On the Cover: Annie Kennedy,
Front, *Angel Moroni in Eternity*, olive oil and pencil on paper,
9" x 12"
Back, *Six by One Hundred Forty Four*, salt crystals on felt
24" x 24"

DIALOGUE
a journal of mormon thought

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The Book of Mormon, the Early Nineteenth-Century Debates over Universalism, and the Development of the Novel Mormon Doctrines of Ultimate Rewards and Punishments

Clyde D. Ford

In their study *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, Robert Putnam and David Campbell observe that a characteristic of modern American religions, including Mormonism, is the belief that those of other faiths may be eligible for salvation.[1] However, Putnam and Campbell fail to point out that this Mormon inclusivism is not recent, but rather extends back to the very formative period of Mormon theological development. The early evolution of these beliefs has not been extensively studied and is not without controversy. For example, modern scholars have pointed to the apparent tension between the positions of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith's subsequent revelations over the acceptance of Universalism, the teaching that all will be saved. While the Book of Mormon consigns wicked humans to an eternal torment, the later revelations endorse what Michael Quinn has described as "a theology of nearly universal salvation."[2] Richard Bushman finds the revelations to be a "perplexing reversal . . . [that] contradicted the book's firm stand."[3] This conclusion is obviously problematic, as it implies that the early Church repudiated teachings from the Book of Mormon immediately following its publication. Thus there is a need for a reassessment of the relation between early nineteenth-century Universalism and the teachings of the Book of Mormon and subsequent revelations.

The principal American opponents of the early nineteenth-cen-

tury Universalists were the mainline Protestant denominations (e.g., Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians). Although disagreeing among themselves on various issues, these had all inherited from the Reformers the teaching that all humans would be awarded an eternal future stay either in heaven or in hell (a "two-outcome" theology). For this paper I will refer to this group as the "anti-Universalists." Likewise, early nineteenth-century Universalists, while agreeing on the ultimate salvation of all humans (a "one-outcome" theology), disagreed on other issues with the great majority being classified as either "modern" or "restorationist" Universalists. A central dispute between the two was whether there would (restorationists) or would not (moderns) be punishment for unresolved sin in the future life.[4] Not surprisingly, both the Universalists and their critics held that their own beliefs were the only reasonable interpretation of scripture and echoed the teachings of the early Christian Church.

In this paper I shall review the spectrum of early nineteenth-century American Universalism at the time of the publishing of the Book of Mormon, the responses of some contemporary Christian theologians who opposed Universalism, the early Mormon positions in these disputes as contained in the Book of Mormon, and some contributions of Joseph Smith's subsequent revelations. I shall argue that (1) the Book of Mormon refutes "modern" Universalism, (2) the Book of Mormon's treatment of the restorationist doctrines of salvation is ambiguous, and (3) reflections and discussions between Joseph Smith and other early Church members over the issues disputed between Universalists and their opponents resulted in several revelations that progressively defined an official Mormon interpretation of the Book of Mormon and resulted in a novel and complex schema of human salvation that incorporates theological elements of both traditional Protestant Christianity and restorationism.

The Early Nineteenth-Century Picture

A number of important disputes dominated the American theological landscape in the first third of the nineteenth century. From its publication in 1830, knowledgeable readers noticed that the Book of Mormon seemed to take sides on these issues. For example, in his 1832 critical book review, Mormon opponent Alexander Campbell (1788–1866) noted that the Book of Mormon reproduced "every er-

ror and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last ten years" and "decides all the great controversies."[5] So what had been discussed in New York during the preceding decade? One of Campbell's "great controversies," that of "eternal punishment," was the chief battle-ground between Universalists and their opponents.

In 1833, the Boston historian of Universalism Thomas Whittemore (1800–1861) observed that Universalism had been in America "about fifty years" and was rapidly increasing in adherents. In New York during the 1820s there were an estimated 150 Universalist societies, several Universalist periodicals, and a large number of additional individuals with Universalist leanings; and it was asserted that Universalism had become the fourth or fifth largest "among the denominations of the land."[6] Thus New York Presbyterian Pastor Joel Parker (1799–1873) lamented in 1830 that "there is a numerous class of people who hold the doctrine of Universal Salvation" and additional "multitudes who feel powerfully inclined to reject a doctrine of . . . future and eternal punishment."[7]

Whittemore identified the three principal founders of American Universalism as John Murray (1741–1815), Elhanan Winchester (1751–1797), and Hosea Ballou (1771–1852),[8] each of whom gave rise to distinct movements. Murray was a traditional Calvinist who found the doctrine of Universalism to be the antidote for the apparent injustice of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, which included the teaching that most people will be condemned to never-ending future punishment through no fault of their own. Conversely, Winchester held that humans will be subject to future punishment precisely because of their own unresolved sins but likewise found never-ending torment to be unjustly harsh. A similar view would subsequently be adopted by the restorationist Universalists, who at the time of the Book of Mormon included Paul Dean (d. 1860) and Charles Hudson (1795–1881).

Although Murray and Winchester agreed with the anti-Universalists on beliefs such as the Trinity, substitutionary atonement, and future punishment, Ballou had radically departed,

> denying the traditional Christian doctrines of the full deity of Jesus, the substitutionary atonement, the impurity of the sinful soul after death, and future punishment for sin.

Those who adhered to a similar schema were termed "modern" or

"ultra-" Universalists by their opponents. Among the influential modern Universalists in 1830 were Ballou, Walter Balfour (1776–1852), and Whittemore. Shortly before publishing his results in 1830, Whittemore surveyed "the principal Universalist clergy" in America and found that the great majority agreed with Ballou on future punishment and the deity of Jesus.[9] Not surprisingly, Universalist opponents were particularly alarmed at the modern Universalists' teachings and influence. For example, New York Methodist minister Timothy Merritt (1775–1845) charged that "the modern doctrine of universal salvation . . . lays another foundation [than traditional Christianity]" and constitutes "*another gospel*" altogether.[10]

Historian Ann Lee Bressler has pointed out that, in the early nineteenth century, Universalists "were most openly and consistently engaged in battle with other religious groups, [and this] was also the period of the denomination's most rapid growth and greatest overall vitality."[11] The advances of Universalism were accompanied by a proliferation of publications both supporting and opposing Universalist teachings. These peaked in number about the time the Book of Mormon appeared.[12]

The Universalist Paul Dean identified the two major American Christian theological persuasions that had become Universalism's principal opponents. Those in the first group held that salvation and the effects of the atonement were available only to the "elect" whom "God . . . determined of his own good pleasure to select . . . for eternal glory . . . without the least reference to works done, or to be done." This group was the Calvinists. By the early nineteenth century, American Calvinism had splintered into a spectrum of theological points of view (traditional "Old Calvinists," New Divinity, New Haven theologians, and others) and denominations (Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Reformed). Dean's second group believed that "salvation is truly and freely offered to all, upon such conditions as they can readily accept or reject . . . and that during . . . the day of probation many will continue willfully to reject the terms of grace and . . . come forever short of [salvation]."[13] These were the Arminians, the most numerous and influential of which were the American Methodists. [14]

Given this tumult, what did the Book of Mormon bring to the American discussion of Universalism? Recent scholars have concluded that the Book of Mormon "decides" the controversies over

Universalism by uniformly siding with Universalism's opponents. For example, Mark Thomas observed that the Book of Mormon "attacks" Universalism,[15] Dan Vogel that "the Book of Mormon . . . explicitly attacked the notion of universal salvation,"[16] Terryl Givens that "the Book of Mormon refuted universal salvation,"[17] Grant Palmer that "there appears to be a specific denouncement" of Universalism,[18] and Richard Bushman that "the *Book of Mormon* argued against universal salvation."[19]

In addition, Catholic sociologist of religion Thomas F. O'Dea (1915–1974), who resided in Utah for several years, concluded that "The doctrine of the book [Book of Mormon] is wholeheartedly and completely Arminian."[20] This observation is important in interpreting the Book of Mormon's responses to the debates over Universalism. Both the Calvinists and the Methodists produced early nineteenth-century works opposing Universalism, but each chose the arguments that supported their own theological views. Thus, in instances where the two groups differed in approach, examining the specific Methodist/Universalist disagreements is likely to be more productive in elucidating Book of Mormon teachings.

The Early Nineteenth-Century Calvinists, Methodists, and Universalists Debate the Big Question: Who Will Be Saved? And the Book of Mormon Weighs In

Like the anti-Universalists, the Book of Mormon teaches a two-outcome theology of ultimate reward or punishment: "eternal life" vs. "everlasting death," "heaven" vs. "hell." Traditional Calvinists believed that God himself had already made the decisions as to who went where, totally independent of human endeavor, so the division of souls in the future life needed no additional theological considerations. But problems presented themselves for the Methodists (and believers in the Book of Mormon and even some progressive Calvinists) who held that, in addition to divine grace, humans must voluntarily choose to accept Jesus during mortality in order to be saved. These had to address such difficult questions as how a just God would handle humans who were seemingly denied the opportunity to choose, e.g., those who died in infancy, or were mentally impaired, or were heathens who had never heard of the Bible.

To deal with such issues both the Methodists and the authors of Book of Mormon divided humans into the same five groups, each

of which required placement into one of the two outcomes. Both agreed that those dying in early childhood ("little children" in the Book of Mormon) are not accountable for personal sin, would be saved from the effects of the fall through the atonement, and would be awarded "eternal life";[21] we will not deal further with them here.

The four remaining groups are accountable for their future rewards and punishments. The first of these is those who have faith in Jesus during their mortal life as manifested by a "change of heart," repentance, living moral lives, and remaining committed to the end of mortal life (2 Nephi 31:18; 3 Nephi 15:9). Likewise for Methodism's founder John Wesley (1703–1791) the "condition of final salvation" is "faith" followed by "holiness."[22] This group we will term "the faithful."

The second group is those, including the "Heathens," who do not have an opportunity to learn about Jesus. These are "the untaught" (2 Nephi 9:26; Mosiah 3:11, 15:24). Wesley observed that "enlightened Heathens in the ancient world" and "the most intelligent Heathens that are now on the face of the earth" are "totally ignorant . . . [of] those [things] which relate to the eternal Son of God."[23]

The third group is those who are taught but then reject the gospel message throughout the remainder of their mortal lives, thus failing to show the requisite faith in Jesus and to conform their lives accordingly (Mosiah 3:12; Alma 12:16, 32). Wesley taught that "God did from the beginning decree to reprobate all who should obstinately and finally continue in unbelief" but condemned the Calvinist doctrine of the "absolute, unconditional" reprobation.[24] We will term these "the unrepentant."

Lastly are those who are truly converted by the Holy Ghost and then knowingly seek to undermine Christian progress by teaching falsehoods. These have committed the "unpardonable" sin and, unlike the unrepentant, cannot repent and be freed from liability for future punishment during the remainder of their mortal lifetimes (Jacob 7:19; Alma 39:6). These are "the unpardonable." Referring to Matthew 12:31–32, Wesley noted that "it is plain, if we have been guilty of this [unpardonable] sin, there is no room for mercy."[25] In the early nineteenth-century Methodist *Book of Discipline* the unrepentant and the unpardonable were clearly distinguished: "Not every sin willingly committed after justification, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance

is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification . . . [providing they] truly repent."[26]

The authors of the Book of Mormon agreed with the Methodists and Universalists on the salvation of the faithful who, according to the Book of Mormon, will be awarded "eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9; Mosiah 15:25). However, they sided with the Methodists against the Universalists in affirming the everlasting punishment of the unrepentant and the unpardonable. As New York Methodist Timothy Merritt explained, those who give in "to the will of the devil, are condemned by the law of God . . . and heirs of everlasting punishment."[27] Likewise, the Book of Mormon states that the unrepentant who "die in their sins" and the unpardonable are respectively destined for "everlasting destruction" and "eternal punishment" (Alma 12:16–17; Jacob 7:18–19).

Conversely, the Book of Mormon and the Universalists agreed against the Methodists in affirming the universal salvation of the untaught. For the Methodists, the untaught will be accountable for their conduct and justly subject to future eternal punishment. Thus, referring to Paul's teaching (Romans 2:14–15), Methodist theologian Richard Watson (1781–1833) concluded that although the heathen had "received no revealed law," they had the law "written in their hearts" and "consciences," and, thus, "we are bound to admit the accountability of all."[28] Since the untaught were accountable and had not fulfilled the conditions for salvation during mortal life, they were not eligible for salvation. As Methodist Timothy Merritt insisted: "Salvation is offered to sinners upon conditions [faith, repentance, etc.] . . . [if] those conditions . . . are not performed by man during the present life, he cannot be saved, but must suffer a future, everlasting punishment." And Methodist Luther Lee (1800–1883) agreed: "all who do not repent and obtain salvation, within the limits of this probationary state, must be forever lost."[29] But the seeming injustice of consigning even the more morally upright untaught to eternal damnation weighed on the minds of some Methodists. For example, Wesley argued that "nor do I conceive that any man living has a right to sentence all the heathen and Mahometan [sic] world to damnation" and Richard Watson left open the possibility of salvation for a minority of heathens who obeyed the law as they knew it.[30]

To the contrary, the Universalists argued that all the untaught

will be saved. To condemn the heathen, as the Methodists had done, seemed to Universalist Paul Dean both irrational and unjust:

> The limitation of all means and methods of grace to the narrow span of this life . . . is opposed to reason and equity. . . . Think what vast numbers of the heathen have lived and passed off the stage of life, without ever hearing so much as the name of Jesus. . . . Shall we at once turn all these to destruction without even the possibility of escape? How much more reasonable is it for us to believe that Christ . . . will continue to use with all his creatures, in all conditions, the most appropriate means for their reformation."[31]

The authors of the Book of Mormon agree with the Universalists that all of the untaught will be saved. Thus, all humans who die "in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them" will "have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord" (Mosiah 15:24).

Thus, Book of Mormon teaching agrees fully with neither the Universalists nor the Methodists but puts forward a novel and complex schema that includes some features of each.

The Book of Mormon and the Early Nineteenth-Century Debates over Universalism

The authors of the Book of Mormon side with the opponents of the modern Universalists

As already noted above, at the time the Book of Mormon appeared, a number of mainline Christian clergy, including those in New York, were publishing works critical of modern Universalism. For example, New York Anglican rector Adam Empie (1785–1860) noted that "Universalists of the present day . . . [reject] what the *Christian Church* has *always* received and revered as the *peculiar, distinguishing, and most essential doctrines* of the Gospel."[32] New York Presbyterian pastor Edwin F. Hatfield (1807–1883) listed the doctrines in which modern Universalists were heterodox. Hatfield included among these the rejection of the full deity of Jesus, human depravity, and vicarious atonement.[33] In these three disagreements the authors of the Book of Mormon clearly support the opponents of modern Universalism (for examples, see Book of Mormon Title Page, Ether 3:2, and Helaman 5:9, respectively). But there is a caution to this conclusion because similar positions to the modern Universalists on these issues were also held by the early nineteenth-century liberal New England Unitarians.

Thus, from an examination of these issues alone we cannot be sure that the Book of Mormon objections were specifically aimed at the modern Universalists. To show this we must look more closely at some disputes between the modern Universalists and the Unitarians.

Although agreeing on some issues, the early nineteenth-century modern Universalists and Unitarians were quite distinct even though the Universalists would see themselves "in a grand liberal alliance" with the Unitarians later in the century.[34] As Ann Lee Bressler has emphasized, the two descended from different theological pedigrees, and the better-educated Unitarians were (like the writers of the Book of Mormon) much more Arminian in outlook.[35] To show that the Book of Mormon was aimed at modern Universalism, I will examine the Book of Mormon positions on two issues on which the Unitarians and the anti-Universalists agreed against the modern Universalists. For the contemporary Unitarian positions, I turn to William E. Channing (1780–1842), Unitarianism's most influential early nineteenth-century spokesman.

Issue 1. Is there punishment for sin in the future life?

Modern Universalists held that all punishment for sin is confined to mortal life. In the celebrated 1817 exchange between Ballou and his friend, restorationist Edward Turner (1776–1853), Ballou argued that there is no need for punishment in the future life because sin is confined to the physical body and, therefore, "death, by dissolving the body of sin, fits the soul for the kingdom of heaven"[36] Walter Balfour felt that the doctrine was not only rational but scriptural: "limited punishment after death, could no more be defended from the Bible, than endless punishment."[37] Congregational pastor Joel Hawes (1789–1867) was critical of such Universalist belief noting that "by far the greater part of them deny all punishment in the future world, and suppose that every man receives the due reward of his offences in the present life."[38] Likewise referring to modern Universalists, Channing noted, "It is maintained by some among us that punishment is confined to the present state. . . . To my mind, a more irrational doctrine was never broached."[39] The Book of Mormon clearly teaches a doctrine of future punishment for the wicked. Thus a human who "dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment" (Mosiah 2:33).

Another pertinent passage is the conversation between the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi and his two disobedient older brothers. After Nephi discourses on "that awful hell which . . . was prepared for the wicked," his brothers ask, "Doth this thing mean the torment of the body in the days of probation, or doth it mean the final state of the soul after the death of the temporal body?" Nephi then explains the consignment of the unrepentant to "that awful hell" as the "final state of the souls of men" (1 Nephi 15:26–36), clearly siding with the opponents of modern Universalism.

Issue 2. Is the human soul freed from sin and moral evil after death?

Hosea Ballou had concluded that all "sin and evil" are caused by and limited to "flesh and blood," and cannot "extend beyond these."[40] Methodist Luther Lee disagreed: "The scriptures teach that men will possess the same moral character in a future state, with which they leave this. . . . If sin attached itself to the body only, it might be contended that it dies with the body; but having its seat in the soul, it will live with it when the body dies. Death cannot destroy sin."[41] Channing leveled a similar criticism: "It is maintained by some among us . . . that in changing worlds we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave. . . ."[42] Rather Channing insisted that "one and only one evil can be carried from this world to the next and that is . . . moral evil . . . ungoverned passion, the depraved mind."[43]

The Book of Mormon also refutes the modern Universalist doctrine that at death the soul is freed from the effects of sin. For example, the prophet Amulek held that those who are taught the gospel but "procrastinate" their repentance until death will face an "awful crisis" because "that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life . . . will have power to possess your body in that eternal world" (Alma 34:33–34).

The Book of Mormon Sides with the Restorationist Universalists in Their Disputes with Modern Universalists

Between 1827 and 1829, restorationist Charles Hudson and modern Universalist Walter Balfour published a series of works detailing the areas of dispute between the two.[44] Balfour noted that the two disagreed over three interrelated "principle questions:" "Is the soul immortal? Is there an intermediate state of existence? And

is the immortal soul to be punished in this state?"[45] To each question Balfour answered in the negative and Hudson in the affirmative. It should be noted that many but not all modern Universalists of the time agreed with Balfour on the question of the soul's immortality. Regarding this issue, Balfour held that "the Bible does not teach the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, or its existence in a disembodied state, but [these ideas] are relics of heathenism." Hudson disagreed: "It appears both from scripture and reason, that men will retain their consciousness after death; they will be the same individuals there they were here."[46]

In each of these questions the Book of Mormon agrees with the restorationists against Balfour. As examples, the Book of Mormon prophet Alma pointed out that "the soul could never die," and "concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection . . . as soon as they are departed from this mortal body . . . the spirits of the wicked . . . [are received into a] state of misery" which lasts "until the time of their resurrection" (Alma 42:9, 40:11–15). The anti-Universalists also agreed with the restorationists on these issues.[47]

In the Disputes between the Anti-Universalists and Restorationists, the Book of Mormon Consistently Sides with Neither

We have already seen evidence for this conclusion in the Book of Mormon handling of the outcomes of the five groups. Below are two additional examples.

Example 1. Is hell a place?

Dean noted that "It has been a question whether the punishment of the wicked . . . will be produced by the place occupied by the sufferer . . . [or] from his character."[48] For early nineteenth-century anti-Universalists, as with their Reformer predecessors, hell is a place in which the inmates, who are forced there involuntarily, experience everlasting torment. Thus Presbyterian Pastor Joel Parker (1799–1873) observed that hell is "a place for the punishment of the wicked in a future state" and Methodist Richard Watson that hell is "the place of torment reserved for the punishment of the wicked in a future state."[49] Conversely, restorationists held that hell is nothing more than a state of mind. For example, Charles Hudson pointed out that "We do not believe that men will be consigned to any particular place of punishment, *as such*; but that the punish-

ment will arise from their own unholy feelings and disturbed minds. The remorse of conscience will be the punishment, and hell will be found within them." Similarly, Dean believed that "hell is a state or condition of sinners in a future world, rather than a place . . . [T]he punishment of sinners will consist . . . in a sense of shame, regret, remorse, and fear, inflicted by the righteous Judge of all, upon the awakened conscience."[50]

The Book of Mormon seems to endorse both alternatives. Thus the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi echoes Revelation 14:10, 19:20, and 20:15 and the anti-Universalists when he states that the wicked "must go into the place prepared for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment" (2 Nephi 28:22–23). Conversely, King Benjamin observed that in the future life the wicked would be "consigned to an awful view of their own guilt and abominations, which doth cause them to shrink from the presence of the Lord into a state of misery and endless torment." (Mosiah 3:24–27). And if hell is a state of mind, then it might also be experienced in mortality and not necessarily for an eternal duration. Thus during his conversion Alma recalled that "my soul was racked with eternal torment" (Mosiah 27:29).

Example 2. Will the unrepentant have a second chance in the future life?

In this question the anti-Universalists were united in the negative and the restorationists in the affirmative. Methodist Luther Lee argued that "nothing can be more clear than that the gospel offers salvation in the present tense."[51] Conversely, restorationist Charles Hudson insisted that: "Those who die impenitent will, after death, enter into a state of misery, consisting of anxiety, guilt, and remorse, which will continue until repentance [and salvation]."[52]

The Book of Mormon does not contain a doctrine of repentance and salvation in the future life for the unrepentant, but rather seems to lean toward the anti-Universalist position:

> This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God . . . the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors . . . after this day of life . . . if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God . . . for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will

> have power to possess your body in that eternal world . . . [T]he devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked (Alma 34:32–35).

However, it is worth noting in this passage that the reason the unrepentant cannot be redeemed is not the irreversible justice of God, as many anti-Universalists maintained, but that the soul of the unrepentant is incapable of change. But are all the unrepentant the same? Could those who had not repented because they had been deceived still be capable of change in the future life with the right education? As we shall see below, this issue would arise again and be addressed in the 1832 revelation known as "the Vision."

Subsequent Revelations Address Problems of Justice the Book of Mormon Leaves Unresolved

Yale theologian George Lindbeck (1923–) has pointed out that "for the most part, only when disputes arise about what it is permissible to teach or practice does a community make up its collective mind and formally make a doctrinal decision."[53] In the following I propose that such disputes arose in the early Church over the issues of divine justice and Book of Mormon interpretation in the background context of the debates over Universalism. Early nineteenth-century theologians all agreed that there is divine justice and sought to show that their systems were most compatible with this tenet. As Presbyterian Joel Parker noted: "We receive it as an axiom in religion, that God is just."[54] Very early Church members had come to the new faith from a variety of previous theological persuasions including Calvinism (the Whitmers, Hyrum Smith), Methodism (Joseph Smith, Emma Smith), and restorationist Universalism (Martin Harris, Joseph Knight). Thus, it would not be surprising if differences of opinion arose. Some of these issues were brought to Joseph Smith for divine resolution, initiating seminal revelations that clarified and expanded the doctrines of the Book of Mormon. We may discern three major steps in this process.

Step 1: "Eternal torment" does not necessarily mean never-ending punishment

The idea that future punishment may be limited in duration extends at least as far back as the great church father Origen (184–253) and was found in the late medieval church as the doctrine of Pur-

gatory. Subsequently such doctrines were rejected by the Reformers but resurrected by the restorationists. In approximately March of 1830, the same month the Book of Mormon appeared in print, it appears that a group of individuals approached Joseph Smith with the question of whether the biblical phrase "eternal damnation" (Mark 3:29) and the Book of Mormon phrase "endless torment" imply a never-ending duration. In the resulting revelation[55] the Lord answered: "Nevertheless, it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written *endless torment.* Again, it is written *eternal damnation*. . . . Endless punishment is God's punishment . . . for Endless is my [God's] name." (D&C 19:6–7, 10–12).

This restorationist-sounding interpretation of the Bible and Book of Mormon was accompanied by additional arguments addressing other criticisms of early nineteenth-century opponents of restorationist Universalism. For example, the anti-Universalists had reasoned that God would not have allowed such words as "eternal" and "everlasting" to be used in scripture if they did not mean never-ending. Dean had responded that the purpose of such radical phrases was simply to scare humans into obedience by producing "an apprehension of being judged."[56] The revelation adopts a similar position: "Wherefore it is more express than other scriptures, that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men" (verse 7). Also, the anti-Universalists had charged that a doctrine of limited punishment encourages sin. Dean had countered that limited punishment could provide the necessary deterrence, but only if it was sufficiently severe.[57] The revelation notes: "But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain" (verses 17–18; note that Jesus's suffering was both limited and severe).

Although the revelation remained ambiguous on the question of whether some wicked humans might still suffer a never-ending punishment, some of Smith's followers apparently were stressing a thoroughly restorationist interpretation. This error necessitated a strong statement to the contrary in a revelation the following September: "Never at any time have I declared from mine own mouth that they should return, for where I am they cannot come. . . . But remember that all my judgments are not given unto men."[58] By now it was becoming apparent that the Mormon solution to these problems was going to be complex, and more revelation would be needed.

Step 2: Subdividing the Book of Mormon outcomes of "eternal life" and "everlasting destruction": A solution to the four accountable groups/ two-outcomes problem of divine justice.

The idea that everyone destined for eternal life (heaven) will receive an equal outcome has long been questioned in Christian history. Multiple levels of heaven were described by late medieval poets and visionary mystics. Such views were generally rejected by the Reformers, who regarded the question as secondary, although they did not completely reject the idea of different rewards.[59] Later, the renowned Reformed theologian Francis Turretin (1623–1687), whose comprehensive *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* was used in early nineteenth-century American Calvinist seminaries, traced the dispute at least as far back as Jerome (c. 347–420) who asserted "an inequality of glory from the inequality of merit." Being a good Calvinist, Turretin did not agree with Jerome regarding a contribution of human merit to salvation but did agree that there must be "degrees of glory" in heaven based on 1 Corinthians 15:41–42.[60]

In early 1831 Joseph Smith and Sydney Rigdon were engaged in revising the New Testament. It appears that as they came to certain key passages needing correction they received revelations clarifying and expanding on the passage in question. Several of these revelations were combined into "The Vision."[61] One was received during the revision of 1 Corinthians 15:40–41, a passage on the resurrection that differentiates between celestial and terrestrial bodies and between the "glory" of the sun, moon, and stars.

The Book of Mormon had created an apparent problem of divine justice by awarding "eternal life" to both the faithful and untaught. This outcome for the latter seems in obvious tension with its own textual (and anti-Universalist) assertion that only those truly believing in Jesus and being baptized during mortal life will be eligible for salvation (2 Nephi 31:18, 33:4), suggesting that the two groups do not justly deserve the same outcome. The Vision addresses this problem by interpreting 1 Corinthians 15:40 as describing two subdivisions of the Book of Mormon outcome of "eternal life": a superior world composed of individuals with "bodies celestial" (the faithful) and an inferior world of "bodies terrestrial" for the untaught, i.e., "[those] who died without law" (verse 72).[62]

Analogous to the history of arguments about heaven, the idea

that the heterogeneous subgroups of humans consigned to hell will receive the same punishment has long been challenged. Christian works, apocryphal and otherwise, extending to at least the second century C. E. speculated on the subject. A famous example is Dante's fourteenth-century *Inferno*, which describes nine levels of hell, the outer portion of which is inhabited by virtuous unbaptized individuals who, unlike the others, receive no punishment.[63] The Book of Mormon again created an apparent problem of divine justice by assigning both the unrepentant and the unpardonable to the same outcome of eternal torment. The Vision addressed this not by consigning to differing subdivisions of hell but to different durations in hell. Thus, in the Book of Mormon, "eternal torment" of the unpardonable is a never-ending stay in hell as the anti-Universalists had proclaimed (verses 32–38), but that of the unrepentant is a limited duration as the restorationists taught (verses 83–85). It should be noted that this clarified the ambiguity of the March 1830 revelation.

However, this unique treatment of the unrepentant created another problem. Where are the unrepentant to go after they had concluded their limited punishment? Certainly they are no longer required to reside in hell, but neither do they seem to qualify for eternal life. The Vision solved this problem by interpreting the three glories (1 Cor. 15:41) as three "worlds" in the future life: the glory of the sun (celestial world) for the faithful who have bodies celestial, the glory of the moon (terrestrial world) for the untaught who have bodies terrestrial, and the glory of the stars. In order to make the two types of bodies mentioned in verse 40 correspond to the three glories mentioned in verse 41, Joseph Smith modified verse 40 by adding "bodies telestial," a neologism. According to the Vision, those with bodies telestial correspond with the glory of the stars and reside in the telestial world, which was between those of eternal life and hell. Although technically residing in the kingdom of God, these were not allowed to see His face, as the revelation of September 1830 had stated.

Step 3: Heterogeneity within the Book of Mormon groups: Addressing additional problems of divine justice

Subdividing the Unrepentant

Expanding the number of outcomes to four to eliminate the

difficulty of consigning heterogeneous groups to the same outcome did not solve all the problems of divine justice. Additional questions arose regarding heterogeneity within the four accountable groups discussed above. The first group addressed was the unrepentant. These were divided into those who knowingly chose and preferred sinning during mortal life and those who were unknowingly deceived, the "honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men" (verse 75). Divine justice would reasonably require different outcomes. As we have seen, the restorationists had taught that all of the unrepentant would have a second chance to accept the gospel in the future life and all would accept. The Methodists restricted acceptance to mortal life but emphasized the voluntary nature of salvation, meaning that only some would accept. This issue was resolved in the Vision by including portions of each view into a unique synthesis. All unrepentant would be given a second chance to gain "the testimony of Jesus" in the future life but acceptance would be voluntary. Those who would accept would be those who had been deceived, the only subgroup capable of change, and these would be promoted to the terrestrial world (verses 73–75). This subgroup was a new development not considered in the Book of Mormon. Those knowingly preferring sin would, as the Book of Mormon had proclaimed, retain the same spirit, not accept, and remain in the telestial world (verse 82).

Subdividing the Untaught

Some time subsequent to the Vision, the question of the just treatment of subsets of the untaught would also arise. As we have seen, Methodist theologian Richard Watson struggled with this issue, ultimately hypothesizing that perhaps those heathens who lived honorable lives might somehow be considered for salvation. But for Watson, who believed that faith and holiness in mortality were necessary for salvation, and who lacked the restorationist concept of rescue in the future life, it was problematic "by what means repentance, and faith, and righteousness, would be . . . wrought in them, as that they shall become acceptable to God."[64]

The Vision created a somewhat similar problem by consigning, without exception, the untaught to an inferior portion of "eternal life." Again, the solution included elements of the Methodists, who taught that people must voluntarily accept the gospel in mortal life

in order to be saved, and the restorationists, who insisted that the untaught would be saved in the future life. In January 1836, Joseph Smith recorded another vision in his journal. Smith was surprised to see his untaught brother Alvin, who had died before conversion to Mormonism and baptism, in the celestial world—seemingly against the schema of the Vision. He then learned that "all who have died with[out][65] a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it, if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial Kingdom of God." That this change was meant to resolve a problem of divine justice is evident from the statement that follows: "for I the Lord judge all men according to their works according to the desires of their hearts."[66] The importance of this unique synthesis for subsequent Mormon teaching and practice cannot be overemphasized. For if some of the untaught can merit the same ultimate outcome as the faithful, then Mormonism was left with the same problem as Watson: what of the scriptural requirements for faith, baptism, etc.? This new doctrine would form the theological foundation for the subsequent Mormon practices of work for the dead.

Subdividing the Faithful? Maybe

There may also have been subsets of the faithful defined in the Vision, although this is less clear. The Vision stated that those "who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus" are consigned to the terrestrial world and forfeit "the crown over the kingdom of our God" (D&C 76:79). Given the state of doctrinal development at the time the Vision was published, this passage could conceivably have referred to (1) the initially faithful who forfeit the crown by failing to endure to the end of mortal life but do not qualify as unpardonable or (2) the unrepentant who forfeit the crown by not accepting the gospel in mortal life but do accept it in the future life. Although some commentators have suggested the latter option,[67] the former interpretation seems to be the more popular, undoubtedly in part because of its utility in Mormon preaching to Church members.[68] Such a teaching would have been pertinent for a number of early members who, through persecution and other problems, were no longer actively supporting and/or had abandoned the fledgling Church.

Conclusions

The Book of Mormon's relation to Universalism is complex.

From one perspective, the book could be placed alongside a number of works critical of the modern Universalists that appeared in the 1820s and '30s before modern Universalism went into decline. But the Book of Mormon and the revelations Joseph Smith received are more than this since their authors also seem interested in resolving the early nineteenth-century anti-Universalism/Universalism controversies, especially those between the Methodists (Arminians) and the restorationist Universalists. In this regard, the Book of Mormon is best seen as the initial step of an ongoing process of attempting to solve a number of problems of divine fairness. Contrary to the idea that the Book of Mormon is pure Arminianism (Methodism), this work had already moved in the direction of the restorationists, as the teachings on the untaught, hell, and others demonstrate. The subsequent revelations continued the process, consistent with an ongoing dialogue with contemporaries and the Mormon claim to continuing revelation. Thus, the subsequent revelations are probably best interpreted as carrying the Book of Mormon innovations to their logical conclusions rather than abrupt reversals of doctrine.

Notes

1. Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 534–40.

2. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 173.

3. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 200.

4. The dispute between modern and restorationist Universalists (the "restorationist controversy") was at its height at the time the Book of Mormon was published; for a history of the major participants and issues, see Richard Eddy, *Universalism in America, A History*, 2 vols. (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1894), 2:260–342.

5. Alexander Campbell, "The Mormonites," *Millennial Harbinger* 2 (January 1831): 93.

6. Thomas Whittemore, "State of the Doctrine and Denomination of Universalists," *The Expositor and Universalist Review* 1 (January 1833): 61; L. S. Everett, *The Life of Rev. John Murray, Late Minister of the Reconciliation, and Senior Pastor of the Universalists, Congregated in Boston* (Boston: Marsh, Capen and Lyon, 1837), 272.

7. Joel Parker, *Lectures on Universalism* (Rochester, N.Y.: Elisha Loomis, 1830), 8.

8. Thomas Whittemore, *The Modern History of Universalism from the Era of the Reformation to the Present Time* (Boston: 1830), 431–33.

9. Whittemore, *History of Universalism,* 439–41.

10. Timothy Merritt, *A Discussion on Universal Salvation in Three Lectures and Five Answers Against That Doctrine* (New York: B. Wauch and T. Mason, 1832), 11.

11. Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770–1880* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 54.

12. Ibid., 55.

13. Paul Dean, *Course of Lectures in Defence of the Final Restoration* (Boston: Edwin M. Stone, 1832), 30, 43.

14. For a discussion of some of the early nineteenth-century Calvinist/Arminian disputes and the Book of Mormon see Clyde D. Ford, "Lehi on the Great Issues: Book of Mormon Theology in Early Nineteenth-Century Perspective," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38 (Winter 2005): 75–96. In 1830 the rapidly growing American Methodist churches were estimated to have a half-million members. See David Hampton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University, 2005), 212.

15. Mark Thomas, "Revival Language in the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 8 (May-June 1983): 20.

16. Dan Vogel, "Anti-Universalist Rhetoric in the Book of Mormon" in Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 47.

17. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 187.

18. Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 128.

19. Bushman, *Joseph Smith,* 199.

20. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 28.

21. Mosiah 15:25; Moroni 8:8–22. For the Methodist view, see Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes: or, a View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity* (1823–1829). Reprinted in 2 vols. (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), 2:344–5.

22. John Wesley, "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," in *The Works of John Wesley,* 14 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 8:68.

23.Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in *Works,* 6:506.

24. Wesley, "A Dialogue between a Predestinarian and His Friend," in *Works,* 10:266.

25. Wesley, "A Call to Backsliders," in *Works,* 6:523.

26. *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 2:12.

27. Merritt, *Universal Salvation,* 38.

28. Watson, *Institutes,* 2:446.

29. Merritt, *Universal Salvation,* 36; Luther Lee, *Universalism Examined and Refuted* (Watertown, N.Y.: Knowlton & Rice, 1836), 230.

30. Wesley, "On Living without God," in *Works,* 7:353; Watson, *Institutes,* 2:445.

31. Dean, *Lectures,* 51.

32. Adam Empie, *Remarks on the Distinguishing Doctrine of Modern Universalism* (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1825), 14.

33. Edwin F. Hatfield, *Universalism as It Is or Textbook of Modern Universalism in America* (New York: J. A. Hoisington, 1841).

34. Bressler, *Universalist Movement,* 146.

35. Ibid., 5–6.

36. Hosea Ballou, *The Gospel Visitant 2* (no. 1) (April 1817): 187.

37. Walter Balfour, *Three Essays on the Intermediate State of the Dead, the Resurrection from the Dead, and the Greek Terms Rendered Judge, Judgment, Condemned, Condemnation, Damned, Damnation, &c. in the New Testament with Remarks on Mr. Hudson's Letters in Vindication of a Future Retribution, Addressed to Mr. Hosea Ballou, of Boston* (Charlestown, Mass.: G. Davidson, 1828), ix.

38. Joel Hawes, *Reasons for Not Embracing the Doctrine of Universal Salvation* (New York: American Tract Society, 1833), 76.

39. William E. Channing, "The Evil of Sin," in *The Works of William E. Channing, D.D.* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1882), 350.

40. Hosea Ballou, "Lecture Sermon on Hebrews 2:14–15" in *Lecture Sermons* (Boston: Henry Bowen, 1818), 237.

41. Lee, *Universalism Examined,* 157–58.

42. Channing, "The Evil of Sin," 350.

43. Ibid., 353.

44. Charles Hudson, *A Series of Letters Addressed to Rev. Hosea Ballou, of Boston, Being a Vindication of the Doctrine of a Future Retribution, against the Principal Arguments Used by Him, Mr. Balfour, and Others* (Woodstock, Vt.: David Watson, 1827); Walter Balfour, *Three Essays; Charles Hudson, A Reply to Mr. Balfour's Essays: Touching the State of the Dead and a Future Retribution* (Woodstock, Vt.: David Watson, 1829); Walter Balfour, *Letters on the Immortality of the Soul, the Intermediate State of the Dead and a Future Retribution in Reply to Mr. Charles Hudson* (Charlestown, Mass.: G. Davidson, 1829).

45. Balfour, *Letters on the Immortality of the Soul,* 1.

46. Balfour, *Three Essays,* 109; Hudson, *Series of Letters,* 93.

47. For example, see Watson, *Institutes,* 2:458–59.

48. Dean, *Lectures,* 61.

49. Joel Parker, *Lectures on Universalism* (Rochester, N.Y.: Elisha Loomis, 1830), 18; Richard Watson, *A Biblical and Theological Dictionary* (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1837), 446.

50. Hudson, *Letters,* 94; Dean, *Lectures,* 62.

51. Lee, *Universalism Examined,* 251.

52. Hudson, *Letters,* 91.

53. George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine, Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1984), 75.

54. Parker, *Lectures,* 88.

55. Section 19 in the current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Like several other revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 19 appears to be a combination of two originally separate communications placed back to back, comprising verses 1–24 and 25–41. The first, which is of primary concern here, was directed to a group of individuals (see verse 9); the second to Martin Harris.

56. Dean, *Lectures,* 65–66.

57. Ibid., 101.

58. Doctrine and Covenants 29:27–29.

59. Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988), 69–156.

60. Turretin discusses the questions "Will there be degrees of glory? And will the glory in heaven be equal or unequal and unlike?" in Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* 3 vols. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 1997), 3:621–30.

61.The earliest surviving versions of The Vision were recorded in the "Kirtland Revelation Book" by Frederick G. Williams in early 1832 and in the "Book of Commandments and Revelations of the Lord" in Missouri by John Whitmer. The originals may be viewed in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 243–55, 415–33. An edited version appears as Doctrine and Covenants Section 76. A more detailed discussion of the literary history of The Vision is beyond the scope of this article but will be the subject of a subsequent study.

62. Further evidence of this division of "eternal life" into two ultimate outcomes can be seen in the need to clarify the future status of infants who die. The Book of Mormon consigns these to "eternal life," but would they join the faithful or the untaught in the future life? In 1836 it was revealed to Joseph that these would go to the celestial world. See Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 168 and Doctrine and Covenants 137:10.

63. See Alice K. Turner, *The History of Hell* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), 83–88, 133–44.

64. Watson, *Institutes,* 2:445.

65. This vision was recorded in Joseph's journal by Warren Parrish (1803–77) on January 21, 1836. Parish wrote "with," undoubtedly a scribal error for "without." The original may be viewed at josephsmithpapers.org, accessed March 8, 2014.

66. See Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals Volume 1,* 168. This revelation was added to the Doctrine and Covenants in edited form in 1976 as Section 137.

67. Matthew Bowman, *The Mormon People* (New York: Random House, 2012), 33; Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants,* 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 2:318. The latter suggests both interpretations as legitimate possibilities.

68. For examples see Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 353; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 820; and Roy W. Doxey, *The Doctrine & Covenants Speaks,* 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 2:26.

