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The King James Bible and the Future of Missionary Work

Grant Hardy

The Problem

Not long ago I went out with the full-time elders and we taught a young mother who was quite interested in our message. In fact, she had been meeting with the missionaries for several weeks. When they referred to a biblical scripture and invited her to read along, she did so and then responded, "That's not what it says in my Bible." Even though she was a conservative Christian, from a Pentecostal background, she was using the New International Version (NIV). And it is not just that the words were different—most Christians are familiar with multiple versions of the Bible these days. The meanings did not match up. The elders were flustered, having no idea how to handle the situation, and they tried to move on to the next point as quickly as possible.

In this case, our exclusive reliance on the King James Version (KJV), which is official policy according to the Church's *Handbook 2*, had become a barrier to sharing the message of the gospel.[1] This problem will only increase in the future because things have changed dramatically since 1956, when J. Reuben Clark wrote *Why the King James Version*, and even since 1979, when our LDS edition of the Bible was first published. The KJV is no longer the dominant Bible of the English-speaking world, and the only denominations that still hold exclusively to that four-hundred-year-old translation are Latter-day Saints and a few marginal fringe groups. The Gideons, famous for providing free Bibles in hotel rooms, recognize that King James English no longer speaks to Americans and have consequently started distributing modern language translations. Even proudly fundamentalist Bob Jones

University has a disclaimer on its website clearly stating that it does not agree with the King James Only position.[2] The obstacles to effective communication will be compounded as we become a more international church. When American Latter-day Saints employ arguments that depend on peculiar readings of the KJV, these will not make sense when translated for Mormons and other Christians who read the Bible in their native languages.

For example, one of the most frequently cited scriptures in *Preach My Gospel* is John 7:17: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," which we use to encourage both investigators and missionaries to gain a testimony of particular doctrines by putting them into practice.[3] Modern English speakers read the first "will" as a future tense marker of "do," but it is actually an independent verb that translates the Greek word *thelō,* "to wish or desire." Modern translations all render the verse more accurately with something like, "Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own" (New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]).[4] The idea of gaining a testimony by putting doctrines into practice is a true principle, but this particular verse is about God responding to our righteous desires rather than to our actions, and every time it is cited in a Church manual or a conference talk, translators have to scramble to cover the discrepancy. There are several more examples like this in *Preach My Gospel*. (See Appendix 1.)

Two generations ago, when the KJV was the most widely accepted and trusted translation, it was an advantage for Latter-day Saints to also use that version because it allowed us to present the restored gospel in terms that were familiar to most people. This is no longer the case. Several major translations today are more reliable than the KJV in terms of accuracy, clarity, readability, and closeness to the biblical texts as they were originally written. And everyone knows this except for us. In particular, the New International Version—an interdenominational translation by believing scholars that was specifically put forward as a conservative alternative to the Revised Standard Version (RSV) for many of the concerns that J. Reuben Clark shared—has swept the field with more than 400 million copies distributed since its publication in 1978.[5] In fact, it has been outselling the KJV since the 1980s.[6] As late as

1979, when Deseret Book reissued *Why the King James Version*, the "Publisher's Preface" could claim that the "use and acceptance of the King James Version is further enhanced by the fact that it still remains the largest-selling version in the world today."[7] That is no longer true and, indeed, has not been true for more than two decades. The NIV is now *the* standard Bible for conservative American Christians, while in Britain a recent survey discovered that a majority of people under thirty-five had never even heard of the King James Version.[8]

The Solution

This does not mean that Latter-day Saints should follow suit and simply adopt the New International Version (or the New Revised Standard Version, which would be a better choice in many ways). As President Clark noted, and as the First Presidency reiterated in their letter of May 22, 1992, modern-day revelations work hand-in-hand with the KJV.[9] As a result, it is important for young Latter-day Saints to become familiar with the archaic diction and grammar of the King James Bible since, for them, this is the language of scripture and of prayer. Yet while we do not want to cut ourselves off from the insights and revelations that came to Joseph Smith, we should also be concerned about cutting ourselves off from mainstream Christianity and the increased access to the writings of ancient apostles and prophets that comes through more accurate, modern translations. The solution is to retain the KJV as our official Bible, but at the same time strongly encourage the supplementary study of other translations. In doing so, we would be holding true to our own tradition of scripture study.

Joseph Smith, who used the King James Bible and knew it well, was not satisfied with it. He studied Hebrew in an attempt to understand the original text better; he read other translations, including Martin Luther's, which he felt was superior to the KJV,[10] and he undertook his own inspired translation. It is remarkable that even with direct access to revelation from God, Joseph still felt the need for the laborious study of biblical languages. In 1836, when the bulk of the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) had already been completed, he confided in his diary, "May the Lord help us to obtain this language [Hebrew] that we may read the scriptures in the language in which they were given" and "My soul delights in

reading the word of the Lord in the original and I am determined to pursue the study of languages until I shall become master of them, if I am permitted to live long enough."[11] Indeed, Joseph later stated, "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors."[12]

It is now possible to get much closer to those original writers than ever before, thanks to the discovery of thousands of manuscripts (including the Dead Sea Scrolls), as well as significant advances in biblical linguistics, philology, and archaeology. Why would a people who love both the scriptures and our first prophet not want to follow his example?[13] Or as Brigham Young put it:

> Take the Bible just as it reads; and if it be translated incorrectly, and there is a scholar on the earth who professes to be a Christian, and he can translate it any better than King James's translators did it, he is under obligation to do so, or the curse be upon him. If I understood Greek and Hebrew as some may profess to do, and I knew the Bible was not correctly translated, I should feel myself bound by the law of justice to the inhabitants of the earth to translate that which is incorrect and give it just as it was spoken anciently.[14]

There will also be new opportunities as we open ourselves to modern translations, because some of them teach the principles of the restored gospel with more clarity than the KJV. For example, 1 Corinthians 1:18 reads in the KJV as: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." Newer versions translate *sōzomenois* more correctly as a dative plural present passive participle: ". . . but *to us who are being saved* it is the power of God," thus indicating that Paul thought of being saved not as a one-time event, but rather as an ongoing process. Similarly, where the KJV translates Galatians 1:15 with "But when it pleased God, *who separated me from my mother's womb*, and called me by his grace . . .," the New Revised Standard Version has "But when God, *who had set me apart before I was born* and called me through his grace . . ."—a reading much more resonant with LDS doctrine.

In addition, Latter-day Saints will come to understand the KJV better as they compare its renderings with other translations. In an age when young people are reading less and less (let alone sev-

enteenth-century classics like Shakespeare and Milton), the highly literary language of the 1611 KJV is quite difficult. We do well enough with the stories and the scripture mastery verses, but the writings of the Old Testament prophets and the letters of Paul are nearly impenetrable. (I say this as someone who taught early-morning seminary for three years.) I myself have a background in Ancient Greek and a doctorate degree, yet I often have to go to modern translations to understand what the KJV is saying. To take a recent example, the Young Men/Young Women theme for 2009 was 1 Timothy 4:12: "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." The "of," however, is ambiguous, and it sounds as if our youth are being told to stand up as examples of what believers should be. Actually, the Greek is an objective genitive: "set an example *for* the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (NIV). This is slightly different, but equally important, advice.[15]

With regard to the Bible, many Latter-day Saints—like the missionaries I went out with—are functionally illiterate. They don't know where the texts originated, how they were transmitted, what sorts of issues translators struggled with, how different types of translations work, or even where to start finding answers. As a result, we read the Bible with blinders, not realizing which of our appeals to scripture are persuasive, and which are based on uncertain readings, though the latter instances can be important because the teachings of modern revelation often restore doctrines that have been lost or obscured in the Bible. In an ideal world, we would follow Joseph Smith's example and develop a strong tradition of studying the Bible in its original languages, but the next best method for getting closer to the original texts is to compare several translations, along with the additional witness of modern scriptures. As it says in 2 Corinthians 13:1 (and this time the KJV is clear enough), "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

As Translated Correctly

The first rumblings of dissatisfaction with the KJV came with a realization that the translation was based on a relatively poor text, one that had frequently been marred by the "careless transcribers" and "corrupt priests" that Joseph Smith warned about.

This was particularly true of the New Testament. The King James translators used a Greek text that had been published by Erasmus in 1516, which was based on only half a dozen relatively late copies. Scholars now have access to over 5,700 manuscripts of the New Testament, although most are fragments.[16] In the 1800s, a few early, nearly complete manuscripts were discovered, including the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus, both dating back to around A.D. 350. Scholars put together a new, more accurate Greek text based on these much older manuscripts, which became the basis for the 1885 Revised Version (RV) of the KJV. Understandably, there was considerable concern at the time over the accuracy of this new Greek text; but subsequent discoveries, especially of very early versions written on papyri, have generally validated the judgment of the nineteenth-century textual critics. Today the fourth edition of the Greek New Testament published in 1993 by the United Bible Societies (with a text identical to that of the twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle-Aland NT) is the standard Greek New Testament, accepted by virtually all Christians of every denomination, from Catholic to Protestant to Orthodox, and from liberal to conservative. This text comes about as close as is humanly possible to "the Bible as is read when it came from the pen of the original writers." It is the basis for all modern translations.[17]

In 1952, a new edition of the Revised Version was published, called the Revised Standard Version (RSV). Again, there were concerns about the accuracy and the faithfulness of the underlying text, particularly because some familiar verses were relegated to the margins since they did not appear in the oldest, most reliable manuscripts. These included Acts 8:37 ("And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God") and the phrase "through his blood" at Colossians 1:14. The new version also indicated, quite correctly, that the traditional long ending of Mark was not found in the oldest manuscripts. In addition, some critics strenuously objected to the substitution of "young woman" for "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14, attributing this change to the supposed faithlessness of the translators—though there are compelling linguistic reasons for this rendering and, in any case, the virgin birth

is still clearly attested to at Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:34.[18]

The debate was not one of the finest moments in the history of American religion, with rational scholarly arguments being upstaged by Cold War suspicions of Communist influence as well as blatant anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, and book burnings.[19] This was the immediate cultural context for J. Reuben Clark's *Why the King James Version*. President Clark was one of the more moderate voices in the debate, but he admitted that, knowing no Greek or Hebrew, he had no direct knowledge of the issues involved and so had to depend entirely on other experts.[20] Unfortunately, most of the authorities he quoted at length were wrong. Indeed, by 1956 there were *no* major scholars, regardless of denominational affiliation or personal faith, who still defended the Greek text behind the KJV, so Clark relied primarily on Frederick Scrivener and John Burgon—two scholars who had been writing in the 1880s. The arguments and charges against the RSV that Clark echoed in *Why the King James Version* were outdated at the time, and now, more than fifty years later, they seem even more unfair and inaccurate. The rest of the English-speaking Christian world has moved beyond the biblical controversies of the 1950s; only Latter-day Saints are still living with the results of those misunderstandings.

The nearly universal perspective today has been summarized by a conservative Evangelical scholar as follows:

> The King James Version became the most popular English translation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It acquired the stature of becoming the standard English Bible. But the King James Version had deficiencies that did not go unnoticed by certain scholars. First, knowledge of Hebrew was inadequate in the early seventeenth century. The Hebrew text they used (i.e., the Masoretic Text) was adequate, but their understanding of the Hebrew vocabulary was insufficient. It would take many more years of linguistic studies to enrich and sharpen understanding of the Hebrew vocabulary. Second, the Greek text underlying the New Testament of the King James Version was an inferior text. . . . The King James translators had done well with the resources that were available to them, but those resources were insufficient, especially with respect to the New Testament text.[21]

As for the Old Testament, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s revolutionized scholarship of the Hebrew Bi-

ble since some of those newly recovered documents predated all other known copies by nearly a thousand years. For the most part, they demonstrated the care with which the traditional text had been passed on, but Dead Sea Scrolls occasionally have superior readings which, along with other improvements from the Septuagint and other ancient versions, have been incorporated into the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977), the standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament for Jews and Christians alike. Scholars at Brigham Young University have been prominently involved in the analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is a shame that the results of that research are inaccessible to Mormons who use only the LDS version of the scriptures.

Linguists make a distinction between translations that lean toward formal equivalence ("form-driven") and those that feature functional equivalence ("meaning-driven"). The first tries to preserve the word order, ambiguities, and repeated terms of the original language, while the second attempts to recreate the original meaning in phrases that sound natural in the target language. It is not that one approach is good and the other bad, since all translations have to find some balance between the two; there is no such thing as a "literal translation." What matters most is whether a translation accurately communicates the thoughts of the original author to an audience in a new language.[22] The KJV can be difficult to read, not only because of its archaic English, but also because it favors formal equivalence with convoluted sentences and ambiguous grammatical constructions that are more natural to ancient Greek. Since readers have to struggle to understand it, the KJV is no longer an adequate translation, at least not on its own. In addition, the lofty style for which it is so admired does not accurately reflect the original language of the New Testament, which was written in a rather ordinary form of Greek called *koine*. Common, everyday English captures the flavor of the Greek more precisely.[23]

There are many modern translations, but four are particularly significant. They have all been very successful in balancing respect for the original text with clarity in expressing the meaning.[24] The New Revised Standard Version, like the KJV, offers a more form-driven approach, while the NJPS, NIV, and REB lean

more toward the natural English of a meaning-driven translation, yet all four versions are far superior to the KJV in faithfully conveying the meaning of ancient Hebrew and Greek to contemporary speakers of English. The translations, in the order in which I would recommend them to Latter-day Saints, are:

• The New Revised Standard Version, or NRSV (1989; a thorough revision of the Revised Standard Edition of 1952). This translation stands in the grand tradition of the King James Bible, and it generally follows familiar seventeenth-century wording (itself often borrowed from Tyndale), except for changes needed to reflect better Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, or better understandings of the vocabulary and grammar. This is the most ecumenical Bible today, fully accepted by both Catholics and mainline Protestants, with participation on the translation committee by representatives from Eastern Orthodoxy and Judaism. It is also the preferred translation in academic biblical studies.

• The Jewish Publication Society Translation, or NJPS (1985, original version in 1917) of the Old Testament. It is based on the traditional Masoretic Text with additional readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and other ancient versions. Its loveliness and accuracy are striking, bringing to mind Nephi's observation that "I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews" (2 Ne. 25:5).

• The New International Version, or NIV (1978; revised in 2011), is the dominant translation among American Evangelicals. It is linguistically accurate and textually reliable but also rather conservative, so that it still sounds something like the KJV. Produced by more than a hundred scholars, all of whom "were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form" (NIV 1978 Preface), this is the Bible that has overthrown the KJV in the hearts and minds of conservative Christians. Latter-day Saint authors sometimes wax poetic about the

faithfulness of the KJV scholars, implicitly impugning the Christian faith of any modern translators; the NIV offers a stark counter-example to that unfair assumption.

• The Revised English Bible, or REB (1989, first published in 1970 as the New English Bible). This was an entirely new translation from the original sources that deliberately sought to express the truths of the Bible in fresh words and phrases. It is innovative but quite accurate. As the product of British Christians, it has the support of the Church of England as well as most other major Christian denominations and the Roman Catholic Church.

There may be other factors to consider, but if our sole criterion were believing the Bible "to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly" (Eighth Article of Faith), any one of these four translations has a better claim to being the word of God than the King James Version. They are simply more accurate translations of texts that are closer to what was written by the original authors. Notice also that all these versions include footnotes indicating ambiguities in the original languages, alternative translations, and textual problems. To note, for example, that some familiar phrases and verses (e.g., Matt. 17:21, 23:14; Mark 9:29, 10:24, 16:9–20; Luke 11:4, 22:43–44, 23:34; John 5:4, 7:53–8:11) do not occur in many of the earliest manuscripts is not an attack by the editors on our faith; it just being honest with regard to the textual evidence—more on this below.

Restored Truths and Additional Insights

So what can new translations add to our understanding of God's word? Here are a dozen or so quick but representative examples. Latter-day Saints using the LDS edition of the Bible have access to very few of these biblical teachings. (I will note all the exceptions.)

1. 2 Samuel 13:21–22. The story of Absalom killing his brother Amnon for raping his sister Tamar is grim in any version, but the KJV simply has, "when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth. And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had

forced his sister Tamar." But notice the key narrative element added by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and various manuscripts: "When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry, *but he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn*. But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon" (NRSV). I have had the sad experience of participating in disciplinary councils that were the direct result of earlier priesthood leaders not taking sufficiently stern action with regard to previous offenses. Sometimes, as David tragically learned, looking upon sin with leniency only leads to further, more serious problems.

2. Psalms 145:13. The KJV, following the Masoretic Text, reads: "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." The Dead Sea Scrolls have the same reading but add another sentence, so that the complete verse is: "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made" (NIV). No new doctrines are taught in this recently recovered sentence; but to those seeking to know God through scripture, every line is precious. Similarly, the NSRV includes at the end of 1 Samuel 10 an entire paragraph from the Dead Sea Scrolls that was lost from the Masoretic Text.

3. Isaiah 53:11. The KJV has "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied . . ." The Dead Sea Scrolls revealed that a word was missing: "after his suffering he will see *light* and be satisfied" (REB). We might wonder if, when Abinadi comments on Isaiah 53 by observing that Christ "is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless," he wasn't responding to the reference to "light" in the original text of Isaiah 53:11.

4. Matthew 5:22. Modern translations delete the phrase "without a cause" from this verse (KJV: "I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment"), because it does not occur in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts. It is similarly absent in the Book of Mormon version of the Sermon on the Mount (3 Ne. 12:22), thus providing a remarkable witness of the authenticity of that text.[25] A footnote in the LDS edition points to the difference with the Book of Mormon verse, but it does not say anything about the evidence of

Greek manuscripts.

5. Matthew 6:24. "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money" (NIV). There is no footnote in the LDS edition explaining the meaning of the Aramaic word *mammon*, which the King James translators retained. The meaning can be found in the Bible Dictionary, but having to look it up is a poor substitute for the direct impact of Jesus's words in the NIV.

6. 1 Corinthians 7:1. This change reflects a different interpretation of the Greek rather than different underlying texts. The KJV reads, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman," which makes it sound as if Paul is urging the Corinthian Saints to adopt celibacy. Many modern translations take the second part of that verse to be, not Paul's words, but rather a quotation from an incoming letter: "Now for the matters you wrote about. You say, 'It is a good thing for a man not to have intercourse with a woman'" (REB). This interpretation of the Greek text matches that of the JST.

7. 1 Corinthians 15:29. Some Christians quibble about the exact meaning of this verse, but the REB makes a strong witness even clearer by translating, "If the dead are not raised to life at all, what do they mean by being baptized on their behalf?"

8. 2 Corinthians 7:10. The general meaning of this verse is clear enough in the KJV: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death," but we might wonder what exactly Paul meant by "salvation not to be repented of." If we turn to the NIV, we read: "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret . . ." When we turn back to the KJV, we can better grasp how the various parts of the sentence fit together, and we are further enlightened by the doctrine that true repentance allows a person to move forward spiritually and not dwell on past wrongs.

9. 1 Thessalonians 4:4. Here the Greek expression itself is ambiguous. It may mean "every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (KJV), which is re-

flected in the NIV: "Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable," but the NIV also provides alternate readings of "Or *learn to live with his own wife*; or *learn to acquire a wife*," which opens up other, perhaps equally important, possibilities.

10. 1 Timothy 5:22. At first, the KJV sounds as if it might be speaking of physical assault: "Lay hand suddenly on no man, neither be a partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." An LDS footnote referring to the topical guide subject "Setting Apart" guides readers toward a more accurate understanding, which is reflected in modern translations like the NRSV: "Do not ordain anyone hastily . . ." This may be good counsel, even though we regularly urge bishops to confer the priesthood as soon as possible on recent male converts. However, the REB has an alternative reading of the Greek that is, perhaps, even more interesting: "Do not be over-hasty in restoring an offender by the laying on of hands, or you may find yourself responsible for other people's misdeeds; keep your own hands clean." If Paul was indeed speaking of restoring blessings as the culmination of the repentance process, his urge for caution and proper timing makes perfect sense.

11. Hebrews 11:1. The over-literal rendering of the KJV makes it hard for English speakers to understand this famous definition of faith. The NIV aims at a more meaning-driven equivalent with the translation "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see," while the NSRV has "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The latter translation accords with the JST. The Joseph Smith Translation usually reflects fresh revelation rather than more accurate biblical texts or grammatical constructions, but there are a few places where modern translations clear up problems that the JST also addresses. For instance, Joseph was bothered by the implication he saw in the KJV of Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection," even though, as noted in the LDS footnote, the KJV is an awkward translation. More typical of recent versions is the reading of the REB: "Let us then stop discussing the rudiments of Christianity. We ought not to be laying over again the foundations of faith in God and of repentance from the deadness

of our former ways . . ."

12. 1 Peter 2:2. The KJV, relying on an inadequate sixteenth-century Greek text, translated this verse "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." But manuscripts much closer to the original include the phrase *eis sōtērian* at the end of the verse. This textual discovery is so uncontroversial that it does not even merit a footnote in the United Bible Societies' Greek NT. The NRSV accordingly includes this lost phrase when it reads: "Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow *into salvation*." Latter-day Saints, of course, will recognize the restored truth that salvation is a gradual process rather than an instantaneous transformation.

13. 1 John 4:19. In the KJV, John teaches that because Christ, in suffering the atonement, took the first step toward reconciliation, we can respond to his freely offered love and love him in return: "We love him, because he first loved us." The modern translations all follow better Greek manuscripts that universalize the first phrase: "We love, because he first loved us." In other words, the power of the Atonement allows us to love not just God, but everyone else, too.

Intelligibility

It might be tempting to assume that, aside from the relatively minor issues covered in the above examples, the KJV teaches the gospel clearly enough.[26] But that is nearly the opposite of the truth. The King James Version is no longer a good translation, which is why almost no one uses it anymore. It is inaccurate to the extent that it relies on late, corrupted Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, and it is inadequate in that it does not communicate the authors' meaning in an intelligible way.[27] Latter-day Saints understand the familiar stories of Genesis and the Gospels fairly well, but they are confounded by just about everything else, and the formatting of the current LDS edition is not very helpful. For instance, I was the substitute teacher in Institute a while ago; and when we tried to match up the stories of Paul's first and second missionary journeys with the maps at the back of the Bible, the students were lost. They had a difficult time even finding where the narratives about Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, and Iconium be-

gan and ended. These are bright enough students, many of whom had graduated from seminary; but without paragraphs, quotation marks, and subheadings, it is hard to distinguish what happened in Philippi from events in Thessalonica, Berea, or Athens. The chapter headings in the LDS edition very rarely mention locations. And Acts is straight narrative rather than doctrinal discourses. The situation is even worse when we come to more complex writings of the Hebrew prophets or Paul.

The footnotes in the LDS edition regarding Hebrew and Greek are acknowledgments of how far distant the KJV is from a clear and intelligible translation, yet they are only a halfway measure. They address vocabulary but not syntax, they occur only sporadically, and they encourage verse-by-verse reading, which often results in taking things out of context. Perhaps the strongest reason to encourage the use of modern translations is that they would give English-speaking Latter-day Saints the ability to understand the word of God in their own language. Quite often, expressions from the KJV that are puzzling or ambiguous can be understood after one sees how other translators have rendered the same Greek phrases. For instance, compare the following phrases from 1 Thessalonians in the KJV and NIV:

> 1:9: "for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you" (KJV)
>
> "for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us" (NIV)
>
> 2:2: "we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention" (KJV)
>
> "with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition" (NIV)
>
> 2:16: "to fill up their sins alway" (KJV)
>
> "In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit" (NIV)
>
> 4:12: "that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing (KJV)
>
> "so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody" (NIV)

The notes in the LDS edition of the KJV do not help make sense of any of these verses. And trying to understand longer pas-

sages is even more difficult than interpreting individual phrases. Here are a few passages for comparison, but examples could be multiplied for page after page.

Hosea 11:1–4

> KJV: When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

> NRSV: When Israel was a child, I loved him,
> and out of Egypt I called my son.
> The more I called them,
> the more they went from me;
> they kept sacrificing to the Baals,
> and offering incense to idols.
>
> Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
> I took them up in my arms;
> but they did not know that I healed them.
> I led them with cords of human kindness,
> with bands of love,
> I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks,
> I bent down to them and fed them.

The NRSV, in a poetic format appropriate to Hebrew poetry, is much clearer. It is easier to see how the clauses fit together, the imagery is translated more precisely, and the entire passage takes on a striking poignancy as God compares his love for Israel to the tender care of a father for a toddler.

Isaiah 10:12–19

This same sort of verse-by-verse comparison could be done for nearly all of Isaiah. That prophet will always be a challenge, but by presenting his prophecies to our members only in King James English, we make it at least twice as hard to read as in a modern translation. In other words, we miss half of what we would otherwise understand. Yet once we see what Isaiah is saying, we can

then turn back to the King James Bible (and the Book of Mormon) and comprehend that translation more fully. For instance, Nephi thought that Isaiah 10 was so important for his latter-day readers that he laboriously inscribed it into metal plates, yet our English translation of the Book of Mormon is almost identical to the King James Version, so it does not add much in the way of interpretive help.

> KJV v. 12: Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.
>
> 13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man:
>
> 14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.
>
> 15 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.
>
> 16 Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.
>
> 17 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;
>
> 18 And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.
>
> 19 And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child shall read them.

In order to understand what Nephi intended us to see, we first have to understand what the passage means, and there are puzzling, opaque expressions in nearly every verse. What is "the fruit of the stout heart"? Is being "prudent" a bad thing? What does it mean to "put down the inhabitants like a valiant man"? Or "as if it were no wood"? Or "send among his fat ones leanness"? Who is the "standard-bearer [who] fainteth"? Who is speaking? What is going on?

Here are the same verses from the NJPS, with quotation marks, paragraphs, and poetic lines. There is still a lot to figure out, but at least we are starting with the modern English equivalent of the Hebrew rather than with quaint expressions of Shakespeare's age:

But when my Lord has carried out all his purpose on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, He will punish the majestic pride and overbearing arrogance of the king of Assyria. For he thought,

> "By the might of my hand have I wrought it,
> By my skill, for I am clever:
> I have erased the borders of people;
> I have plundered their treasures,
> And exiled their vast populations.
> I was able to seize, like a nest,
> the wealth of peoples;
> As one gathers abandoned eggs,
> So *I* gathered all the earth:
> nothing so much as flapped a wing
> Or opened a mouth to peep."
>
> Does an ax boast over him who hews with it,
> Or a saw magnify itself above him who wields it?
> As though the rod raised him who lifts it,
> As though the staff lifted the man!
>
> Assuredly,
> The Sovereign Lord of Hosts will send
> A wasting away in its fatness;
> And under its body shall burn
> A burning like that of fire,
> Destroying frame and flesh.
> It shall be like a sick man who pines away.
> The Lord of Israel will be fire
> And its Holy One flame.
> It will burn and consume its thorns
> And its thistles in a single day,
> And the mass of its scrub and its farm land.
> What trees remain of its scrub
> Shall be so few that a boy may record them.

Isaiah 14:29–32

Here is a side-by-side comparison of another familiar passage:

29 Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.

Do not rejoice, all you Philistines,
that the rod that struck you is broken;
from the root of that snake will spring up a viper,
its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent.

30 And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

The poorest of the poor will find pasture,
and the needy will lie down in safety.
But your root I will destroy by famine;
it will slay your survivors.

31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.

Wail, O gate! Howl, O city!
Melt away, all you Philistines!
A cloud of smoke comes from the north,
and there is not a straggler in its ranks.

32 What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it. (KJV)

What answer shall be given
to the envoys of that nation?
"The Lord has established Zion,
and in her his afflicted people will find refuge." (NIV)

Without the aid of elaborate commentaries, but by simply comparing the NIV, it is easy to determine the meaning of obscure King James expressions like "Palestina," "cockatrice," "fiery flying serpent," "firstborn of the poor," and "none shall be alone in his appointed times." Furthermore, the addition of quotation marks in the last verse makes it clear how the final sentence connects with its immediate predecessor.

Ephesians 2:11–13

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (KJV)	Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. (NIV)

If we start with the KJV on the left, it is nearly impossible to make out Paul's argument, though it concerns one of the central ideas of his preaching: how the Gentiles can be brought into the house of Israel through Christ's atonement. Once we read the NIV, however, we can return to the King James and understand what it is saying. For instance, we can see that the word *sometimes* in v. 13 is not used with its ordinary modern definition; rather, in this passage it means "at one time" or "once."

Colossians 3:5

When teaching youth the principles of the gospel, it is important to be as clear as possible. And here the KJV is nearly useless. Contrast these two translations:

> KJV: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" [with no explanatory footnotes in the LDS edition]
>
> NIV: "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry"

It seems to me that one of these would make for a much more ef-

fective Bishopric Youth Discussion than the other.

Ephesians 5:3–4

Or imagine how teenagers in seminary would benefit from carefully comparing these two translations, word by word, and then pondering what the scripture might mean in a world of cell phones, email, text-messaging, and Facebook:

> KJV: But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks [again with no explanatory footnotes].
>
> NIV: But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

As it says in 1 Corinthians 14:8 (and here again the KJV is clear enough), "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

Potential Difficulties

Using modern translations as supplements to, rather than replacements for, the King James Bible would allow Latter-day Saints to enjoy the advantages of both; we would reap the benefits of today's best conservative biblical scholarship, while at the same time keeping our strong connection to fruits of modern-day revelation. We would also increase our ability to converse with and persuade other Christians. Nevertheless, there may be a few drawbacks, at least temporarily, and I suspect that these sorts of issues were behind the caution in *Handbook 2* that "although other versions of the Bible may be easier to read, in doctrinal matters, latter-day revelation supports the King James Version in preference to other English translations."[28]

Sometimes favorite verses turn out not to teach doctrines as clearly as we had assumed. For instance, Job 19:25–26 is on the seminary scripture mastery list as evidence for Old Testament belief in the Savior and the resurrection: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my

flesh shall I see God" (KJV; also very familiar from Handel's *Messiah*). Yet the underlying Hebrew is quite difficult, and the King James translators had to do a lot of guesswork (as can be seen by the key italicized words they had to add: *day*, *though*, *worms*, *body*). More likely translations, based on several centuries of advances in Hebrew linguistics, often read like the REB: "But in my heart I know that my vindicator lives and that he will rise last to speak in court; and I shall discern my witness standing at my side and see my defending counsel, even God himself, whom I shall see with my own eyes, I myself and no other." Missionaries looking for Old Testament allusions to a bodily resurrection would do better with other scriptures such as Ezekiel 37:1–14.

In other cases, as mentioned above, we will discover that a few familiar verses are not in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts of the New Testament. This is true of the ending of the Gospel of Mark (16:9–20) and also Luke 23:43–44: "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (KJV). Modern translations include these verses, but add footnotes indicating that the textual evidence is questionable. This is not a matter of scholars disliking the doctrines in these passages; they are simply reporting objective facts about the transmission of manuscripts. Conservative scholars argue that even if these verses were added somewhat later, after the manuscripts began to circulate, they nevertheless reflect authentic traditions and were undoubtedly inspired.[29] Latter-day Saints, however, have an advantage in these two instances because the content of both passages is reaffirmed in latter-day scriptures. The essential teachings of the last chapter in Mark are reiterated in Mormon 9:22–24 (see also D&C 84:64–74), and Mosiah 3:7 goes even further than Luke 23; it was not just that Jesus's sweat, as He suffered for our sins, was *like* drops of blood, but "blood cometh from every pore" (see also D&C 19:18).

Comparisons with versions based on older and more reliable manuscripts will show that the Book of Mormon occasionally follows poor readings from the King James Bible. For instance, 1 Nephi 21:24 quotes Isaiah 49:24 as virtually identical to the KJV:

"For shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives delivered?" The word "lawful" was the 1611 translators' attempt to paper over an obviously corrupt reading; the Masoretic Text refers improbably to delivering "the captives of the righteous." Thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is now clear that the original Hebrew text read more like, "Can his prey be taken from the strong man, or the captive be rescued from the ruthless?" (REB).

This makes much more sense, but why, some might ask, would the Book of Mormon contain a mistake that came into the text long after 600 B.C.? The answer is that given in Doctrine and Covenants 1:24: "These commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." Regardless of how the Urim and Thummim may have worked, the end result was an English translation of the Book of Mormon that drew heavily upon the King James Bible. As Hugh Nibley pointed out long ago, the Lord reveals truths in language understandable to people at the time, and the KJV was *the* Bible for Americans in the nineteenth century. The situation is similar to the way New Testament authors, writing for a Greek audience, often quoted the Old Testament in its Greek Septuagint form, even when that version translated the Hebrew awkwardly or imprecisely.[30]

Another difficulty, also related to new truths being revealed in familiar language, is that modern scriptures occasionally make their points with phrases borrowed from the KJV but taken out of context. Consequently, the latter-day meanings cannot be read back into other versions of the Bible. This point is important enough to warrant three examples.

1. Three times in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord commands his disciples to "stand in holy places" when the calamities of the last days come (D&C 45:32, 87:8, 101:22; see also JS–Matt. 1:12). The phrase itself is derived from Matthew 24:15, where the KJV is somewhat ambiguous about who is doing the standing: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place . . ." In the original Greek, however, it is quite clear from the grammar that this was *not* a commandment to the faithful, as can be seen in the NRSV: "So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the

holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel . . ."

2. We sometimes speak of the "first estate" as being the preexistence. This is the way that Abraham 3:26–28 uses the phrase, and it seems to have been borrowed from Jude 1:6: "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Taken by itself, this sounds as if it might refer to Satan and his followers in the preexistence, especially because, in the KJV, how this verse relates to the rest of the passage is ambiguous. But in Greek, the grammar of the next verse makes the meaning perfectly clear: "Remember Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbouring towns; like the angels, they committed fornication and followed unnatural lusts . . ." (REB). So the fallen angels of verse 6 are *not* the spirits who followed Satan before the creation of the world, but rather angels (or "sons of God") who apparently had illicit relations with women. That is to say, this is a reference to the somewhat mysterious events of Genesis 6:1–4.[31]

3. One of the most beloved principles of the Restoration is that of continuing revelation, "line upon line, precept upon precept" (2 Ne. 28:30; D&C 98:12, 128:21). Though the doctrine is timeless, the words used to describe that principle were borrowed from Isaiah 28:10, but only in the KJV. Anyone comparing other translations will encounter a number of puzzling expressions, including: "It is all harsh cries and raucous shouts, 'A little more here, a little there!'" (REB); "For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there" (NIV); and "That same mutter upon mutter, murmur upon murmur, now here, now there!" (NJPS). The problem is that the original Hebrew of this verse is quite uncertain. As a footnote in the NIV helpfully explains, "Hebrew / *sav lasav sav lasav / kav lakav kav lakav* (possibly meaningless sounds; perhaps a mimicking of the prophet's words)."

What then are we to make of these perhaps potentially troubling facts? Robert J. Matthews, speaking of similar issues, gave an insightful explanation:

> The whole question of "correctness" must be viewed in light of the fact that the Bible was not the source of the doctrines the Prophet

Joseph Smith taught. Rather, the Bible, so far as it is translated correctly, is tangible evidence that the doctrines he received by revelation were the same as those the ancient prophets obtained by revelation.

Too often we make the faulty assumption that the established scriptures are the ultimate source of doctrine, rather than revelation. This was the basic argument Jesus had with the Jews in John 5:39, wherein Jesus told the Jewish rulers that they had placed their confidence in the written scriptures instead of listening to him. For both Jesus and Joseph Smith, the Bible was a teaching tool rather than the basic source of their information.

Let us examine Hebrews 11:40 first. In the King James Version it reads: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they [referring to the dead who had had faith in the Savior] without us should not be made perfect." Members of the Church frequently cite this verse in connection with salvation for the dead. However, the Joseph Smith Translation says: "God having provided some better things for them through their sufferings, for without sufferings they could not be made perfect." This rendition is in harmony with the overall message of the chapter, which is not talking about those who died without the gospel, but rather about those who were valiant in the gospel, even suffering and dying in defense of it. The JST rendition of verse 40 is thus consistent with the context of the chapter; the KJV rendition is not. (See [Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*], 170–71.)

However, even though the Prophet Joseph Smith knew that Hebrews 11:40 had reference to earthly suffering, he still occasionally used the KJV passage for teaching about salvation for the dead. I can only give my opinion on why he did so, but one reason may be that in either case the doctrine is true. Since the world and the Church had access to the King James Version, it may be that Joseph Smith used that familiar rendition to undergird the doctrine of salvation for the dead. Because he had obtained the doctrine of salvation for the dead by revelation and not from the printed page of the Bible, he therefore had a certain independence from the Bible and seems to have felt free to use it when it would corroborate true doctrines, even if a particular passage might have been worded differently in its original text. . . .

It isn't a matter of "correct" or "incorrect" as much as it is a matter of purpose. The nature of human language is such that there can be no "literal" translation of any extensive or intricate document. Every translation is, in effect, an interpretation. The language is not the revelation; it is the awkward vehicle by which a revelation or a concept is expressed. Thus, texts might often be enlarged or paraphrased by a prophet in order to give a certain emphasis or perspective beneficial to his hearers.[32]

The truths of the restored gospel came through revelation. Later, Church leaders and missionaries searched the scriptures to find evidence for those truths, but the biblical evidence they identified is of secondary importance (since the Bible was not the source of the doctrines) and therefore can be revised, updated, and enlarged upon. The basic set of biblical verses that we still use to support the doctrines of the gospel was developed by LeGrand Richards in his *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950). Many of these will work in any translation of the Bible, but some are too closely keyed to the KJV and will result in confusion and frustration if we hold to them in an age when most people have moved on to modern or foreign language versions. The challenge (and opportunity) of the next generation is to find new biblical references that will explain the principles of the gospel in ways that biblically literate Christians can understand and accept, without special pleading to seventeenth-century verbal formulations or translation errors. Because we can be confident that our Latter-day Saint doctrines are consonant with the Bible in its clearest, most accurate form, we have no reason to fear modern translations.

As the KJV reached its 400th anniversary in 2011, Mormons joined with other Christians in celebrating the remarkable origins and influence of that esteemed translation. Yet such accolades are somewhat pointed for Latter-day Saints since we, nearly alone, still actively discourage our members from reading other versions: "English-speaking members should use the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible."[33] This attitude separates us from most other Christians, and not in a good way. It suggests that we are not serious about the Bible, that we are ignorant of its history and transmission, and that our beliefs may not be persuasive in light of even conservative biblical scholarship. Mormons appeal to the literary beauty of the KJV, or the faithfulness of its translators, or the fact that Joseph Smith used it, or the supposed need for unity (as if we could not hold to true doctrines unless everyone reads exactly the same words in their identical Bibles) in order to defend the status quo, but these are not strong arguments. Some even believe that Latter-day Saints can be more engaged with the Bible if they have to struggle with the language

of the KJV, though it would seem preferable to seek inspiration concerning the message of scripture rather than relying on the Holy Ghost to parse convoluted syntax and obsolete vocabulary. Revelation is not inimical to scholarship, as Joseph Smith's study of Hebrew demonstrated. For people who value the Bible as God's word, accuracy and clear understanding should far outweigh aesthetics, tradition, and familiarity; archaic diction is not the essence of the gospel.

Nevertheless, there is at least one important reason for English-speaking Mormons to stay connected to the KJV: our latter-day scriptures were written in King James-like language and a subtle, pervasive interplay exists among the standard works as the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price borrow biblical phrases, allude to biblical precedents, and comment on biblical passages, all from the KJV. It is possible to imagine a new edition of the Book of Mormon that updates the language—indeed Royal Skousen's work has demonstrated that our current 1981 edition is already a translation into a more contemporary idiom—but for the time being, it is beneficial for Latter-day Saints to know the KJV as well as they can, and one of the best paths to greater comprehension is to read the KJV alongside more recent translations. (See Appendix 2.) You might try an experiment in which you choose two relatively short but doctrinally substantive books from the Bible, such as Habakkuk and Ephesians, and then read them through, taking a few verses from the KJV followed by the same verses in the NRSV or NIV.[34] You can easily do this in a single afternoon. My guess is that many Latter-day Saints will discover they have not understood the KJV as well as they have assumed, even if they have participated in seminary, Institute, and several complete cycles of the Sunday School curriculum.

