DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

DIALOGUE: *A Journal of Mormon Thought is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The Journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Mormon Church or of the editors.*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

the greatest

Hugh Nibley is *the* great scholar of our time. How blessed we are to have him use his scholarship in the service of the Lord. His article in *Dialogue* (Vol. XII, 4) struck a note we could all consider in the present age of affluence—the law of consecration that too few of us live.

Nibley is especially dear to me. He made the Book of Mormon the most exciting treasure trove in print. His endearing humility and the complete absence of puff and pomposity in anything he says or writes make him the greatest teacher I know. I hope he will consent to write often for *Dialogue.*

Continue to struggle: We all need to think as well as pray.

Mary D. Nelson
Fairfax, Virginia

marginal note

Marvin Rytting's personal struggle ("Living with Opposition in All Things," Vol XII, 4) saddened me. Not that I haven't faced similar paradoxes, but for Rytting: "The result of these paradoxes is that today I find myself in a bind. I am perceived by myself and by others as a marginal Mormon." This from someone who appears to care deeply about the Church and his place in it, whose life seems to have been influenced by his reflections on the Church's teachings, who says he manages sufficient conformity to the Church's social demands to hold a temple recommend. This fellow is *so* Mormon he even appears to accept the popular Mormon tyranny that defines all "really active" Mormons as General-Authority or Relief-Society-president types (other types are "marginal"—including Rytting).

There is something terribly wrong when intelligent Mormons—who, from all outward appearances, are Mormons as "true-blue, through and through" as they come (such as Rytting, to judge from his essay)—can believe they are on the fringes. When he and other Mormon scholars and artists rationalize or define themselves *out*side of the mainstream, they leave me and my children without models of the intellectual Mormon *in*sider.

So it makes me sad to find Rytting saying, "I am . . . a marginal Mormon." Well, you're not marginal to me, brother!

Kevin G. Barnhurst
Salt Lake City, Utah

a blank check

Susan Taylor Hansen's essay on the ERA (Vol. XII, No. 2) deserves a reply because she cleverly but grossly misstates the case against it. Primarily she fails to address the invitation to judicial tyranny created by this open-ended proposal.

The truth is that neither she nor anyone else has any idea how the amendment will be interpreted in fifty years in the context of the prejudices of the federal courts. She seems to say that we can be assured on this matter by the vast amount of pre-passage discussion that has surrounded the amendment. This is false and any attorney ought to know it. It is really not that difficult to find out many of the views of the founding fathers or the drafters of the fourteenth amendment. Yet, as even she admits, the fourteenth amendment has been perverted from its original intent to such an extent that it is doubtful the drafters would recognize it and it is certain that they would not endorse it. The courts have even created new rights such as "privacy" that are simply not in the constitution and would never have been endorsed by the framers.

Take an example that is close to Mormon hearts—religion and the schools. There is not a shred of evidence to support the contention that the founders would have ever endorsed the interpretation put on this matter by the courts in recent decades (e.g., read the works of Walter Berns and Leonard Levy on this). The founders were friendly to religion, and the most literate and astute of them

believed religion essential to the preservation of that public virtue necessary in a republic. Whether they were right on this may be debated. But their belief would have supported state aid for religious schools, school prayer, etc. That we have none of these things today, even though a majority of people would support school prayer, is due directly to the enforced prejudices of the federal courts—nothing more.

Why then should this studied rejection of the intentions of the founders not take place with ERA? For example, what is to prevent the meaning of "sex" being expanded to "sex preference" and opening the way for coverage of homosexuality? (Privacy was "created" on much less). Coverage of homosexuality would never be enacted by any legislature because the American people overwhelming reject it. Yet we simply do not know what the courts might do. Anyone who claims he or she does know has not studied constitutional history or the political philosophy of the founders. With this amendment we will be handing another blank check to the most undemocratic tyranny left in the country: one which owes no allegiance to popular will or founding intentions but only to the "light of their own conceit". (Remember the example of raw judicial power in the abortion cases.) If we cannot reverse all of these mistakes, we may at least reduce the opportunities for their repetition in the future.