Hospitality in the Book of Mormon

Bryan R. Warnick, Benjamin A. Johnson, and Sang Hyun Kim

A notable feature of many ancient societies was the set of customs related to hospitality. Hosts often had an obligation to give comfort, friendship, and protection to wandering strangers, while guests often had an obligation to give gifts, gratitude, and proper respect to their hosts. In addition, the ethic of hospitality was often linked to religion and divine commands. In ancient Greek literature, for example, Zeus himself oversees the treatment of strangers, and the theme of *xenia* or "guest friendship" pervades Greek mythology and the Homeric epics. The Trojan War, as partially described in Homer's *Iliad*, begins with a violation of the hospitality ethic (as a guest of Menelaus, Paris transgresses *xenia* by kidnapping his host's wife, Helen), while the *Odyssey* is an extended consideration of the behavior of guests and hosts. Hospitality also plays a key role in some of the most memorable stories in the Old Testament, and, as we will see, it is connected in important ways to Israelite religious understanding. This article will examine hospitality as it is found in the Book of Mormon. We will look at instances when a person (or group) invites an outsider (or group of outsiders) into the home or community, making note of how the hospitality is exercised, what motivates it, what role it plays in the Book of Mormon narrative, and what spiritual or religious dimensions it is assigned. Paying particular attention to hospitality as a process by which "an outsider's status is changed from stranger to guest,"[1] we will examine how the theme of hospitality is present in the book's stories, themes, sermons, and metaphors.

Old Testament Hospitality

It will be useful to review instances of hospitality in biblical literature, particularly the Old Testament, since this forms the setting

in which the Book of Mormon is placed. In the Hebrew Bible, there are numerous examples of hospitality. Abraham is approached on a summer afternoon by three strangers. He "ran" to meet these strangers, bowing to them with respect, urging them to stay, saying, "Pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." He does not ask them any questions about who they are or what their business is. Instead, he puts Sarah to work making bread, he picks out the best of his calves to offer to them, and he gives them butter and milk to eat (Genesis 18:1–8). After they are fed, these holy men promise Abraham and Sarah that they will have a child. Shortly thereafter, Abraham's nephew, Lot, demonstrates hospitality to perhaps an outrageous extreme, offering his own daughters to the men of Sodom, either as sexual bribery or, as Scott Morschauser convincingly argues,[2] as a legalistic hostage exchange, to protect the guests under his care (Genesis 19:1–9). Here again, like Abraham, Lot offers to shelter them and to wash their feet, without asking any questions of them. These initial examples of hospitality are multiplied throughout the Old Testament: Elijah is commanded by the Lord to rely on the meals and shelter of a poor widow, but he returns the favor to her by providing a continuous supply of food and oil and by raising her son from the dead (1 Kings 17:9–23). Elisha is offered sustenance and a place to stay by a woman who is unable to have children. After the woman assists Elisha, she and her husband also welcome a child (2 Kings 4:8–17). In the Hebrew Bible, the hospitality ethic encourages a willingness to impart of one's means, no matter how meager. God will facilitate the hospitality by providing blessings to those who offer it.[3] In all of these stories, the guest-host relationships become inverted through divine sanction, as the guest turns out to be the one who blesses the host.

The hospitable encounter between a guest and host becomes an image that defines Israelite self-understanding. As God's chosen people, the Israelites have themselves been wanderers and see their own story in the plight of peripatetic strangers (Exodus 23:9). As a wandering people, they have empathy for those without a home and care for strangers as they themselves have been sustained by God, acting as their generous hosts. The Israelites, in fact, are reminded that they are strangers even in their own land, since it is, in the end, God's land, and they are his guests (Leviticus 25:23). The Lord tells the Israelites that they should treat strangers as they would their

own family (Leviticus 19:34). Taking in all these considerations, Christine Pohl concludes, "The teachings of the Law, the warnings of punishment for disobedience, and the promise of blessing on obedience reinforced Israelite hospitality toward strangers, as did the individual hospitality stories: guests might be angels, messengers from God, bringing divine promise or provision."[4]

Scholars have identified some things that typically happen as part of an act of biblical hospitality.[5] The host goes out to meet the stranger, not asking any questions until the basic needs have been satisfied (Genesis 18, 19, and 24:33), provides a meal, and washes the guest's feet (Genesis 18:4, 19:2, 24:25). It is the host's responsibility to protect the guest (Genesis 19:8; Joshua 2:2-4; Judges 19:22–24). The invitation to hospitality often includes a time span, stipulating how long a guest can stay (Genesis 18:5; Judges 19:5, 20). The hospitality relationship sometimes includes a covenant between the guest and the host (Genesis 26:31). Once the invitation is accepted, Victor H. Matthews describes biblical customs surrounding hospitality in this way: (a) the guest should not ask for anything or insult the host; (b) the host should protect the guest, provide the best provisions he has available, and should not insult the guest; and (c) the guest should accept what is offered with gratitude and praise.[6] While these elements are not universal across all the stories, they are common enough to form recognizable patterns and type-scenes. Hospitality, then, plays an important role in Hebrew scripture. It drives biblical narratives forward and contributes to Israelite self-understanding. There are some common elements to the stories of hospitality that give them a recognizable structure. Given this Old Testament background, we should expect hospitality, then, to play some role in the Book of Mormon. We shall see that it does, but also that the Book of Mormon has its own emphasis relating to hospitality.

Hospitality in Book of Mormon Narratives

Nephi and Zoram

The first example of hospitality involves Nephi and his invitation to Zoram to join the Lehite family exodus. So long as he serves in Laban's household, it is important to note that Zoram remains unnamed; he is referred to only as "the servant of Laban." Although

he has obviously been given substantial authority within the household, we first seem to encounter this servant as a *thing*, a mere possession of Laban. Whatever identity this servant may have had in the household of Laban does not seem to be recognized by the narrator: We are given no lineage or family history, no background, not even a name. The servant seems at first to be a minor figure, hidden in the larger drama surrounding the brass plates, a mere tool in the hands of more powerful men, first as a tool of Laban and then as a tool of Nephi. As Nephi and this nameless servant walk to the city walls of Jerusalem after acquiring the brass plates, there is the scattered record of their conversation. The servant talks of the "elders of the Jews"; his clear emphasis on "of the Jews" (repeated twice) suggests his status as a stranger, as if he were on the outside of the covenant community looking in. As far as the narrator is concerned, Zoram is initially a person without a name or place, lost in the stories of others.

From the perspective of the reader, particularly, Zoram is in a precarious position. His master is dead and he has unwittingly participated with Nephi in stealing the brass plates. He will be subject to suspicion when Laban's household finds out what is done—who would believe his story, after all, that he did not recognize Nephi under Laban's clothes? He is obviously fearful that Nephi and his brothers will do him harm—they would seem like violent, murderous men to him. Also, it is important to remember that Zoram is living in a doomed city, Jerusalem, a place that will be destroyed in a matter of years. Zoram is in a more precarious position than perhaps even he himself realizes.

After leaving Jerusalem, Nephi promises to this unnamed outsider by "an oath" that "he need not fear; that he should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us" (1 Nephi 4:33). Significantly, Nephi promises to the unnamed servant that he should "have place with us" (1 Nephi 4:34). It is only after this invitation that Laban's servant is finally named in the narrative as "Zoram." In Nephi's promises to have a place and to be free, the Book of Mormon links both identity (as the narrator finally gives the reader Zoram's name) and freedom to hospitality. With Lehi's family, Zoram, a formerly unnamed servant without place, is eventually given a family (a wife) and friendship (with Nephi) within the covenant community. Nephi is extending his kin, making Zoram

part of his circle. Nephi has turned, as Matthews argues, a threat into an ally,[7] and he has done this through hospitality. The enduring relationships go beyond hospitality, but hospitality has made them possible.

Compare the experience of Zoram to the process of hospitality that Pohl outlines in her work, where strangers without connections are given place within a web of relationships:

> Strangers, in the strict sense, are those who are disconnected from the basic relationships that give persons a secure place in the world. The most vulnerable strangers are detached from family, community, church, work, and polity. . . . When we offer hospitality to strangers, we welcome them into a place to which we are somehow connected—a space that has meaning and value to us. . . . In hospitality, the stranger is welcomed into a safe, personal, and comfortable place, a place of respect and acceptance and friendship. Even if only briefly, the stranger is included in a life-giving and life-sustaining network of relations.[8]

Through the act of hospitality, Zoram not only achieves the safety of leaving the city that will soon be destroyed, but also begins to form the protective connections that come with ties to family and community. The invitation to be part of Lehi's family is received by oath, emphasizing that Zoram has become part of the web of covenant relationships. Zoram's connection to Lehi brings him into a family that is itself a part of multiple covenants—the covenants between Israel and its God, and between Lehi and the Lord (1 Nephi 2:20) relating to their journey to the Promised Land. The notion that hospitality creates covenant relationships connects to the biblical typology of hospitality. Somewhat mysteriously, Nephi's justification for inviting Zoram is this: "Surely the Lord hath commanded us to do this thing; and shall we not be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord?" (1 Nephi 4:34). The commandment Nephi refers to is designated "this thing" and is left ambiguous. The thing that is commanded is connected logically (with a "therefore" statement) to the act of giving a place to Zoram: "Therefore, if thou wilt go down into the wilderness to my father thou shalt have place with us." Nephi is offering Zoram a place with his family because, in some sense, it is related to the thing that he has been commanded to do. It is unclear why the specific commandment

to retrieve the plates should also imply that Nephi needs to invite Zoram to have place with them. Of course, silencing Zoram would be important for the success of Nephi's escape (verse 36), but this could have been accomplished in ways other than making Zoram part of the family—he could have been taken prisoner or enslaved, or (using the same reasoning behind the killing of Laban) simply dispatched. Perhaps Nephi, in talking about "this thing," is referring to the commandment to leave Jerusalem and find safety in the promised land, with the retrieval of the plates being only one part of the larger commandment. Nephi may be connecting the hospitality that God offers to Lehi's family, and the place of safety they have been offered in the promised land, with his own offer of a "place" to Zoram. At first glance, the story of hospitality toward Zoram is somewhat different from other ancient stories in the biblical material. For instance, there is no household to speak of. And yet, the tent of Lehi is repeatedly affirmed as Lehi's place of dwelling, and the story ends as Nephi and Zoram depart for this place of dwelling, "the tent of our father" (1 Nephi 4:38). Those offering the hospitality, Nephi and his brothers, are vulnerable and in danger here, at least as much as the recipient of the invitation. Zoram, in fact, constitutes a threat to them since he alone of the household knows what happened to Laban. This introduces a theme that seems to be emphasized in the Book of Mormon, the theme of dangerous hospitality. Hospitality is offered even when it places the host at great risk. Another difference from the biblical typology is that the offer from Nephi to Zoram involves an indefinite length of stay rather than a specific time period. Indeed, the offer of hospitality is not simply to stay and be temporarily protected; instead, it is to become part of the fugitive family. In this moment, the Book of Mormon seems to broaden the scope of hospitality in several ways. It is not about temporary protection but about permanent change of identity. It suggests that hospitality is not simply about offering room and board, but that it involves forming enduring relationships.

Alma and Amulek, Ammon and Aaron

Chapters 5–35 in the book of Alma detail the ministry of Alma, the sons of Mosiah, and the subsequent aftermath. There is an underlying theme of hospitality driving the structure of these chapters. Consider first the story of Alma and Amulek. After Alma's suc-

cessful visits to Zarahemla, Gideon, and Melek, he finds himself in Ammonihah. The people of Ammonihah cast him out of their city but Alma returns to the city, hungry (Alma 8:19). One commenter suggests that Alma's hunger may be at least partially attributable to a lack of hospitality on the part of the wicked communities that he visited.[9] Amulek, though, takes in the holy stranger and offers him food, drink, and protection. Consistent with biblical hospitality, Alma does not give a full account of himself until after the meal, and Amulek does not ask questions of Alma beyond what he has learned from the angel (Alma 8:23).

Hospitality to strangers is particularly important in biblical narratives because wanderers sometimes turn out to be holy messengers, either angels or prophets. Whether the occasion is Abraham hosting the three holy men or the widow of Zarephath giving her sustenance to Elijah, strangers can bear important spiritual messages, offer blessings, and can themselves be significant figures. It is not within temples or tabernacles, synagogues or holy mountains that some lessons are to be given and received, but within the confines of individual households. This message is consistent with what we find in the Book of Mormon, particularly in this part of the book of Alma, where the question of how prophets are received by communities is a major theme.

The events surrounding the meeting of Alma and Amulek are discussed twice in the Book of Mormon, once by the narrator (Alma 8) and once again by Amulek himself (Alma 10). In both accounts, the site of the interaction between Alma and Amulek, the household, is repeated. In Alma 8:18–22, Amulek speaks through the narrator, inviting Alma "into [his] house" and awaiting the promised blessings that will come to "[his] house." The narrator follows up relating that Alma did indeed bless "Amulek and his house." Thus, the location of the hospitality, "his house," is stressed three times by the narrator. In Amulek's own account of his initial encounter with Alma, the location of the events as his house is emphasized even more emphatically. Amulek says that an angel told him to return to his "own house" where he would meet a "holy man," a person whom he should receive "into [his] house and feed him." If Amulek did this, he was told twice that the stranger would bless him and his house (Alma 10:7). It is remarkable that the location of the household as the setting for the encounter is repeated eight times. Clearly,

Alma's invitation into Amulek's house is not a trivial or incidental detail; rather, it is the essential part of the story that Amulek wanted to tell. By emphasizing the hospitality of Amulek's household, the underlying contrast seems to be with the city Ammonihah. Instead of rejecting the prophet, the people of Ammonihah should have welcomed the prophet into their homes and communities, just as Amulek has done.

The angelic command to Amulek to offer hospitality to Alma plays several roles within the story. First, the idea that Amulek's hospitality is to contrast with that of Ammonihah is underscored by Amulek's story of the angel. As we said, the Hebrew tradition encouraged hospitality because of the possibility of hidden prophets and angels disguised as wandering strangers. Here, the stranger is fully unmasked as God's messenger, making the condemnation of Ammonihah's continuing lack of hospitality more thorough and complete. The status of outsider has been recognized by one of the city's own citizens. With the angel's introduction, Alma's identity as a divine messenger is revealed to Amulek and subsequently to the Ammonihah community, and the city is left without excuse. Second, the angel's involvement in this act of hospitality also serves to introduce another theme within Book of Mormon hospitality, that of guided hospitality. This is the idea that the Lord is actively involved in setting up guest and host relationships, arranging them to accomplish his purposes. In the Bible, particularly after the book of Genesis, the hand of God can be inferred in hospitality relationships, but in the Book of Mormon that involvement is front and center.

In the story of Alma and Amulek, hospitality is linked to spiritual blessings. Being instructed by an angel to take care of the prophet, Amulek receives Alma into his house warmly: "Therefore, go with me into my house and I will impart unto thee of my food" (Alma 8:20). Similar to other biblical accounts of hospitality to men of God, the act of hospitality given by Amulek, "a chosen man of God" (Alma 10:7), brings "blessings" to both himself and to his family (Alma 8:22). Amulek testifies that the prophet "hath blessed mine house, he hath blessed me, and my women, and my children, and my father and my kinsfolk; yea, even all my kindred hath he blessed. And the blessing of the Lord hath rested upon us according to the words which he spake" (Alma 10:11). Amulek describes not only the

angelic visit but also the events of the household as he talks with his fellow citizens. As the wandering guest becomes the source of blessings, we see the inversion theme of hospitality in biblical material. As Waldemar Janzen writes of the "Jesus Paradigm" of hospitality, "The guest who is offered hospitality turns into the host from whose blessing the hosts-turned-guests can continue to live a new life."[10] As Alma blesses Amulek, he becomes the host-turned-guest, offering spiritual rebirth (Alma 10:6, 11) to Amulek just as Amulek has before offered him physical sustenance.

A complicating factor in this story of "blessings" is, of course, the grim fate of Amulek's household. From one perspective, Amulek hardly seems blessed, even being forsaken by some of his family (Alma 15:16). Yet Amulek himself continues to honor the teachings of Alma, indicating their continued meaning for him after the destruction of his former life.

The story of Alma and Amulek is usefully compared with the story of Lot and the men of Sodom. In both stories, angels are involved in the act of hospitality. In the case of Lot, the guests were angels themselves; in the case of Alma, the guest was introduced by an angel. In both stories, the respective cities are being condemned partly because of their lack of hospitality. In both stories, one home opens up to the outsiders and provides them with protections, and these acts of hospitality come at great potential cost to the host: Lot must offer to sacrifice his daughters to the mob; Amulek seems to lose his family and household completely. And, finally, although both inhospitable cities are thereafter destroyed, the charitable host is able to escape the destruction. In both cases, inhospitality is used to expose the moral corruption of the cities. As Pohl writes, "Deliberate acts of inhospitality, such as seen in the stories of the men of Sodom . . . exposed foolish, evil, or corrupted character." She continues, "The contrast between hospitality and inhospitality in Genesis 19 . . . highlights the utter lawlessness and degradation of the communities."[11] This dynamic holds true with Ammonihah, a city that would let Alma go hungry. In the story of Alma and Amulek, the community's inhospitality is emphasized and, as with Sodom, the degradation of the community is exposed. What is noteworthy in this story of Amulek's hospitality to Alma is that Amulek does not simply remain a host who serves a prophet by caring for his temporal needs. Through hospitality to a holy man, Amulek him-

self becomes a holy messenger, becoming, in other words, the type of person whom he had previously served. Through hospitality, two strangers, Alma and Amulek, turn into allies in a very literal sense. As the story continues, we learn that Alma "tarried many days with Amulek before he began to preach unto the people" (Alma 8:27). During this stay, Amulek becomes convinced by Alma's teachings. In his defense of Alma before the people of Ammonihah, Amulek declares: "I know that the things whereof he hath testified are true; for behold I say unto you, as the Lord liveth, even so has he sent his angel to make these things manifest unto me; and this he has done while this Alma hath *dwelt at my house*" (Alma 10:10; emphasis added). In this passage, the emphasis on the location "in my house" seems to strengthen Amulek's argument: people who live together, who share meals and sleep under the same roof know one another in an intimate way, and thus are better able to judge character. Hospitality, in this sense, strengthens Amulek's witness of Alma's teachings. Living in the same household allowed Amulek to feel Alma's sincerity and spiritual power. When Amulek's words were finished, the people of Ammonihah "began to be astonished" because of what they heard and saw, especially the fact that there was "more than one witness" who called them to repentance and shared things to come (Alma 10:12). Amulek serves Alma, the hungry traveling minister, with his generous hospitality but also comes to play an important role in advancing God's work: He defends the wandering prophet as a good host would do and also becomes a holy man of God himself.

The subsequent story of Ammonihah continues, with the theme of hospitality always in the background. The people in Ammonihah who had believed Alma, we read, fled into the land of Sidom (Alma 15:1). There, it seems that many of the outcasts from Ammonihah had received refuge, sheltered in the houses of the Nephites who were living there. At least we know that Zeezrom, who had led the arguments against Amulek, was being cared for in the house of one of the unnamed inhabitants. Alma goes "in unto the house unto Zeezrom" (Alma 15:5) to visit his former adversary. Someone had apparently taken in this sick and sorrowful refugee. This appears to be the first instance in what will shortly become a common feature of the Book of Mormon: a community opening itself up to care for religious refugees. This act of community hospitality again appears

to function as a way of revealing the character of the community. In this case, the revelation is positive. In turn, the people of Sidom respond well to Alma's message and the church is established among them (Alma 15:12–13).

The story of Alma and Amulek reaches its most poignant moment as the setting of the household is mentioned one last time in connection to their companionship. Alma "took Amulek to his own house, and did administer unto him in his tribulations" (Alma 15:18). Just as Amulek had taken in and comforted Alma, now Alma takes in Amulek. After all that has happened to Amulek, we can understand why some healing might be necessary. Hospitality remains central to the story of Alma and Amulek to the end. It plays a role in our evaluation of entire cities but also reveals the contours of their friendship.

Immediately after the revelation of Sidom as a welcoming city, we are told of the downfall of Ammonihah, and the attention of the Book of Mormon turns to additional encounters between communities (this time Lamanite cities) and prophet/missionaries (Ammon and Aaron). While the Lamanite rulers are initially suspicious of these new messengers, in contrast to the people of Ammonihah they are able to welcome them into their homes and communities, benefiting spiritually from their message. Ultimately, where the people of Ammonihah suffer annihilation, the converts of Ammon and Aaron receive protection and comfort.

The story of Ammon and King Lamoni is interesting, not so much because it exemplifies the characteristics of good hosts and guests, but because it initially does the opposite, at least if we take seriously the elements of biblical hospitality described earlier. Not only does King Lamoni break the rules of hospitality with his rough treatment of Ammon (Alma 17:20), but the narrator informs us that Lamoni immediately begins questioning Ammon about his plans (Alma 17:22). Rather than offering an invitation that includes a prescribed length of stay, Lamoni suspiciously asks how long Ammon intends to stay. For his part, Ammon apparently sees no need to follow the rules of the guest. When Lamoni offers Ammon his daughter, Ammon refuses, thus rejecting what has been offered to him (a breach of protocol on the part of a guest; see Alma 17:24–25). Perhaps all of this heightens the dramatic tension. We know that Ammonihah had rejected the prophet, while Sidom had not.

The inhospitable initial encounter and explicit play of elements of hospitality make the reader wonder what will happen in this new city.

Whatever failures there might have been here (and it is not clear whether Ammon and Lamoni would have known about or have felt compelled to follow any ritual practices of hospitality), the initial awkwardness is overcome as Ammon actively and repeatedly degrades his own social status. Hospitality in the ancient world often demanded that the gifts of the host be equal to the status of the guest. It is possible, as Peter J. Sorensen suggests, that Ammon rejects the daughter because he believes that the gift is not commensurate with the status of a lowly "servant" that he wishes to adopt. His rejection of the gift may not have been a rejection of the hospitality protocol but a gentle correction to Lamoni's misreading of the demands of hospitality in that instance.[12] His desire to "dwell among" the Lamanites, possibly until the day of his death, signifies a willingness to leave behind his Nephite heritage and adopt a new identity among the Lamanites. Despite this, it seems that Lamoni has taken Ammon as a guest under his protection, since we subsequently learn that Lamoni protects Ammon from the attack of his father in Alma 20:13–18.

Ammon's self-degradation here, his lowering of his own social status, allows King Lamoni to accept Ammon into his household. As we saw with Alma and Amulek, an underlying message of these chapters is the power of letting a messenger of God into one's home. Amulek was impressed by what he received from or through Alma as Alma was living in his household. Similarly, once Ammon is allowed into the royal household, he is able to perform the miracles that so greatly impress King Lamoni, beginning with the miraculous protection of the king's flocks. Hospitality, allowing God's servants inside one's home, sets the stage for the workings of God's spirit. Hospitality, the Book of Mormon implies, gives the foothold the Spirit needs to convert hearts and minds.

The pattern repeats with King Lamoni's unnamed father, who is king of all the Lamanites. The father of Lamoni had been prepared by his encounter with Ammon earlier (Alma 20:8–27). Unlike the people of Ammonihah, he opens up his house to a traveling missionary, this time Aaron, who teaches by the Spirit, working miracles within the king's home—most notably curing the king of his

spiritual coma in front of the queen and the other members of the household (Alma 22). After converting, the king proclaims a type of religious freedom that enshrines hospitality into law: "Yea, he sent a decree among them, that they should not lay their hands on them to bind them, or to cast them into prison; neither should they spit upon them, nor smite them, nor cast them out of their synagogues, nor scourge them; neither should they cast stones at them, but that they should *have free access to their houses*, and also their temples, and their sanctuaries" (Alma 23:2). Interestingly, the king does not require religious conversion, but he does require that the people receive the messengers into their most intimate places—a policy that seems quite successful as many convert to the church.

The Nephite-Ammonite-Zoramite Hospitality Cycle

In the Book of Mormon, stories of hospitality are not simply about individuals hosting individuals, but also about communities hosting communities. We have already seen how the people of Sidom took the refugees from Ammonihah into their homes. Earlier, during the reign of King Mosiah, the Nephite community had received two groups of wandering refugees. He welcomed first the people of Limhi into the Nephite community "with joy" (Mosiah 22:14); later, the group led by Alma was also received "with joy" (Mosiah 24:25). The parallel references to Mosiah's emotional response highlight a celebratory attitude toward hospitality, a joyful openness to others. It is true that the people of Limhi were kinfolk to the Nephites, but the hospitality should not be discounted for this reason, particularly given the Book of Mormon background in which brothers quickly became strangers and enemies to each other.[13] These wanderers are welcomed, not only as people in need, but also as people with sacred records and stories to tell. As Thomas Ogletree writes in his influential study of Christian hospitality, "Hospitality designates occasions of potential discovery which can open up our narrow, provincial worlds. Strangers have stories to tell which we have never heard before, stories which can redirect our seeing and stimulate our imaginations."[14] Similarly, as the people of Nephi hear the stories of these strangers and read their records, they are "struck with wonder and amazement" and "knew not what to think," being torn by emotions of "exceedingly great joy" on the one hand and "many tears of sorrow" on the other (Mosiah 25:7–9).

Clearly, the stories of these wanderers stimulated the imagination of Nephites. They had access to those stories through their hospitality.

Perhaps the most impressive examples of communal hospitality to strangers in the Book of Mormon narrative begin where we left off with the Lamanite converts of Ammon and the sons of Mosiah, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. In their story, we find repeated acts of large-scale hospitality offered to destitute groups that seemingly have little to offer to the host community. The people who are eventually converted through Ammon's efforts later become politico-religious refugees, no longer welcome among the Lamanite/Amalekite communities. They seek and, in another act of dangerous hospitality, receive refuge and a place among the Nephite people in the land of Jershon (Alma 27). A few details make this act of hospitality particularly impressive. First, the name Jershon may be linked to the Hebrew root *yrö,* meaning "to inherit." If this is accurate, it amplifies the invitation of the Nephites that this would be an inheritance, that is, it was not simply a temporary arrangement until a better situation could be found. As with Zoram, the Nephite offer is one of permanent refuge, not temporary shelter. Second, the offer of hospitality is what we might call a grass-roots decision, with a "voice" of the people vowing to take in the Ammonites (Alma 27:22). This contrasts with other communities, such as Ammonihah, where the popular sentiment seemed to go against hospitality. Third, the offer of hospitality brings with it a new identity for the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, signified in a new name, the "people of Ammon" (Alma 27:26).The Anti-Nephi-Lehi identity is constituted by their role as generous hosts to Ammon and Aaron, while the people of Ammon's identity is constituted by their role as guests to the generous Nephites. Hospitality is again linked to the deepest sense of identity, just as it is in the story of Zoram, where groups or individuals are given a new name as they receive hospitality. Fourth, as in the case of Amulek, we have an instance of guided hospitality (see Alma 27:12), with the Lord playing a role connecting community with community and homes with those who are wandering.

Unfortunately, the Amalekites had angrily turned the people of Ammon into cultural scapegoats (Alma 27:3); and, in taking them in, the Nephites commit what the Lamanites interpret as an act of war. The people of Ammon refuse to participate in armed conflict, however, even though their presence is itself the cause of "tremen-

dous slaughter" among the Nephites who defend them (Alma 28:1–3). Thus, taking in this group gives no strategic advantage to the Nephites and instead causes them to endure tragic losses—an act of dangerous hospitality, a decision fraught with peril and tragic political implications. Here again we see a theme we found in the initial encounter of Nephi and Zoram. Each time hospitality comes up in the Book of Mormon, the consequences of the hospitality become more and more dire.

This pattern of dangerous hospitality is quickly repeated as the people of Ammon themselves offer protection to poverty-stricken refugees from the Zoramite community: "They did receive all the poor of the Zoramites that came over unto them, and did clothe them, and did give unto them lands for their inheritance; and they did administer unto them according to their wants" (Alma 35:9). We are told little about these refugees, other than that they were "many." We know that these refugees were expelled based on a secret plot (Alma 35:3–6) driven by the Zoramite elite (Alma 35:3–6), the elite expulsion contrasting with the welcoming hospitality of popular "voice" of the people toward the people of Ammon. The narrative closely parallels what happened earlier when the people of Ammon themselves had been taken in as refugees. Now, however, it is *their* act of hospitality that causes the problem: threats are issued against the people of Ammon for accepting the Zoramite poor and another war is initiated (Alma 35:8–11). Here, the results of the dangerous hospitality become catastrophic. This conflict, in fact, ignites the series of bloody wars detailed in the remainder of the book of Alma. The saga of the people of Ammon, who act as both needy guests and generous hosts, does not give the impression that hospitality is safe or convenient—quite the opposite.

Throughout Alma 5–35, then, we are presented with a series of comparisons among individuals and cities, all involving hospitality to outsiders. Amulek's hospitality is contrasted with the city of Ammonihah, while Ammonihah is also contrasted with Sidom. King Lamoni and his father, after initially going against the biblical typology, turn toward hospitality, as does the "voice" of the Nephite people. In the later chapters of this Alma, we see the final comparison as the Zoramites are contrasted with the people of Ammon. While the people of Ammon demonstrate reciprocity, providing hospitality as they had been given it, their contemporaries, the Zoramites, show an

extreme lack of hospitality. Indeed, there is a distinct hostility shown by the wealthy Zoramites toward their poor, powerless, and needy. We read that the poor were not permitted to cross the threshold into the Zoramite communities of worship: "They were not permitted to enter into the synagogues to worship God, being esteemed filthiness; therefore they were poor; yea, therefore they were esteemed by their brethren as dross" (Alma 32:3). As we will see, this lack of congregational hospitality will come under severe condemnation in many Book of Mormon sermons.

Hospitality in Book of Mormon Homily

Given that communities are judged by their hospitality in the book of Alma, it is no surprise that many Book of Mormon sermons condemn inhospitable treatment and use the imagery of hospitality to convey their ideas. Sorensen writes that this is certainly the case with Abinidi's sermon before the greedy king Noah: "The prophet is reminding Noah that his people are beggars in the promised land, and that Jehovah will tolerate neither inhumanity nor arrogance."[15] We should note that it also plays a role in Jesus's sermons to the Nephites. Whereas the wealthy Zoramites had cast out the poor from their meetings, Jesus commands that even unrepentant sinners should not be cast off: "Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out of your synagogues, or your places of worship, for unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them" (3 Nephi 18:32).

In Book of Mormon sermons, this hospitality within communities and congregations of worship mirrors God's open invitation to his children. Just as congregations should open their arms to sinners and strangers, so God offers an open invitation to his people to come unto him. God is portrayed as the welcoming host in Nephi's sermon in 2 Nephi 26:25–33, as he offers to share food with those who come unto him:

> Behold, doth he cry unto any, saying: Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith: Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price. Behold, hath he commanded any that they should depart out of the synagogues, or out of the houses of worship? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. Behold, hath the

> Lord commanded any that they should not partake of his goodness? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but all men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden.

Perhaps the most interesting sermon relating to hospitality in the Book of Mormon can be found in the King Benjamin homily at the beginning of the book of Mosiah. In this address, Benjamin implores his people, saying, "And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish" (Mosiah 4:16). The physical imagery of "turning him out" or being "turned away" describes a failure of hospitality. The language of "turning him out" suggests that the beggars in question are homeless wanderers, who belong within the household or community in at least one sense. The language of "turning him away" also has overtones of a lack of hospitality. This language is used specifically with reference to strangers in 3 Nephi 24:5, where the resurrected Jesus, quoting Malachi, says that the Lord will frown upon those that "turn aside the stranger," explicitly connecting the language of "turning away" with a failure of hospitality. Turning away implies a face-to-face encounter, as the poor are met, possibly at the threshold of home and community. The poor are portrayed as seeking entry into the lives of the community. At the door, the needy request entrance, are denied, and are physically turned away from the threshold or turned out of the community. Benjamin urges his people to grant the poor entrance into their homes, or otherwise give them help and sustenance, rather than turning them out in this way.

This call to hospitality through the physical imagery of turning away or turning out coheres with the larger rhetorical and theological context of the sermon. A major goal of the sermon seems to be to explain why people should not be turned out in this way. King Benjamin sets up his reasons for service, including acts of hospitality, with reminders of his people's political and theological equality. All are beggars in need of aid, and all need to be taken in—that is, all are in need of hospitality (beggars, recall, are those that in Mosiah 4:16 have been "turned out"). People are equal theologically, first, because of their equal dependence on God for *continuing* life and sustenance (Mosiah 2:21–24) and second, because of their equal indebtedness in that they

were all created *initially* from the "dust of the earth" (verse 25). Such initial and continuing dependence, he says, makes it impossible for his people to claim self-sufficiency, to boast, and to make distinctions of what they *deserve* among themselves (verses 24–25). Since one cannot claim to have *earned* one's belongings, one should not refuse to share one's belongings (or, it follows, one's household) with others. True, individuals are unequal in their material possessions and social status, but the theological equality prevents the wealthy from rationalizing away their inhospitable treatment.

King Benjamin uses this theological equality of neediness as a justification for a notion of political equality, saying, "For I am no better than ye yourselves are; for I am also of the dust." Even kings, in other words, cannot escape the basic theology of equality. Earlier, his statements reflecting his political positions—his forbidding of slavery, his desire to earn a living through contributing to the work of the community—are prefaced by his affirmation of equality: "I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind." Benjamin undercuts all claims that people have earned wealth and privilege, including any claim he himself might make. He stresses, "None shall be found blameless" (Mosiah 3:21) and asks, "Are we not all beggars?" (Mosiah 4:19).

Benjamin not only undercuts the boasting of the wealthy and powerful, invalidating their rationalizations about what they think they deserve, but he also dignifies the suffering of the poor and sorrowful. Indeed, he relates the message of an angel, describing the future Messiah figure as one who suffers—he shall "suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue" (Mosiah 3:7). One thing Benjamin is asserting is that people who are hungry and thirsty are not to be despised, since that is how the Messiah himself would live. The word "fatigue" specifically implies a wanderer without a place to rest, without a home. It is the image of Christ as a suffering person, without a place to rest, an image present in parts of the New Testament, which dominates King Benjamin's sermon. In a world divided between the rich and poor, Benjamin places the Messiah himself within the circle of the homeless beggars. How can the poor *deserve* to suffer, Benjamin seems to ask, if Christ himself was a poor wanderer? How can we then turn out the poor from our homes and communities?

After the affirmation of theological and political equality, the

humbling of the rich and the exaltation of the poor, Benjamin launches into the specifics of his social ethic, which is centered on the care of the needy and suffering. All are beggars before God; and, in this sense, turning away the poor is a denial of one's own dependence on God—it is an act of willful self-deception concerning the realities of one's own existence. People should not turn away the needy when God does not turn away from them. Not only is it an act of pride, but turning away the poor is also an affront to the coming Messiah, who himself will wander poor, hungry, and homeless.

The logic of the sermon involves linking knowledge with service. Benjamin first equates serving others with serving God (Mosiah 2:17) and then stipulates that serving God is the only way to know him (Mosiah 5:13). This leads to the conclusion that serving others brings knowledge of God, and it is no accident that this connection follows the detailed account of his ethic of service. As individuals turn away strangers and beggars, they become strangers to God; we fail to know him. "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served," Benjamin probes, "and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" This is another Book of Mormon example of Ogletree's linkage of hospitality, knowledge, and interpersonal discovery: As people engage in hospitality, they learn about each other and from each other.

Mormon excoriates the Nephites who turn their backs on the poor (Alma 4:12–13). He asks, "Yea, and will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them?" (Alma 5:55). Amulek warns the Zoramites that they will not be redeemed if they turn away the needy and naked (Alma 34:28). Mormon laments that the Gadianton robbers "did trample under their feet and smite and rend and turn their backs upon the poor and the meek" (Helaman 6:39). When Moroni was without living family or friend, he exclaimed, "Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?" (Mormon 8:39). This very physical imagery, "turning away," "turning aside," or letting the poor "pass by" suggests not only caring from the poor from a safe distance, but also encountering the poor in their embodied presence, meeting them face to face, eyes looking into eyes, hands clasping hands. The connection of this imagery to acts of hospitality is strengthened

when we recognize in the biblical literature the link that is made between charity and hospitality (e.g., Isaiah 58:7). The household was the place where food was prepared, where clothes were made, and where shelter was given. There were few other institutions that supplied these material needs. To talk about charity, in many cases, was at the same time to talk about hospitality—welcoming the needy into one's space and community.

Hospitality in the Book of Mormon: God as Host to Strangers in the Promised Land

Another way hospitality is shown in the Book of Mormon is through the imagery of Lehi's family, a wandering branch of Israel, being taken in by God in a promised land. The ancient Israelites saw themselves as strangers who were being shown God's hospitality in the land of promise. The ethic of hospitality was derived theologically from this understanding of God: God had been hospitable to Israel, therefore Israel should be hospitable to strangers (Deuteronomy. 10:19). Pohl writes that the Israelites "were to view themselves as aliens in their own land, for God owned the land and they were to be its stewards and caretakers, living in it by God's permission and grace. They were the chosen people—chosen, yet still aliens."[16]

The image of God as a gracious host to aliens in the land of promise is echoed in the Book of Mormon. It seems that the children of Lehi think of themselves as strangers in a foreign land, feeling acutely the need of a generous host: "Yea, blessed is the name of my God, who has been mindful of this people, who are a branch of the tree of Israel, and has been lost from its body in a strange land; yea, I say, blessed be the name of my God, who has been mindful of us, wanderers in a strange land" (Alma 26:36). God, like an ancient host, protects his wandering people. Likewise, Jacob describes his people as "a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness" (Jacob 7:26; see also Alma 13:23). Clearly, the Lehites sometimes understood themselves as strangers in a strange land, wanderers, outcasts in need of protection.

These strangers recognize that their continued survival is dependent on their host, who receives them mercifully: "Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his

commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations . . . and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever" (2 Nephi 1:9). The guests are told they can stay in the Lord's promised land if they abide by the terms of the covenant. It is not an unreasonable interpretation of the narrative sweep of the Book of Mormon to posit that the decline of the Nephite and Lamanite civilizations comes about through violations of the hospitality covenant. Hospitality is not only found in stories and homilies but may also be central to understanding the larger story of the rise and fall of civilizations.

But what part of hospitality have the Nephites violated, exactly? The terms by which the children of Lehi are allowed to stay in the Promised Land, it could be said, mirror the terms of the hospitality relationship in the ancient world. Once hospitality is offered and accepted, the participants must abide by the rules of hospitality. The guest may violate the terms of hospitality in various ways, as T. R. Hobbs explains: "As a guest, the stranger is in a liminal phase, and may infringe upon the guest/host relationship: by insulting the host through hostility or rivalry; by usurping the role of the host; by refusing what is offered."[17] Although all of these violations may apply, it is this last condition that the Nephites seem to have broken most prominently. God states they have rejected his offer of gathering them to him. He laments, "How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not" (3 Nephi 10:5). The guests have, in other words, refused what had been offered by the generous host. The protection of the host is thereby lost.

Conclusion and Implications

The ethos of hospitality in the Book of Mormon reveals itself in the stories, homilies, themes, and imagery that pervade the text. In many ways, its hospitality ethic parallels the ethic of hospitality in the ancient world. As in the Bible, hospitality in the Book of Mormon is a standard by which entire communities are judged. A community's hospitality, in short, reveals its character. Of particular interest in the Book of Mormon is how prophets and missionaries are treated, which echo themes from the Bible as "holy men" are taken into homes through hospitality. As in the Old Testament, strangers like Zoram are turned into allies, and kin relationships are expand-

ed through acts of hospitality. In the Book of Mormon, hospitality also seems to involve a set of mutual expectations on the part of the host and the guest, just as it did in the ancient world. God hosts Lehi's family in the Promised Land on terms established by covenant, and Nephi hosts Zoram on similar terms. The image of God as a generous host to guests who abide by the rules of hospitality connects the themes of the Book of Mormon to the Old Testament.

The Book of Mormon also seems to contain some new points of emphasis. It highlights the need for hospitality not only in households but also in congregations and communities. Indeed, the Book of Mormon seems to expand the scope of hospitality. Hospitality should be offered not simply when one is safe and comfortable, but also in dangerous circumstances. Hospitality involves not just supplying food and shelter but also providing enduring relationships and community connections. These connections have the potential to fundamentally change one's identity, signified in the Book of Mormon by the assignment of new group names. In addition to dangerous hospitality, the Book of Mormon also emphasizes the idea of guided hospitality, where God directly arranges meetings of guests and hosts through revelation. Finally, the Book of Mormon, in looking at Amulek, Lamoni, and Lamoni's father, emphasizes the role of hospitality in connecting individuals to moments of spiritual power. As characters let each other into their intimate spaces, spiritual miracles ensue.

The Book of Mormon, by expanding hospitality and framing it as community inclusion based on equality, may speak to the current debate about how hospitality should be lived in the modern world. Travel is no longer as dangerous as it was anciently, so the sociological conditions driving the ancient practice are virtually non-existent today. For these reasons, writers such as T. R. Hobbs have complained that ancient hospitality had little to do with "being kind to strangers" and that "indiscriminate use of this ancient material"[18] commits what he calls the "teleological fallacy," which is using ancient documents as a "springboard for modern polemic."[19]

In contrast, other writers have pointed to contemporary conditions that mirror ancient conditions and that thus serve to make hospitality relevant. Pohl writes:

> We struggle to find better ways to respond to homeless people, people

> with disabilities, immigrants and refugees. Questions about diversity and inclusion, boundaries and community challenge us daily. We search for more personal ways to respond to youth who are detached and alienated from family, school, and church. In many cases, we feel as if we are strangers ourselves, even in our own families and churches, and we long for bonds that give life and meaning.[20]

Waldemar Janzen seems to concur with this assessment, and argues that certain contemporary conditions are analogous to what was faced by the ancients, and that these conditions call for renewed attention to hospitality in the modern world. Janzen writes:

> It may help us remember that travel, in the ancient world, was only undertaken for grave reasons, often negative in nature, such as flight from persecution or search for food and survival. Hospitality, under those circumstances, has little to do with modern tourism, but embraces the biblical equivalent of our policies regarding refugees, immigration, welfare, and social security.[21]

The emphasis in the Book of Mormon, we suggest, directs readers in this interpretive direction rather than the direction suggested by Hobbs. Hospitality in the Book of Mormon emphasizes the more expansive aspects of hospitality hinted at in the Old Testament—hospitality tied not just to personal honor, as Hobbs suggests, but also to understandings of human and divine communities. Hospitality in the Book of Mormon is not just a host increasing his honor by being generous to a potential enemy under his roof; it is also an opportunity to act as God acts toward others, with kindness and mercy, offering up one's home as a place of safety and protection. In this case, the Book of Mormon highlights the need for a greater sense of face-to-face hospitality in contemporary life, a hospitality extended to strangers and to the poor, a hospitality offered to immigrants, sinners, and refugees, a hospitality where individuals see in others the image of the God they serve, a hospitality that reminds the readers of their equal dependency and venerability. It is a hospitality that is required even when it is inconvenient or risky. It is the same hospitality that human beings seek as they yearn for the presence of a generous God.