Conclusion

It has been over thirty years since the current LDS edition of the Bible was first published. At the time, it was a landmark in gospel scholarship and it has helped Latter-day Saints read the scriptures—ancient and modern—in a correlated, integrated manner. That publication has made the four standard works the foundation of teaching in Sunday School, seminary, and Institute, with

an emphasis on gospel principles and our distinctive LDS heritage (including the JST). After a generation, however, it is time to take another look at where we are in our study and knowledge of the scriptures, particularly in relation to other Christians—those who will be most receptive to our missionary efforts. It may be that our devotion to the KJV has reached the point of diminishing returns, that it is starting to be more of a hindrance than a help. Decade by decade, the language of the 1611 KJV is becoming more foreign, artificial, and opaque to young people and potential converts.

While there is much in biblical scholarship that is still debatable, the basic issues of texts and translations are settled and universally acknowledged. Using the KJV is no longer as advantageous as it once was, and relying upon that translation exclusively is not like being opposed to increasing worldliness or encroaching secularism. It is more like Christian Scientists rejecting modern medicine. Or perhaps a better analogy is that it makes us seem like Jehovah's Witnesses, who come to your door wanting to prove their beliefs by referencing a version of the Bible that, for historical and theological reasons, only they themselves use (that is, the New World Translation). When Latter-day Saint missionaries open up their King James Bibles, they, too, are appealing to a translation that, increasingly, Americans do not own, use, or understand.

It will seem that we are afraid to match up our teachings with the word of God, which, in the case of the Bible, is actually the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Or worse yet, that we are unable to do so. Our ignorance of the basic issues of biblical texts, transmission, and translation will make it much harder to convert or even communicate with Bible-reading Christians, and it will be an obstacle to new members who want to continue using their trusted, familiar modern Bibles. As Elder M. Russell Ballard observed a few years ago, "We tend to love the scriptures that we spend time with."[35] This is surely true of nonmembers, as well as Latter-day Saints who have grown up with the King James Version.

Furthermore, an exclusive reliance on the KJV will inhibit our ability to reach out to members of the Church abroad, as well as to the next generation of Latter-day Saint youth. We do our English-speaking members a great disservice when we insist that they

use only a Bible translation that they cannot reasonably comprehend. Even though the King James Version is too deeply rooted in our history and too connected to latter-day revelations to simply abandon, there are nevertheless steps the Church could take to utilize contemporary translations in helping us better comprehend the KJV, become more biblically literate, and more effectively share the gospel in an era in which a plurality of translations is the norm:

• Explicitly encourage Latter-day Saints to read modern translations as supplements to their study of the LDS edition of the scriptures.

• Print articles in Church magazines on modern translations.

• Update the First Presidency letter of May 22, 1992, to allow for more flexibility in the use of alternate English translations while reaffirming the official status of the King James Version.

• Include basic information on translation issues and specific translations in the Sunday School and Church Education System manuals.

• Encourage occasional citations of contemporary biblical translations in conference talks.

• Allow BYU religion classes to use newer versions of the Bible as supplemental textbooks.

• Commission articles for publication in the *Religious Educator* on how to appropriately integrate multiple translations of the Bible into gospel teaching.

• Sell modern translations of the Bible at Deseret Bookstores.

• Invite BYU professors to write a detailed commentary on the NIV or NRSV for LDS readers.

As with faith and works, there must be a balance between revelation and scholarship. Only those leaders charged with the proper stewardship can determine the particular combination appropriate for the Church as a whole, but both are surely necessary. Joseph Smith, who had remarkable access to revelation, was nevertheless thrilled to get closer to the original meaning of the Bible through

language study as well as reading translations other than the King James Version. And he considered this type of scholarship so important for spreading the gospel that he made it part of the curriculum for the Kirtland School of the Elders. As he wrote in January of 1836, "This day we commenced reading in our Hebrew Bibles with much success. It seems as if the Lord opens our minds in a marvelous manner to understand his word in the original language, and my prayer is that God will speedily endow us with a knowledge of all languages and tongues, that his servants may go forth for the last time to bind up the law and seal up the testimony."[36]

Appendix 1
Problematic Biblical References in *Preach My Gospel*

Some of the references in this missionary handbook are based on peculiar KJV readings and hence will be problematic in any other translation; other citations will be more confusing in some versions than in others. Yet all of the examples below are potentially troublesome and will likely prove so when they are cited by missionaries working with the variety of non-English Bibles used by Latter-day Saints around the world. These foreign translations tend to be more meaning-driven than form-driven and, consequently, are more like the REB. You might imagine, for instance, how a Japanese or Filipino Latter-day Saint would feel when he or she looks up a verse recommended by a manual, a conference talk, or the full-time elders, and discovers that it means something quite different from what the speaker intended.

John 7:17 (pp. 19, 62, 93, 122, 196)

"Whoever has the will to do the will of God shall know whether my teaching comes from him or is merely my own." (REB)

This translation nicely picks up the pun in the original Greek with the repetition of "will," but it still clearly promises blessings for a change in attitude, or in faith, rather than for the actions that one assumes will follow. The actual meaning is therefore basically the opposite of how it is used in *Preach My Gospel*.

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 (p. 35)

We often read this passage as a prophecy of a general apos-

tasy, perhaps because of the phrase "falling away" in verse 3. But in more comprehensible modern translations, it is clear that Paul is here speaking of quite particular events—a "rebellion" led by "the man of lawlessness" who will "set himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (NIV). I do not know who Paul had in mind, but he may have been describing something in current politics, in which case it does not really demonstrate a worldwide apostasy. If, on the other hand, Paul was prophesying of things to come in the last days, things which have not yet come to pass, it does not make sense to use this scripture as an indication of the pre-Restoration apostasy.

Ephesians 1:10 (p. 38)

". . . to be put into effect when the time was ripe: namely, that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, might be brought into a unity in Christ." (REB)

We tend to think of the phrase "the dispensation of the fulness of times" as a technical term with a specific, unique meaning (as on p. 44). This is not how it is used in Greek.

1 Corinthians 15:40–42 (pp. 52, 54, 58)

"There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another, and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable." (NIV)

These verses will be problematic in any translation, and remember, because this is the reading of the NIV, this is how most American Christians will first encounter the scripture. In explaining the plan of salvation, Doctrine and Covenants 76 borrowed the terms "celestial" and "terrestrial" from this passage in the KJV, and then added the word "telestial." The Joseph Smith Translation brings "telestial" into 1 Corinthians 15 as well. There is no question about the truth of our doctrine of three degrees of glory, which comes from modern revelation, but in 1 Corinthians 15:40, Paul is contrasting our future resurrection bodies with our present mortal bodies. Even in standard English, "terrestrial" means "earthly"; he is not talking about differences between various king-

doms of glory. In the next verse (41), with his astronomical analogy, Paul *may* be referring to distinctions between different types of resurrection bodies, but his meaning is not crystal clear here.

1 Peter 4:6 (p. 53)

"For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit." (NIV)

One common and linguistically valid interpretation of this verse is that it refers to Christians who heard the gospel while they were still alive, but have since died. The NIV contributes to this impression by adding the word "now," which is not in the Greek. We read this verse as a reference to missionary work in the spirit world (as in D&C 138:10), which is also a defensible interpretation, but it is not as unambiguous as 1 Peter 3:18–20.

Acts 3:21 (p. 70)

"He [Christ] must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." (NIV)

On a happier note, *Preach My Gospel* explains that the word "restitution" means "the return of something that has been taken away or lost. For example, the Restoration of the gospel is called a restitution (see Acts 3:19-21)." The Greek word *apokatastasis*, which was translated in 1611 as "restitution" clearly means "restoration," and in this case all the major modern translations will teach the doctrine of Acts 3:21 more clearly than the King James Version.

1 Kings 19:12 (pp. 73, 96)

". . . and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence." (NRSV)

"Still small voice" is an idiomatic rendering of the Hebrew, which is also translated as "a soft murmuring sound" (NJPS) or "a gentle whisper" (NIV). It might be confusing, particularly for a non-English speaker who turns to a translation in his own language more along the lines of the NRSV, to be told to listen to "the sound of sheer silence." We frequently speak of the "still small voice" and assume that everyone understands what we

mean, but comparing different translations of 1 Kings 19 might remind us that we are dealing with a metaphor that poetically represents the actual experience of perceiving the promptings of the Spirit. As usual, the doctrine itself is more important than any particular verbal formulation of it.

John 5:39 (p. 74)

"You study the scriptures diligently, supposing that in having them you have eternal life; yet, although their testimony points to me, you refuse to come to me for that life." (REB)

We usually interpret this verse as Jesus urging his listeners to study the scriptures. In fact, the meaning is nearly the opposite; Jesus is warning scripture-loving Jews that their diligent study is taking them away from what matters most. They think that eternal life is in the scriptures, but they are wrong. Eternal life comes only through Jesus Christ, of whom the scriptures testify. The REB captures the actual meaning of the conversation more clearly than the KJV. It is possible to read the first sentence in Greek as an imperative, "Search the scriptures . . .", but with this reading Jesus would be speaking ironically, saying something like—in a very loose paraphrase—"Go ahead and search the scriptures if you think you will find eternal life in them, but you are missing the main point." The standard works include several admonitions to study the scriptures wholeheartedly, but this is *not* one of them.

Philippians 2:12 (p. 88)

"Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." (NIV, vv. 12–13)

Any modern translation will reflect the fact that Philippians 2:12 is only half a sentence, and readers will naturally continue to the next clause. The phrase "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" is indeed an injunction to individual effort and enduring to the end, as Latter-day Saints commonly use it, but the sentence as a whole makes the more subtle point that any success we may achieve is the result of God working through us.

Ephesians 1:13–14 (p. 91)

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the

word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory." (NIV)

Latter-day Saints often treat "the Holy Spirit of Promise" as a technical term, for this is how it is used in the Doctrine and Covenants. As Lawrence Flake states in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, "The Holy Spirit of Promise is the power by which ordinances and other righteous acts performed on this earth, such as baptism and eternal marriage, are ratified, validated, and sealed in heaven as well as on earth." Yet this usage is, at least partially, the result of an ambiguous genitive in the KJV. In Ephesians, the "holy spirit of promise" is not a power, and it is not even, as Flake continues, a "descriptive name-title of the Holy Ghost [which] refers to a specific function."[37] We know from modern revelation that the sealing power is real and significant; but in this particular New Testament verse, Paul is not making a distinction between "the holy spirit of promise" and "the holy spirit." They are one and the same. This is why all the major translations speak of the "promised holy spirit."

2 Timothy 3:16 (p. 182)

"All Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (NIV)

The NIV, somewhat uncharacteristically, invents a new expression here. The Greek word *theopneustos* literally does mean "God-breathed," as does the traditional rendering "inspired of God" (with "inspiration" being related to "respiration"), but this translation may come as a surprise to missionaries who first encounter it in their investigators' Bibles. By the way, the REB offers a perfectly legitimate alternative reading: "All inspired scripture has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error"—which opens up the possibility of uninspired scripture. The JST does exactly the same thing with this verse.

Appendix 2
Possibilities for Future Editions of Restoration Scriptures

The current official editions of our modern books of scripture are also over thirty years old, and perhaps it is time to start

thinking about updating the texts and formatting to make them more accurate and more accessible. The extensive cross-referencing that was groundbreaking in 1981 is no longer necessary in an era when full-text searching is readily available online or in apps. The same is true of the 600-page Topical Guide included in the 1979 LDS Bible. Shorter, less cluttered volumes may be preferable in many contexts, as with the Doubleday edition of the Book of Mormon. Royal Skousen's Book of Mormon Critical Text Project has identified over two hundred changes that would bring the text into closer correspondence with the earliest manuscripts, continuing the pattern of emendations in the 1981 edition.[38] I suspect that the Joseph Smith Papers Project may do the same for the Doctrine and Covenants. In addition, the problems of archaic language in the KJV also apply to our latter-day scriptures.

The 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon was designed to look as much as possible like the common Bible of the day, the KJV, with its verse-by-verse, double-columned format. Now, nearly 100 years later, if we wanted the Book of Mormon to resemble the Bibles that most Christians use, we would publish our scriptures in paragraphs, with minimized verse numbers, quotations marks, poetic forms, and section headings, as I did with my *Reader's Edition*.[39] If we were concerned about the language, it would be a relatively simple matter to modernize the grammar, much as Joseph Smith did in the 1837 and 1840 editions, and perhaps even delete many instances of stylistic interjections such as "it came to pass" "behold," and "yea." (Keep in mind that Joseph Smith himself deleted forty-eight occurrences of "it came to pass" in his editing for the 1837 edition).[40] There is little risk that modest grammatical updating would "introduce doctrinal errors or obscure evidence of its ancient origin,"[41] since it would not change any meanings, and since Skousen has established a scholarly reconstruction of the earliest text, which academics should always use in investigating ancient origins. Indeed, the several thousand changes in our current edition already obscure some of these evidences.[42]

Merely revising the grammar, however, would still leave much of the Book of Mormon sounding awkward or outdated to many readers of modern biblical translations. For instance, neither the NRSV or the NIV ever use the term "Holy Ghost," which is an odd locution, if you think about it. When talking to nonmembers, it is of-

ten preferable to employ the more common equivalent "Holy Spirit." And to say "stripling" outside of Mormon circles is to invite misunderstanding.[43] It is also increasingly common to add the phrase "or women" in paraphrasing LDS scriptures when they refer to "men" in a generic way. In the last few decades, there has been considerable controversy among other Christians over whether to make Bible translations as gender-inclusive as is warranted by the original Greek and Hebrew meanings. The NRSV has always been gender-inclusive, while the NIV became so in its 2011 revision, despite the hesitations of some conservative Evangelicals.[44]

The Church may someday modernize the vocabulary, as well as the grammar and formatting, of the Book of Mormon, but that still leaves the question of its mission of working hand-in-hand with the Bible as "Another Testament of Jesus Christ." It would be possible to undertake a careful, thorough revision of the Book of Mormon that identifies all the places where it is tied to the KJV and then reproduce those connections using a modern translation as the base-text, in essence imagining what the Book of Mormon would look like if it had been translated in the twenty-first century and sent out to contemporary Christians with their current Bibles. This sort of modernization, quite distinct from a paraphrase, would need to be updated every generation or two and might be different enough from Joseph Smith's original translation to be a missionary tool and study aid rather than a canonized version.[45]

The formatting, grammar, and biblical language of the Doctrine and Covenants could be similarly modernized, but there may also be opportunities to reconsider its contents, which are less fixed than for the Bible and the Book of Mormon. The last substantive revision was in 1876, when twenty-six sections were added, along with versification throughout. The 1981 edition was expanded by two more sections (137–138) and a second Official Declaration. Perhaps some of the revelations or documents being edited as part of the Joseph Smith Papers deserve canonization. For instance, the minutes for the organization of the Relief Society on March 17, 1842, would make a nice counterpart to the minutes for the organization of the first high council in Section 102. And canonization is not necessarily a process of accretion; there may be some current sections that could be deleted without much

loss.[46] The "Lectures on Faith" and "Article on Marriage" (Section 101 in the 1935 edition) offer precedents for decanonization.[47] It might be useful as well to rearrange the sections in chronological order, with the obvious exception of our current Section 1, which serves as the book's preface.

For a church with such a strong commitment to continuing revelation, it could eventually become something of an embarrassment that the Doctrine and Covenants includes only three sections that postdate the death of Joseph Smith in 1844: John Taylor's account of the martyrdom, a revelation to Brigham Young in 1847, and a vision of Joseph F. Smith in 1918. There may be room in the Pearl of Great Price, or in some other quasi-canonical publication, for fifteen to twenty complete sermons or writings of Joseph's successors that have proven their worth and relevance over time, in accordance with D&C 68:4.[48] This would give members a sense of the inspired progress of the Church since the early nineteenth century and provide materials for detailed study and discussion. The contents of such a collection could be reevaluated for potential deletions or additions every thirty or forty years.[49] In any case, Mormonism is too new and too dynamic a religion to let our expansive canon ossify in less than two centuries.

Notes

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church, 2010* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), section 21.1.7, p. 180: "English-speaking members should use the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible."

2. "Statement about Bible Translations," Bob Jones University website, http://www.bju.edu/communities/ministries-schools/position-statements/translation.php (accessed May 7, 2012).

3. *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 19, 62, 93, 122, 196.

4. Similarly, the NIV has: "Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." The official LDS edition has no footnote alerting readers to the archaic usage of the first "will" in the verse.

5. Committee on Bible Translation website, http://www.niv-cbt.org/about-zondervan (accessed May 7, 2012).

6. Gordon D. Fee and Mark L. Strauss, *How to Chose a Translation for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions* (Grand

Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007), 149. A *Christian Post* article in 2008 reported that two-thirds of participating leaders named the NIV as their preferred Bible in a survey conducted by the National Association of Evangelicals, an organization that claims to represent 30 million evangelical Christians. Jennifer Riley, "NIV Bible Tops List by Evangelical Leaders," *Christian Post* website, http://www.christianpost.com/news/niv-bible-tops-list-by-evangelical-leaders-31904 (accessed May 9, 2012).

7. J. Reuben Clark Jr., *Why the King James Version* (1956; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), iv. Despite its title, Clark deals only with the New Testament.

8. "More Than Half of Young People Have Never Heard of the King James Bible," *Daily Mail* website, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1332138/More-half-young-people-heard-King-James-Bible.html (accessed May 9, 2012).

9. "First Presidency Statement on the King James Version of the Bible," *Ensign*, August 1992, 80.

10. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (1902–12, 1932; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), 6:307, 364.

11. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 156, 161; spelling modernized.

12. *History of the Church*, 6:57.

13. Latter-day Saints have not always been as exclusively devoted to the KJV as they are today. For instance, Elder John A. Widtsoe observed:

> It should be remarked that the translation of the Bible into several modern languages has helped us to understand the meaning of many passages otherwise obscure. To convert the ideas recorded in Hebrew or Greek into another language is not an easy task. The translator at best is only an interpreter of the text. It is well therefore to compare, say a standard translation in German or French with one in English. The peculiar genius of one language often permits a clearer expression of the original meaning.
>
> In recent years many new translations of the Bible into English have been made, chiefly to render the text in modern, colloquial language, though others have sought primarily to make the rendering correspond more exactly with the text. These modern translators have had at their command for comparison many more manuscripts than were possessed by the translators in 1611. Each such translation has contributed something towards our fuller understanding of the Bible. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, arranged by G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 119.

For an authoritative overview of Latter-day Saint attitudes toward the King James Bible, see Philip L. Barlow, "Why the King James Version?: From the Common to the Official Bible of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 19–43,

which later became Chapter 5 of his *Mormons and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

14. Brigham Young, August 27, 1871, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 14:226–27. Several modern authors omit the phrase "or the curse be upon him" when they quote this statement.

15. In Greek manuscripts, the KJV phrase "in spirit" is so obviously a late addition of the Middle Ages that it does not even warrant a comment in the universally accepted United Bible Societies' edition of the Greek New Testament.

16. Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 489.

17. The problems of biblical transmission referred to in 1 Nephi 13:20–28 seem to have much more to do with handcopied manuscripts than with translations. One would think that such prophetic warnings would make Latter-day Saints eager to study and accept the results of careful textual criticism. Instead, our current edition of the Bible ignores such issues or pretends that they do not exist.

18. F. F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1978), 186–203. For a systematic rebuttal of the arguments made by the authorities upon whom Clark relied, see D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979). Both Bruce and Carson were very conservative, well-respected evangelical scholars. Standard surveys of textual scholarship include Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, translated by Erroll F. Rhodes, 2nd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1995), and Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

19. Peter J. Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 94–119.

20. Clark, *Why the King James Version* (1956 ed.), vii–ix.

21. Philip W. Comfort, "History of the English Bible," in Philip Wesley Comfort, ed., *The Origin of the Bible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1992), 281–82.

22. Basic introductions to the specialized concerns of biblical translation can be found in Fee and Strauss, as well as in David Dewey, *A User's Guide to Bible Translations: Making the Most of Different Versions* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004). For an excellent article focusing on

these matters from a Latter-day Saint perspective, see Joseph G. Stringham, "The Church and Translation," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 1 (1981): 69–90.

23. The answer to J. Reuben Clark's rhetorical question "Could any language be too great, too elegant, too beautiful, too majestic, too divine-like to record the doings and sayings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ?" is clearly "Yes," at least if one values accuracy in translation; the Gospel writers themselves did not use such language. Clark, *Why the King James Version* (1956 ed.), 355.

24. Another LDS perspective on a few contemporary versions of the Bible can be found in Gaye Strathearn, "Modern English Bible Translations," in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, edited by Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011), 234–59. For Latter-day Saints interested in Roman Catholic translations, both the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB, a 1985 revision of the 1966 Jerusalem Bible), and the New American Bible (1970; with a 2011 revised edition, NABRE) are quite good.

25. See John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 200–201.

26. This is the conclusion that Lincoln Blumell draws in his careful study of twenty-two significant NT textual variants. See Lincoln H. Blumell, "A Text-Critical Comparison of the King James New Testament with Certain Modern Translations," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* [a journal of BYU's Maxwell Institute] 3 (2011): 67–126.

27. Jason David BeDuhn offers more details in his *Truth in Translation: Accuracy and Bias in English Translations of the New Testament* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2003), 29:

> The greatest drawback of the KJV is that the English it employs is not modern English. Besides the notorious "thee" and "thou," dozens of words found in the KJV have dropped out of the language completely. More importantly, many words now mean something different than they did in 1611. "Meat" was used of any kind of food. "Corn" was any grain, particularly wheat, not American maize (which, of course, was unknown in the Old World in New Testament times). "His" was used where we would use "its." "Prevent" meant "come before," not "hinder." "Let" meant "prevent"; now it means "allow." "Suffer" meant "allow"; now is used for experiencing pain. "Conversation" meant "interaction"; now it is limited to "talking." "Evidently" meant "clearly"; now it means "apparently." To be "careful" meant to worry, rather than being cautious. To be "pitiful" meant to be compassionate, rather than wretched or miserable. "Worship" referred to a physical bowing or prostration; now it is used of a mental state of reverence. "Quick" meant "alive," rather than "fast." And so on.

Footnotes can help with these terms, but at some point, they become so cumbersome that it seems preferable to simply consult a modern translation.

28. *Handbook 2*, section 21.1.7, p. 180.

29. See, for example, David Dewey on another such passage, the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11), which did not start appearing in manuscripts until the sixth century: "However, there is no reason to doubt the historical nature of the story; it is too scandalous to have been made up. Neither is there any reason to reject it from the canon of Scripture. It has a ring of truth. While it is not written by John, we need not doubt it is based on fact and inspired by the Holy Spirit." Dewey, *A User's Guide to Bible Translations*, 214–15; see also Blumell, "A Text-Critical Comparison of the King James New Testament with Certain Modern Translations," 89–104.

30. Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah,* 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1988), 111–12, and his *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1989), 215. A prime example of the New Testament quoting an imprecise Septuagint rendering is the citation of Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child." The Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah simply means "young woman."

31. For more on this topic, see Hugh Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet,* edited by Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 178–80. Nibley observes that "while the sons of God have been identified with both angels and the Watchers, the Greek Enoch [which is very closely related to the book of Jude] does not identify the Watchers with Satan's hosts who fell from heaven from the beginning—they are another crowd."

32. Robert J. Matthews, "I Have a Question: Some passages such as Matthew 6:13 and Hebrews 11:40 in Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible read quite differently from the comparable passages in the Book of Mormon and/or other statements by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Why is this so, and how could we know which of the variants is correct?" *Ensign*, September 1981, 16–17. By the way, in a later "I Have a Question" column, Franklin S. Gonzalez responded to the question "With so many English translations of the Bible that are easy to read, why does the Church still use the King James Version?" He compared modern translations unfavorably to the KJV, but he stacked the deck by referring mainly to the Living Bible, which is not even a translation but rather a paraphrase. *Ensign*, June 1987, 23–25.

33. *Handbook 2*, section 21.1.7, p. 180.

34. Many Mormons who are new to modern translations of the Bible will respond more positively to the NRSV than the NIV, given the relative formality of the NRSV. I particularly recommend the HarperCollins *NRSV Standard Bible* (2007), which features minimal footnotes and para-

graphs that extend all the way across the page. For Latter-day Saints interested in biblical scholarship, the *New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, 4th ed. (2010) is the standard academic bible. Its concise explanations of meaning, structure, and historical background focus attention on the scriptural text itself in a marvelous fashion.

35. M. Russell Ballard, "The Miracle of the Holy Bible," *Ensign*, May 2007, 82.

36. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 143; spelling and punctuation modernized.

37. Lawrence R. Flake, "Holy Spirit of Promise," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 2:651–52.

38. Royal Skousen has suggested 256 corrections that would make a difference in meaning, though these include a few conjectural emendations. See Skousen, *Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, xxxv, 745–89.

39. Grant Hardy, ed., *The Book of Mormon: A Reader's Edition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003). Since versification was added only in 1879, a transition to paragraphs would return the text to a form more similar to what Joseph Smith and Brigham Young read. In addition, the prevalence of electronic versions with hyperlinks makes it easier than ever to jump from cross-reference to cross-reference with little regard for genre, time period, or narrative significance. Paragraphing, by contrast, ensures that verses are read in their original contexts.

40. Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2004), 207. For an example of what such a Book of Mormon might sound like, see the Community of Christ's 1966 Revised Authorized Version (though unfortunately it is broken into even more verses than the LDS version).

41. *Handbook 2*, section 21.1.8, p. 181.

42. Royal Skousen, "The Original Language of the Book of Mormon: Upstate New York Dialect, King James English, or Hebrew?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3, no. 1 (1994): 28–38. See also Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

43. In similar fashion, the words "carnal," "curious," "epistle," "lasciviousness," "temporal," "tittle," and "twain" do not appear in either the NIV or the NRSV. Readers of the NIV will never have encountered "charity," "fornication," "murmur," "partake" or "perdition" in the Bible. And in the Book of Mormon, "plates of brass" could more accurately be described as "plates of bronze," since "brass" is a KJV anachronism.

44. Mark L. Strauss, "Current Issues in the Gender-Language Debate: A Response to Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem," in *The Chal-*

lenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World, edited by Glen G. Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, and Steven M. Voth (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2003), 115–42.

45. For example, if 2 Nephi 25:17 were based on the NRSV, "And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men," might be rendered as "The Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover his people from their lost and fallen state. Therefore he will again do shocking and amazing things among mortals," picking up the allusions to Isaiah 11:11 and Isaiah 29:14. I think that "shocking and amazing" might be an apt description for the Book of Mormon (see 2 Ne. 27:6–26).

46. Some of the short sections dealing with individual callings or the disposition of properties may have more historical than doctrinal significance. As a rough indication, there are thirty-one sections that were never included in the assigned readings, or even referenced, in the most recent *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Class Member Study Guide* (1999): 7, 32, 36, 40, 47, 48, 53, 55, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 77, 79, 80, 83, 91, 94, 96, 99, 106, 108, 111, 114, 116, 117, 125, 129.

47. Richard S. Van Wagoner, Steven C. Walker, and Allen D. Roberts, "The 'Lectures on Faith': A Case Study in Decanonization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 71–77.

48. The *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church* manuals for Priesthood and Relief Society (1997–) are a step in this direction, but their topical organization obscures any historical context and makes it difficult to get a sense of the personalities and speaking styles of various Church presidents. The brief excerpts also truncate extended arguments.

The list below offers some possibilities, many of which have already been republished in the *Ensign* as "Gospel Classics," apparently drawing upon Jay A. Parry, Jack M. Lyon, and Linda Ririe Gundry, eds., *Best-Loved Talks of the LDS People* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002).

Brigham Young, "The Remarks of President Young in Behalf of the Claim of the Twelve to Lead the Church in the Absence of the First Presidency," August 8, 1844, *History of the Church*, 7:231–36, 239–42.

Brigham Young, "Necessity of Building Temples—The Endowment," April 6, 1853, *Journal of Discourses,* 2:28–33.

Brigham Young, "True and False Riches," August 14, 1853, *Journal of Discourses,* 1:264–76.

Brigham Young, "Eternal Punishment—'Mormonism,' etc.," January 12, 1862, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:146.

Wilford Woodruff, "The Keys of the Kingdom," June 2, 1889, *Mil-*

lennial Star, September 2, 1889, 545–49; reprinted in the *Ensign*, April 2004, 29–31.

Lorenzo Snow, "Discourse by President Lorenzo Snow" [on tithing], *Millennial Star,* August 24, 1899, 533.

Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, First Presidency, "Family Home Evening: Counsel and a Promise," *Improvement Era*, June 1915, 733–34; reprinted in the *Ensign*, June 2003, 12–13.

The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, "The Father and the Son," June 30, 1916, *Improvement Era*, August 1916, 934–42; reprinted in the *Ensign*, April 2002, 13–18.

Heber J. Grant, "Morning Session Address" [on forgiveness], *Conference Report*, October 1920, 2–11; reprinted in *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), 148–55.

Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., and David O. McKay, "The Message of the First Presidency to the Church [establishing the Church welfare program], October 2, 1936, in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 6:19–23; reprinted in the *Ensign*, March 2003, 33–34.

George Albert Smith, "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God," *Improvement Era*, October 1947, 688–90.

David O. McKay, "Every Member a Missionary," *Improvement Era*, October 1961, 709–11, 730–31.

Spencer W. Kimball, "When the World Will Be Converted," *Ensign*, October 1974, 2–14; reprinted in a shortened form in the *Ensign*, April 1984, 4–6.

Spencer W. Kimball, "The False Gods We Worship," *Ensign*, June 1976, 3–6.

Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign*, November 1986, 4–7; reprinted in the *Ensign*, October 2011, 53–58.

Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," *Ensign*, May 1989, 4–7; partially reprinted as "The Faces of Pride," *New Era,* October 2003, 40–44.

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, September 23, 1995, 102.

Gordon B. Hinckley, "Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention of Converts, and Missionary Service," *Ensign*, November 1997, 49–52.

There might even be space for Joseph Smith's complete 1842 "Wentworth Letter" (including the Articles of Faith) and his 1844 "King Follett Discourse," though I realize these take us back to the founding era of the Church.

Unity and the King James Bible

Ronan James Head

The Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible (KJV)[1] has been the de facto English LDS Bible since the very beginning of the Restoration. The initial reason for this is simple: The KJV was the Bible of American Protestantism in the nineteenth century[2] and was therefore Joseph Smith's Bible. For example, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery used an 1828 KJV to begin work on the Inspired Version of the Bible, known by Mormons as the "Joseph Smith Translation" (JST).[3] As Philip Barlow puts it, "Joseph Smith's generation was raised on the KJV."[4] However, Joseph never designated the KJV as the "official" LDS Bible. Indeed, recognition of its flaws led him to study the ancient languages, work on the Inspired Version, and seek out alternative translations such as the Luther Bible. Indeed, early Mormons often cited different translations of biblical texts,[5] and it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the KJV began to acquire official status. In 1956, J. Reuben Clark, a member of the First Presidency, wrote a defence of the KJV,[6] a work which remained popular for many years and whose influence can still be felt. The KJV's place was later quasi-canonised with the publication of the 1979 LDS version of the Bible, a project begun under Harold B. Lee, a close associate of President Clark. As it currently stands, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shows no sign of wanting to move away from the KJV, and a consideration of this position is theologically and socially revealing.

Some people, particularly those outside the Mormon faith, might rightly ask why Anglophone Latter-day Saints still use the KJV when new translations are available that both represent the ancient sources and their languages in up-to-date ways and that are now more popular than the four-hundred-year-old KJV. Mormon scholar Grant Hardy (see preceding article) has recently ad-

vocated using modern translations alongside the KJV, claiming that the archaic language of the KJV is a hindrance to both missionary work and Bible literacy in the church.[7] Hardy notes that the KJV is no longer the dominant Bible of the English-speaking world[8] and that the New International Version (NIV) is now the standard Bible for conservative American Christians. It would seem that the question of why Latter-day Saints still use the KJV is a relevant one.

The purpose of this article is neither to defend the KJV nor to criticise its use. Rather, I will discuss, in ways hopefully illuminating for those both in and outside the tradition, why Mormons use the KJV—or to state it differently, what the use of the KJV might say about the modern Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As we shall see, the KJV stands at the convergence of several important Mormon beliefs and thus serves as an interesting token of the LDS faith. In particular, the KJV seems to underline the importance of unity to the LDS Church: unity with Joseph Smith and the Restoration, unity with the sources of revelation, and unity with traditional Mormon Christology.

Unity with Joseph Smith and the Restoration

Latter-day Saints regard the gospel as a unified, eternal project, its teachings evident from Adam to modern times. Apostle Bruce R. McConkie stated: "We know that the plan of salvation is always and everlastingly the same; that obedience to the same laws always brings the same reward; that the gospel laws have not changed."[9] Similarly, the Lord tells the Latter-day Saints: "If ye are not one, ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27). Important to this belief in gospel unity is the King James Version, which, unlike other translations, offers Latter-day Saints a seamless linguistic continuity from ancient writ to latter-day revelation—from Genesis to modern scripture—most transmitted in a Jacobean idiom. As Douglas Davies puts it, for Mormons the KJV is "retained for purposes of coherence, mutual reinforcement and unity of ethos."[10] Anthony Hutchinson describes it as a "Harmonizing Hermenuetic" and characterises the use of the KJV as supporting the dominant conservative mode of biblical hermeneutics in the LDS Church.[11]

The KJV reinforces latter-day revelation in two particular and related ways. First, and historically, Smith's use of the KJV

through his work on the JST acted as a trigger for many of the revelations now printed in the Doctrine and Covenants (e.g., D&C 76, 77, 91, and 132).[12] As J. B. Haws states, regarding Doctrine and Covenants 76, the revelation was "more than anything else a blending of literal readings of the Bible into a revolutionary view of heaven."[13] Second, the actual language of the KJV allowed Joseph and his successors to find biblical phraseology for new doctrines. Certain Mormon distinctives would therefore be lost if Mormons were to use newer translations, something of which the First Presidency was no doubt aware when they stated in 1992 that "while other Bible versions may be easier to read than the KJV, in doctrinal matters latter-day revelation supports the KJV."[14] Compare the following doctrinal phrases found in the KJV with their more modern equivalents and then consider the LDS doctrines that relate closely to the particular language and cadence of the KJV:

• Millenarianism: "dispensation of the fullness of times" (Eph. 1:10) vs. "a plan for the fullness of time" (New Revised Standard Version)

• The Rocky Mountain location of the Salt Lake Temple: "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established *in the top of the mountains*" (Isa. 2:2; emphasis mine) vs. "as the chief of the mountains" (New American Standard Bible)

• Preexistence: "First estate" (Jude 1:6) vs. "Principality" (Douay-Rheims)

• Theology: "Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:9) vs. "One who had been living forever" (Good News Bible)[15]

• Soteriology: "work out your own salvation" (Philip. 2:12) vs. "do the good things that result from being saved" (Living Bible)[16]

David Rolph Seely has catalogued the words and phrases crafted by Tyndale, whose translation preceded the KJV and was a major influence upon it. In particular he examines neologisms such as "Jehovah," "Passover," "atonement," "scapegoat," "mercy seat," and "shewbread"—words that, he notes, are "significant and

essential in Restoration scripture."[17] Retaining the KJV maintains a biblical link with Mormon doctrine and language, allowing "all scripture [to be] woven together as one book."[18] Use of another Bible would orphan some Mormon phraseology, from the "And it came to pass"-es and other Jacobeanisms of the Book of Mormon to the important doctrines listed above. The purpose of the JST—to "improve" the Bible—might also be weakened when using a so-called already "improved" Bible.[19] Thus, the KJV maintains an important unity between the modern church and Joseph Smith and the Restoration.

Unity with the Sources of Revelation

Armand L. Mauss and Philip L. Barlow see the KJV as part of what they call the "Mormon sectarian retrenchment," although that is only its current use.[20] During the first half of the twentieth century, they claim that "the KJV served as a vehicle for Mormon assimilation,"[21] providing a common scriptural ground with Protestant Christianity. This explanation also remains current in explanations for Latter-day Saints' continued use of the KJV. The reprinted edition of Clark's *Why the King James Version* asserts: The "use and acceptance of the King James Version is further enhanced by the fact that it still remains the largest-selling version in the world today."[22] While the KJV no longer has this best-selling status, it does demonstrate the desire to bring the LDS Bible into what was seen as the mainstream. However, Mauss and Barlow see a turn to retrenchment in the decades after World War II in which the KJV promoted Mormon distinctiveness and supported a more conservative and orthodox approach to the Bible.

For Latter-day Saints, the primary route to truth is through revelation, available to the individual through the Holy Spirit, but at all times guided by those authorised to reveal doctrine to the Church, viz. the General Authorities and the institutions of the Church that implement their will. No matter how good the modern translations, they are the products of scholarship, and Mormons typically prefer to subordinate scholarship to revelation (2 Ne 9:28–29). Contrast the revelatory power of the lightly educated Joseph Smith with the famous tale of the Ivy League unbelief of Charles Anthon, professor of classics at Columbia, who could not accept the supernatural nature of the Book of Mormon

translation (JSH—1:64–65). Mormon scripture does not speak highly of attempts to translate and transmit the Bible by those not man- dated by God:

> And the angel of the Lord said unto me [Nephi]: Thou hast beheld that the book [the Bible] proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God. . . .
>
> Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God. (1 Ne. 13:24, 28)

Modern Bible translators, inasmuch as they participate in "higher criticism," until recently would have found their work referenced with "apostasy" in Bruce R. McConkie's still-influential *Mormon Doctrine*.[23] Translators of the "liberal" Revised Standard Version (RSV)—the new biblical upstart at the time Clark wrote his defence of the KJV—were, in conservative eyes, scholars first and believers second (if at all). Compare them with the claimed piety of the KJV translators, who prayed to God to guide their work and who received no financial remuneration for their efforts. Tyndale, who exudes the kind of piety inherent in such translations, wrote, "Them that are learned Christenly, I beseche: for as moche as I am sure, and my conscience beareth me recorde, that of a pure entent, singily and faythfully I have interpreted itt, as farre forth as god [sic] gave me the gyfte of knowledge, and understondynge."[24]

While obviously not Mormon, these translators are the paragon of the faithful scholar, learned but believing. It is no surprise that they met with the approval of J. Reuben Clark, whom Latter-day Saints considered, by virtue of his status as a member of the LDS First Presidency, as a "prophet, seer, and revelator." President Clark was both erudite and authorized, and there has simply been no similar Mormon proponent of another translation.[25] Indeed, the newest edition of the Church's administrative handbook reiterates a commitment to the KJV: "English-speaking members should use the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible. . . . Although other versions of the Bi-

ble may be easier to read, in doctrinal matters, latter-day revelation supports the King James Version in preference to other English translations."[26]

The language of the KJV has also had an important influence on Mormon prayer language and ideas of deference and reverence. President Clark asked, "Could any language be too great, too elegant, too beautiful, too majestic, too divine-like to record the doings and sayings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ?"[27] Mormons tend to encounter the divine in a formal way, an enduring influence of the KJV and to move away from it would be to orphan, among other things, the language of prayer. As Apostle Dallin H. Oaks has stated: "When we address prayers to our Heavenly Father in English, our only available alternatives are the common words of speech like *you* and *your* or the dignified but uncommon words like *thee, thou,* and *thy* which were used in the King James Version of the Bible almost five hundred years ago. Latter-day Saints, of course, prefer the latter. In our prayers we use language that is dignified and different, even archaic."[28]

Such is the Mormon commitment to the archaic language of the KJV that the original *informal* function of these second-person pronouns is consciously ignored. Terryl L. Givens describes the unifying role of the KJV in Mormon speech as follows: "As an intensely Bible-literate community, immersing itself in not just one, but four volumes of King Jamesian scripture, Latter-day Saint culture was, and continues to be, comfortably familiar with those speech patterns. . . . As a consequence of all this reinforcement, King James English is, in Mormonism, firmly identified with sacred language, and absolutely immune to any modernizing reform in the realms of prayer, ordinances, or the scriptures themselves."[29]

To Grant Hardy's claim that the KJV is too difficult to read, many Latter-day Saints might respond with a certain dispassion, for Mormon scripture reading is often as much a devotional as an educational activity, where the emphasis is on cognition as a spiritual and not just as an intellectual event.[30] There is merit in the struggle to understand, as it forces the Latter-day Saints to rely on revelation. For example, Mormons are enjoined to read Isaiah (3 Ne. 23:1–3) but can have difficulty understanding it,[31] a problem

that might be improved by reading a newer translation. However, to use a modern version of the Bible as a means of better understanding the text is to rely in the first instance on something other than revelation. When Bruce R. McConkie gave his "Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah," they did not include the suggestion to read a modern version (or learn Hebrew for that matter). Instead, he invited Latter-day Saints to, among other things, "have the spirit of prophecy" and "use the Book of Mormon."[32]

Of course, Latter-day Saints are not the only Christians who struggle to understand ancient scripture whatever the translation, which is why many Bibles include marginal notes and commentaries, but for a Mormon to use such a Bible is to be possibly unduly influenced by non-revelatory voices, no matter how erudite or earnest. Seeking to understand the KJV, Mormons are likely to turn to their own authorized commentaries and aids and to the spirit of revelation through prayer.[33] These are vital tools in the pedagogical life of Mormons.