Richard Sherlock
Memphis, Tennessee

try it, you'll like it

Dr. Don H. Nelson's review of *Is Any Sick Among You?* and *No Side Effects* (Vol. XII, No. 3) seemed to me to be his all encompassing generalization that herbs have no medicinal value. Did he read the books? Has he read the "large number of similar publications from our own Mormon culture?" Has he studied the medicinal value and tried herbs himself? It seems to me that Dr. Nelson is no better off than those "dreamers or selfstyled healers" who have not "through hard work" received "the inspiration which comes to those who have applied themselves to the knowledge that has already been given us."

I feel sorry for Dr. Nelson and others in this category.

H. Scott Washburn
Orem, Utah

hypocritical oath

Most people are slow to absorb the insights of the avant garde or remember the wisdom of the out-of-fashion and rarely challenge orthodoxy. The latter cloaks itself in the term "responsible expertise" while dismissing dissent as "quackery." This is particularly true in the health field, and the Fall 1979 (Vol. XII, No. 3) issue could have benefited from some opposing views. Instead, it has been used as part of the campaign to crush medical dissent in the Church.

Most readers are unaware of the reprehensible oppression that has been held at bay by Apostle Benson and the National Health Federation (led by a Mormon attorney). The formula to instill prejudice has been followed in this issue: consign those advocating unorthodox medicine to the ranks of freedom extremists, the dangerously unscientific, the potentially apostate; ascribe early Mormon attitudes to naivete and the deficiencies of nineteenth century medicine while showing the wisdom of leaders who rely on the "experts" today. The problem with this picture is that while there is truth in it, it is a serious distortion.

Mormon adherence to medical orthodoxy is the result of increasing secularization. Ironically, it has taken gentile researchers to show the soundness of the Word of Wisdom and some of our earlier attitudes. Just as the conservative medical establishment fiercely resisted innovative health concepts like acupuncture and nutrition, the decline of allopathic dominance in the Church will mean greater polarization and attempts to discredit all naturopathic concepts by lumping the irresponsible (and there are many) with the responsible. The fact is, however, that a fair number of LDS physicians of my ac-

quaintance (and hundreds outside the Church) have discovered by study, experience and even prayer, that the shrill warnings of orthodoxy are largely hypocritical and hollow (see, for example, Illich's *Medical Nemesis*).

The case for alternative health views is quite strong—whether the subject is fluoridation, cancer, vaccination or whatever—and also quite ignored by the medical majority. I speak as one who is informed—and I know that the LDS medical establishment is not. Hindsight has ever been the greatest teacher and the trend of contemporary medical history is apparent and hopeful.

Scott S. Smith
Thousand Oaks, California

not so mild herbalist

I was, quite frankly, sent into a state of mental shock after reading Dr. Smith's blind sermon entitled "Herbal Remedies: God's Medicine?" (Vol. XII, No. 3). Dr. Smith has laid a fine historical background of the use of herbs in the Church, but in his limited exposure, he has *missed the point*!!!

First of all, I do use a competent M.D. *and* I take herbs as a mild, natural form of medication. I am currently interviewing several medical doctors and their patients for a book soon to be released.

The overwhelming majority of medical patients interviewed are of the opinion that their medical doctor is "ripping them off." They complain of impersonal, rude and abrasive examinations. Prescriptions are given with little or no explanation. Their doctors never speak of proper nutrition as a means of preventative medicine. And why should they? Medical doctors are not exposed to preventative medicine in school or practice. They leave the patient bewildered and confused.

Brother Smith fails to admit that it is his attitude and those of his colleagues that have turned people away from his most sacred profession. His ostrich-like approach is the very reason his patients are asking questions. Or could it be, possibly, the failure of the medical profession that has brought this all about? Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote ". . .they have tried their talents at one or at the other, and have failed; therefore they turn critics."