Notes

1. Bruce J. Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do: III John and Hospitality," *Semia Studies* 35 (1986): 181.

2. Scott Morschauser, "'Hospitality,' Hostiles and Hostages: On the Legal Background to Genesis 19.1–9," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 27 (2003): 461–85.

3. Other examples from the Hebrew Bible include Genesis 24, 29; Exodus 2; Joshua 2:1–21; and Judges 1.

4. Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 29.

5. See Victor H. Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 21 (1991): 13–21; Bob Stallman, "Divine Hospitality in the Pentateuch: A Metaphorical Perspective on God as Host" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary [Philadelphia, Pa.], 1999); Malina, 171–86; T. R. Hobbs, "Hospitality in the First Testament and the 'Teleological Fallacy,'" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 26 (2001): 3–29; R. A. Wright, "The Establishing of Hospitality in the Old Testament" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1989).

6. For specific New Testament examples of this ethic of hospitality, see Malina, "The Recieved View,"184–85.

7. Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility,"14.

8. Pohl, *Making Room,* 13.

9. Peter J. Sorensen, "The Lost Commandments: The Sacred Rites of Hospitality," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 21.

10. Waldemar Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 208.

11. Pohl, *Making Room,* 26.

12. Sorensen, "The Lost Commandments," 22–23.

13. We would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful input. One reviewer points out that most of the references to "strangers" in the Book of Mormon come from the brass plates. Perhaps this is because the Lehites saw themselves as a family, and the concept of a stranger therefore did not therefore apply in their new environment.

14. Thomas W. Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stanger* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 2–3.

15. Sorensen, "The Lost Commandments," 22.

16. Pohl, *Making Room,* 27.

17. Hobbs, "Hospitality in the First Testament,"11.

18. Ibid., 29.

19. Ibid., 5.

20. Pohl, *Making Room,* 7.

21. Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics,* 43.

Manly Virtue: Defining Male Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Mormonism

Russell Stevenson

Sexuality in antebellum America constituted a set of contradictions. Men should be steely, resolved, and assertive; women ought to be reserved, flighty, and, under the right conditions, sexually explosive. As historian Karen Lystra has observed, "There are no sexual absolutes. Sexual experience is time-bound," a fact that holds true for the Mormon experience as well.[1]

Much scholarship on the history of virtue in America has focused on the feminization of sexual virtue in the mid-nineteenth century. Mary Ryan writes that the Perfectionist community of upstate New York demonstrated how an experimental free-love community eventually came to be the exemplar of feminine domesticity, emphasizing female virginity and restrained sexuality.[2] Indeed, as Barbara Welter argues, women sought to wield sexual abstinence as a weapon in their defense. If they could fend off male advances, then they could be the saviors of male-kind from descending into barbarity and backwardness.[3] Nineteenth-century notions of female sexuality likewise exhibited the complicated relationship women had with their sexual self-identity. While some voices exalted the purity of the female virgin, some physicians encouraged husbands to be proactive in seeking their wives' sexual pleasure.[4] At the same time, other physicians assured insecure men that women would receive happily whatever was given them.[5]

This narrative of the feminization of virtue and sexuality, however, does not address an important trend in Mormon history: the

role and definition of male virtue in the discourse on sexuality. In Mormonism's earliest days, the Saints upheld virtue as an attribute applicable to both sexes. Recognizing that Americans had embraced a new sexual order, the Saints defined and redefined virtue in response to the myriad forces pressing upon them both from within and outside their community.

Virtue in Early America

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the definition of *virtue* underwent radical shifts. Virtue had once been a complex and multilayered attribute, evoking political, social, and personal attributes. Indeed, the word had long been a battleground for a wide array of political, ideological, and theological factions dating back to the Middle Ages. During the founding of the American republic, Alexander Hamilton considered *virtue* to be disciplined self-interest. The political theorist Baron de Montesquieu argued that virtue meant disinterestedness, public-mindedness, and general good government. Daniel Webster and John Stevens thought it to be akin to ambition. Even within a generation, the term found new contextual homes and applications.[6]

In the mid-nineteenth century, Jonathan Swift defined virtue as an inherently masculine characteristic. "Virtue was for this sex design'd," Swift declared, "in mild reproof to womankind." Virtue consisted of education and resolve. "Manly virtue" meant integrity; Swift identified virtue in contrast to personal interest and implored the virtuous man to work in "the council and in the court, where virtue is in least repute." Virtue signified the "godlike ends for which he rose."[7] Jonathan Edwards defined virtue as "benevolence to being in general."[8]

By the early 1830s, the meaning of "virtue" was still more multivalent. In 1828, Samuel Johnson defined virtue as "acting power," or even "one of the orders of the celestial hierarchy," referring to doctrines concerning the chain of being (e.g., "Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers").[9] One Ohio paper identified virtue with the pursuit of "justice and truth"—the "very wish to make others happy."[10] Virtuous men and women were said to "increase the happiness of all with whom they have intercourse." It was "the power of self command" that allowed man to overcome "the propensities of animal nature."[11] Some associated virtue with a

work ethic, for "to be idle and virtuous at the same time is a moral impossibility."[12] Tennessee Senator Hugh Lawson said that a "pure and virtuous" political appointee should "thank Congress to take from him every discretionary power which they can take with propriety," for it would "ease him of a labor and a responsibility most unpleasant to a good man."[13] Jesse Torrey, an antebellum moralist, suggested that virtue "consists of a congruity of actions which we can never expect so long as we are distracted by our passions." Virtue called for people to "eat and drink, not to gratify . . . palate[s], but to satisfy nature." Torrey suggested that the virtuous would "look upon the whole world as [their] country."[14]

For women, virtue became even more complex. It called for women to demonstrate multiple, sometimes contradictory attributes at once: intellectual parity coupled with servility, sexual self-regulation, aloofness, and humility.[15] It could be used as a euphemism for virginity but this was only one definition among many—and it was applied to both men and women alike. In his *Moral Essays in Praise of Virtue*, John Scott exhorted his readers to "maintain unblemished and uncorrupted integrity" even "in times of prevailing licentiousness," citing Lot as an exemplar.[16]

Modesty likewise was associated with virtue, both sexual and otherwise. A Connecticut paper opined that "modesty is not only an ornament, but also a guard to virtue . . . a kind of quick and delicate feeling in the soul which makes her shrink and withdraw herself from the thing that has danger in it."[17] Hugh Blair declared that "the characteristics of virtue are modesty and humility"; virtue alone was "the sovereign pilot which steers us into the harbour of true lasting pleasure."[18] Modesty was often characterized as a "kind of shame or bashfulness, proceeding from the sense a man has of his defects, compared with the perfections of him whom he comes before." It made "a man unwilling to be seen" but "fearful to be heard." It "loves not many words, nor, indeed, needs them."[19] Likewise, "a modest woman," a women's magazine declared, "delights to reflect the happiness and prosperity of those to whom she is dear."[20]

Popular writers were also well aware of the dangers that an overly strict adherence to virtue could pose to those who wandered. Author Grace Grafton told an allegory of "a dame called Virtue" who "but over the whole valley shed the influence of her wise laws and sober regulations." When one of her subjects, a young woman, wandered

to explore the enchantments, Virtue had little patience with her. She "stood chilled and rigid, and scarcely opening her lips, motioned sternly with her raised arm to the sinner to depart." The young woman left, hoping to find "transient relief" with the "blandishments of Pleasure and Wantonness." When Virtue discovered that the young woman was embroiled in sin, Virtue "turn[ed] to her friends Modesty and Propriety" to "aid me . . . in chasing this abandoned creature from our own unsullied walls." The woman was cast into hell where "she trod her way to everlasting sorrow." Where were Virtue's advisers, "Faith, Hope, and Charity," Grafton asked? "Faith was at church; Hope dwells too much on the future . . . and as for Charity—she was at home."[21] Left untethered by other attributes, virtue could quickly become the tyrant.

Through the voice of Aspasia, the ancient Milesian woman accused of adultery, Samuel Johnson echoed the concern, noting that her Sultan's piety and "excessive virtue . . . have hurried him on death."[22] Biblical scholar Moses Stuart argued that abolitionists suffered from the "infirmity of excessive virtue" and that if their tactics "are lacking in prudence, in sober foresight, in moderation, in justice . . . then the public suffer far more from these distinguished and excellent men than they would from all the efforts of the *Ledru Rollins* [a French socialist] and the *Red Caps* [an epithet for French revolutionaries for their donning of red hats] who are in the midst of us."[23] One columnist enjoined his readers to be leery of the man "who deals in large principles, and trades wholesale in virtue," for those who were "crazy about public virtue" often "neglect[ed] . . . all inward piety."[24]

Both virtue and modesty had sexual connotations too, especially when employed in a feminine context. Feminine modesty often meant not thinking too highly of one's sexual allure. Mary Wollstonecraft suggested that not only did it signify "purity of mind, which is the effect of chastity" but also "soberness of mind, which teaches a man not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think." Wollstonecraft took particular aim at the prostitutes of London who "trample on virgin bashfulness with a sort of bravado . . . becom[ing] more audaciously lewd than men, however depraved, to whom the sexual quality has not been gratuitously given." Not only were the prostitutes depraved in thought and act; their self-regard was so low that they would be tawdry around sexually unattractive men.[25] Modesty also meant that women avoided spectacles that employed sexual innuendo. A Boston

paper bemoaned that there were "few plays . . . which a woman can see consistently with decency." The theater was always "seasoned" with material "in the prologue or epilogue . . . or in some scandalous farce" that in other contexts would prompt them to "rise with indignation and reckon their reputation ruined."[26]

Making Mormon Virtue

Early Mormon discourse echoed the ongoing complexities of the conversation on virtue. In the Book of Mormon—a volume Mormon prophet Joseph Smith claimed to be an ancient book of records regarding the "inhabitants of the American continent"—the concept is notably absent. The term only appears twice, once in reference to the "virtue" (read: power) of the word of God, and the second, in reference to the "stolen" virtue of raped women (Alma 31:5; Moroni 9:9). Chastity has a clearer meaning in the text; in both instances of the word, it is used to condemn rape and unauthorized polygamy (Jacob 2:28; Moroni 9:9). Yet one of the harshest condemnations of premarital sexuality in Mormon scripture is directed at a young man, Coriantumr, for his sexual dalliances with a prostitute, Isabel—one of the few named women in the Book of Mormon (Alma 39:5).

Mormons generally accepted that Victorian assumptions about gender roles were deeply rooted in Mormon society. In June 1844, Emma Smith wished that she "may not through ambition abuse my body and cause it to become prematurely old and care-worn" and that she would "honor and respect my husband as my head, ever to live in his confidence and by acting in unison with him" hoped that she might someday "overcome that curse which was pronounced upon the daughters of Eve."

Joseph Smith's recorded revelations use the term much more freely but with no greater clarity. One of his earliest declarations called for the Saints to cultivate virtue among a long list of other qualities (D&C 4:6). His revelations repeatedly implore the Saints to "practice virtue and holiness before me" (D&C 38:24, 46:33). In 1839, Smith received a revelation directing, "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45). In Joseph Smith's famed 1844 letter to Chicago news editor John Wentworth, he declared that the Saints believed in being "honest, true, chaste, benevolent and virtuous" and that they sought anything that was "virtuous, lovely, or of good report."[27] In a blessing to Joseph Knight, Smith praised him for being "true, and even hand-

ed, and exemplary and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand nor to the left."[28]

Early Mormon converts tended to see virtue as a kind of salvific or healing power. Sidney Rigdon thought of virtue as supernatural power. When the Church's "second elder" Oliver Cowdery baptized him, Rigdon allegedly reported that "no one could tell what virtue there was in [his] hands for when he took hold of him . . . he felt a shock strike through him."[29] Joseph Noble recalled that when Joseph Smith healed him of an illness, he "felt the healing virtue flowing through every part of my system."[30]

When the Jackson County Saints faced expulsion from the area, some Saints began to broaden their definition of virtue to include law and order alongside sexuality. The Mormons' news editor, W. W. Phelps, said that many of the instigators of mob violence "ought to have been the first to rise in the defence of innocence and virtue."[31] Phelps credited "the over ruling hand of the Father" for the preservation of the Saints rather than "any principle of honor or virtue existing in the hearts of the mob."[32] Virtue was not only innocence; it was also law. And God's nature required that he teach it to his children.

For Phelps, a virtuous man honored and sustained the law; mob members should be brought before the bar of justice to demonstrate that "the law in Geauga County, has lost none of its nerves, neither have the Administrators of justice lost their virtue."[33] Virtue came to be unity of purpose and "a firm course" opposing "personal ambition and tyrannical dispositions" of the marauders. A virtuous legal system meant a reliable one; America's "constitution and laws . . . shall protect us, if they possess any virtue!"[34] Phelps felt disgusted as he was forced to "witness . . . a ruthless soldiery trample down the helpless and defile the virtuous."[35] Someday, Phelps predicted, the county would "inhabited by virtuous citizens who will 'magnify the law and make it honorable.'"[36] Mormon David Redfield also chastised the state legislature for enabling the lawlessness. If they did not pass a law protecting the Saints, he would declare "farewell to the virtue of the State; farewell to her honor and good name, farewell to her Christian virtue, until she shall be peopled by a different race of men."[37] By employing virtue rhetoric, Phelps and Redfield were casting Missouri as a woman who had given herself

up to unrighteous male domination.

Virtue not only cleansed a soul; it also served as a binding agent. In an 1835 hymnal edited by Joseph Smith's wife, one hymn asked that the Lord would "turn all our hearts unto thee / to walk in the paths of virtue and wisdom / to live in the bonds of union and peace." It was central to building up God's kingdom on earth. "I believe in living a virtuous upright and holy life before God and feel it my duty <to> perswad all men in my power to do the same."[38] In Joseph Smith's translation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics associated with the Book of Abraham, he told the story of "three virgins" being offered up as a sacrifice on the altar of the "priest of Elkkener." As women of "royal descent directly from the loins of Ham," Joseph suggested that they were "offered up because of their virtue" in refusing to "bow down to worship gods of wood" or "stone" (Abraham 1:11).

Joseph was a pragmatist in matters of language—using what applied and discarding the same when it did not. Joseph's indistinct usage of the term "virtue" illustrates his tendency to use language with marked fluidity. He had long been skeptical of his own linguistic talent, pleading that the Lord would "deliver us . . . from the little narrow prison almost as it were totel darkness of paper pen and ink and a crooked broken scattered and imperfect language." In 1830, Joseph Smith had offered up a new "translation" of the Bible that claimed to illustrate the essence of the Bible's original authorial intent. In his translation, he rendered the first line of Revelation 1:6 to be: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God, his Father." Yet in his famed Sermon at the Grove in June 1844, he publicly recited the text using the language in the King James Version: "And hath made us kings and priests to God and His Father," a reference which, he believed, proved "the plurality of the Gods."[39] Joseph Smith did not feel women had a special claim to virtuous living. In April 1837, Joseph Smith gave a sermon to a gathering of men that the divine revelations he expected them all to receive were "bound by the principles of virtue and happiness."[40]

Virtue and the Battle for Male Mormon Sexuality

A wide corpus of scholarship has assessed Joseph Smith's establishment of polygamous theology in the Mormon community. Historian Samuel M. Brown has further argued that Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy reflected his efforts to create an "everlasting

community" that could defy death and annihilation.[41] Joseph declared that one of the most important purposes of his religious project was the "welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories" (D&C 128:18). One of Joseph Smith's plural wives, Lucy Walker, recalled Joseph Smith promising that polygamy would "form a chain that could never be broken."[42] Or, as Joseph Smith biographer Richard Bushman has interpreted Joseph Smith, he did not "lust for women" as much as he "lusted for kin."[43]

The corpus of literature on antebellum male sexuality illustrates that unresolved paradoxes defined how both men and women understood the masculine sexual impulse. As once-rural men faced the economic realities that the industrial revolution was forcing upon them, they felt impelled to improve their ability to perform sexually in order to compensate for decreased purchasing power. Popular medical texts celebrated the value of sexual self-control. Radicals such as Sylvester Graham and Reverend John Todd argued that sexual activity depleted strength and should be exercised with only the most focused of purposes. Mainstream medical thinkers such as John Ware and Andrew J. Ingersoll encouraged moderation but nevertheless saw sexual activity as a basically moral and God-centered activity. Angus McLaren has argued that "restraint was the mark of the middle-class male."[44] Or, as Charles Rosenberg styled "the Christian gentleman," he was to be an "athlete of continence, not coitus, continuously testing his manliness in the fire of self-denial."[45] Such lofty ideals seldom found root in reality.

Joseph Smith's early explorations of polygamy coincided with the increasingly sexualized—and monogamized—definition of virtue for both genders throughout antebellum America. As numerous historians have argued, monogamy had gradually become enshrined in the American national consciousness as a sacred lifestyle, in spite of monogamic sexuality's several contradictions.[46] William Paley's widely read textbook, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy,* stated that "wherever the commerce between the sexes is regulated by marriage . . . [and] can be procured with ease and certainty, there the number of people will increase."[47] In societies with a "vague and promiscuous concubinage," they are "liable to perish by neglect" and "are seldom prepared for, or introduced into situations suited to the raising of families of their own."[48]

In August 1835, Mormon leader Oliver Cowdery penned a document—approved by the body of the church and likely in response to the Alger affair—that eschewed charges of "the crime of fornication" and polygamy which had been leveled against them. Mainstream critics argued that the Saints' economic collectivism also translated to conjugal collectivism: "a community of wives."[49] Heber C. Kimball observed that Joseph introduced the practice to him in order to "test [his] virtue."[50] Yet the word *virtue* continued to be used in a wide variety of contexts. Joseph Smith urged missionaries to England "to perform the great and responsible duties" of missionary work with "virtue, faith, diligence, and charity." Oliver Cowdery associated virtue with Christ's suffering: "Is the[re] efficacy and virtue sufficient," he asked rhetorically, "in the blood of him who groaned on Cavalry's summit to expiate our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness?"[51] Unlike the sexual reformers of his day, Joseph Smith saw virtue not as an end but as a means. "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly," he exhorted the Saints as he was holed up in Liberty Jail. "Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presants [sic] of God."[52]

For the Mormon people, the introduction of polygamy forced the Saints to cast virtue as a sexualized quality. Joseph's efforts to implement polygamy came under attack in 1838 when his second-in-command, Oliver Cowdery, suggested that Joseph's union with Fanny Alger was a "dirty, nasty, filthy affair." Joseph responded that he had "intrusted him with many things."[53] Some authors have suggested that Joseph's libido was a widely known—and feared—attribute of the Prophet's makeup. That he exhibited sexually attractive traits is apparent enough. In Joseph Smith's theology, virtue served as the cohesive agent between individuals and families. Though the exact date of his earliest plural marriage has been the topic of some debate, there is evidence that Joseph Smith was thinking seriously about instituting the practice as early as 1831. Between 1833 and 1835, he had an intimate relationship with the servant girl Fanny Alger; whether this relationship was a marriage or merely an extramarital affair has long been a point of dispute. Regardless, the episode sent a shockwave of scandal throughout the community, and Alger left the Saints unceremoniously, never to return. In 1838, Oliver Cowdery, disgusted, sneered that the union was "dirty, filthy, nasty" affair.[54]

The Alger relationship brought the Saints' sexual mores into

stark relief, compelling them to reconsider how they framed their sexuality. As Joseph Smith began to implement a practice that would defy everything the Saints thought they knew about sexual morality, they also began to frame virtue as an increasingly sexualized concept. The Saints' use of virtue served as an outward manifestation of the state of their collective sexuality. Joseph Smith's efforts to radicalize the Saints' marriage system also compelled the Saints to find a means of convincing themselves of their own sexual moderation.

In 1840, Dr. Alfred Woodward passed through Nauvoo and administered phrenological tests to several Nauvoo Saints, including Joseph Smith.[55] Woodward rated Joseph Smith's "amativeness" at a 16.[56] Phrenologist R.H. Collyer identified 16 as a "full"-sized amativeness organ. He suggested that those with a large amativeness organ show " a great partiality to the other sex, when opportunities occur" and find it "difficult to curb its tendencies, except when governed by large moral and intellectual organs." Such a man "is a favorite with them, from his fascinating address and manner."[57] Phrenologist Orson S. Fowler maintained that the "proper exercise" of amativeness was "pure, chaste, and even desirable."[58] Phrenologist and reverend George Weaver thought amativeness to be "a virtue high and holy, a virtue binding upon all men and women to exhibit, a virtue that is the parent of all of many others, and that opens a world of tender and precious delights."[59]

Publicly, William Smith downplayed Joseph Smith's amativeness measurement, placing it at an 11, considered "moderate" by most phrenological standards.[60] Collyer observed that an 11 measurement indicated apathy about the opposite sex: "he will be chaste, and will dislike all kinds of obscene language."[61] Fowler noted that an 11 would be "rather deficient, though not palpably so"; such readings were in fact more common in women.[62] Despite the fact that phrenology had no clear founding in scientific fact, it is striking that William Smith actively sought to desexualize Joseph Smith in the public eye.

Joseph Smith's sexual attractiveness was apparent enough. In later years, Joseph's marriage practices invited attacks from a variety of circles. Even friends thought the worst. When Joseph approached his friend Benjamin Johnson, about marrying Dulcena Johnson, he thought the worst: Joseph intended to "debauch" her.

While no evidence exists to justify Johnson's fears, observers could sense Joseph's sexual appeal and virility.[63] When Joseph Smith proposed plural marriage to Rachel Ivins Grant, she responded tartly that, in spite of her personal respect for Joseph, she would "sooner go to hell as a virtuous woman than to heaven as a whore."[64]

Beginning in 1841, Joseph Smith's political confidante, John C. Bennett, began to seduce several women in the Saints' new settlement of Nauvoo; only a few months earlier, he had assured Joseph that he would "devote my time and energies to the advancement of the cause of truth and virtue."[65] The scandal prompted the Saints to home in on virtue as a euphemism for sexual chastity. Bennett claimed the endorsement of Joseph Smith, prompting Joseph to call for Bennett to testify that Joseph had "never taught any thing in the least contrary to the strictest principles of the Gospel, or of virtue, or of the laws of God, or man, under any occasion either directly or indirectly, in word or deed."[66] In April 1842, Joseph "pronounced a curse upon all adulterers and Fornicators, and unvirtuous persons" who had "used my name to carry on their iniquitous designs."[67]

The dispute over the meaning of virtue continued in fall 1842 when Bennett published *A History of the Saints,* a volume that exploited virtue rhetoric freely to cast Joseph Smith as a sexual predator and a danger to the female community. Indeed, female virtue was one of his volume's enduring themes. Women who resisted Joseph Smith were praised for their "courage and virtue in resisting and repulsing with such signal success the foul miscreants who were tempting her to crime by the most insidious and powerful arts."[68] Another woman received Bennett's accolades when "virtue once more triumphed over the insidious arts and machinations of a malevolent caliph."[69]

In March 1842, Emma Smith and other leading Nauvoo women established the Nauvoo Relief Society, with Joseph's blessing. With Emma Smith as its head, the society promised to provide benevolent service, spiritual uplift, and moral guardianship over Mormon society. Joseph Smith promised that it would be a "select society from all the evils of the world, choice, virtuous, and holy."[70] The Nauvoo Relief Society orchestrated a campaign to uphold Joseph Smith's reputation of sexual virtue. Bennett now cast virtue less as a set of moral principles but as a means of oppression—an "Inquisition"—that the Relief Society used to coerce its members into obe-

dience. The society preyed upon women who had "lapsed from the straight path of virtue," he wrote.[71] The Relief Society interrogated the "poor, terrified female . . . until she confesses the crime she has committed" or even in her "confusion and terror, accuses herself of what she was never guilty of."

The consequences of the Relief Society's "Inquisition" to protect virtue? "Many young and beautiful females have thus been ruined eternally." The "Inquisition instantly condemns them" to be none other than a "class set apart and appropriated to the gratification of the vilest appetites of the brutal Priests and Elders of the Mormon Church." When used to undermine Joseph Smith, Bennett thought virtue a worthy attribute; otherwise, he thought it a tool to uphold a "horrid" and "monstrous system." As Bennett portrayed it, the punishment for failing to be virtuous was to be coerced into a life stripped of virtue.[72] Bennett knew well of the Relief Society's capacity to shape public opinion. He feared that the Relief Society "could be the means of a mob forthcoming."[73]

As Bennett's accusations began to gain steam, President Emma Smith hit back, calling upon the women to counteract his charges by launching a campaign to prove the Prophet's sexual virtue. In March 1842, Clarissa Marvel was said to have circulated "scandalous falsehoods on the character of Prest. Joseph Smith, without the least provocation." Emma's counselor, Elizabeth Whitney, moved that one of the sisters "go and labor with her and if possible reform her." When Hannah Markham was commissioned with the task, she resisted, as she was "unacquainted with the circumstances."

Emma took on the task herself, observing that it "should be done in a private manner, with great prudence." But prudence notwithstanding, it was still the duty of the Relief Society to "look into the morals of each other and watch over each other."[74] Bennett and Smith appeared to agree that the Relief Society wielded the power of collective shaming when women gave way to sexual temptation. Emma Smith composed a circular and encouraged the women to "write and send in their productions, out of which, a selection should be made."[75] In August, Relief Society members, along with several of Nauvoo's leading citizens, signed a petition attesting that Joseph Smith was a "good, moral, virtuous, peacable [sic] and patriotic man."[76] That October, Emma Smith alongside men and women from Joseph's inner circles swore that they "know of no system of

marriage being practised in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" other than marriage between one man and one woman.[77] Joseph Smith implored the Relief Society that "the virtuous should not from self-importance grieve and oppress needlessly those unfortunate ones" who had fallen victim to Bennett's advances. In Joseph Smith's vision, virtue was an essential component of Mormon society. It transcended gendered boundaries. "I love virtue," Joseph Smith declared in August 1842; he also loved "friendship and truth . . . and law."[78] "Stop spreading this spinning street yarn and talking about spiritual wives," he told the Saints, for he would "have nothing but virtue & integrity & uprightness."[79]

By May, Bennett's sins were haunting the Mormon women. When the society met on May 19, Emma declared grimly that "this day was an evil day."[80] The stain of John C. Bennett had soaked into the body of the sisters. President Smith could abide impropriety earlier under the cloak of charity, but "now it is necessary that sin should be expos'd," for "much of this iniquity was practiced by some in authority, pretending to be sanction'd by Joseph Smith."[81] They were likely referring to the testimony of Catherine Fuller, herself recently discovered as one of the women Bennett seduced. She had engaged in sexual intercourse with several other men who also assured her that the act was sanctioned by Church leadership.[82]

In spring 1844 various Relief Society members held meetings in which Emma responded to a provocative editorial by a columnist named Orasmus Bostwick in which he sneered about female sexuality in Nauvoo—that he "could take a half bushel of wheat, obtain his vile purpose, and get what accommodation he wanted with almost any woman" in Nauvoo. Outraged, Emma urged the "whole virtuous female population of the city with one voice [to] declare that the Seducer of female chastity, the Slanderer of Female Character, or the Defamer of the Character of the Heads of the Church" shall be ostracized from the Nauvoo community." "Female virtue," Emma declared, "is a pearl of great price and should glitter in the abodes of men, as in the mansions of bliss, for the glory and honor of him, whose image she bears and whose help meet she is and every attempt of man to seduce that virtue is next to murder, a robbery that cannot be restored." Emma called for "every virtuous woman" to "scourge such tormentors of domestic felicity, with vengeance throughout the world." She "curse[d] the man preys upon

female virtue" and decreed that "*vitare perditoris* [avoid the enemy]" be "written with indelible ink, upon every such villain." The *Nauvoo Neighbor* editor heralded the meetings under the headline: "VIRTUE WILL TRIUMPH."[83]

Many Saints believed that masculine virtue primarily meant sexual self-control, not complete sexual suppression. Mormon news editor W. W. Phelps suggested that Saints allow the "laws of virtue" to regulate their thoughts and actions: "If we must resist all allurements of pleasure, we must refuse to contemplate them." The "sinful indulgences of imagination" would prove to be any man's ruin.[84] While serving a mission in England, Mormon scribe William Clayton felt the struggles that Mormon men faced in living within the sexual strictures given them. In January 1840, Clayton visited a woman named Burgess who was feeling ill. He "anointed her breasts and played with them." A month later, William Clayton felt the pull of lust toward a different woman, Sarah Crooks. He "was much . . . tempted on her account and felt to pray that the Lord would preserve me from impure affections." He felt his "love towards her increase but shall strive against it." He felt "too much to covet her." He prayed that the Lord would "keep me pure and preserve me from doing wrong." Clayton showed increasing familiarity with Crooks, writing that Crooks "washed my head with [rum]" over the ensuing months. [85]

Under most circumstances, Crooks's practice of using rum for bathing was common enough. In 1851, mannerist Sarah J. Hale recorded that "rum or brandy is used by some ladies as cosmetics to wash the face and hair, or as a remedy against colds, &c to bathe the head and feet." Hale thought rum to be a poor method of bathing since it left a "sort of stickiness . . . on the skin after washing in the rum." The residue "closed the pores of the skin, and thus proves really injurious to its healthy action."[86] But however Clayton felt about the rum baths, he found his interactions with Crooks to be stimulating.

By now, Clayton knew well of Joseph Smith's polygamy and had to revise his understanding of sexual virtue. Joseph Smith's system required the Saints to learn how to adapt to a new system of sexual morality and vigilance—to draw stricter parameters for their definitions of "virtue." Crooks complained to Brigham Young concerning

"evil and fals [sic] reports" the Saints were spreading about her. After she began "keeping company" with a certain male Saint—likely William Clayton—she was "much slandered and slighted" when he "began to come to my lodgings." Crooks hinted at the nature of the accusations, writing Brigham Young that she would"leave you to guese [sic] the rest." She insisted that she "never had such a thought in my head neither had [he]." So destructive were the allegations that her friend began "to feel for my welfare [as] it was evident that I was injuring my health."[87]

In 1843 Joseph approached William Clayton and said that "he felt as though [he] was not treating him right and asked if [he] had any familiarity with Emma." Though Emma remained faithful throughout the marriage, her relationship with Joseph was desperately strained by his introduction of the practice of polygamy. When Joseph began to contract marriages with Emma's knowledge, she threatened that if Joseph "would indulge himself she would too." Fearing that Emma would orchestrate a high-profile seduction of Clayton, Joseph warned Clayton that "she was disposed to be revenged on him [Joseph] for some things."[88]

Joseph had directed Clayton himself to take additional wives. Clayton married his wife's sister, Margaret, even though she was still civilly united to her husband. But the practice vexed him. When Margaret's husband learned of the union, Clayton's "heart ache[d] with grief on his and M[argaret]'s account and could almost say O that I had never known h[er]." Clayton struggled to justify the deed in his own mind: "Thou O God knowest the integrity of thy servant. Thou knowest that I have done that which I have understood to be thy will and am still determined to do so and I ask thee in the name of Jesus Christ either to absolutely wean my affections from M[argaret], or give me hers entire and then I am content." He begged to know if had had "done wrong in this thing," and then he would "repent of it and obtain mercy." Right or wrong, he pled for "release . . . from this grievous bondage of feeling."[89]

Other Latter-day Saint men felt the influence that the increasingly sexualized male virtue dialogue, Bennett's philandering, and Joseph's new marriage system had incited. Mormon first counselor, William Law "confessed that he had been guilty of adultery and was not fit to live and had sinned against his own soul, &c."[90] Francis Higbee, also the legal counsel for Orsemus Bostwick, had al-

legedly admitted to contracting a sexually transmitted disease from "a French girl" living in Warsaw. On one occasion, Joseph Smith discovered Francis Higbee with John C. Bennett "on a bed on the floor" engaging in activity "so revolting, corrupt, and disgusting" that the editor of the *Times and Seasons* censored the material from readers. He did not want to "offend the public eye or ear with a repetition of the foulness of their crimes any more."[91]

In spring 1844, a cabal of Joseph Smith's confidantes felt it necessary to reveal not only Joseph Smith's marital practices but also what they claimed was monarchical megalomania. By the critics' account, Joseph felt entitled to sexual liberty. Describing him as drunken with his own "pretensions to righteousness," Joseph's critics alleged that his sexual appetite was unbounded.[92] Drawing on Phelps's and Redfield's conceptualization of the state of Missouri as a female victim of rape, women became the victims in Joseph Smith's wasteland of morality: the seduced's "heart is like some fortress that has been captured, sacked, abandoned, and left desolate." Joseph's sexual appetite had unleashed a "disease" on the Nauvoo community, and the germ needed to be "exposed from the house tops."[93]

They insisted that they believed in the religious principles of Joseph Smith "as originally taught." But as Joseph gained power, he had become corrupted. He sought to "christianize [the] world by political schemes and intrigue."[94] Yet they also claimed that the teachings of the Book of Mormon "sinks deep into the heart of every honest man" when "spoken in truth and virtue."[95]Accusations of immorality abounded against leading Mormonism's leading men. Now haunted by Bennett's promiscuity, Mormon men now had to distinguish that and Joseph Smith's marital practices. Mormon masculinity came to be defined increasingly by sexual self-discipline. When the federal government commissioned a battalion of several hundred men to assist in the war with Mexico, Mormon men defined themselves through their commitment to sexual chastity. Daniel Tyler recalled that the soldiers had a reputation for "sobriety and virtue."[96]

Indeed, polygamy had made the Saints all the more sensitive to the prospects of perceived predatory sexuality. When black musician William McCary married white Lucy Stanton, the daughter of a former stake president, the union sent a shockwave of scan-

dal throughout the community. White Saints hurled epithets at the couple, calling them an "old n---r and his white wife." The white Mormon women gossiped about them. McCary believed that "some of the Sis. sd. that [McCary] is the man that Bro. Brigham tells his family to treat with disrespect." Brigham saw little threat from the man and assured him that "we are all of one blood" and that they "don't care about the color."[97]

After Brigham left Winter Quarters in April 1847, McCary raised suspicion when he began claiming to have prophetic authority and held "meetings of the men and women separately." He also began to practice interracial polygamy. He "had a number of women sealed to him . . . the form of sealing was for the women to bed with him . . . by which they were sealed to the fullest extent." When the practice was revealed, McCary faced probable mob violence; one man "determined to shoot him if he could find him for having tried to kiss his girls." McCary left the camp "on a fast trot to Missouri."[98] The consequences of McCary's dalliances foreshadowed the new kind of sexual morality under which the Saints labored. Virtue had become not only sexualized; it was now a life-and-death matter.

As the Saints ventured across the wilderness, they had begun the awkward transition from the complicated definition of virtue employed by Joseph Smith to the increasingly sexualized definition that polygamy invited. Brigham Young himself walked a hard-to-discern line in defining appropriate boundaries for male sexuality. "One member, Jesse Braley, approached church leadership about his serial sexual encounters, and received a response that revealed the unclear parameters defining male sexuality. He had married Rachel Taylor "according to Gentile law." But she was "sealed to another man" and "got another woman [Polly] to come & live with [him]." Polly was unsatisfied with the union and "wanted to leave me" for a "young man." Unsatisfied with the union, he "saw a woman, Sarah Frazier, [who] took my attention as if I had been acquainted a long time." He felt it "right in having connection with her bef. we were married." Braley claimed that Brigham endorsed the union, so he married Frazier while Polly still lived with them. Polly left Braley shortly afterwards to "liv[e] with a Gentile."

Church leaders had little sympathy. Albert Rockwood chastised him: "If he can't govern one woman, he can't govern another." Bra-

ley's marital failings were a "black mark" against him as he had "so many woman" who were "all bad." Brigham thought the matter to be a clear: "We cov. not to [have] Any thing to do with the daugrs. of Eve unless they [are] given of the L[ord] or the man that holds the keys." [99]

Brigham Young thought himself reasonable. He allowed that if a "man comes to me & sa[y] we want to be sealed & I ave not time to attd. it," he told them to "go & live with each other." He would "bear the sin of it." But Braley had abused his privileges. The definition of manhood was "know[ing] how to use a wife." Brigham had warned the men "not to handle edge tools," but Braley had "handled edge tools with women." When one of the leaders learned of his situation the year prior, he gave Braley a "severe lecture," declaring, "for heaven's sake don't run off a woman to take anot[her]." Young warned that if "the Quo. Of 70 fellowship such conduct . . . they will all go to hell." One leader "wanted to do good to him," but he felt he "must do it by the law of God." The disciplinary council ordered excommunication but only in order to "bring him back again": "make the plaster as big as the sore." Young directed Braley to "receive it like a corrected son."[100] Virtue was the defining aspect of questions surrounding male sexual self-regulation in Winter Quarters. When John D. Lee bragged about his sexual exploits, he told of "frigg[ing]" his wife, Louisa Free, "20 times in one night."

For Brigham, Lee's sin was "lov[ing] his women too much & frigg[ing] them too much."[101] Women were naturally attracted to men, so it was appropriate for a man to "enjoy a woman all you can to overflowing."[102] Young anticipated that women were naturally drawn to male power and privilege. When one man was found to be publicly living with a woman other than his wife, he acknowledged his error. Young exonerated him: "I know," he told the council, "that the woman has pressed herself upon him & r[eceive]d by the permission of his wife." With this knowledge, the council "forgave" him in short order.[103] Yet men too had an obligation to provide it. When John Benbow's wife, Agnes Taylor Benbow, left him over his sexual performance issues (due to prolonged disease), Young expressed measured sympathy for Agnes, noting for "a woman to be in such a sit[uation] of impotency, it is death to her." Brigham himself "wd. not live 3 weeks in such a situation."[104]

Unlike prevailing Victorian attitudes, Brigham Young at no time

associated "virtue" primarily with sexual abstinence. Young never was a speaker terribly interested in semantic exactness. He admitted it: "I feel it sometimes very difficult indeed to word my thoughts as they exist in my own mind." This, he felt, he explained the "many apparent differences in sentiment which may exist among the Saints." Likewise, Young applied the concept of virtue in unconventional ways. Virtue, Young argued, was merely "do[ing] the will of our Father in Heaven." It "embraces all good" and "branches out into every avenue of mortal life, passes through the ranks of the sanctified in heaven, and makes its thrones in the breast of the Deity."[105] "You say, 'I want an explanation upon virtue,'" Brigham Young told an audience. "I wish I could so give it to you, that you could understand it when I am done talking." If the Saints would "learn the will of God, keep His commandments and do his will," then they would be a virtuous people. God would make us "pure and holy, and fit for the society of angels and Himself." The Saints could then be "virtuous . . . in the highest sense."[106]

Virtue Systematized

But the sexual order continued to loom over virtue rhetoric; it pulled the Saints back even when they tried to cast it in a new light. Manly virtue had come to be a role largely based on the man's stewardship over women and their chastity. In 1851, Howard Egan killed James Monroe when Monroe tried to seduce his wife, Nancy Redding Egan. When Egan was brought before a federal court, his attorney George A. Smith defended him, since the "act was in accordance with the established principles of justice known in these mountains." Every man, Smith warned, "knew the style of old Israel, that the nearest relation would be at his heels to fulfill the requirements of justice." The adulterer, James Monroe, was but "a hyena that entered his sheets, seduced his wife, and introduced a monster into his family." While Smith acknowledged that Egan's actions were extreme, at least it could be said that "the law, the genius, the spirit, and the institutions" of the Mormon people strove to "preserv[e] inviolate, in perfect innocence, the chastity of the entire female sex." Meanwhile, non-Mormon governments "only value it by a *few dimes*." They were "corrupt institutions, which prostitute and destroy the female character and race."[107]

Outside observers did not doubt the Mormon fierce commit-

ment to male virtue, and Mormon men appeared to be proud of it. John Jacques of the *Millennial Star* complained that Benjamin Ferris's account of Utah Mormonism was entirely devoid of "a single open, manly testimony of virtue." He approvingly reprinted a *New York Herald* article observing that "adultery and illicit intercourse will be punished with death by the Mormon code. "Drones," as the *Millennial Star* styled them, "whether male or female—must be driven from the hive."[108] Jacques further quoted federal judge L. H. Read, observing that "the men are jealous of all interference in their domestic affairs . . . seduction and adultery, if discovered, are apt to be punished by death of the offender."[109] In 1856, Brigham Young echoed the rage that informed the judgment of male adulterers: "Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified, and they would atone for their sins, and be received into the kingdom of God."[110] When Ioannes Gennaidos, a late-nineteenth-century Greek author, criticized the British government for backing Turkey during the Greco-Turkish war, he suggested that "Brigham Young is an angel of modesty and a model of decorum when compared to 'Mohammedan butchers.'"[111]

For all the anger that informed men to take up arms against sexual predators, the discourse never exhibited the eloquence of Mormon rhetoric on female chastity. In Mormon Nauvoo, Emma urgently warned (likely using the voice of W.W. Phelps, Joseph Smith's ghostwriter) that when women lost their virtue, "ruin ensues, reproach and shame/And one false step bedims her fame/In vain the loss she may deplore/In vain review her life before/With tears she must in anguish be/Till God says, 'set that captive free.'"[112]

Even the non-Mormon *Valley Tan* agreed, observing that a woman's "blush is the sign which nature hangs out to show where chastity and honor dwells." The non-Mormon press accused the Saints of not trusting their women enough. "Men talk and write here about the seductions of their 'wives, sisters, and daughters' with a publicity and boldness that elsewhere would not be permitted." By non-Mormon accounts, Mormons treated every man as a suspected adulterer: "If a young man makes a polite bow to a lady here, or offers any of the civilities which in more civilized regions are deemed the index of a gentleman, his motives are at once suspected, and from the housetops the community are cautioned to be on their guard, lest some innocent

woman fall victim to his blandishments and wiles."[113] The reward of male libertines was unceremonious condemnation and possibly death.