Unity with Mormon Christology

Despite the complaints of some Christians, Mormon beliefs regarding Christ are in many ways very traditional, so it was no surprise that President Clark (and others) were worried about the RSV's use of "young woman" rather than "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 to describe the famous Messianic prophecy of the woman (believed by Christians to be Mary) who conceives and bears a son (believed to be Jesus). Such was the indignation surrounding this passage that copies of the RSV were publicly burned by some conservative Christians. Senator Joseph McCarthy even claimed that the translation was part of a Communist plot to undermine American Christianity.[34] Thus, at a time when KJV use was being made official in the LDS Church, the KJV was seen as conservative, American, and Christian, a grouping with which Mormons have tended to feel socially comfortable.

Other dissonances with Mormon Christology found outside of the KJV further led President Clark to state that the Church "cannot accept any version that takes from Jesus the Christ any attribute of Godhood."[35] Newer translations, for example, often note textual doubts over the use of "Son of God" in Mark 1:1, highlight the supposed problem of the end of Mark, and cast

doubt on important elements of the Gethsemane narrative. Following are the marginal notes for these passages in the NRSV:

• Mark 1:1—"Other ancient authorities lack *the Son of God*." As Mark is widely considered to be the earliest Gospel, this alleged later intrusion might be used to support historical Jesus studies which claim that Jesus's divinity was a later development in Christianity.

• Mark 16:8—"Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8," i.e., with the empty tomb but before Jesus's post-resurrection appearances, including his charge to take the gospel into the world, so vital to the concept of Christian evangelism.[36]

• The most troublesome is the question mark often placed over the story of Christ's bleeding from every pore in Luke 22, for which a marginal note in the NRSV states, "Other ancient authorities lack verses 43 and 44." The verses themselves are bracketed in the NRSV text. For Mormons, the Gethsemane narrative—Jesus's "inner crucifixion"[37]—is central to their view of the Atonement (Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:16–19).

According to LDS scholars Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric Huntsman, and Thomas A. Wayment: "Although these important passages are questioned by some textual critics, who note that they are lacking from some, although not all, of the earliest manuscripts, other scholars have pointed out that some early copyists felt that the account of Jesus' sufferings and need for strength was incompatible with his divinity, which led them to try to delete these 'plain and precious' parts of Luke's account."[38]

Lincoln Blumell offers a recent, fuller treatment of these verses and believes that there is good reason to consider them original, although he notes the strong counter-view. Interestingly, his argument uses evidence that further highlights the problem of "plain and precious" deletion by some ancient theologians and will thus ring true to Mormon ears: "It has recently been argued that this account of Gethsemane may have been dropped by certain Christian groups, such as the Marcionites in their copy of the

Gospel of Luke, because it portrayed a side of Jesus that was not only too weak but also too subordinate to the Father (the Demiurge to the Marcionites)."[39]

The KJV raises none of these problems relating to the "plain and precious" passages and thus supports what is, for Mormons, a faithful view of Christ. Such support should not, however, be taken as a convenient crutch. The Mormon view of Christ's divinity is robust and reliant on sources, such as the Book of Mormon, which are unequivocal in their testimony. But as already stated, gospel unity is important to Latter-day Saints and thus the KJV serves a useful purpose.

Conclusion

Since President Clark's apologia for the King James Version, modern LDS authorities have not entered into detailed discussion of the use of the KJV; and thus authoritative explanations, beyond the statement that the KJV supports latter-day revelation, are lacking. However, one can observe how the use of the King James Version by Mormons represents an enlightening token of LDS beliefs and practices and, in particular, how it intersects with the importance of unity in the faith: unity with the Restoration, the sources of revelation, and Christ. For English readers, different Bibles can interfere with this unity and thus there remains no popular movement in the Church to move away from the KJV.

In the meantime, while it may seem increasingly idiosyncratic to outsiders, Anglophonic Mormonism is indebted in vital ways to both the KJV idiom and the kind of Bible the KJV represents, and its importance cannot be overstated. It is true that these are not problems encountered outside of the Anglophone church; it is also true that Mormons are free to use other translations in their reading and scholarship, something even evident in sermons given by Mormon leaders at General Conference.[40] However, for the time being,[41] and for reasons including those discussed above, the KJV may be considered too useful a tool in the spiritual life of the Latter-day Saints to be set aside in exclusive favour of another translation.

Notes

1. Owing to the 400th anniversary of the King James Version in

2011, numerous works on the KJV have recently been published, including, *inter alia*, Robert Alter, *Pen of Iron: American Prose and the King James Bible* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010) and, from a Mormon perspective, Kent P. Jackson, ed., *The King James Bible and the Restoration* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011).

2. "For most of our history, to refer to the Bible in America is to refer to the King James Bible." John Tanner, "The King James Bible in America: Pilgrim, Prophet, President, Preacher," *BYU Studies* 50, no. 3 (2011): 6.

3. See Kent P. Jackson, "Joseph Smith's Cooperstown Bible: The Historical Context of the Bible Used in the Joseph Smith Translation," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 41–70.

4. Philip Barlow, "Why the King James Version?: From the Common to the Official Bible of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22, no. 2 (1986): 20. Barlow's article is summarised online {http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/Why-the-King-James-Version.html} and is also treated in his book, *Mormons and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also Gordon Irving, "The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s," *BYU Studies* 13, no. 4 (1973): 473–88 and Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 130–43.

5. *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1, 1845): 791, quotes from the Bishop's Bible, the KJV, the Catholic, the Polyglot, and the Hebrew.

6. J. Reuben Clark, *Why the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956). A history of the KJV and a summary of President Clark's argument can be found in Franklin S. Gonzalez, "The King James Bible," unpublished handout (University of Utah LDS Institute of Religion, n.d.); copy in the LDS Historical Department Library and in my possession. Clark's objections to the RSV are also summarised in J. Reuben Clark Jr., "Our Bible," *Conference Report*, April 1954, 37–47.

7. Grant Hardy, "The King James Bible and the Future of Missionary Work," *BCC Papers* 6, no. 1 (February 2011), {http://bycommonconsent.com/2011/02/15/bcc-papers-6-1-hardy-kjv}. Hardy believes that the LDS Church should "retain the KJV as our official Bible, but at the same time strongly encourage the supplementary study of other translations" (3).

8. I oversee religious instruction at an Anglican prep school and whilst some features of the KJV remain part of Anglican life—notably the text of the Lord's Prayer—it would be rare to find the KJV in the classroom or in the pews. The NIV now accounts for 45% of Bible sales in the USA, making it the best seller by far. Jennifer Robison, "The Word on Bi-

ble Buying," *Gallup Polls*, June 18, 2002, {http://www.gallup.com/poll/6217/word-biblebuying.aspx}.

9. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 4–5.

10. Douglas Davies, *Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44.

11. Anthony A. Hutchinson, "LDS Approaches to the Bible," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 99–124. Hutchinson describes what he sees as four approaches to the Bible in the Church, each with its advocates: (1) Harmonizing Hermeneutic (Joseph Fielding Smith, Bruce R. McConkie, et al.); (2) Critically Modified Harmonizing Hermeneutic (J. Reuben Clark, James E. Talmage); (3) Critical Hermeneutic with Harmonizing (Hugh Nibley, "various LDS literati"); (4) Critical Hermeneutic (Russell Swenson, Sterling McMurrin).

12. On the translation of the Bible by Joseph Smith, see Robert J. Matthews, "*A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible–A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975) and, latterly, Kent P. Jackson, "The King James Bible and the Joseph Smith Translation," in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *The King James Bible and the Restoration* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011), 197–214.

13. J. B. Haws, "Joseph Smith, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Section 76: Importance of the Bible in Latter-day Revelation," in Andrew H. Hedges, J. Spencer Fluhman, and Alonzo L. Gaskill, eds., *The Doctrine and Covenants, Revelations in Context: The 37th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center/Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 142–67.

14. "First Presidency Statement on the King James Version of the Bible," *Ensign*, August 1992, 80.

15. Kent P. Jackson has commented on the theology Joseph Smith derived from Daniel in his "Joseph Smith and the Bible," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63, no. 1 (2010): 35–36.

16. Other examples are given in Franklin S. Gonzalez, "I Have a Question: With so many English translations of the Bible that are easy to read, why does the Church still use the King James Version?" *Ensign*, June 1987, 23–25.

17. David Rolph Seely, "'Words Fitly Spoken': Tyndale's Translation of the Bible," in Steven C. Harper, ed., *Prelude to the Restoration: From Apostasy to the Restored Church* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center/Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 212–27; the quotation is on p. 224.

18. Joseph Fielding McConkie, "Modern Revelation," in Robert L.

Millet, ed., *'To Be Learned Is Good If . . .,'* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 126.

19. There are different ways in which one can understand the revelatory character of the JST, either as something approaching a standard translation (see Matthews, "*A Plainer Translation,"* 233–53) or as a kind of inspired midrash (see Heikki Räisänen, "Joseph Smith as a Creative Interpreter of the Bible," *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 1–22). Kevin Barney has summarised these views in "The Joseph Smith Translation and Ancient Texts of the Bible," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19, no. 3 (1986): 85–102. Kent P. Jackson characterises the JST as a revealed "recasting" of the biblical text in his "Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible," in Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2010), 55.

20. Armand L. Mauss and Philip L. Barlow, "Church, Sect, and Scripture: The Protestant Bible and Mormon Sectarian Retrenchment," *Sociological Analysis* 52, no. 4 (1991): 397–414. For Mauss's fuller statement of Mormon assimilation and retrenchment, see *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

21. Mauss and Barlow, "Church, Sect, and Scripture," 409.

22. "Publisher's Preface" to J. Reuben Clark Jr., *Why the King James Version* (1956; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), iv.

23. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966). This book went out of print in the spring of 2010.

24. William Tyndale, *The New Testament 1526 Translated by William Tyndale, Original Spelling Edition*, edited by W. R. Cooper (London: The British Library, 2000), 554.

25. To this reason, one might also add distrust at the time of a peculiarly Mormon version of the Bible (the JST), given that it was owned by a rival faith, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ). This distrust has largely disappeared, but the LDS Church still does not have the copyright to the JST.

26. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church, 2010* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 180.

27. Clark, *Why the King James Version*, 155.

28. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Language of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 1993, 15.

29. Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 211–12.

30. "The scriptures, in essence, are a written 'recording' of the voice of the Lord—a voice we feel in our hearts more than we hear with our

ears." David A. Bednar, "Because We Have Them before Our Eyes," *New Era*, April 2006, http://www.lds.org/new-era/2006/04/because-we-have-them-before-our-eyes?lang=eng (accessed May 3, 2012).

31. A search at DeseretBook.com for "Isaiah" produced fifteen study aids and includes such titles as "Isaiah for Airheads."

32. Bruce R. McConkie, "Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah," *Ensign*, October 1973, http://www.lds.org/ensign/1973/10/ten-keys-to-understanding-isaiah?lang=eng (accessed May 4, 2012). In 1984, Elder McConkie noted that the "key to an understanding of Holy Writ lies not in the wisdom of men, not in cloistered halls, not in academic degrees, [and] not in a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew." McConkie, "The Bible: A Sealed Book," in (no editor), *Supplement to a Symposium on the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), 1. When used properly, McConkie rates skill in the ancient languages as "one and two tenths"; improperly used its worth is "a minus five or a minus ten" (3). The entire sermon is a classic orthodox exposition of Mormon biblical hermeneutics.

33. Elder Bednar's first principle of scripture study is to "Pray for understanding, and invite the help of the Holy Ghost." "Because We Have Them before Our Eyes."

34. Barlow, "Why the King James Version?," 25.

35. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "Our Bible," *Conference Report*, April 1964; quoted in W. Jeffrey Marsh, *The Joseph Smith Translation: Precious Truths Restored* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002), 147.

36. This textual problem is discussed from a Latter-day Saint perspective by Thomas A. Wayment, "The Endings of Mark and Revelation," in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *The King James Bible and the Restoration* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011), 75–94.

37. Davies, *Introduction to Mormonism*, 153–54.

38. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric D. Huntsman, and Thomas A. Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 123.

39. Lincoln Blumell, "A Text-Critical Comparison of the King James New Testament with Certain Modern Translations," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 3 (2011): 67–126; quotation is on p. 102. In conclusion he notes: "Despite its largely minor text-critical shortcomings, the KJV is still a respectable edition of the NT that can still, even four hundred years after its publication, be used with much profit, especially if one is made aware of some of those deficiencies" (126).

40. Note, for example, how Elder Juan Uceda of the Seventy used the NIV in his talk in the October 2010 general conference priesthood session. Uceda, "He Teaches Us to Put Off the Natural Man," http://

www.lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/he-teaches-us-to-put-off-the-natural-man?lang=eng (accessed May 4, 2012). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland paraphrased the New Living Translation in his April 2012 general conference talk: "The Laborers in the Vineyard," http://www. lds.org/general-conference/2012/04/the-laborers-in-the-vineyard?lang=eng (accessed May 4, 2012). Holland said:

> My friends, I am not being unfair to you. You agreed on the wage for the day, a good wage. You were very happy to get the work, and I am very happy with the way you served. You are paid in full. Take your pay and enjoy the blessing. As for the others, surely I am free to do what I like with my own money." Then this piercing question to anyone then or now who needs to hear it: "Why should you be jealous because I choose to be kind?

The NLT version of Matt. 20:13–15 reads: "He answered one of them, 'Friend, I haven't been unfair! Didn't you agree to work all day for the usual wage? Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?'"

41. Mauss's view that the Church may be entering a new period of assimilation might suggest that we can expect to see a loosening of the canonicity of the KJV in the future. Mauss, "Rethinking Retrenchment: Course Corrections in the Ongoing Campaign for Respectability," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 1–42. It is nearly impossible to imagine a wholesale shift away from the KJV, but the Church has proven itself capable of revolutionary changes while finding effective ways of still promoting unity with tradition and authority. A recent discussion of the possibilities (or not) of non-KJV Bibles in Anglophone Mormonism is Gaye Strathearn, "Modern English Bible translations," in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *The King James Bible and the Restoration* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011), 234–59.

(Re)Interpreting Early Mormon Thought: Synthesizing Joseph Smith's Theology and the Process of Religion Formation

Benjamin E. Park

Nine months after Joseph Smith and his brother were assassinated by an angry mob in June 1844, Parley P. Pratt published a proclamation addressed to the Church's large and dispersed membership to assure them that all was well. In doing so, he sought to accomplish two things: first, to praise Smith's legacy as the founding prophet of a movement that had attracted thousands of converts on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean; and second, to insist on the necessity of the Quorum of the Twelve's institutional leadership—a role that meant not only continuing, but fulfilling and extending, Smith's religious vision. "The chaos of materials prepared by [Smith] must now be placed in order in the building," he wrote. "The laws revealed by him must now be administered in all their strictness and beauty. The measure commenced by him must now be carried into successful operation."[1]

Pratt's metaphor of organizing chaotic matter is a potent symbol for tracing the process of religious formation and succession as a whole as well as an astute assessment of Joseph Smith's legacy. Only through admitting the role of reinterpretations and appropriations performed by those not typically recognized as the founders of religious movements is it possible to glimpse the scaffolding behind the "strictness and beauty" of the resulting "successful operation." To better understand early Mormonism and situate it within its broader context, focus must be broadened

from the movement's founder to include his numerous followers. Mormonism's apostles, despite some backsliders within its own ranks, as a quorum ultimately won the allegiance of the largest group of Smith's followers. What is more, they held it by navigating a tenuous relationship with, on the one hand, the inchoate "material" left from the movement's founder and, on the other, ideas and tensions present in their surrounding American culture. Their motive was their need to validate their own succession rights and to construct a coherent Mormon theology. Their success depended on the ability to offer both resistance and accommodation to both internal and external influences.

Two theological essays published just months before Smith's death by Parley P. Pratt, one of the Twelve Apostles, offer a micro-historical lens through which we can examine the process of synthesis and interpretation. Pratt's 1844 writings are used as gateway texts through which to explore two burning issues of the period: Mormonism's relationship to the American nation and the LDS conception of continuing revelation. These two themes strike at the heart of Smith's religious legacy as an "American revelator." Indeed, they are rooted in the egalitarianism, amateurism, and Americanness that often dominate the scholarly image of Mormonism's founding prophet and are central to the attempts at placing Smith within his cultural context. Yet the direction the Twelve took with Mormonism's theological corpus not only nuanced but also challenged its democratic flavor—a move that brought stability to a fledgling movement and authority to a contested debate. Taken together, the debates over these features in Joseph Smith's thought magnify a synthesizing process that shaped how Mormon theology was to be understood for the rest of the nineteenth century and even until today.

I

This dynamic of interpretation and synthesizing was hardly unique to the LDS Church. Three decades before the founding of Mormonism, and thousands of miles across the Atlantic Ocean, a similar debate raged over the interpretation of Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) philosophy. German theologian Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), in defense of his interpretation of Kantian idealism, argued for a distinction between "the inventor" of an

ideological system, and "his commentators and disciples." Fichte explained:

> The inventor of a system is one thing, and his commentators and disciples are another. . . . The reason is this: The followers do not yet have the idea of the whole; for if they had it, they would not require to study the new system; they are obliged first to piece together this idea out of *the parts* that the inventor provides for them; [but] all these parts are in fact not wholly determined, rounded and polished in their minds. . . .
>
> The inventor proceeds from the idea of the whole, in which all the parts are united, and sets forth these parts individually. . . . The business of the followers, is to synthesize what they still by no means possess, but are only to obtain by the synthesis.[2]

In short, the progression of an intellectual movement always includes a gap between founder and disciple, and a pure continuity in worldview is impossible when perpetuating a philosophical or theological system—even from a systematic thinker like Kant. While the specifics of Kantian philosophy that Fichte was debating are of little importance for the interpretation of Mormonism, the tension he outlines between an "inventor" and "disciple" is a useful rubric for examining the development of early Mormon thought.

Students of the development of Mormon theology have long focused on Joseph Smith, with good reason. As prophet and founder of the LDS Church, his revelations and teachings laid the foundations for the movement, and his voice is considered most authoritative when considering early Mormon beliefs. However, Smith's theology is difficult to determine on at least two grounds. First, his premature death at age thirty-eight prevented the completion of his religious revolution. Though he had been the recognized prophet and leader for nearly a decade and a half, the explosive theological development during his last three years showed no signs of slackening, and it can be assumed that much of his religious vision was left inchoate and unfulfilled. Indeed, it was not until the last three months of his life that Smith's sermons started to piece together what had previously been only theological fragments; and in his private teachings, he began to expound these ideas to his closest followers.[3]

The second reason for the difficulty of developing a coherent

corpus of Smith's theological work is the very nature of Smith's prophetic persona and relates to the Kantian dynamic outlined above. Smith was by nature eclectic, rather than systematic, and his teachings were emblematic of that approach. Though they were perhaps a coherent whole in his mind, Smith's teachings were never presented in a systematic order but rather, as Richard Bushman aptly described, in "flashes and bursts."[4] This collection of fragments has left many historians bewildered at the difficulty of presenting a coherent picture of his beliefs. For instance, one recent writer waved the metaphoric white flag by describing Smith as "simultaneously an eminent Jacksonian, a scion of the Yankee exodus, a creature and critic of the Second Great Awakening, a Romantic reformer, a charismatic utopian, a mystic nationalist, and a hustler in the manner of Barnum."[5] Further, Smith's eclecticism has made it difficult to position him among his antebellum contemporaries, because his teachings are malleable enough to be considered emblematic of numerous—and sometimes contradictory—cultural tensions. Gordon Wood wrote that the principles Smith laid out contained elements "mystical and secular; restorationist and progressive; communitarian and individualistic; hierarchical and congregational; authoritarian and democratic; antinomian and arminian; anti-clerical and priestly; revelatory and empirical; utopian and practical; ecumenical and nationalist."[6] Other scholars have cited Smith as an example of the American prophetic voice, the preeminence of modern revelation, the climactic merging of folk-magic and religion, the continuity of Renaissance mysticism, or merely as a theological response to pluralism.[7] Thus, just as Smith's religious successors inherited a dynamic theology with countless possibilities, modern historians are left with a collection of innovative fragments from which to make a distorted picture.

While attempts to articulate Joseph Smith's vision will—and should—continue, it may prove fruitful to look in other directions for ways to understand and contextualize early Mormon thought. It should be remembered that the vast majority of Mormon print came from the disciples who were still trying to understand Smith's theology even as they were explicating it. Just as Fichte worked from the bits and pieces of idealism he inherited from Kant, Mormon thinkers like Parley Pratt, John Taylor, and Wil-

liam W. Phelps sought to synthesize the Prophet's revelations into an intelligible dogma. Indeed, especially after the Quorum of the Twelve took control of the Church in 1844, there was an acute anxiety to complete and expand Smith's vision even as ambiguity remained. The diversity in these synthesizing attempts reveals not only the pliable nature of early Mormon thought but also the difficulty of systematizing eclectic ideas into a coherent theology.[8]

Perhaps more importantly, the process of the theological authority shifting from Smith to his successors is significant in its own right. Sociologists Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge, building on the religious theories of Max Weber, have argued that this process of systematizing is an important moment in the development of any religious movement. Religious formation, they argue, is "a two-stage process of innovation." The first is "the invention of new religious ideas," while the second is "gaining social acceptance of these ideas" through adaptation and expansion. The latter stage is accomplished primarily by drawing from cultural tensions and expectations in an attempt to further accommodate the movement's religious goals and make their message more persuasive.[9] In other words, those synthesizing the innovative ideas have a specific culture in mind as their audience and a distinct set of cultural preconceptions as their tools. The doctrinal formulations of the early theologians of Mormonism are marked not only by the innovation of the religious innovator—in this case, Joseph Smith—but also of the culture in which they interpreted the innovator—in this case, antebellum America.

It is commonplace to view changes in early Mormonism as an instance of Weberian "routinization of charisma," sometimes even locating the beginning of that transition prior to Smith's death. But these interpretations are often applied almost prescriptively, assuming a linear development that progressed in predictable and perhaps even determinative ways. A closer examination of the Mormon example, however, reveals a dynamic system with multiple possible trajectories and a development that was by no means predetermined. Because they did not receive a coherent intellectual system that could merely be taken to its logical conclusions, those who followed Smith built with the raw materials of the theology they inherited, guided by their own personalities and beliefs, immediate contexts, and parochial concerns.

While the internal dynamics of the church body dictated in broad outlines the ways in which Smith's legacy was to be reinterpreted, external tensions were also influential—whether consciously or not—in shaping the contours of those reinterpretations. Only by examining the particulars of these transitions, then, and acknowledging that other sorts of development were possible, can we both make sense of the significance of Mormonism's transformation and properly identify the role of the surrounding environment in the process.[10]

Thus, the synthesizing of Joseph Smith's theology provides an opportunity to examine the procedure of religious formation in a tumultuous intellectual climate. The first half of the nineteenth century is known for being rife with religious innovation, as numerous new religious movements emerged from the fertile ground of the Second Great Awakening. However, while many new sects sprang into existence, only a few matured enough to last beyond the first generation. Mormonism, as one of a handful of movements that survived, is thus an important case study into the dynamics of religious formation. The success of its maturation, I argue, exists in the ability of Smith's interpreters to merge their prophet's teachings with larger cultural trends, offer enough of a critique of that culture to make the movement relevant and necessary while still utilizing common cultural fears and misgivings, and finally to provide parameters that were simultaneously broad enough to enable theological divergence while still maintaining legitimate boundaries.

II

"In the opening of this year [1844] I completed a number of miscellaneous works, some of which were published in pamphlet form," reminisced Parley P. Pratt at some point during the 1850s while penning his *Autobiography*. Pratt, one of the original apostles chosen by Joseph Smith in 1835, had crafted a niche as the religion's chief defender and extrapolator. He published numerous works during his apostolic career, including theological treatises, apologetic pamphlets, books of poetry, hymnals, and his own memoirs (published posthumously), all of which served to spread and synthesize the Mormon religion. His literary production was halted only by his death at the hands of the ex-husband of one of

his plural wives in 1857. The year 1844 found Pratt at the height of his popularity. He had just returned the previous summer from a successful three-year mission to the United Kingdom where he had introduced Mormonism to thousands of converts and where his printed works were published in tremendous numbers. Once back in America, he discovered Joseph Smith's religious developments of 1842–44—including human deification, theological materialism, divine embodiment, temple rituals, and the still secret practice of polygamy. Pratt was anxious to explore these intellectual possibilities in print and enter the dialogue of what Mormon theology entailed.[11]

Eight months before his assassination, the Prophet took the bold step of declaring himself a candidate for U.S. president, thus thrusting Mormonism into national politics and coloring much of the period's writing with a patriotic and nationalist hue.[12] The first essay in Pratt's collection was "An Appeal to the Inhabitants of New York," written in the context of the LDS Church's continued effort to obtain redress for its forcible expulsion from Missouri five years earlier. In a meeting on November 29, 1843, Joseph Smith encouraged everyone willing and able to "wield a pen [to] write an address to his mother country" in defense of Mormon rights and restitution. Pratt responded promptly, composing his "Appeal" in less than a week, and presenting it to Smith and other leaders of the Church on December 4. Staking his claim as a descendent of the "early settlers of the colonies of *Plimouth* and *Sea-Brook*" with regard to his national pride, and appealing to the "honest and patriotic sons of liberty" and "lovers of your country," Pratt positioned the Mormon movement in a way that not only made the movement appear worthy of the nation's help but which also described Mormon believers as appropriate representatives of America's promise and potential—a theme that was central to Joseph Smith's teachings, yet an idea that was subtly appropriated in the years following his death. Smith provided a complex and paradoxical corpus of teachings on America, and it was left to his successors to reorient and reframe those teachings to meet immediate needs, both by appropriating Smith's teachings and also by incorporating contemporary influences.[13]

The broader intellectual and religious context in which Pratt wrote was equally vibrant. The antebellum period was simulta-

neously a triumphant and unsteady time for Protestant America. Religious disestablishment led to the flowering of new religious movements with variant expressions of faith claiming national legitimacy, yet the relationship between religious belief and American citizenship remained alarmingly tenuous. Churches claimed not only theological validation from their adherents but American approval from the general public: Just as citizens in the Early Republic sought to label their country as a "Protestant Nation," religious movements, even those that originated in Europe, fought to prove that others should recognize their churches as "American religions." Being heir to the biblical Christian tradition was not enough—religionists had to prove that they were also heirs of the American Revolution. Thus, in constructing religious "Others" in an attempt to validate one's own identity, competing faiths were depicted as not only wrong, but as *un-American*. The battle over the title of "citizen" was just as important among American religious movements as that of "Christian."[14]

Mormonism's relationship with the American nation was consistently tenuous during the nineteenth century. Most of those who joined the faith in its first decade were children and grandchildren of the Revolutionary generation and were raised in a period of great national pride following the War of 1812.[15] This devotion was severely tested as Mormons were forced out of their communities and were unable to secure restitution from the local—and later, federal—governments. But despite deep conflicts with competing religionists and citizens, they still held on to what they believed to be the pure patriotism of America in the face of being denigrated as outcasts. Shortly after Mormons were forced out of their settlement in Independence, Missouri, in 1833—the first of many conflicts between Mormons and their neighbors—Joseph Smith penned a revelation stating that God himself "established the constitution of this Land by the hands of wise men whom [he] raised up unto this very purpose."[16] Even in Nauvoo, when external difficulties were increasing and a possible civil war seemed imminent, Joseph Smith's solution was not to reject the American nation altogether, but instead to run for the American presidency himself with the goal of realigning the nation with its divine purpose. Just as Christianity had fallen into apostasy and

was in need of a restoration, so too did the nation descend into a degenerate state that required divine recovery.

Parley Pratt made it clear to his audience that the current atrocities committed against Mormons were a rejection of America's founding virtue. "Here then is an end of our western empire," he bemoaned in a typically grandiose flourish. "Here then is the consummation of all your labors, toils and suffering." The nation's true enemies were found amongst Mormonism's adversaries, and the constitution—that "sacred instrument"—was being "trampled under the feet" of those who oppressed the LDS Church. Pratt urged Americans to locate "that pure fire which animated the bosoms of our fathers," and to offer the help due "by the kindred ties of citizen-ship" toward their fellow Americans. Indeed, Mormons owned "a right to claim [America's] aid and assistance" stemming from their identity as rightful heirs of American rights, liberties, and patriotism.[17] Writing even before Joseph Smith's presidential candidacy, Pratt implied that Mormonism's cause was central to the nation's principles.

This appeal to American citizenship only became more complex and vehement following Joseph Smith's death. To many Mormons, the murder of their prophet was an affront to what they believed to be religious liberty in America, and the fault was laid at the feet of the American nation. Eliza R. Snow, Mormonism's poetess and one of Joseph Smith's plural wives, penned, "Where are thy far-fam'd laws—Columbia! Where / Thy boasted freedom—thy protecting care?" Yet Mormons' allegiance to America became even more complicated. On the one hand, they were weary of the nation's failure to protect their liberties and were anxious to flee its borders; on the other, they felt certain that they, as the true inheritors of divine promises on the nation, would be taking America's pure tradition with them.[18]

In one anonymous editorial written in 1845—the year after Smith's death—this connection was more than merely implied: "When in the course of the divine economy it becomes necessary for one people to separate themselves from the religious and political fellowship which has once bound them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth that just and equal standing to which God and nature has designed them, a decent respect

for the opinions of others would seem to require them to show the causes which impel them to separation."[19]

These words, appearing nearly seventy years after America's Declaration of Independence, were explicitly written to demonstrate how Mormonism inherited its identity not only from Joseph Smith but also (at least in its rhetoric) from Thomas Jefferson. In depicting the battle between Mormons and anti-Mormons, the author makes the former not only God's chosen people but also the very representation of America's promised citizenship; Latter-day Saints were recapitulating not only the biblical narrative, but also the Revolution of 1776. As Parley Pratt wrote elsewhere, a Mormon was not only "a believer in revealed religion," but also "a patriot, who stands firmly for the laws of his country, and for equal rights and protection"; an "Anti-Mormon," by contrast, was not only a "mobber," but also "a man opposed to the laws of his country."[20]

This tension—rejecting America while still preserving the "American" ideal—was a crucial paradigm in constructing a cogent post-Joseph Smith Mormon identity and was key to their creation of a stable religious movement. Those who followed Joseph Smith inherited a collection of scriptural texts, written revelations, and oral teachings that, though perhaps coherent in Smith's own mind, came across as disjointed messages pregnant with meaning. This corpus of theological materials, then, could be synthesized in different ways to produce different results. Yet historians have continued to treat these developments from one ecclesiastical leader to the next as if they were all part of a logical and cogent trajectory.[21] As Michel Foucault noted, this type of intellectual genealogies inherently "credits the discourse it analyzes with [a] coherence" that was not really there.[22] There were indeed persistent strains that continued through the period following Smith, but it remains crucial to acknowledge the multiple directions and open-ended possibilities that were available at each point of transition.

One way in which Smith's successors navigated this obstacle-strewn sea of continued meaning was by determining a distinction between America the *nation* and America the *land*. In doing so, they creatively unearthed portions of Smith's scriptural texts that had previously been either overlooked or under-theorized.

While Smith and others had previously used these texts to present a tenuous future for the American nation, his followers now used them to divorce the principles and potential associated with the ideals of America from what they believed to be a corrupt government that had apostatized from those ideals. They accomplished this end through an emphasis and reinterpretation of the Book of Mormon that placed the American continent rather than the American nation at the center of God's divine will.

Parley Pratt outlined this perspective in an editorial nearly a year after Smith's death. In contrasting the Bible and the Book of Mormon, Pratt proclaimed that the latter held more importance, not only due to its "home production," but due to the fact that the narrative took place in a more relevant physical geography. "This point need not be argued," he wrote, "as all persons must admit that America, is a larger and better country than Palestine, Egypt, Arabia and the neighboring provinces generally encluded [sic] in the bible history." He then waxed eloquent upon the importance of America based entirely upon the actual land rather than the symbolic nation:

> It must be admitted on all hands to be a country of vastly more importance, both as it regards the history of the past, and its future destiny.—Being larger in extent, and more firtile [sic] and productive in mineral and vedgitable [sic] wealth; consequently better calculated to sustain a numerous population. And this is the principle point in the estimated value and importance of any country. And judging from the antiquities which are daily coming to light, we feel safe in saying, that America has been more densely populated than almost any country in the world. And as to its future destiny all are willing to admit, that it must stand foremost, and take the lead of all other nations and countries while time endures.[23]

Pratt was drawing upon a common cultural sense of American exceptionalism that argued that America's preeminence extended even to its natural landscape. It was akin to Thomas Jefferson's strenuous efforts to prove the American continent better suited for vegetation, animals, and human population than any other piece of land in the world, repudiating the "regeneration" thesis that had previously been popular among Enlightenment thinkers.[24] Even the American continent, it seemed, was destined for the climax of humanity. Thus, for Pratt, America was unique,

not just for its constitutional government—that very government that was depriving Mormons of their rights—but also for its physical location, something Mormons could still claim and embrace. Yet rather than making the United States the fulfillment of the continent's potential, Pratt argued that the American republic was just one more temporary tenant.

Further, Mormons emphasized America's chosen status through attachment with the Nephite civilization and the future role in God's kingdom. Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded how reading the Book of Mormon "teaches the honest & humble mind the great things of God that were performed in the land of promise now called America," as well as "the fate & Destiny of the American Nation." The scriptural text taught that there were expectations and standards that must be met to retain possession of the physical geography and that failure to do so would trigger dangerous repercussions. "Unless [the American nation] speedily repent of their sins & humble themselves before God," Woodruff wrote the year after Joseph's death, "they will be destroyed from the land."[25] This separation between the promised Zion of the American continent from the actual nation then in control allowed Mormons to maintain loyalty to the ideals of Americanism, for now those ideas transcended the American nation.

Immediately before the migration from Nauvoo in February 1846, Mormon newspapers were filled with disillusionment at America's failure to live up to its scriptural and principled mandates. Particularly, they were obsessed over the injustices shown toward God's chosen people—not just the Mormons, but also the Native Americans, whom they believed to be the descendants of the Book of Mormon people. Importantly, the native population symbolized the American continent's other chosen civilization, a group alienated, like the Mormons, from the American nation. Mormons were especially critical of the government's treatment of Indians through westward imperialism, "shoving these Lords of the soil 'further west'" whenever the American "gentiles" ran out of space.[26] Smith had shown support for the nation's manifest destiny before his death, but that support was contingent on "the red man's consent."[27] But now Smith's successors determined that America had trespassed a moral line and was unworthy of its geographic birthright. "It is a melancholy fact, among all classes,

sects, and denominations, (save the Mormons only)," one Mormon editorial critical of America's dealings with the Oneida Indians summarized, "that there is not virtue enough among the better to create a reverence for purity among the worse portions of community."[28] The American land and its ideal principles were destined for the House of Israel, and the government's malpractice meant that retribution was imminent. As a result, America's fall and degradation would pave the way for Mormonism's kingdom of God. Apostle Orson Hyde preached: "Here is the United States. . . . But we are told that the kingdom of God shall come, and his will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." The ideals and principles of America that Mormons so cherished would depart from the degenerate nation and merge into God's kingdom.[29]

Where many of Smith's predictions for the American future rested on a restoration and reformation—he did, after all, run for president of the United States hoping to right the nation's wrongs—Smith's texts and revelations were now used to call for a more radical refutation, and perhaps even revolution. Pratt's views expressed in his "Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York" soon morphed into his "100 Years Hence," an 1845 apocalyptic article that looked to a future time in which the American nation was wiped out and the kingdom of God ruled unmolested. These elements were embryonic in Smith's own teachings, but the new leadership and circumstances brought new emphases and, in turn, a new framing for American nationalism within the Mormon movement.[30]

But to be culturally relevant, Smith's successors could not rely only on Mormon texts; they also responded to broader cultural themes. Indeed, these Mormon apostles spoke not just for their Mormon constituents, but also for a large—if often overlooked—segment of antebellum society that struggled with the juxtaposition of ideals and reality in American culture. Political strife, growing consumerism, religious intolerance, the continuance of slavery, and other dividing factors weakened the faith of American citizens only two generations removed from the Revolution. The antebellum period led many to question the nation's exceptionalism and wonder how, as one historian puts it, "America should gain, or regain, its stature as an exemplar of liberal democ-

racy," a position seemingly lost somewhere in the previous five decades.[31] By drawing on this cultural unrest, as well as giving new attention to several passages from the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith's revelations, Pratt, Woodruff, and Hyde were able to construct a dynamic and compelling identity for Mormonism within the American nation.

Indeed, in the wake of Joseph Smith's death, Mormons were forced to reinterpret what it meant to be "Mormon" and "American," and eventually determined that an exodus to the West, leaving the confines of the American republic, was the only option remaining. Ironically, however, due to westward expansion in 1848, Mormonism would remain within the confines of the United States and continue a tense battle over citizenship and Americanness for the rest of the century—a battle that began with Joseph Smith but continued long after his death.