For Dr. Smith to infer that apostasy is the next step after using herbs is like saying that a person who posesses a gun is certainly going to murder someone. Some gun-owners do murder. Some people who use herbs are apostates. Some herb users are fundamentalists and/or Birchers. Some herb users are medical doctors.

The patient's position today is clear. Medical doctors who use ecclesiastical or austere professional influence to promulgate or suppress unproven methods should be put on notice that their standing as that patient's doctor is jeopardized. (At least one medical doctor has lost patients for channeling them into unorthodox practices using "profit-ic" counsel.) This injunction may seem severe until one realizes that the basic premise of modern medicine's arguments is precisely what has led to patient apostasy in the past.

The origin of the apostate patients is this issue: an inflexible adherence by medical doctors to tradition despite new trends of knowledge and self-preservation found among reliable and responsible individuals today. Antiherbalists fit this mold.

David Lisonbee

more is better

I very much enjoyed your recent issue on medicine and Mormonism (Vol. XII, No. 3), especially since it touched on my academic specialty, the history of medicine. I do, however, feel that the "Historical Perspective" provided by Robert T. Divett was both too brief and in some ways misleading. The richness of nineteenth-century medical thought cannot be appreciated if medical practice is dismissed as Galenic. Certainly, mentioning only Thomsonianism as a source of popular medical thought, in spite of its special relevance to Mormonism, distorts the picture of the medical ideas that influenced the American public. I would like

to briefly describe certain elements which I feel are important to understanding early nineteenth-century medicine, before the germ theory revolutionized medical thought.

Because medicine is a highly cumulative discipline, any point in the past seems markedly inferior to the present. This is especially true of the nineteenth century before Pasteur and Lister. Nineteenth-century physicians were, however, no less presentistic than we are. They believed that their medicine was better and more rational than that of the past. The early nineteenth-century French physician Cabanis believed that "analysis" and "observation" were the proper foundation of the new medicine. He and his colleagues looked to Hippocrates for inspiration but were well aware of their distance from the past. No one then would have described medicine as Galenic. Since Paracelsus in the sixteenth century, the pharmacopoeia had become increasingly chemical in its remedies. Antimony, mercurials like calomel and numerous opiates unknown to Galen were introduced. Vesalius, Harvey, Willis, Bartholin, von Haller, Bell, Bichat and innumerable other anatomists had revolutionized anatomy and physiology. Clinical instruction was developed at Leyden and at the Paris Hospital.

Although traditional therapy called for "puking," "purging" and bloodletting, the physiological and diagnostic basis of such treatments were very different than in Galen's day. That diseases were "treated alike" is not to say that "there was little concept of differential diagnosis." Diagnosis made real progress in the nineteenth century. Laennec's *Treatise on the Diseases of the Chest* and first published in France in 1819. It went through six English editions before 1830, two of which were printed in America. Dr. James J. Walsh wrote: "To Laennec more than any other is due all the data which enable the physician of the twentieth century to make the diagnosis of tuberculosis." Laennec's researches were of nearly equal value in diagnosing pneumonia, bronchitis and various heart conditions. Laennec and his stethoscope were becoming well known in the late 1820s, especially among European-trained American physicians.

Perhaps sanitation and public health were the areas in which nineteenth-century medicine made the most spectacular advances. In fact, they account for a much larger drop in the mortality rate than modern therapy. Vaccination was becoming more reliable and accepted in England and elsewhere, yet, as Lester Bush notes, there was considerable resistance to it by some groups. The miasmatic theory of disease led Southwood Smith, James Kay, Jeremy Bentham and Edwin Chadwick to force the British Government to improve urban sanitary conditions. The result was a dramatic decrease in mortality in Britain from the 1840's on. The miasmatic theory was well represented in John Eberle's *Practice of Medicine*, a book which had gone through three editions by 1835. Eberle also accurately discussed the diagnosis of smallpox, scarlet fever, gout, hepatitis and other well known disorders. The builders of Nauvoo had no need of the miasmatic theory to warn them of the dangers of swamps and other places where decay led to a corruption of the air.