By contrast, promiscuous women who placed an undue emphasis on their appearance were cast as property, albeit beautiful property. In one anecdote told by the *Deseret News*, a father and son find themselves courting the same woman. They soon discover, however, that she had been seeing yet another man. "She is a coquette," the father declared. "She is, by Jupiter," the son responded. After learning that she was in fact a married woman, the father and son reconciled. The *Deseret News* ended the story by noting that in this "court of love . . . the parties have the satisfaction of seeing the property in dispute pass gradually and effectually into the hands of a third person."[114] Indeed, the *Deseret News* went further, noting that women who placed intensive emphasis on their looks were but "haughty, vain, coquettes [that] . . . might be placed within glass cases and shown off to much advantage but [who] in the capacity of wife, mother, affairs of family, and the real duties of woman [are] . . . wholly unprepared."[115] When Orson Pratt announced the doctrine of plural marriage in an August 1852 conference, he had to address the obvious concerns from the outset. Plural marriage was not a doctrine created to "gratify the carnal lusts and feelings of man." On the contrary, polygamy became a way of institutionalizing male sexuality into a system of domestic accountability. Orson Pratt said wryly that the same men who called polygamy an "awful thing" were those who were likely to "go into a brothel and there debauch themselves in the lowest haunts of degradation all the days of their lives."[116]

From 1852 onward, Mormon polygamy expanded from Joseph's vision of an eternal kinship community fostered through polygamy to become an entrenched social system. Mormon men practiced polygamy openly, and women learned to adjust to the new system. Various living arrangements were devised for the new family structures. Some families cohabited, with the wives sharing space, cooperating in meals, and assisting one another in child-rearing. Other wealthier—and less-congenial—family units established networks of houses in which the various wives lived.[117]

When the Saints publicly embraced polygamy, they were forced to redefine the sexual discourse. Top Mormon leaders had been seeking to practice polygamy inconspicuously for over a decade. A week before apostle Orson Pratt's official announcement, Brigham

Young's confidante W. W. Phelps wrote a letter to a convert living in British India named Mizra Khan. Khan was enthusiastic about the Mormon message but worried that his nine wives would not be welcome in America. Phelps told Khan that the Western world trailed behind the "heathen and pagan nations" in its celebration of polygamy and commitment to following "the patterns set by the fathers of the faithful and nobility of the Lord." The custom "continues as good for the virtue of creation." Phelps now used the term "virtue" to describe the procreative act within polygamy, not merely to describe the absence of sexual activity.[118]

Now facing several sexual prospects, masculine virtue suggested sexual self-control within marriage rather than the attributes celebrated by Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and others. An incident that reveals Mormon attitudes about male sexuality is the 1859 murder of Phillip Scott Key, Jr. (son of "The Star-Spangled Banner" author, Francis Scott Key) by Republican operative Dan Sickles when Sickles discovered that Key was having an affair with his wife. National sentiment was strongly in favor of Sickles; one member of the jury pool reportedly said that he had "a fixed opinion on all such cases" and if "justify[ing] the act would make him an impartial juror, he could be one." Sickles' attorney, John Graham, argued that Sickles' actions were justified, for woman as the "weaker vessel" needed the "strong arm of her husband" to "restrain her within the paths of rectitude." The non-Mormon newspaper *The Valley Tan* found Graham's arguments disgusting, insisting that there was "no fortress so impregnable as the citadel of a virtuous woman's heart." Female chastity had the power to "make a strong man quail and become as an infant."[119]

But the *Deseret News* placed the responsibility for the promotion of sexual propriety squarely on men. After presenting a detailed account of Sickles' murder trial, the *Deseret News* also included the story of a man who took vengeance on his wife's seducer by "walk[ing] coolly up to his betrayer and, at one stroke, severing his right ear from his head" and "put[ting] it in his pocket." Ignoring the Howard Egan incident of years earlier, the *Deseret News* associated sexual immorality as well as vengeance with urban living: "Are the legion of brothels that rear their dingy and their gorgeous fronts in all of the larger cities of the States becoming insufficient for the tide of sensuality and corruption "Men of the world" ought to "look to

[their] firesides and homes . . . for the darkened specters of moral as well as political corruption"; they threatened to "bring downfall and desolation in their course."[120]

Some women celebrated polygamy as being a method for corralling the male libido. Parley P. Pratt's plural wife Belinda believed that polygamy cultivated a virtuous marriage. Sexual "indulgence," Pratt argued, "should not be merely for pleasure, or wanton desire, but mainly for the purpose of procreation."[121] Pregnancy was a sacred time for women: "During nature's process in the formation and growth of embryo . . . her heart should be pure, her thoughts and affections chaste, her mind calm, her passions without excitement."[122] If a man attempted to engage in sexual intercourse with a pregnant wife, she argued, "he would sin both against his own body, against the body of his wife, and against the laws of procreation."[123] Men had been commanded not to "take liberties with any woman except his own." Thus depriving "wealthy men" from having the "inducement to keep a mistress in secret," polygamy allowed men to have an honorable sexual outlet and for women to be the "honorable wives of virtuous men"—essentially who had kept themselves clean from sexual impropriety.[124] Polygamy did not foster sexual licentiousness, Belinda Pratt insisted; if anything, it promoted an environment that allowed men to seek out their sexual needs in healthy ways.

In the late 1860s, the growth of industry in territorial Utah further called upon Mormon men to embrace the doctrine of masculine sexual virtue. Separated from their homes, industrial workers had cut the ties that existed with their family farms and domestic units. Free to explore their sexual identity, young men could indulge in sexual activity away from the watchful eye of their home community. A *Deseret News* editorial eschewing modern Christianity observed with typical bitterness that the Saints would rather "be heathen and behave ourselves" than submit to urban America's "pious, virtuous, Christendom" that tolerated "dancing girls" who were "selected for their . . . looseness of morals."[125] The influx of foreign laborers frightened Mormon men: "You can form some estimate of what the result would be to our cities and settlements of 5,000 or 6,000 Irish, German, and other laborers crowding through our peaceful vales."[126] Mormon men felt retrenchment was necessary, and that the only way to save Mormon men from the increasingly

depraved environment was through the teaching of virtue.

In the new environment, the Mormon press was unsparing in its condemnation of unleashed male sexuality. Men deserved no free pass in sexual matters. "Women," George Q. Cannon observed, "in their yearning after the other sex and in their desire for maternity, will do anything to gratify their instinct." It was the "instinct of their nature" that drove them to inappropriate sexuality and therefore they "are not held accountable to the same extent as men are." But men, Cannon continued, "are strong" and "the head of woman, and God will hold him responsible for the use of the influence he exercises over the opposite sex." The procreative power is a "godlike power," he cried, "but how it is abused!" In polygamist Utah, "our young live virtuously until they marry . . . we have fewer unvirtuous boys and girls in our midst than any other community within the range of my knowledge."[127] A *Deseret News* editorial opined: "Why ought moral purity to be any more a feminine than a masculine virtue, and why should not a fall from it hurt a man as much as it does a woman?" Sexual double standards were a "doctrine of damnation" that "breeds lewdness and corruption." It "rots the foundation of manliness and honor." Indeed, the *Deseret News* associated its support for granting women the vote with its consistency in applying the sexual standard: "That movement holds men and women to an equal, high, and spotless morality before God and the world." Suffrage "is a protest against one code of morals for one sex and another for the other."[128] As historian Kathryn Daynes has observed, Mormons did not indulge the sexual double standard "that countenanced men's sexual dalliances but demanded chastity of women."[129]

A generation later, Cannon's disgust with male promiscuity had only increased: "Why, it is not considered very discreditable for a man to be unvirtuous. It is esteemed as the privilege of the sex, and the female sex themselves almost accept it as a natural consequence of man's organization." This doctrine, Cannon said, echoing his earlier concerns, "is damnable, and it will ruin any people that practice it. Let us set our faces against it, and teach our sons and daughters that virtue ought to be esteemed by them as more valuable than life. A young man who will defile himself is unworthy to be the spouse of a virtuous girl." He would "rather see my daughter buried than go to the arms of such a creature."[130]

Fearful of the impact that outsider, non-Mormon male laborers would have on Mormon sexuality, Mormon leaders grew increasingly vigilant of possible sexual impropriety, wherever it might surface—particularly in the imported sexual culture of non-Mormons entering the territory alongside the transcontinental railroad. As orthodox Christians had done for centuries, Mormon leaders took aim at cultural forms such as the waltz, pointing out the close bodily contact and twirling motions that were sure to excite sexual passions. In 1835, author James Mercer Garnett (*nom de plume:* Oliver Oldschool) denounced the waltz for "exhibiting to the gaze of a numerous company of both sexes, the female form in every variety of position and attitude into which activity of body and suppleness of limb can throw it . . . no modest woman ever beheld it for the first time, without the burning blush of shame and confusion." They were "licentious innovations" that corrupted the youth; a respectable man "may choose a waltzing partner for *a dance*," but "most of them decline inviting her to be a partner *for life*."[131] Following suit faithfully, the *Deseret News* published a piece in 1855 by Washington Irving claiming that the waltz gave men an avenue to take subtle sexual liberties: "The dancers . . . are continually changing their relative positions—now the gentleman, I assure you madam, meaning no harm in the world, carelessly flings his arms around the lady's neck with an air of celestial imprudence." After dancing for long enough, the couple would "find their arms entwined in a thousand seducing mischievous curves." "Closer and closer they approach each other" until they are "overcome with ecstatic fatigue."[132]

By the late 1860s, round dances had become routine in Utah. The *Salt Lake Herald* printed a joke in which a married woman was asked to waltz; she responded: "No, I thank you, sir; I get enough hugging at home."[133] The *Salt Lake Tribune* thought the waltz to be a way lustful Mormon leaders could seduce new brides; one account told of a bishop who "expressed himself highly displeased with round dances." When the youth protested, the bishop allegedly offered to teach them. "He got on the floor with a one hundred and eighty three pound blonde; the band struck up the Blue Danube, and away they slid. It was only a matter of moments before the girl's "cheek . . . rested on the shoulder of that man of God."[134] Waltzing, the *Tribune* believed, made it all too easy for marriage-hungry Mormon men to land their next wife.

For Mormons, virtue served as the self-regulatory mechanism that allowed polygamy to run smoothly. Providing secure environments for women would de-incentive the need to turn to prostitution. Marriage—even in the plural—allowed women to express their "natural purity" and the "talents and abilities with which she is endowed for her own benefit and advantage." The "heart-rending, terrible sight" of the "fallen woman will cease to exist." Even more, the *Deseret News* warned ominously: "lascivious men" who "seek her destruction" would suffer a "swift and condign punishment." Church leaders acknowledged that sexual attraction was an inherent part of man's existence. But the new order demanded new solutions. Apostle Erastus Snow approved of the sex drive, though with some reservation: "These affections and loves that are planted in us are the nobler qualities that originate from God. They stimulate us to the performance of our duties; to multiplying and replenishing the earth to assume the responsibilities of families, and rear them up for God . . . Every instinct in us is for a wise purpose in God when properly regulated and restrained, and guided by the Holy Spirit and kept within its proper legitimate bounds." The "lusts and desires of the flesh," he assured the Saints, "are not of themselves unmitigated evils."[136] In 1882, George Q. Cannon wrote that Deity "provided a system of polygamy that where this excess prevailed it might be met on a legitimate principle, and thus . . . while the demands of nature might be met, decency and propriety might be exhibited in all relations of life."[137]

Mormon leaders believed that men had stronger sexual appetites than women; polygamy seemed to assure them of that. Now presented with several sexual outlets, virtue came to be understood as a man's ability to navigate a complex web of conjugal relations. John Jacques argued that "virtue is proverbially fostered and promoted by marriage" whereas "vice is indubitably encouraged and strengthened . . . by unnatural [monogamous] restrictions upon marriage."[138] In 1883, Joseph F. Smith claimed that plural marriage could never be compared to the "sexual crimes and iniquities of the world." Plural marriage was "virtuous, pure, and honorable" and promoted "life, purity, innocence, vitality, health, increase and longevity." Worldly systems "engender[ed] disease, disappointment, misery and premature death."[139] An 1884 publication attributed the destruction of Book of Mormon civilizations to a loss of its

"strength of purpose, integrity, and manly virtue." It is likely that Jacques was referring to the Nephites' participation in cannibalistic rapes in the final chapters of the text (Moroni 9:9) in which Nephite peoples took many women as war captives and then "depriv[ed] them of that which was most dear and precious above all things, which is chastity and virtue."[140] Jacques did not see the rapes as the theft of female virtue; he saw it as the grotesque degradation of male virtue.

As the Saints dismantled the structure of polygamy, the idea of manly virtue endured, indeed, flourished. From the Utah penitentiary, Lorenzo Snow waxed eloquent about Apostle Willard Snow's character: "It gives a key no mortal made/Yet has it pow'r to mortals aid/'Cause we, though mortals, clearly see/By it, high virtue dwells in thee/What's in thy heart—integrity:/No virtue told, is more sublime/Then this that's shown as truly thine."[141]

Far more common than Snow's remarks were injunctions for young people to cultivate virtuous thought and actions. Gone were the days when it was personified by an aging grandmotherly figure. Virtue became not a sign of sage wisdom but youthful virility watched under close vigilance. "Guard your virtue," Apostle Mathias F. Cowley implored the youth, "esteem it as dearer than the blood which flows in your veins." God had "placed a premium upon honor and chastity, and he or she who loses that gem loses something that cannot be restored in this life, if it can in the life to come."[142] In Manti, the *Manti Messenger* warned that if parents "want your boys and girls to be honest and virtuous men and women, keep them off the streets as much as possible, especially after night. The boy or girl who is allowed to roam the streets at night is an exception if he or she does not learn something that will prove a detriment to their character." At the very least, "the finger of scorn will be pointed at them," regardless of "how virtuous they may be."[143] Virtue was not old, cold, and haggard; it became the sign of a sexually capable young man or woman committed to living according to the Mormon principles of premarital chastity.

Conclusion

In Mormonism's formative days, virtue could be employed in a variety of contexts.Once polygamy had become a signature mark of Mormonism, the Saints used it to provide an alternative defi-

nition of manly virtue that could address what they felt were the sexual ills facing men in the mid- to-late-nineteenth century. The Mormon re-appropriation and re-definition of "manly" virtue allowed the Saints to cast polygamy as a solution to America's social ills, not merely as the social innovation of a peculiar people in the mountains.

But lived practice controlled the contours of Mormon discourse. The ongoing practice of polygamy sexualized virtue rhetoric in Mormon societies, leaving behind the original language that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had employed. Mormon men came to see themselves not as sexually powerful but sexually weak—a weakness that could only be buttressed by providing men sexual access.

At the turn of the twentieth century, manly virtue had traveled a winding road in Mormon thought, originating in amorphous ideas about law, order, and refinement and coming out as a deeply sexualized attribute. Over the course of nineteenth-century Mormonism, the ideals of manly virtue had shifted in response to the prevailing cultural trends from both within and outside the Mormon community. The Saints paid a heavy price for their social system and the narrower definition of virtue that accompanied it. Though Paley's monogamic ethos ultimately won the day, the Mormons' redefinition of virtue as sexual self-regulation rather than sexual abstinence demonstrated the strong influence of polygamy not only on Mormon lifestyle but also on Mormon rhetoric. Indeed, it served as the interpretive lens through which abstinence culture can be viewed from Joseph Smith through the present day. However it was expressed, nineteenth-century Mormons agreed on this truth: virtue knew no gender.

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Sinners Welcome Here (2002)

Phyllis Barber

Editor's Note: Excerpts from this essay appear in Barber's memoir, *To the Mountain: One Mormon Woman's Search for Spirit,* forthcoming from Quest Books in July 2014.

Driving past the humongous brick building set way back from the street, I do an instant double take. Did I just see what I thought I saw? Did that sign say, "Sinners Welcome Here?" While I'm supposed to be negotiating traffic on my way to Costco, I'm rubber necking, and I see that the sign says what I thought it said. The words are painted on a shiny plastic, weatherproof banner attached near the top of the building.

Sinners. I blush. The tips of my ears turn red. I've made way too many mistakes in my life. I want to pull over, walk through the doors, and see what this church has to offer to the myriad of sinners out here on the streets—the cheaters, the liars, the drug addicts, the pimps, and me—whoever might be out here screwing up the world. I'm fascinated with the idea of sinners being welcome at a church. But wait a minute. What does it mean to be a sinner, anyway? Do I really think Satan lies in wait behind every bush, waiting to trip us all up and lead us into sin and hard times?

Sinners Welcome Here. The sign teases me. I'd like to see one of those hanging across the front of a Mormon chapel where I haven't been for eighteen years, but that's not the Mormon style. Even though members there can and do fail at times, a given with all human beings, I remember more emphasis being placed on the idea of perfection: "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Not so much talk about sinners being welcome.

As I continue driving down Florida Street in Denver in the sum-

mer of 2002, the word "sin" overtakes my mind. *Do I believe in it the way the TV evangelists talk about it, like sin is bad, odious, accompanied by the smell of sulfur and the raucous laughter of the Devil, like it's the province of evil humans bent on destroying the world and the good people in it? Or is it something less melodramatic?* Sin means "missing the mark" in the original Greek. Or even "a mistake" made on the path of eternal progression, the Mormons might say. One from which a person can learn if he or she doesn't get tangled in the wires of guilt and despair. But right this minute, despite my intellectual efforts to wrestle the idea of sin to the mat, call it a misconstrued and misunderstood idea, and punch it in the nose, I think maybe the idea has its hook in me.

I can still feel a self-imposed noose around my neck that tightens when I remember how I was taught to live life and how I haven't followed those rules. Am I caught in an ancestral web spun by the natural man and woman, the supposed enemies to God? Or can I just laugh off the idea of sin and sinners and make jokes about CTR rings?

All I know for sure, bottom line, is that right now, my heart is broken. Again. *Been down so long, it looks like up to me.* (Can't help that my brain keeps track of the first line of every song I've ever heard.) Romance has been a bust in the past ten years. I've just signed the dotted line that ended my second, very brief, marriage and moved from Utah back to Denver to lick my wounds. Maybe there's something out of place in my human engineering—too independent, too idealistic, too whatever. Maybe I need something besides love and romance which I don't know how to do or what it is or where to find it. *Looking for love in all the wrong places* is the next song in the jukebox of my brain as I pull a sharp left into the Costco parking lot. It's packed with a mass of Detroit metal. As usual.

Mother Mary full of grace, help me find a parking place. Thank you, my Catholic daughter-in-law who taught me that handy prayer. Even as I say the words, I see the taillights of a maroon mini-van blink red. I brake to wait for the opening. And I wait. And wait. Then I creep up a few feet and see a stroller, a shopping cart half full, and a harried mother trying to strap her two-year old into his car seat. Since there are no other prospects, however, I accept this as my personal parking place, my gift from Mother Mary.

My thoughts turn to her son. His name still comes to me, even

though I keep telling myself I've given up hope that there's anyone named Jesus, the Son of God. Maybe that's another one of those stories I'm prone to believe since I love stories of every shape and size. But then I hear my mind humming an oldie, this time a church song: *Jesus wants me for a sunbeam, to shine for him each day.* The Sunday School children used to sing that song with unreserved glee at the Boulder City Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, our favorite activity singing the "beam" part in a squeaky falsetto. When I'm done with that song, I'm onto another one: *The Lord is my shepherd, No want shall I know.* Songs live in the layers of my synapses.

But then, I'm a sucker for all kinds of music and musicians—Joshua Bell with his violin, Jim Morrison's "L.A. Woman," Yo Yo Ma, Alison Kraus, Radiohead, Muddy Waters, Robert Plant, Aretha Franklin and her interminable version of *Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me* that goes on for hours while she embellishes every syllable and makes the hair on my arms stand straight up. I tear up when I hear "I Believe," the fifties song that says something about believing in every drop of rain that makes a flower grow, something about darkest nights where a candle glows, something about the people who go astray and how someone will come to help them find the way. *I believe. I believe.* I feel my lips forming those words. Who am I kidding when I say I've given up hope?

The flustered mother is now folding up the stroller and opening the back hatch of the mini-van. Her grocery cart is empty. I lean my forehead against the top of the steering wheel.

For forty years I was an active Mormon. I'd been told all my life that Jesus Christ was the answer, that I needed to accept him if I wanted to be saved. I used to listen to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir broadcasts on Sunday mornings while I ironed my wrinkled dress for Sunday School, the one that had slipped off the hanger and spent the week in a crumpled hump on the floor of my closet. From Salt Lake City, Utah, the Crossroads of the West, Richard L. Evans uttering The Spoken Word in his mellifluous voice. I can still hear the cadence of his speech, even now in the Costco parking lot, as he encourages everyone to live a good life, to love as Christ taught. But I'm also thinking that when I was attending church for those forty years, the lay members who delivered sermons at sacrament meeting seemed to talk more about modern-day prophets,

Joseph Smith, the Word of Wisdom, obedience to authority, tithing, sexual purity, having a year's supply of groceries and first aid supplies, etc. It's not that Mormons don't believe in Jesus. They absolutely did and do. But there seemed to be so many other things that needed attention, so many proscribed rules for perfection, so many cultural codes of behavior. When they spoke of Jesus, they spoke of Jesus the Christ or Our Savior, not so much just plain Jesus—the kind I could use today.

Now that the maroon mini-van is finally pulling out, I think of the times when I took the sacrament passed to the members at church—aluminum trays filled with broken bread and mini-cups of water—and how I'd tried to envision the body and blood of Christ, to feel what it must have felt like to hang from a cross by nails in your hands and feet. Maybe I wasn't very good at concentrating, but I'd never quite felt Jesus in my heart the way I was supposed to. I could go through the motions, I was good at that. I could be intellectual about what Jesus said and repeat the book answers about the Atonement being At-One-Ment, but right now, at this one-ment, I feel the need for a just plain Jesus, a living Jesus. I need to call on His name the way they do in Gospel choirs, singing from the tiny bones on the bottoms of their feet, filled with Spirit and begging, "Save me, Jesus, save this motherless child."

After I flash my Costco card to the greeter and purchase dried mangoes, paper towels, and the Growers' Special bouquet of flowers, I drive home. As I'm putting things away, my friend Laney calls. She's been watching out for me since I returned to Denver earlier this summer—limping from the suddenness of the second divorce and in need of a wheelchair of friendship. Out of the blue, she asks me if I want to go to the Heritage Christian Church with her next Sunday. I'm amazed at the serendipity. "You mean that church with the sign out front?" I ask her. "The one about sinners? I just did a drive-by. You're on." I can't believe this coincidence. And yet I can.

I welcome the opportunity to pass through the doors of that massive building with a friend by my side. But I'm also nervous. I don't know what happens inside that brick fortress. Will it be full of Pentacostal, Born Again, and Fundamentalist Christians, some of whose strident political rhetoric and almost militaristic approach to Christ's teaching troubles me? The way I see it, his teachings are much more subtle, much more nuanced and challenging to live, and

some of the televangelists I've heard can sound like the Pharisees whom Christ disparages. I have no idea what this congregation is like. There were those Sundays when I was growing up in Boulder City, Nevada, when my brother and I would sometimes sneak up to the window sills of the Holy Roller church down the block from our home and try to peek inside, though the windows were always covered. We listened for the sounds of thumping, shouting, even rolling, but never heard much to get excited about.

The next Sunday, I meet Gil and Laney in the parking lot that stretches for miles it seems. They arrive in their white camper, the one they take to go bird watching in Nebraska when the sandhill cranes migrate. Gil once studied to be a Buddhist monk. He's now considering Christianity. He reminds me of Yoda. Laney, a gifted artist with many big ideas, is a woman constantly looking for a philosophical and spiritual home. Fellow seekers whom I met in a Gurdjieff study group, searching, looking, considering. I have very few friends in town. I'm grateful for these two.

The hall in front of the main sanctuary is filled with greeters who hold out their hands, palms up. "Welcome," they say with wide smiles that make me feel like a fish-on-the-hook being reeled in. "We're happy to have you here." One of them stretches out her arms to fold me into a hug, but, even though I could use a good one, I offer my right hand instead. A handshake will do. We work our way through a wide spectrum of humanity. Despite my down-and-out state of mind, everyone's smiles are contagious, just like my father always said they were. I find the hardness of my face creasing into a half-smile from beneath the bottom of my deep, dark blue sea of sadness. A sad-eyed smile. Poster child for Hard Times, Been There, Done That, Seen It All.

When we walk through the doors into the sanctuary, there are neon lights lighting up the interior architecture of the pulpit with its high-tech aluminum tubing, framing two huge video screens, delineating the stairways to the stage, maybe even to the stars, one can never tell when there's so much going on. Flags from every country line the towering walls, and a thousand or more people fill the cushioned seats, clapping their hands, responding to a gospel choir dressed in maroon robes and standing in front of three rows of cushioned chairs on stage. They're singing "I am a friend of God, He is my friend. The Lord God Almighty calls me Friend," accom-

panied by a six-piece rock band—a lead and bass guitar, drums (a trap set and bongos and a tambourine), plus a Hammond B-3 organ. *A free concert. All right.*

Ushers roam the aisles, ready to hand out questionnaires if you're a first-time attendee. Greeters line the aisles, putting out their hands and saying, "Welcome. Bless you, Sister, Brother." We've happened upon a mega-rock à la gospel concert at nine o'clock on a Sunday morning. Even though I've visited small Pentacostal services where a fainting cloth was held at the ready in the event one of the sisters swooned, fell to the floor, and was left embarrassingly uncovered, it's surreal to watch so many people clapping, raising their arms and waving them as if they were palm trees in stiff wind, people saying "Hallelujah" and "Praise God," people singing "I am a friend of God" with no self-consciousness.

Because I had a well-entrenched habit of church-going or maybe even a spiritual gene, I'd been attending all kinds of churches for the past ten years, mostly African American congregations. Gospel music and Gospel choirs lifted my soul in ways it needed lifting, but I'd never seen anything done up in this mammoth, even behemoth scale. This is a two thousand decibel, multi-media show. The words of the hymn are being flashed across screens mounted on both sides of the stage.

After we find our seats on the raised-up left side of the auditorium, I notice the quartet of singers standing in front of the choir, two of them black, two of them white. They're each wearing black and white as well—one woman in a houndstooth check jacket cinched with a black patent leather belt, the other in a drapey, floral dress that compliments her memorable figure. The tenor is leaning his head back, holding a microphone pointed down at his mouth and reminding me of a sword swallower. His notes are higher than high, falsetto even, and he's going on and on about how the Lord God Almighty calls him friend, then stays with that word "friend," the notes going round and round his head like bees close to a hive, notes up and down and all around the scale.

People are standing up and sitting down, sometimes raising their hands high above their heads, sometimes clapping, sometimes saying, "Yes, Brother. Sing it out." I look over the literal sea of people in this sanctuary, grains of sand, grains of mustard seed, even, replete with faith. There are very few empty seats, and the variety

of color, size, and style astounds me. A cameraman on the stage manipulates a huge boom that swings out over the audience, and then individual faces show up on the screens. This turns the audience into a reality show of the faithful whooping it up and swaying and joining in with the choir. I find myself standing up, hear myself singing the words projected onto the mammoth screens, feel my hands clapping against each other, and hear a shy "Hallelujah" escape from my mouth when the instrumentalists are playing a bridge. Gil and Laney stand up with me. We clap each other's hands. We rock out. We're singing, "I'm a friend of God. He is my friend." We're almost dancing, though the row is too narrow to get into any serious moves. After the music ends, Laney is hugging me, Gil is patting my shoulder, and I'm saying, "All right," two thumbs up. We sink into our seats.

The minister comes in through a door at the right side of the building. He's dressed in an immaculately tailored suit, the jacket slim around the hips, his collar starched. He's got a razor haircut, a tan, and he lays his hands on the rocket engine pulpit, ready to take off, to energize his congregants with jet propulsion.

"Welcome, every one of you," he says. All of the musicians take a rest except for the organist who keeps a low change of chords murmuring softly while the minister speaks, sometimes punching it up a little when he says something people need to remember. "Glory, hallelujah, it's a sight for sore eyes to see so many of you here, ready to take God into your lives, ready to turn your hearts to the Master. Bless you."

The organist rips a glissando, and I feel a little smile considering a walk across my face.

This is good theater, whatever your beliefs. Good times.

"Before we get started today," he says with a smooth, practiced, even silvery tongue, and the organist takes a more somber turn and plays chords that turn thoughts inward. "We have our prayer teams down in front. If any of you need to be prayed over, if your hearts are burdened, if you can't seem to take the right steps in your life, come down to the front and allow prayer and our Master and Lord Jesus to change you and your life."

Without looking at me, Laney takes my hand in hers. It's nice to have a friend by your side when you feel abandoned by life and its glittery hopes. This brings tears to my eyes, though. I don't let Laney see the glistening on my eyelashes, those crystallized bits of

interior water I've seen too much of this summer. It's not so much that I'm feeling sorry for myself. It's like I can't get a toehold in the wall, a place to help me climb out of this hole of down-heartedness that's been dogging my psyche every day. It's like a boxing match when that mean, chew-me-out voice gets wound up and lets loose with a one-two punch and I just lie there in my bed at night letting the blows fall where they will without putting up my dukes. *Is there a hooded wrestler, a master of despair who wants to take me down? And is there something outside of me trying to topple my spirit, take the air out of my tires? Is there a devil, a Satan, who relishes in people's despair, who tries to keep them down because his plan didn't win in the War in Heaven? Because God the Father chose Christ's plan of salvation–the freedom to choose? to exercise free agency? Or is this me at war with myself?*

Small groups of two and three gather in front of the stage, people from all walks of life, the men wearing nice suits and the women sporting heels, pearls, and Sunday-go-to-meeting outfits. They stand ready to help, ready to accept the few people who are making their way to the front to stand inside their small circles. The organ plays its mournful commentary on people and their troubles.

"I know you might be feeling hesitant," the minister says, "but put your hand in the Hand. Release your burdens. Bring them to the front where our prayer teams will lift them from your shoulders, where you can give them to Jesus. Accept his goodness and mercy. Now is the time. Not tomorrow or the next day. But now."

I swallow. I feel as if big hands are cupping my elbows and urging me to get out of my seat. I stay in my chair. But suddenly, as if I'm a marionette on a set of twelve strings, I stand up in the row where Laney, Gil, and I are sitting. I say "Excuse me" and try not to step on anyone's purse or their toes. *What am I doing, holding on to the chairs in front of my row, trying to get to the end of the row that just won't arrive? Who am I in this crowd of people trying to make peace by holding each other's hands when the preacher says,* "Take the hand of your neighbor and tell him or her, 'Gee, it's great to see you here today?'" *I'm aware of something like the walls of Jericho crumbling around me, something breaking down barriers, something saying surrender to a will greater than your own.*

After negotiating a journey past a long row of protruding knees and dodging feet, I take each stair on the aisle with caution. I'm wearing a new pair of high heels. I could topple. There's too much air around me, too much light shining on my weakness. I keep walk-

ing slowly toward the people standing in front, the prayer teams. I don't look left or right.

"Welcome," a dusky African says, a tall, spindly, kind-looking man with bent shoulders inside a pin-striped suit jacket. "Are you here to take on Jesus's name?" he asks with a British accent. I'm not ready for this big order. Too soon. I just wanted to come up here as an experiment. It's too brash to say yes, I'll do this. But my face has more than enough to say.

"Jesus loves you," the man says, and I feel those crystal drops of liquid running past the lids of my eyes and down my cheeks. "Accept him into your life, sweet sister. Give your burdens to the Lord. He can carry them. He will carry them if you'll surrender to him."

In this moment, I'm suddenly my eight-year-old self, standing in the waters of Lake Mead in southern Nevada with my father who's dressed in white as I'm dressed in white. The water comes up to my waist and to the tops of his thighs. It's cold in the early part of May with all of the snow runoff from the Rockies siphoning into the tributaries of the Colorado River. My father's holding his right arm to the square. He's saying, "I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ," and then he's laying me back in the water, making sure that my toe doesn't break the surface. I feel his strong arms holding me under water for a brief second, then they're pulling me out again. Water rushes over me as I surface, as I rise, re-born, clean, fresh, free from all of my sins. Before my baptism, I'd cleaned the slate: I'd confessed to my parents that I'd stolen a dollar's worth of colored paper from the five & dime. I didn't take good enough care of our dog, Rocky. I even said I'd love and respect my older sister better.

In the next moment I've advanced to my ten-year-old self standing up to bear my testimony at testimony meeting in the Boulder City Ward, saying things I don't really know for sure. I am a good learner and a faithful, dutiful daughter. I'm repeating what I've heard my elders and other children say: I know the Mormon Church is the Only True Church and that Joseph Smith was a prophet and David O. Mckay is a modern prophet. I'm saying that I love Jesus Christ. I'm saying that I know he's the way back to God, even though I'm not sure how I know what I'm saying at all. But I always loved the stories of Jesus looking for the lost sheep and of that woman with the issue of blood who touched the hem of his robes and was healed, so I wasn't a talking robot when I gave my testimony and

said I loved Jesus. Except maybe I didn't love him very much back then. Maybe I couldn't understand what he was all about, let alone comprehend the word atonement.

Did I have any idea of who Christ was, even though I'd heard the Christmas story a zillion times and played the part of Mother Mary in our family Christmas pageant? And heard the stories about branches of palm trees being waved when Jesus made his triumphal journey into Jerusalem and people shouted "Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord?" And listened to stories about Gethsemane and Golgotha and drops of blood? Did it seem real to me when I was in Ecuador and saw a massive parade of Penitentes with purple pointed hoods over their heads and long white robes, jamming together in a huge crowd that moved like a slow amoeba down the street, past the Plaza Central in Quito. Penitentes who were asking forgiveness, repentant Penitentes full of sorrow that they wished to place at the feet of Jesus? Had I felt anything in the many cathedrals I'd visited in Paris, London, Mexico City, Santa Fe, Santa Barbara, or Cusco, Peru, when I'd seen Christ hanging on the cross, Christ with a bowed head and the stains on his hands and feet? Or had I only been an observer, a tourist, someone who respected Christ's teachings but considered him more of a concept, an idea, a symbol? Maybe I'd just mouthed back the things I'd heard about Jesus being the way, the truth and the life, but maybe I believed in some quiet corner of myself that there was something important here. I wasn't sure about all of this.

Now, I'm standing in front of thousands at the Heritage Christian Church and this kindly, lanky man in a pencil-striped suit is looking at me with tenderness and watching the tears falling down my cheeks and putting his arm around my shoulders. I feel Jesus standing there by my side, looking at me with those liquid eyes and his reams of kindness and love and compassion, saying, *Come to me, child. Enter my kingdom like a little child,* and I want to be His child. I want to know he's been looking for me, the little old lamb tripping over a rock and stumbling and falling away from the fold. I want to hear him saying, *Come to me, my child.*

"Do you take Jesus Christ as your Savior?" the man is asking. I can barely hear him as I'm so full of the many times I'd been taught about Jesus and did I or did I not believe everything I'd heard? And, too, I am filled with my self, my suffering, my bad deeds, my hurts,

my sin and all of the wrong turns in the road.

He's standing there. He's waiting. And a woman joins us and a circle is being formed around me. Two people are holding my hands and patting my shoulder to reassure me. "It's all right, Sister. It's all right."

I lift my head. The man's eyes appear to be someone else's eyes. Someone in Sunday School once told me that you need to be kind to everyone you meet because it might be Jesus in disguise, asking you to reach out, asking you to be kind as the Good Samaritan was kind to an Israelite who was supposed to be his enemy. God could be speaking to you out of the mouth of anybody you met. You never knew who was standing next to you or in front of you and who was asking you to receive the God in them.

I look at this man again and at the woman who's joined our circle. I see the kindness of Jesus in both of their eyes, the kindness I'd read about in the New Testament, the way Jesus said it was time to let go of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth kind of thinking, but to come to him in love, to forgive, to be compassionate, above all to be charitable. And I hear myself saying, "Yes. I accept Christ as my Savior." Two people are hugging me and squeezing me as if I were their young daughter who'd escaped a near fall from a cliff. I hear the organ, its vibrato, the way music's fingers are everywhere present, and these people are shaking my hand and telling me how good it is I've accepted Jesus as my Savior, because He is the way, the truth, and the life.

For one brief second, I wonder what I've done, what I've promised, what I've agreed to, and then I hear the guitars amping up and I feel like dancing. I feel like dancing in front of those thousands of people. Twirling even. It's okay to let Jesus inside. It's okay. It's okay to sing *Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.* It's okay be a cliché if that's what I'm being, to let Jesus back into my life, to be one of those people who are sheep in the flock. I've been so afraid of being a lowly sheep, part of a herd. I've fought hard to stand apart, to distinguish myself—so afraid of being a lamb running back to the fold when the shepherd calls.

But it's okay. It's okay.

Oblation

Will Reger

Death does not
disturb me, nor fear
of death.
The architecture of age
has left space for more
than bone grinding
against bone, more
than to waste life
alone in a house,
waiting for despair to win
its wrestle with me.
My blood is still young
enough to unfold
the wings of my affection:
I will fly in the bright air
and let the exultant
bitterness of life whisper
in my veins.
I will tell all the stories
scratched in glyphs
on tongue and memory.
I will not cower before death.
Instead, I will
pour out ecstasy
as a wine offering.
Let it stream,
the garnet flow arcing
from my cup,
puddling in the dust
at my feet,
and let the gods
hear me.

Blood Cries

Will Reger

Sometimes you speak
and I hear
the words between us,

but below your voice
a far motion of sound erupts:
a new language
swells into storm,

a watery thunder—
unspoken anger of blood
heaving; a sea

aching for the moon,
raging
in its vast bed,
to tear free

and rise unshackled
into the abundance
of nothingness;

a language that floats
like mathematics above
and within everything,
still unknown to us.

Its first words
drift ashore within me
tasting metal-raw
and dangerous.

Haiku for the Cat

Will Reger

The fever is on me now.
Since morning I can do nothing
but crack pistachios between
my thumbs and listen
to the woody tinkle of their shells
hitting the floor.
I mutter haiku at the cat
who bats them as they fall.

As antidote, someone sent me
a new book of poems today.
Carefully, I unlimber its spine
the way my father taught.
A few pages, front and back,
press them gently flat and open
not unlike a trembling groom
opens the darkness of his new world.

I ravish the book,
peeling each poem from its page
like a slice of mandarin orange.
I breathe the delicate scent,
take each one into my mouth and
taste its bitter but nourishing skin.
Then, with a violent push I am in—
oh tang of understanding—

And give myself over to this rushing
awareness: something greater is ahead,
something beyond, out of my reach,
something I want more than anything
I have or am or ever will have or be.
This fit of longing and discontent
comes when I am most fulfilled,
most—dare I use the word?—*happy*.

I need to clear my palate, refresh
my head, so I put down the book
and crack more pistachios.
Make up more haiku.

Oh and here comes
the cat.

Crow Games

Will Reger

How high fly the crows?
Thirty stories up I've seen them
Swimming in currents of air,
As confident as children in puddles.

Black flecks of night that twirl
Upon a trampoline sun,
They piggy-back the wind;
Play chicken with the parking lot;
Shadow puppet among
The mirrored high rises,
Dancing and diving with neither
Fear, nor science to ruin
The magic they conjure
With their games of tag:

Red rover, red rover,
Send Corvus right over!
Olly! Olly! All crows free!
Kiss the clouds and make them cry,
Then stick a talon in your eye!

Those are the games I recognize,
The games I played when I was a child,
When I soared like a bird
Through anonymous woods
Tucked somewhere between
My nowhere and elsewhere—
Anywhere the crow flies.

Not Far Off Trail, Late Summer

Dixie Partridge

Where deep water widens and silks past
the river island, you move through tall grasses
downhill riverside, crouch through overhang
and find yourself beneath a great
low catalpa, broad leaves

like manna being offered—palms of hands
raised: bright sky in small patches,
slender fractals without glare,
trunk almost horizontal, close over water
where the river levels out, lake-like,
surface movement a faint solace
against the heaviness of August.

The shade is softly fluid, a tented space,
and despite the world pressing down hard,
the translucent green strength of this arch
holds everything back.
Visible stones shallow off shore
give out luster from settling light.

A single bird cry: lo - iy - iy - iy
then silence,
and a sense you've come far.
The coved stillness here
is a cradle; small lappings back and forth
move without strain
against a pebbled shore.

Evenings in October

Dixie Partridge

It's the Schubert piece that does it . . .
tonight you are moved into the dark to come
where white roots are suddenly remembered,
growing beautifully out of soil walls of a cellar
gone half a century . . . white roots

like vague regrets, that perhaps in the end
hold you here . . . not exactly discontent.
Yet with the *Serenade* come undertones

of all the times you should have stayed still,
should have listened, or waited, or looked,

not kept acting and moving as though
you always had somewhere else to be.

Longing—one thing grown stronger
as you grow older—lingers without object . . .
like what's glacial but hardly perceived
at the far edge of night vision.

Beside framed faces of children in dusky light,
something of Schubert and Brahams
remains in the room—the piano near windows
unplayed until they visit, recital recordings,
tapes and CDs filed in drawers as protection
against loss of impromptu, ordinary joys.

Lamps off, you watch a pale rising
in the ink-blueing sky, see again how we used to gather

on large boulders still warm in the cooling dark
as the lake went violet-silver those summer nights.

The drifting moon seems thin and translucent—
old parchment about to tear; words, too,
casualties of the throat aching and closing
with no animate cause.

You breathe a long breath, try to attend
the exquisite themes of Schubert, instantly recalling
how some beauty widens so close to pain

one might try to avoid it,

how once as a child in the moonlit dark
you chose a route more closed and sinister
through wind-stirred pines, passing by the open luster
of fields
to walk the long way home.