III

Even beyond overt appeals to patriotism and Americanism, LDS theology both challenged and appropriated subtle—if still important—themes within American democratic culture. Part of what made Mormonism so scandalous was its claim of new scripture in an age dominated by Bible-centrism. Joseph Smith's entrance into the religious marketplace was not with a theological treatise, published sermon, or even a conversion-oriented pamphlet; rather, it was a book claiming ancient origins, supernatural translation, and scriptural authority, challenging the traditional—and staunch—views of canonicity of the period. In his essay "The Fountain of Knowledge," published in early 1844 as part of the same compilation that included "An Appeal," Parley Pratt countered the generally accepted Protestant epistemology of antebellum America by arguing that religious knowledge stemmed not from the Bible, but from immediate revelation from God.[32] In doing so, he synchronized a Mormon discourse that both embraced and adapted American notions of common sensism and a fluctuating canon.[33]

America had long been a Bible-oriented culture. British subjects in colonial America and citizens in the new United States perceived themselves as members of the modern-day house of Israel. Cities were named after Old Testament towns, children were

named after biblical figures, and rules of society were modeled closely after biblical prescriptions. This emphasis only increased in the early nineteenth century, which one book peddler described as "the very season . . . of the Bible" because "the crater of the public appetite" was so large that it consumed anything Bible-related.[34] But the Bible was far from just a cultural symbol—it was also the measuring stick for knowledge. Biblical common sense was how Americans differentiated their rationality from that of the deist Tom Paine, and which, coupled with the Scottish philosophy of common sense, provided an epistemology that not only based human knowledge on revelation but also allowed the Bible to be the standard of truth. "Theistic common sense"—as Mark Noll aptly put it—dominated American religious discourse, as a religion's validity depended on whether a movement could tether its belief system to the biblical text.[35]

"Modern men have been traditionated to believe that a sacred book was the fountain of Divine knowledge," Pratt wrote in "The Fountain of Knowledge." They believe "that the heights and depths, and lengths and breadths of heavenly intelligence is contained therein, and that the human mind must be limited and circumscribed thereby, so as never to receive one particle of knowledge except the small amount contained within its pages." Pratt challenged this quintessentially Protestant notion, arguing instead that divine truths were independent of the written word; imagining the Bible as superior to independent revelation was placing the buggy before the horse. Relying entirely upon one book of scripture was stultifying to humankind's progress: "A sacred book could never be made to contain a millionth part of the knowledge which an intelligent being is capable of receiving and comprehending." It would not be until Christians "burst the chains" of Bible-centrism that they could fully comprehend the divine will. Biblical common sense emphasized building on the foundation of scriptural text—Pratt sought to attack and adapt that very epistemology. "Does not common sense teach you," he responded, "that you must feast as well as [those in the past], or perish forever?" Like Ralph Waldo Emerson's iconic manifesto—though bent toward a completely different end—Pratt essentially proclaimed, "the sun shines to-day also."[36]

But in rejecting biblical common sense, Mormon thinkers

were introducing a unique epistemology that worked to merge empiricism and supernatural discourse. The cultural context in which they lived was similarly at a crossroads. On the one hand, even though the American Enlightenment was in decline by the beginning of the nineteenth century, it had made a lasting impact on the intellectual climate. As E. Brooks Holifield wrote, "Never had the issue of rationality assumed as much importance as it did in the early decades of the nineteenth century," when it gave rise to what he titled "evidential Christianity." Paradoxically, this was also the moment at which Romanticism encouraged rebellion against the neo-classical structure of the previous age deemed both stifling and limiting to human potential. Romantic thinkers argued for an ideology that placed no limits on the soul and, with its yearning to know the unknowable, privileged the sublime and the supernatural. But while Romanticism influenced many religious groups of the day—including the Mormons, the requirement for a rational presentation and defense still remained. What religionists of the period desired was an intellectual approach that balanced rational inquiry while at the same time maintaining the reasonableness of religion, revelation, and supernaturalism.[37]

Nowhere was this epistemological convergence more evident than in Joseph Smith's account of how to differentiate false from true angelic beings. "If an Angel or spirit appears offer him your hand," Smith explained to his close confidants. "If he is a spirit from God he will stand still and not offer you his hand. If from the Devil he will either shrink back from you or offer his hand, which if he does you will feel nothing, but be deceived."[38] Elsewhere, the instructions included the addition that, if the angel were a resurrected personage, he would grasp the individual's hand—literally interlocking mortal flesh and blood with what Smith described as immortal flesh and bone—and the physicality of the angel would thus prove his pure intentions and divine authority. Not only were supernatural, extra-canonical experiences possible, but they were capable of withstanding empirical testing. Similarly, Smith explained in an editorial that Mormons believed in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, but only "rationally, reasonably, consistently, and scripturally, and not according to the wild vagaries, foolish notions and traditions of men."[39] Most importantly, these

moments of knowledge were available to all, and could be confirmed through individual reason and revelation.

Especially during the Nauvoo period, Joseph Smith and other early Mormons fully employed this version of the commonsensical approach to color their theological discourse. When Joseph Smith preached on the possibility of salvific certainty, he prefaced his remarks by claiming, "It is so plain & so simple & easy to be understood that when I have shown you the interpretation thereof you will think you have always Known it yourselves."[40] When he attacked the idea of creation *ex nihilo*, he explained that it was not only on the basis of revelation but also because "it is contrary to a Rashanall [rational] mind & Reason. that something could be brought from a Nothing."[41] It was this combination of reason and revelation that Parley Pratt felt was the key to unlocking theological truths: "Revelation and reason, like the sun of the morning rising in its strength, dispel the mists of darkness which surround him; till at length heaven's broad, eternal day expands before him, and eternity opens to his vision. He may then gaze with rapture of delight, and feast on knowledge which is boundless as the ocean from which it emanates."[42]

Debates over revelatory authority within Mormonism stretched all the way back to 1830, when Hiram Page claimed his own revelations and forced Joseph Smith to emphasize his own preeminence over those matters. Yet even as Smith continually affirmed his prophetic position, his revelations and sermons emphasized the revelatory responsibility placed on every member of the Church. This paradoxical strain continued through his life and created a complex web of revelatory responsibilities in which Smith was the center while the peripheries still maintained a degree of autonomy. It is to be expected, then, that this dynamic canonical structure, based on consistent tension, faced a substantial challenge when the center figure was removed.[43]

The dynamics and tensions between reason, revelation, and tradition immediately took center stage in the dialogue that followed Joseph Smith's death, but were now tinged with the Twelve's authoritarian zeal. With Mormonism's founding prophet gone and several competing factions struggling over Smith's authoritative mantle, the question of how truth was obtained was a defining feature of one's claim to legitimacy. While the Quo-

rum of the Twelve eventually took control and moved the largest coherent unit of the Saints west, their approach to revelation and epistemological authority, their mode of interpreting Smith's revelatory legacy and their emphasis on prophetic authority were deeply affected by their debates with competing successors and a desire to centralize institutional authority.

Most importantly, they met a surprising challenger in James J. Strang, a recent convert in Michigan who asserted his claim based on angelic visitations, a new book of translated scripture, and a corpus of continued revelations that composed an impressive prophetic mimesis in opposition to the Twelve's claims to leadership. The most significant problem the Twelve faced when combatting Strangite missionaries was that the latter group emphasized exactly what Mormonism had hitherto highlighted: the necessity of a prophet and immediate dialogic communication with God. Brigham Young and the Twelve were at a theoretical disadvantage because they lacked a prophetic figure as compelling as James Strang. Previously, Parley Pratt had adapted a common American folk song to proclaim, "A church without a Prophet, / Is not the church for me / It has no head to lead it, / In it I would not be." However, now that they lacked that very "head" celebrated in the hymn, the Twelve—according to one amused Strangite observer—dropped the song "like a hot potato."[44] Meanwhile, Strang's followers embraced both the song and its message, positioning themselves as the true successors to Mormonism's revelatory claims and Joseph Smith's prophetic legacy.[45] These battles waged between followers of Brigham Young and James Strang over the dynamics of revelatory authenticity and canonicity are acute examples of how Smith's corpus of teachings was molded to fit internal questions.

These tensions played out in a debate that took place in Nauvoo on March 3, 1846, just as thousands of Saints were beginning their exodus out of America and into the West. John E. Page, formerly an apostle in the LDS Church but now a loud and persuasive convert of James Strang, argued against the Twelve's authority because they lacked the power of continuing revelation: "It is for the voice of God to say who the [leader] shall be, & then the people shall say amen." To follow the tradition of Joseph Smith, a divine intervention and infallible voice from the heavens was the

manifestation needed to identify God's chosen prophet. But, he lamented, now there is only "talk of the *people* appoint[ing] a [president]," and by so doing, "we have to trample upon the Doc[trine] & Cov[enants]"—the collection of Joseph Smith's revelations, and the tangible manifestation of Smith's mantle and expansion of the scriptural canon. The problem with Brigham Young was he "had no more power to give rev[elations] than any of the other[s]—it requires the 'thus saith the Lord' to put a man in his place." Page emphasized that his embrace of Strangism and rejection of Young was a product of being a faithful follower of Mormonism for over a decade. "If I have erred," he insisted, "it is because I placed too much confidence in them that taught me." Persuasively, Page sought to demonstrate that the only possible interpretation of Mormonism required a figure of continuing revelation—the "thus saith the Lord"—and anything else was counterfeit.[46]

In response, Orson Hyde, one of the apostles left behind to watch over those remaining in Nauvoo after the first company moved west, voiced what had come to be the dominant rhetorical message of the Twelve: Smith's revelatory position was not being "trampled," but it had evolved into the esoteric rituals of the temple—the climax, according to Hyde, of Smith's prophetic career. Through temple ordinances, the Church was still linked to Smith and the fountain of revelation. "Joseph Smith is [still] the Hook in Heaven—the 12 [are] the next link—& you [are] all linked on," Hyde explained.[47] The image of the hook reinforced the connected nature of the gospel structure, with the Twelve maintaining a central position that made all others peripheral and dependent. This interconnected chain drew from Smith's cosmology, where all spirits were located within an evolving web of familial sealing, a web made literal and imminent through priesthood rituals and ecclesiastical control.[48]

Hyde continued his sermon four days later, expanding the linkage between Smith, gospel knowledge, and the Twelve's authority: "Recollect Jesus Christ was the president of the Church he choose 12 Apostles & they were witnesses, to go to all the nations & preach—by & bye the Lord was crucified & ascended to heaven—did he take the keys with him or leave them on the Earth—he did both—he left knowledge on Earth & took knowl-

edge with him, & Knowledge is power—says he to Peter, I give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."[49] Just like Christ in the meridian of time, Smith passed the keys of knowledge on to the Twelve.

In the early years of the Twelve's leadership, "knowledge" and "priesthood keys" became intrinsically connected, creating a canon of religious knowledge centered on priesthood authority. Whereas with Smith the temple rites were to be the apex of gospel learning, with the Twelve they became the standard of all knowledge and validity—a merging of several disparate themes into a centralized base. It was only through the priesthood keys that the fountain of knowledge could continue. Indeed, that the term "keys" came to be the dominant descriptor for salvific truth demonstrates the lengths to which the Twelve routinized epistemological authority. Smith's revelations had laid the foundation, but now the temple ordinances ritualized and fulfilled that spirit and message. "I asked Elder Page the other day," Hyde mused, "which is the greater, this Book (the D&C) or the Sprit [sic] that gave it?"[50] And for the previous year, in the aftermath of Joseph's death, the Twelve had emphasized that the temple was the apex of this spirit of revelation. Strang, himself, had never been inducted.

Because this debate between Hyde and Page took place less than six months after thousands of Saints initially experienced these salvific ordinances and because the discourse was given in the shadow of the temple, listeners would have recognized the connection between "knowledge" and "priesthood keys" as further confirmation of the apostles' succession claims. While Smith made this connection himself during his Nauvoo sermons and further emphasized it through private teachings and rituals to close associates, the extent to which it touched the average Saint was mostly limited. The Twelve, however, further publicized it, making it a focal point of the Mormon lived experience. Though Smith had intended these rites to be shared by all those found worthy within the Church, they still played an important role in cementing the Twelve's authoritative claims. Knowledge could and would be gained through reason and revelation, but it could be solidified only through priesthood rites. In this sense, Mormonism's canonicity expanded to include not only recorded revelations but also ritual experience.

This rhetorical and interpretive strain also dominated the Twelve's debate with another schismatic figure, Sidney Rigdon, further demonstrating the malleability of their message. Previously, Rigdon had been the first counselor in Smith's First Presidency, possibly placing him second in authority and power. However, he had gone through significant periods of alienation from Smith, especially over plural marriage, and had not participated in the new doctrines Smith had shared with his inner circle. Rigdon challenged the Twelve, urging his own claim to be "guardian" of the movement until Joseph's oldest son, then twelve, came of age. Similar to Strang, Rigdon claimed a revelation that he felt validated his authority. Thus, in their battles with Rigdon—and especially his excommunication trial—the Twelve emphasized that the former leader lacked the knowledge, power, and authority necessary for Church leadership, which could only be gained through the highest temple ordinances. In the epistemological crisis in which competing supernatural revelations are claimed as support for practical concerns, the only determining factor was priesthood keys, which the Twelve emphasized they obtained from Smith himself. By binding knowledge to priesthood rites and authority, it lessened the threat of competitors who presented ecclesiastical claims and doctrinal revelations as validation.

"There is a way by which all revelations purporting to be from God through any man can be tested," Orson Hyde explained at the trial over Rigdon's membership. "Brother Joseph said, let no revelation go to the people until it has been tested" in the highest councils. This interpretation of Smith's teachings emphasized order and authority in determining what was truth. Further, this precedent was especially relevant in the months preceding Smith's death, bolstering the Twelve as the central figures in this epistemological hierarchy, because they "were in council with Brother Joseph almost every day for weeks." Smith had prepared them for this position by "conduct[ing] us through every ordinance of the holy priesthood and when he had gone through with all the ordinances he rejoiced very much, and says, now if they kill me you have got all the keys." It was only then, Hyde recalled Smith proclaiming, that "Satan will not be able to tear down the kingdom" and corrupt the doctrines and ordinances of the gos-

pel. Parley Pratt added to Hyde's testimony, explaining that, though "the quorum of the Twelve have not offered a new revelation" since Smith's death, that was only due to the fact that "we have spent all our time, early and late, to do the things the God of heaven commanded us to do through brother Joseph"—most especially, building the temple and officiating in its ordinances.[51] Revealed truth had all pointed to the temple and its priesthood sealings. Future knowledge depended on its completion.

The antebellum period in which these debates took place was riven by competing ideas: It was heralded as the age of democratic freedom, in which each individual believer set off to pave his or her own religious path, but there was an equally palpable fear concerning this radical dispersion of knowledge. In terms of scriptural canonicity, there were "those who overtly punched holes in the traditional boundaries of the biblical canon in order to make room for new truths that they considered worthy of canonization," one historian has written, "and those who expressly viewed the rise of new moral or religious imperatives as a sinister threat to the sanctity and unity of the closed canon."[52] On one side were figures like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Lorenzo Dow who argued for a more egalitarian model of spiritual truth, and on the other there were those who maintained a skepticism toward the excesses of democratic power, even—and perhaps especially—in a religious setting.

Mormonism, at different times and in different situations, occupied positions on both sides of these cultural tensions. Smith himself, while often heralded as the epitome of opening the "canon" of spiritual truth, took steps to restrain a concomitant outpouring of revelatory anarchy. These restraints included a hierarchical priesthood structure not too dissimilar from Methodist conferences in their ability to oversee and manage an otherwise democratic structure. And, as it had within Methodism, this turn to more centralized and systematized knowledge introduced more stability in the tumultuous environment of the mid-nineteenth century—a religious trend that pervaded much of the period. So in drawing from these contemporary tensions, Smith's successors incorporated a potent blend of cultural tools and influences while adapting Mormonism's revelatory tradition in response to immediate concerns.[53]

By placing the temple and priesthood keys at the center of Mormonism's epistemological claims, the Twelve succeeded in establishing a theological framework in which their claims could triumph over competing schismatic options while drawing from elements in both Mormon and American culture. By holding the keys to the temple, Brigham Young and the apostles held the keys to knowledge. But in doing so, they dictated that Joseph Smith's revelatory legacy would be understood in a way that led first and foremost to the future temple rituals—ordinances that had been introduced only two years earlier and not made public until shortly after his death. What had been a set of secret rituals limited to a small circle of initiates—though they planned to have larger participation once the Nauvoo Temple was completed—was now the only path by which believers could gain salvific knowledge. Pratt's "Fountain of Knowledge" of 1844 focused on Smith's teachings of dialogic revelation through personal connection to deity; now the "fountain" was more to be *experienced* rather than merely learned. But more than just experiencing truth—a framework that could inherently be disruptive—the experience was established within a strict set of liturgical boundaries and overseen by tight ecclesiastical control. While this adapted perspective of revelatory knowledge threatened to routinize what had hitherto been a dynamic understanding of truth, it succeeded in centralizing epistemological power in the hands of Brigham Young and the Twelve and in attaching believers to a unified religious movement; personal and familial revelation was still possible, but validation and control were further centralized.

IV

The process of correlating and synthesizing Joseph Smith's revelations and teachings largely continued in step with the new developments and evolutions in Mormon history and culture. Settlement in Utah introduced theocratic dominance, frontier discourse, and sometimes violent reformations; the end of isolation brought more spiritually oriented boundaries; the stepping back from authoritative support for polygamy by 1904 forced a reformulation of what constituted "families" and "kingdoms" in the Mormon cosmos; and finally, the twentieth century brought a growth of fundamentalist and neo-orthodox thought in reaction

to an increasingly secular and skeptical world. Indeed, the transformations in LDS thought during its first two centuries offer in microcosm the larger intellectual trends of the cultures in which Mormons acted within and reacted to.[54]

And therein lies the significance of the interpretation(s) and reinterpretation(s) of LDS theology. The growth and development of Mormonism from a frontier faith to a Utah theocracy to the twentieth-century "American" religion depended to a large extent on the ability of Smith's successors to both incorporate and challenge broader cultural tensions in the process of synthesizing and expanding the teachings of its founding prophet. This task required innovation in sustaining—or recreating—a uniquely Mormon and coherent theology with a tenuous and dynamic relationship with the broader culture. As a result, the study of how that theology developed not only sheds added light on the movement itself but also on the dynamic process of religious formation and transformation in both a vibrant movement and an energetic culture.

Notes

1. Parley P. Pratt, "Proclamation. To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Greeting," *Millennial Star* 5 (March 1845): 152.

2. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, "Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge," in J. G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, translated by Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 57; emphasis his.

3. For the most incisive overview of Smith's theology, as well as the most persuasive argument for its coherency and consistency, see Samuel M. Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

4. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), xxi.

5. Walter A. McDourgall, *Throes of Democracy: The American Civil War Era* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 180.

6. Gordon S. Wood, "Evangelical America and Early Mormonism," *New York History* 61 (October 1980): 380.

7. For other intellectual frameworks for Smith, see John L. Brooke, *Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987); Jan

Shipps, "The Reality of the Restoration and the Restoration Ideal in the Mormon Tradition," in *The American Quest for the Primitive Church*, edited by Richard T. Hughes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 181–95; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989); Terryl L. Givens, "Prophecy, Process, and Plentitude," in *Joseph Smith Jr.: Reappraisals after Two Centuries*, edited by Reid L. Neilson and Terryl L. Givens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 107–18.

8. The ascension of the Quorum of the Twelve to authority was not the only option for succession following Joseph Smith's death. See D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), esp. 143–262. Indeed, Smith's eclectic nature left the question so open that numerous different branches were formed in a continuation of what each successor felt was Smith's religious vision. See various articles in Newell G. Bringhurst and John C. Hamer, eds., *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism* (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Press, 2007); Newell G. Bringhurst, "Joseph Smith's Ambiguous Legacy: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity as Dynamics for Schism within Mormonism after 1844," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 27 (2007): 1–48. A recent and useful treatment is Christopher Blythe, "Recreating Religion: The Response to Joseph Smith's Innovations in the Second Prophetic Generation of Mormonism," (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 2010).

9. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 156. For more on this formation, see their Chapter 8. See also Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, translated by Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), esp. 46–79.

10. For a more anthropological theory that is based in isolated tensions, see Danny L. Jorgensen, "Dissent and Schism in the Early Church: Explaining Mormon Fissiparousness," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 15–39.

11. Parley P. Pratt [Jr.], ed., *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry and Travels, with Extracts in Prose and Verse, from His Miscellaneous Writings* (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 367. The definitive biography of Pratt is Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley Parker Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). For Pratt's writings and theology, see Peter Crawley, "Parley P. Pratt: Father of Mormon Pamphleteering," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 13–26; Benjamin E. Park, "Salvation through a Tabernacle: Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and Early

Mormon Theologies of Embodiment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 1–44.

12. On Joseph Smith's run for the American presidency, see Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 514–17. For the origins of Smith's political thought, see Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Zion Rising: Joseph Smith's Early Social and Political Thought" (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2008).

13. Manuscript History of the Church, Book 1E, 1789 [November 29, 1843], 1791 [December 4, 1843], LDS Church History Library. Parley P. Pratt, "An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York," in *An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York, Letter to Queen Victoria (Reprinted from the Tenth European Edition); The Fountain of Knowledge; Immortality of the Body, and Intelligence and Affection* (Nauvoo, Ill.: John Taylor, Printer, 1844), 1.

14. For Christianity during the Early Republic period, see Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*; Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

15. For the patriotic age in which Mormonism's first converts were raised, see Sam W. Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 24–50.

16. Joseph Smith, Revelation, December 16, 1833, in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books*, Vol. 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of the Joseph Smith Papers, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 271.

17. Pratt, "An Appeal," 3–5.

18. Eliza R. Snow, "The Assassination of Gen'ls Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith . . . , " *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 12 (July 1, 1844): 575.

19. Anonymous, "American Independence Declared Over Again; with Amendments to Suit the Times," *The Prophet*, March 22, 1845, not paginated.

20. Parley P. Pratt, "The Science of Anti-Mormon Suckerology—Its Learned Terms, and Their Significance," *The Prophet*, May 10, 1845, not paginated. For Mormonism's complex relationship with American patriotism during this period, see Ryan G. Tobler, "Parley Pratt and Evolving Views of the American Republic in Early Mormonism," paper presented at the 2009 Joseph Smith Seminar; copy in my possession.

21. See, for example, Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982); Ronald K. Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham, and the Twelve: A Succession in Continuity," *BYU Studies* 21 (Summer 1981): 301–41.

22. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 149. This new form of a cultural history of ideas has taken root in histories of early America. See Michal Jan Rozbicki, *Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); Gordon S. Wood, "Intellectual History and the Social Sciences," in *New Directions in American Intellectual History*, edited by John Higham and Paul K. Conkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); James Tully, ed., *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

23. Parley P. Pratt, "The Bible and the Book of Mormon Contrasted," *The Prophet* 1, no. 47 (April 12, 1845): not paginated.

24. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1785), 71–111.

25. Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898*, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–85), 2:610, November 1, 1845.

26. "Indian Affairs," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 4 (March 1, 1845): 829.

27. Joseph Smith, *General Smith's Views of the Power and Policy of the Government of the United States* (Nauvoo, Ill: John Taylor, 1844), 8.

28. "The Oneida Indians," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 20 (January 1, 1846): 1080–81.

29. "Speech of Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered Sunday, June 15, 1845," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 15 (August 15, 1845): 1002. See also Parley Pratt, "The Remnants of Lehi," *The Prophet* 1, no. 47 (April 12, 1845): not paginated; "Indians in Canada," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 13 (July 15, 1845): 964; "Ephraim and Manasseh," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 13 (July 15, 1845): 965–66.

30. Parley P. Pratt, "100 Years Hence," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 1845, rpt. in *The Essential Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 141–45. These ideas were also fleshed out in a larger text, *Angel of the Prairies*, which was written around the same time and published posthumously. Parley P. Pratt, *The Angel of the Prairies; A Dream of the Future, by Elder Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by Abinadi Pratt (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Printing and Publishing Establishment, 1880).

31. Timothy Mason Roberts, *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Chal-*

lenge to American Exceptionalism (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 185. See also Sean Willentz, *The Rise of Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 425–55; John Corrigan and Lynn S. Neal, eds., *Religious Intolerance in America: A Documentary History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 99–124; Amanda Porterfield, *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

32. Pratt, "The Fountain of Knowledge" in *An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York. . .* , 15–20.

33. Mormons, of course, were not the only minority group that challenged the canonical borders. Hicksites and Quakers made similar claims. The tensions of canonicity in early America are deftly explored in David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

34. Mason Weems, quoted in Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll, eds., *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 3.

35. Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 93. For the importance of the Bible in the period, see various essays in Hatch and Noll, *Bible in America*. For American religious use of common sense rhetoric, see E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), esp. 174–80; Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

36. Parley P. Pratt, "The Fountain of Knowledge," in Pratt, *An Appeal*, 15, 19. See also Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971–94), edited by Robert E. Spiller and Alfred R. Ferguson, 1:7. For similarities and contrasts between Mormonism and American Romantic critiques of Bible-centrism, see Benjamin E. Park, "'Build, Therefore, Your Own World': Ralph Waldo Emerson, Joseph Smith, and American Antebellum Thought," *Journal of Mormon History* 36, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 59–64. Mormonism's founding scripture denounced Bible-centrism as a perversion of religious devotion. "Thou fool, that shall say, A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible," the God in the Book of Mormon queried ironically. "Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word?" *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon, upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, translated by Joseph Smith (Palmyra:

Printed by E. B. Grandin, for the Author, 1830), 115 (current [1979] LDS edition 2 Ne. 29:3–11).

37. Holifield, *Theology in America*, 175. For an overview of Romanticism and Mormon thought, see Givens, "Prophecy, Process, and Plentitude," 55–56.

38. Joseph Smith, Sermon, December 1840, recorded in "William Clayton's Private Book," and reproduced in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 44.

39. Joseph Smith, "Gifts of the Holy Ghost," *Times and Seasons* 3 (June 15, 1842): 823. For Mormon angels, see Benjamin E. Park, "'A Uniformity So Complete': Early Mormon Angelology," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 2 (2010): 1–37; Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, chap. 9.

40. Joseph Smith, Sermon, May 21, 1843, in Howard and Martha Coray Notebook, reproduced in Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 206.

41. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in Frank McIntire Minute Book, reproduced in ibid., 61.

42. Parley P. Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," in Pratt, *An Appeal*, 23.

43. Terryl L. Givens has identified this constant tension of centralized authority and radical individualism to be a central tenet of Mormon thought. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3–20.

44. The original text of the song is from "Poetry," *Times and Seasons* 5 (February 1, 1845): 799. "Hot potato" comes from "The Corner Stones," *Voree Herald* 1, no. 9 (September 1846): [37].

45. Robin Scott Jensen, "Mormons Seeking Mormonism: Strangite Success and the Conceptualization of Mormon Ideology, 1844–50," in Bringhurst and Hamer, *Scattering of the Saints*, 100.

46. John E. Page, quoted in Thomas Bullock, clerk, "Minutes of a Meeting Held in Nauvoo, March 3, 1846," 2–3, LDS Church History Library, emphasis mine; transcribed by Robin Scott Jensen. This debate is further engaged in Robin Scott Jensen and Benjamin E. Park, "Debating Succession, March 1846: John E. Page, Orson Hyde, and the Trajectories of Joseph Smith's Legacy," article under review.

47. Orson Hyde, quoted in Bullock, "Minutes," 4.

48. For Smith's cosmological chain, see Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, chaps. 8–9.

49. Hyde, quoted in Bullock, "Minutes," 4–6.

50. Ibid.

51. "Trial of Elder Rigdon," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 17 (September 15): 649–51, 653. For this trial and its relevancy to the succession debates and temple ordinances, see Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances," 189–236.

52. Holland, *Sacred Borders*, 9.

53. For Methodist conferences, see Russell E. Richey, *The Methodist Conference in America: A History* (Nashville, Tenn.: Kingswood Books, 1996); Kathleen Flake, "From Conferences to Councils: The Development of LDS Church Organization, 1830–1835," in *Archive of Restoration Culture: Summer Fellows' Papers, 1997–1999*, edited by Richard L. Bushman (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS History, 2000): 1–8; Christopher C. Jones, "'We Latter-day Saints Are Methodists': The Influence of Methodism on Early Mormon Religiosity" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 2009), 84–88. For the religious shift toward more centralization in the mid-nineteenth century, see Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 348–63; Holifield, *Theology in America*, 258–60; John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 173–96.

54. For theocratic thought in the early Utah period, see Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, and Glen W. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 6–40; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958). For more spiritually attuned boundary maintenance, see Stephen C. Taysom, *Shakers, Mormons, and Religious Worlds: Conflicting Visions, Contested Boundaries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 51–99. For the transformation from polygamy to mainstream, see Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Matthew B. Bowman, "The Crisis of Mormon Christology: History, Progress, and Protestantism," *Fides et Historia* 40, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 1–27. For the twentieth century and fundamentalism, see Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); O. Kendall White, *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987).

Our Dinner with Levi Peterson

Ruth A. Starkman

Levi Savage Peterson, the beloved and controversial Mormon writer, throws a quietly skeptical glance over his menu in a posh Palo Alto nouveaux-Middle Eastern restaurant on a recent evening in early June 2011. My partner, Russell A. Berman, of Stanford University, president of the Modern Language Association, and I had invited Peterson to speak about his work and his contributions as a "literary intellectual" in the American public sphere. On campus, Peterson had read selections from his work, answered some questions from an audience of young and adoring Stanford undergrads, most of whom were Mormon, and now was seeking some respite at dinner before the seminar that would follow on the second day.

The menu doesn't seem to entice him.

This is the moment I have been awaiting for a long time: dinner with my beloved author, Levi Peterson. I have read all his works—his seminal *The Backslider* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), a comically profound story of a Mormon cowboy who wrestles with his doubt; his provocative biography *Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988); a novel *Aspen Marooney* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995); two compilations of short stories, and his recent autobiography, *A Rascal by Birth, A Christian by Yearning* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006). So thinking I know something about Levi Peterson and, having lived in Utah, about Mormons, too, I try to be reassuring about the exotic offerings.

"Levi, you're a meat and potatoes guy."

"I'm a meat and potatoes guy." He obliges, still in a state of distraction.

"Then how about some steak and potatoes?"

"Maybe." He fends me off.

At his side perches Althea Peterson, his wife of fifty-plus years, slight, brown-haired, whose large, blue doe-eyes rest on me with gentle but keen 20/20 vision. She has decided on a vegetable platter. Althea, a non-Mormon, or as described in the dialect of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a "nonmember" and thus a "gentile," looks on patiently as Peterson makes his choice: a light halibut dish with vegetables, which he'll share with his wife.

No alcohol, no coffee, though he had just told the seminar audience that he has for years been unable to obtain—one wonders if he has tried—a "temple recommend," the official document signed by two high priests of his Church certifying that a Church member has sufficient Mormon worthiness to enter the temple, the secret/sacred ceremonial space of Mormon rituals. He informs us gamely that he has succumbed to the "demon of coffee" and "has been known to take a glass of wine now and then."

But tonight his austere alcohol- and coffee-free light meal makes one wonder how similar Levi is to his troubled protagonist Frank from *The Backslider*, who, unlike Levi, is a believer deeply disturbed by what he imagines to be his own moral shortcomings. In one of Frank's many stringent efforts to atone for his (imagined) excesses, he renounces his beloved steak, pork, buttered biscuits in gravy, and potatoes for his mother's bland and very ascetic vegetarian diet.

Could it be that Levi Peterson, the strapping, jaunty, fearless jack-Mormon (jack = one who has lapsed) is also as strictly ascetic as his characters?

Remembering him from fifteen years ago when I saw him read in Ogden, Utah, where he was a professor (now emeritus) of English at Weber State, I now encounter a somewhat slighter seventy-eight-year-old Peterson. Still bearded and mustachioed, dressed in professorial corduroy jacket and khaki trousers, very much the cowboy writer from Snowflake, Arizona, with a light drawl to match, Peterson is also a vision of profound humility.

But such modesty is wholly unnecessary. This is the American writer of God, man, and the American West, who shaped Mormon literature, who edited the unorthodox journal *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* from 2004 to 2008, whose writing and life have inspired many readers, Mormon and not, to confront the

demons of humanity and examine existential doubt. No dark brooding, politically programmatic Sartre with an arid mockery of faith, nor a transnational Camus, Peterson is a local guy, an American writer of contemporary American literature as Kafka was for modernism, a writer of poetic yearning, who translates Kafkaesque despair ("there is hope but none for us") into a tragic-comic ("there is hope, and maybe even for a rascal like me"). Most of Peterson's readers find their faith affirmed by his depictions of the gulf between religious ideals and everyday practice. Others discover in Peterson a kindred spirit of a yearning nonbeliever, a sensualist with a twinkle in his eye for scandal. For Americans, who despite their daily voluptuary embrace of the culture industry, the questions of faith and belonging are central. Peterson speaks to those questions.

It is fitting that Peterson appears at Stanford University, where *Dialogue* was co-founded by his colleagues Eugene England and Wesley Johnson, and where he offers insight into a part of American culture that struggles with assimilation, identity, and self-understanding. Stanford University harbors a sizeable group of Levi Peterson fans: young and old, undergraduates and full professors, both members and nonmembers of the Church.

Yet even as he faces a eager audience, Peterson doubts his status as a "public intellectual," wonders which audience he actually reaches beyond the liberal Mormon reading public. For him and his small group of liberal peers, the Mormon Church is an "authoritarian institution" in need of modernization and liberalization, as can be evidenced by what Peterson calls "the debacle of Proposition 8," California's ban on same-sex marriage, which was widely supported by the LDS Church.

His life has been a story of the larger questions of human existence. At the opening of his autobiography he introduces himself simply:

> I will introduce myself with a few facts. I was born and raised in Snowflake, a Mormon town in northern Arizona. I have lived most of my adult life in the cities of the American West. Although I consider myself a religious person, I know very little about God. At first I intended this book to be about wilderness, but as I wrote it, it became an autobiography with many themes. Among these themes are

> wilderness, my vexed and vexing relationship with Mormonism, my moral and emotional qualities, and my family.[1]

Peterson actually knows quite a lot about God, his and others' search for divine connection. He also understands the pain of families and communities that are more conflicted in practice than in their ideal. The youngest of thirteen children born to a devout mother, who often doubted her own worthiness for salvation and wished out loud that Levi had been a daughter, Levi Peterson is also boldly individual, complex in his identity and self-understanding, Peterson appears surprised and honored that his writing has been meaningful to others.

To my right at the dinner table, Russell Berman, my partner of several years, silently studies the menu. I have no doubt what is on his mind: Surrender to the high-calorie, cholesterolemia-inducing dishes that beckon, or choose a healthier lighter fare. In the end, Berman virtuously chooses the same dish as Levi and asks for sparkling water instead of alcohol.

On my left is Nikil Saval, the handsome young graduate student organizer of the symposium, a vegetarian who describes himself both as a "non-practicing Hindu" and as someone who remains ever conscious of the weight of his dissertation dangling over his head like Damocles's sword. He is not drinking either tonight, maybe with a plan to return to dissertating-mode.

I drink neither coffee nor alcohol simply because I don't like either. Nor do I smoke. Nor do I swear in the presence of anyone younger than thirty-one or older than sixty-one. Except for the swearing, I might pass for Mormon if I mention things like the "Aaronic Priesthood," tell people that I grew up in what was semi-rural California riding horses, or if anyone had seen me dive into my mashed Idaho potatoes in heavy cream that evening. But I'm Jewish, like Russell.

Tonight I've decided that Peterson, despite his Scandinavian name and Nordic looks, is, perhaps unbeknownst to himself, actually Jewish in spirit.

"Maybe you're Jewish!" I exclaim.

"How's that?"

"You know how you say you go to church just for the human connection?" I try. "Just for the opportunity to allow a restless

one-year-old girl to climb up on your lap and play with your beard, as you told us. Or to connect with people and hear about their lives?"

"Yes . . . " He allows, curious though unpersuaded.

"Well, that human bond for us Jews is the presence of God. We don't have testimonies about a 'burning feeling in the chest' like Mormons do. But we believe we can see the face of God in a young child or a bride or when we feel true human understanding between people."

Peterson nods politely. The imagery I've just offered him is actually a jumble of Hasidic thought mixed with a little Talmud, Maimonides, and Martin Buber, all of my own invention. Wondering if I'm getting through, I continue: "I can tell from your writing and what you say in public that you are very directed at this world, that you reject a kind of 'worldlessness' of religious institutions." I'm pushing some Hannah Arendt at this point, which, if it applies to him at all, must exist in his concept of nature, but I don't think to ask about nature.

"Your public can tell that heaven for you is on this earth." I cast about. "That one has to make heaven here by doing good and connecting to others. When you die, your body may go in the ground and there is no afterlife, but you live on in the memories of others."

Russell, who has just returned from an unveiling of his late mother Evelyn's tombstone, may her memory be a blessing, nods his affirmation of at least this last statement.

Peterson looks tense and uncertain.

I can tell that I'm losing him, but at that moment, it doesn't occur to me that heaven remains a tantalizing concept for Peterson, the unbeliever. I know from his writing he hasn't given it up and that he still wishes for a benevolent Christian God, so unlike my tough-guy Jewish God, who gives us in turns the "silent treatment" or, when he's not ignoring us, acts like an ill-tempered gambler from Las Vegas. Surely Peterson, who loves his wife deeply, has written at length about whether there is an eternity for them, a blissful undying bond that the LDS Church will deny them for not marrying in the Church and not participating in temple ceremonies.

"Of course—" I strike out in another direction, thinking I

could bond with him over our shared American identity "—Jews have to be circumcised." *Isn't every American man?* I think.

Levi's face pales. I can't understand why. Here is a famous author who writes in detail about sexual acts, his own youthful masturbation, and a male character's horrifying genital self-mutilation in *The Backslider*. He can't be offended, can he?

I dare not glance at poor Nikil, who is cringing next to me, not wanting to deflect a faculty member, but surely utterly embarrassed by the topic. Nikil is American, too, after all, and has just shared with us his ideas about being an Indian-American, who has grown up without much of an Indian community and whose literary interests are European. Althea is puzzled and waiting to see what transpires. Russell looks blithely on.

Levi gazes at me steadily and says softly, "I guess I wouldn't fit in."

"Oh," I stumble on, horrified that I have just trapped this great American author of distinguished age into discussing his anatomy. "Um . . . well . . . there are some Jews who reject ritual circumcision now. I mean, you can still be Jewish if you want."

"Funny what a lot of fuss there is about a little piece of skin," Peterson offers, hoping someone will change the subject and knowing full well that a "little piece of skin" remains, like many other small, trivial things about the body and humanity, enormously contested.

Althea comes to the rescue, asking Russell about foreign language acquisition; and the conversation turns to more pressing topics like American literacy.

Meanwhile, I'm wondering how I could possibly make amends to Peterson. Maybe he would feel better if I told him it didn't matter, he could be whatever he wanted. But that was already true. Maybe a funny story would help? One about how, after my oldest son's ritual circumcision at home when he was eight days old, the rabbi handed me the foreskin in a piece of gauze and told me to bury it in my backyard with a prayer. I couldn't do this, though, because the yard was being dug up for a garden. I put the foreskin in the freezer, planning to bury it later. Then the garden seemed to be taking forever while a part of my firstborn child's body lay in the freezer next to the Dreyer's French vanilla ice cream and Mrs. Paul's frozen fish sticks. Before I knew it, the fridge broke and was

hauled away one day with all its contents while I was on campus. Who knows what kind of burial that foreskin received? I could mourn, I could tell Levi this story and hope he would laugh, but the moment was gone and the conversation had turned to yet another topic: the question of visions.

Do Mormons really believe in visions and what are they? Certainly not my vision of the contents of my old freezer. Peterson affirmed that Mormons have visions and apologized that he had none really, unless by vision, one meant literary images like his Cowboy Jesus, who comforts the troubled protagonist in *The Backslider*. My mind wanders to how Russell and I miss his late mother, how we gaze at the light reflected on the ceiling at night, joking to ourselves that it marks the enduring presence of the Berman matriarch. Our elegiac longing contrasts with the Mormon understanding that such images and even dreams may constitute actual visitations.

For us that night, however, Levi Peterson's literary vision more than sufficed. In fact, it seemed to offer a redemptive promise that a person like him could extend his gift to others and that we'd be so moved. Peterson is writing something new now. A non-Mormon story. I wonder who his audience will be. I wonder if we thanked him enough that night?

Note

1. Levi S. Peterson, *A Rascal by Birth, A Christian by Yearning* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), 1.

Undie Running on the Line between Church and State

Max Perry Mueller

They were wearing next to nothing. Thongs, boy-shorts, string bikinis. A lacy Victoria's Secret red and black nightgown seemed downright conservative. Pro-gay slogans—"Marriage Equality!" and "Down with Prop 8!"—were plastered on chests, legs, buttcheeks, cheeks. "Judge not lest ye be judged" read one billboard/lower back, scrawled in what might have been red lipstick. Tattoo ink had rendered many of these mostly twenty- and thirty-something-year-old bodies more permanent canvases.

And they were running. Downhill. The body parts—exposed and (only slightly) unexposed—of the some 3,000 participants of Utah's Undie Run giggled, bounced, sloshed in full view of the few dozen spectators and unsuspecting passersby on the corner of State Street and North Temple in Salt Lake City on September 27, 2011.

I was one of the unsuspecting. So were two of my college friends, Nate and Kevin, who had come to Salt Lake to visit me and play in Utah's great outdoors during my year in Zion as the Mormon Studies Fellow at the University of Utah. After summiting Pfeifferhorn in the morning, that evening we had gone for Mexican food and margaritas at the Salt Lake City institution, the Red Iguana. Returning home on North Temple, we found ourselves caught in a growing line of cars, piling up at the intersection (literal and figurative) of Church and state in Utah—a fuzzier line in this state than in most. The Utah Capitol towered above on our left, the Salt Lake City Temple—the axis mundi of Mormonism—to our right.

At first, when the first few dozen exposed male torsos came sprinting down the hill, Nate, Kevin, and I thought it was just

some small, early fall 5K. But as we inched our way closer, we noticed that this was less a competition than an exhibition. More bodies, less muscled bodies, began passing the corner, running, skipping, and sauntering down the street. The three males in my car—two married, one in a long-term relationship—were silent, mouths agape, enjoying the view and feeling a little guilty about it. After making our way past the scene and up into the Avenues where I was renting a small, sunny, fourth-floor flat in a century-old brick apartment building, we ditched the car and headed back downtown on foot.