Orthodox medical men realized that their influence was limited in rural areas, and they published tracts to educate the public in self-care. These tracts both supplied common people with medical knowledge and created a further market for unorthodox schools and texts. One of the most popular orthodox tracts was *Domestic Medicine*. It was written by William Buchan, M.D., of Edinburgh but edited for American consumption by Samuel Griffitts of Philadelphia. It recommends a wholesome diet as a prophylaxis and purgatives like Glauber's (a seventeenth-century German chemist) purge and rhubarb for sickness. The emetic ipecac as well as calomel, a mercuric preparation, were also praised. In 1826, Anthony Benezet published a popular tract, *The Family Physician*. He recommends the traditional emetics and laxatives but limits the medical amateur by suggesting when physicians should be called. Works like Buchan's and Benezet's

were as important to popular medical care as those of the unorthodox herbalists.

Heroic treatments were not so foolish as they seemed. Unlike Galen, who believed in letting nature heal, most orthodox physicians believed that if a little therapy was good, more was better, and they had reason to believe they were right. P.C.A. Louis undertook an investigation of the efficacy of bloodletting in the 1830s in France. This was one of the first statistical studies done in medicine. He demonstrated that bloodletting helped in acute diseases like pneumonia; needless to say, his methods were faulty. James Jackson published the results in English in 1836. Such hard "scientific" proof served to vindicate traditional therapeutic practices. It was not until the wonder drugs of the 1930s and 1940s that internal medicine had really effective treatments. In 1920, the mortality rate for pneumonia among the hospitalized was still around 80%.

To sum up what I hope my few examples have shown, medical thought and medical care in early nineteenth century American were complex, despite the redundant therapeutic practices. Diagnosis and health theory were much further advanced than treatment. Home medical advisers written by orthodox practioners were important sources of self-treatment for many Americans. Heroic therapy was supported not only by tradition but by data. Even with a heightened awareness of the complex medical background of the early Church, most of us would agree with Gert Brieger, a noted historian of American medicine, that in the nineteenth century one was safer with homoeopaths, who taught that samll doses of drugs were more powerful than large ones, than with M.D.'s, who knew more of diagnosis and anatomy.

Michael T. Walton
Salt Lake City, Utah

progressing to prophecy

All the comments I have seen on the revelation to confer the priesthood on all worthy males have been curiously monocultural. It is to Latin America in general and Brazil in particular that one must look to see worthwhile elements of the Lord's revelation on the priesthood.

Brazil in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a slave-supported economy similar to the southern United States. However, the Brazilians accomplished manumission without a civil war. Intermingling of the races was commonplace and accepted. The Brazilians, indeed, say there is no racial distinction in Brazil. Unofficially and realistically it exists, but not to the extent found in many other countries.

I think the Church moved toward this revelation in three ways. First, was the decision to open the country of Brazil to the preaching of the gospel. These early missionaries were instructed to teach only the German-speaking people in Brazil. Then, after World War II, the gospel was taught in Portuguese. Lastly, in 1975 at the Sao Paulo area conference when President Kimball announced the decision to build a temple, many people felt then that the Negro was going to get the priesthood before the temple was dedicated.

Mary Jane Heatherington
Lawrence, Kansas

policy ad absurdum

I would like to respond to Daryl Turner's letter (Vol. XII No. 4) concerning the Church's former racial policy. One would certainly hope that the Church's reversal of the policy has quelled a lot of "doctrinal" justifications for denying the priesthood to blacks. But why must we have "rational excuse"? Is there any just reason for assuming that the policy ever came from God in the first place?

Some have seen the insufficiency of the justifications for barring blacks from the priesthood as a sort of Kierkegaardian proof (via the absurd) that the policy really was divine: if it made no sense, it must have come from God. But such rationalizations ignore the policy's history so fittingly pointed out by Lester Bush—that in the context of nineteenth-century America (both in and out of the Church), such a policy made only too much sense. Only as we as a nation have grown more

civilized about racism have we as a church begun to face the insufficiency of our reasons for our racial policy, until at last President Kimball, in prayerful concern, ended the policy itself.