Shade

Dixie Partridge

Only the north slopes grew pines
above the rocky hillside farm,
and we sought shelter there in our climbings.

Here, in our plantings under suns
of this desert plateau, trees
came before grass, before garden.
Away from town on the treeless flats,
the sheet of light spreads out and out
in changing tints where scant clouds pass on.

* * *

The image that came to me strongest
in meeting my father's death
was of his black and white cattle bunched
under the dark shadow of cottonwood
along a creekbed—the cattle
long gone, the creekbed, even.

* * *

Today, in the heaviness of this July heat,
word came of a friend's diagnosis
with its sudden re-orderings
of time: the turning photos of wall calendars
shockingly vivid, swift
yet ephemeral . . . perhaps six months . . .
perhaps a year.

A builder, he tells me
he's not afraid of dying, but of leaving
things half finished, his full shop and garage
too heavy a weight to bequeath.
Growing weaker, he works tirelessly—
sons alongside—clearing out
and giving away.

* * *

We struggle always to muster
what is necessary . . .
at times to our surprise, the subconscious
will map a shortcut way.

Tonight in the cooling dusk I'll walk along the wide
Columbia, flush with the great plateau—
home . . . and far from home.
The river, steep in undertow, will look
subdued, shaded, but like polished steel
in its surface drift and ripple.

The Kirtland Temple as a Shared Space: A Conversation with David J. Howlett

Hugo Olaiz

This interview was conducted on July 4, 2013, in Community of Christ's Kirtland Temple Historic Site Visitor and Spiritual Formation Center, located next to the temple.

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Of all the Mormon historical sites that ended up in the hands of the RLDS Church (today known as the Community of Christ), none is more significant for the LDS Church than the Kirtland Temple. Despite its contrast, both in form and function, with all other LDS temples, the Kirtland Temple is still claimed by the LDS Church as the first temple of this dispensation and the setting of glorious visitations that form a crucial part of Mormon history, ritual, and doctrine. Although the building is not owned by the LDS Church,

over 90 percent of visitors are LDS. This means that members of the Community of Christ, acting as hosts and guides, find themselves sharing this space with visitors who may interpret it differently than they do. LDS visitors are sometimes baffled that their church doesn't own this sacred site, and some are confused by the differences between current LDS temples and their Kirtland precursor, which doesn't even have a baptismal font.

How is it that the RLDS Church ended up owning the Kirtland Temple?

The ownership goes back to a broken chain of title in the 1830s. Over the course of the 1840s and 1850s, many different Latter Day Saint denominations occupied the Kirtland Temple. By 1862, the Kirtland Temple was auctioned off to settle outstanding debts of the early Church in the area, and it was bought by a man named Russell Huntley for $150. Huntley put a new roof on the temple, he painted it, re-stuccoed it, and re-plastered it. If he hadn't done that, the temple would have fallen into ruin. By 1874, Huntley had associated himself with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and he sold the temple to Joseph Smith III for $150—the same price that he had paid in 1862.

Because of the broken chain of title, Joseph Smith III was advised to simply wait until 1883, when Ohio law would grant legal possession after having used a property for twenty years. Joseph Smith III, however, wanted to get the Reorganized Church recognized as the true successor of his father's church in a court of law. So in February 1880, the Reorganized Church filed a lawsuit in a small county court over the possession of the temple and named John Taylor as one of the defendants. Of course John Taylor was not going to show up—he was in hiding and never even heard about the case. The RLDS Church got the judge to say almost everything they wanted him to say—that the Reorganized Church was the true church because of its continuation of the original Mormon doctrines, etc. The judge's statement was published in *The Saints Herald*—except for the last two sentences, which actually threw out the case!

So for over 100 years RLDS historians in good faith thought of the 1880 lawsuit as the reason why the RLDS Church owned the Kirtland Temple. Then in the early 2000s, Kim Loving, president of the then Kirtland Stake of the Community of Christ, conducted

research for his master's thesis and discovered that the process had been more or less propaganda by Joseph Smith III, and that the lawsuit had been thrown out.[1]

So the real reason the Community of Christ today owns the Kirtland Temple is what is called "adverse possession": They were here for the longest period of time as the continual possessor of the temple, having a local congregation and meeting in the building.

I'm sure the LDS Church, and possibly other branches of the Latter Day Saint movement, would like to be seen not only as the legitimate successor of Joseph's church but also as the owner of the Kirtland Temple.

For nineteenth-century Community of Christ members, the Kirtland Temple legitimized them in their own eyes and, they hoped, in the eyes of other Americans. By the 1880s, there was a sign on the second floor of the temple which literally said, "We are not the Mormons." "We, 30,000 [members of the RLDS Church], are not associated with that Utah group whose doctrines are an abomination to us, working all manner of iniquity," and went on and on distancing the RLDS Church from Utah Mormons. Then by 1899, the RLDS painted an inscription on the front of the temple that said, "HOUSE OF THE LORD–BUILT BY THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS, 1834." They added: "REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS IN SUCCESSION BY DECISION OF COURT, FEB. 1880." That same sign stayed on the Kirtland Temple until 1986.

Let's talk about what the early Reorganized Church did in the Kirtland Temple. What would they use the building for?

They used it a variety of purposes. By the 1880s, there was a congregation that met every Sunday and on Wednesdays for prayer meeting. This went on until 1959. There were also conferences. In 1883, for example, there was a general conference, during the period when the RLDS were holding general conferences once a year. Priesthood conferences were also held at different times, all the way to the present.

Starting at least in the 1910s, continuing into the 1950s, traditional RLDS "reunions" or "family camps" were held on the temple's property. This is a tradition that LDS don't have. The origins go back to the 1880s, out of a desire to have general conference twice instead of once a year. These reunions were regional confer-

ences that functioned similarly to a week-long revival: There was preaching, praying, and testifying all day long, with services in the evening. By the early twentieth century, it took on more of a recreational feel. Imagine the Kirtland Temple, by 1911, surrounded by people camping out in tents—that's the scene you would have seen in the summer. Worship services were held during the day in the temple, and the cooking was done in the yard. Eventually the reunions lost some of their rural feel when showers were built across the street, in a building that is today part of the local congregation.

I like the image of the temple surrounded by tents. Yet I assume the RLDS Church never saw Kirtland as the central place of the church?

It was seen as it was in the 1830s: a stake of Zion, but not as Zion itself or its capital. Kirtland was a center for the people of this particular region, but not the center to which people would be encouraged to gather. The RLDS followed the LDS doctrine of gathering into the 1970s, and for many families even into the 1980s. The RLDS were encouraged to gather in Independence, Missouri, because that was the place for the New Jerusalem.

That meant moving your family to Independence?

For twentieth-century RLDS, it meant exactly that. For nineteenth-century RLDS, it may have meant moving to Lamoni, Iowa, which was seen as "on the edge of Zion" because it's near the border between Iowa and Missouri. Then in the 1880s, RLDS started slowly moving back into Independence itself. The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) had been the first group to gather back to Zion, but they were so small that they did not make a major impact. The RLDS were the first ones to make a major impact in terms of numbers. By the early twentieth century, they were by far the largest church in Independence, and that continued all the way into the 1980s.

Who were some of the early Utah visitors who toured the Kirtland Temple?

One of the most famous Mormon visits in the early twentieth century was a group of LDS leaders who came through in December 1905. They had been to Sharon, Vermont, to dedicate a granite obelisk to Joseph Smith Jr. on the centennial of his birthday, and on the way back they stopped in Kirtland and took a tour of the temple.[2] And since they kept journals, there are at least four or five

accounts that I've read of what they experienced on their tour.

The visitors showed different levels of politeness as they described what happened on that visit. I think they had a good time, but there was definitely tension. They visited the unheated temple on December 27, and Edith A. Smith said that it was evident there were two types of coldness in the building: "One the result of the temperature and the other a lack of [God's] Spirit."[3] There was already tension when Edith walked in, and I think she was looking in part to be offended. At the same time, they felt that the RLDS guide, who was an RLDS apostle, was a jovial individual, and they seemed to get along fine with him. They tried to get pictures in the temple with their Kodak Brownies, and their guide asked them to desist. But "before Brother B had been discovered," Edith writes, "the Kodak had already got its work." So even then there was tension about the control of that space and what happened inside the temple as the RLDS tour guides were taking you through.

The LDS guests who went through in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had the notion that this temple was used much as they understood their temples. So as they listened to the RLDS guide explain the use of the temple in the 1830s, they thought he had no idea what he was talking about. "To hear their [RLDS] explanations," wrote Anthon H. Lund in his journal, "it was easily understood that they had no conception of the real uses of a Temple."[4] Actually, what LDS visitors didn't understand was the evolution of the temple space. So there was that misunderstanding as they were going through the tour. They were polite about it, but there was definitely this sense of ecclesiastical rivalry between the two groups. That had happened throughout the nineteenth century as well.

And as the twentieth century progressed, more and more LDS guests would visit the temple—not just leaders. By the 1930s, there were groups of average LDS people coming to the Kirtland Temple in big tours. And that really increased after World War II, when the number of people coming on bus tours and with their families on family vacations just exploded.

It seems to me that generations of Mormons have visited the Kirtland Temple wondering, "Where the heck is the baptismal font?"

I think any person who has guided tours through the Kirtland Temple has been asked that at a certain point. LDS temples have

baptismal fonts to perform proxy baptisms for the dead, and this is something which was done in Nauvoo in the 1840s, i.e., after the Kirtland period. In the 1830s, this was not yet part of their theology.

An increasing number of guests, though, are informed enough to realize that didn't happen here. In part they know that because since the 1980s the LDS Church canonized a vision that Joseph Smith had in the temple of his brother Alvin, who died in the 1820s (D&C 137). In the vision, Joseph sees Alvin in resurrected glory in the celestial kingdom and wonders how this could be, given the fact that his brother hadn't been baptized. Joseph is told that those who would have received the gospel, had they been given a chance to hear it, will be heirs of the celestial kingdom.

So Joseph Smith is assured that you don't need baptism, which kind of undercuts the whole reason for this ordinance of the baptism for the dead. But it is re-interpreted, of course, in contemporary LDS belief, as meaning that Joseph Smith was coming to understand that there would be a future time in which these ordinances could be administered. So Mormons have this idea that Joseph had this experience early on as an intimation of something that would come later. To that extent, they may be aware that there were not baptisms for the dead in the 1830s in the Kirtland Temple.

In terms of contemporary LDS temple rituals, my understanding is that there was a hint of starting washings and anointings in the Kirtland Temple.

That is correct. Washings and anointings are part of LDS temple rituals today, and there is a hint of that in what these early Saints were doing in Kirtland. They didn't anoint different parts of the body and say prayers or blessings over them—that wasn't happening in the same way as in LDS temples today, as a liturgical or set form. The Kirtland washings and anointing were less structured. Here they were washing feet, and they were washing their bodies with whiskey mixed with cinnamon, to give some aromatic scent to it, and the feel of the whiskey evaporating from the body produced a bodily sensation, too. The Holy Spirit was in that way felt, experienced, and ritually mimicked. Mormons felt they were re-living the ancient order of things, so they were trying to re-create priestly anointings described in the book of Exodus.

Even before the temple was finished, they performed these washings and anointings in the print shop, which was close to the temple.

And when the temple was completed, the washings and anointings became part of the Kirtland endowment ceremony, which was not a secret ceremony. There were no parts of that ceremony which anyone took a covenant not to reveal, and they didn't regard these rites as something they couldn't talk about. They certainly talked and even sang about them! In the hymn "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning," one of the verses says,

> We'll wash, and be wash'd, and with oil be anointed,
> Withal not omitting the washing of feet.
> For he that receiveth his penny appointed
> Must surely be clean at the harvest of wheat.[5]

What was the Kirtland endowment?

In the broadest sense, it seems to me that the Kirtland endowment was a recapitulation or reenactment of the Passion narrative and Pentecost.[6] So during the ceremony you had the washing of feet, as Jesus did with his disciples, and you had communion, which was a reenactment of the Last Supper.

This ceremony, by the way, was for priesthood holders, and it happened between the Sunday dedication and the second dedication that happened the following Thursday, so probably March 29–30, 1836. Leaders went through it first, and then all the priesthood holders who were in Kirtland went through it. It consisted of a kind of mass revival meeting where they prayed and prophesied. During the day they performed the rituals of washing of feet, anointing with oil, and laying on of hands to bless people, to "seal" them, as they used to say. The older notion of sealing was the salvation of the assured, but now there's this assurance that you have this extra gift of power from the Holy Spirit.

For the Kirtland Saints, this endowment was what other Protestants would have called a second work of grace—something beyond baptism, what Methodists would have called sanctification. The Saints were looking for something similar. They felt that as priesthood, as ministers, they needed more of the Holy Spirit to go out to preach with power and authority, evangelize the entire world, and redeem the kingdom of God on earth into these gathered communities that they would create with just relationships, and bring to pass

the wrapping up of the world before the Second Coming, which they whole-heartedly believed would happen in their lifetimes.

Tell me more about what happened during the Kirtland endowment.

The ceremony mimicked the high point of Christian redemption. It even included the Methodist-like practice of a "watch night" or vigil: they stayed up all night on the third floor of the Kirtland Temple. Staying awake all night in prayer and resisting sleep is, in a sense, a re-enactment of Gethsemane. They had been up already twenty-four hours when the gathering ended at four or five in the morning. And as they were in prayer, they spoke in tongues and felt that they had this Pentecostal power. They did the Hosanna Shout, which now LDS do at the dedication of all their temples. The early Saints performed it frequently in the Kirtland Temple, both around the dedication and in the Kirtland endowment. "Sealing up a covenant with Hosanna and Amen," they would say.

These covenants were not the set promises that would develop later in Nauvoo, but were more informal. For instance, one of the darker things that they promised was to avenge themselves on their enemies in Jackson County if anyone should come against them again. This is biblical vengeance, Psalms-like vengeance; this, too, was part of the Kirtland endowment. I'm not sure if this carried over as they repeated the endowment subsequently, but it was certainly part of the 1836 ceremony.

The chorus of "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning" was an approximation of the Hosanna Shout: "Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb." And that's an intimation of Jesus coming into Jerusalem, riding in, and the people greeted him with, "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."[7]

More radical Methodists shouted Hosanna when the Holy Spirit fell upon them. A radical Methodist thought that, any time the Spirit was present, a person couldn't be quiet and had to shout Hosanna. So this was part of the worship experience that many of the Kirtland Saints were already familiar with, since maybe half of them had been Methodists at one point in their life. And this in a way is ritualized in the new Kirtland Temple.

In our day, when someone gets sick, we anoint them with oil and pray for them. In the Community of Christ we call this an administration, and in the LDS Church you may call it a blessing. And

that began to occur with much more frequency after the Kirtland endowment, which included so much washing and anointing. So a whole sacrament in the Community of Christ, or an ordinance in the LDS Church, was born out of this experience. After the Kirtland endowment, elders everywhere were anointing the sick with oil and praying. So it became routinized, a regular part of their worship life.

A lot came out of the Kirtland endowment in terms of ritual. Some parts evolved in some inchoate form into the first part of the LDS endowment as administered in Nauvoo, but other parts were never performed again in the same exact way.

Was the Kirtland endowment performed only once?

At first they intended to do it once. But then they realized that not everyone was there, so they repeated the endowment several times in 1836. And by 1837 they realized that they had new people who weren't around in 1836, or who weren't yet part of the Church, so they went through this endowment again. Wilford Woodruff, who was at that time ordained to be a Seventy, wrote in his journal that the Kirtland endowment was to be practiced every April 6 until the Second Coming of Jesus.[8] So they anticipated doing this over and over again, almost like an annual revival meeting.

Christopher Jones has done some great work in comparing the Kirtland endowment to what Methodist ministers experienced in revival meetings.[9] Methodist ministers would often go to revival meetings to be themselves renewed, and in some ways the Kirtland endowment was a rough equivalent to that: priesthood holders could come to be renewed again through this ceremony. So what the early Saints did was to take the Methodist revival meeting and add a heavy ritual emphasis, in this way making it their own.

Let's move forward to the history of Kirtland since the 1950s. What are some of the developments worth mentioning?

As the number of LDS traveling to historic sites increased, the LDS Church started thinking about buying sites in Ohio. They first purchased the John Johnson Farm, which is about thirty miles from Kirtland. With that purchase, they were slowly re-establishing their historical presence. Then in the 1960s a private LDS investor, Wilford Wood, bought the Newel K. Whitney store, located about a

quarter of a mile north from the temple. Wood kept that property in trust for the LDS Church until a certain point in time when they wanted to interpret Kirtland as a historic site.

The RLDS Church also moved toward expanding its interpretative center in Kirtland. In the late 1960s, the RLDS Church built its first visitors center. It was tiny, but it meant that they could show a film and display some artifacts. They were trying to mimic what you see across America. Visitors centers were growing everywhere. With the expansion of the interstate system, many middle-class families who owned automobiles were going on vacations. All of these factors set Kirtland as a destination not only for Latter Day Saints, but also for people interested in Ohio history.

So people continued to flock to Kirtland. By the 1970s LDS members had established a presence in Cleveland, with probably several thousands in the Greater Cleveland metropolitan area, and they decided that they wanted an LDS visitors center in Kirtland. That started a process that eventually resulted in Historic Kirtland, an LDS campus around the Newel K. Whitney Store, which was dedicated in 2003.

It was a fascinating case: The impetus started with local members clamoring for a visitors center, rather than top-down instructions from the hierarchy. The hierarchy had to agree, of course, but it was the local people who convinced the hierarchy that the Church needed a presence in Kirtland.

What is the "Kirtland Curse"?

It's a complicated story. By the 1970s, key LDS local leaders began believing that Kirtland had been cursed in the 1840s by the Lord. This group included Karl Anderson, a well-known local LDS leader who became stake president. They based this belief on statements by Joseph and Hyrum Smith. One of the statements by Joseph Smith is in the current LDS Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 124:82–83). It was canonized by the LDS Church in 1876, so it's not part of the Community of Christ's Doctrine and Covenants. Verse 83 declares that the Lord has "a scourge prepared for the inhabitants" of Kirtland.

Hyrum Smith's statement is an 1841 letter that he wrote to the Saints who were living in Kirtland. British converts stopping in Kirtland were being persuaded by local Saints that Kirtland was a great

place to live. So they were settling there, instead of going to Nauvoo. The problem was that the Church at the time had invested an enormous amount of money in land in Nauvoo, and if they were not going to default on their loans, they needed Church members to buy that land. So Hyrum Smith issued a "thus saith the Lord" statement in which he commanded all the Saints living in Kirtland to go to Nauvoo, adding that their Kirtland properties would "be scourged with a sore scourge" and that many days would pass before they could possess them again in peace.[10]

The Saints in Kirtland wrote back and said to Hyrum, "Actually, we've organized ourselves quite well here. We're taking care of the poor. We'd like to continue on here in Kirtland." Hyrum wrote back and said "O.K., you can stay, but don't expect Kirtland to rise on the ruins of Nauvoo."[11] So the matter was at the time more or less settled. But if you don't have the rest of the story, if all you have is the Hyrum Smith letter, and if you think that it was literally a revelation from God, instead of being part of this drama of trying to convince the Saints to move to Nauvoo, then you're going to look back and read that letter and say, "Kirtland is cursed!"

In 1974 Karl Anderson read these and other Mormon writings and became convinced that Kirtland was cursed. I think for local LDS members this worked as an explanation as to why the LDS Church didn't own the Kirtland Temple, i.e., because the Lord cursed it in the 1840s. And they thought, "If the temple is cursed, but we will possess it in the future, maybe then we are part of redeeming Kirtland." So suddenly these Mormons felt they were an important part of God's redemptive action in the world.

What did Karl Anderson and other Mormons do to "redeem Kirtland"?

Karl Anderson came up with a three-fold solution for how to redeem Kirtland from the curse. First, they would bring missionaries so that the gospel would be preached in Kirtland for the first time since the 1840s (which of course was an insult for the RLDS because they had been there continually). Second, they decided that they needed to establish a ward and a stake in Kirtland. Third, they concluded that they needed to establish a visitors center. Karl believed that this plan would be an integral part of lifting the curse on Kirtland—helping God reclaim the place and, if you read between the lines, eventually redeem and get back the Kirtland Temple for

the LDS Church, with everything in its own order and in its own due time.

This story of the curse was not widely known by LDS members, but Karl began talking a lot about it. In 1976, Donald Brewer, president of the LDS Cleveland Ohio Mission, arrived here, heard Karl talk, and got really worried. He read and prayed about it, and he was convinced! "There's a curse, there's a scourge here in Kirtland, and we need to lift it." So he was totally on board, and Karl and President Brewer worked together to try to lift the curse. They got missionaries to walk around Kirtland, evangelizing again. And when they got an RLDS family to convert, they were ecstatic and believed that the curse was indeed lifting!

When LDS General Authorities were in the area, Karl would take them to Kirtland on tours, show them around, and if they hadn't known about the scourge before coming to Kirtland, they certainly knew by the time they left. By 1979, Karl and other local LDS members had a local architect draw plans for a visitors center, and they printed a brochure about it that looked very professional. But it got lost in the bureaucracy of Salt Lake and never got the attention of the apostles.

Did they eventually get the attention of Salt Lake leaders?

Because of his unique access to General Authorities, Karl eventually managed to get the proposal on the desk of the right apostle, who then brought it to the Quorum of the Twelve. Some of the apostles were opposed. "We've already put so much money into Historic Nauvoo," they complained. "We should be spending more money on the missionary program—not historic sites and buildings."[12] But Ezra Taft Benson, who was at that time president of the Quorum of the Twelve, had become a great advocate for the project and broke the deadlock. "We will not have another Nauvoo," he said, "but we will have a Kirtland, and it will be as it should be." And that's how they authorized the construction of the visitors center.

By October 1979, the last part of Karl's plan to lift the curse was in place: they broke ground in Kirtland for a new LDS chapel that would become a stake center. Ezra Taft Benson attended the ceremony. "The curse that the Lord placed on Kirtland," he told the congregation during his speech, "is being lifted today." And during his prayer, he formally lifted the scourge that was on Kirt-

land. Latter-day Saints saw this as a redemptive process of remaking Kirtland.

By 1984, the Whitney Store was restored and re-dedicated, becoming a more prominent historic site for the LDS Church. Ezra Taft Benson and Gordon B. Hinckley attended the dedication, and they talked about the spiritual visions and dreams that happened there: John Murdock seeing Jesus in the Whitney Store, and Joseph Smith organizing the School of the Prophets.[13] Thus Church leaders were starting to assure LDS that they may not have the temple, but they did have a place where Jesus appeared in Kirtland.

I think this was part of the greater narrative in which people believed that the curse was being lifted. It wasn't just Karl Anderson who believed that this was happening—it was widespread at that time among Cleveland LDS members who had heard Karl talk about this and now felt part of God's redemptive plan in Kirtland. The RLDS were vaguely aware that LDS held this belief, and yes—the notion that their own activities were part of a curse was mildly insulting to them. It implied that they were on the wrong side of God! But it seems to me that this was a way for LDS to attempt to explain why they were not in control of the temple.

And then as time went on, I believe Karl himself began thinking, "Maybe also the RLDS have been part of lifting the scourge on this place." So he eventually included them as part of this process by which God was redeeming Kirtland and making it into a holy place again, thus creating a more generous narrative of curse and redemption.

Could another factor have been the process by which the RLDS Church has become less obsessed with its past?

I think that happened only in the 1990s. Through the 1980s, the RLDS focused heavily on its past. And then in the 2000s there was a reinvigorated emphasis on Church history in Community of Christ. As much as LDS would like to think that Community of Christ no longer values Church history (and at least some LDS believe that), if you look on the ground, people are still interested in the history of their church, and there was even a greater emphasis in the 2000s. This visitors center in Kirtland, where we're having this interview at, is one of the results of that—it was built in 2007 after a long process of raising money. Community of Christ is small, it's not even

as large or financially powerful as it was in the 1970s, so I think this visitors center is a statement that they still value the heritage—in a different way. They can't value it in the same way—no one ever does!

So there's a renewed emphasis on history in Community of Christ. If Nauvoo represents a problematic, uncomfortable time period for Community of Christ—because of issues such as militarism, theocracy, and plural marriage—Kirtland, even with the conflicts that happened here, with the breakup of the bank and arguments around that,[14] is seen much more positively. People can still rally around and think of the dedication of the first worship building, the first temple in Community of Christ tradition, and what it means to them, and almost universally they have a positive image of Kirtland. And that's true whether you're talking about Saints in Independence, Missouri, or Saints in Manihi, French Polynesia. They universally think of the Kirtland Temple as a sacred place.

In 1994, the Community of Christ dedicated a temple in Independence. How does that edifice relate to the historic Kirtland Temple?

The modern temple in Independence was built on a portion of the land dedicated by Joseph Smith Jr. in Missouri in the 1830s for a temple site. When they drew up the plat for the City of Zion in 1833, they placed twenty-four temples in that plat—they drew up the plans right here, in Kirtland, probably only a few yards away from where we're having this interview. And the Independence Temple is on the footprint of at least three of those planned temples, so it's literally on land that was intended for temples in the 1830s, for that redeemed city of New Jerusalem.

The Independence Temple functions in some ways like its Kirtland ancestor. For instance, the Kirtland Temple had Church administrative space—an office for the Church president. The Independence Temple has the offices for the president and the apostles who live in that area. (Some apostles now live in their fields, which could be as far away as Honduras, French Polynesia, or Zambia.) The Independence Temple, like the Kirtland Temple, also has a space for education: the Community of Christ Graduate Seminary, which amounts to a Masters of Arts and Religion, where people gather for classes. And we also have the Peace Colloquy, which happens every October in Independence.

The Independence Temple is also a place of worship. The Dai-

ly Prayer for Peace happens in the Independence Temple. (By the way, we also do the Daily Prayer for Peace in Kirtland, but we do it in this visitors center, instead of the temple, in part because we light candles and we don't want to create a fire hazard in the historic temple.) So doing the Daily Prayer for Peace in the Independence Temple is a continuation of the notion that the temple is a special worship space. Also from the Independence Temple, Steve Veazey, Community of Christ prophet, gives an annual address to the Church that is then broadcast via the web.

So I mentioned three areas of correspondence between the Kirtland and the Independence temples: administration, education, and worship. And even though we don't do a Kirtland-style endowment, all the sacraments of the Church, except for marriage, can be performed in the Independence Temple. People may go there for their evangelist blessing, which is the equivalent of an LDS patriarchal blessing, or an administration (health blessing), or communion, which in the Community of Christ consists of bread and "wine" (grape juice).

And the Kirtland Temple here is also used today much as it was in the 1830s, minus the Kirtland endowment. In the 1830s the temple was a space for public worship, and they also had tours of the temple—not only before it was dedicated but also after; at that point we did not yet have the notion that only people who have made certain covenants should be allowed in. In the 1830s they charged 25 cents, which was actually pretty expensive for just a tour! And you saw everything in the temple, they took you floor by floor. And on the third floor, which is the top floor, they had the Egyptian mummies associated with the Book of Abraham. By 1837, tourists were going through the Kirtland Temple, and some published their accounts.

Let's move to the recent past. What was the process by which Community of Christ started to share the Kirtland Temple with the other branches of the Restoration?

That process happened in the 1990s. In the era before that, the Kirtland Temple was basically a worship space for the RLDS congregation. In 1959 the congregation moved across the street to their present space, but even at that era the temple continued to be used at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter for community

services in which the entire Kirtland community came together in ecumenical worship. Through the 1940s, the temple was the center and the symbol of the community, and in the 1940s most of that community was RLDS—though there were also Catholics, Congregationalists, and other faiths. So at least since the 1940s, all those groups traditionally have come together for community services in the Kirtland Temple.

Then in the 1990s, the building was opened up for the LDS also to have services there. That was in a sense a community outreach by the Community of Christ. At first they allowed it on a limited basis, but now they allow it a lot more frequently. In the course of a year, there might be fifty services in the Kirtland Temple; a couple dozen will be sponsored by the Community of Christ, but another couple dozen are going to be LDS.

We always have staff to accompany LDS groups, and LDS would probably use it more if we could schedule more staff to be there. LDS can have a sacrament meeting there, but we ask the groups not to perform any sacrament or ordinance other than the Lord's Supper. Testimony meetings are very popular—especially with LDS youth groups. The temple is scheduled for both local LDS groups and cross-country pilgrimages that come through Kirtland by bus all the time, especially in the summer.

What percentage of the visitors you receive are LDS?

A realistic estimate is that 90–95 percent of our visitors are LDS. The official number is 50 percent, but that's calculated only from those who fill out a comment card and indicate their religious affiliation. In any given year we have approximately 25,000 people going on a tour of the temple, although the year Historic Kirtland (the LDS site) opened, we had close to 40,000. Even in the 1920s, a significant percentage of visitors, though less than half, were LDS. In the 1970s, a larger percentage of visitors were Community of Christ, because there were more RLDS in this area and there was an extensive program of weekend retreats which every year would bring as many as thirteen RLDS congregations to Kirtland. That ended in the mid-1970s, when the local congregation who was sponsoring these visits got burned out on the program.

After having been through several tours of the Kirtland Temple, my perception is that LDS visitors tend to be very gracious

guests, but on occasion they cannot help it and they have to ask a question that attacks the Community of Christ.

Most people going to historic sites across the country know relatively little about them when they step in the door. At the Kirtland Temple, we generally have the opposite. LDS visitors might not know the views of current historians, but they know stories about the temple, and it's already part of a narrative that they have of their spiritual past and their spiritual ancestors. This makes it a different experience—this is a pilgrimage site for many people. That generates a sense of reverence and sometimes discomfort—especially around the fact that this is a pilgrimage site that they, the LDS, don't own.

Add the fact that this is not exactly like the tour they would experience at an LDS site. Some LDS frankly don't like LDS historic site tours; some love them. I think the majority love them and a growing minority don't like them. The majority of LDS tourists who come have been through an LDS tour where someone is testifying along the lines of "I know this happened, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen." LDS visitors will notice that this doesn't happen in our tours. So that already creates a sense of tension. Many of them may feel that it's more like a historical tour, so they may not get exactly the religious experience they were looking for.

And at times there's adversarial tension too, along the lines of, "Let's see if we can trip up the guide." A few visitors may think, "These Community of Christ guides don't really know Church history—let's see if we can make them look silly." That occasionally happens. But the vast majority are very gracious and very kind. And even if they have questions, sometimes they don't even ask them: they hold back or they ask the LDS tour director—and who knows what the tour director answers! I think it's a way of being polite and saying, "OK, we have our differences, and I won't try to make my discomfort public and make the guides uncomfortable." So I think there's a good deal of graciousness that happens, too, in these interactions.

I was once touring the temple with an LDS family, and they were all very polite–except for the Grandpa! As soon as we sat in the lower court, he asked the guide in an accusatory tone, "Why is it that you guys no longer tell the story of Jesus Christ appearing to Joseph Smith in the temple?"

Some guests will come out and say that, but the vast majority

won't. When I was a regular temple guide, I sometimes guided junior high groups. As you know, junior high kids sometimes believe they know everything! And some of these kids would treat me harshly. Maybe that had to do with the way their leaders prepared them, too. The entire time they were asking me questions like, "Why don't you believe in the First Article of Faith?" Apparently the intent was to rebuke me for not believing that God the Father has a physical body, which of course is not what the First Article of Faith says.

And these kids went through all the hot-button social issues and made me defend the Community of Christ on women, and LGBT issues, and peppered me with questions. So I finally said, "You know—I'm happy to answer these questions, but I would like to talk about the temple, too. So let's go downstairs and talk about the 1836 dedication." And things ended a lot better on that tour. So on occasion we have tours where people want to argue. And I understand that, because when I was a teenager, I was a very conservative RLDS member raised in a very conservative RLDS home, and I would go with my youth group friends down to the LDS Visitors Center in Independence to argue! So I can be empathetic when people sometimes come at me—I can imagine what I was like, too, at a certain point in my life.

You describe the Kirtland Temple not only as a place of contestation, but also cooperation.

That's right. Besides the services where LDS worship on their own, there are cooperative services through the year. Since the 1980s, the LDS staff of Historic Kirtland will help out with the Christmas and Easter services.

In a few days, we'll have the Emma Smith Hymn Festival that began in 2004, on the 200-year anniversary of Emma's birth, which is July 10. The hymn festival has a little script, and some parts are read by sister missionaries from Historic Kirtland. These missionaries are also part of the choir that sings "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning" and "Redeemer of Israel." The congregation, which is mostly LDS and local Community of Christ folks, is invited to join in singing these hymns. So it's another example of those ecumenical traditions of cooperation that have grown up at the Kirtland Temple.

Certainly the relationship with the LDS has grown less adversar-

ial over time, and the points of contention have changed over time, too. I think that shift reflects the changes in American denominations. Some sociologists and religious studies scholars talk about religious realignment, not just over denominational differences, but differences along a liberal/conservative social divide. And since the 1980s, the Community of Christ has been squarely on the progressive side, and the LDS Church has been on the conservative side, so that produces a new set of tensions. I do not think many Community of Christ members today care too much about arguing over nineteenth-century issues such as presidential succession, but they would really care about social issues. This provides a new area of contestation on temple tours—although not as frequently as in the mid-2000s.

So there's still a sense of construction of otherness, not only by LDS visitors but also on the part of the Community of Christ guides giving the tour. If LDS missionaries go on missions and come back converted, a Community of Christ guide who gives tours every day in the Kirtland Temple comes back from that experience thinking that the Community of Christ is awesome, and probably thinking they never want to be LDS!

After a while, a sense of difference develops in these guides. And I'm sure that happens as well to some LDS who go through the temple tour. They may end up thinking, "No doubt the Community of Christ has lost the authority and gone off on this apostate road," etc. Other LDS visitors come out thinking, "These guys are our friends." So it's a way for them to make kinship with the group, or extend a more limited notion of ecumenical encounter, even if brief. And I think, for a lot of LDS, the Kirtland Temple tour experience is a combination of both—a way of making friendship while at the same time establishing difference.

Notes

1. Kim L. Loving, "Ownership of the Kirtland Temple: Legends, Lies, and Misunderstandings," *Journal of Mormon History* 30, no. 2 (2004): 1–80.

2. See *Proceedings at the Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument* (Salt Lake City: 1906), 68–69; see also Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), chap. 5.

3. Edith Ann Smith, "Journal," December 27, 1905, MS 1317 FD.1,

LDS Church Archives.

4. Anthon H. Lund, *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921*, edited by John P. Hatch (Salt Lake: Signature, 2006), 328.

5. Fourth verse of 1835 LDS hymnbook. Most of the twentieth-century editions of this six-verse hymn, both in the LDS and RLDS traditions, present the hymn in shortened versions that skip this verse.

6. See Gregory A. Prince, *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 115–49 and David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 11–34.

7. Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:9, and John 12:13. See Jacob W. Olmstead, "From Pentecost to Administration: A Reappraisal of the History of the Hosanna Shout," *Mormon Historical Studies* 2 (Fall 2001): 7–37; Steven H. Heath, "The Sacred Shout," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19 (Fall 1986): 115–23.

8. Susan Staker, ed., *Waiting for World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1993), 13.

9. Christopher C. Jones, "'We Latter-Day Saints Are Methodists': The Influence of Methodism on Early Mormon Religiosity," MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 2009.

10. *Times and Seasons* 3 (November 1, 1841): 589.

11. Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals, Volume 2: December–April 1843* in THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011), 340.

12. The LDS Church had been investing heavily in Nauvoo since the 1960s by buying land, restoring historic properties, and building many new structures. See Julie Dockstader Heaps, "Nauvoo 'Beautiful' Once Again," *Church News,* June 29, 2002.

13. "Restored Whitney Store Dedicated in Kirtland," *Ensign* 14, no. 11 (November 1984): 110–11.

14. The 1837 failure of the Kirtland Bank, with its ensuing conflict and dissent, is widely considered the main reason why Joseph moved Church headquarters from Kirtland to Nauvoo.

Acute Distress, Intensive Care

Karen Rosenbaum

Barb's dying, Carma thinks, and she steadies herself against the chest of drawers as Dan, kneeling beside his sister's bed, strokes Barb's face. Barb's head seems to be rocking slightly on the pillow. Her eyes are closed, her mouth open.

"Sis?" Dan asks. "Barb, what's wrong?" He turns and speaks over his shoulder. "She's on fire. Come feel."

But instead, Carma leaves her cane in the hall and brings wet washcloths from the bathroom, ice cubes in a dishtowel from the kitchen downstairs. She steps unsteadily around Barb's awful dachshund Buddy, who whimpers and paces at the foot of the bed.

"I'll call 911," Carma says.

Barb's eyes open wide. For an instant she looks at them in terror, then shuts her eyes and smiles. "Danny," she sighs. "You've come."

Carma brings juice from the refrigerator, a straw from the cupboard. Dan holds Barb's head so she can take little sips. Carma reaches for the phone on the nightstand.

"Wait," Dan says. "Sis? Do you know what's wrong? Can we call your doctor?"

Barb dribbles a little yellow juice down her chin. "I don't want," she has to breathe between words, "you to call anyone." Her voice is barely audible. "Don't."

"How long have you been sick?" Dan asks. "Where do you hurt?"

"Buddy," she pants. "Carma, could you feed him?"

Next to the doggy door between the kitchen and the deck are two empty bowls, orange and blue. Carma puts water in one. While she looks through the cupboard for something to put into the other, she hears Buddy slurping. Barb is very, very sick, Carma thinks, or she would have fallen down the stairs to feed Buddy. She loves that dog more than almost anyone, certainly more than the neighbors

who, last year, circulated a petition about his barking and biting. Carma glances at the ashtray and the pack of cigarettes on the table. But Barb doesn't love him more than cigarettes. Buddy has asthma and wheezes all the time, and the vet has suggested that if Barb didn't smoke around him, maybe he wouldn't need all that medicine. There are two trays of prescription bottles next to the cigarettes, one for Buddy, one for Barb—hers probably for depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, maybe back pain—her usual complaints.

Dan is at the kitchen door. "I'll take care of the dog," he says. "She wants you to help her clean up."

"She needs a hospital," Carma whispers. "Call an ambulance."

Dan shakes his head. "That would just alarm her. She asked specifically that we not call an ambulance."

Carma sighs. "At least call Amy. Maybe she's talked to her mom. She probably knows her doctor at least. Here." She takes her phone from her purse. "Amy. Here."

"Amy lives more than an hour away."

"Call her. Please. And call Grace and tell her we aren't sure now when we'll see them."

Barb is breathing heavily, inhaling with a kind of gulp. It smells bad in here, Carma thinks, and she finds a small plastic tub under the bathroom sink and fills it with warm water. She sets it on a chair next to her sister-in-law's bed and brings in an armload of washcloths and towels.

"Carma," Barb says slowly, "I need a clean gown."

I know how to do this, Carma says to herself. When she could hardly move, the months after Grace's birth and then Sophie's and the surgeries and all those other times, the home nurse would do then what she will do now. She pushes up the sleeves of her pullover and takes a deep breath. She rolls Barb gently towards the center of the bed, pulls off the soiled gown, washes Barb's body and the bottom sheet too, best she can, towels her dry, works a big dry towel under her, and maneuvers arms and head into a fresh kimono she finds in the closet. On Barb's right rump is an astonishing tattoo of a vermillion-throated hummingbird. Who would have guessed?

"Carma," Barb says when she has finished. Her eyes are intent now. Her eyes seem to say, "You know what's going to happen, don't you?"

And Carma does know.

* * *

Carma and Dan had no warning. They drove the rental car straight to Barb's house from the Salt Lake airport, planning to take Dan's sister to lunch before setting off to Provo to see Grace and Ryan and darling Bradley and the new baby. Buddy greeted them with agitated howls when they rang the bell and finally pushed open the unlocked front door. There was no answer to their calls, and Dan had bolted up the stairs to the bedroom.

Two, no, three days ago they'd phoned her from California, set up the lunch date. Barb sounded fine then. Well, as fine as she had sounded in the past five years. Ever since the divorce, she'd been so deflated, as if all her energy were whistling out through a little leak somewhere. But she'd planned to drive down to Provo with Amy for the baby blessing on Sunday.

Barb needs more than a winter job, Dan often says, though he doesn't consider renting out skis at Alta a real job. Summers, she's on call for vacation replacement and sales weekends at a Salt Lake sporting goods store. That jerk she was married to did agree to a handsome enough settlement so she can work when she wants to, and the house, with its crumbling basement floors and unreliable air conditioner, is in her name.

"Left a message for Amy," Dan says when Carma returns to the kitchen. "And Grace says to let her know what's happening."

"Dan," she says. "Your sister is really sick. We have to get her to a hospital. You and I can't carry her out to the car. She can't sit in a waiting room. We have to call an ambulance."

"I don't want to," Dan says. "Not when she doesn't want it."

"We'll have to stay with her every minute," Carma urges. "We'll have to take care of her and we don't know how."

Dan squeezes his temples with his left hand. "Okay," he says at last. "But tell them no sirens."

Carma tells them no sirens, and the ambulance comes quietly, but two fire trucks spot and join the action, and the blare might resurrect the dead. Out the window, Carma can see the cul-de-sac crammed with vehicles, and several big uniformed men are suddenly at the door. She scoops up Buddy, oddly subdued, and shuts him in the laundry room. He immediately starts to yelp.

Barb looks betrayed, but a little relieved, too. The paramedics

have her propped up and are doing an oxygen thumb test and taking her temperature. "How old are you?" the one with a laptop asks.

"Forty-five," Barb says. Add three years, thinks Carma.

"Do you smoke?"

Barb has to catch her breath. "Used to," she says.

"How long ago did you stop?"

Barb shrugs. "A couple of weeks?" presses the paramedic.

Barb closes her eyes and nods.

* * *

In the curtained-off cubby at the ER, the only thing to sit on is the doctor's wheeled stool, so Carma pushes it close to the bed and takes hold of Barb's limp hand. Dan is in the hall, talking to Amy on the phone. Barb's bed has been raised to a half-sitting position, and she looks pretty in the clean kimono. She is connected to a black box and a transparent bag and oxygen. Every few seconds something beeps, and numbers change on the black box. A fan pulses somewhere.