Our intentions were noble, we told ourselves: to "investigate" this novel cultural phenomenon. After a few Google searches on our smartphones and after interviewing the event's slower movers, we found out that what we were witnessing was a "protest" run conducted in the all-but-buff. Starting from a modest Facebook posting in early August, the officially dubbed "Utah Undie Run 2012 Protest against Utah Being So Uptight" grew past the event organizer Nate Porter's wildest expectations. Porter had hoped that he'd gather a few hundred of his closest friends, united in their frustration with the conservative nature of the state's political (and religious) environment. After some 15,000 signed up to run, Porter thought he might set a Guinness record for "largest gathering of people wearing only underpants/knickers."

While records weren't broken—he couldn't get the 3,000 or so who did show up to stand in one place long enough for an official count—Porter was successful at creating a cultural sensation. The Undie Run made the news in almost every media outlet in Utah. The *Boston Globe, Washington Post*, and even the UK's *Daily Mail* picked it up. Perhaps even more significant for the entrepreneurial organizer, the body-focused event served as fantastic free advertising for Porter's "Huka Bar"—a trendy nightclub in Murray which, according to its website, employs "the hottest collection of bartenders and servers along the Wasatch." Like hip-hop mogul Jay-Z's attempt to cash in on the Occupy Protests with his own brand of "Occupy ₩All Streetz" T-shirts, Porter seamlessly stitched together social protest and capitalism. Runners painted declarations of "Down with 3.2 Beer!" alongside adverts for "Huka Bar" on their backs, midriffs, and backsides.

Be Wary of a Mass of Women in Long Skirts!

The Undie Run was not the only significant gathering of bodies on display that Indian summer evening in and around Salt Lake City's Temple Square. Just two hours before, on our way to the Red Iguana, the boys and I had driven west along North Temple. On Temple Square, we witnessed not an exercise of political rights but a performance of religious modesty. Some thirty thousand women and girls, all dressed in demure skirts and blouses in muted colors, manifested as if summoned by some shofar from all directions and with quiet efficiency entered the LDS Conference Center. Slowing traffic to a crawl as they crossed North Temple and entered into one of the twenty huge Conference Center doors, moms held daughters' hands with one hand and copies of the "Quadruple Combination"—the standard Mormon single-volume scripture set including the LDS version of the King James Bible, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—in the other.

Watching this pageantry of piety, the boys' eyes grew big with wonder and (frankly) a little fear. "What the hell is this?" Nate asked the Mormon expert *praetendere*, their chauffeur for the evening. But not having grown up LDS or in Utah, I had never witnessed such a huge and orderly gathering of women—and women who all looked the same: slender, white, and conservatively dressed. I offered a tentative guess that it was a gathering of the Relief Society. I tried my best to explain that, while the LDS Church does not allow women to serve in ecclesiastical leadership positions, women do serve in many service roles for the Church and community. "Actually, it's probably the oldest and largest women's philanthropic organization in the world." I parroted the line I'd heard many times from Church members and read in Church publications.

While I asked Kevin to search on his phone for any announcements of Relief Society gatherings, Nate and I made a game of trying to find the few men among the crowds of thousands of faithful women. We found a handful and speculated that they were acting as event coordinators or perhaps, out of chivalry, were walking their wives and daughters to the women-only gathering. Because driving that long Salt Lake City block took more than five min-

utes, this game got old. Nate suggested switching the "I spy" target to finding black women in the crowds; he thought that I, as an aspiring scholar of race and Mormon, might find this variation particularly interesting. While this switch proved to be as fruitful as trying to find men, I spouted out another line of Mormon apologetics: "Actually," I announced, "most Mormons now live outside the United States and probably there's a large plurality of people of color in the Church."

With this speech, as with my soundbite on the Relief Society, as soon as I uttered the words I realized that they sounded a lot like something that could come out of the LDS PR office. For some reason, even perhaps more frequently than many of my Mormon friends, I am wont to give the company line about the Church when talking to the non-initiated. I feel a need to combat stereotypes. I need to dispel mischaracterizations that even my well-educated friends have about the Church. (*Thanks*, Jon Krakauer and *Big Love*.) After all, with a few noted exceptions (Jan Shipps, Sally Barringer Gordon, and Laurie Maffly-Kipp), non-Mormon scholarship has traditionally been "sectarian"; it is intent on exposing the supposed Mormon crimes against theology, or women, or African Americans, or reason, or democracy. And often all of the above, at the same time.

Especially when visiting the new, grand LDS Church History Library next to which Nate, Kevin, and I found ourselves parked, waiting for the last wave of Relief Society sisters to cross North Temple, I find myself defending my non-membership status. "I'm not a Mormon, but I grew up with Mormon playmates in Wyoming!" I explain to the missionaries assigned to assist library patrons, friendly but initially suspicious of why I would stake my professional life on studying something which I'm not willing to embrace for time and eternity.

But neither Nate nor Kevin was really listening to my pro-Mormon lectures. They were too busy watching in wonder the mass of (female) humanity moving with such patience and grace toward the ten-acre Conference Center, with its terraces and rooftop garden that might be at home in a Middle Eastern desert or in a Mesoamerican jungle.

"So they're *all* Mormon?" Nate, not really expecting a serious answer, posed his question more as a statement of awe than an ac-

tual inquiry. We non-Utahans aren't used to seeing so many Mormons all in one place. Everywhere outside of Utah, Mormons are minorities. They have their meetinghouses. A few big cities have temples. Mormons don't typically form ghettos. Instead, while they live "among the gentiles" as our neighbors, cheerful and friendly, they for the most part keep to themselves, choosing to spend most of their free time with other Mormons at Church worship, participating in service, or at LDS social functions. For many Americans, Mormons outside of Utah seem quaint, charming, innocuous, perhaps because almost everywhere, there are not that many of them occupying one space. But what I think shocked us was less the "Mormonness" of seeing this sea of sister Saints than the monolithic nature of the group. This uniformity, especially uniformity due to shared religious commitment, seems out of place and out of time, even in America, the most religious democracy outside of India.

We three liberal, and liberal arts-trained young professionals have grown up in an America where pluralism of religions, races, and ethnicities, not homogeneity, is the norm. This supposed "secular age" is really a pluralistic one. During last year's Arab Spring, scenes of neat lines of Muslim protesters in Tahir Square all performing the *salat* toward Mecca made many Americans—and the State Department—nervous. But the image of a ring of Christian Egyptians forming a human shield to protect their fellow Muslim protesters in prayer comforted us. Salt Lake City, which is majority non-LDS, is almost certainly more pluralistic than Cairo. Catholic cathedrals, Congregational churches, synagogues, and store-front mosques anchor the street corners not occupied by Mormon meetinghouses. But on this night, in Salt Lake's equivalent to Tahir Square, Mormon women en masse show that this city belongs to the Saints.

"Gayest City in America"

Once we headed back downtown to walk among the undie runners, it became clear that the choice of location and timing was intentional; undies and bare skin juxtaposed with modest skirts overlaying sacred underwear. "Uptightness"—the organizers' supposed target of protest—was a thinly veiled euphemism for "Mormon." And the veil came off along with the participants'

clothes: "Separate Church and State" and "I'm a Utahn and I'm *not Mormon!*" were some of the most direct critiques of Utah's political and religious culture. Others were more tongue in cheek: "Satan Worshipper" read one young woman's lower back. "Mormon"—with a pentagram replacing the O, read her girlfriend's motto. At least, I'm guessing it was her girlfriend as the pair made a point of displaying a not-so-sisterly kiss as they celebrated completing their run at Salt Lake City's outdoor concert venue, the Gallivan Center, where the runners gathered after their trip down State Street.

Downtown Salt Lake, in particular the area around Temple Square, is a contested space. During the semi-annual general conferences in April and October, anti-Mormon protesters occupy 100-square-foot boxes demarcated by bright electric tape on the sidewalks on North and South Temples. Conference-goers pass the sometimes humorous, often caustic protesters armed with placards denouncing the Church as satanic, as blasphemous, as merely ridiculous. Following California's successful Prop 8 initiative in 2008, the sidewalks that line Temple Square also attracted pro-gay activists, denouncing the Church and its membership for meddling in American politics and in American bedrooms.

But the national uproar over the Church's political involvement on gay rights issues became a local controversy in July 2009. Two gay men, Matt Aune and Derek Jones, were arrested for trespassing when they kissed on the Church-owned Main Street pedestrian promenade between North and South Temple Streets. Walking home from a summer concert at the Gallivan Center, the couple stopped for an embrace on what they believed was public property. In fact, in 1999, the Church had purchased the plaza and, with it, bought the rights to regulate behavior and speech in the space. After witnessing what they described as "inappropriate behavior," LDS security guards quickly detained the couple, handcuffing both, and forcing Jones to the ground. Salt Lake City police officers then responded to the scene and ticketed both for trespassing. Aune and Jones complained to the police that the LDS security force roughed them up after what Aune called a "modest" display of affection; Jones displayed some pretty nasty bruises on his arm

for the *Salt Lake Tribune*'s report on the incident. The Church responded by stating that the couple were the provocateurs: according to a Church statement, the two "engaged in passionate kissing, groping, profane and lewd language, and had obviously been using alcohol." Within days, the couple convinced the Salt Lake City prosecutor to drop the charges. Aune and Jones claimed that theirs was an act of ignorance. They did not know that there "is no longer is a public right of way, or accompanying free-speech rights, on the plaza."

If the streets and sidewalks are battlegrounds between the LDS Church and its critics, the latter seem to be winning, at least in the court of public opinion. Jones got a bruised arm after he kissed his boyfriend on Church property in July 2009. The Church got a black eye. Like the response to Prop 8 in November 2008, the state and national press picked up the story of a couple arrested for a kiss. For those ready to see the episode as such, the forced detention of two gay men for what they claim was an innocent and romantic display of affection encapsulated the LDS Church's efforts to police public morality in ways that interfere with the rights of private American citizens. It also emboldened gay activists to take their fight directly to the Church—or at least directly to the Church's property lines. The week after the arrest, several dozen protesters staged a "kiss-in" on the sidewalk on the Main Street promenade—within clear view of the LDS security force who called the police when protestors refused to stage their demonstration elsewhere. This time no arrests were made.

As recently as January 2012, the nation's leading gay magazine, *The Advocate*, named Salt Lake City the "Gayest City in America." Excluding New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, Salt Lake City beat out places like Cambridge, Massachusetts, and San Francisco for its "per capita queerness." For this year's "totally accurate if decidedly subjective criteria," *The Advocate* editors all but admitted that they put their fingers on the scales by pre-selecting categories in which Salt Lake City would finish first. Salt Lake City apparently earned points for having an LGBT bookstore and a nude yoga class, and for sending a representative to the gay men's beauty pageant, the "International Mr. Leather Competition." Leaders of the Salt Lake City gay com-

munity reacted to the award with ironic bemusement. They understood that the recognition honored the home of the "Mormon Tabernacle Choir" not because it was so gay but, as the *Advocate* itself pointed out, because the city is "far less oppressive than it used to be." The director of the Utah Pride Center in Salt Lake City said, "All humor aside, I think that our city has come a long way. If we were to rate the cities that have made the greatest amount of progress over the last 10 years, I think we certainly would rank among the top." Like the Undie Run, the *Advocate*'s unorthodox choice of Salt Lake City as the "gayest city in America" was a protest pick, an attempt to "queer" Utah even if the prophets and politicians of Utah refuse to recognize queer as a legitimate modality of human identity and human love.

A Family Fight, an Act of Pluralism

In such rhetorical and legal contests over space, political influence and public policy, one assumes that the belligerents have little in common. That's what Nate, Kevin, and I thought as we walked toward the Gallivan Center to participate in the festivities at the end of the run. By this time, the Relief Society sisters had been released from their meeting. This meant that packs of overdressed Saints mingled with underdressed sinners on the sidewalks of downtown Salt Lake. At the Gallivan Center, beer (I believe it was stronger than 3.2) was served. Men and women, almost naked, danced to the heavy riffs of the Salt Lake City-based band, Royal Bliss. Boys kissed girls. Boys kissed boys. Girls kissed girls.

A few hours before and a few blocks to the north, Relief Society General President Julie B. Beck, paraphrasing the great nineteenth-century Mormon poetess who had occupied the same office, taught that her community should be "a select society, separate from all the evils of the world, choice, virtuous, and holy." Herself making a declaration of counter-protest against the demonstrations taking place outside the Conference Center, Beck attested: "As our times become more difficult, the faithful sisters of Relief Society will unite to protect the homes of Zion from the shrill voices of the world and the predatory and provocative influence of the adversary." Beck's message to her sister Saints was clear: The devil is on our doorsteps and on our streets. Let this so-

ciety and the Church of which it is a part be, as Beck describes it, "a place of safety, refuge and protection."

The recently opened LDS-owned megamall occupying four city blocks between Temple Square and the "worldlier" rest of downtown Salt Lake also provides a literal buffer zone between New Jerusalem and Gomorrah directly to its south, with its evils of heavy metal, beer and unsanctioned sex.

But in this idea of creating a place "of refuge, safety, and protection," the undie runners and Relief Society sisters have common cause, even common ground. The undie runners could have employed much of the same language as Beck; by protesting against "the shrill [Mormon] voices of the world" that labeled them as deviants, the undie runners attempted to create their own refuge, their own space where their acts of love would not be condemned as "predatory and provocative" but human, even divine. The undie runners would not claim theirs was a religious community like the sister Saints meeting in the Conference Center, but they *would* claim that theirs was a moral one, formed out of a commitment to the love ethic similar to the one articulated by a Jewish sage 2000 years ago: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self" (Mark 12:31).

This common ground between the Relief Society and the undie runners leads to a recognition of other connections between the two groups of Utahns. It was likely, if not almost a certainty, that undie runners had mothers and grandmothers at the Relief Society meeting. One could even imagine, earlier that afternoon in a bedroom of some Salt Lake City suburb, two sisters preparing for their respective nights on the town, one sister choosing which long skirt to wear, another choosing which sports bra. Nate, Kevin, and I talked about this potential sisterhood between the two groups as we walked back home after the concert let out. We noticed groups of underdressed girls and women also heading home, shivering in the chilly early fall night air but nevertheless at ease, without any concern of what they might encounter on the dark streets. This couldn't happen in Nate's hometown of Minneapolis or Kevin's hometown of Boston without raising serious concerns about the women's personal safety.

Ironically, what allows the undie runners to feel safe in their

underwear is the same culture they're protesting. Utah's conservatism provides one of the highest degrees of safety in the country. If Salt Lake City isn't the gayest city in America, it is among the safest. Not unlike the Christians encircling the Muslims at prayer in Tahir Square, the Relief Society sisters form their own prayerful circles around their undie-running sisters and brothers, even as the latter decry the former as oppressing them. The only place such an undie run could happen—an act of pluralism on the streets of Salt Lake City—is in the city the LDS Church dominates and protects.

Acts of pluralism are, by nature, reciprocal. The undie runners do something for the Relief Society sisters, too. By exercising their rights to protest, by guaranteeing the continuation of a free society, the runners protect the Mormon women's rights of free expression and religious liberty. The undie runners descend thus—in blood and in spirit—from the same lineage of Utah protestors as the Relief Society: the late nineteenth-century Mormon women who protested against oppressive and discriminatory laws that criminalized their marriages and their acts of love.

Back in my apartment, Nate, the doctor and mathematician, speculated that simply due to the laws of statistics, there must, *must* have been at least one woman who participated in both events. A 100 percent separation between such large groups of people—30,000 at the Relief Society meeting, some 3,000 at the Undie Run—was simply impossible. And, after all, many Mormons don't agree with the Church's position on gays' place in society and in the Church. We imagined some Relief Society sister leaving the Conference Center and going to her car to take off her long skirt and modest blouse and apply some pro-gay rights slogan to her now exposed torso. We pictured her jogging down to the Gallivan Center to join some friends for the concert, avoiding the beer but enjoying a libation of Diet Coke. She wouldn't think of her membership in these seemingly disparate communities as a sign of undiagnosed schizophrenia. Instead it would be part of her holistic Mormon identity, an identity that requires that she live by a certain code of piety but also an identity whose history of persecution teaches her the dangers of requiring that others live by this same code.

Even if such a woman didn't exist, we realized that the partici-

pants of these two events were existentially dependent on each other. Long skirts and undies are not the uniforms of opposing armies, one of heaven, the other of hell. They are the insignia of different battalions in the ragtag militia that keeps America's sacred but tenuous peace with pluralism.

Notes

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Fierce Joy and Proof That It Happened

Libby Potter Boss

In my CD collection is a set of two semi-bootlegged discs, their cases held together with a rubber band, each marked *La Pietà, 1/21/01* in permanent marker. The recording itself is perfectly legal; I arranged for it with an ebullient phone contact at NPR's "Performance Today," along with recordings of several other concerts on the "Chamber Music in Historic Sites" schedule that season. That I ended up with a copy of it is sheer luck, or divine intervention, or chutzpah. The music is a French-Canadian all-girl band, playing music written for young women, and it is my favorite CD.

* * *

I grew up playing Suzuki method violin, which is something like a religion. ("Only practice on the days you eat" is one of the figurative rosary beads.) My violin teacher signed several of us up for the Utah Symphony Youth Guild; and as a Youth Guild member, I spent a lot of weekends checking coats at concerts, slipping in to hear the performance during the applause after the first piece. This, too, was like a religion, complete with a high priest in white tie and tails and a worshipful congregation of mostly gray-haired disciples. The music was grand, self-important, established, fundamental. Only years later would I realize that it was actually very young, that the idea of the civic orchestra, complete with large numbers of paid performers, is roughly the same age as the United States of America. Its Important Composers are newcomers, too. Mozart was a contemporary of George Washington. Shostakovich died two days before my third birthday.

My best friend and I, the angry feminists of the seventh grade,

sat in this gold-leaf temple celebrating old male composers wearing wigs and counted the women on the stage. A few violinists and violists, flutists, always a female harpist. The percussion section and double bass players were exclusively male. Not once in years of guest conductors did we see a woman hold the baton or hear music written by a woman—not even the short contemporary pieces that we missed because they showed up on the first part of the program, while we were still collecting coats.

It didn't add up. We performed violin/piano duets regularly, mostly in our own wards' sacrament meetings but occasionally in a random ward where the bishop knew our families and was tired of a weekly congregational hymn. There, we would sit on the stand, obvious visitors, keenly aware that our talent carried with it a kind of authority that granted two tweenish girls in velvet dresses and our first high heels access to the realm of graying men in charcoal suits. We spent several weeks every summer at rigorous music camps, always surrounded by other girls. (The sole male flutist we knew, a good-looking blond guy built like a fullback, got equal measures of awe and teasing.) The best musicians we knew were girls. So we watched the stage and asked, *Where are all the women?*

* * *

Twenty-five years later, the scene inside concert halls around the world has changed little. There are more women performing in orchestras, thanks to the widespread practice of blind auditions. The musicians literally play behind a screen, and walk on and off the stage on thick carpet to mute the distinctive tapping of high heels. It took a government order to integrate the Vienna Philharmonic—in 1993. Yet not a single top-tier American orchestra is led by a female conductor. Marin Alsop, despite appearing regularly as a guest conductor with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the London Symphony, makes her artistic home at the second-tier Baltimore Symphony; her colleague JoAnn Falletta leads the perennially struggling Buffalo Philharmonic.

* * *

The occasion for the La Pietà concert was the seventy-fifth anniversary of Mount St. Mary's College, the Catholic women's col-

lege in Los Angeles that houses the Da Camera Society, where I was working as the marketing manager—a bit of a misnomer: We had a staff of exactly seven people, and I was the entire marketing department.

The concert was a collection of music written for young women, including a sinfonia and several concerti by Vivaldi, who wrote them as *maestro di violino* at a girls' orphanage in Venice that was famed for its music; the young ladies performed behind a screen or grate for the sake of modesty, playing for paying tourists as well as for men who had come to the orphanage seeking wives. The chamber orchestra La Pietà takes its name from this orphanage, and each of its twelve women wears something red in honor of Vivaldi, who was known as the "red priest" for the color of his hair. Also on the program was a suite Gustav Holst wrote for his students at St. Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith after complaining, "I get reams of twaddle sent me periodically, and that is all publishers seem to think is suitable for girls."[1] It is a madcap piece, a romp, a constantly accelerating roller-coaster ride that ends at a gleeful sprint.

La Pietà had already produced three best-selling CDs, but tours are usually a chamber group's bread and butter, and this was their first tour. The logistics were overwhelming. Not only was there the normal problem of arranging for twelve women, their instruments, and their luggage to be in the same city (and preferably in the same hotel) at the same time, with the solo violinist arriving as early as possible before each concert to allow for media appearances, but there was also the timeless problem faced by a large group of women in their twenties and thirties. Most of them were mothers of small children, and elaborate child-care arrangements had to be executed in their absence.

Aside from the logistical details, the tour had the air of a stolen girls' weekend. The musicians' collective excitement came through in the performance as a buoyancy, an enthusiasm, a highly contagious virus of *joie de vivre*. A reviewer from the *Los Angeles Times* wrote that they played with "fierce joy."[2] Our artistic director, unfortunately, read their joy as a lack of professionalism and mentally filed them in the same distasteful category as the

Eroica Trio, another all-girl band known for their low-cut gowns and sensual on-stage affectations.

The audience members, in contrast, were entranced. On their feet, they demanded not one but two encores.

* * *

And then consider the case of a Milanese composer born over four hundred years ago. Northern Italy in the early seventeenth century was a dangerous and unstable place. Margarita Cozzolani was born in 1602 into a city whose prosperity had earned it the wrong kind of attention. During the previous two centuries, rule of the city-state had passed through warring Italian families, the Spanish, and the Austrian Hapsburgs; eventually the political upheaval led to economic decline, and families of standing began to disinherit younger sons in the interests of keeping the family wealth in a single pair of hands. Daughters of these families, whose marriage dowries could be a significant drain on financial resources, were more likely to be placed in convents than married off.

Young women of wealthy households brought with them the interests and talents that had been cultivated by their parents—interests that would not have been easily continued after marriage—and several of the cloisters began to be known for their music. Cozzolani, a gifted singer, entered the convent of Santa Radegonda when she was seventeen, taking the religious name Chiara ("clear") to complement her given name (literally, "pearl"). Twenty years later she would publish the first of her four known groups of compositions, only two of which survive in their entirety.

Milanese writer Filippo Picinelli described the fame of Cozzolani's convent: "The nuns of Santa Radegonda of Milan are gifted with such rare and exquisite talents in music that they are acknowledged to be the best singers of Italy. They wear the Cassinese habits of [the order of] St. Benedict, but under their black garb they seem to any listener to be white and melodious swans, who fill hearts with wonder, and enrapture tongues in their praise. Among these sisters, Donna Chiara Margarita Cozzolani merits the highest praise, Chiara in name but even more so in

merit, and Margarita for her unusual and excellent nobility of invention."[3]

So this was a particular moment, a particular opportunity in a unique time and place, where a few fortunate women were able to express themselves musically. The popularity and widespread use of the printing press meant that, with some money, they could even publish their music. The first sacred choral music written by a woman to appear in print was written by Raffaella Aleotti, another nun, and was published in 1593, just a few years before Cozzolani's birth.[4] Even the turmoil of the times, which included not just political and financial upheaval but also the Black Death (bubonic plague), which killed nearly half the Milanese population between 1629 and 1630, may have led to a relaxation of Church rule over the convents; the nuns not only sang their music but also, for a time, were allowed musical instruments to serve as accompaniment, which resulted in ever more complex harmonies and forms.

The window was narrow. Cozzolani published for only ten years, though she was one of more than a dozen religious women in the region who did so. Later in life, as prioress and then abbess of her house, Cozzolani would battle with the archbishop of Milan over the nuns' right to perform their music—and, indeed, have contact of any form with the world outside their walls. I do not know what was in her heart when she and her sisters sang the *alleluias* at the end of her "Ave mater dilectissima," a dialogue between the risen Christ and his mother contained in her *Messa Paschale*. I cannot imagine it to be less than the "fierce joy" of the women of La Pietà.

* * *

The *Messa Paschale*, written early in what we call the Baroque period (the name was not used until early in the twentieth century), retains much of the sustained polyphony of the music of the Renaissance, my own favorite music. A friend commented a few years ago that she knew I would love Boston because it has "such a great early music scene." Early music the *Messa Paschale* is, but its form is decidedly forward-looking, anticipating the mathematical structures that Bach would write nearly a century later. The instrumentation is built on a basso continuo part: a mainstay in Ba-

roque music, the sustained low notes on which the more intricate (or "baroque") variations are constructed. The low bass could be played by any instrument in the register, from organ or harpsichord to viola da gamba (a kind of second cousin once removed to the cello and double bass), and provided a depth to the music that the nuns' high voices would have lacked. Though Cozzolani's published vocal scores include a bass line, it is almost certain that the nuns sang it an octave higher than written; the score, after all, was intended for the public at large.

There are even passages of the music that remind me of the *concerti* Vivaldi wrote for his students, which is logical. The "red priest" certainly would have known of Cozzolani, whose fame had spread throughout the Italian peninsula and who had died the year before he was born in a city just 225 miles away.

* * *

When I emailed Angèle Dubeau, the leader and soloist of La Pietà, to let her know that NPR had asked to record her ensemble, she replied with an unusual question: Could the group have a copy of the recording? I passed along the request to my contact at NPR, who after only a slight pause, said that yes, it would be fine to make an unofficial copy of the tape for the group—it was their music, after all—provided they not release it to the public. It also had to be done quickly; he intended to air it the following week, and he had to allow enough time for editing.

The day after the concert, I took the digital tape to a studio on Santa Monica Boulevard which had promised same-day transfer to CD; that afternoon I would FedEx the tape to Washington, D.C., and the CDs to Montreal. When I handed over the tape, I found myself asking for two copies. The experience of a performance occurs just once, in a particular place and time; but a recorded disc, like a printed folio, is tangible evidence that it did happen, and that it can happen again.

To listen to Chiara Margarita Cozzolani's music,
visit The Cozzolani Project at http://www.cozzolani.com.

Notes

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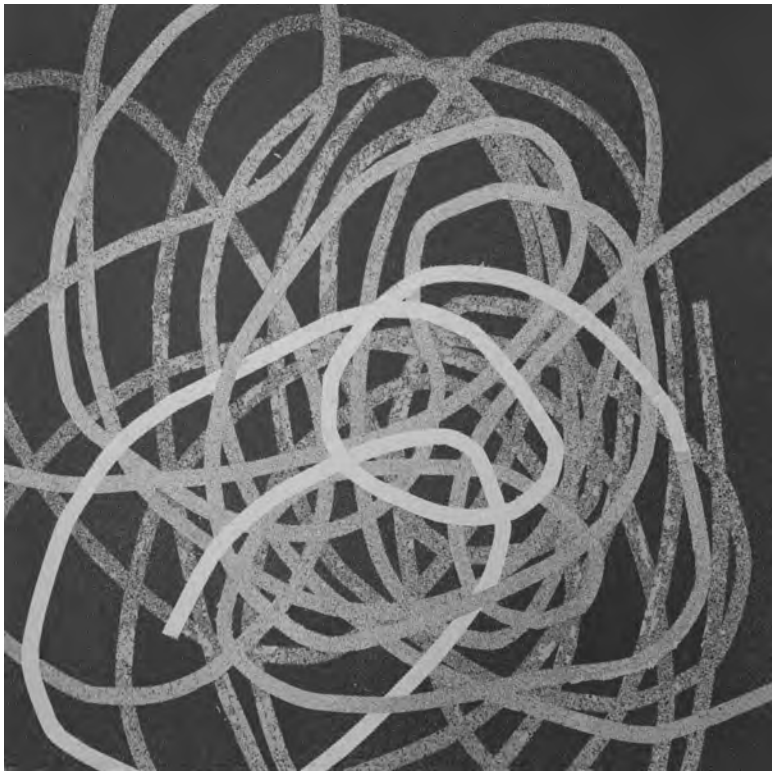

Sunny Belliston Taylor,
Hello My Name is So and So,
acrylic on paper, 15"x15"

Note: *The following poems are reprinted from Tyler Chadwick, ed.,* Fire in the Pasture: Twenty-First Century Mormon Poets *(El Cerrito, Calif.: Peculiar Pages, 2011).* Fire in the Pasture *received the Association for Mormon Letters award for poetry in 2011. Tyler Chadwick has joined the* Dialogue *Editorial Board as Poetry Editor.*

Perplexed by the Revelator's Heaven

Scott Cameron

The earth in its sanctified and immortal state will be made like unto crystal (D&C 130:9)

Aren't leaves crumbling against the edge
of autumn, the fibrous tangle
of the lesser shrew's heart, and a prophet curled
in the belly of night, shaking like a reed fragile enough?

Why transmute Alps or Andes into Spanish crystal
or celestialize black forests into a clarity
that can shatter?

Won't porcelain branches snap
like the camel's leg, the donkey's left ear,
the Christ child's outstretched
wrist, glued and glued but always somewhat scarred?

I have seen too much of crystalline nativity to wish
the world's rebirth a sea of glass.

Mass Transit Madonna

Will Reger

She looks around wondering if
The driver remembers her stop.
She does not speak to me
But bends her white neck
To check the child she holds.
Her hair was quickly gathered—
Pinned in haste against
The wind, uncorrected.
Her young eyes watching,
Gather age, take on the first,
Bolder lines of death
As though her life had crested:
Her gathering tide has turned.
On her knees are big brown eyes
Swaddled in white. They stare
From a gray plastic car seat.
Beyond them a low counterpoint
Of conversation and snatching
Laughter at the back
Of the rocking city bus
Reminds of an earlier peace.
The eyes meet mine, then sleep,
Content in their gathering life.

Runaway

John Schouten

A bus token jingles
against the nickels and dimes
in the pocket of his Pendleton coat
as he lingers at the door
of the Salvation Army
bookstore and wonders, if he enters,
what new thing will happen to his soul?
Will it fold itself up like the city map
now lined more with creases
than with the streets he's yet to search
for someone who might know her
who might have seen the face
that haunts him like a shadow of the one
reflected in the storefront glass
looking back with empty eyes
through words that spread
like ink across his brain:
all romance twenty-five cents

Finding Place

Doug Talley

A fire in the pasture undulates
of blue and white and yellow flower,
a fire like a snake, it would seem, iridescent
by sunlight and undulant in the wind.

Here one will understand the Nazarene's joy,
awash in the lilies of his own field, a spicery
of uncommon radiance in a common hour
rising from the dark, speluncular sod.

Consider, he said. Simply consider. Flowers
catching light like the scales of a serpent's skin,
a yellow apple sun delicious to the taste,
and temptations to joy irrepressible!

The kingdom of heaven found on earth
is like a pasture, a strange, little kingdom
full of spicery, the undulant and speluncular,
all the words with which we choose to frame it.

In this life we find the peaceable kingdom
within, then above, beneath, and all around.
What can a person driven by grandiosity
know of the quiet, hidden God found here?

After Her Stroke

Shannon Castleton

Above this cold chair
they say *vegetable.* Voices like calves
bawling for their mother's teats.
I think yellow squash, summer,
radish the shade of my lips
in sun, all the ways to be beautiful.
Even after five dull children,
my breasts really never sagged.
I cradle them days when he nods
across from me. He spreads his cold palms
on my cheeks, looks deep
though he thinks it's just his face
he sees in my blue irises.
I want to say Lawrence
you never held me right. And when
did you see my legs never sprouted
one blue vein? The kind wandering
down a thigh like a wet blue trail of mud.
You can't kiss a thigh like that.
What I love is my skin, how cool
it presses me. They watch scared.
I breathe to say it and everyone circles
my face. *Scared* I whisper, and they think
I mean me, and who knows
how long they'll weep, pray me out
of my body, when it's what I want to keep.

Revelation

Elisa Pulido

I am ten, sitting on your sofa.
I watch as you paint and talk.
Your voice is a swallow,
which sometimes loops through the Andes,

spins over the terraced slopes
of Machu Pichu, then dips suddenly
to the bucket of pig slop by the kitchen sink,
or hovers over Little Bryant's shot-off toe.

It is August. You recite Revelation.
Grandchildren bang through the back door,
interrupt the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.
They ask for glasses of milk, take you away from

the canvas you have tacked on the living room wall.
Cattlemen pass through the front door.
Their barnyard boots crisscross your Persian carpet.
You pause to chat, then paint again—

I remember you giving Moses eyes,
so he could watch Pharaoh's daughter
lift him from the Nile.

Atlanta to Salt Lake

Elizabeth Garcia

(for Sally)

Prose will not capture some people, the way
they drift. You can only see them dragging
their furniture through Wyoming night,
down a dark throat of road, the ice
clear and slick. We stopped to sleep in a solitary
town: Rawlins, Wyoming. Ahead:

a slow hundred miles of snow. (Things ahead
are always murky, but we go anyway,
forward.) Oklahoma was first, the solitary
landscape scarred with arthritic trees, as if dragged
up by their bones. We stopped only twice,
once at a motel with "crap" on the walls, and all night

she couldn't sleep, fearing what other nights
("hookers and pimps") had left in the sheets. And still ahead
of us, Nebraska flats and the Wyoming ice
a vast white cliché. It wasn't the way
I expected, but an easier slope for dragging
that U-haul than I-25. Just solitary.

Only a semi every few miles. We played laptop solitaire
by turns—her black skirt in the window shading her like night,
blocking the sun, while my toes went numb—dragging
the load away from failed relationships, hoping ahead
for clarity, like Thelma and Louise. But that's not the way
it works. Still, we ate at that truck stop the night before. Ice

shrapneled our faces; her dad phoned to warn us of icy
roads that could lead to cliffs and a solitary
death where our car might "blow up. That would suck." His way
of cheering her up—and it worked. That night
we laughed through the rattlesnake backscratchers, Dead Head
T-shirts, Jesus figures, stuffed pigs dressed in camo, dragging

ourselves to warm beds in a decent motel. Then that dragging
day through whitewash, WY, horizons of ice,
to Rock Springs, shouts, and a Pizza Hut buffet. Ahead
was Utah, final destination for her solitary
path without men, though every night
she would think of the same one. But that's the way

it works—in circles. The way she came dragging
back home, still obscured by night, months later, the ice
still thick inside. More solitary. Less looking ahead.

The Afternoon Hour

Terresa Wellborn

(For my mother)

You colored me
sienna, azure,
a shape I was becoming,
a bird, perhaps,
a cloud,
a field of trees.
I don't remember much, only
the low table,
how we knelt,
how you held the crayons
like flowers,
tipping color,
a petal pouring rain.

Field Walking

Angela Hallstrom

Jennifer is a mother of three—Sadie in high school, Carson in middle school, Jordan in elementary—which means weekdays start at 6:00 A.M. and quickly unspool, devolving into a mad scramble of showers and hair dryers and cold lunches and lost homework and family prayer and kisses good-bye, the front door slamming its exclamation with each departure until 8:00, when her husband, Dean, loads Jordan into the car to take him to school on his way to work.

By 8:05, the house is perfectly still. Most mornings, Jennifer turns on the *Today Show* while she does her chores, the hosts' friendly chatter filling up the quiet as she unloads the dishwasher and sweeps the kitchen floor. Then she takes off her pajama top and puts on her sports bra and does her Thirty Minute Yoga Blast DVD. Then she takes a shower. Then she puts in a load of laundry. Then she does her make-up and her hair. Then she decides what else she needs to do, and how, and when.

Most mornings.

Not this morning, or the last few weeks of mornings. A few months have passed since the miscarriage, and for the first time in her adult life, she feels the charge of rebellion in her veins. Over the years, she's dealt with anxiety and sadness. She even experienced a full-blown bout of post-partum depression after Jordan was born. But never before has she felt this urgent impatience, more powerful than frustration but not quite tipped over into rage. And she's doing all sorts of surprising things. One morning last week she stayed in her pajamas all day long and ate s'mores for lunch, toasting the marshmallows over the bright red coils of the stove burner. A few days after that, instead of going to the grocery store, she drove forty minutes south to the Mall of America, where she bought two new bras from Victoria's Se-

cret—neither of them white—and a book by a self-proclaimed psychic about energy healing. She sat in the food court overlooking the Nickelodeon Universe indoor theme park, hysterical adolescent screams approaching and receding as the roller coaster rattled by (*why were these kids not in school?*), and read the strange little book cover to cover. She pulled in the driveway just minutes before the kids were due home, but none of them asked her what she'd done all day or where she went. When Dean arrived home from work and asked, "How was your day?" she answered, "Fine," then paused and said, "Different." He responded with a distracted kiss on the top of her head. She left the new bras in the shopping bag, the tags still on.

So this morning, as soon as the front door clicks behind Dean's back, she winds her dark hair into a messy ponytail and heads for the car. Last night's dinner dishes remain in the sink and she hasn't done laundry in almost a week, but she doesn't care, and this apathy both astonishes and thrills her. Today, she thinks, will be a movie day. She'll head to the library and stock up on a few films she's been meaning to see but hasn't made time for.

She drives to the library with the windows down and the music up high, the radio tuned to a station her daughter Sadie likes, and she sings along with Lady Gaga—*no you can't read my poker face*—impressed with herself that she knows both the singer and the words. She's aware, too, that if any of her children were in the car with her, they'd beg her to stop singing.

Inside the library, Jennifer stands in front of the rack of DVDs, disappointed. Most of these movies are old, and many are of absolutely no interest to her. She considers *Shakespeare in Love*, a blushing young Gwyneth Paltrow on the cover, but Gwyneth seems suddenly unbearable to her, so stridently blond and healthy and apple-cheeked, as if she'd tucked the key to happiness inside her ruffled blouse, right next to her perky twenty-five-year-old bosom. No, she doesn't want Gwyneth, and she doesn't want Julia Roberts or Reese Witherspoon or even Kate Winslet, bonneted and demure on the cover of *Sense and Sensibility*. Jennifer also moves quickly past any movies for or about children or teens. She wants to watch a grown-up film—a movie made by grown-ups, for grown-ups.

And then she sees a title that makes her stop and consider.

Brokeback Mountain. She remembers the movie receiving a good deal of acclaim years ago, but back then she never would have considered seeing it. Not only does the movie deal with homosexual relationships, but it's rated R, and Jennifer hasn't seen an R-rated movie since the early 1990s. She pulls the DVD case from the rack and recognizes one of the leads, Heath Ledger—the poor young actor who died a few years ago. She'd seen him as the Joker in that *Batman* movie Dean dragged her to ("PG-13 for *cartoon* violence," he'd said when she objected) and his performance had literally haunted her dreams: his menacing, blood-red smile; the wildness in his eyes. On the cover of this DVD, he looks like an entirely different person—so lovely and so sad. She realizes her heart is pounding at the thought of taking this movie home. Should she? *Can* she? Then she feels her apprehension turning inside her, twisting into indignation and, finally, cool decisiveness. She is a grown woman. Grown. Who's to stop her?

She watches the movie in her bedroom, tucked up under her covers, the blinds closed tight, and her heart races with anguish and empathy as each character on the screen tries so hard to love and be loved, and then fails. The pathos is almost unbearable when Heath Ledger is on screen. He's so vibrant in all his doomed beauty, his wild blond curls and the sweaty shimmer of his skin radiating life. So young, so unaware that his real-life death sits crouching just around the corner, waiting to steal away his earthly promise. *God needed him*. Surely someone said those terrible words to his grieving mother; someone will say them, someday, to his orphaned daughter. The thought of it makes her want to weep. *Who are we to feign understanding of God's mysterious needs?* she thinks. *Why must we bend our tragedies to fit His unknowable will?*

It must not have been the Lord's time. Those were the words her own mother said when Jennifer called to tell her about the miscarriage. Jennifer didn't answer her or acknowledge the platitude in any way. She simply gripped the phone and breathed. As the silence between them continued, her refusal to speak gathered weight and power, becoming an act so aggressive and courageous that she still can't quite believe that she, Jennifer, was the woman withholding even a murmur of assent.