Dale Thompson
Amherst, Massachusetts

infallible?

The reactions presented by readers in *Dialogue's* letters column to the change in the Church's black-priesthood policy were interesting. Some wriggled around one doctrine, others around another. There seemed to be reticence to face the real issue involved, which is the infallibility of the church presidents.

Since the announcement of President Kimball's policy change (we have yet to read the actual revelation) the fundamentalist groups have had a field day with the Church. It would seem to them that the Church has fulfilled prophecy by extending the priesthood to our black brothers.

In 1963 Norman C. Pierce privately printed his *The 3% Years* and added an addendum foretelling the eventual policy change. He quoted from George Q. Cannon, Wilford Woodruff, Joseph Smith, Orson Hyde, Brigham Young and others, concluding with a scripture found in Zechariah 14:21, prophesying that when the Lord would come to the New Jerusalem Temple, that "in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." The reasoning was that when Christ came he would have to take the priesthood away from the blacks who were given it by mistake by the Church. At the time Mr. Pierce wrote the book, most members of the Church were convinced that the priesthood would not be given to the blacks in this generation, but possibly after the millenium.

Is the president infallible?, they ask. Joseph Smith hounded the Lord to have Martin Harris take the manuscript, and finally the Lord relented and 116 pages were lost. The Lord, they say, gives unto men "according to their desires whether it be unto death or life. . ." (Alma 29:4). He will even "send strong delusion" if men want something bad enough (2 Thess. 2:11-12). If Joseph Smith could make that kind of a mistake because of his heart's desires, couldn't President Kimball want this enough for the blacks that he could err, they ask?

Then, quoting former prophets, they cite Brigham Young and others as allowing the possibility of priesthood ordination to the blacks only *after* the resurrection of all of Abel's projected offspring. (See J.D. 2:142-143.) They argue that the Church has taken upon itself the curse of Cain (See Brigham Young's statement as Governor of Utah to the Legislature on February 5, 1852).

It seems to me that the Church must answer these questions openly and doctrinally. Many Saints question the veracity of the Book of Abraham, for no new doctrinal explanations have come forth to explain the contradictions born of the new policy. If the blacks are that color because of pre-existent events and there is a law of lineage and right of the priesthood through lineage, how does this all work out? Certainly much is needed in the way of doctrinal defense for the Church's stand and the best theologians should be at work in this matter to settle the minds of those in and out of the Church on these points so that fundamentalists steal not the thunder of the Church.

The infallibility doctrine must be discussed with reference to when presidents are infallible. If President Kimball is now, why was Brigham Young *not* when he made all of those statements years ago. Wriggle as we do, we must ask these questions of ourselves, or doctrinal stability and credibility will suffer, and we will be scripturally, intellectually and spiritually dishonest to boot.

Merle H. Graffam
Palm Desert, California

gentlemen first

There are interesting historical parallels in three areas where women have been denied the full privileges held by men: suffrage, equal rights and the priesthood.

For almost a century, only white males could vote in the United States.

Black males were enfranchised after the Civil War, but black and white females obtained this privilege much later. Females in Utah were given voting rights in 1870. These rights were withdrawn in 1887 with the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act, but the Utah State Constitution, adopted in 1896, restored them. Most other women in the United States waited until 1920 for voting rights, with the adoption of the nineteenth amendment. Thus, a pattern was set in American and Mormon history: first, a privilege was held exclusively by white males; second, this privilege was extended to black males; and finally, the privilege was given to black and white females.

This pattern also seems to be at work in equal rights and the priesthood. White males held full civil rights from the adoption of the United States Constitution, but it was not until the 1960's that full civil rights were extended to minority males. Even now, females are not accorded the full protection of the law, and both the Equal Rights Amendment and specific legislative acts are being pursued as remedies. The same order in which individuals were accorded voting rights can be observed in full civil rights: first the white males, second the black males, and finally the black and white females.