"I'm keeping you," Barb's voice quavers, "from seeing the baby."

"Don't worry," Carma says. "We'll get there."

"I forgot," Barb pauses to breathe, "her name."

"Camilla. They call her Cammy."

Barb closes her eyes, exhales as if through mud. "Like Carma."

"Kind of."

Dan touches his sister's arm. "Amy is on her way," he says.

A doctor hustles in, stands at the foot of the bed. "You, my lady," he announces to Barb, "have full-blown pneumonia. We're finding you a room."

Barb makes a face. "What," she whispers, "about Buddy?"

"That magnet on the fridge," Dan says, "that's the kennel you used when you went on that cruise?"

"He liked it there," Barb murmurs.

"We'll take him after they have you settled."

"You," a weak cough, "don't have to stay."

"We'll stay until Amy comes." Dan squeezes Barb's shoulder.

Carma nods. Suddenly she feels very hungry. It has been a long time since breakfast. And a hymn is pounding in her head—one they used to sing in church. "Master, the Tempest Is Raging." She doesn't know if they still sing it. "Whether the wrath of the storm-

tossed sea," BUM bum bum, BUM bum bum, "demons or men or whatever it be . . ." a sort of bass chant underlining the beeping machines and the wheeled whooshes in the hallway and Dan's soft words to his sister.

* * *

Camilla is silky and pink and smells like talc. Grace places her into Carma's arms, and Carma kisses the reddish fuzz on her granddaughter's scalp. Bradley is opening the presents they brought him, board books and a quilted birdhouse filled with small stuffed birds. Pushed forward by his mother, he takes hold of Carma's knee. "Thank you, Gamma," he says. "Can I play with this?" He has appropriated Carma's flowered purple cane, which is taller than he is. He clearly prefers it to the birdhouse.

His other grandmother, who lives just a few miles away, is Nana, the number one grandma. It is she who has been spoiling Bradley and helping with laundry and filling up the fridge with food. Knowing of the arrival of the less robust grandmother today, the church ladies have brought over dinner, and Ryan has stuck it into the oven to reheat. Lasagna, by the smell of it. Carma and Dan are ravenous, having eaten nothing all day but a couple of breakfast bars Carma had stowed in her purse.

"So Aunt Barb has pneumonia." Grace moves Ryan's books and laptop to the couch and sets forks and knives on the table. She is wearing black capris and, Carma notices, has already lost most of her baby fat.

"I'm sure it's worse," says Ryan, "for someone who has smoked so long." He talks out of one side of his mouth; in the other he chomps on a baby carrot as if it were a cigar.

"If she lived in the Bay Area," Dan says, "she wouldn't still smoke. You should see the smokers on their break when it rains. They have to be so many yards from the doorways of buildings. They skulk around trying to find a place to keep dry."

Carma wiggles Cammy's tiny toes. "I can picture Barb smoking and skulking," she says.

"Barb only smokes to show Utahns that she isn't a Mormon anymore." Dan is on the floor now, teasing Bradley, who is still wound around Carma's cane. "Amy has been after her for years to stop."

Carma catches Grace's sidelong glance at Ryan. Carma, too,

isn't a Mormon anymore. But she's about as likely to start smoking as she is to take up glacier-scrambling.

"Sophie calls you often?" Carma makes it a question and an answer. She suddenly thinks—and my younger daughter isn't a Mormon anymore either. And maybe that's my doing.

"She calls Wednesday afternoons," Grace says. "She doesn't have classes then. I think she's a little lonely. But she's pretty absorbed in school. She has a small part in a play, I forget its name. And Manhattan, well, she says there's always more to do than there's time."

"It's *The Cherry Orchard*," Dan says. "She usually calls us Saturday mornings while she's doing her laundry. Or we call her. Let's call her now." He extracts the cane from Bradley's grasp and tousles his hair. "We can give her a first-hand account of her new niece." He winks at Bradley. "And, of course, her old nephew."

* * *

They are staying at a motel. Carma insisted. Everyone will sleep better. Otherwise Grace and Ryan would be on an air mattress in the living room, next to the baby's crib, and she and Dan would be in their bed, and everyone would be using one bathroom, and to take a shower, you'd have to take all the rubber toys out of the tub. Besides, she gets up a couple of times in the night, and on their last trip she stumbled and cried out and woke everyone, even Bradley in his tiny bedroom.

But Carma and Dan don't sleep well at the motel either. About five a.m., Amy telephones. "Mom's taken a turn for the worse," she says. "She's in ICU. Her fever spiked to 105. They have this bipap mask on her to give her more oxygen." Amy has spent the whole night there, catching naps on a couch in a small waiting room.

"We'll make it there in an hour and a half," says Dan, and they almost do.

Barb can't talk because of the plastic mask. She seems to be dozing, but she looks up when Dan presses her arm, the arm that isn't connected to the IVs. She seems somewhat lost, scared. Instead of the pretty kimono, she is wearing an ugly white-with-blue-diamonds hospital gown.

"Why don't you go back to your mom's?" Carma says to Amy. "Get some sleep. We'll be here." Amy nods. "And eat something," Carma adds.

"Would you like me to give you a blessing?" Dan asks Barb. She seems to bob her head. "There's probably someone who can help me," he whispers to Carma. "I saw a chaplain's office on the first floor, next to all that St. Whosits stuff. Even in an Episcopalian Hospital, there must be Mormons around. This is Utah, after all."

Carma takes his chair when he leaves it. She holds Barb's hand. "The baby looks like Sophie, I think," she says. "Sophie with reddish hair." Will Cammy be docile and tranquil like Grace? Or uninhibited, impatient like Sophie? Sophie's a doting aunt though, makes a big fuss over Bradley when they're all together. Carma smiles at Barb, whose gaze drifts around the room. Then Barb lifts her other hand, the one attached to the arm encumbered by tubes, raises her hand to her face. Her fingers are separated, and she moves her hand back and forth. She is smoking, Carma realizes, an imaginary cigarette.

Dan returns with a short, bearded man in Levis and a sweatshirt. "My wife Carma," he says, "and," motioning to the bed, "my sister Barbara. This is Ray. He's the chaplain. Mormon chaplain." Dan takes a small vial of oil from Ray and puts a drop on Barb's head. Barb looks a little alarmed, so Carma squeezes her hand harder and tries to look reassuring. The two men cover the oil with their crossed hands and close their eyes. Carma realizes Barb might be wondering what they are doing to her hair, to her head. The last time men put their hands on Barb's head like that, she was probably eight years old, after she'd been baptized. Sometimes, like when she has surgery, Carma lets Dan put oil and his hands on her own head. It makes him feel better.

"If it be thy will," Dan is saying, "restore sweet Barbara to health."

If there is a God, Carma thinks, whom does He will to health, to life? How does He decide?

"And give her peace," Dan is saying. Barb seems to have slid into sleep. Peace, repeats Carma. A-men.

* * *

It's dark when they get back to Grace's apartment. Ryan and Bradley have had their dinner—Ryan is off at the library to study for an exam, but Grace puts a different lasagna on the table and eats with her parents. Bradley is allowed to stay up an extra hour so Dan can give him camel rides on his back and so Carma can read

to him and calm him down. Carma holds the baby, changes her diaper, hums a Primary song to her. "'Give,' says the little stream," she remembers, "as it hurries down the hill."

There is another unsettling phone call in the early morning at the motel. Amy has spent a second night at the hospital. The bipap wasn't giving Barb enough oxygen; in order to get tubes down her, the doctors put her into a coma. "So there's no need for you to rush up," Amy says. "She's stable and she isn't really conscious. Every hour they wake her just a little, to prove they can, I guess." Her voice trembles.

At her daughter's apartment, Carma makes oatmeal for breakfast. "We're not much help to you," she tells Grace, who is nursing the baby.

"You're a help to Aunt Barb—or anyway Amy. Think how hard it would be for Amy if she had to deal with this by herself."

"I don't know. I guess we have to be there. At least your dad has to be there. Maybe I should let him go alone."

"Mom," Grace says, "you are a help to Dad."

This time they don't hurry so much. They pack sandwiches and fruit. As Dan drives, no faster than the speed limit, Carma finds a classical music station on the radio. She practices her breathing exercises, then rubs Dan's neck and touches his cheek.

"She's my little sister," Dan says. "I should have tried to stay closer to her."

Carma thinks about, but doesn't mention, the hummingbird tattoo.

After sending Amy to Barb's house to sleep, they settle themselves in the hospital room. Barb seems restless, as if she were having bad dreams, as if she hurts. Maybe she does—the tubes must feel awful. That's why they put her into a coma, isn't it?

Dan sits, holds Barb's hand, then stands, then paces. A young Indian doctor appears at the door.

"What's happening?" Dan asks. The doctor motions them outside. "I am Dr. Gill," he says, and shakes their hands. He looks at Carma's cane.

"R.A.," she answers the question his eyes ask. "Can she hear us?"

"Perhaps on some level," the doctor says in precisely enunciated English. "She is agitated."

"Maybe it's nicotine withdrawal," Carma offers. "She smokes a

pack or two a day."

"Ah," says the doctor. "We can give her a nicotine patch. Her lungs are like paper." He clears his throat. "It is more than pneumonia now. It is acute respiratory distress syndrome. We call it ARDS."

Dan catches his breath. "And the prognosis?"

Dr. Gill raises his thick eyebrows. "About two-thirds of patients with ARDS survive. We will know more in a day or two." He speaks very softly. "She may have some brain damage. Her blood and her brain have been starved for oxygen. You and her daughter need to talk about the different alternatives."

"If she pulls through, could she live on her own?" Carma asks. "Could she go back to her home?" She looks over at Dan, whose eyes seem unfocused. "Her house has stairs."

The doctor sighs. "If she recovers enough to leave here, I would guess she would have to stay several months at a rehabilitation center or an assisted living facility, maybe even a nursing home. I cannot imagine her living alone."

"No cigarettes," Carma says. "No Buddy. Her dog," she explains to the doctor, "her dreadful little dog."

Amy returns to the hospital in the middle of the afternoon. She has washed her hair and put on one of Barb's bright blue sweaters. She's older than Sophie, younger than Grace, not as pretty as either one, Carma thinks, but she has luminous skin and a sensual awareness that her cousins lack. She has a will to do well that she didn't seem to inherit from her mom or dad. She was raised in a religion-free home, one of the few things her parents came to agree on. She's a court reporter in Ogden, types on those little machines, makes a much better salary than Carma, even if Carma were still a full-time social worker.

While Amy and Dan go to the chaplain's office, Carma stays with Barb, whose mouth is stretched out of shape by the cruel tube. She seems calmer now that she is sporting a nicotine patch. If they could have got her to wear one of those before—Carma takes a motel bottle of lotion out of her purse, pours some into her palm, and massages it into Barb's hands and feet. "There is a balm," Carma hums, then sings, "in Gilead, to make the wounded whole."

* * *

"I don't know what to do, Aunt Carma," Amy says. They lean

back on a couch in the little waiting room. Carma has taken off her rocker-bottom shoes and put her feet up on the coffee table. In the ICU room, Dan is reading to his unconscious sister. He found a copy of Winnie the Pooh in the gift shop. It was once her favorite book.

"That chaplain made me feel as if I were a murderer just thinking about disconnecting Mom from all that crap." Amy shakes her head. "How she'd hate being tied down with tubes."

"She would," Carma agrees.

"And even if she gets so she can breathe on her own, with just one of those tanks—I know she'd rather die."

She didn't seem too fond of life before, Carma thinks, but doesn't say.

"She wouldn't have hesitated to pull the plug on her mother." Amy stops. "But she didn't have to. Even if Grandma hadn't died in the ambulance, Grandpa would've had to make the decision." She closes her eyes and breathes in. "Did Uncle Dan tell you we've decided not to tell Grandpa?"

"That's wise. He probably wouldn't remember ten minutes after. And if he did remember, he'd cry."

"They hardly even talked," Amy says. "What did he do to her anyway, to make her dislike him so much?'

Carma resettles herself on the couch. "I don't know that he did anything. But he wanted for her to come back to church."

"To be saved," Amy says.

"Well—to have a better life than she was having."

"What do you think about this being saved business?" Amy looks at her narrowly. "You aren't going to be saved, are you?"

"Guess not," says Carma.

"But you live like a Mormon," says Amy. "You don't drink alcohol, you don't even drink coffee, do you?"

"Oh," says Carma wryly, "is that what being a Mormon is?"

"Well—more than that. I guess you're supposed to go to church and to the temple."

"And believe," Carma adds softly.

"Ah, yes," Amy says, "and believe. Sometimes I think Mom believes—at least a little. Not the Joseph Smith thing, but at least God and Jesus and heaven. And I think she thought she was a sinner." Amy puts her feet up on the coffee table next to Carma's. "Do you think she was? And why did I just use the past tense?"

"She's not a sinner," Carma says. "I think if I believed, though, I would try to follow all the rules. I've always been in awe of people who have faith but don't follow the rules."

"If only she hadn't smoked," Amy says. "I used to tell her, 'Look, I know you won't quit for me, but how about for Buddy?' She wouldn't even quit for Buddy."

"That's the definition of addiction."

"Some addicts quit. She just gave up, caved in. Look at you—you have that awful rheumatoid arthritis, and you don't give up."

"It comes and goes, you know. Sometimes I want to give up."

"But you don't."

"No. I guess not." But I've got a husband, Carma thinks, who really did marry me for a bit better and a lot worse. She pats Amy's hand. "Do you ever see your dad?"

Amy harrumphs. "More than she sees her dad. Couple times of year, something sparks his guilt, and he calls and comes up to take me out to lunch."

"He still lives here then, in Salt Lake?"

Amy nods. "Want another kid?" she asks. "I'm up for adoption."

Carma reaches over and hugs her. "We'll take you," she says.

* * *

Because Barb is no better the next day, the prognosis is worse. The machines are keeping her alive—not exactly alive, Carma thinks, but they are breathing for her and keeping her heart beating. Carma takes the elevator down and knocks on the chaplain's open door. "What right do you have," she says evenly, "to make our niece feel guilty about stopping life support?"

The chaplain looks dazed. "We just want them to see all sides," he says at last. "Her mother didn't leave very clear instructions."

"That girl," Carma says, "has been the most responsible adult in her family since she was fourteen." She punctuates her sentences with her cane, which seems to intimidate him. "Don't you think she knows what her mother would want? Don't you think she knows what her mother is capable of?"

He says nothing. "You talk to her again," Carma says. "You tell her you're sorry you have made her even more miserable. You tell her that you know she loves her mother and knows what is best for her."

He apparently does it. The following day, Dan and Amy sign

some papers, and Dan and the chaplain, both wearing Levis and golf shirts, give Barb another blessing, one that thanks her for her love and her generous spirit and gives her permission to go. A few seconds after the nurse detaches the oxygen, Barb gasps and is gone. "Goodbye, Sis," Dan says, and he breaks down and weeps. Then he remembers Amy and he holds her as she sobs. Carma watches them and swallows her own tears. And Barb—she doesn't look peaceful exactly, but at least her mouth isn't all distended and sad. It didn't seem that her spirit left the second she died—it seemed to leave before that. It had been leaving for years maybe. Carma touches Barb's hand, already cold. She kisses Barb's cheek.

* * *

Two of Amy's friends have come down from Ogden—Luke and Ellen—a nice young tanned couple from her hiking group. Her high school pals Susan and Jill have been waiting out in the hall. They flank Amy on the couch in the little waiting room. "What makes me feel so bad," Amy tells them, "is that the only part of her they can use is her corneas. Nothing else was good enough."

"A cornea is a huge gift if you need one," says Susan, unbuckling her sandals and settling herself into a lotus position. She smiles at Carma, sunk into an overstuffed chair by the door. Dan is out in the hall talking to Sophie on his phone.

Barb's body is to be cremated, her ashes—Amy doesn't know yet. Maybe she'll scatter them someplace, maybe Millcreek Canyon, maybe Alta. There will be a get-together, a small one, at the house. In about two weeks, or three. Dan and Carma will fly back. Barb's ski bum friends, some of her cousins from Logan, Amy's own friends will come. And Grace and Ryan. "And the kids," Amy says. "Then I can see the baby. You don't mind if I don't drive down on Sunday for that blessing ceremony? I can see Grace and the kids at the open house." Carma nods to signal of course.

What to do with the house? She'll have to decide. Buddy? "No one who knows him will want him," says Amy.

"Maybe we can donate him," Luke grins, "to a research lab."

"Craig's List," says Ellen. "We'll write a killer ad."

Susan and Jill insist Amy stay in Jill's apartment for the night, as many nights as she wants, Jill says. Amy agrees.

Dan slips back into the waiting room. He reaches down into

Carma's chair to lift her to her feet and puts her cane in her right hand. When Amy hugs them, her eyes fill with tears. "We'll come back tomorrow," Dan says.

* * *

Just Dan comes back. It's a bad night for both of them, but in the morning, Carma can hardly move. Her knees and ankles throb. Dan takes her to Grace's and insists she lie down on the couch. He puts an orange afghan over her legs. Bradley sidles up to her. "Will you watch my programs with me, Gamma?"

"Sure," she says and waves goodbye to Dan. Sometimes she laughs when Bradley laughs, sometimes she hears his programs and his whining and the baby's fussing and Grace's cooing through a haze, sometimes she sleeps. "I'm sorry you feel so crummy," Grace says to Carma, "but it's great to have you here, all to myself."

Carma pushes her head up to the arm of the couch. "You're a natural mother," she says, "something I could never be."

Grace smiles. "You don't think we should postpone the blessing tomorrow, do you?"

"Of course not," Carma says. "That's what allows us to accept death. Life. Babies."

"We won't be able to think of Cammy's blessing without remembering Aunt Barb dying."

Carma sits up straighter on the couch. "We won't be able to think of Barb dying without remembering Cammy's blessing."

"Touché," says Grace.

Dan is back by supper, minestrone someone from the church made, and Carma thinks it tastes wonderful. Dan usually gives up dinner the evening before Fast Sunday, but neither he nor Ryan suggests that tonight. Carma and Dan leave early for the motel, and this night is different from all the preceding nights: they sleep.

* * *

Carma and Dan meet Grace and Ryan and the kids at the church—they won't all fit into either of their cars. They slide into a side pew halfway down the chapel aisle: Carma and Bradley, who has taken possession again of Carma's cane, next to the wall; the baby, now sleeping, in a ruffled carrier on the floor beside Grace. In the pew in front of them, Ryan's parents and one of his brothers

and his family stand up and greet them and offer hands to shake and cheeks to kiss. "We're so sorry," Ryan's mother whispers, "about your sister." Ryan's nieces run to look at the baby. Into the pew behind them file more of Ryan's family, another brother and his brood. Everyone settles down just before the meeting begins. The opening hymn is "Master, the Tempest Is Raging." The organist misses a few chords, but the congregation enthusiastically belts out both the "Storm-tossed sea" and the "Peace, be still."

The major item of ward business, it appears, is the blessing of their baby. Grace takes sleeping Cammy out of the carrier and carefully places her in Ryan's outstretched arms. He and Dan and Ryan's father and brothers walk down the aisle to the front of the chapel, assorted men joining them from their seats in the congregation or on the stand. Carma hopes the baby stays asleep. It would be terrifying to wake up surrounded by so many big men in dark suits. It's good that Sophie is in New York. She would be outraged that Grace isn't allowed in the circle. No women. When Dan asked Sophie why she couldn't at least stay in the Church until she was twenty-one, she said, "Women aren't welcome. Women aren't important."

This isn't what went wrong for Carma. Carma doesn't remember ever wanting the priesthood that the men have, and she certainly doesn't want it now. But she has told Sophie that she believes that it would be better if everyone who wanted the priesthood could have it. "Do you want it?" she asked Sophie once. "Well, sure," Sophie had said. But Carma doesn't believe her.

Ryan begins. "By the authority," he says, "of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, which we hold, we give this child a name and a blessing. The name by which she shall be known on the records of the church is Camilla Barbara Gibson."

Carma lurches in her seat. She can see Dan's face, eyes shut, tears leaking out. The men's shoulders all move slightly as they bounce the sleeping baby.

Ryan says nice things about what he and Grace hope for Camilla—that she will be blessed with health—no autoimmune diseases, no addictive tendencies, thinks Carma—that she will be kind and sensitive to those around her, that she will one day find a young man worthy of her and marry in the temple and have a family of her own. Did Dan say those things when he blessed Grace and Sophie? He must have. That was some years before Carma's faith failed. And

at both baby blessings, she was too sleep-deprived, too frantic, too ill to pay attention and remember.

The circle disperses, most of the men taking their seats. After Ryan holds Camilla up so the congregation can see her—white, frilly, angelic, and asleep—he struts up the aisle and lays the baby on Grace's lap and slides in next to her. Grace scoots over next to Carma and Bradley, and Dan takes the seat on the aisle. The chorister leads the congregation in the sacrament hymn. A small army of young boys in white shirts and ties carry the sacrament bread trays up the aisles. Carma doesn't take the bread even when Bradley looks questioningly at her. In—how many years?—he will be wearing a white shirt and tie and holding a stainless steel tray of bread. By then, he will perhaps understand that only one of his grandmothers is a real Mormon.

As a tall young man kneels to bless the water, Grace whispers to her mother, "That boy's autistic, but he's come a long way." Carma has already noticed him, a beautiful boy with clear, unpimpled skin and a wide cap of curly blond hair. "O God, the Eternal Father," he begins, "we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this water to the souls of all those who drink of it." Carma is startled. His voice is not the voice of a teenager mechanically reading a prayer. He is earnest, passionate. For him, it is real. ". . . in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them"—the boy is almost keening—"that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father. . . ."

He is a witness, this boy. He's almost enough to make one believe. Carma shakes her head just a little. Almost enough, but not quite.

Ryan, then Grace, stand and talk during the testimony-bearing part of the meeting. Each expresses gratitude for the perfect baby, for Bradley, for their parents and siblings. Grace acknowledges the loss of her father's sister and says they hope to honor her and him by giving her name to Camilla. Others rise and speak. Ryan's father seems just a little pompous. A woman hiccoughs out a harrowing tale of driving down a steep hill, her baby in the carseat behind her, when the brakes went out. A voice in her ear told her to use the emergency brake. A leggy teenage girl in a very short denim skirt has to bend down to use the microphone. She loves everyone. Her ward friends are way cool.

After the closing prayer, the pews of Gibsons gather up children and bags, exchange pleasantries with local members in the lobby, and head out the doors. Ryan's parents are hosting a family brunch so none of the clan is staying for other meetings. Tonight, Carma and Dan will kiss Grace and Ryan and the children goodbye before the last night at the motel. Tomorrow early, they will touch base with Amy and then fly back to Oakland.

At the end of the parking lot, past the rental car which Carma wouldn't let Dan park in one of the handicapped places, she spots the blonde young man who blessed the water. He stands alone, hands on hips, looking up into a tree. He has shed his suit jacket. His trousers are not quite long enough—his yellow socks an unsettling swath above his black shoes. Carma squints up at the branches that have captured his gaze, but sees nothing, nothing but leaves. Maybe that's all there is.

"Coming?" Dan asks.

She leans lightly on her cane. "Coming," she says.

Two-Dog Dose

Steven L. Peck

Jarring bang. Wheels leap up, rattling the heavy load of black piping destined for the oilrig. The truck rolls on. Oblivious to what it left behind.

On the macadam, a coyote. From its sacrum back to its hips its hindquarters are now flat, pressed hard against the pavement. Its pelvis and thighs pulverized under the weight of the semi. The creature tries to pull itself forward on its front legs. It makes little progress.

The spring air is cold. It is late and stars command a moonless sky. No car passes on this lonesome stretch of road that runs parallel to the Colorado from Highway 191 to the Potash Mine, until Lorin Gambel pulls up on the coyote in his '94 Toyota. He shines his headlights onto the beast and sees it making an effort to move, straining against its dead back end, but its exertions fail.

Lorin gets out of the truck and walks toward the coyote. That stirs it into action and it raises itself onto its front legs, snarling viciously. Foam and blood leak from between its teeth. Its eyes, vicious in hatred and rage, flash red in the headlights as it struggles to pull itself forward, warning with its snapping jaws that it is not yet dead. It intends damage.

Lorin hears a clatter from the truck. Avek. An old and distinguished lab climbs from the cab. Slowly. Her grizzled muzzle shows white in the back-splash of the headlights. She stands back from the commotion, hair stiff and standing along her dorsal ridge. She is giving a low rumble at the sight of her raging relative smashed bloodily into the road.

"Avek. Truck!"

Still growling low, the dog obeys. Not reluctantly. Age learns its limits.

The dog's human companion, too, is feeling the years press and he stares for a time, watching the rage and vitriol of the doomed

animal. He walks back to the truck and digs under the driver's seat, through the old pop cans, candy wrappers, and other flotsam to find the holstered .375 Smith & Wesson. It's been sequestered for a long time, yet loaded and ready for use. It feels heavy in his hand. He unholsters the gun and pops the cylinder loose and gives it a spin and sees the ends of the bullets displaying their waiting silver primer. He then locks the cylinder in place and steps away from the car.

The old dog has not watched any of this: her eyes have exclusively focused through the front windshield on the coyote. Her attention has not wavered for even a second.

The unlucky animal has lain back down during this interlude.

Lorin approaches the wounded mess in the road and the coyote rises again onto its front legs. Its vicious rebuke is no less vigorous than before, but there is a tremor in its legs that suggests its time in this world may not be much longer. Lorin gets as close as he dares and takes aim. The savage creature is snarling and biting the air. The pistol fires and the canyon lights up from the muzzle flash like the burst from a lighting strike. Just as he pulls the trigger, however, the coyote snaps its head away and the shot strikes the beast in the muzzle. It is jerking wildly on the ground, shaking its head, trying to dislodge teeth and bone that have shattered loose inside its snout.

"Shit." He says and steps forward, takes a better aim at the skull and fires. There is a bang and a whimper, like both scenarios for the end of the world, followed by stillness—save for the ringing in his ears from the explosion. He hears Avek give an approving bark.

He grabs the coyote by one of its front legs and swings it to the side of the road with enough force that it rolls down the embankment a bit. He then goes back to the truck, takes the leather holster off of the front seat, holsters the gun and slides it back under the seat, pushing the garbage collected there out of the way. He crawls into the seat and gives Avek's head a rub. Then, grabbing the steering wheel, he looks at the large bloodstain on the road. He stares long enough that Avek fidgets with concern and begins to lick his face. He looks at Avek. His eyes well with tears. He starts to cry. His cry is not restrained; he weeps in anguish and sorrow. Sobbing, he accepts the licks of his companion, but finds neither solace or discontentment in the wet tongue that scours his face—for his thoughts are far away. Today he killed not only the coyote, but murdered his best friend Karl Tillman and he was coming out of the canyon to

call the sheriff and tell Kay Tillman that her husband was dead.

* * *

It happened on this wise.

When he arrived at the Moab hospital he found Kay sitting in little waiting area. Wheel of Fortune was airing silently above her on a thick-backed TV mounted in the corner. She was on a cell phone. She said, "I've got to go. I'll fill you in later."

She hung up the phone as he approached, and they wrapped their arms around each other in a tight hug. She kissed him on the cheek and held onto both his hands as they separated. She was wearing jeans, cowboy boots, and a T-shirt. She had a large turquoise necklace and matching earrings. Her hair was in a tight ponytail, gray, with pure white streaking through much of it. They had known each other a long time and he could tell she was worn. Exhausted. Not just from what had happened this morning. It had taken him three hours to drive down from Spanish Fork. He had only stopped to drop off his dog at an old friend's place. After, he came straight here.

"How is he?"

Kay dropped his hands and ran both hands over her head as if trying to press things back into place. She sighed and looked at a nearby door.

"They are stitching him up now. It's a bad gash across his shin. I couldn't watch. Had a devil of a time picking the gravel out."

"Dislocated his shoulder you said on the phone?"

"Yeah, they set it. The bastard could have killed himself. He's been so lucid since they slapped the Mematorex Patch on him, I'd started thinking he was back to normal."

"Can I see him?"

"Yeah, just go in. He may or may not recognize you. He didn't know me when I got here. They found him out in the golf course. Now he seems perfectly normal. Surprised he is in the hospital, yeah, but he knows me and Doc Pritchett now."

"Ok."

She took his hands again and whispered, "Thanks for coming."

In answer he gave her another big hug and whispered, "Of course."

He walked into the room. Karl was sitting on a white-papered

physician's table in a hospital gown. He had one arm in a sling and a doctor was putting a bandage on his lower leg. It looked like he was just finishing.

"You tipped over a golf cart? Really, Karl? That's just lame. If I come all the way down, I expect something dramatic. Something with style, a little panache. At least something like getting bucked off a horse, or wiping out jumping a motorcycle. But a golf cart? You are an embarrassment to old geezers everywhere."

"Damn it. I told that biddy not to call you. I'm fine." But his eyes betrayed him. He was glad Lorin had come. It was obvious he was afraid.

Lorin crossed the room and tried to give him a hug but it became more of a friendly pat as he tried to avoid the wounded shoulder and the bandaged leg.

"So what happened?"

Karl looked down.

He was clearly avoiding the conversation so Lorin dropped it, "Are they going to let you go?"

"Yeah, they want to up the meds." He looked down as the doctor gave him some instructions and then left the room for a minute. He looked up at his friend, "It's getting bad. I don't know where I am sometimes. I'll just sit still for awhile and it will usually come back, but it's taking longer and today apparently I never came back."

"Maybe they just need to adjust the meds like you said."

"Last week in Salt Lake the brain doctor said the granules are starting to show up more and more—" there was a long pause, then, "It's going to go bad."

"How's Kay taking it?"

"Not good. She's worn out from worrying. She's been reading up on it and she is getting more and more depressed. I picked up one of the books and . . ." he paused again, "and the next few years are going to be hell."

Lorin knew he was right. He had watched his brother's wife go down with it and it took five years to take her all the way under, but in most ways she was gone in three. The lights were on, but no one was home. Thank goodness his wife had gone quickly five years ago. A heart attack that slowed her down, then another that had taken her in her sleep. He thought about what the next years of Kay's life would be. He looked at the wall.

"Well, I'm going to help as I can. I can get down here a little more. I've been thinking of retiring from the University anyway."

"Well you'll help me now. It's time."

Lorin understood instantly, "No! It's too early."

"Look, we agreed. It's my call. You can't break the pact now."

"It's too early."

"This ain't going nowhere but down. Right now my kids have great memories of me. Kay is still strong and chances are she has got some good years with the grandkids coming. After five years of watching me Titanic she'll be a shell. Already it's killing her. I can see it. I invoke the pact. My call."

"No."

"Don't do this. We've talked about it for fifteen years. We swore on the hunt. My call. I invoke the pact."

Lorin looked at his friend. He knew he was right. But he always thought he'd go first. This was something Karl was going to do for him. Not vice versa.

"Look, Karl. It's crazy. We'll both end up in the Terrestrial Kingdom."

Karl laughed. "You haven't believed in that for years. I'm the religious one. Remember? And I think the Lord is OK with this. This is an act of courage. Jesus laid down his life. I'm just following him."

"Karl, I'm not going to kill you."

"Yes, you are. I invoke the pact."

* * *

That night after dinner, they were sitting out on the deck looking at the glow of the La Sals in the setting sun. Their bellies were full of good T-bone steak that Karl cooked one-handed. Old-style over charcoals. Kay had conjured up a potato salad and some camp beans, flavored with the same sauce the beef was marinated in. They were drinking Postum mixed with hot chocolate, Karl's invention nearly twenty-five years ago on a deer hunt. He called it Nephi's savory coffee, then it became just NSC. It had been a staple until the company quit making Postum years ago, and he had brought it back when they started making it again.

To Lorin the flavor brought back memories—delicious with bright colors. He and Karl had been friends since they roomed together at BYU and as he looked at his old friend he felt a loss that

hung over him like the sword of Damocles. He could not kill him as he wanted. Yet he could not not honor the pact. It had been a sacred part of many a Canyonlands hike. He knew what lay ahead for his friend and his wife and his eyes welled with tears as he thought about the darkness just over the horizon.

The top of the La Sals were bathed in orange light and the desert rock that lay before them had almost disappeared in darkness. The three old friends were silent as they watched the last of the sunlight climb toward the summit of Tuk, Utah's third highest mountain. Lorin sighed. There were things he could do. And things he could not. Despite his promises he would not kill him.

He looked at Karl. Karl was staring back at him strangely. A mixture of fear and what? Karl turned to Kay with that same expression. She looked at him at that moment and fear stamped her face with such immediacy Lorin took in a breath.

"Karl? Are you OK?" There was panic in her voice.

He was looking at Lorin, then at Kay. His face was a mask of confusion and fear. His eyes were wide. He stood up.

"Excuse me. Who are you? Are you from the church? From the stake?"

"Karl. It's me, Lorin. Remember? We were just talking about the deer hunt."

He sat down cowed but his obvious fear and confusion did not abate.

Kay said, "Karl. It's me. Kay. Remember?"

He gave a very fake smile, "Kay. Yes. Of course. I remember we've met. I'm Karl."

Kay was crying now. She jumped up and ran into the house, tears streaming down her face.

Karl continued his fake smile, "Did I say something to upset her? Do I know you?"

He could see Kay in the kitchen pacing frantically and talking to someone on the phone.

"Excuse me a minute, Karl." Lorin ran into the kitchen, "Are you OK?"

"Don't leave him alone!" She screamed and sure enough when he got back he was gone, but he had not gone far. He was standing on the side of the house confused.

Karl looked at his friend and said, "I'm sorry, but I can't remem-

ber where I live. Can you take me home? I think the house is yellow."

"You live here, Karl. This is your house."

"This isn't my house."

The fear in his face was turning to anger, "Please take me home, or leave me alone."

"Karl, this is your house."

"This isn't my house!" he yelled, "Get away from me!"

Kay was running toward him waving her arms, "Don't make him angry," she whispered.

"Can someone tell me where I am? Where do I live?

"Karl, just relax, this will pass. You'll remember." He walked toward him holding out his hands in a gesture of reconciliation.

"Stay away from me!"

"Karl." He then reached out to reassure his friend. His friend punched him hard in the face. Lorin went down. His nose broken. Kay screamed. Karl ran.

Lorin got up quickly, his nose was bleeding but he took off after Karl. Just then an ambulance pulled up and Kay ran over and directed it toward the man running down the gravel lane that fronted the house.

The ambulance driver was a young kid who had been nearby when he got the call. He ran to Karl rather quickly, but it did not go well. The driver grabbed Karl, and Karl went crazy, swinging wildly. The kid, not trained to handle this, blew up in anger and a full-blown fight erupted. Kay ran over and tried to pull the driver off her husband. He had fallen and the driver was trying to sit on him to hold him down. Karl found an old piece of rebar and swung out hard from his supine position and capped the knee of the driver. The sound of the crack pushed Lorin out of his shock and he ran over and pulled the kid away from Karl, who was snarling like a cornered animal. Kay was hysterical. The police arrived. The kid was rolling on the ground clutching his knee. Kay was beating the officer's chest with her fists begging him to help her husband. Two more officers arrived. Karl had to be cuffed and was placed in the back of the police car. Kay was placed in the second ambulance, clutching one hand with her other. Somehow in the scuffle and confusion she had broken two fingers. The kid from the ambulance was put in a stretcher and loaded onto a third ambulance, which tore away with the siren and the kid screaming.

Lorin tried to explain to one of the officers what had happened while holding some ice to his nose. Was it really only thirty minutes ago that they had been watching the rays of the sunset igniting the La Sals?

* * *

Two days later Karl was sitting on the couch watching TV. His eyes were glazed and somewhat blank. He knew where he was. He knew who Lorin was. He knew he was in his own house. But he was drugged. Sedated. Just until his new meds had time to adjust things, the doctor said. No one could risk another episode like the one of the other day. Best to ensure his calmness chemically.

Lorin was sitting at the kitchen table across from Kay. Her eyes were red and swollen, the bags under her eyes aged her ten years. She hugged a large convenience store diet Coke. She looked at Lorin and tried to say something, but just looked past him to her husband. Finally she said, "I can't do this."

"Kay, this is temporary. The doctor said he just needs to get his medicine stable and . . ."

Kay was looking at him like he was an imbecile. She smiled sadly at him, "It will never get better. Only worse and worse and worse and worse . . ." She trailed off into a sob.

He got up and put his arm around her. She did not move to return his embrace. He looked at his friend and the sad empty look on his face. Eyes hollow.

He felt Kay's sobs along his arm wrapped around her back. Worse and worse and worse, she had said.

Karl had invoked the pact.

"It will be all right," he said to Kay, stroking her head and staring sadly at Karl.

* * *

Lorin watched as Kay leaned into the window and kissed Karl goodbye. She said she was pleased to have a couple of days to get some things done. The few weeks had been a mixture of bad and good. Sometimes he was as cogent as he was right now. Occasionally he faded, but the sedation kept him from acting up. Lorin had driven down again from Spanish Fork, ostensibly to give Kay a break.

"We'll be fine. We are going to the temple, walk the grounds,

maybe ask someone to add a few names to the prayer roll—don't worry, I won't let him go in by himself. It's the House of the Lord. This is a good thing. Then we'll explore some of our old stomping grounds and maybe jog his memory circuits a little."

She nodded. Kissed Karl and stepped away from the car. She looked worried. Lorin had talked her out of giving him the drugs that kept him calm. She had believed him when he said that he would be blessed for visiting the newly built temple in Monticello. Karl assured her that he would be fine.

They pulled away and she watched until they turned onto the highway toward Monticello about fifty miles south of Moab. As she passed out of sight, Lorin turned left onto a side road. She would not see them as they turned away from the city driving south and then doubled back north on Spanish Valley Drive, back onto the highway, and back through town. Most of the way both men were silent. After passing the Arches National Park entrance, they turned west on Potash Road.

"You all right?" Karl asked as they began following the Colorado toward the potash mine.

"No."

"I suspect not. But you're doing the right thing."

Lorin did not answer. He looked at his friend, "Just stay with me. OK. Try hard."

"I'll do my best."

They found the old jeep trail they were looking for and turned up it. It took considerable skill to maneuver over the old mining road. Avek, lying on the backbench kept being tossed to the floor. She finally gave up repeatedly climbing back onto the backseat and just stayed on the footrests.

"She's a good dog." Karl said.

"That she is. I was so mad when Sandy brought her home after the kids left. But she's been one damn good dog. She's seen me through a lot."

"Get Kay a dog. OK? A good one. A lab like Avek."

"Shit, to replace you? I'll get her a city pound mutt. That seems more appropriate."

"Take care of her."

"Take care of her? Hell, I'm going to sweep her off her feet and talk her into marrying me. Steal her right out from under your nose

and when she gets to heaven she'll be saying, 'I want Lorin.'"

Lorin was surprised to find he was crying, making his claims lose some of their force.

Karl smiled, "It won't work. I see what you're doing. Trying to get me to stick around. Forget the pact. Nope. I wouldn't mind you taking Kay. They say in heaven everything will get sorted out. And besides," Karl laughed, "you don't believe in the Celestial Kingdom no more so you'll get nothing on the other side. Likely they'll castrate the likes of you. So have fun with Kay, she'll be your last taste of a woman for the next zillion years."

Karl was now crying too.

They went through a rough patch where some of the road had washed away, creating a bit of tricky maneuvering. It looked for a moment like Lorin was going to leave them high centered, but he pulled it off.

"Hey. Be careful coming back. I don't want to see you on the other side for a few years at least."

"Whatever."

They went on climbing along the edge of a high ridge.

"Can you imagine the work it took to cut this road?" Karl observed.

"This is the kind of stuff my dad did."

"Really? He must have been disappointed his son became an English professor."

"Yeah. I think he was, actually. Maybe. Hard to say. He was a difficult man to read. Sometimes I thought he was as proud as hell about me, other times I wondered if he thought my life had been wasted."

Karl suddenly said, "Pull over." He seemed scared and Lorin worried that he might have started slipping away, but his friend added, "I want to change into my temple clothes."

"You know they are just going to rot."

"Well, no one knows the day or time of His appearance. I want to be buried properly. I wish you could dedicate my grave, but given your heathen status . . ."

The truck stopped. Both Karl and Lorin got out of the car and he let Avek out to give her a chance to stretch her legs a bit. Karl changed into his white clothes, and put on the accouterments of a man garbed in the robes of the High Priesthood, like someone

ready to make temple covenants, or to meet the Lord should the need arise.

Lorin pulled some sandwiches out of a bag and passed one to Karl decked out in his priestly garb. He pulled a couple of Mt. Dews out of a little cooler and handed one to his friend. They ate in silence after a brief toast to Kay for providing such a perfect lunch and a couple of teases that the food was reason enough for Lorin to go after Kay when Karl was gone.

But after a couple of bites, Lorin set the sandwich down. His appetite fled so he gave the sandwich to Avek. Karl ate with relish, savoring each bite with a look of contentment on his face. After eating without a word they got back in the truck and continued banging up the unruly mining road.

Lorin looked over at Karl, "You know you look ridiculous in that getup."

"I remember the first time I put it on. It was all supposed to be sacred, but when I saw everyone dressed like this, I couldn't help but laugh. So there I was in the temple, knee deep in what was supposed to be the most holy experience of my life and I can't help it but I'm trying damn hard to suppress my giggles."

Lorin, focusing on the road, said, "Not me. I took it so serious I felt like I was standing before God Himself. There was an aura over everything. I felt like every electron in my body had suddenly reversed directions because everything had changed in fundamental ways. Everything was new."

"Ironic, hey, how you are now the unbeliever and me who laughed at the sacred am hanging on until . . ."

"Funny. Yeah. Maybe I took it so earnestly I broke it. It couldn't stand the gravity of my seriousness and it just collapsed. Maybe if I would have laughed more at it, I could have found something to cling to."

"Maybe it's not too late."