After the movie she curls onto her side, her knees pulled up against her chest, and when she finds herself sliding into sleep,

she doesn't fight it. She sleeps deeply, never dreaming, until she hears Carson home from middle school, pounding on the locked front door. She hurries downstairs, apologizes for locking him out, and then busies herself cleaning up the house and preparing dinner as usual—grilled cheese sandwiches and chicken noodle soup, one of the few dinner combinations each member of the family will eat without objection.

But she doesn't sit down to the meal with the rest of the family. Instead she grabs the keys and the movie that needs returning, holding the DVD case with the scandalous title facing out, and when Dean asks where she's going, she answers simply, "Errands." When she arrives home, she walks right past Dean and Jordan at the kitchen table, sweeps by without a word as her husband quizzes her son on his times tables (it's the sevens—the unbearable, unknowable sevens, a quiz he keeps failing, the cause of incalculable tears). From her bedroom, Jennifer can't help but hear Jordan's voice escalating, stressed and panicked, punctuated occasionally by Dean's rumbling baritone, but she chooses to stay in her room, reading. At one point, Carson lingers outside her open door, unaccustomed to seeing his mother lying down unless she has a migraine or is ready for bed. But she doesn't look up from her book. She doesn't go downstairs and join any of them until it's time for family prayer.

Then all night long she sleeps fitfully, Dean's rhythmic snoring and the stifling weight of the bed covers bringing her up out of her dreams. By 5:30 A.M. she's given up the struggle and lies there, fully awake and sweating in the muggy morning air of a late-May heat wave.

She speaks one sentence aloud. To the ceiling. To God. "What do You want from me?" She doesn't bother whispering. Dean doesn't rouse.

This is all the praying she can muster, a single line flung up into blades of the fan spinning lazily above her head. She digs her fingernails into the palms of her hands, narrows her eyes, and waits. The house is so still she can hear the metallic whir of the refrigerator in the kitchen. She remains quiet, tensing in the silence, daring God to answer. Listening. Breathing.

Nothing.

Then Sadie's alarm begins its rhythmic bleating, and Jennifer

hears her daughter fumbling with the clock. Then she feels the ground shake as Jordan, always anxious to be the first one up, leaps from his top bunk. Then she hears her name, "Mom!" as Carson yells down the hall, "Where in the crap is my baseball shirt?"

All her life, since she was a little girl, she's tried to do what she thought God asked of her: marrying in the temple, having children young and staying home to guide them, serving faithfully in her callings. She'd been trained to listen for the promptings of the Spirit, and she thought she knew how to hear them. But for years now—four years, maybe five, definitely since Jordan started first grade, and more emphatically once her children began transitioning to their teens and her failures as a mother were reflected in them more starkly—for all that time, as the emptiness inside her yawned wider, she's been unable to decipher God's will for her life.

At first she thought it was a phase, a normal spiritual fluctuation, and she tried to wait patiently for the day when God would open his mouth. She studied her options. Should she go back to college and finish her degree? Start working part-time, see if she could get a job at Jordan's school? Or perhaps God wanted her to keep her free days free, blessed as she was with a husband who could support her—it could be that a big calling in the Relief Society or Young Women's or early morning seminary was in the works. But the years passed, and the only calling change was from Sunbeam teacher to CTR 7; no part-time jobs opened up at Jordan's school; she looked into the University of Minnesota and found that she'd have to retake way too much math.

So she increased her temple attendance. She woke up early to read her scriptures before the rest of the family claimed her day. She got on her knees and told God the truth: how paralyzed she felt by her own aimlessness; how she feared she would soon be overwhelmed by her creeping sense of failure. She pled with Him until the silence whistled in her ears.

And then, after all that pleading, she thought she finally found her answer. *Have another baby*. It was hard to be sure whether the prompting came from God. There was no overwhelming spiritual feeling; no prophetic dream. The idea took hold slowly, beginning first as an example of something she *could*

do, then slowly evolving into something (perhaps?) she *should* do, until finally becoming something she felt she must, at least, attempt. Dean had been surprised that she wanted another baby. She'd been so adamant that they were done at three. And they were getting old, it was true. But once the idea implanted itself, she couldn't let it go. After a year of trying she finally conceived, and immediately she felt jolted out of her terrible inertia, as if she'd been living for years on a broken carnival ride that had been miraculously repaired and was finally moving forward. *So this* is *what God had in store*, she'd thought, and the relief had been intoxicating.

The bed springs creak as Dean rolls over, finally awake. He moves closer to her and wraps his arm around her waist, his warm hand finding her stomach's bare skin.

"You okay, hon?" he asks.

She can't turn around. She can't look at his face. "I'm fine," she says, her shoulders rigid and unyielding.

"You seem . . . I don't know," he says, his breath pulsing against the back of her neck.

"I'm fine," she says again.

The day is breaking across the Midwestern horizon. Yet another day. Suddenly an idea comes to her, clear as the sunlight bleeding in through her window: Today, she will go field walking. She throws off her covers, releasing herself from Dean's loose embrace, and rises.

By 9:30 A.M., she's ready to go: the floor swept, the dishwasher chugging, the comforter on her king-sized bed pulled tight, its pale blue accent pillows arrayed in an artful pile. Jennifer herself is wearing comfortable jeans and a good pair of tennis shoes, and she's prepared a small backpack containing a water bottle, some granola bars, her journal, her phone, her credit card, a Cedarville City trail map, and $200 in cash.

Jennifer realizes that "field walking" isn't the perfect term to describe her plans for the day. The descriptor doesn't work in the literal sense, since the trails she'll be walking don't cut through fields, but through suburban neighborhoods and nature preserves. And she's not exactly going field walking in the figurative sense, either—the sense that she and her best friend from a decade ago, Amanda DeWitt, adopted during the daily phone calls

they indulged in as punchy, sleep-deprived young mothers. After all, Jennifer isn't bringing a gun. She doesn't even own a gun. And she has no plans to kill herself, although a part of her understands why suicide might appeal to some as a seductively rational solution. No, if she picked up the phone today and dialed Amanda's number to confess her plans, her best friend from ten years ago would sigh in that ironic, drawn-out way of hers and say, *No gun, no suicide, no* field? *It's not field walking.*

Then Jennifer would agree. Technically, she would tell Amanda, it's true she's not going field walking. But she plans to embody the spirit of the thing. She intends to open her door and wander away for a while, from her home, her family, her life, her self. And whether she'll decide to come back? That remains an open question.

Well, when you put it that way, she can imagine Amanda answering. *I get it. I see.*

* * *

As young mothers, Jennifer and Amanda often joked about killing themselves. Jennifer remembers this time fondly. Amanda—smart, tough, wry, everything Jennifer wished she could be but wasn't quite—Amanda was the first to dare joke about such a thing, and Jennifer was more than willing to laugh along.

The two of them talked on the phone nearly every day. Jennifer waited for the ring amid the smear of jelly sandwiches and the yammer of Elmo or Blue; and when the call finally came, she would take the phone to the master bathroom, close the door behind her, and join Amanda in the cathartic pleasure of complaining.

"I'm going field walking," Amanda would say, her three-year-old daughter howling in the background.

"Oh no," Jennifer would answer, the sound of barely suppressed laughter in her throat. "What today?"

"Pooping on the stairs. Preschool drop-off tantrum. Bounced check."

"Definitely a field walking day. Heading straight out the back door?"

"Yep. Right out the door. No looking back. Locked and loaded, baby!"

Then Amanda would laugh and Jennifer would join her, their voices tired and musical and young.

Occasionally, their shared black sense of humor made Jennifer feel a bit guilty, especially since the phrase "field walking" referred to an actual woman who'd killed herself: a mother of eight kids ranging in age from infant to teenager living in the Salt Lake City suburb just south of their own. Jennifer and Amanda didn't know her, of course; Jennifer liked to think they'd *never* joke about such a thing if she'd been an actual acquaintance. The truth was, not many people in the community had known the woman well, but they'd all been shaken by the incident. It's not every day that a mother of eight escapes out the back door and shoots herself in the head. According to news reports and neighborhood gossip, the morning wasn't out of the ordinary: the kids were fighting over the cereal, the oldest had missed her bus, and in the midst of all the squabbling, the woman stood up and left. She didn't say a word to anybody. She simply headed for the field behind her house, barefooted and in her bathrobe. She'd hidden the gun in her bathrobe pocket.

Even today, fifteen years later, Jennifer remembers the irony of the dead woman's name: Joy. She also remembers the woman's age, thirty-nine, because it seemed so terribly old to Jennifer at the time, too old to still be having kids. The whole scenario reinforced Jennifer's decision to have a smaller family—at least by Mormon standards—and to be done having babies early so she could enjoy the rest of her life. Jennifer was twenty-six when the shooting happened and already the mother of two. Three years later, she had one more. A year after that, she began her long-standing relationship with her IUD.

Jennifer and Amanda were in fierce agreement regarding matters of family planning and family size. Have 'em young. Have three, four tops—although four might be pushing it. Amanda herself had three girls, and whenever somebody would ask her when or if she planned to have number four—"try for a boy?"—Amanda would narrow her eyes and deliver her answer with calculated coolness: *That's between me and the Lord, don't you think?* It was a horrible, wonderful thing to witness, the unfortunate questioner babbling her apology and Amanda icily dismissing it with a wave of her hand. Only Jennifer was allowed to ask Amanda such per-

sonal questions; only Jennifer was privy to Amanda's secrets and motives and deepest, most complicated feelings.

For reasons Jennifer never understood and that still remain unclear, for five whole years, she was Amanda DeWitt's anointed best friend. Then a Ph.D. student and divorced single mother named Chelsea moved into the ward; and in a matter of months, Jennifer's phone stopped ringing. Later that year, Dean accepted an offer to head up his company's Midwestern sales division in Minnesota. Amanda and Chelsea co-hosted a good-bye party for Jennifer and her family, during which Chelsea kept Amanda and all the neighborhood men raptly entertained with witty stories and slightly ribald pop culture observations, while Jennifer somehow found herself in the kitchen, helping the children decorate sugar cookies.

Amanda and Jennifer called each other on their birthdays for a few years after the move, but the conversations grew briefer and more stilted until they finally ended altogether. Now, they stay in touch via Christmas card. Last December, Jennifer opened the envelope to find a family photo of Amanda, her husband Will, and their three beautiful girls all decked out in holiday finery. And then, a surprise: a gloriously bald baby boy grinning up from Amanda's lap.

Jennifer had learned of her own pregnancy just days before receiving the card, and she'd been tempted to call Amanda, to revel in the serendipity of it all, to pepper her with questions about pregnancy and childbirth in the face of what doctors called "advanced maternal age." It would be like old times. The thought of listening to Amanda on the other end of the telephone line—her sharp laugh, the joy thrumming through her rich, throaty alto as she exclaimed at the news, a sound Jennifer had once truly loved and hadn't heard in years—it tempted her so much that she picked up the receiver, despite the decision she'd made with Dean not to breathe a word of her condition until she'd reached twelve weeks. But then she hesitated. She looked at the phone in her hand, and her heart clenched, apprehensive. *No*, the thought came. *Don't*.

Looking back, she counts this one event as the single tender mercy of the entire pregnancy and its aftermath. The one time that the Spirit actually protected her from harm.

* * *

Jennifer steps onto her porch and locks the front door behind her. The morning sun hangs low in the sky; the air is warm and filled with frantic birdsong. Her neighborhood, lined with imposing two-story homes and neat green lawns, is devoid of human noise: garages and windows closed tight, no little children riding tricycles on the sidewalks or playing ball on the driveways.

She slings her backpack over one shoulder and strides across the silent street toward her subdivision's nature preserve. Once inside the canopy of trees, she inhales the ripe, heavy air and feels her body relax. She loves these trails, even if she doesn't use them much anymore. Cedarville is famous for its extensive citywide trail system—one reason Jennifer chose to buy a home here was because she liked to imagine herself running on these paths, a fleet figure moving underneath the trees, alongside the lakes—but she hasn't run on them for years. Not since the summer she tore the meniscus in her knee training for a half marathon that a woman in the ward had talked her into attempting.

She heads south, knowing she has hours of walking ahead of her if she keeps following the connected trails, and that, if she keeps following them, she'll end up on the outskirts of Cedarville, its southeastern corner. There, the suburban sprawl abruptly ends, becoming farmland. Long, straight country roads. Fields.

Perhaps, she thinks, if she walks long and far enough, she'll end up field walking after all.

Moments after plunging into the nature preserve she feels her cell phone buzz against her hip. A text. She knows if she's getting a text it's from one of her kids, since Dean doesn't text with her, and neither do any of the handful of middle-aged women friends who have her cell phone number. What she should do is ignore the text. But. If she ignores it, then whichever child is sending it will worry because Mom *always* answers texts; then that child will call home and the phone will ring, unanswered; then that child will call Dean who will call both the cell phone and the home phone and become increasingly more alarmed until he decides to come home for lunch and start looking for her. Then the jig, as they say, will be up.

She pulls the phone out of her pocket. Sadie.

Hey ma so sry but i left my math book home & it has my hmwork in it & i need it by 4th per so i don't get docked. Thnk u thnk u thnk u!

Sadie is a high school sophomore and forgets her homework (or her cell phone, or her permission slip, or her cheerleading shoes) at least once every couple of weeks. Jennifer has tried grounding, allowance-docking, raging, long talks about the psychological reasons behind her disorganization, the silent treatment, and cell phone confiscation as means of treating the problem, all to no avail. Dean has told her over and over again that the *real* problem is Jennifer always rescuing her. She punishes Sadie, yes. But only after delivering the forgotten item to school.

No, Jennifer types, and presses send. She sits on a fallen log, the phone cupped in her hand, waiting for the hammer of her daughter's wrath to descend.

Wat do u mean no? Where r u? Y cant u come?

I CAN come, Jennifer types. I simply choose not to.

The response is immediate. But ma this is an emrgncy. If im late i get docked & thn my grade will be a C+ prblby and then i get on probation for cheer this summer. U know this!!!!!!!!!!!!

Yep. Consequences suck.

It will take u like 10 mins!!!!!!! Srsly mom this is not a good time for u to tch me some lesson or smthing!

Sorry, hon. I'm not coming. No amount of begging will change my mind.

Jennifer's heart beats fast and she realizes she's smiling. Smiling! What kind of sadism is this, when a mother enjoys her child's suffering? Well-deserved or not?

Ugghhh! I dont believe this! U picked the wrong day 2 go crzy mom! UGGHGHGHG!

Is there ever a good day to go crazy? Jennifer thinks, then sends one final text: Love you, hon. Have a good day.

She waits for a few minutes but her phone has fallen silent. Other than the shirring of the trees overhead, the whole world is still. Jennifer stands, brushes off her backside, arranges her pack over both shoulders, and starts to jog.

She jogs for twenty minutes straight, the longest she's run without stopping in years. Her knee feels fine. She's passed a few people on the trail—an older couple out for a walk, an intense young man all decked out in racing gear—and each person has inspected her with curiosity. She realizes she must be a confusing sight: a woman in street clothes with a backpack over her shoulders, running. The older gentleman even looked concerned, as if Jennifer were running away from someone or something and needed rescue, but she made eye contact as she passed and smiled reassuringly. He smiled back and raised his hand in a faltering wave.

Once her breath turns ragged she slows her pace, walking briskly out of her neighborhood preserve and through an older residential area. She walks alongside the busy thoroughfare bisecting Cedarville, her hair flown loose from her ponytail and whipping in the wind as cars barrel by. She walks past a playground, near a mother sitting on a bench reading a magazine while her toddler, a redheaded girl in pink tennis shoes, piles rocks at the bottom of the slide. She walks across the cracked asphalt of a gas station parking lot. She walks the eastern length of Carver Lake. She walks past a municipal tennis court where two gray-haired women play, their legs wide and white in their tennis shorts, their practiced swings both elegant and strong. She walks into a dense patch of forest ringing a medium-sized pond. She can hear the frogs, their cries like a screen door creaking.

She has walked now for over three hours without stopping, and she's finally hungry and tired. She's on a little-used trail, an offshoot of the main trail encircling Carver Lake. A number of beautiful homes back up against this path, the nicely kept grass of their long green back lawns sloping down toward the jumble of wilderness just beyond the walking trail. Jennifer sits on the slightly damp grass of a particularly well-tended yard, not caring whether her jeans get wet. After she takes a long swig of water, she opens a granola bar and eats it slowly, considering. It's almost one o'clock. She is a three-hour walk away from home, and Carson, her middle schooler, gets off the bus at 3:15. He knows the garage code and can let himself in, but thus far in Carson's middle school career he hasn't had to do it. Jennifer always makes sure she's there. But there is no way, now, she can make it back in time.

No way. She's walked too far.

She pulls the trail map out of her backpack and studies it. An hour's worth of brisk walking will lead her to the southwestern outskirts of her town, emptied into the stark brightness of farmland. Once she reaches the end of the map, she knows there are no bus stops. No municipal trails. No canopies of sheltering trees. Just long straight roads, furrowed fields, and the occasional car whizzing along the two-lane highway.

She wants to keep walking. She wants to keep walking until she disappears.

She imagines what it would feel like to reach the end of the trail and step off the pavement into the mounded furrows of newly planted crops. She would pick a path through the wispy sprouting corn until the road behind her fell away, until the farmhouses receded to smears of color against the horizon, until only the buzz and hum of silence filled her ears. Then she would lay herself down against the loamy brown earth until the sun burned itself to darkness, and when the night air covered her body, she would close her eyes and rest. All alone. Her whereabouts a mystery.

But she can't do such a thing. Can she? An image of her family crowds into her mind: Dean and Sadie and Carson and Jordan, each of them standing as still and expressionless as chess pieces on a board. They are light and hollow, carved out of balsa wood or pine, and she sees her own hairless arm sweeping across the flat plane of her imagination, sending them all tumbling. It's so easy. One swipe and they topple, helpless.

Her family. The family she made.

She remembers a voice from her young adulthood, a non-Mormon college professor at Utah State, telling her class full of mostly Mormon students that they should wait until they're older to marry and have children, not only for their own sakes, but for their children's sakes as well. She remembers the professor's words exactly: *Children deserve to be raised by grown people*. Oh, how this woman offended her! She remembers putting a hand over her abdomen—Sadie was growing inside her—and seething. But as she thinks back on all her failures as a mother, all those mistakes born of naïveté and blindness, she can't help but wonder who her

children would be if they'd been raised by someone more mature. Sadie would be kinder, Carson would have learned how to manage his anger, Jordan would have received the early intervention or medication or (what? can she even think it?) the undivided, focused attention that she knew he needed as a preschooler, but that she was too exhausted—too *selfish*—to provide.

But she can't change any of that. No matter how long or how far she walks, she can't escape these truths: She is her children's mother. She is her husband's wife. The past trails behind her like a cobbled path, each stone set into the ground with her own two hands.

Jennifer pulls out her phone. It's almost 1:00. Dean will be at lunch with a customer, she's quite sure. He's a good salesman because he knows how to keep his people happy, which means that every day from 11:30 to 2:00 he's usually out of the office, sharing an afternoon steak with some middle-aged plant manager. Jennifer can call his office phone and leave a message so at least he won't panic. She can do that much.

The phone rings once. Twice. She composes the message in her mind: *Hello, Dean. I'm fine. Please don't worry about me, but I'll be gone for a little while, maybe until tomorrow. I promise I'm healthy and safe and I have every intention . . .*

"Hello?"

Dean's voice sends a jolt of adrenalin straight to Jennifer's heart. He's at his desk? Her mind races, scrambling her memorized explanation into an incoherent jumble.

"Jen? That you?" He has caller ID. There's no turning back now.

"Yes. Yes, it's me. I didn't think you'd be at your desk."

"Oh, I get it! You only call me when you think I won't be here? Ha! How's that for wifely devotion?" He laughs at his own joke, his powerful voice booming in her ear. Jennifer closes her eyes and inhales slowly. It's difficult having a happy husband. She's never admitted this to anyone—she has a hard time even admitting it to herself, it sounds so ungrateful—but it's true. He's never understood her, really. Her sadness. Her fear.

"Listen, Dean," she begins. She has no choice, now, but to tell him. "I just want you to know I've been out today, doing some things. Some thinking. It's been good to be out."

"Good, good. I'm glad. You needed to get out. Hey, did you call that new woman in the ward who wanted to go to lunch? Annie? Or was it Amy. You know—the youngish one with all the hair . . ."

She can feel her resolve crumbling beneath the weight of his optimism. She interrupts him. "Dean." Her voice isn't loud, but it's sharp.

"Oh, hey, sorry. Go ahead," he says.

She steels herself. "Here's the thing. I need some . . . space. Some time alone, I think. Not a lot of time alone; not weeks or even days or anything like that. But just, you know. Time."

Silence fills his end of the line. She imagines him holding the phone to his ear, his face blanched with confusion and concern. Finally he answers her. "Is this about the baby?"

Is this about the baby? She wants to laugh, or cry, or both. That he even has to ask! *Is this about the baby?* Dean was the one she rousted awake in the middle of the night, her abdomen clenched like a fist, the bed they shared crimson with blood. He was the one who knelt beside her on the cold bathroom floor while she sat on the toilet, moaning and sobbing, overcome with pain and fear. He was the one who yelled at their son Jordan when he appeared, ghost-like and stricken, at the door of their room: *Get out! Get out!* He was the one who wrapped his arms around her broken body and let her sob until she was ready to clean herself up and go to the hospital.

He had been there. And then it was like he hadn't. *Let's think positive*, he told her. *We can have another*. Just days after the miscarriage he told her this, all confidence and peace. *We can have another*. As if it hadn't been her idea in the first place to have this baby, not his. As if it hadn't taken them more than a year to conceive. As if she wasn't forty years old. As if this wasn't a sign from God that His answer was no, she'd been wrong all along, and He wasn't going to let her try again.

"Of course it's about the baby," she answers, her patience straining. "It's about the baby, and it's about you, and me, and life, and God, and loneliness and futility and rage." She spits out the last syllable. She can't help herself.

"Rage?" He speaks the word as if it's a stranger to his mouth,

as if it belonged to a foreign language he'd learned in his youth but had since forgotten.

The sound of rushing blood fills Jennifer's ears. "Dean, please just understand. I need a little more time, is all. Away."

"Away," he says, not a question this time, but a statement, tight with understanding. He swallows. "You need some time away," he repeats again.

Then a sadness wells up inside her, a sorrow too corrupted by guilt to be sympathy. "I know how this sounds, but you have to trust me," she says. "I'm not *leaving*, leaving. I just need some time."

She hears the sharp crack of his office door closing. "So let me get this straight," he says, louder now, and she's somehow relieved by the sound of his anger rising. "You went on a walk, but now you don't want to come home and you thought, what? You could leave me a message and nobody would worry? You realize you sound like a crazy person, right? Do you have the car? Do you have money? Are you lost?"

She answers him slowly. "I don't have the car. I told you, I've been walking. I have money. I have food. I have my phone if there's an emergency."

"But, Jennifer, where are you going? What does this mean?"

She doesn't answer him.

"What is it you want?"

Again, she is silent. She wishes she could answer him, but she simply doesn't know what to say. *What is it you* want, *Jennifer?* Not a question, but a stone—so huge and impossibly heavy that she's lost hope of ever turning it around, a portion of its surface forever curving just outside her range of vision.

"We can have another baby," he says, a note of pleading in his voice. "It's not too late."

"Isn't it?" She wants to know. Hasn't it suddenly become too late for almost everything? Can't he see how narrow, how strait, their road has become? *We can have another baby*, he says, and he says it without thinking, without paying attention to the words as they leave his mouth. *Can*. Such a slight little word—just one staccato syllable—and so deceptive. As if the act of claiming a choice is simple enough to be contained in one tiny burst of sound.

"I've told you, Jen, I'll support you in this. Whatever it takes.

Testing. In vitro, if you need it. I know we don't have much time, but it's still possible. If having a baby is what you want, we can make it happen."

Her hands are shaking and she needs to take a few deep breaths, but the desperation in her chest won't let her inhale. She misses the child she carried, the child she lost, its absence a hollow ache inside her rib-cage. She'd envisioned an entire life with her (she'd imagined this baby a girl), a life more beautiful and purposeful than the one she currently led, one where she parented with patience and vision and could call herself wise. This baby, this girl that she lost—she could have been her delight and her redemption.

Who was she to ask such a thing of a child? Who *is* she?

She's exhausted, so tired she can barely speak. "I can't talk about this right now, Dean. I've got to go."

"Wait! Just wait. Let me come get you. We'll talk, I promise. I'll take you wherever you want. We can go . . ."

"Dean!" She is not deaf to her husband's pain. She feels like a criminal, like an assassin. Truly cruel. "I'm hanging up now. I am fine. I will be fine. I'll be in touch with you tomorrow. But I'm hanging up now."

"Jennifer, wait! I need . . ."

She presses "end." She holds down the power button and listens as the phone chimes three times, signaling its good-bye. She lies back against the grass and closes her eyes.

When she opens her eyes again, the angle of the sun tells her that it's early evening. Five o'clock, perhaps? She would take out her cell phone and look, but she doesn't want to turn it on again. She knows there will be a message and she'd be tempted to check it. Her body is stiff from sleeping flat on the hard ground. Her bones are not young.

She rises up on her elbows and listens. She hears the sighing wind, the birdsong, the creak of the frogs, but there's another sound, too, higher and more insistent, riding just above the rest. A thin, urgent wailing. The noise registers deep inside her brain: a newborn's cry.

The sound comes from behind her. She turns and looks up at the house set back from the trail and realizes immediately that she's being watched. She can make out the form of a woman hold-

ing a baby, standing inside the screened-in back porch, inspecting her. Although the length of the manicured back-yard separates them and the woman stands behind the gauzy mesh, Jennifer senses the moment their eyes meet, the subliminal *click* of seeing and being seen. The baby in the woman's arms continues to scream. Jennifer stays frozen on her elbows, caught. How long has this woman been watching as she sleeps on her lawn? How will Jennifer explain herself?

Finally, the woman opens the screen door and steps onto the deck's top step. From this distance, Jennifer can tell she's close to her own age. Her dark hair hangs like heavy curtains against her shoulders and her long gray T-shirt shows a telltale circular stain against one breast. The baby is swaddled tight in a blue receiving blanket, and his cries pierce the evening stillness, tense and rhythmic.

"Do you need help?" the woman calls.

Jennifer raises one hand and shakes her head, embarrassed. She begins to stand.

"I've been watching you for a while now," the woman says loudly, the sentence carrying past Jennifer and across the water. "I was beginning to get a little worried."

Finally, Jennifer is able to speak. "I'm so sorry!" she says. "I was on a jog. I mean, a walk. I sat down to rest a little and before I knew it . . ." She lets the sentence trail away. She raises a hand and sweeps a few blades of grass from her matted hair.

The woman takes the three steps down onto the cement landing of the deck. She squints at Jennifer. "You sure you're okay? You look a little—I don't know. Shaken?"

Jennifer tries to laugh dismissively, but it sounds stiff and forced. "No, no. I'm okay. I don't do stuff like this usually." She increases her volume over the wailing infant. "Sleep on people's lawns!"

The woman moves across the grass toward her. She's not smiling but her bearing is friendly, even as her eyes run up and down Jennifer's body. "Yeah. You don't look like the type," she says confidently, standing a few feet away now. "Although I don't think I've interacted with another human being in, oh, seventy-two hours, so my judgment could be a little rusty."

Jennifer lets some of the tension out of her shoulders, relieved

that the woman is kind. "The baby doesn't count as a human being?" Jennifer asks with what she hopes is a playful tone. The red-faced bundle bucks against his mother's tight grasp.

"Ha! Sometimes I wonder." The woman smiles ruefully. "I probably should have said *adult* human being. Or even *verbal* human being. I think I would take a conversation with a three-year-old at this point."

"How old is he?" Jennifer asks. "Three or four weeks?"

"You guessed it. Three and a half."

"Three and a half weeks old. I remember three and a half weeks old. Does it help to remind yourself that the crying usually tapers off around six weeks?"

The woman sighs. "That's what the books say. They also call breastfeeding a 'beautiful bonding experience' instead of 'hellish physical torture,' so I'm a little skeptical."

"I hear you," Jennifer says. "I bottle-fed mine. Couldn't do breast feeding, although heaven knows I tried. But you know what? It didn't kill them." Jennifer knows her nonchalance is misleading. She still remembers her defeat as she filled those bottles of formula, an ace bandage wrapped around her breasts like a guilt-grip on her heart. Three times she couldn't get her baby to latch on right, three times her nipples cracked and bled, three times she gave up, conquered. She couldn't bring herself to feed her babies in the mothers' room at church, feeling somehow unworthy to be around the breast-feeding moms and their easy, natural mothering. And she still blames herself, just a little, for her children's average test scores. The correlation is scientifically proven. She's read articles. "It's great that you're breast feeding; don't get me wrong. But don't let them make you feel too guilty about formula. Being a mom is hard enough without all the guilt."

The woman closes her eyes a beat longer than a blink. When she opens them, Jennifer is surprised to see tears welling up, then spilling out and down her cheeks. "You're right," she says softly, shifting her gaze away from Jennifer's face, embarrassed. "This really is hard enough. It's harder than hard enough." The boy in her arms has maneuvered his upper body free from the swaddling and one hand flails above his angry red face.

Without thinking, Jennifer opens her arms. "Would you let me take him for a minute?"

The woman's eyes find Jennifer's and fill with relief. "Would you? He won't let me put him down. I don't know what I'm doing wrong but he won't let me put him down." Her voice breaks. "My mother left two weeks ago, and then on Sunday my husband went out of town, and I told them I could handle it. I told everybody I could handle it, but I can't handle it. He won't let me put him down!" She's sobbing now, unashamed, her nose running and her tears staining the baby's blue blanket.

Jennifer takes the baby gingerly, then turns him so he's facing outward, his body running lengthwise along her arm, her hand gripped between his legs. She swings him slowly, side to side. All three of her babies were colicky, and all three liked this hold best. He keeps crying, but the pitch seems a little less frantic.

"Thank you," the woman says, and wipes her face with both hands. She takes a deep, shuddering breath. "What you must think of me!"

"And you're saying this to the lady who's been sleeping on your lawn?"

"You have a point," the woman says, and smiles. "I know this sounds arrogant, but I never considered that this might be too hard for me. I'm a lawyer, you know? I deal with crying babies all day long." She shakes her head. "But truly, what was I thinking?"

Jennifer smiles sympathetically.

"I'm asking you in all seriousness. What *was* I thinking? You said you did this three times. Three times! I can't imagine that. What were *you* thinking?"

Jennifer looks at this woman, this stranger, with her long unwashed hair and her tired, middle-aged eyes, and she feels a surge of love and sisterhood well up inside her, a visceral expansion so powerful that for a moment she can't bring herself to speak. "I don't know," she says quietly. "I don't know what I was thinking. I simply did it back then. It was what I was meant to do, so I did it."

"But would you change it? If you could go back, I mean. Would you change any of it?"

Jennifer knows the answer that almost any mother would give: no. Automatic, deep, instinctual. She, Jennifer, wouldn't alter the fact of choosing motherhood when she did because her *children* are the fruit of that decision. Her living, breathing children, with their warm skin and flashing eyes and fragile wrists. Hers. But she

can't simply answer this woman with a "no." The question is too complicated.

"I wouldn't trade my children for anything. I wouldn't change having *them*," Jennifer says. "But there are things I regret. I think you can regret things even if you'd never change them."

The woman nods, understanding her. The baby has relaxed against Jennifer's arm and his crying has mercifully ceased.

"Look at you," the woman says. "A pro."

"I don't know about that. No. Not a pro."

"You have three kids. Don't they give you some kind of upgraded status for that? A mothering medallion or something? Baby whispering certification?"

Jennifer laughs, loose and honest, the kind of laugh she remembers sharing with Amanda and can't recall sharing with any woman since. "Nope, no certifications here. Anyway, I was young when I had them. Too young, probably. I made a lot of mistakes. I was actually hoping for a do-over."

The woman tilts her head to one side, curious.

"I was going to have one more. Actually, no. I did have one more, just a few months ago. It was a miscarriage at eleven weeks. But there was a baby." Jennifer takes a deep breath, preparing herself to say it. "And that baby died."

"Oh!" The woman's single round syllable stabs the air, full of surprise and sympathy. "Oh, no!"

She reaches out and gathers Jennifer in an embrace. Jennifer wraps her free arm around the woman's waist and keeps her other arm tightly grasping the baby, his warm body fitting snugly between them. She buries her face in the woman's dark hair and she cries.

The two women spend hours that evening on the back lawn, talking and passing the baby between them. The woman's name is Candace, and she is forty-one years old, twice-married, Episcopalian, more Libertarian than Republican, and her high jump record at Eden Prairie High School still stands. Jennifer tells Candace everything: about field walking and Amanda DeWitt and Utah and Mormonism and her worries for her children and her husband's infuriating cheer. She tells her about the two new bras. The fascinating book by the energy healer. The last phone call between Dean and herself.

"You can stay here tonight, you know," Candace says. "I mean it. Is that weird? But you can stay with me, if you want."

Jennifer looks up at the rows of windows lining the back of Candace's house. She imagines entering Candace's mysterious guest bedroom and slipping between the cool sheets of a relative stranger. She's surprised to realize she wouldn't be afraid. She could do it. But not tonight.

"Thanks," Jennifer says. "Truly. But I think I need to be alone. For one night at least, I need to be alone."

Candace nods. "But where will you go? You realize you can't do the thing where you lie down in the middle of a corn field, right?" She smiles.

Jennifer laughs again, soft and knowing. "I know. But the Days Inn is just a few miles away. It's not too late yet. And I can walk. I want to walk." Her legs feel strong, and the night air is perfectly cool. She'll be at the hotel before it gets too dark, and then, for the first time in her life, she will check into a room under her own name and stay there, alone. The desire to do this thing—pull out her credit card, claim her anonymous shelter—wells up inside her with the force of inarguable necessity. *One night*, she thinks. She can give herself one night. A stake planted in the ground so she can tether herself.

"So after tomorrow, then," Candace says. "What do you want to do?"

For the first time in years, the question doesn't sound like an accusation. "I have no idea," Jennifer says, and then she begins to laugh again. "Isn't that awesome?"

Candace's brown eyes are luminous and wise. It's so easy to meet her gaze. "You'll figure it out," she says, and the timbre of her voice—so serious and kind, so unambiguously certain—sounds the way Jennifer had always imagined God's might, if she'd ever heard Him speak aloud.

Jennifer embraces Candace, tight. She smells like mother sweat and milk. "You have my number. You call me."

"I'll call you," Candace says firmly, and Jennifer believes her.

Jennifer leans down to kiss the baby. "What is his name?" she asks, suddenly aware she's never learned it.

"Henry," Candace says. "After my father."

"Henry," Jennifer says, brushing her lips against the top of his

warm head. “Beautiful Henry. I’ll see you again.” Then she pulls on her backpack and starts along the trail, heading west, retracing her steps toward the hotel and into the setting sun. She doesn’t need her map. Even in the gathering darkness, she remembers the way she came.

Mormon Authoritarianism and American Pluralism

Note: *This conversation between David Campbell, Russell Arben Fox, Matthew B. Bowman, and Kristine L. Haglund took place February 3, 2012, at the Lucerne Hotel in New York City.*

Russell: I wanted to start off this conversation by asking David about the subtitle of his book, "How Religion Unites and Divides Us." That concern over unity and division has been a serious one for the Mitt Romney campaign. He's made efforts to bridge divides in order to make his candidacy appealing to a particular segment of conservative Republican primary voters who, generally speaking, have not looked well upon Mormons. He's also made efforts to downplay the significance of his religious identity entirely in this election cycle, to keep the focus on the economy and on beating President Obama in November. What, if anything, do you think someone working for the Romney campaign could learn from your book that they could make use of in helping their candidate along?

David: Well, one thing they would learn—and perhaps they've already learned it the hard way—is just how it is that Mormons are perceived by other Americans. Even though I'm LDS myself, my co-author, Robert Putnam and I did not set out to write a book that emphasized Mormons or any other religious tradition in particular. Still, it does turn out that Mormons are very distinctive in many ways, and so we just couldn't help but point out what makes Mormons unusual. One of those things is the way other Americans perceive them. The degree of negativity in that view is quite striking, actually. Now, those working for Mitt Romney probably wouldn't find that fact surprising. What they would also learn

from our book is the reason why we think Mormons are perceived so negatively. And the reason is that, compared to other religious groups in America, Mormons are much less likely to form bridges or social connections with people outside their faith.

Why are Catholics and Jews viewed more positively today than in the past? They're also groups that have experienced discrimination throughout American history. The reason is simply that those two groups "bridge" far more than Mormons do. So the challenge for the Romney campaign is something that they probably can't do anything about. It's hard to imagine a presidential campaign somehow encouraging Mormons to go out and make close friends with people of another faith. So what they would learn from the book is that they'll have to deal with the reality that Romney's Mormonism is going to be foreign and alien to most voters because they simply do not know any Mormons.

Kristine: Bob Goldberg, a history professor at the University of Utah and director of its Eccles Center, recently gave a talk in which he compared Mormons and Catholics—and Jews, to some extent. It seems to me that intermarriage was a really key factor in those groups' assimilation, and somehow we have to account for the doctrinal difficulty that makes it less likely for Mormons to marry outside the faith if that's the most important bridge.

David: That observation relates to a message I've been delivering to various LDS audiences. I emphasized the challenge that the insularity—the social cocooning that goes on among Mormons—presents for how they're perceived in the rest of the population. I take pains to point out one aspect of that bonding is not going to change—that is, that Mormons have a much higher tendency than other faiths to marry "their own kind." And we all know the reasons for that—strong doctrinal reasons that go far beyond what you find in most other faiths. That's not going to change. But it extends beyond that. Mormons are also more likely to have close friends who are of the Mormon faith and less likely, therefore, to have close friends who are of another faith. So the message I deliver is that *because* of the challenge of same-faith marriage (in this context of intra-religious bonding), there's an extra imperative to reach out and make friends and form connections with people of other faiths, all of which is 100 percent consistent with what Gen-

eral Authorities have taught recently. It should not come as a surprise for Mormons to hear. Mormons just don't do it.

Russell: I was thinking of the recent article by Fred Gedicks, a law professor at BYU, where he, after taking a look at Romney's candidacy in 2008 and then at the battle over Proposition 8 in California, concludes that it's really very silly for someone in Romney's position to try to assuage doctrinal differences and find a way to get on the turf of the civil religion establishment within the United States.[1] He felt that a much wiser approach would be to embrace a more aggressive ecumenism, a liberal pluralism—to stop trying to build doctrinal bridges, and try to build more social bridges. Do you feel that the argument you're laying out here feeds into that sort of a conclusion? Would you agree with the assessment that Mormons trying to get along with Christian conservative voters are doing it wrong?

Matt: Can I complicate that a little bit? Mormons are insular, but isn't it that insularity that gives them all the social capital to build the kind of community strength you were speaking about earlier? If we were to reach out to other Christians, play games with them, and have nice social events with them, would that dilute some of the social capital Mormons have?

David: Both excellent points. Let me first address the idea of making social links, rather than trying to find theological common ground. I haven't read that article, but I would agree with the point Russell drew from it. As I've said, Americans feel very positive about Catholics and Jews and other religions as well, but there's no evidence that they really know much about what those religions believe. The Pew Research Center has done some excellent research, in which they've come up with factual questions to ask about religion, and it turns out that Americans know very little their neighbors' religion—or for that matter, their own. But they know they *like* their neighbors. They know they feel warmly toward their neighbors of other faiths. So, why is that? It's not because of beliefs those people have. It's because of the relationships they've built.

Now, Matt's question about whether building bridges beyond Mormonism might lead to a dilution or weakening of the vitality of Mormonism is the $64,000 question for any religion that wants

to be in the mainstream of American life. One could argue that the arc of Catholic history over the last fifty years has been gaining acceptance in the mainstream of America at the price of what made Catholics distinctive. (One can argue about what's cause and what's effect there, because lots of changes were happening in Catholicism at the same time it was moving into the mainstream.)

In the case of Mormonism, I actually think that Mormons today have such a tendency to bond that, even if they were to bridge to other religions more, they're in no danger of losing distinctiveness in either this generation or the next—maybe three generations from now we could talk about that. But as long as Mormonism maintains its distinctive practices—temple worship and all the other practices that set Mormons apart—I'm not terribly concerned about the dilution of the faith's vitality.