"Maybe."

A few hundred yards from their destination a rockslide blocked the road with red rock boulders ranging in size from basketballs to Volkswagens.

"Looks like we are going to have to walk." Karl said brightly. There was a giddiness about him as if he were a kid about to sit on Santa's lap.

"I reckon so."

Lorin took a small backpack out of the back of the truck and grabbed a shovel strapped to the side of the bed and threw it across his shoulder. He took a large bolt cutter out of a box in the back and handed it to Karl saying, "Here, you carry the heavy stuff."

They easily skirted the slide and started their march to the mineshaft. Karl in his temple slippers was walking carefully, almost mincing toward their destination. His robe blew in the slight wind and he had to hold down his cap to keep the occasional gust from unsettling it.

"What's the shovel for?"

"Clean up the dog poop. Can't leave a mess in the wilderness," Lorin joked, giving both men a laugh, but then he added, "I don't know exactly. Just thought I'd bring it. Who knows maybe I'll need to hit you in the head with it if you don't go down easily."

"Just don't mess up my beautiful face."

The men moved slowly. The old slightly arthritic dog followed closely behind, seeming content with the easy pace. They moved now in silence. There was a strong sense of belonging here. The sage and juniper, the red rock, the scattered pieces of yellowcake, the blue-bellied lizards darting away as they approached. It was all intimately familiar. They knew this land. They had both been raised in Moab and had spent a lifetime wandering its environs.

There was a wide clearing in front of the mine. They found a large flat rock and they both sat down on it. Sweating and puffing. A palpable fear starting to grace both their faces. They both looked at the big gate bolted deep into the rock over the entrance.

"Bats," Karl said.

"What?"

"Bats. That's why the BLM put these gates in. It turns out these mines are critical bat nurseries. If people come around disturbing the bats, entire generations might be lost."

"OK. Bats."

Karl walked over to the chained door with the bolt cutter. It was secured with a thick chain.

"Lorin! A little help here."

Lorin got up and between the two of them squeezing the huge calipers, the bolt came free. They opened the gate and wandered about thirty yards in until they came to a large hole that shot straight

down. They both looked into the shaft.

"Deep."

"Yeah. About a hundred feet, if our plumb line was right when we were here twenty years ago."

"Twenty years ago."

"Yup."

They walked back out of the mine and sat down on the same rock. Finally Lorin said, "I don't want to do this."

"We made a pact. I'm holding you to it."

Lorin looked at him for a long time. The face he had known longer than any living soul. "What if next year they discover a drug that will make it all better?"

"If fishes were wishes we'd all have a fry. Let's do this. The longer we wait the harder it will be. Let's get it over with."

Lorin did not move for a long time. Finally he fished a couple of small bottles out of his daypack.

"I told Avek's vet that he was too old and it was time to put him down. I told him I had a lady friend whose German shepherd was ready to go too and we were going to the mountains to do it together. I've known the vet all Avek's life and he was good enough to give me both doses."

"I'm getting a two-dog dose then."

"Yup," he said, then hesitantly held out bottles, "It's your call. If you use them, this is you not me."

Karl did not take them.

"What happens?"

"The vet said that it takes about twenty minutes before the dog falls asleep. Once asleep he'll last about ten more. Then he sleeps forever."

Karl nodded and reached for the pills, "OK then. For Kay."

"For Kay."

Lorin sighed and handed him the pills, "There's five in each bottle, take them all."

"Any side effects?" Karl asked. Both men burst into laughter.

"Not if used as directed." Lorin smirked.

"Consult your doctor to make sure your heart is healthy enough for death," Karl joked, but it fell flat.

Lorin just said, "Yeah."

Karl took a water bottle out of his pack, poured all the pills into

his hand, and swallowed them down in almost one gulp. He finished and said, "That's that."

The men sat in silence for a few minutes looking over the landscape.

"Lorin?"

"Yeah."

"Thanks."

"It was a pact. I swore an oath. Thank that. I'm not happy about this."

"Kay will be. Not if you told her. Not if she suspected anything. It will sting at first, but in a year from now she'll start moving on. Being a grandma. She'll get over it. Otherwise, in a year she'd be hollowed out and empty from taking care of me. She'll have worried herself into a short life."

"I suppose."

"The kids will remember me strong. With a good mind. No memories of a blank deer-eyed man staring at nothing and who has no idea who he is. Are you going to stick to the plan?"

"Yeah. I'll drive down to Bluff and that footpath that crosses the San Juan by the reservation. I'll say we were remembering good times and I turned around when I heard a big splash."

"Tell her we didn't call from Monticello because we were having so much fun."

"I'll tell her. Don't worry."

"And we drove to Bluff to remember more good times. She'll understand the need to visit memories with this thing I've got looming."

"I'll tell her."

"And you'll call the police."

"Yup."

"They'll drag the river."

"Yeah."

"It's running high with the thaw. No one will even expect to find my body."

"I suppose."

"Lorin?"

"Yeah?"

"Thanks for doing this. It's right. It's going to fix a lot of things that would get broken."

"I think you are very brave. This will be a good death."

Lorin reached out and put his arm around Karl, who leaned into him. They were silent a while.

Karl, pulled back and looked at him, "Sir, you are a good friend!" His voice sounded somewhat slurred. Lorin knew the medicine was taking effect.

"Karl, you are a good friend, too. I love you, buddy."

"I love you too, but let's not muddy this up getting sappy."

They were silent a few more minutes. Then Karl said in a very slurred voice, "Last night I didn't know where I was. I was laying on my bed and I did not know where in the hell I was. I thought I must be staying in a hotel somewhere. I saw Kay beside me and I thought my hell who am I in bed with. It was strange. I thought I'd just lie there until things came back to me. I fell asleep."

"I'm glad you were awake today."

"Me too."

"Lorin, I'm tired. Can I just lay down here in the sand? Just for a minute."

Lorin helped him from the rock and assisted him so he could lie down on his back. He opened his eyes for a while looking at the one lone cloud in the sky.

"I love this place. I love the desert. I love you. I love Kay. I love God."

"They all love you, too."

Karl closed his eyes and began to breathe more evenly.

"Karl?"

"Umm?"

"Let me know what's on the other side."

"Ummmmmmbb."

Karl slept for some time. Longer than the ten minutes that the vet suggested. His breathing got shallower and shallower and several times Lorin checked to see if he was breathing. He repeatedly was. After about fifteen minutes he worried something had gone wrong. After twenty-five minutes Karl made a funny sound, raspy and hollow. It was his last breath.

It was getting late in the afternoon. Lorin wept for a bit. He watched the body of his friend until flies started to gather and land on the corpse. He decided to get to work. He had never intended to throw his body into the mine. He knew he could not stand the sound of his friend's body striking the bottom of the shaft. He also

worried that some kids would invariably break into the mine and do something crazy like rappel down the shaft. They would discover the body. That would raise questions and likely start an investigation. Karl had always had more faith in gates and locks than he had.

He walked over and picked up the shovel and walked down to a rock overhang a good sixty feet down and west of the mine. A rock overhang—part of a larger red rock formation—created a depression that protected what was once a small sandstone bowl that had, over the centuries, filled with sand. Over the top was a patchwork crusting of cryptobiotic matting, the delicate microbial mass that stabilized much of this desert soil, giving the sandy surface the crumbly look of an overdone coffee cake. This he delicately removed by digging beneath it and placing it carefully a few feet away. Once the sand was exposed, digging was easy. Still it took most of the remaining afternoon to get a hole about four feet around. He dug until he hit sandstone, likely the lower portion of the tipped-over bowl that shaped the overhang. The configuration of rock allowed the wind to slowly fill up the bowl with the sand he had just removed, if he left it for a century or so it would fill back up. A friend of his called these formations wind-blown sand eddies.

He climbed back up to the mine and tied a bit of rope around Karl's legs and dragged him carefully down the hill. Once he could have carried him, but now it took everything just to drag him downhill to his grave. Avek was very curious about Karl and kept sniffing him and looking inquiringly at Lorin for some explanation.

He dragged him right into the hole, but his body was left sort of sitting up and leaning on his side against one of the walls of the grave. Lorin jumped down and arranged him on the floor of the hole, on his side and slightly curled up. He climbed out of the grave and rested a while.

He looked at the grave with Karl resting in his dirty and disheveled temple clothes. His cap had fallen off and his apron and robe was twisted all round. This would not do. Although he was no longer a believer, he believed in Karl and his intent. He jumped into the grave and brushed the sand off his clothes and arranged them properly as was fitting a High Priest of the Lord. When all was done he climbed back out of the hole and stood by the side of the grave. He felt like he should say something and remembered back to when he was a bishop in the Church. He had dedicated many graves and

he decided that despite his heathen status Karl deserved a proper Mormon ritual.

In the low, late afternoon sun, he looked around him. While he no longer believed in the white bearded god he had grown up with, there was something powerful in the landscape that lay all around him. A presence that made itself felt. An ancient attendance that cared very little about him, but that he could acknowledge and feel. An old god. This was something he could worship. So while the rituals that had shaped the people of this landscape had been born elsewhere, they had entered this land and made themselves part of the high desert, the wind- and water-carved variegated Canyonlands. He was a part of the landscape and the people that called it home. He knew what to do.

He raised his arm to a square pointing his palm toward the rusty reds, oranges, and white sandstones in the valley below:

"By the power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood I hold, I dedicate this grave to be the final resting place of my friend Karl Tillman. I ask that this place be hallowed ground and will be protected from the elements and beasts that would disturb this place, until the morning of the First Resurrection. In which you will arise, Karl, if anyone will."

Then he sensed that strange force which had always overcome him whenever he had given priesthood blessings to his wife, or children while they were growing up. He felt his voice detach from his own will and speak as power flowed from something higher and better than he was.

"I bless you, Karl, that you'll not be found here. I bless your children that they will find comfort in the goodness of your life. That the things you taught them as a father will be remembered and cherished. That your life will be recalled as worthy of emulation. I bless that Kay will be comforted by the Holy Ghost and she will also find meaning in your life and will remember and hold onto those memories that you both cherish. Karl, I bless your friend who took your life that he will forgive himself for what he's done and take comfort in the sacrifice you have made for your family. God bless you, Karl, wherever you are."

"I say these things in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

Lorin started to shake and sob as he picked up the shovel and with blurry eyes filled in the grave. When it was about half full he

carried and rolled some large flat stones to form a protective barrier from predators that might sense something aging under the sand. It was nearly dark when he finished burying the flagstones he had placed over his friend. When he was done, as carefully as he could, he replaced the soil surface crust. It didn't work as well as he hoped, much of it crumbling as he tried to place it, but it was something that gave it an air of having never been disturbed. Mostly.

On the wall of the overhang where the stone entered the sand that made up the grave, he carved with his pocket knife, "Karl Tillman, 2014." It would be mistaken for a random bit of graffiti, if anyone ever noticed it, such as is common to the rock faces and aspens of this area. He walked back to the gate on the mine and tried to fix the chain they had cut. He put the links together and angled them in a way that would hold together unless someone noticed the cut and reoriented them to loose the links. He pulled the chain in a way that the break was hidden behind the gate.

It was done. Karl was dead. Murdered really. But he felt so light ,he started to sing one of the old hymns of his youth through his tears.

* * *

There is blood on his hands. There is also blood all over his pants and shirt. Why had he not noticed what the coyote had left on him? It will not do to call the Bluff sheriff covered in blood and claim his friend has gone missing. He walks down to the Colorado and washes his hands in the very cold, brown, sandy water. He's near a sandbar and wades out through calf-deep water and takes his shirt off and washes it quickly like his pioneer ancestors might have. He keeps his trousers on, but takes up a handful of river sand and scrubs his pants clean with it. The blood is fresh and the water cold and the stains come out easily.

He hikes back up to the truck passing the dead coyote grimacing at him. Its eyes are fixed on nothing and everything. Lorin is exhausted. He spreads his shirt onto the back seat, places his shoes on the floor of the backbench, and then climbs into the driver's seat. He reaches over and scratches Avek's head. She seems jittery and eagerly licks his hand.

"It's been quite a day, girl. Still some shit to do."

He then puts the truck in gear and pulls away. Leaving behind the coyote on the side of the road.

The God Who Weeps: Notes, Amens, and Disagreements

Terryl Givens and Fiona Givens. *The God Who Weeps: How Mormonism Makes Sense of Life.* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Ensign Peak, 2012). 160 pp. Hardcover: $19.99. ISBN: 978-1609071882.

Reviewed by Adam S. Miller

The God Who Weeps is a different kind of book. It's devotional in spirit but academic in pedigree. It's published by Deseret Book but under its Ensign Peak imprint. It's an aggressively expansive book that, instead of quoting General Authorities, ranges across the whole Western tradition, skillfully absorbing and repurposing whatever stories and ideas speak to its Mormon ears. It's a book that matters because, rather than asking us to agree, it asks us to think.

Its importance depends on this difference. In order for *Weeps* to make a lasting difference—and I think it can and should—it needs to be different enough for us to care. If its ideas are too similar (or dissimilar) to what we usually say, then its influence will be limited. But if its account of Mormonism is just different enough to simultaneously prompt a moment of recognition *and* motivate a cascade of thoughtful disagreement, then its influence will radiate. On the other hand, if the book prompts only assent, I worry that a chorus of amens will silence it.

Weeps is invigorating precisely because it does not mime the voice of authority. It speaks and thinks in its own name. We honor that work best by offering the same thoughtfulness back again. In what follows, I sketch a response to *Weeps* that looks at its position on five topics—faith, satisfaction, premortality, evolution, and agency—and offer, in return, a mix of sincere amens and honest disagreements.

1. Practicing Faith

In its first chapter, *Weeps* argues that faith is a response to uncertainty. Only our uncertainty about God can make our decision to be faithful meaningful because "an overwhelming preponderance of evidence on either side would make our choice as meaningless

as would a loaded gun pointed at our heads" (4). Faith like this has its place, but I doubt that this kind of uncertainty is ordinary. For instance, in this same chapter, *Weeps* describes the death of a friend who had a faith that "did not seem a choice for her. It descended upon her as naturally and irresistibly as the heavy snow that fell on her upstate New York farm" (3). If this friend's belief in God was natural and irresistible, is her faith still meaningful?

It seems to me that the most salient feature of belief is often its involuntary character. Our beliefs are generally given as common-sense conclusions that are drawn from a shared but unchosen background of practices, institutions, and assumptions. Depending on the infrastructures we inhabit, God's existence may or may not show up as a common-sense conclusion. But, in either case, it is a conclusion that is unlikely to be freely chosen.

What then of faith? When slipping from one existential framework to another, we may experience a dark night of the soul. But such dark nights of uncertainty are typically brief and faith is necessary even (and perhaps especially) when we are *not* in crisis and our place in a framework is firmly settled. In most situations, faith is not a choice about *what* to believe but a choice about *how* we respond to beliefs we did not choose.

Faith is not the same thing as belief or common sense. For some, belief in God comes easily and naturally. Belief isn't a choice and can't be unchosen. God, like words or air, just is. But this isn't enough. Though this common-sense belief in God's reality can be a blessing, it can also be a hurdle to practicing faith. It can lull us into thinking that the hard work of being faithful is done when, in fact, we haven't even started. On the other hand, for some, God's absence is itself an obvious aspect of the world as it is given. God's improbability presents itself as a fact not as a choice. And while this kind of common-sense godlessness can obviously be a barrier, it's not the end of the story. It, too, can open a path to God by freeing you from common-sense idolatries. Neither kind of common sense is faith. Whether God is or isn't obvious to us, the work is the same. Faith is a willingness to lose our souls in faithfully caring for the work that's been given to us. Common-sense theist, common-sense atheist, common-sense (or anguished!) agnostic—the work is the same. Each must practice faith. Each must choose to care rather than wish or run.

Weeps claims that "the greatest act of self-revelation occurs when we choose what we will believe, in that space of freedom that exists between knowing that a thing is, and knowing that a thing is not" (5). I'm hesitant to agree. It seems to me that the greatest act of revelation comes when we faithfully care for what God, unchosen, has given. Faith, on this account, is still a choice, but it's a choice of a different kind.

2. Saving Satisfaction

Weeps argues that the world is inadequate to satisfy our desires. "Who has never felt the utter inadequacy of the world to satisfy the spiritual longings of our nature?" (40). It is clearly true that the world is inadequate to our desires and that, in the end, it cannot satisfy our "insatiable longing for wholeness" (41). But *Weeps* goes on to claim that the world's inability to satisfy our desires compels us to posit the existence of an object that *could* satisfy them: namely, God. This is a classic theological move with a prestigious pedigree: our longing for wholeness and completion is strong evidence that *something* must exist that *can* make us whole.

Weeps invokes this pedigree by way of both Aristophanes and Augustine. To dramatize our longing and brokenness, Plato's Aristophanes tells a story about how human beings originally had four legs, four arms, and two heads. But, full of ourselves, we angered the gods and Zeus split us in two as punishment, condemning us to wander the earth as half-persons with just one head, two arms, and two legs. As a result, humans are hungry for sex because it allows us to—at least temporarily—put ourselves back together. Of this, *Weeps* says:

> Aristophanes was surely half-joking, but he captures brilliantly our sense of incompleteness and longing for wholeness, for intimate union with another human being who fits us like our other half. Yet even when we find true love and companionship in the rediscovered other, the restoration that should fulfill us falls short; Aristophanes himself is baffled. It is as if, coming together, we are haunted by the memory of an even more perfect past, when we were even more whole and complete, and this suspicion lends an indefinable melancholy to our present lives. . . . So what can we make of this unsatisfied longing, this sense of a primordial loss that no human love can heal? (13)

The Christian tradition picks up on this same longing and says: "Aha! You feel this way because *God* is your one true other half!" In

this vein, Augustine famously prays in the opening lines of his *Confessions:* "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." But, as *Weeps* asks, what *should* we make of this unsatisfied longing? Are hungers that will not quit an accidental defect of sin and mortality? Or is this hunger an inseparable feature of what it means to be alive and, perhaps, especially alive in Christ?

I won't deny that it is possible for our restless hearts to find rest in God, but I do want to deny that this rest results from the *satisfaction* of our desires. God does not save our hungers by satisfying them. God saves us from the tyranny of our desires by saving us from the impossible work *of* satisfying them. God may be what we desire, but God's arrival does not quench this desire. It gives it. And in giving it, God means to show us how living life depends on caring for rather than being done with desire. Rather than trying to simply satisfy desire, we must be faithful to life by being faithful to the unquenchable persistence of the desires that animate us as alive. Life depends on our being open and incomplete. To be "whole" is to be dead. The heavens are filled with an unquenchable fire. Only hellfires die down. Jesus liberates us from the problem of desire by saving our desires rather than solving them.

3. Weighing Preexistence

Weeps argues that our world can't support its own weight. Life, meaning, agency, and morality aren't native stock but must be imported from elsewhere. Meaning and stability are drawn from off-world accounts. Here, our doctrine of a premortality is a handy answer as to why things still manage to make sense when our world is so senseless. "The only basis for human freedom and human accountability is a human soul that existed before birth as it will after death. Moral freedom demands preexistence, and preexistence explains human freedom" (51). Because this world is too weak, "there must be a true beginning rooted in a time and place of greater dignity and moment" (45). This kind of theological outsourcing is, again, a classic gesture with a prestigious pedigree.

The issue is *identity.* Given how messy and multiple the world is—and this includes, especially, our split and messy selves—there must be (the story goes) some deeper source of unity and identity. Against the complicated dependencies of this world, there must be

"an independent, existing principle of intelligence within us" (12). Moreover, "a sense of unease in the world and the poignant yearnings and shadowy intimations of an eternal past, attest to a timeless heritage at the core of human identity" (6). To be spiritually solvent, we need an "identity that lies deeper than our body, rooted beyond actions, reaching past memory" (43). The only trouble with this approach is its nihilism.

You must, of course, decide for yourself, but I endorse Nietzsche's sharp critique of our Christian tendency to devalue the present world by anchoring its true meaning and substance in another. The irony, in this respect, is that *Weeps* is well aware of the Nietzschean critique and it, too, wants to *agree* with Nietzsche: "Nietzsche was right when he said Christians had a tendency to turn away from this life in contempt, to dream of other-worldly delights rather than resolve this-worldly problems" (111). But a sensitivity to this Nietzschean problem never shows up in any of the many celebrations of our doctrine of a pre-world as an essential supplement to this world's poverty.

Rather, with respect to preexistence, *Weeps* ignores the Nietzschean critique of theological outsourcing by ignoring the more fundamental Nietzschean critique of identity. Premortality figures large in the book as a ready-made way to stabilize meaning and identity. In this world you may be composed of split and compromised selves that require your patience and care, but beneath this jumble lies a pre-self, a divine self, that doesn't have these same problems. The pre-self is the true, ideal self. Religion is the work of being faithful to this primordial intuition that my self is something better, simpler, and more independent than it appears.

When we hear an echo of this other self, when we intuit that we must be something more ideal than we appear, what are gesturing toward? "Who is this 'I' we are referring to in such instances? It could just be an idealized self we have in mind, except the sense is too strong that it is our actions that are unreal, not the self to which we compare them. So, is the most plausible candidate for that 'I' really a hypothetical self we might someday be, or is it what the minister and novelist George MacDonald called an 'old soul,' a self with a long history, that provides the contrast with present patterns of behavior?" (44).

On this, *Weeps* and I part ways. Where *Weeps* sees a solution, I

see a problem. Where *Weeps* reads this ideal pre-self as what's real and our present split selves as pale shadows, I regard the ideal pre-self as a dubious and sticky fiction and the present, competing, and multiple selves that compose my soul as the truth about what's really eternal. Now, this is not to deny that I have a pre-self from a premortal life. But it is to deny that we should understand this pre-self as something more true, more divine, and more ideal than our present fleshy one. We're not less true and real in this world. We're more true and real here.

On my account, the Mormon doctrine of preexistence is crucial because it *prevents* us from positing a "deeper" and "truer" original self. Preexistence shouldn't be read as a guarantee of my eternal identity and self-possession. It should be read as what guarantees their impossibility. Preexistence names my always preexisting lack of self-possession. It testifies that I have *always already* been emptied into a world that both composes and divides me with its competing loves and demands. Here, both the pre-world and the post-world must be understood as continuous with the messy work of the present one.

Weeps wisely notes that, with respect to the post-world, "it is in the continuity of our lives now with our lives hereafter that we find rescue from the dangerous heaven of fairy tales" (111). I agree. But I would warn that our lives heretofore must also, just as surely, be rescued from such dangerous heavens and fairy tales. Our belief in a preexistence should commit us to the doctrine that our work in this world is the only kind of work there has ever been: We must work loose our fantasies of self-identity for the sake of love.

4. Defending Darwin

I'm glad to see that *Weeps* makes room for Darwin, but I wish it had made more. Theologically, Darwin is a sticky wicket. On this front, the fact of biological evolution can be approached in one of three ways: (1) we can shut the evolutionary door and pretend we're not home, (2) we can allow it occasional, supervised visits and hope it doesn't make too big a mess, or (3) we can allow that we are the visitors in the house that it built. *Weeps* accommodates something like the second position. And, to the extent that it does, this is a big and welcome step forward in mainstream Mormon discourse.

But I'd like to see us take one step more. I'd like to see us explore—

carefully and charitably and experimentally—what it might mean for Mormons to see evolution not just as a local twist in God's top-down management of a wholly rational real but as indicative of a fundamental truth about the contingent world to which both we and God find ourselves given. *Weeps* seems willing to answer the door but (like any wise investigator) it doesn't want to let the discussion move much beyond the doorstep. The following passage is representative:

> Darwin explained how random, incremental change over millions of years, leads to many species developing from one original source, and he proposed mechanisms and processes by which the giraffe acquired his long neck, and our species the miraculous human eye. . . . In sum, he made it intellectually respectable to be an atheist. Why, then, do we need faith in God and things eternal? Perhaps because the development of complex human beings, with self-awareness and lives filled with love and tears and laughter, is one too many a miracle to accept as a purely natural phenomenon. Perhaps because the idea of God is a more reasonable hypothesis than the endless stream of coincidences essential to our origin and existence here on earth. (10–11)

Darwin gets a nod, here, but really only to juxtapose the weak contingency of evolutionary processes with the reassuring rationality of a strong theism. While I think this seriously underestimates the explanatory force of these "natural" processes, I also think that Weeps is expressing a solid, acceptable, mainstream theological response to evolution: evolution can be taken seriously as a creative process but *only* insofar as it is an instrument in the hands of a guiding intelligence. Otherwise, evolution involves one "miracle" too many.

This same sentiment is on display in a later passage that chides Darwin for his inability to account for something as powerful and gratuitous as the beauty of the natural world:

> Darwin was sure that even those spectacles of nature that overwhelm us by their beauty, from the peacock's tail to the fragrance of an English rose, serve not man's purposes but their own, which is survival and reproducibility. If anything in nature could be found that had been "created for beauty in the eyes of man" rather than the good of its possessor, it would be "absolutely fatal" to his theory. In other words, maple leaves in autumn do not suddenly transform into stained glass pendants, illuminated by a setting sun, in order to satisfy a human

> longing for beauty. Their scarlet, ochre, and golden colors emerge as chlorophyll production shuts down, in preparation for sacrificing the leaves that are vulnerable to winter cold, and ensuring the survival of the tree. But the tree survives, *while* our vision is ravished. The peacock's display attracts a hen, *and* it nourishes the human eye. The flower's fragrance entices the pollinator, *but it also* intoxicates the gardener. In that "while," in that "and," in that "but it also," we find the giftedness of life. (36)

I really like this passage. In fact, it is one of my favorites in the book. It is a pitch-perfect description of giftedness or grace. But the passage seems to me to offer a stunning account of exactly how evolution *does* work, not a rebuttal that is "absolutely fatal" to its credibility. Evolution works by way of exaptation. The fundamental process is one in which gratuitous features are purposelessly generated *and then these features get repurposed by extant systems for some other productive end.* The "while" and the "and" and the "but it also" fit perfectly with a Darwinian picture. In fact, they epitomize how natural selection works. But what does this mean? What does it mean if something *Weeps* sees as key to defending the gospel ends up also being key to defending *evolution* itself?

Generations of theologians are jealous of our day. On no merit of our own, we've inherited the task of probing the theological implications of the planet-sized shift in our self-understanding imposed by the latter-day revelations of biological evolution and deep geological time. We have a lot of work to do.

5. Distributing Agency

Weeps takes a hard, all-or-nothing line on agency. It argues that "something is free only if it is not caused or created by something else" (48). Freedom equals freedom from outside influence. The confused and cross-pollinated conditions of mortality compromise free will. Here, there are too many competing claims. "In our present, earthly form, we are clearly the product of forces outside our control that influence our personality, inform our character, and shape our wants and desires. And yet, we know we are free. How can this be, unless there is something at the heart of our identity that was *not* shaped by environment, *not* inherited from our parents, and *not* even created by God?" (50). If we are free, then there must be some part of us that is not conditioned by our earthly conditions.

According to *Weeps,* any freedom that is *given* is, by definition, unfree. Freedom cannot be given or enabled or inherited or created. A doctrine of co-eternality figures large here as the answer to how we're free. If we are free, it must be because we are uncreated, our agency always already given only by ourselves to ourselves. Our ability to act must not be acted upon. Freedom is a form of self-possessed, self-informed, self-determining autonomy.

Along these lines, it follows that we are free in this world only if we freely chose this world. *Weeps* asks: "If we were simply cast adrift on the shore of this strange world, where is the freedom in that?" (52). But, "if we were involved in the deliberations that culminated in creating and peopling this world, then we are not passive victims of providence. We would have entered into conditions of this mortal state aware of the harrowing hazards mortality entails" (53).

I find this account of agency unconvincing. More, I think it obscures the truth about the kind of thing agency is. Take, for instance, the claim that our freedom in this conditioned world depends on our having freely chosen those same conditions in a former life. Does this same logic apply to the preexistence itself? For *Weeps,* if we were also free in the preexistence, then wouldn't it have to be the case that either (1) the preexistence did not, itself, impose any unchosen conditions, or (2) we must have freely chosen even those preexistent conditions in a *pre*-preexistence? Option one seems to me to make little sense of the preexistence, but option two doesn't seem much better. With option two we've just pushed the problem back a level and, to be fair, we'd have to pose the same two alternatives again. And again. Until we reached that ur-moment when we *did not* find ourselves *already* pitched into a world we did not choose, conditioned by conditions we did not will.

This hiccup in the book's treatment of agency isn't decisive, but it is, I think, symptomatic. I'm inclined to think that our doctrine of co-eternality means just the opposite of what *Weeps* proposes. Rather than safely positioning us (and God) beyond the reach of any unchosen conditions, co-eternality guarantees that there is no such unconditioned place. Co-eternality guarantees that the only thing unconditional is the unconditional imposition of always already existing and unchosen conditions. In fact, I'm inclined to think that this is, at root, the reason why it makes sense for us to claim, as *Weeps* surely does, that our Mormon God weeps.

Does this rule out real agency? No. Just the opposite. Unchosen conditions are the condition of possibility for any meaningful agency. The limits that constrain agency enable it. Recall our other Mormon narrative (one that *Weeps* also draws on) about why mortality is so important. Mortality makes agency meaningful because it *limits* our knowledge and *constrains* our agency. "We need the continuing spiritual friction of difficulty, opposition, and hardship, or we will suffer the same stasis as the bee" (62). Friction is the thing. I'm empowered to act by the unchosen and uncontrollable frictions that compose me and oppose me. Agency isn't simple and internal, it's complex and distributed. Agency is niche-dependent. It is a situated gift dependent on context. Agency isn't a kind of autonomy, but a peculiar, reflexive, and responsible kind of heteronomy. My freedom is *always* given and enabled by something other than myself (cf. 2 Nephi 2:26–27).

Agency isn't possessed, then, but borrowed. It isn't a freedom *from* the conditioned world but a freedom *for* that world. Our ability to act is always both empowered and reciprocally affected by that which it acts upon. All active agents are enabled only by their passivity. "Free" agency is a myth. Freedom is never free. Agency always comes at a cost. And that cost is often paid by others. This is why charity is the greatest virtue.

Weeps concedes that, as a matter of fact, agency works this way. Given our mortal conditions, "hardly ever, then, is a choice made with perfect, uncompromised freedom of the will" (100). But I would raise the stakes and push this one step farther: *never,* then, is a choice made with perfect, uncompromised freedom of will. Why? Because a perfect, uncompromised freedom of will is antithetical to the expression of real agency.

My very favorite passage in all of *The God Who Weeps* has to do with the intersection of agency and atonement. *Weeps* wants to know how the atonement can intervene in our lives without ruining the law of agency. The passage asks:

> The question, however, remains: on what basis can the consequences of our choices be deferred or abated? The law of moral agency, of choice and consequence, does not require that we entirely bear the burden of our own choices made in this life because those choices are always made under circumstances that are less than perfect. Our accountability is thus always partial, incomplete. Into that gap between

> choice and accountability, the Lord steps. (91–92)

Into that gap between choice and accountability, the Lord steps. That gap, that beat of "imperfection," is what makes room for love. Love is possible because our choices are *always* made under circumstances that are less than "perfect."

Weeps qualifies that "always" with an "in this life," but I don't think that qualification is necessary. The borrowed and incomplete character of our agency is not an "imperfection" in the expression of that agency, but its condition of possibility. And, moreover, it is the condition of possibility for the fullest possible expression of agency: redeeming love. "The paradox of Christ's saving sway is that it operates on the basis of what the world would call weakness" (29). The paradox of agency is the same.

Prophetic Glimpses of Mormon Culture: Recent Publications on Patriarchal Blessings

Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith. *Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of the Presiding Patriarch.* Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2003. 272 pp. Notes, index. Paper: $23. ISBN: 978-0-252-07115-7.

H. Michael Marquardt, ed. *Early Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* Salt Lake City, Utah: The Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007. 447 pp. Index. Hardcover: ISBN: 978-1-56085-202-5.

H. Michael Marquardt, ed. *Later Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* Salt Lake City, Utah: The Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2012. 648 pp. Index, appendices. Hardcover: $90. ISBN: 978-1-56085-221-6.

Gary Shepherd and Gordon Shepherd. *Binding Heaven and Earth: Patriarchal Blessings in the Prophetic Development of Early Mormonism.* University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012. 185 pp. Notes, references, index. Hardcover: $54.95. ISBN: 978-0-271-05633-3.

Reviewed by Susanna Morrill

With these publications, Gary and Gordon Shepherd and H. Michael Marquardt have contributed immeasurably to the scholarly conversation about Mormon patriarchal blessings. This has been a continuing conversation that intensified in 1996 when Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith published their book on the office of Church patriarch. Scholars now have a critical mass of primary and secondary material with which to understand this often overlooked but powerful practice in the LDS Church. Each of these books adds something to the conversation, complicating it in messy, fruitful ways. They illuminate the intersection of the institutional and lived religious levels of Mormonism, an intersection that has been largely unexplored but is receiving increasing scholarly attention. Marquardt's collection of patriarchal blessings, in particular, enables scholars to examine how, every day, leaders and members created the Mormon faith as a viable and vigorous religious group.

Bates and Smith's book has been the standard work on patriarchal blessings. Even with these additional works, it stands well the test of time; those with little to no knowledge of these blessings should begin here. Written by sociologists, the book is a curiously effective mix of sociological analysis and measured mourning for the loss of this early Church office. The authors apply a standard Weberian interpretive framework as they chronicle the rise and fall of the position of Church patriarch. The office originated in 1833 (or possibly 1834) when Joseph Smith Jr. ordained his father as patriarch, and it ended with Eldred G. Smith's forced retirement in 1979. Bates and Smith argue that it was inevitable that the office of Church patriarch, a manifestation of traditional authority in its "familial charisma" form, would be eclipsed by the "office charisma" form of traditional authority wielded by the Twelve Apostles.[1] Still, generations of apostles and presidents were thwarted from establishing control over the office because Joseph Smith Jr. never spelled out the exact role of the patriarch and gave to his father, Joseph Smith Sr., and his brother, Hyrum Smith, the first and second patriarchs, additional Church responsibilities. It was not clear if these additional offices were attached to the patriarchate or to the persons of Joseph Smith Sr. and Hyrum Smith.

Bates and Smith effectively complicate the Weberian model, a necessary step in any Weberian analysis where ideal types must

bend (if not break) to complex, historical reality. For instance, they highlight the importance of personality in speeding up and inhibiting the inevitable eclipse of the office. The fourth church patriarch, "Uncle John," the brother of Joseph Smith Sr., was steadfastly loyal to Brigham Young and avoided using family claims to the office. His tenure stabilized the office within the rationalizing church. Eldred G. Smith had the opposite effect because he attempted to revive the precedence and privileges that Hyrum Smith enjoyed. Hyrum Smith had administrative roles such as ordaining and overseeing stake patriarchs. The Twelve did not allow Eldred G. Smith to take up these roles, despite his desire to fulfill them. The Twelve argued that Hyrum Smith had more authority because Joseph Smith gave him additional responsibilities relating to Hyrum Smith's role within the presidency. Thus, Bates and Smith demonstrate in nuanced fashion how effective the Weberian is as a model for analyzing the development of the LDS Church.

Shepherd and Shepherd's book is a useful complement to Bates and Smith's earlier work. The authors have a very different approach and focus. They are more theoretical and aim to demonstrate how their methodology and the Mormon case study speak to general patterns in the development of new religious groups. They argue that, in the years 1834–45, when members faced much opposition from outsiders, internal dissension, and difficult living conditions, patriarchal blessings were a key "commitment mechanism" that promised members a balance of sacrifice and rewards if they stayed faithful to the Church and its teachings (18). For Shepherd and Shepherd these patriarchal blessings reveal how members and leaders in new religious groups collaborate to create a new faith that meets the needs of members.

Like Bates and Smith, Shepherd and Shepherd approach the blessings from a Weberian sociological perspective, but with a quantitative, rather than qualitative methodology. Using the blessings published in Marquardt's first volume, they applied a statistical content analysis to thirty randomly selected blessings given to equal numbers of female and male recipients by the first three patriarchs of the church, Joseph Smith Sr., Hyrum Smith, and William Smith. Using 431 distinct themes identified in these blessings, they ran a content analysis on every line of the selected blessings in order to see which were the most prominent. Twenty preeminent themes emerged: "salvation and

eternal life; lineage; posterity; Zion; priesthood; faith; spirit; affliction; husband; material blessings; spiritual blessings; knowledge and understanding; end times; Israel; good name and reputation; power; kingdom; gospel; covenants; and angels" (177). All of these themes, they suggest, show that early Mormons lived in a worldview of "ultrasupernatural beliefs" where the "oracular prophecy" of Joseph Smith spoke to them directly and authoritatively (7–8). These themes reinforced the democratic power of the priesthood by means of the powerful concept of restorationism. The patriarchs assured recipients if they remained faithful during the surrounding difficulties, opposition, and violence, they would see Zion established and find eternal happiness and power (86).

Shepherd and Shepherd also used their statistical methodology in order to explore if the first three patriarchs emphasized different themes, or if they emphasized different themes to men versus to women. These focused questions suggest the ways that this kind of statistical analysis can be used to zero in on cultural patterns and historical trends that are hard to track in more qualitative approaches. And here, I think, lies the greatest strength and greatest (fruitful) frustration with this book. Shepherd and Shepherd say explicitly that they have taken the first step of analyzing the large collection of blessings gathered by Marquardt. They offer their findings as incentive for other scholars to fill in the historical and cultural context, to explain the importance of these themes and the trends. The reader, thus, is left with many important questions. Do we, for instance, accept Shepherd and Shepherd's preliminary explanation for why angels appear more often in women's blessings than in men's: that in the early Church men were away so often on Church duties that patriarchs felt moved to assure women of supernatural protection? Perhaps instead, for example, this simply demonstrates more general cultural expectations that women were more spiritually inclined and connected than were men, more "naturally" attracted to and attracting angels.

Shepherd and Shepherd suggest other lines of inquiry. Citing Bates and Smith, they note that the themes of patriarchal blessings have shifted from "ultrasupernatural" promises to "inspired guidance" and exhortations to recipients about Church service, education, proper gender roles, and good family life (118–19). They argue that patriarchal blessings are no longer a commitment mechanism

within the Church. Rather, they have become a kind of rite of passage into Mormon adulthood, while temple rituals and general conferences have become contemporary forms of commitment mechanisms. Their conclusions suggest that scholars may need to look to other places to find the potent alchemical collaboration between members and leaders in today's church: temple rituals and general conferences, but perhaps also in the way local to general leaders and members interact, make decisions, and reach agreement within the bureaucratic structures of today's church.

I also wonder if scholars need to pay more attention to the ritual aspect of these blessings and how this has changed through time. Shepherd and Shepherd explain that in the earliest era patriarchal blessings were given in semi-public, group settings; they were "quasi-public affairs" (57). Often entire families gathered together for a blessing meeting in which all members were given and/or heard each other's blessings. In these settings, "Church members' commitments were publicly reiterated and mutually reinforced" (58). Shepherd and Shepherd note that these blessings are now private affairs between the individual and the patriarch and that the content of the blessings is also considered private, unless shared by the recipient. The public setting seems to have been an essential component of the way that patriarchal blessings served as commitment mechanisms. As anthropologist Clifford Geertz would argue, this public ritual moment was a crucial place where members and leaders together created the new LDS worldview that they were self-consciously assuming. Even more intriguing is the idea that blessings have become rites of passage and quite private. This is rather unusual for rites of passage, rituals that often have some kind of public or communal dimension to them. Is this evidence of the shift from "oracular prophecy" to "inspired guidance" in the Church, demonstrating a more controlled, rationalized Church that still values private, individual, bounded connection to the divine?

In the best way, Shepherd and Shepherd's book leaves us with many questions and is a spur to researchers seeking to understand better the early Mormon Church and to track changes within this Church through time. Marquardt's two-volume collection is the wellspring of these questions and a source for their potential answers. Neither volume is (nor claims to be) comprehensive of the patriarchal blessings given within the Church. Nevertheless, they are both

invaluable resources. Marquardt has done an enormous service for scholars in collecting and publishing patriarchal blessings from the full span of Church history. Shepherd and Shepherd's book is an excellent example of how Marquardt's persistence is inspiring new paths of inquiry. The first volume is a collection of blessings given by the first three patriarchs of the Church (Joseph Smith Sr., Hyrum Smith, and William Smith) from 1834 to 1845 and recorded in a notebook as the first official record of patriarchal blessings. There are also some fascinating blessings by Joseph Smith Jr. and Oliver Cowdery in this volume. The second volume covers the years 1844 to 1995 and includes the blessings of Church patriarchs as well as stake patriarchs, additional blessings by Joseph Smith Sr. and Hyrum Smith that came to light after publication of the first volume, minutes of a meeting of patriarchs from 1958, excerpts from the Church handbooks of 1981, 2000, and 2010 on the duties of patriarchs, as well as, in the introduction, extensive quotes from primary sources relating to the conflict between Heber J. Grant, the Twelve, and Eldred G. Smith about how much the Twelve had the power to supervise and control the office and person of the patriarch and how much the patriarch was an autonomous function based on lineal descent and charismatic and traditional authority. Marquardt has arranged the blessings chronologically and by patriarchs for whom at least three blessings exist, along with chapters containing blessings of patriarchs for whom less than three blessings exist. This arrangement allows the reader to zero in on differences between patriarchs and changes in themes through time. The books are printed in user-friendly larger print, something that makes the sheer volume of blessings somewhat less overwhelming. My only complaint is that misspelled words are only sometimes corrected. This left me wondering if other misspelled words were found as such in the original or the result of copyediting lapses, something that is inevitable with such a large collection of material.

This is a fascinating and riveting (though sometimes repetitive) collection of primary sources. From a careful qualitative reading, many of Shepherd and Shepherd's quantitative conclusions are supported. Their top twenty themes are, indeed, central in most of the early blessings. These early blessings overflow with restorationism and the power of the priesthood. In 1845, to Sarah Jane Hall, William Smith promised: "thou art a Josephite and will receive an exal-

tation with that Royal blood when the Israel of God are redeemed and if thou wilt abide the law of thy Companion one in whom there is no guile none shall take thy place or deprive thee of an everlasting inheritance" (*Early Blessings* 273). Shepherd and Shepherd's contention that these blessings functioned as commitment mechanisms is likewise bolstered in the way the patriarchs talk about the blessings within the blessings themselves. Patriarchs describe their prophetic words as valuable resources to be remembered, treasured, and recalled in times of trouble or distress (*Early Blessings* 268).

Marquardt's volumes force the reader to look at the other two works with a wider lens. Marquardt, for instance, complicates even more Bates and Smith's Weberian analysis. Describing the conflict between Eldred G. Smith, the Twelve, and Heber J. Grant, Marquardt highlights the often-informal authority held by women and how this kind of authority influenced the processes of rationalization. During this final conflict, two women had pivotal roles. Some in the Twelve felt that Eldred G. Smith was dissatisfied with the diminished authority of the patriarchal office because his mother had sowed seeds of discontent during the time he waited, was passed over, and then finally assumed the office (*Later Blessings* xlvi). Eldred G. Smith's secretary was also prominent in the final conflict between Eldred G. Smith, the Twelve, and the Presidency. Smith blamed her for continuing old practices that were points of contention with the Twelve, suggesting, for instance, that she too quickly called in stake patriarchs to give blessings in his stead and in his office space when he was unavailable (*Later Blessings* xli). While it is hard to gauge the actual influence of these women who emerge briefly from the background, this speaks to the way women's non-institutional authority continues to complicate the patriarchal bureaucratic and traditional authority structures of the church. Beneath the surface level of patriarchal authority in the LDS Church lies a myriad of complex moving parts that simultaneously support and undermine it.

The full blessings also demonstrate what we lose if we only read the analyses of Bates and Smith and the Shepherds. The blessings allow us to step more fully into the worldviews and conversations of leaders and members from any era. As Shepherd and Shepherd suggest and as the blessings so vibrantly demonstrate, in the early years, Church members stood at the end of ordinary time; the extraordinary language and imagery of the Bible helped express

this experience. God and Jesus Christ were not distant realities, but present, interested, and connected. Joseph Smith Sr. promised Wilford Woodruff: "Yea the Lord of Glory shall appear unto thee. Thou shalt put thy hands upon his feet and feel his wounds with thy hands that thou mayest become a special witness of his name" (*Early Blessings* 155). Divine and evil forms of the supernatural were loosed upon the landscape and God's chosen people had to endure the battle, a battle for the eternal life of the individual, the community, and the world. The early patriarchs effectively wove the destiny of individuals into this larger theological and historical discourse. William Smith spun out for Joseph West a tale of rich detail, showing how West's personal faithfulness had ultimate impact:

> [T]hou shalt stand in the way of the wicked & like the roaring lion that cometh up from the thicket whose Angry growl maketh the forest to tremble shall thy voice be heard and many shall fear the Lord of hosts and mighty princes shall bow to the mild scepter of the Gospel and humble themselves to the dust and with the Israel of God shall they come to Zion and the ships of Tarshish shall bring them and their Silver & their Gold with them to the place of the Mount Zion wherein dwelleth righteousness. (*Early Blessings* 428)

In this ritualized narrative, West became a key player in the ultimate eschatological drama.

Marquardt's collection is a treasure trove of new directions for research. The blessings and the sustained wrangling between Church patriarchs, the Twelve, and the presidency (described by Bates and Smith and the Shepherds), for example, reminded me of something that I noticed when doing primary source dissertation research in diaries of nineteenth-century Mormon men and women, as well as in Church periodicals: Hyrum Smith was very prominent in the early Church. This is an obvious but grossly under-studied fact. In their diaries and public writings, early members often paired Joseph Smith with Hyrum Smith as a partnership presidency echoing the missionary pairings that began in the nineteenth century and continue today. Jan Shipps and Richard Bushman, among others, have written eloquently about how the early Church was founded and supported by the Smith family as a whole.[2] But in the hearts and minds of early generations of Church members the two brothers stood out from other Smith family members as a kind of

prophetic unit. Patriarchs picked up this fraternal pairing as they exhorted young males to avenge the death of the two brothers (*Later Blessings* 210), but also as they described a recipient's post-mortal life. Stake patriarch William G. Perkins promised Anthony W. Ivins, for instance, that he would be caught up by God at the dedication of the temple and that "there you will see Joseph and Hyrum and many of the Latter day Saints [sic] with their resurrected bodies" (*Later Blessings* 205).

The prominence of Hyrum Smith in these blessings speaks to the institutional conflict that Marquardt and Bates and Smith detail. It helps explain why members of the Twelve and the Presidency were eager to rationalize the office of church patriarch as a position under the Twelve and without administrative duties. They were wrestling with a powerful collective memory and historical narrative that paired the president and patriarch. A critical mass of members envisioned this pairing at the inner circle of Church leadership and history. It was ironic, but not surprising that the brother whose descendants followed the LDS Church to Utah was the one inevitably (in the Weberian model) elided from the Church's historical narrative. This suggests that the eventual eradication of the office of Church patriarch was a part of a larger campaign by Church leadership to secure their traditional and bureaucratic authority by downplaying in historical narratives and public discourse Hyrum Smith who most early Mormons believed would have been Joseph Smith Jr.'s successor to the presidency had he not died with his younger brother in a Carthage jail. Marquardt's collection helps demonstrate that scholars need to explore in more depth the role of Hyrum Smith in the early Church, as well as his recession in Church history and, related, theology.

In these blessings, we also see intriguing shifts in how patriarchs and members envisioned the afterlife and the plan of salvation. Early blessings promised recipients eternal happiness in a glorified, supernatural heaven surrounded by an extended network of ancestors and descendants.[3] Later blessings exhorted recipients that they had to continually progress toward godhood even after mortality. These shifts are evidence that the plan of salvation had crystallized with its idea of three estates, focus on temple work for the dead, and learning to be a righteous leader by creating a healthy and happy home environment. With this shift came changes in imagery, lan-

guage, and focus within the blessings. Increasingly, the blessings looked backward to the individual's preexistence, not backward, in restorationist fashion, to biblical narratives and lineages. By the late nineteenth century, blessing recipients were often told that they were choice spirits in their preexistence. They were still informed of their glorious Israelite lineage, but patriarchs also assured them that their preexistent, spiritual ancestry derived from individual merit proved in pre-earth events, often the conflict between God and Lucifer. Dead family members appeared increasingly in the blessings, and recipients were exhorted to be "saviors" to these ancestors in their temple work (*Later Blessings* 471). In the later blessings, parenthood did not assure the recipient of the blessing of eternal glory; rather, the model of divine parenthood assured the recipient that he or she could work toward and, with enough effort, attain eternal, familial glory. As part of this shift, the Mother in Heaven began to show up in blessings, not often, but regularly, as the divine pairing took center stage as the aspirational, eternal domestic model. In 1955, for instance, Christian Hyrum Muhlestein had Reva Lynne Bennett look forward to motherhood in the spirit world:

> [Y]our marriage will endure and your relationship will continue in and after the resurrection, and you will have increase and your children will be spirits and when sufficient spirit children will have been born to you to justify the organization of an earth; it will be done then your faithful spirit children will be given the opportunity to go upon that earth and receive a body even as you have done and now enjoy. (*Later Blessings* 490)

By 1995, patriarchs exhorted both men and women to co-create a stable, moral, healthy home life. Bryce Corey Anderson was promised he would be a "father in Israel," paralleling the Mother in Israel role that women were assigned from the very first blessings (499). In these later blessings, members had to create a good home life to assure that they and their children could live in eternal happiness and become divine actors in the plan of salvation. In the course of the two volumes, the reader moves from blessing recipients who were about to be translated, after much suffering, to eternal glory with their families, to recipients who, using free will, were working doggedly to enlarge a progressive and continually expanding plan of salvation.

These themes and shifts, a few among countless others, call for detailed historical, cultural, and à la Shepherd and Shepherd, statistical analyses. These authors and editors have bequeathed to scholars valuable, seemingly inexhaustible questions and answers. They give us new ways to look at the Mormon community, new ways to answer old questions about the role of prophecy in the LDS Church, theological changes, and how members and leaders have (or have not) adjusted to changing times and a changing Church. I look forward to the future conversations that will be generated by this fulcrum of primary and secondary sources.

Notes

1. Bates and Smith and Shepherd and Shepherd are in conversation with D. Michael Quinn. See D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994); Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997).

2. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 2007).

3. For extended discussion of this early Mormon understanding of the afterlife, see: Samuel M. Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Theology as Poetry

Adam S. Miller. *Rube Goldberg Machines: Essays in Mormon Theology*. Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012. 132 pp. Paper: $18.95. ISBN: 978-1589581937.

Reviewed by Robert A. Rees

> *If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?*
>
> *—Emily Dickinson*

While in Dallas giving a couple of firesides last June, I met Adam Miller. In response to one of my presentations he asked interesting questions and made statements that made me think. When he learned that I teach at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, he asked if I would be interested in reading his book, *Rube Goldberg Machines: Essays in Mormon Theology.* Who could resist a book with such a title! When Adam's book arrived (along with *An Experiment on the Word: Reading Alma 32,* for which he served as editor), my eye immediately caught the blurb on the front cover: "Adam Miller is the most original and provocative Latter-day Saint theologian practicing today." My immediate response was to consider this puffery, until I saw that it was written by Richard Bushman, a scholar whose opinions I respect. "The most original and provocative Latter-day Saint theologian practicing today"? It didn't take me long to recognize that Bushman was right: *Rube Goldberg Machines* is not simply original and provocative, it is often thrilling, a word I don't ever remember using in relation to a book of scholarly writing.

In his introduction, Miller denigrates theology, or at least deflates it: "Theology is a diversion. It is not serious like doctrine, respectable like history, or helpful like therapy. Theology is gratuitous" (xiii). To emphasize this, he analogizes theology to an ingenuous, overly complicated machine whose function is to perform a simple task: "Doing theology is like building a comically circuitous Rube Goldberg Machine: you spend your time tinkering together an unnecessarily complicated, impractical, and ingenious apparatus for doing things that are, in themselves, simple" (xiii). Such a machine, Miller argues, is not really worth very much: "The Church neither needs nor endorses our Rube Goldberg flights" (xiii). Thank heavens that doesn't stop Miller from building his machines which, it turns out, are quite dazzling and it is counter to his argument that "theology has only one strength: it can make simple things difficult" (xiv). *Au contraire*, my dear theologian!

Part of what is exciting about *Rube Goldberg Machines* is that in it Miller stakes his claim as a Mormon theologian. In reading the chapter titled "A Manifesto for Mormon Theology," I was initially taken aback and then fascinated by Miller's assertion that "a critical theology is chartered by charity" (59). Miller elaborates: "Good theology . . . is grounded in the details of lived experience, and it takes charity—the pure love of Christ—as the only real justification for its

having been written" (49); "Theology participates in the illumination of patterns that show charity, produce meaning, and [ad]dress suffering" (59). Wow, I thought, that disqualifies a lot of theology that I have read which has seemed much more focused on argument than on charity, and yet, as soon as one reads such words, one experiences the shock of recognition that they are true—or ought to be.

Miller makes the same assertion about criticism—that it too should be grounded in charity, which would therefore likewise disqualify the vast majority of critical thinking and writing (perhaps, soberly, some of my own!): "A genuinely critical approach begins and ends with what is crucial. In the context of theology, this means that criticism is defined by charity (agape). Charity must both define the critic's disposition toward the subject and work to filter the acute from the cosmetic" (59).

Theology and criticism as essentially charitable impulses and actions is a radical concept, one that to my mind shifts the ground (and possibly shakes the foundation) of theological and critical discourse. Miller elucidates: "The key is to pose critical questions that will allow the voice of charity to respond" (62). One can imagine a whole new theology based on such ideas. Were Mormon theology to embody such an approach, it might constitute a sort of theological revolution, a sort of continuing revelation of what a Christ-centered theology should be.

As a Christian humanist, I found Miller's essay "Humanism, Mormonism" of particular interest. "Humanism" is a bad word in some conservative, including some Mormon, circles, and yet for Miller, as for me, humanism and Mormonism seem inextricably bound to one another. As Miller argues, "There is both a Mormon foundation to humanistic inquiry and a humanistic foundation to Mormon inquiry, because Mormonism and humanism converge in their commitment to the new" (107). Perhaps another way of saying this is that both humanism and Mormonism are based on the concept of continuing revelation, the one through the imagination and the other through the Holy Spirit, although from my experience, these ways of knowing often overlap.

Miller posits that it is the very idea of the possibility of discovering, inventing, or creating the new that gives being its meaning, which he expresses in another koan-like phrase, "Without the new, the being of everything is nothing" (109). It was precisely be-

cause Jesus made the world new with every word and every act that Christianity offers such hope. The genius and inspiration of Joseph Smith is that he understood this: "Mormonism explicitly reframes the Christian tradition as itself being vain without the intervention of the new. Joseph Smith's claim is that revelation—both new revelation and continually new revelation—is absolutely essential to the vitality of Christianity. . . . In reaffirming revelation Mormonism is reaffirming Christianity" (110).

The affinity between Mormon Christianity and humanism is that both have the capacity to open our hearts and our minds to endless possibilities, endless newness, if you will, both human and divine. This is the most exciting realization about existence. In fact, it seems to me that along with eternal love, eternal revelation is the only thing that makes the idea of eternal lives worth considering. God's declaration, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5), is, by extension through modern revelation, his promise to us, "Behold, if you are worthy, you too can make all things new" (implied in D&C 88:35).

I believe that contemporary Mormonism's failure to fully recognize the connection between the restored gospel and the humanities explains in part why it has yet to find its full flowering. Essentially, I feel that many Mormons remain suspicious of the humanities (not, I would say, without some justification, considering how far the humanities sometimes veer from their true and highest function) and thus remain blind to their possibilities for enriching (and even correcting) our religion. In fact, Miller sees Mormonism and humanism as "mutually corrective" (112). He adds, "For the sake of each, it is necessary to perpetually expose humanism to its inner 'Mormon' impulses while simultaneously exposing Mormonism to its own deep humanism" (112).

At times, Miller seems as much poet as theologian. Essay after essay does what Robert Frost says poetry is supposed to do: "begin in delight and end in wisdom," although at times Miller's essays begin in wisdom and end in delight. In reality, Miller's writing is as often theology as poetry. Consider, for example, the following from Chapter 1, "Benedictus": "When [the theologian] reads, she reads right off the edge of the page and onto her desk and into her yard and out under the sun. When she writes, she writes right off the edge of her page and onto her desk and up her arm and into her heart. Her arms are

tattooed with a fine scrawl of unrepeating names for God's grace. Her body is an unboxed tefillin. Her eyes, open" (1).

For those who do not catch the allusion in the next to the last sentence, tefillin are the small black leather boxes worn by devout Jewish men during morning prayers that contain scrolls with inscribed verses from the Torah. By using such a bold metaphor, Miller intends us to see the theologian's body as the container of God's word and her heart as inscribed with His name. This kind of metaphor is characteristic of the English metaphysical poets who used extravagantly bold imagery to awaken imaginative readings of their texts.

Miller's essays constitute philosophy in a new key. Much theological writing is esoteric, erudite, and impenetrable. Frequently it is characterized by labyrinthine rhetorical arguments loaded with theological jargon. Miller's theological writing is at times quirky, bizarre, and even Zen-like. For example, consider the following koan-like statements:

> "Theology helps us to find religion by helping us to lose it" (xv)
>
> "[The theologian] faithfully repeats what she is told by never faithfully repeating it" (1).
>
> "She reads the Bible by writing a new one" (1).
>
> "She is God's work and glory. She is that thing she had never dared suppose: she is nothing" (2).

No careful reader can simply keep on reading after encountering such statements. They stop the reader in her tracks and make her ponder. But since, as Miller argues, theology requires imagination, they stimulate her imagination as well ("How exactly can she write a new Bible by reading it?")

Miller also makes unexpected observations, observations that at first glance seem more in the realm of therapy than theology. Consider, for example, the following: "Mormonism makes plain what is otherwise left implicit: liberation from the bonds of sin cannot be disentangled from the work of sorting out our family relationships" (18). I never thought of that before, but it seems absolutely right—and even profound.

Here's another from his chapter, "Love, Truth, and the Meaning

of Marriage": "The potential infinity of the family is the matrix within which the drama of Christ's atoning love is enfolded" (90).(This chapter contains a number of other fascinating observations, including "Love is an experience of the nonrelation of sexual difference. It is an exposure to the gap of being human that is human sexuality" [96].)

At times, Miller's aphorisms are hidden poems. Consider the following, which I have titled using Miller's own lines and then arranged in stanzaic form:

Religion Is Revealed Geography

All sinners are expatriates—
not because they've left
some particular place behind
but because they've come un-
grounded from place all together.

As sinners, we no longer know
where we are. We no longer
feel earth beneath our feet,
smell rain in the air,
or stain our hands
with walnut hulls. . . .
Sky turns unnoticed.
Angels . . . point to the ground
and say, "Here!" (52)

The image of "walnut hulls" is a powerful because it evokes the difficulty of cracking open the hard shell (repentance) but also the delight of finding the fresh nut meat (forgiveness) within, rewards that are diminished to a soul racked with sin.

Miller's profound, provocative, and poetic essays each tempt commentary, but lest this review end up being as long as the book itself, I restrict myself to several and hope that the reader is enticed (seduced!) into reading the complete collection—and then start reading again.

While it is highly unlikely that Miller intended it, his fourteen small essays might be thought of as a sort of theological sonnet, with each essay corresponding to a poetic line in the typical sonnet form. While the metaphor is extravagant, it does fit imaginatively with Miller's deep poetic voice and sensibility. To extend my admit-

tedly strained metaphor further, I see the last two essays—"Groundhog Day" and "Shipwrecked"—as a sort of couplet, summarizing and tying many of Miller's rich themes together in a way similar to the final two lines of a Shakespearean sonnet.

In "Groundhog Day," Miller uses the movie by the same title (starring Bill Murray as the lead character, Phil) to illustrate the fact that our lives are full of diurnal, seasonal, never-ending, mundane repetitions:

> There is no escaping the minute specificity of repetition required for anything to be what it is. Again and again you must reach for the alarm, roll out of bed, straighten the sheets, and stretch your arms wide. Again and again you must wash your hair, rinse the conditioner, adjust the hot water, and reach for the towel. Again and again you must eat your lunch, pause at the water fountain, stop at the restroom, and wipe sauce from your chin. Again and again you must breathe in and breathe out, breathe in and breathe out. . . . Life is all nickels and dimes. Every moment, ten thousand points of resistance, ten thousand paper cuts, ten thousand pleasures, and ten thousand pains (122).

Miller gives us the depressing news that while we "may yet dream of the frictionless, of floating in zero-G" (122), like Phil, we have no place to go. And further, even the novelty (which Miller calls bluntly, "a red herring" [123]) which we crave to interrupt the endless banality of repetition, "won't scare the groundhog back into his hole" (123).

Then, in a way typical of Miller's thinking, he turns the seeming depression of the endlessly mundane on its head: "If you think I'm being bitter, you've misunderstood. I'm being compassionate. And I'm trying to be Mormon" (123), by which he means that Mormons have made the mundane eternal—or rather accepted the inescapable realization that endless repetition is—well—endless, part of the fabric of eternal life. Miller continues:

> In general the complaint about Mormonism is that it is all too mundane. God, for Mormons, is not supra-mundane. God has a body? Fingers and toes? He's married? He must, everyday, tie the sash on his white robe? His immortal lungs perpetually expand and contract? Heaven, too, for Mormons is supra-mundane. Heaven? Where people are still married, still work, still have children, still change diapers, still share casseroles? Heaven, too, for Mormons is what seals our union with the mundane rather than terminates it (123).

Miller continues, "Leave it to Mormonism to claim that even in heaven we'll have to button and unbutton our shirts, show all our work, suffer paper cuts, and—of course, forever and ever again—breathe" (123). He concludes, "Leave it to Mormonism to see the nihilistic claim that there is nothing but the aching specificity of this repetition and raise it to the power of infinity" (123). And, like almost everything else Miller sees in our lives, this too is a gift: "There is no help on the way. No one is coming to save you from the grace of the mundane. Jesus came to give this grace, not take it away. Breathe. Nothing could be more merciful" (124).

Finally, in his last essay, "Shipwrecked," using an image from Swift's *Gulliver's Travels,* Miller sees himself as one who from birth "was already bound by the invisible twine of ten thousand threads to Mormonism" (125). But, he is quick to add, unlike Gulliver who wakens from his sleep to find himself powerless to unloose his bonds, "I have remained because of one conclusion that I have been entirely unable to avoid: I am convinced that not only did I wake to find myself bound to Mormonism but that it is Mormonism (with Joseph Smith, handcarts, Biblical scripture, modern prophets, Jell-O molds, temples, missionary work, and all the rest) that has done the waking" (125–26). He adds, "The substance of my conviction about Mormonism amounts to a running account of the ways in which, because of Mormonism, I have been and increasingly am awake" (126). This reminds us of Thoreau's famous lines from the last paragraph of *Walden,* "Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The Sun is but a morning star."

Miller concludes this essay and his theological sonnet, with these words: "Mormonism has indeed been marrow to my bones, joy to my heart, light to my eyes, music to my ears, and life to my whole being. Thus lit up, I woke to find Jesus leaning over me, smiling wide, with the Book of Mormon snapped like smelling salts beneath my nose" (126).

The good news for all of us who are awakened by Miller's brilliant writing is that he is a young man with more books to write. On reading this volume of essays, we might say, as Emily Dickinson said upon reading Lydia Maria Child's *Letters from New York,* "This, then, is a book, and there are more of them!"

Annie Kennedy
150 Sego Lilies/Honeycomb,
olive oil and grape juice on
baked paper, 36" x 36"

Annie Kennedy
Sego Lilies Small Honeycomb,
olive oil and grape juice on
baked paper, 8" x 8"

Woman: Joint Heiress With Christ

Liz Hammond

Originally given as a talk in the First Ward, Cambridge, Mass. Stake on Mother's Day, May 12, 2013

I've been asked to speak on the topic of women who have inspired me, how they've helped me, and how I honor them in my life.

I want to start with a remarkable experience I had in this ward, when a group of Primary girls inspired me in a life-changing way. I was teaching the senior Primary about the stories of Jesus, and they were very squirmy so I decided to harness this energy into a spontaneous form of kinesthetic learning. I said: "Let's act out things people do to show they are following the Savior's example!"

First a boy stood up and acted like he was teaching or preaching. "Great job! Yes, we all need to share the gospel. Jesus was a master teacher! Very good!"

The next boy acted out reading scripture. "Absolutely! Jesus read his scriptures and knew them by heart! Next example!"

Enter, the girls. They came in groups, of course.

The first troop of thespians gave a rather clever, funny, G-rated account of the Savior's birth. I was impressed to note that Jesus's umbilical cord was neatly cut and tied. I wasn't quite sure how to respond to this, though, so I said, "Um, yes, the Savior had to be born! Getting a body is important!"

The next girl placed her hands on another girl's head and acted out healing the blind. It was arresting to see these girls going through priesthood motions. I couldn't exactly say, "Yes, you can heal the sick with the laying on of hands," could I? I muttered a bit breathlessly, "Um, yes, it takes a lot of faith to be healed!"

Next girls acted out bestowing the priesthood. I simply said,

"Next group!" The next girls acted out administering the sacrament. At this point I wondered if I should say something. Did I need to elucidate that the girls could do none of these things to follow Christ? I decided to simply let their skits reflect that they knew the stories of the Savior, and not to expound on how boys and girls follow him differently.

The next girls marched up . . . and in a moment I will never forget, Amber raised Naishma from the dead. I was speechless, stricken dumb, to see these little girls play out a symbol of atonement and resurrection. I squeaked out something like, "You all know a lot about Jesus! Let's do music time!"

With gusto they belted out the first strain: "I'm trying to be like Jesus, I'm following in his ways. I'm trying to love as he did, in all that I do and say."

I have spent months, even years, trying to parse out this experience and answer the question, "How can women be like Jesus if we don't have a priesthood? What is my power?" I studied. I learned that many of the qualities that were celebrated in Jesus were not what would be considered classically male: He did not sit on a throne, carry weapons, or lead armies. He did not perform feats of physical prowess, he did not marry the princess or have a quiver full of children. His celebrated virtues were classically feminine: gentleness, kindness, unconditional love, forgiveness, service, and strikingly, he kept the company of women. It was like he was a sister. He even once called himself a mother, in the imagery of a hen inviting her children to shelter unbder her wings. (We do not usually consider chickens to be nature's most noble animals, but in scripture, wings are the symbol of power.) Jesus obviously understood inspirational womanhood, and he embraced it without hesitation, incorporating women into the fabric of his dispensation unlike any prophet before or since. I pondered further and learned more—the reason female spirituality matters, the reason you should listen to a woman when she speaks.

The female experience of life is a very vulnerable thing. I went visiting teaching once to a jolly sister in Ithaca, who, when I sat down with her and discussed the procession of her long life, solemnly declared to me, "I believe women are placed on the earth to suffer." And she meant it. She chose to assign meaning to her tragic experiences by attributing them to God's will—by believing that

He wanted her to suffer. She had chosen to believe in an abusive Heavenly Father, not a being of whom we say "God is Love." This is an absolute tragedy. The eternal nobility of womanhood is one of the Restoration's great recalibrations in Christianity. Woman's suffering is the condition of mortality and the result of the abuses of agency. It is not a holy calling. But I could not turn to a scripture that read, "Woman is that she might have joy." This sister's reaction to her life experiences is not an anomaly for women. Often when a woman tells me of a personal tragedy, her sensemaking narrative reflects some form of "What have I done to deserve this?" or else, "This must be God's will. Thy will be done." I believed for years that my own multiple miscarriages had somehow been God's will, and this prevented me from fully trusting Him. I think I have a much better idea of God's will now. God does not want women to suffer. I can, however, kind of see where we, as women, would get this idea. It is the result of our collective reality.

The female condition is appalling. The majority of people in poverty are women and their children. Professional women face an exhausting host of challenges and injustices—many of which are humiliating—and those are exponentially increased if they become mothers. Every mother who is not independently wealthy faces financial vulnerability whether or she is married or not. Centuries of political, philosophical, scientific, and cultural and religious leaders have perceived and portrayed the female form as broken, incomplete, subordinate, or as a source of sensuality and temptation. The story of Eve has been a tremendous burden on my gender, as women are often blamed for all the problems there are in the world and sometimes even as the source of evil itself. Women have often been measured and classified solely by the status of their sexual activity. Women are often penalized and denigrated for rearranging their lives in self-empowering ways. They are luridly portrayed as victims in media. Around the world, female babies receive less nutrition than their brothers. Exponentially more female fetuses are aborted. And overwhelmingly, it is women who are most often the victims of intimidation, harassment, extortion, pornography, violence, rape, abuse, trafficking, slavery, and other atrocities. And yet, even with all this, the present day is the best time it has ever been to be a woman. These are not uplifting things, probably not the kind of stuff you want to hear in sacrament meeting on Mother's Day. But we declare

a gospel that we claim is equal to the task these burdens represent. I list these things not to cast women as victims, but to present a narrative of spiritual opportunity

Woman's collective vulnerability and experience in the world impacts her spirituality. It affects us on many levels, including how we interact with men (including God the Father), and with our own power. It is part of my everyday calculus as I navigate life to figure out how to keep myself and my daughters safe. There is a very delicate balance between trying to maintain a girl's innocence and also giving her the awareness and assertiveness she needs, between protecting her but not stifling her, and between teaching her how to defend herself while maintaining that she does not bear the responsibility of others' sins against her. I do not want to underprepare my daughters and leave them vulnerable, but neither do I want to fill them with fear.

I submit to you that women continue to descend beneath unspeakable things, even in our modern day, even in our local places, and this brings them very close to Him who descended beneath all things. Just by being women, we breathe the air of Gethsemane. I am a privileged woman, yet I feel an echo of empathic mourning for my sisters, as do most women. Each of us knows how easily "that could be me." Our Savior Jesus Christ descended beneath all things, and also experienced a collective pain, and He used this to empower Himself with the profound empathy for the human condition that He needed to enact the atonement. He did not say, when crucified, "thy will be done" and then simply accept His death as God's will, resignedly moving into His tomb. Despite suffering, He knew it was God's will, not that He should die, but that He should LIVE, and spread that life to everybody else. He rose again and offered us the power to do the same.

The empathy that arises from pain is one source of Christlike love, and the culmination of it is the healer's art. There are better ways to obtain it—for example, we can grow empathy and love by living up to our covenant to mourn with those who mourn and by bearing one another's burdens, or by fighting evil outright. I knew a woman in this ward who used her training as a lawyer to fight against child pornography. This was a painful burden to bear, since she learned of great tragedies, in order to fight it. She grew in empathy and the healer's art through this heavy service—which, while

difficult, was far less destructive than being a victim of it herself. I reject the idea that woman has been called to suffer . . . but the woman's collective experience has unfolded as it has, and it is undeniably powerful. Though tragically obtained, this empathy and healing we carry is one thing women have to offer. This is Amber raising Naishma from the dead, as sisters raise every one every day in a thousand resurrections. Yes, we have things to teach you.

We learn in church that men and women are fundamentally different. If we follow this assertion to its logical conclusion, it would mean that men and women have different spiritual contributions to make. I cannot, of course, speak for every woman, but I am confident in declaring that female mortal experience is not the male mortal experience and that the female spiritual experience IS NOT the male spiritual experience. Most of our leadership, scriptures, quotations, publications, and teachings reflect the male spiritual experience, and the price of this is, I believe, that we have not yet figured out how to institutionalize inspirational womanhood.

We have not made women's words required reading. When female leaders speak in general conference, they speak to their stewardships . . . so if you are not in the Relief Society, Young Women, or Primary, you may easily turn off your attention when those leaders speak, as I have done myself. There is no declaration: "This is my beloved daughter, hear Her." Nor do we sing, "Come listen to a prophetess's voice." Without an outright commission to do so, we may only rarely hear women speak of their personal inspirations or allow them to inspire us. In reality, inspiring women surround us like oxygen; but like oxygen, though it sustains every breath, they can be invisible and easy to ignore. If you are to be spiritually inspired by women, the burden is often upon you to notice and to seek it out.

Despite all this, Mormonism has started to heal the female wounds and welcome inspirational womanhood. We have, I believe, rhetorically adopted a theology of gender equality. We have established a narrative that Eve's act in the garden was purposeful and necessary, even heroic, or in the words of Sheri Dew, "Were it not for Eve, our progression would have ceased."[1] Because of this, the hearts of the children are turning again to the parent whom they reviled—Eve, the mother of all living, their own mother. Until we recaptured Eve, we could not recapture sacred motherhood or

womanhood, so this is key. We Mormon women have a history of empowered matriarchy, where women healed and prophesied and had visions. I have learned over the past several years that the same such charismatic spirituality actively continues in the lives of LDS women, though usually very quietly. We are encouraged as women to seek after spiritual gifts and to be educated. And very significantly, we have a Heavenly Mother doctrine. Female spirituality remains theologically and institutionally undeveloped in Mormonism, but the foundation has definitely been laid. As it unfolds through ongoing revelation, it will be wonderful to behold! In the meantime, women need to practice expressing their feminine spirituality. So here I go—I'll share with you a vision I had while preparing this talk.

I had a dream of a depiction of the *Pietà* sculpture. In my dream, the beautiful stone Mary held the crucified Christ. Tears fell from her stone eyes. Then Jesus's eyes opened, and He smiled at her and said, "Mother, I am reborn," and then, now resurrected, he walked away. Mary's eyes continued to pour tears, and I realized that the *Pietà* reversed . . . that Mary was a dead female form, held in the arms of Heavenly Father. She continued to weep with the pain her sisters endured, and as I watched, became a young girl of twelve years old—representing all of womanhood in her adolescence, and Heavenly Father wept with her. Then Jesus returned to her and said, as he had to the twelve-year-old daughter of Jarius, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." And she did rise. Jesus then said, "Mother, you are reborn."

Women's visions are powerful and revealing. And they are often whispered. You may never encounter one unless you seek it out.

I want to share a specific example of an inspiring woman. I do so with some trepidation. It is a fraught thing, to hold up an inspiring woman, because women may see her as one more impossible standard to live up to. For those who venerate her, they may say "I could never do that." I know this because I feel it a lot myself. The Spirit is in the process of convincing me that this is the wrong reaction to an inspiring woman. I should say, "She is an example of my potential—I could totally do something, Liz-flavored, as awesome as that!" Sisters and brothers, I think we need to take our matriarchs to heart and see in them the power that we ourselves wield in our own time and our own ways. And when we behold one inspiring woman, we are invited to ponder what a queendom of matriarchs could do. So with that in mind I give you Judy Dushku.

Judy Dushku is a former Relief Society president in this stake. She is a political science professor at Suffolk University in Boston, and several years ago she focused a class on the plight of child soldiers. She chose Uganda, because they speak English and the materials about it would be accessible for her students. At the end of the semester, the students went to Uganda and built a house for a former child soldier. There she met many other survivors and heard their stories. They are the kind of stories you don't want to hear. I was surprised to learn that half of the children kidnapped to become child soldiers were girls. As part of their initiation, they were required to perform acts against members of their own families, so that they could never return home. They were forced to be soldiers as the boys were but also had to do all the cooking, cleaning, and campwork, and they were used as nighttime slaves. It was common for these girls to have four to five children by the age of twenty. They've only known desperate poverty and lives of untold horror. How does one even begin to approach a problem like this?

Judy Dushku opted to believe in the women, their inspirational womanhood, and their power to heal each other. She realized that what they needed even as much as homes was actually something profoundly doable: they needed a new community and new families with new family relationships. These women needed sisterhood. And she thought to herself, Who better to build community, to foster family, to create sisterhood, than Mormon women, who are raised in the language of home, family, and Zion? So she returned to Uganda with Mormon women and built more homes, and eventually, at the request of the Ugandan women, she built them a community center, where visiting therapists offer therapy through art, sports, film making, and recording the women's stories . . . gathering their histories—or in Judy's words—their "herstories," so that they are not lost or forgotten. Judy did not tell them what they needed—her act was to follow their lead, to truly hear, in capital letters, What The Women Said, and to validate that with action.

I only know about Judy and her organization, which is called Tharce-gulu, from the periphery. But when I read about it, or watch videos online, it is striking to me that Sister Dushku is spontaneously called, by men and women alike, "Mother Judy." She takes a crushing burden and believes that these women know the pathway through their own pain. She offers a safe haven, a womb even,

where they can enter and start over, gestating from "victim . . . to survivor . . . to thriver." This is the healing all women need—this is the healing all women do, and this is this healing, this is the rebirth, that makes them mothers in Zion.

In the book *Words of Wisdom: A Collection of Quotes for LDS Women,* one woman named Susan Harriss said:

> Families are not an end, but a means to an end, which is the transcendent principle of love: As mothers, as fathers ... we may set aside our interests time and again; we may practice watching the interests of others. But if that sacrificial love starts with our children and stops there, we will have lost our opportunity to fulfill Christ's commandment, and so have everything that he has promised. Christ's commandment is that we love, not just our children, but one another! Having loved our own, we now can love the world. Now we rise to the task for which parenting prepared us.[2]

You can read about a diverse array of captivating mothers in zion online at the Mormon Women Project, which profiles sisters who practice their inspired womanhood (www.mormonwomen.com).

Inspirational womanhood will never be crushed out—but the world has long been a desert for women, and if we want a rose to bloom here—if we want acres full of them—then we need many gardeners, and a lot of purposeful care.

To inspire, women need to be inspired. Here is my recipe for the inspired woman, which I call, "The Care and Feeding of Matriarchs."

Women need to gather as women, unscripted.

Women need safety, on a community level. It can be difficult for women to be truly honest when in public.

Women need to discover, not just be taught. Women need to teach. Women's words need to be written, archived, and studied. Women need to be quoted by others. The first time I heard myself quoted, which was by Linda Eastly, it was riveting. I had said something profound, and I had been heard, remembered, and recycled to the community as a source of inspiration. It was not a pride thing—it was a moment of clarity when I knew my inspirational worth.

Women need legacy—a connection to our social, historical, and religious foremothers. Right now, many mothers are shadowed in the silence and confusion surrounding polygamy—we don't want

to talk about it, so we don't talk about them, or have any interest in what they have to say. I have spent many hours reading words penned by polygamous pioneer women—and found them to be phenomenal. We need to raise the mother's teachings to prominent places in our spiritual genealogies if we are ever to really start delving our female theology in this gospel.

Women also need vision—an idea of what we are becoming. A women will never "be like Heavenly Father" because she can never be a father—a woman needs a peek behind Heavenly Mother's veil if she is to ever see her own reflection. This is a righteous desire.

Women need matriarchs. They need others to recognize their matriarchs.

Women need people to recognize that female spirituality is divine, and not to dismiss it as "emotion." We have truth, even if it sometimes comes through a literal veil of tears.

Women need time and space to mourn. They should not always be expected to smile. Women also need high adventure.

Women need their spiritual concerns to be brought before the Lord in their homes, in their wards, and at the general level. Also, women need ecclesiastical leadership to legitimize and speak the language of inspirational womanhood. We need them to utilize female spirituality when making stewardship decisions.

Women need to be trusted to solve their own problems—given the chance, they will innovate and execute inspired solutions through the Spirit, as they always have, and contribute these solutions to the spiritual life of the Church. We can look to them to heal not just women's problems, but the world's problems.

To do so, women need the raw materials of creation. A woman, like God, cannot create something out of nothing. In recent years, the world has awoken to the now-established fact that, when women control economic resources and when they participate in social and political power, society at large benefits in such ways and at such a magnitudes that similar results cannot be obtained with any other approach.

And finally, women need skills to expand their influence and power to enact their spiritual truths. This means they need time to develop skills and to pursue high-impact opportunities, without being burdened by guilt that they are neglecting their families, without the dread of perfectionism, and without being forced to choose

between their relationships and the causes they believe in.

When woman is healed, when Jesus declares, "Mother, you are reborn," what could women do then? It is a question worthy of fasting and prayer.

I hope I've made a case that women have a female spirituality to offer, that they are worth listening to, and that in the status quo you have to go out of your way to truly comprehend and develop their power. The effort is worth it, though, and let me tell you why. I believe that, just as in the account of creation, the work will never be finished until woman is complete and fully alive. Perhaps there is a reason that Zion, the modern family of God, is portrayed not as a kingdom, but as a woman.

Doctrine and Covenants 82:14:

> For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments.

Later in the Doctrine and Covenants 113, it is asked what Isaiah means when he says, "Put on thy strength, O Zion." The answer follows:

> [Isaiah] had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also to return to that power which she had lost. (D&C 113:7–8)

The last thing a woman in Zion should ever feel is powerless.

Our duty is to build Zion, in every woman here, and in every woman everywhere. I am grateful for my many mothers and fathers, some of them in this room, who have built me.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. "It Is Not Good for Man or Woman to Be Alone" *Ensign,* November 2001.

2. *Words of Wisdom: A Collection of Quotes for LDS Women* (need rest of cit.) . . .

Annie Kennedy
Essentials, Band-Aids, cotton, multivitamins, ibuprofen, toilet paper & matches, in vacuum seal, 10" x 11"

Annie Kennedy
Safety Hers/Woman's 72 Hour Emergency Kit, family keepsakes, dried fruit, shoes, etc., in vacuum seal, 106" x 144"

CONTRIBUTORS

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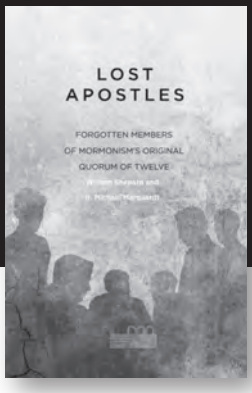

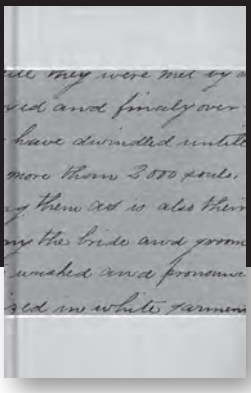

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by William Shepard and
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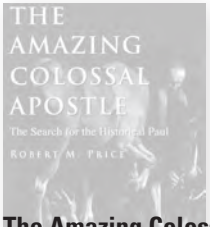
Their stories are not those of stung pride over spilled milk, lack of faith, or loss of testimony. These are stories of intense inner conflict over competing values, tests of faith, irreconcilable differences, and amicable separations—each man going forward on his own path.

Cowboy Apostle: The Diaries of Anthony W. Ivins, 1875-1932

Elizabeth O. Anderson, editor

Anthony W. Ivins was an early Arizona explorer, cowboy, game hunter, politician, first stake president of the Mormon colonies in Mexico, apostle, and member of the LDS First Presidency. He performed plural marriages in Mexico following Wilford Woodruff's "Manifesto" calling for an end to polygamy. But after the Second Manifesto in 1904, he helped remove practicing polygamists from church influence. Well-known families such as the Eyrings and Romneys have roots in the Mexican colonies, where Ivins led them through revolution, blight, and real estate blunders due to reliance on amateur surveys. He was inducted into the Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1958.

The New Testament



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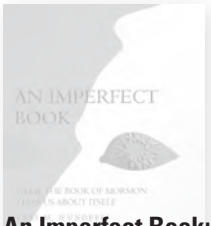

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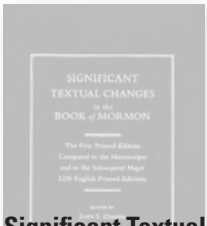
The Book of Mormon



Significant Textual Changes in the Book of Mormon
by John S. Dinger, editor

On the Cover: Annie Kennedy,
Front, *Angel Moroni in Eternity*, olive oil and pencil on paper,
9" x 12"
Back, *Six by One Hundred Forty Four*, salt crystals on felt
24" x 24"

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