Russell: This discussion about how Americans may be confident in their knowledge of their own beliefs but generally have very little accurate knowledge about what their neighbors believe or what any other churches believe feeds into a model of American public life that a lot of people would describe as "liberal." They'd say that this is a liberal, individualistic society, where belief is decided by a person's individual conscience and it's not much dictated by the churches they might happen to associate with. A lot of liberals would argue that that's a good thing, that it's going to create a public square that's very amenable to the sorts of things that allow democracy and the principles we value about a free society to flourish. Are organized religions with a strong authoritarian structure, like Catholicism or Mormonism, a threat to that kind of society? And in order to build the kinds of social bridges we're talking about here, are we going to have to anticipate a liberalization that will move us away from that authoritarian structure? Is that a price that will simply have to be paid because there is no way to function or flourish politically in a liberal society without it?

David: Well, I understand what you're saying, but I think it's easy to overstate the authoritarian nature of Catholicism (and I say that as someone who teaches at Notre Dame) and of Mormonism. And I say that because we know that, within Mormon culture, there's a lot more "play in the joints" as to how people live out

their Mormonism than you might be led to believe by just reading the material produced by the Church or just visualizing those organizational charts on paper that say they're describing how things are supposed to work. My experience is that, in a typical ward, the chain of command that is supposed to be followed is often loosely interpreted. And I think that's just the nature of people, or at least the way that Americans live their religion, because, after all, we live in a world of religious choice. That's a fact of social life that even local LDS leaders have to be thinking of. If you're not allowing your religion to meet people's expectations, they'll stop showing up. They'll go elsewhere. So, even though we don't normally think of local LDS leaders as having to be innovative and entrepreneurial and creative the way Protestant pastors do, they still do have to be somewhat responsive. There's a little bit of latitude given.

I'd say further that it's important to keep in mind that not only can people choose to leave the Church, but people also choose to come into the Church. So despite the "authoritarian" nature of the Church you're describing, it's still something people choose to be a part of, and that's a very different world than one in which people can't leave or enter at will. This is not a matter of ascription, it's a matter of choice, and that's what helps Mormonism or Catholicism or any other top-down hierarchical organization function in society—that there's a little more democracy than it might seem at first.

Kristine: There's a lot of talk lately about threats to religious freedom from this pluralistic society, a sense that the United States is somehow newly or more intensely threatening to the ability of Mormonism and other religions' ability to practice their faith on the ground. Do you see that? Or is it issue-driven? Will it go away when our anxiety about gay marriage lessens?

David: Well, these are real concerns, not just within the LDS community but with other faith groups, especially this week with the decision by the Obama administration to require all health insurance plans to cover birth control. The particular issue of birth control per se is not of huge concern to Mormons, but I can assure you that it's a big concern at Notre Dame, and it should matter to Mormons, on principle. So this is a live issue; it's a real thing. I'm

not as convinced that religious freedom is truly under attack, however, in the United States, because this is still a highly religious country. It's a country that has provisions written into its Constitution protecting free exercise and avoiding establishment of religion, and I see lots of counter-evidence suggesting that religions are flourishing.

What's different—what we're undergoing right now—is a recognition of increased diversity of religions, the question of how to accommodate religions that don't fall within the Judeo-Christian framework. But we should remind ourselves that the very fact that we use the term "Judeo-Christian" means we've done this before. There was no such thing as "Judeo-Christian" at the time of the founders; it was introduced later on. And one day we may have another term that accommodates Jews and Christians and Mormons and Buddhists and Hindus and Sikhs and Muslims.

Russell: You already hear people trying out "monotheistic religions" to include Muslims. So there's diversity but also the introduction of choice. Maybe in matters of law, that choice was always there, but I think that technological and economic changes in American life have resulted in a significant pluralization of society and the breaking apart of a lot of customary norms, with the result that choice has become a greater reality in even these authoritarian religions.

Matt, you've just published a book about the Mormon people. Do you feel as though there came a particular time when choice and other sorts of liberal concerns, as they might be defined American society, became issues for the Mormon Church? I can see several points in history where you could argue that it was beginning, but where do you see it?

Matt: Well, I think to some extent, it's there from the beginning. Mormonism is one of these new religions that's playing around in a disestablishment America. Mormons are losing people to Methodists, Methodists are losing people to Mormons, and there's some clash there, some going back and forth. We talk about Mormonism *becoming* a denomination, but there's a sense in which it really was just a denomination for the first ten years or so. It was not seen as that different from, say, the Disciples of Christ or other innovative Protestant sects. Mormonism's exclusivity and

its claims of being the "New Israel"—the sense that this was a culture as much a religion—doesn't really emerge until Missouri in the late 1830s.

Russell: So in earliest Mormonism, let's say, you've got Oliver Cowdery penning Section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants . . .

Matt: And you've got Cowdery and Whitmer getting excommunicated for saying things like "we will not allow religion to trammel our freedoms."

Russell: Very liberal language. So, let's say that goes away and is followed by a theocratic period. When does it come back?

Matt: I don't know that it ever really goes away. We have this idea of a Golden Age in the early Utah period, but the reality looks different. Inactivity has always been as much of a problem as it is now for the Church; meeting attendance is just not that high in the Utah period. Brigham Young is always complaining about people like Almon Babbitt being "lukewarm Mormons." Members will go off to the East and not come back, and he's constantly preaching that members who don't live their religion should go to California and hell in that order. This is going on—this is why they have the "Reformation" in 1856–57, because there's this sense that this idealized Zion, this New Israel, is not what it was cracked up to be.

David: And this same dichotomy between the ideal and the real continued even into the early part of the twentieth century. We actually have empirical data—surveys done of BYU students—who are asked questions basically about the Mormon catechism: Do you believe that the First Vision really happened? Do you believe in the historical nature of the Book of Mormon? And the percentage of students who answer affirmatively is very low, shockingly low. Something changed between then and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Matt: Part of that is that there were a fair number of non-Mormons at BYU until the Wilkinson period—a lot of children of miners from Price and other non-Mormon Utahns sending their children there. But, yeah, there's a hardening of notions of orthodoxy and exclusivity in the 1950s and 1960s.

Kristine: But pre-correlation?

Matt: Where I've seen these surveys is in *The Angel and the Beehive*, and Mauss contrasts the answers in the '30s with those done in the '70s. By the '70s, the percentages who answer these questions affirmatively is way, way up. By the '70s, 99 percent say that Joseph Smith is a prophet, 95 percent say that the Book of Mormon is historical, that sort of thing.[2]

Russell: Well, then, to tie in some of the concerns we were raising before, does this trend suggest that the political problem of Mormon insularity—the lack of bridge-building between Mormons and their neighbors—is a recent one, a problem two generations old, and that, perhaps, if Mitt Romney had run for president in, say, 1948, Mormonism *wouldn't* have seemed weird?

Matt: You know who *didn't* have a "Mormon problem"? George Romney. George Romney is giving interviews in 1968, going on about how wonderful it is to be a Mormon, and how Mormonism has made him the man he has become, and *Time* magazine is fawning all over him. So there *is* a shift. I think much of it has to do with the rise of the Evangelical Right.

Russell: So it's not that we became insular, but that they raised the bar for inclusion?

Matt: I think it's much like what David was saying about Catholicism earlier. There's a sense that Mormon authoritarianism, this grim specter of the hierarchy, is something that has always been more image than fact, something that other people fear more than Mormons actually experience it.

David: It's actually hard to make this comparison between Mormonism today and its insularity—that's maybe too strong a word; let's call it social cocooning—and what we might have observed in the 1800s or the first half of the twentieth century. Today, while Mormons are still concentrated in the Mountain West, they're much, much more widely dispersed throughout the country than they were then. So, while there was a lot of insularity then, it was dictated by geography.

Russell: And by the communication technologies of the time.

Matt: But actually, the percentages of Church members living in Utah in the first few decades of the twentieth century are fairly

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Matt: But actually, the percentages of Church members living in Utah in the first few decades of the twentieth century are fairly

low. At statehood, it's 56 percent.[3] So, there's this myth of Zion that maybe has never actually been true.

Kristine: Can we talk about generational attrition? Is that new? Or has the retention of the next generation always been this much of a problem for the Church?

Matt: It is true, I think, that the Reformation in the 1850s, the establishment of the Retrenchment Association in 1869 (that turned into the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association), the Aaronic Priesthood reforms of the 1870s and the corresponding Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, were aimed at young people, but I don't know if that reflects an actual drifting away, if Perry Miller's "declension of the young generation" is really happening, or if people are just responding to anxieties about what *might* happen.

David: I don't have any data on trends in Mormon retention rates over time. I can speak however, about the retention rates in Mormonism compared to other religious traditions now. For all the concern that is raised about defection/disaffiliation/going inactive, Mormons actually set the bar pretty high for themselves. If we used a relative standard, Mormons are doing better than most other denominations. But "better" is nowhere near 100 percent; "better" is 60–65 percent.

Kristine: That's still higher than you'd think from some of the alarmist rhetoric.

David: That's captured at one point in time. That's Mormons-across-the-age-spectrum. If we had better data and could focus more specifically on young people, maybe it would be higher or maybe we'd locate some large-scale defection. That's certainly happening in other faiths; and if it were happening in Mormonism, it's likely to be just Mormons following the national trend, rather than there being any distinctive problem among Mormon youth.

Matt: Are these people switching faiths or simply becoming nonaffiliated?

David: A little bit of both, although the dominant trend is to become unaffiliated.

Kristine: "Spiritual, but not religious?"

David: Yes. The term Robert Putnam and I and others have used is the "Nones."

Russell: So, going back to my original question about Romney's dilemma, let's say that there's some recognition among the Mormon cohort around Romney that this "insularity" is the result of a mutually reinforcing perception that has become real, or at least reportable, in terms of data. Do you think this means that a hypothetical President Romney could, safely, simply set aside the historical forms that journalists or others might cast their concerns or suspicions in? I'm thinking in particular of my friend Damon Linker's book,[4] where he describes what he thinks a liberal society should be and, with an admirable lack of irony, takes a look at Mormon history and some rather apocalyptic statements that have been made in the past—and some more recently—and concludes that Mormonism is an authoritarian religion. Now, maybe it has never really been all that authoritarian, and maybe that mutually reinforcing perception we were talking about has been going on for a while. But now we have a situation where there's this historic distrust, Mormons are a little more insular than they perhaps ought to be, and that makes it easy for people to throw around words like "cult," and worry about the prophet calling up President Romney. So do you think Romney can sail above all these concerns and simply not engage those perceptions (distortions)? Or will he be forced to dig into them, explain Mormonism, and insist that he's not getting calls from Salt Lake in order to establish his liberal bona fides?

Matt: It's true, I think, that in practice Mormonism is much less authoritarian than detractors have accused it of being. There is, nonetheless, rhetorically and theologically in the Church, this idea that the prophet is someone who speaks for God. The Primary children sing "Follow the Prophet." And the case that Richard Bushman and others have made against this rhetorical strain is that *in practice* this has never actually happened. In practice, Reed Smoot was a boring, middle-of-the-road Republican senator who did not try to do anything bad to the republic; in practice, the First Presidency does not send telegrams to members of Congress telling them how to vote. But this authoritarianism exists on an ideational level.

Russell: So is the fact that it is mostly ideational going to enable Romney to escape it? Or will any Mormon president be dogged by the constant suspicion that he's an illiberal theocrat just biding his time?

David: I'm often asked by reporters whether Romney will have to give a speech about his religion, and my answer is that we just don't know and that *he* doesn't know. Barack Obama did not know that circumstances were going to conspire to compel him to give a significant speech about race (and religion) in the heat of the 2008 primaries. Mitt Romney does not know whether circumstances are going to conspire to compel him to give a speech about Mormonism. Should he become president, we don't know whether some issue would arise or whether some pressure will be brought to bear that would require him to address these questions directly.

I suspect that, as a candidate, he'll do everything he can to avoid speaking about his religion, but should he win the presidency, all bets are off. We don't know what will happen. We can be confident that the Church leaders in Salt Lake City will do everything they can to avoid any suggestion that they're trying to influence the White House. So I don't think Romney would ever have to worry about responding to something his church does. But who knows?

Russell: I know some people at BYU and elsewhere who think that the Church leadership doesn't want him to win.

David: I wouldn't be surprised if, behind closed doors, some General Authorities might express ambivalence.

Russell: Well, that's saying something, since they're all Utah Republicans. Admitting ambivalence is pretty impressive.

Kristine: They're not *all* Utah Republicans! There are at least two Democrats!

Matt: Would the Church have mounted something like Prop 8 if Romney were president?

David: That's a really great question. I am willing to go on record as saying I don't think the Church would have. The Church is very careful about how and where it chooses to mobilize its members. We don't really know what the criteria are for making those deci-

sions; but even with gay marriage, the Church doesn't get involved in every ballot initiative.

Russell: Well, then, maybe liberal Mormons should *want* Mitt Romney to be elected, because it would force the Church to retreat even further from political life, to avoid the perception of behaving theocratically.

David: And of course, it also raises the question of whether the Tabernacle Choir could perform at Romney's inauguration without an apparent conflict of interest!

Russell: Or Donny and Marie!

Kristine: Well, the question of what liberal Mormons should want tempts me to get on my soapbox about why the Church should be *more* involved in politics, rather than less.

David: Because politics is a moderating force on the Church?

Kristine: No, just because there's a broad range of issues with moral valences about which I think the Church should not be silent—poverty, child welfare . . .

Russell: I've thought for years that it would be a good thing if the Church, institutionally, got involved in partisan politics. And the reason why I thought that—and I still kind of think so (although I recognize that there are huge holes in my reasoning)—is because then there would be no getting around the fact that there would be active, temple-recommend-holding members who disagree with their Church leaders about politics. That situation would force the Church to recognize political pluralism within its own ranks.

David: There's another wrinkle here—a thread I was trying to tease out. Let's look at the case of Evangelical Christians. At the time of the emergence of the Religious Right, the activists in those ranks were far, far from the mainstream of American politics. They held opinions that were way out in right field. But if you look at members of that group who became involved in politics on a regular basis—the kinds of people who became party delegates, attended national conventions, that sort of thing—there's good evidence that, over time, their attitudes have shifted. They've become more accepting of democratic norms, and their opinions have moved toward the moderate middle. There's a lot of evi-

dence that simply being involved in the process of politics, the give and take and compromise that even intra-party politics entails, has a liberalizing (small "l") effect.

Russell: Is there any kind of historical analogue here, Matt? Say, when statehood came and all of a sudden we had apostles serving as senators—it was a very different world then . . .

Matt: . . . and much more contentious. There were all sorts of problems—you had folks like Apostle Moses Thatcher and Seventy B. H. Roberts, who mounted campaigns to hold political office against the wishes of higher-level Church leaders. Moses Thatcher was removed from the Quorum of the Twelve because he accused the First Presidency of meddling in politics. And he was right. They were. It has definitely become less turbulent.

Russell: But a lack of turbulence is not necessarily a good thing.

Matt: Maybe. But the Church has become more hands-off and has gotten much more subtle, perhaps, and smarter, in the ways that it exercises influence and persuasion.

David: Yeah, I think all the evidence suggests that, in Utah itself, the Church really doesn't do much actively in politics, because it can make its wishes known by subtle signaling. And in many cases, the Church can reasonably guess which way the votes will go, just because it's relatively easy to predict how orthodox Church members will behave politically, at least on some issues.

Matt: There are surprises, of course, like the immigration issue, where the Church blew the Republican Party out of the water . . .

David: And in those cases, it's remarkable how quickly Mormon politicians respond when the Church speaks. For example, a few years ago when the Utah State Legislature was considering legislation to allow concealed weapons to be carried in churches, the LDS Church made it clear they didn't think that was such a good idea. You can see why, from the perspective of Church leaders . . .

Kristine: Yeah, I've been in some Sunday School classes . . .

David: Right. So the legislature backtracked quickly.

Matt: Or, longer ago, the MX missile was a similar case. There's a fair amount of evidence that the Church is a couple notches to the left of the Republican Party in Utah.

Russell: There are always so many variables, so many factions in the construction of any kind of political movement. Mitt Romney has taken positions that appeal to a certain segment of the Republican electorate that he hopes will put him over the top and give him the nomination; he has communicated to them opinions on immigration, for instance, that seem to conflict with the Church's position. There may not be a lot of substance to that conflict, but that won't be the only time it happens. So how might a hypothetical President Romney manage situations in which his positions are at odds with Church positions?

David: I think it's fair to say that there's really a small number of issues on which an official Church position can be discerned, and most of those are not in areas where a chief executive really has a lot of influence—casino gambling in states, liquor laws in Utah . . . immigration is really the only one that a president would have to deal with. When you get right down to it, it's really a very short list of policy issues about which the Church has spoken out officially. There are all kinds of issues about which one might try to draw inferences from Church teachings about what the Church's position might be, but that's not at all the same thing as an official policy position. There's a hierarchy of issues that matter to the Church, and on the most important ones—gay marriage, for example—the Church's position is very clear. But there will be lots of other issues on which one might reasonably infer a Church position, but it's not going to rise to the level of affecting your standing in the Church to disagree.

That's also true in Catholicism. Abortion matters a lot to the Catholic hierarchy, capital punishment matters some, and other issues really not so much at all.

Kristine: Before we wrap this up, can we turn from how a Mormon president might govern to the question of how having a Mormon candidate will affect Mormons and maybe Mormonism?

One of the parts of your work that's most interesting to me, David, is the data on how warmly Mormons report feeling toward members of other faith groups, as compared to the rather less warm feeling that members of other faith traditions report about Mormons. I think this is a reality that many Mormons could be comfortably oblivious about until recently. But now, from the re-

action to Proposition 8 in California, conservative Mormons learned something about how virulently they can be disliked on the left; from the vote in South Carolina, they're likely to learn how much they're disliked on the right, while from the sneering of the *New York Times* editorial page, for instance, it must be clear to liberal Mormons that they are similarly disliked, and I wonder how (or whether) that will affect Mormons' self-presentation. Will we keep begging for people to like us with "I'm a Mormon"-style PR, or will we resurrect the rhetoric of being persecuted for righteousness' sake? How will Mormons cope with this? I think it does shake us up. It's a big deal.

David: It *is* a big deal. The Mormons' sense of persecution has never really gone away. We asked a question about this on our survey: "Are your values threatened in society today?" Mormons are one of the groups that are most likely to say their values are threatened. That can be interpreted in lots of ways, but it's consistent with the idea that Mormons are being persecuted—that the world is out to get them.

Matt: In the most recent Pew survey, 46 percent of Mormons say they've been victims of discrimination based on their religion.

Kristine: And that's even more specific than just saying your "values" are threatened.

David: Right—so that's both perception on the part of some Mormons, but also some reality; they really are experiencing negative comments or other slights.

A minute ago, you raised an interesting question about what the reaction to this perceived (and real) dislike will be. Let me answer it by saying what I hope the reaction will be. I actually fear that the "I'm a Mormon" campaign may have a completely unintended effect on Church members. If individual Mormons think that the Church, with a capital "C", is taking care of Mormons' image problem, they may conclude that they don't have to individually worry about it. And if that's the result, it will not help Mormonism's image at all. A PR campaign won't hurt, but it won't help that much in terms of how Americans perceive Mormons. Now, if the ad campaign leads to conversations, opens doors, then it will have been a success. But if it just leads to people thinking, "Oh, thank goodness this is taken care of. Now I don't have to en-

gage with my neighbors, because that's hard—they'll ask questions about what I believe, they'll offer me coffee when I go over there, or invite me for a barbecue on the Saturday night before fast Sunday . . . Thank goodness Brandon Flowers is taking care of it," then it will have failed.

But I do think that those individual efforts can make an enormous difference. In 1960, if you had told JFK that, in fifty years, Catholics would be one of the most respected and accepted religions in America, that the Supreme Court would have a majority of Catholics and not a single Protestant, that there would have been multiple candidates for president in both parties who were Catholic and that the issue of their religion simply did not come up, he would have said, "You're crazy! Look what I'm having to go through, and I'm not even a serious Catholic." But something changed. Catholics have now moved completely into the mainstream; and if it can happen for Catholics, I'm convinced it could happen for Mormons, too. Maybe we don't want it to, but if we do, it will happen as individual Mormons build bridges and social connections and real friendships with their neighbors.

Notes

1. Frederick Mark Gedicks, "Truth and Consequences: Mitt Romney, Proposition 8, and Public Reason," *Alabama Law Review* 61, no. 2 (2010): 337–71.

2. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 179.

3. Reid L. Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 52.

4. Damon Linker, *The Religious Test: Why We Must Question the Beliefs of Our Leaders* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

Making Visible the Hand of Ritual

Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds. *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005); Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds. *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005); Devery S. Anderson, ed., *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011).

Reviewed by Stephen C. Taysom

Although we may not know it, we live our lives immersed in ritual. Many of our daily exchanges with other human beings are ritualized. We often categorize and compare religions by referencing how highly structured, or not, their liturgical worlds are. I grew up being told that Mormons avoided ritual because it connoted empty practice and vulgar symbolism. The truth is, however, that Mormon temple worship is among the richest symbolic systems of worship in Christianity.

Within the temple rituals, one can, for example, identify almost all of Catherine Bell's six genres of ritual action. Bell was, before her untimely death from cancer in 2008, among the most prominent scholars of ritual theory in the world. A specialist in Chinese religion, Bell not only studied rituals but also produced important work on the history of the study of ritual. Bell's work has allowed a new generation of scholars to apply ritual studies theory to a strikingly broad range of specific religious traditions.

Given the strength of the theoretical framework available, it is time that the Mormon temple ritual receives serious study *as ritual*. Unfortunately, it has not received as much of this attention as it should have.[1] Since Joseph Smith introduced the temple endowment in 1842, it has been a source of curiosity, contempt, and even fantasy for those outside of the faith. Even for insiders, the temple has always been somewhat perplexing. Because Mormon tradition holds that matters of any specificity regarding the temple ceremonies must not be discussed outside the temple itself,

those who are preparing to attend for the first time are understandably nervous. Adding to this tension is the fact that the temple is simultaneously the heart of Mormon piety and the least "Mormon" thing that most Mormons do.

In a Church where the sacramental elements are bread and water, there is no local professional clergy, and many Church buildings are centered around an indoor basketball court, the temple ceremonies represent a different sort of devotional mode altogether. They are liturgically rich and involve ritual vestment changes and symbolic body posturing, sacred words and the enactment of a holy and comprehensive mythology. No other Christian church in America comes close to the level of individual involvement in the abstract ritual performance of a sacred story that is found in LDS temples.

Most Mormons know very little about the history of the temple endowment. Signature Books, in its three-volume documentary history of LDS temple worship, has given a great gift to scholars and believers who wish to understand the historical development of these rituals through a study of the documents that believers have produced. This review looks at these three volumes, focusing on how the documents collected in each volume illuminate the possible future study of LDS temple worship, as well as what the documents tell us about using the history of temple worship as a lens through which to view LDS history more generally.

Volume 1: *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*

In the first volume of the trilogy, editors Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera focus on documents bearing on the origin and development of Smith's "Anointed Quorum." This group, first organized in May 1842, initially met in Smith's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo and thereafter in a variety of private locations, including the homes of quorum members. At the group's meetings, they would initiate new members and perform a ritual that would be more or less familiar to modern Mormons as the temple endowment. The documents collected in the first volume are drawn largely from the journals of quorum members, most of whom were very circumspect in writing about the ritual. The documents range in content and style from the specific and voluble to the vague and rhetorically enthusiastic.

An example of the former is drawn from the journal of L. John Nuttall, who recorded an 1877 recollection from Brigham Young. According to Nuttall, Young recalled that, when the first endowments were given in Nauvoo, "we had only one room to work in with the exception of a little side room or office where we were washed and anointed had our garments placed upon us and received our new name. And after he [Joseph Smith] had performed these ceremonies, he gave the key words, signs, tokens and penalties" (7). A rather more succinct and veiled entry is found in Smith's diary entry from September 26, 1842, in which he wrote, simply, that he spent some time "in the large room over the store" (16). Although few of the documents contain specific information about the endowment itself, when read as a whole, these early sources provide historians with several important pieces of information, including the process by which new members of the quorum were selected and the role of the quorum's meetings in the larger problem-solving operation of the Church. On the first point, this was a small, insular group of mostly American-born converts. The nationality issue is significant in view of the fact that Nauvoo was becoming increasingly internationalized, as first the British and later the Scandinavian missions were bringing thousands of new Latter-day Saints into Nauvoo each year. Most members of the Anointed Quorum were not part of that new demographic. Members of the quorum nominated those whom they believed to be trustworthy, thus creating a web of relationships that were mapped onto the demographics of this new, sacred unit.

With regard to the second point, the documents included in this volume make it abundantly clear that Joseph Smith confronted the vast array of difficulties facing his Church in the 1840s through what he believed to be the profound spiritual power available through petitioning God in special prayer rites. These rites sanctified the entire meeting and created a sacred space in which revelation would flow unimpeded. Although the term "prayer circle" does not appear in any of the collected documents in the first volume, it is obvious from the context that the prayers offered during meetings of the Anointed Quorum involved dressing in temple robes, praying in a circle, and invoking the attention of God through the use of ritual signs. Heber C.

Kimball referred to it in his journal as the "Holy Order," and he recorded that the order prayed for rain July 10, 1845 (127). Smith and his fellow quorum members prayed about a wide range of practical issues during these sessions, including "the prosperity of Israel" (176) and "that the Lord would turn away the sickness now prevailing amongst the children in the City" (129).

Prayers were also offered up for sick individuals, and what would be categorized by scholars of religion as prayers of cursing were also mentioned. For example, Willard Richards recorded a meeting after Joseph Smith's death in which "George A. Smith prayed that the evils of the course William Smith had pursued would fall upon his own head" (135). In addition to the prayers themselves, the now-sanctified environment was used for the discussion of political, economic, and social problems that were pressing upon the Mormons. That these documents so clearly indicate that Smith conceived of and used the meetings of the Quorum of the Anointed not only to perform rituals but also as a setting uniquely suited to finding solutions to vexing problems is fascinating because the problem-solving function of temple worship among ordinary Mormons now represents one of the central features of temple worship; members speak often of receiving inspiration about practical problems during the time they spend in the temple.

Also during the period covered by the first volume, women were inducted into the Anointed Quorum and the practice of plural marriage was introduced, largely through the auspices of the quorum and the relatives of quorum members. The records are largely silent on the issue of plural marriage, as one would expect, but Todd Compton's insightful introductory essay to the first volume, as well as many of the footnotes, help readers identify subtle references to the practice.

In sum, Volume 1 is about the creation of an elite group focused on ritual practices of mythological performance, apotropaic prayer, and eternal marriage. In subsequent volumes, Bergera and Anderson's documents demonstrate how this process was first democratized and then modernized.

Volume 2: *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies*

The second volume is the longest despite the fact that it covers

only the period from 1845 to 1846. Volume 2 consists largely of lists. The majority of its nearly 700 pages are devoted to reproducing temple records concerning ordinance work performed in the Nauvoo Temple between December 1845 and the Mormons' departure from Nauvoo in February 1846. Obviously, this volume will be of interest to genealogists. But what use will historians or scholars of religion or even readers of Mormon history find in this massive collection of lists?

For me, what these records represent is a tangible manifestation of the democratization of the endowment and sealing rituals. This may seem a minor point, but in fact it represents a substantial and unusual development in the context of ritual studies. In most cases, rituals that are introduced to and, in fact, serve to create an elite are closely guarded by the elite that makes, and is made, by the rituals. In the case of the Mormon temple rites, the alacrity of the shift from the status of elite rituals to rituals serving an entire religious community, to say nothing of the shift itself, is truly remarkable. And it is in this volume that we see that shift take place.

It is one thing to be told that Mormon temple rites were democratized after the death of Joseph Smith. It is another thing entirely to read the truth of that in the lists of names. Obscure, ordinary, non-elite Latter-day Saints are initiated by the thousands into the rituals that we saw in Volume 1 being administered only to the elite. In my estimation, this is the most important, but not the only, contribution made by Volume 2.

While the masses were being washed, anointed, endowed, and sealed in the Nauvoo Temple, Church leaders were continuing their temple meetings. One of the tasks that takes up a surprising amount of Church leaders' time as chronicled in these documents is the ritual dedication of objects. The horns that held the holy anointing oil were dedicated individually. The oil, too, had to be ritually consecrated, something that was often done while the ritual actors were wearing temple robes. Most interesting, however, were the cases in which objects not directly connected with temple service underwent ritual dedication in the temple. For example, on December 16, 1845, a "letter which had been written by E[lde]r Hyde was dedicated to God with prayer that the desired object may be accomplished by it" (47).

What the documents in Volume 3 make clear is that, by the

mid-1840s, the temple itself was seen as a locus of power—not only a place set apart for the performance of sacred ritual, but a place in which actions that could be performed outside of the temple stood a better chance of achieving efficacy when performed within. The issue of efficacy is always salient in discussions of ritual. In the case of the LDS temple endowment, Volume 2 makes it clear that Church leaders believed and taught that the prayers offered up in the temple were particularly efficacious. Apostle Amasa Lyman told a group of Mormons who had just been through the endowment ceremony: "You have learned how to pray. You have been taught to approach God, and be recognized. This is the principle by which the Church has been kept together, and not the power of arms. A few individuals have asked for your preservation, and their prayers have been heard, and it is this which has preserved you from being scattered to the four winds" (120). All of these details help us develop a picture of how the Mormons viewed the power of the temple as a place and the rituals themselves as providing greater access to God and allowing God greater access to them.

These meetings also included the ritual prayer circles and discussions of the meaning of the temple endowment with Brigham Young "giving much instruction at different intervals" (58). Some of this instruction involved the proper relationships among men, women, and God. In a particularly telling temple sermon, Heber C. Kimball told the women present: "[God] did not make the man for the woman; but the woman for the man, and it is just as unlawful for you to rise up and rebel against your husband, as it would be for man to rebel against God. When the man came to the vail, God gave the key word to the man, and the man gave it to the woman. But if a man don't use a woman well and take good care of her, God will take her away from him, and give to [sic] another" (120). This fragment is significant because it demonstrates that the LDS temple endowment, like most rituals, allows participants to incorporate contemporary cultural ideals into a ritually performed mythology that is assumed to be unchanging and eternal. In this case, the notion that women were not only third in a hierarchy that ran from God to man to woman, but also that women were objects to be acted upon, possessed, and even redistributed is incorporated into the most sacred of Mormon ritual contexts.

While it is a sad truth that most nineteenth-century Americans would have found such misogyny unremarkable, one of the problems that ritual-making presents is that it tends to put believers in a double bind when it comes to social change. On the one hand, they are bound by their culture, but even when the culture begins to change, the old cultural ideas have been tied with an all-but-invisible bond to sacred ritual structures within the faith itself. As Catherine Bell noted: "Ritual must simultaneously disguise its techniques and purposes and improvisations and mistakes. It must make its own invention invisible."[2] Thus, rituals sometimes hamper efforts by religious groups to make social changes commensurate with changes being made within the broader culture. The documents presented in Volume 2 demonstrate that Mormon temple rituals follow a pattern common to many other rituals across time and space—a process by which "cultural or conventional orders, by themselves arbitrary and fragile, come to partake of the necessity and durability of natural law and brute fact."[3] In Volume 3, discussed below, we will see the modern Church negotiating this struggle to make the invention visible so that change can be made to the most brutish of facts without appearing to subvert the eternal rites.

Aside from the important contribution that the documents in Volume 2 make to the study of Mormon temple rituals qua ritual, they also shed light on some issues attendant to the practical management of the temple. The temple was the largest building in the area; and by the time it was completed, the Mormons in Nauvoo had become so ostracized by their neighbors that they were all focused on spending time in the temple for entertainment as well as liturgical purposes. Many of the documents record Brigham Young's efforts to control the use of the temple building for recreation—especially dancing. While he strongly supported the Mormons in their desires to kick up their collective heels, he was particularly concerned with the "wicked" individuals who found their way inside the temple. In a document extracted from William Clayton's journal, Church leaders noted that "some three or four men and perhaps more, had introduced women into the Temple, not their wives, and were living in the side rooms, cooking, sleeping, tending babies, and toying with their women." The same entry noted that "there were also many persons lounging about, who had

no particular duty to attend to, but who thought they had a right to be present, because they had once passed through the Vail" (193). The democratization of ritual apparently had its price.

Volume 3: *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000*

The third and final volume is perhaps the one that contemporary Mormons will find the most interesting. This volume is like the first two inasmuch as it illuminates a major shift not only in the history of temple worship but also in the history of Mormonism itself. In the case of the final volume, we see through these documents a church that has established itself as a staple of American cultural life but which finds itself struggling to negotiate the rough waters of modernity.

During this period, especially beginning with the twentieth century, Mormons were forced to make important choices about how far they were willing to separate themselves from the broader American culture. This process of separation was made more painful and difficult than it had been since the 1840s because Mormons were beginning to see themselves, for the first time in many decades, as full participants in the rising tide of American cultural influence. Also, the Church continued to struggle with the problem of democratization that had initially emerged during the very late Nauvoo period. Volume 3 contains many possible examples that could be used to illustrate these points, including discussions of polygamy, second anointings, suicide, and the move to the commercial production and sale of temple clothing.

Two examples are particularly illuminating: the evolution of the temple garment and the prayer circle. First introduced as part of the original Anointed Quorum endowment rites in the 1840s, by the early twentieth century the garments were beginning to pose some practical problems. Garments for both men and women consisted of thick union-suit-type articles with long sleeves and long legs. They tied up the front, had a collar, and did not feature a closed crotch. Instructions issued to temple presidents in 1904 underscored the fact that "garments . . . must not be altered or mutilated and are to be worn as intended, down to the wrist and ankles, and around the neck. These requirements are imperative; admission to the Temple will be refused to those who do not comply therewith" (139). The same instruction was reissued in 1911.

What the documents in this volume reveal is that, as late as 1911, most Church leaders understood the garments to be sacred, not only in function but also in design. In 1923, Salt Lake Temple President George F. Richards, acting as part of a committee to reexamine temple practices, pushed hard for a modernization of the garments, to include "dispensing with the collar, using buttons instead of strings, using the closed crotch and flap, and for the women wearing elbow sleaves [sic] and leg length just below the knee" (198–99). The First Presidency eventually approved the changes to the garment; and according to an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, included in Volume 3, the motivation for these changes stemmed largely from the experiences of women. "The younger of the gentler sex complained that to wear the old style with the new finer hosiery gave the limbs a knotty appearance, . . . [and] was embarrassing in view of the generally accepted sanitary shorter skirt" (200).

The *Tribune* article notes that the changes were met with resistance from some older members of the Church. One woman was quoted as saying: "I shall not alter my garments, even if President Grant has ordered me to do so. My garments now are made as they were when I was married in the endowment house long before the temple was built. The pattern was revealed to the prophet Joseph, and Brother Grant has no right to change it" (199). The point of view expressed by this anonymous woman—that the pattern of the garment was revealed to Joseph Smith and was, therefore, immutable—was the standard notion held by most Mormons throughout the nineteenth century.

In fact, one of George F. Richards's main tasks was to demonstrate to the committee of apostles that Joseph Smith had, in fact, experimented with a number of designs for the garment and that the specific pattern was not revealed from God. Once Richards had successfully made this case to most of the Church leaders (Joseph Fielding Smith voted to oppose most of the proposed changes), further modifications to the garment were increasingly frequent. In 1936 the Church moved to produce a garment "without sleeves" in order to "obviate undesirable exposure of the garment which now so frequently occurs through the wearing of present-day patterns of clothing" (241). This is a clear instance in which the behavior of the members of the Church persistently

conformed with American cultural norms and which, in turn, led to a liberalizing of ritual practice.

While one might be tempted to view this development as evidence of the weakness of hierarchy in the Church, I see this type of development as a choice on the part of the hierarchy to avoid the exacerbation of tension both between the hierarchy and its members and between the Church and the broader culture. It is worth noting that Church officials felt some ambivalence toward the changes being made in the garment. This ambivalence appeared in the requirement, in force until 1975, that all patrons coming to perform temple ceremonies were required to wear the "old-style" garment while in the temple. Eventually, however, that requirement was also dropped. In 1979, the Church authorized the production of a two-piece garment (437). As of 2011, the one-piece variety is available only by special order and is not carried in LDS Church Distribution centers. Remember that one of Bell's central arguments about ritual is that it faces the double-edged sword of power and inflexibility from the occlusion of its own construction. By making the creation of one aspect of the ritual visible again, to return to Bell's earlier framing of the issue, George F. Richards introduced a high level of flexibility to the ways Mormons wore and thought about their ritual undergarments. It is also not surprising that this development occurred in the twentieth century, a period of "unprecedented visibility of the very dynamics of ritual invention," according to Bell.[4]

On the issue of prayer circles, the documents in Volume 3 are equally enlightening. As noted in Volume 1, the prayer circle formed an important element in the meetings of the original Quorum of the Anointed. Once established in Utah, Mormon leaders performed prayer circles regularly as part of their meetings, as well as part of the endowment. Additionally, members of the Quorum of the Twelve and First Presidency formed their own private prayer circles that included members of their families as well as close friends. An excerpt from the diary of Apostle Richard R. Lyman, written when his prayer circle was disbanded in 1929, sheds light on how these private prayer circles operated: "Two weeks ago tonight . . . I met with my prayer circle for the last time—and disbanded it. The [first] presidency and the Council of the Twelve decided . . . that only official prayer circles be continued—that is, cir-

cles which have other business to do as for example high council and our weekly council meeting. It is nearly 33 years since Francis M. Lyman invited me into the circle. President Grant presided over it after the death of FM Lyman until he became president of the church—since then I have been its president" (224). These private prayer circles thus evolved with an orderly succession and invitation process and imitated in striking detail the form and function of many of the meetings that the Quorum of the Anointed held during the lifetime of Joseph Smith.

Finally, some individual stakes also had prayer circles for various priesthood quorums, as Lyman alluded to in his journal. Volume 3 includes extracts from a history of one such prayer circle that was attended by elders in the Salt Lake Stake beginning in 1898 (225). Such official, but locally organized, prayer circles persisted until 1978. That year, the First Presidency wrote: "Because of the increasing number of requests for such prayer circles, viewed in light of the rapid growth of the church, and because of the complications that holding prayer circles on Sunday have created . . . [we] have decided that such prayer circles . . . be discontinued immediately" (434). The letter suggests that a suitable replacement for the local prayer circle was for stake leaders to attend a regular endowment session and participate in the prayer circles being held there. The real difference, of course, is that the prayer circles held as part of the endowment ceremony would not allow local leaders to act as voice in the prayers and thus they would be unable to vocally ask for guidance on specific local matters.

On the surface, it appears that the case of the prayer circles demonstrates the process of what Max Weber called the routinization of charisma. Considered more carefully, however, it is clear that the documents pertaining to the prayer circles indicate several dynamic historical processes at work. First, it is clear that Church leaders were concerned with the centralization of authority and that they were aware, especially with regard to the private prayer circles, that divisions within the Quorum of the Twelve could be incubated into full-fledged schisms in the context of individual prayer circles. While it may be difficult for modern Mormons to comprehend, meetings of the Quorum of the Twelve in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were often contentious, frequently factious, and occasionally rancorous. The move

to disband the private prayer circles of such leaders may have served to lessen the propensity for division within the quorum.

Second, the move to disband local prayer circles, most of which existed in Utah, was at least as much about the increasing availability of temples as it was about an attempt to rob local authorities of power. Also, as the twentieth century progressed, so did the view of the temple as a place of devotion and contemplation, a view that was replacing the older sense of the temple as a place for ritual work. Therefore, it is not surprising that Church authorities would seek to make the temples the exclusive home of the most spontaneous and contemplative element of the ritual.

Conclusion

It is true that many elements of temple worship have been dealt with in articles and books such as David J. Buerger's *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994) and D. Michael Quinn's "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles" (*BYU Studies* 19, no. 1 [Fall 1978]: 79–105. But any historian will affirm that there is nothing quite like reading the primary source documents and working out their significance and meaning for oneself. With these three volumes of primary materials, Signature Books has bestowed a gift on readers—especially on LDS readers who want to understand the roots and the history of the rituals that mean so very much to them.

There is nothing here that would destroy faith or besmirch the sanctity of the temple rituals. On the contrary, these books function, in some sense, as manuals that will make LDS temple worship richer and more powerful for the believer; these books are a record of how hard Mormons have worked over the course of almost two centuries, how much thought and effort and time and money they have invested in maintaining these rituals, in keeping them relevant, in ensuring that their essential elements did not wash into the sea of anachronism as the culture changed around them. Indeed, these documents provide a more powerful testimony of the enduring importance of temple rituals to Mormons everywhere. Furthermore, the books present scholars of religion and ritual with a wealth of data that can be analyzed and interpreted in sophisticated ways that will further our understanding of the relationship between ritual and cultural development.

Notes

1. One major exception to this trend is Kathleen Flake, "'Not to be Riten': The Mormon Temple Rite as Oral Canon," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 9, no. 2 (1995): 1–21.

2. Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 224.

3. Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 166.

4. Bell, *Ritual*, 224.

Errand Out of the Wilderness

Matthew Bowman. *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith*. New York: Random House, 2012. 352 pp. Hardback: $26.00. ISBN 978–0–679–64490–3

Reviewed by Robert Elder

In Perry Miller's famous essay on the Puritans, he described how John Winthrop and his fellow dissenters left England in the hopes of establishing on the other side of the Atlantic a godly society that could serve as a model for the reformation of the mother country and its church. In the wake of the English Civil War and as the end of the seventeenth century neared, their descendants were plagued by the sense that the mission of their fathers had foundered. "Having failed to rivet the eyes of the world upon their city on the hill," wrote Miller, "they were left alone with America."[1]

It was a problem that at various times in their history many Mormons would have welcomed. As Matthew Bowman's *The Mormon People* makes clear, despite the striking similarities between the Puritan "errand into the wilderness" and the Mormon saga in America, for most of their history Mormons have suffered the opposite problem from the Puritans. The rest of the country watched, often intently, as Mormons undertook their errand into, and then out of, the wilderness. Bowman offers a timely account of this still ongoing process in a book that is clear-eyed in its approach to a church he clearly loves as well as beautifully written, braiding together a fascinating narrative with insightful analysis.

Bowman narrates the story of Mormon origins in a style remi-

niscent of the eminent Richard Bushman (to whom the book is dedicated). Dismissing portrayals of Smith as a "religious genius" whose fertile imagination gave rise to a new religion, Bowman relates Smith's visions, and the discovery and translation of the golden plates, through the believing eyes of Smith and his early converts. Acknowledging that his readers may find the story too odd or strange to believe, Bowman skillfully navigates the familiar shoals of Mormon origins by making Smith's claims intelligible within the cultural context of an era in which "the intellectual revolutions of the Enlightenment still stood locked in uneasy embrace with the intuitive and mystical world of the premodern age" (24). Here Bowman relies on the work of historians like Gordon Wood and Nathan Hatch, and he could have emphasized even more strongly that Mormonism was not alone during this period in combining what Wood called "subterranean folk beliefs" with the forces of democratic individualism and Enlightenment rationality. Nathan Hatch described how the eccentric Methodist itinerant Lorenzo Dow frequently and openly referred to visions and prophecies in his peripatetic movements throughout the country. Caleb Rich, the Universalist leader of the late eighteenth century, determined to reject all religious authority and work out the truth for himself, but he came to his belief in universal salvation through encounters with divine beings as well as his study of the Bible. However, these historians also make clear that the disintegration of religious and social authority in the wake of the Revolution and disestablishment was just as important as the ebbing tide of an enchanted world or Enlightenment rationality in making people willing to credit such signs and wonders and evaluate new revelations for themselves. Here we see more clearly than anywhere else that Joseph Smith and Mormonism were not just the meeting of two worlds but also the products of a uniquely American historical moment.

Early Mormonism combined the characteristics of several other contemporary movements, such as William Miller's prophetic and apocalyptic millenarianism and John Humphrey Noye's utopian communalism. Unlike these other movements, which addressed the concerns of early-nineteenth-century men and women piecemeal, Mormonism satisfied what Bowman terms "a whole host of hungers" (40), spiritual and social, that

men and women living in the midst of the clamor and ferment of the early Republic felt deep in their souls. From the start, the idea of the family as a spiritual community was central to Smith's religious vision. His religion spread first through his own family and friends, and then, rapidly, through the family and social connections of early converts. Bowman does a wonderful job holding on to this thread throughout the book, showing how the sacredness of the family lay at the root of plural marriage and then, following the discarding of polygamy at the turn of the century, to the reconceptualization of monogamy as a form of "celestial marriage" in the twentieth century. Another recent book, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* by Samuel Morris Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), makes a complementary point: that dealing with the disorientation and loss of a loved one's death shaped nearly all aspects of Smith's revelation and early Mormonism.

Throughout the book, Bowman portrays the tension between Mormonism's distinctly American inheritance and the prophetic vision of its founder, a tension that would surface unpredictably throughout its history. Bowman captures the struggle Smith's early followers went through as they negotiated the tension between the democratic individualism of the Jacksonian era and the authority with which Smith's revelations imbued the emerging organizational hierarchy of the Church. An early convert, Methodist minister Ezra Booth, resented a revelation that commanded him to walk to Jackson County, Missouri, preaching all the way, and then to repeat the exercise in reverse (53). Bowman echoes here Terryl L. Givens's *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), which identified a tension between individualism and authoritarianism as a defining characteristic of Mormonism.

It is interesting to note that Mormonism was different only in degree, not in kind, from Ezra Booth's erstwhile Methodism in this regard. For all the individualistic emphasis of evangelical Protestantism, Francis Asbury still claimed apostolic authority for himself and his Methodist lieutenants and constructed an ecclesiastical hierarchy that, in sharp distinction from the Baptists, wielded considerable power over a rapidly burgeoning movement in a manner that mirrored the tensions described by Bowman. Yet

there were important differences. Bowman observes that, while the Methodists, Baptists, and, to a lesser degree, Presbyterians sent out circuit riders and missionaries to build the kingdom of God by establishing a far-flung archipelago of Christian communities, for the first few decades of its existence Mormonism called converts to come together to build an earthly Zion. Furthermore, Mormonism challenged one of the central tenets of evangelical Protestantism: the centrality and ultimate authority of the Bible. As Booth complained, "When they [Smith's revelations] and the Scriptures are at variance, the Scriptures are wrongly translated" (53). Booth did not make the transition from Methodism to Mormonism gracefully, although many other Methodists did.

Just as the Erie Canal shaped the emergence of Mormonism in upstate New York, the transcontinental railroad, completed at Promontory Point, Utah, in 1869, reshaped the Mormon experience in the West. Yet the railroad only deepened, and did not precipitate, the Americanization of Brigham Young's western Israel. Bowman's narrative makes clear that the westward trek, which transformed Mormonism from a sect into a faith tradition with its own history, did not eradicate the deep pulsing of American individualism. Try as they might, Young and the other leaders in Utah could not convince Mormons to embrace "consecration," the communal ownership of property that Joseph Smith had attempted to institute back east. Apostle Orson Pratt denounced the "Gentile God of property" (113) and distributed printed forms for Mormons to deed their property to the church, but most of the faithful preferred to retain their property and pay a 10 percent tithe. The railroad, and the flood of cheap goods and tenets of capitalism that came with it, made the establishment of a self-sustaining Zion a fading dream. The U.S. government's infamous crackdown on polygamy during the 1880s, known as "the Raid" to Mormons, and Utah's statehood in 1896, finally precluded the possibility of a separate Mormon Zion in the wilderness.

One of the most welcome aspects of this book is Bowman's focus on the contours of twentieth-century Mormonism, often given brief attention in the rush to examine the Church's dramatic early history. In an innovative chapter titled "Eternal Progression," Bowman examines the affinities between Mormonism and Progressivism in the early twentieth century. Here, more than anywhere else

in the book, the confluence of American and Mormon identity is evident. The enduring optimism about human ability that Mormonism had absorbed from the reverberations of the Enlightenment in upstate New York found a natural partner in Progressivism's reforming spirit and unshakeable belief in the possibility of progress. Mormon theology during this period easily took on the tenor of the age. Theologians like James E. Talmage renovated the notion of celestial marriage to accord with monogamy, and B. H. Roberts and John A. Widstoe wrote about the harmony between religion and science, and the "comprehensible nature of the universe and humanity's godly ability to act on that comprehension" (165). Bowman only briefly addresses how these developments played out among everyday Mormons, but his treatment of Church leaders and intellectuals is fascinating nonetheless.

Yet even during an era Bowman describes as the greatest convergence between Mormonism and mainstream American culture, Mormonism retained its stubborn distinctiveness. Bowman points out that while Talmage, Roberts, and Widstoe shared some of the characteristics of their liberal Protestant counterparts in the Progressive era, they remained committed to the primacy of revelation and the literal truth of scripture—commitments that set them apart and marked them as distinctly Mormon. "Mormonism," writes Bowman, "existed on a much narrower theological scale" than American Protestantism, which could encompass Harry Emerson Fosdick alongside Bible Belt fundamentalists (181).

Bowman's ability to weave the Mormon story instructively into larger American patterns while at the same time showing how it retained its singular character is showcased again in an illuminating discussion of the work of Mormon theologian Bruce R. McConkie. McConkie turned aside from the broad and inclusive scholarship of his Progressive era forebears in favor of a tighter focus on the Mormon canon, and Bowman places him in the context of the conservative Protestant Biblicism of the same era. Yet instructive though the parallel is, Bowman makes it clear that McConkie cannot be called a "fundamentalist Protestant in Mormon clothing" (201). To prove his point, he quotes McConkie's reply to a Mormon academic opponent: "It is my province to teach to the church what the doctrine is. It is your province to repeat what I say or to remain silent" (202). It is a risible understatement to say that such an asser-

tion of doctrinal authority would not have been well received by McConkie's fundamentalist Protestant counterparts.

Bowman's book contains an implicit warning to those who believe they can accurately predict Mormon political behavior. In the last few decades, Mormons have often been considered one of the most reliably Republican political constituencies, yet Bowman demonstrates that in matters where religion and politics differ the Church has often been willing to break ranks with its political allies. In 1980 Ronald Reagan won more than 70 percent of the vote in Utah. The next year Reagan announced that the military would construct an experimental missile system in the state's southern portion. Mormon president Spencer W. Kimball immediately announced, much to Reagan's surprise, that the Church was opposed to the proposal. Kimball consistently preached against Cold War militarism as a "False God," and saw the missile program as a manifestation of American idolatry (212). Reagan eventually abandoned plans to base the system in Utah, and no doubt came away a little puzzled about the strength of his support in Utah. Bowman uses this episode, along with others throughout Mormon history, to make one of his central points. Despite its transformation into the most American of religious traditions, Mormonism retains the prophetic strains of Joseph Smith's religious vision, a vision that could not have blossomed elsewhere than in American soil and which still continues to set his followers apart.

Bowman brings his history up to the present day but wisely refrains from trying to fully assess what all this might mean for the presidential candidacy of Mitt Romney, whose great-great-grandfather Parley P. Pratt was one of Smith's earliest followers. Even as Romney's role as the Republican nominee appears certain, it remains much less certain what role his faith will play in the contest. However, one thing is certain: Americans remain intensely interested in Mormonism's errand into the wilderness; and in this book, Bowman has fully taken advantage of a golden opportunity to educate them.

Note

1. Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956), 15.

Dear Diary: Joseph F. Smith's Mission Journals

Nathaniel R. Ricks, ed. *"My Candid Opinion": The Sandwich Island Diaries of Joseph F. Smith, 1856–1857*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011. 168 pp. Notes. Hardcover: $100; ISBN: 978–1–56085–219–3

Reviewed by Steve Evans

Many examples of missionary journals are available from early days of the Church. (See, for example, the diaries collected in Brigham Young University's online archive collection http://lib.byu.edu/digital/mmd/). In reading through them, one finds that they often share a remarkable number of common themes: the depraved state of the locals, the horrible food, slacker companions, and the struggles with competing missionaries of other faiths. It would seem that little has changed in the contents of these journals over time. Indeed, there must be some ur-text for missionary journals, some platonic form for writing of the mixture of doldrums, panic, and interpersonal struggle that seems common to all who embark on the Lord's errand while in their youth.

While the original missionary pictographs may be on some cave walls somewhere near Spring Hill, Missouri, this book provides a new and extremely valuable set of missionary diaries: the Sandwich Island diaries of Joseph F. Smith, tracking his mission in the Hawaiian Islands from January 1, 1856, to October 21, 1857, the last two of his three-year service on the islands These diaries cover twenty-two months; two earlier volumes, spanning presumably from his arrival in September 1854 to the end of 1855, were destroyed in a fire in June 1856. Transcribed with great attention to detail by Nathaniel Ricks, who received his master's degree in history from Brigham Young University, the diaries trace the day-to-day acts of Joseph F. through an extremely formative time. Ricks occasionally includes historical background at key points, as well as biographical detail for individuals whom Joseph F. encounters or with whom he corresponds. On the whole, the diaries are invaluable—they provide unique insight into the adolescent days of the sixth president of the Church, as he complains of

bad food and ignorant natives, as he quarrels with mission companions, and writes to potential future wives.

At age fifteen, Joseph F. departed from Salt Lake City shortly after being ordained an elder in April 1854 and spent the next three years traveling between Hawaii, Oahu, and other Hawaiian islands, at first learning the language, then presiding over various areas. Already known as something of a firebrand, Joseph F. had a headstrong personality that shines through the journals; he is unafraid, bold in declaring the messages of the Restoration and of the gathering, and brash at times in his judgments of native Hawaiians and his fellow Saints. Nonetheless, there is much that these diaries do not include. Those who are looking for the original occurrence of legendary JFS stories like that of his Hawaiian "Ma" (http://www.scienceviews.com/photo/library/SIA2838.html), the "True Blue" story (http://lds.org/manual/teachings-joseph-f-smith/chapter-12?lang=eng), or his "Dream of Manhood" (http://lds.org/general-conference/2007/04/i-am-clean?lang=eng) will be disappointed, for there is nothing in the diaries to suggest that any of these experiences ever took place. These omissions may be due to the limited time span covered by the diaries, but they still leave us without an original record about these landmark events in Joseph F.'s life. As a result, these diaries do little to corroborate the formative stories told by Joseph F. himself.

That said, the diaries themselves have some great moments of their own that have previously been unknown—nothing perhaps as grandiose as the Dream of Manhood, but a few interesting themes of note emerge:

• *Joseph as hothead*. One particular highlight is that of JFS getting into a fistfight with a missionary companion who calls him a "Damn Shit Ass" and charges that Joseph F. purposely misplaced the companion's scissors. But Joseph F. regularly loses his temper, shouting at Saints in his sermons, hotly debating local preachers, or berating natives for hoarding food instead of feeding him.

• *Joseph as racist*. His view of the native islanders ranges from love and appreciation, to expressed confidence in the eventual white skins that righteous Hawaiians will achieve, to condemning them as fundamentally lazy and dishonest. It's unclear how or whether his

view of the people evolved during the course of his mission; by my own estimation more praise is given to native islanders in the early parts of the diaries.

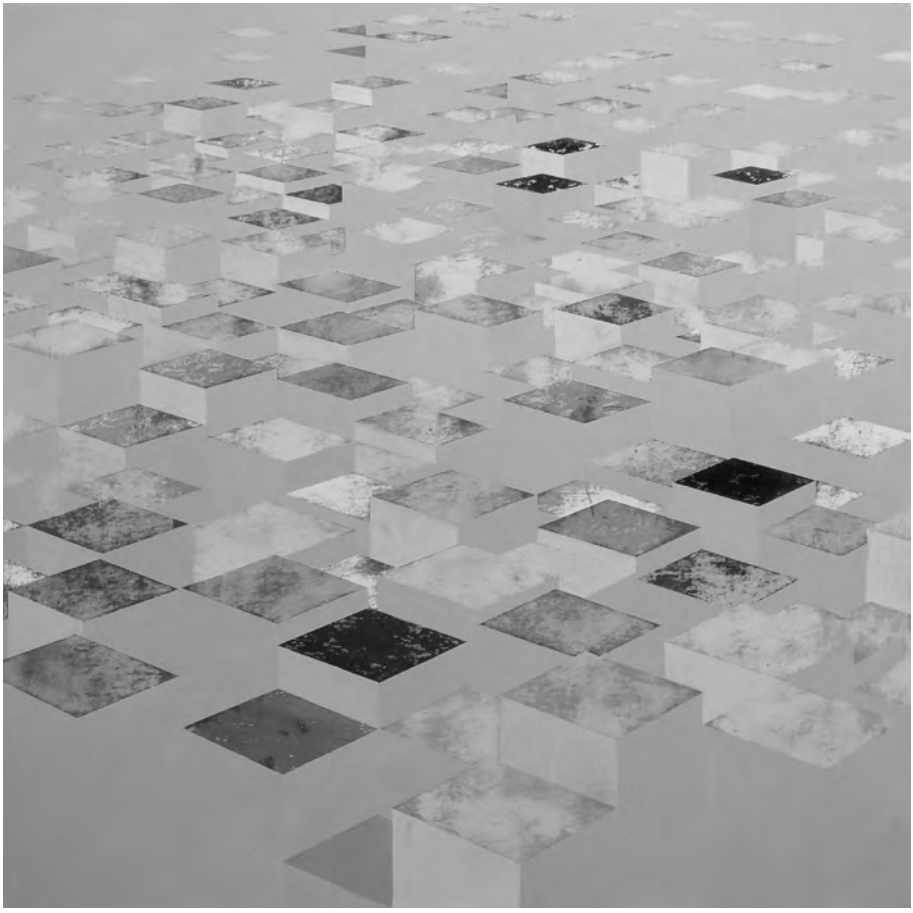
• *Joseph as omnivore*. Yes, a great deal of the diaries describes Joseph's reading a wide variety of texts and continually applying himself intellectually, but he didn't just hunger intellectually. A surprising amount of the diaries is composed of descriptions of food—or lack thereof. I daresay Joseph F. never ate another sweet potato, and it's clear he lost his taste for poi before he ever acquired it. A typical entry reads: "we have Been with out anything to ear [sic], having nothing this morning but about a half a pint of goats milk, and a little Boiled squash! we had nothing els[e]. no! not so much as Salt!! hard times." I estimate that at least half of the diary entries include complaints about the food.

• *Joseph as teenager*. Like any good missionary, Joseph F. spends a good deal of time loafing. Many days are spent in reading the *Deseret News*, mending his shoes, hiking in the jungle, or watching ships come in to the harbor at Lahaina. To his credit, however, there is little indication in the diaries that Joseph F. got trunky as the time of his return home approached.

To summarize: Joseph F. was a seventeen-year-old on a mission in Hawaii, and behaved like one.

Joseph F. served in Hawaii during a very interesting time in LDS history: The gathering of the Hawaiian Saints to Lanai had scarcely begun, the Mormon Reformation of 1856–57 would soon be in full swing and the specter of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in September 1857 was just around the corner. Hints of these themes are seen throughout the diaries, both in Joseph F.'s own writings and in the letters he receives. Ricks helpfully includes portions of such letters when Joseph F.'s diaries indicate having received them, although they are provided selectively and perhaps not as uniformly as more voracious readers might prefer. But despite living in such tumultuous times, Joseph F.'s diaries are reassuringly familiar; he was desperate for word from home, living among a people who seemed utterly foreign to him, while trying his best to live up to his birthright. As a result, the Sandwich Island diaries are immediately recognizable as an LDS missionary

experience and yet retain an intensely foreign quality, both because of cultural shifts over time and because of Joseph F.'s unique character. The diaries are helpful and engaging, both as a resource and as a reminder to us that, when it comes to missionary work, the more things change the more they remain the same.



Sunny Belliston Taylor,
Float,
mixed media, oil on panel,
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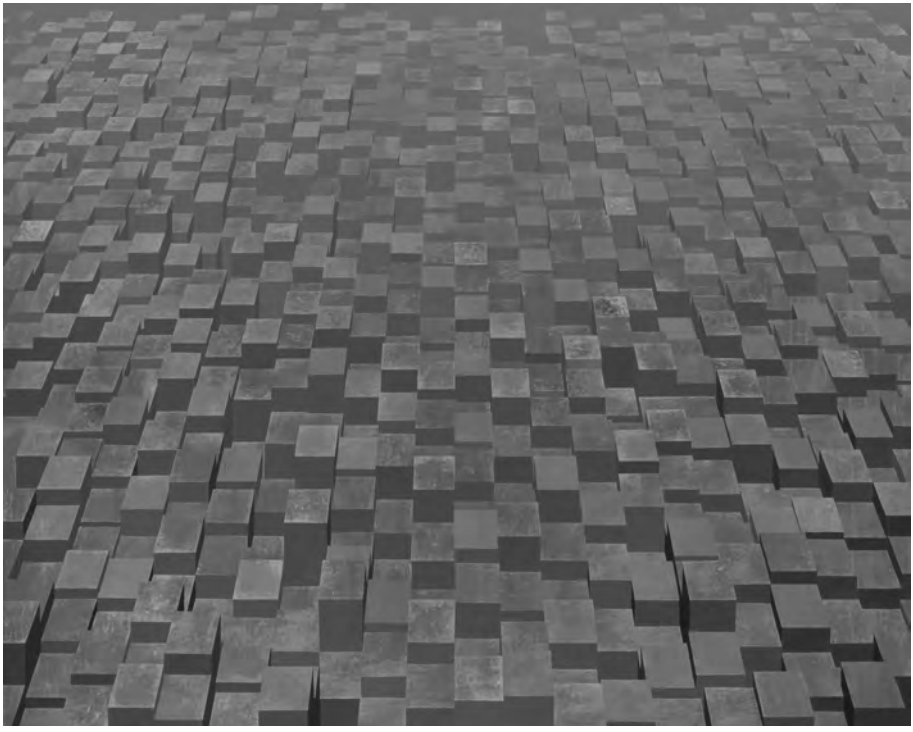

Sunny Belliston Taylor,
Horizon,
mixed media, oil on panel,
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To the 78 Percent

Heidi Harris

Note: *This sermon was given in the Coos Bay Ward, Coos Bay Oregon Stake, on July 31, 2011.*

"Have you ever acted as though you had a testimony of something you were still unsure of at church? Maybe you found yourself hoping that if you played the role, it would eventually feel real? Or have you ever said you believed something that you didn't have a testimony of because you knew it was expected of you, and you were surrounded by people that wouldn't hesitate to confirm their own witness of the same subject? Is this being dishonest?"

This series of questions prefaces the results to a recent online survey of members of the LDS Church.[1] Revealingly, for the population polled—like most online surveys, the sample was self-selected, not random—78 percent of all respondents admitted that they had acted as if they had faith in something they actually did not or had said that they believed something when they actually doubted it. In other words, almost four out of five admitted that they had put on an act, for whatever reason, to give the appearance of undoubting, unwavering, unquestioning faith to their fellow ward members, even though they personally felt conflicted.

I see the results of this survey as both a comfort and a warning. First, it shows that we are a Church of human beings with an endless diversity of spiritual biographies. And second, it is a comfort because, though I was not one of the survey's respondents, I am still one of those 78 percent. And before I had access to these results, I thought that I was part of an infinitesimally small minority—the minority of mask-wearing Mormons. I thought that I was the only one in the world who had ever had a hard question, who had ever had a single doubt. But now I know I am not alone, and it's always a comfort to know you are not alone.

But as I said, these results are problematic, a warning. The

problem isn't that there are so many who apparently have doubts (I will deal with this fallacy later) but rather that there are so many people with questions that will never be asked and spiritual wounds that will never be healed with help from our ward brothers and sisters. The problem is the high percentage of respondents who indicated they were putting on a show of faithful perfection while suffering silently and in fear. It indicates that we do not encourage an atmosphere of complete spiritual honesty in our worship but value instead the tidy ease of conformity and the comforting façade of flawlessness. It indicates that many feel as if they will be rejected by their ward family if they do not answer every question the same way as everyone else. It indicates that, after baptism, many feel as if Mormons should never have any more hard questions to ask or that those questions even deserve an answer.

If the things I am saying are unrecognizable to your own experience, please understand that I am only explaining how it feels to be on one particular rock face of the spiritual climb. We're all working toward the summit, but we all have a different sort of mountain face to conquer. Perhaps you're a person who has never had a crisis of faith or never had your concept of God shaken to its core. Perhaps you are one who has been blessed with the spiritual gift of "exceedingly great faith" (Moro. 10:11), while others have been given different but equally valuable gifts. Take this discussion as an opportunity to understand where, most likely, a good number of your brothers and sisters currently stand in the church—as people who have questions and concerns that you have never had to confront. Take it as an opportunity to develop empathy.

To the whole congregation then, I ask you to consider: How would you have answered the survey question? Would you have said yes or no to the following, "Have you ever acted like or said that you believed or had faith in something you did not?" We won't really know how the results would turn out here in the Coos Bay Ward. But I think there is probably a good chance that at least one of you out there is someone like me, who has felt confused, alone, or even deeply wounded by an internal crisis of faith. To that probable person, I want you to know, I'm giving this talk to you.

I've often wondered why we, as Mormons, sometimes think that the scriptures are filled with stories of people who never had doubts. It seems as if we often jump into stories after the crisis has

passed and then pretend that it was the way things were the entire time. And then we insist that every major character in every story does the exact same thing. Forgive my literary allusion, but that would be like saying the entire story behind *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Help*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *War and Peace*, and *The Tao of Motorcycle Maintenance* all simply read, "And they lived happily ever after."

Take Abraham, for example. We often talk about Abraham as if he never questioned things—that he was so single-minded in his devotion to God that he was even willing to sacrifice his and Sarah's only child without batting an eye. But Abraham questioned and required an explanation for those questions many times. Abraham doubted that he and Sarah could have a child, questioned the necessity of circumcision, and debated with God about sparing Sodom and Gomorrah.

Or consider another paragon of unquestioning faith in our religion, Nephi. But Nephi doubted when asked to slay the evil Laban. He required an explanation to his questions from the Holy Spirit before he decided what to do. Nephi acknowledged that he must continue to ask questions because he realized he had gaps in his testimony. In his record of seeing his father's vision, an angel asked him whether he knew the condescension of God. He replied with a basic, grounding pillar of his own personal faith: that he knew that God loves all of His children. But then he continued: "Nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things" (1 Ne. 11:17).

The entire collection of Doctrine and Covenants is, from one perspective, simply a compilation of answers to questions and validations of doubts.

Or perhaps we could consider stories in the New Testament about the apostles and disciples. These were women and men who had already proven their faith and conviction to Jesus; but even after seeing miracles, Mary and Martha doubted that their brother could be raised from the dead. Peter, named because of his rocklike faith, faltered on the Sea of Galilee after he had already walked on water. Furthermore, this same Peter, who would become our organizational equivalent of a prophet, publicly denied his association with Christ three times. Then, there was the apostle Thomas who, even after his trusted friends insisted they

had seen Jesus resurrected, continued to doubt their testimony until he saw it himself. In modern rhetoric, his name has been used to denote a person who is spiritually weak, a "doubting Thomas," but it's an unfair accusation.

If we look at the character arcs of the grand majority of scriptural characters at our fingertips today, Thomas, Peter, Mary, and Martha are not anomalies of shameful doubt, but rather more the rule of humanity, examples of a process we all will, most likely, go through at some point in our lives. Some of us will have our questions answered directly; some of us might always live with uncertainty. But it is our nature to question; it is human to doubt. Perhaps I can even say that it is a spiritual responsibility to debate with God at times, to insist like Nephi on getting an explanation for why we are commanded to do something, or like Jacob to wrestle with an angel for our blessing.

Questions in the scriptures and in modern LDS theology are vehicles for personal growth and for institutional reform. Questions and doubts founded our church. If you know anything about Mormon history, you know that the young Joseph Smith was beset by questions about which church of his time was more correct than any other. He had a crisis of faith, confused as to what truth might be and where one would find it. And this crisis and its outcome eventually set his friends and community, sometimes violently, against him. But Joseph Smith was brave enough throughout his life to ask God his many questions with confidence and courage.

Questions and doubts will also always shape our doctrinal future. We describe our church as being one of continuing revelation; and if you study the scriptures, you quickly discover that revelations most often come as answers to questions men and women brought to God of their own volition. The message seems plain enough: to have continuing revelation, we have to be a church of continuing questions. If we ask questions, especially hard questions, it will be uncomfortable. It might be frightening. You may learn something that completely turns your world upside-down. But it will also mean growth, strength, a firmer rooting in what is truly important, and the assurance of continuing knowledge.

So, to the probable person out there who was part of that 78

percent, I hope you now realize that you have nothing to be ashamed of. You are going through a process, a very natural process of knowledge, that apostles and prophets have all experienced. You are asking hard questions in your own mind that have led you to need a greater explanation from God, an experience felt by Joseph Smith, Eve, Abraham, Mary, Hannah, Emma Hale Smith, Nephi, Sarah, Hagoth, Jacob, Peter, and billions of other women and men throughout the history of the world.

I've found the conference talk given by Elder Neil A. Andersen in October 2008 a comfort and something I have revisited often since it was given. He said: "Our spiritual journey is the process of a lifetime. We do not know everything in the beginning or even along the way. There are days when we feel inadequate and unprepared, when doubt and confusion enter our spirits, when we have difficulty finding our spiritual footing. . . . At times, the Lord's answer will be, 'You don't know everything, but you know enough.'"[2]

But I'm not sure if it is enough to simply tell you that what you're going through is normal and natural—even a beneficial and strengthening process. I want you to understand that I know this same process is never an easy one. Crises of faith can range on a wide spectrum, from a brief hiccup of discomfort to a deep gash-like wound that seems to refuse healing. I also want those who have never doubted to understand how difficult it can be—and how best to mourn with those of us who mourn our lost faith and comfort those of us who stand in need of comfort.

In my own case, I experienced something I can only describe as an earthquake. Knowledge and faith that I had previously held as sacred and indefatigable were not only challenged but, I felt, completely ripped from my soul. I have struggled to find words to describe how it cut me to those who could not understand my perspective. I've usually settled on saying I felt as if God had betrayed me—as if a person I had loved with all my heart and soul had slapped me across the face. I felt abandoned. I felt more alone than I had ever felt or ever thought I could feel. I pushed those I loved the most away from me, since in some way, they seemed to remind me of the pain I was feeling and I was indirectly afraid that they would also betray me in some way.

After some time, I felt strong enough to try and reach out to

others, looking for help to work through my questions. But it seemed that, at every turn, I was treated poorly. I was told that I was faithless. I was told that people with questions like mine did not belong in this church and that I should leave. I was told that I did not have any testimony at all simply because I doubted a single facet. I was told to pray harder, even though I had prayed harder than I thought was possible and received no answer to my questions. I was told to repent of things I had never done. Most gallingly, I was sometimes treated as a petulant and illogical child.

In short, I was rarely actually listened to and usually treated as a pariah. This experience quickly taught me to never talk to anyone about my pain and questions. It taught me that people would always judge me harshly rather than reach out to help me and validate the very real problems I had to deal with. But all I wanted was to find someone who would help those of us with spiritual burdens by being like good physicians and simply asking, "Where does it hurt?" Once people learn they can speak freely about their spiritual aches, we will be better able to sustain one another.

Eventually, I found a small group of people who were kind and understanding toward me, the kindest being my husband, Paul, who listened and loved me through everything. It was by him and through his unconditional love for me and the diamond-hard beliefs I still held to without wavering that I was shown again that God loves me.

Through time, through friendship, and through the love rather than the condemnation of others, I have finally come to a place where I feel safe and confident in my faith and my beliefs, even though those original doubts and crises have not been resolved. I feel comfortable in my liminal place in my spiritual climb, and I'm grateful that I have gone through and am still going through this crisis of faith. I know it has made me stronger. It has given me an unassailable testimony of things I now absolutely know to be true. Crises make you stronger, and my crisis was all internal. I may not look different to you all, but inside I feel as if I'm a redwood tree.

So, my 78 percent friend out there, it will get better. Find the people who love you for you and not for how well you conform. Be brave. Believe that God loves you, or believe that someday in the

future you will be able to believe that Heavenly Mother and Father love you. Be true to your truth.

To show you are not alone, I also want to read you some letters from people who love you and who understand. They are part of a community of Mormons across the country. I asked them what they would like to hear in a sacrament meeting talk about crises of faith. Here are their answers:

• As an audience member, I'd want to hear that crises of faith are normal, understandable, and not an indication of my worthiness or value as a person/member.

• So often when someone confesses a doubt, fear, or that they simply don't "get" something in the Church, gospel, or culture, the response is along the lines of "pray harder," as if the questioner is somehow broken or a part is missing. Nothing could be less helpful. Questions should be treated as an opportunity to learn more, enhance knowledge, and search for truth, not as a moral failing.

• Our faith was founded by a man who didn't "get" something and asked questions. And Joseph Smith was just one in a long line of prophets and other inspired people who experienced moments of crippling fear and ignorance. Even prophets have crises of faith; surely we're entitled to them too.

• I would make it clear that, if 400 people are in the meeting that day, there are 400 different levels of belief and understanding. I would want to make people feel empowered to talk and question and wonder.

• I would quote Canon Austin Farrer of the Church of England, who was quoted by Neal A. Maxwell in conference: "Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish."

• When someone brings up something that bothers them or that they don't understand, a common response is "X isn't essential to my salvation, so I don't worry about that." I would point out that X may not be a foundational principle of our faith, but it might still be very important or very troubling to someone, and the least we

can do is to acknowledge it, even if we don't have a good answer or explanation to offer.

• I would want to make sure the "non-doubters" understood that it's okay for others to have doubts. One of the things that drives me the craziest about experiencing a crisis of faith in the LDS Church is the extent to which the "non-doubters" make those who doubt feel broken and unworthy, or how they so glibly dismiss others' questions, or how they condescendingly remind those with questions of the party-line answers.

• We can't attain intelligence without asking questions. God most certainly wants us to ask questions: "Ask, and it shall be given to you" (Matt. 7:7). Yes, some things we learn may cause us to have a crisis of faith—not just in the gospel but in anything we have learned—but we should not fear those doubts. We do not have to embrace them, but we can learn more as we come through them, no matter where we end up when we are through.

I can't say much more than that—that we can learn more as we come through our questions and doubts, that they are part of a human experience, that we are all good people trying our best. Thank you all for your friendship, love, and support.

Notes

1. This was an online survey posted on the *Exponent II* blog on 17 July 2011. 157 people responded to the prompt: "Have you ever acted like or said that you believed in something you did not?" The paragraph quoted here is part of the introduction to the poll. In final results, 78% of respondents answered, "Yes," 20% responded, "No" and 2% responded, "Other." The author of the post writes under the pseudonym "Corktree." "Poll: Honesty." *The Exponent: Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?* Posted 17 July 2011, http://www.the-exponent.com/2011/07/17/poll-honesty/ (accessed July 30, 2011). Probably, given the blog's usual audience, most of the respondents were women.

2. Neil L. Andersen, "You Know Enough," *Ensign*, November 2008, http://www.lds.org/general-conference/2008/10/you-know-enough?lang=eng (accessed July 30, 2011).

Uncertainty and Healing

Anne Lazenby

Note: *This sermon was given in the Belmont First Ward, Cambridge Massachusetts Stake, on March 13, 2010.*

Two things have been on my mind recently. They have provoked a lot of thought and research. Over the past months, I have spent hours on the internet perusing medical studies, Church websites, and countless blogs, looking for answers. At first glance, the two seem to be entirely unrelated topics, but as they've occupied so much of my thoughts, I've come to notice some similarities.

The first topic is more tangible. Since June 2011, I've been experiencing symptoms of inflammatory arthritis. This is not like the osteoarthritis that sometimes comes with aging as joints deteriorate. Instead, it is an autoimmune disorder; the immune system becomes an "overachiever" and starts attacking healthy joints. I don't want to bore you with all the details but I think a few points are relevant. First, it is a systemic problem, so in addition to painful joints, it can cause loss of appetite, fatigue, and a general "unwell" feeling. Second, it is not straightforward to diagnose. And this mysteriousness has been a cause of major frustration for me. It was months until my first appointment with a rheumatologist. And that appointment turned into a three-hour hospital visit with all kinds of blood tests that I'd already had twice before and were, once again, negative. It also involved twenty X-rays that showed nothing useful.

In January 2012, I finally got some answers. My rheumatologist believes I have something called Minocycline-Induced Autoimmunity. Basically, this that means a prescription medication I was taking last year, minocycline, triggered my immune system to overreact and attack my joints. Knowing *something*, anything, about what was going on relieved a lot of my stress. I finally

had something to call my symptoms and, best of all, a helpful medication to take.

But I still experience a lot of uncertainty about my condition. I searched everywhere and found only one study on twenty-seven patients with this condition, and the prognosis is extremely unclear. It could (and hopefully will) go away in the next few months or it could become chronic and either turn into, or at least mimic, rheumatoid arthritis, a progressive disease. It is manageable with the right drugs but it is not curable. Though I now know I have this potentially scary disorder, knowing is somehow so much less scary than before when I knew nothing at all. I have a cousin with this disease. She has learned how to live with her condition and now has a darling one-year-old daughter. (How much is hereditary is part of the mystery.) If I need support, I know I will have it from her, as well as many others.

Now, the second topic I've had on my mind is questions I have about things in this Church. I have some questions about policies, leadership, and women's roles in the Church, but the specific details of my questions aren't really relevant. What I will say is that there are several parts of this Church that I don't understand. And there are parts that I, perhaps, just don't agree with. My experience with this questioning has been surprisingly similar to my experience with arthritis. For both, a big source of my frustration has been my lack of knowledge. Sometimes, this inability to understand can be almost painful. And they are both systemic; my arthritis affects more than my joints, and specific questions can cause a cascade of more questions. I don't think my questions will just go away with a prescription, as could potentially happen with my arthritis. I'm quite positive that they are destined to become "chronic," but I'm also quite hopeful they will be manageable.

One thing I would like to make clear, though, is that I don't think this similarity between questioning and a chronic disease extends to the idea that questioning is like a disease that needs to be cured. Questioning is, I think, natural and even healthy. This leads me to possibly one of my favorite story from Christ's ministry, when Christ is in the Americas:

> Behold, now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these

> words he looked round about again on the multitude, and he said unto them: Behold, my time is at hand.
>
> I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time.
>
> Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.
>
> But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for he knoweth whither he hath taken them.
>
> And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus spoken, he cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them.
>
> And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.
>
> Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy.
>
> For I perceive that ye desire that I should show unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you. (3 Ne. 17:1–8)

This story doesn't clear up any questions, but it is a source of comfort. I love that Christ knew some things He said wouldn't be easily understood and gave the people time to ponder and prepare for the next day of his teaching. I also love this story because it is a beautiful example of Christ's compassion. He has some kind of schedule and other people He needs to visit, but He sees these people's tears and stays with them.

Today, Christ doesn't minister directly to us, but we have God's prophets on the earth. Maybe, then, it's even more important now to question and find out for ourselves what we believe. My favorite quotation on the subject is from Brigham Young. He said:

> I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by him. I am fearful that they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands

> of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation, and weaken that influence they could give their leaders did they know for themselves, by the revelations of Jesus, that they are led in the right way. Let every man and woman know, by the whisperings of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path the Lord dictates, or not.[1]

My doctor happened to be one of the doctors on the only study about my condition. There are probably few other places I could have gone and been properly diagnosed. And I know I have people to support me whatever happens. So I actually feel quite lucky.

Similarly, I am extremely grateful that I grew up in this ward, with so many great examples. I am especially grateful for the people who have openly shared their own questions with me, who have allowed me to see their struggles and resolutions. They have allowed me to see how I can both be a part of this Church and have questions, and I hope we all remember to continue to allow for questions. I really hope we never settle for "a state of blind self-security." For while I know Christ suffered for me and I believe and love the scriptures, there are some questions I just don't have answers for. I can reconcile myself to this, though, because I know God is real. I know He loves me and you. And I know that eventually we will be able to go back to Him.

Note

1. John A. Widtsoe, ed., *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), 135.

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