Two of these three steps have been taken with respect to the priesthood. For a very long time, only white males could hold the priesthood, but recently black males were included in the list of those so qualified. And it may be, by some inexorable working of history, that the pattern followed for both suffrage and equal rights will be repeated with respect to the priesthood. We may ever be surprised that the Church, the family, and the home will be as uncorrupted by women having the priesthood as they have been by women having voting rights.

Dr. Jean Bickmore White points out an interesting parallel to the current controversy over equal rights in her article, "Women's Place is in the Constitution: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Utah in 1895" (*Utah Historical Quarterly*, Fall 1974, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 344-369).

Jack Worlton
Los Alamos, New Mexico

attention 12- to 15-year-olds!

The gospel is "all truth." *Dialogue* seems to be becoming increasingly narrow in its scope. Has it become a captive of the establishment?

I think the men and/or women with the intelligence and education we would like to hear from think, "What is the use?" The bulk of our population is at the twelve- to fifteen-year-old intellectual level, many with restricted reading capacities. The Church is a cross section of the population of which it is a part. The best minds of the Church who do not attain "two-headed monster" status get distilled off. Those who are employees of the Church or its educational system may be afraid to write, but I think that they have been conditioned not to give to their religion the same critical analysis they would insist be given to their career or specialty.

I think those who doubt, and then work mightily to resolve that doubt, soon recognize that prayer has been a part of all religions in all cultures that have existed in our six thousand years of recorded history. And the evidence is accumulating that all people in all cultures regardless of who or what they pray to receive answers about the same. So then the question becomes, "What is the common denominator of all this praying?" If a devout LDS member praying to the Mormon god gets the same answers with the same frequency as the Australian aborigines then, "What is the value of prayer?" Apparently it is not important who or what is prayed to. What does this do to the god concept? I'm not suggesting that we should destroy the god concept. It has been important in the lives of too many people throughout history who are within the twelve- to fifteen-year intellectual level, but those who are above that

intellectual level would look at the matter analytically and see it somewhat differently. I think it best that people come to these realizations on their own. Once accomplished, what is the point in writing about it to another who already has arrived at this realization? The priests of every religion are aware of the realities of their religion and differentiate between those realities and the public ceremonies, except for the "two-headed monsters."

I don't believe revelation will stand up under critically analytical and objective reasoning. But, like prayer, "What is the use?" Political necessity calls forth revelation.

Then there is the lip service to eternal progression, the constantly growing in knowledge, wisdom and inward capacity to perform, that is recognized by few but can't be handled by the twelve- to fifteen-year-old people who are the bulk of the Church. So the Church which is unable to get revelation and guide its people in the today and tomorrow reverts back repetitiously to the same restricted words and phrases of our two- to four-thousand-year-old biased history. All history is necessarily biased.

I don't think it's because of fear that people don't write. I think perhaps futility may apply—and regard for the twelve- to fifteen-year-old intellectual level of the membership who desperately need to believe.

William J. Tanner
Hayward, California

diversion day

I really enjoy your journal—it makes for a fascinating diversion in gospel study. The work is going fine in Michigan, and the Lord blesses us when we deserve it and even when we don't. May he bless you in your "Fireball of Mormonism."

Elder John W. Quist, Jr.
East Lansing, Michigan

loan finds a friend

After reading several borrowed issues from friends I have found that your publication has become "a must" in our household.

Terry and Illona Kolodzik
Eagle River, Alaska

ARTICLES

VIRGINIA SORENSEN: AN INTRODUCTION

MARY L. BRADFORD

MORMON READERS are rediscovering Virginia Sorensen. In her person and in her work, she combines many of the traits so often associated with Mormonism: a handcart pioneer heritage, a Danish, old world charm, a seeking spirit, an observant eye. She adds to these a childlike delight in living, a sense of humor, insightful attention to detail and the storyteller's ability to mesmerize.

Born in Provo, Utah in 1912, she was the third of the six children born to Claude and Alice Eggertsen, both of pioneer stock. Eggertsen's work as railroad agent led them from Provo to Manti and then to American Fork, three small towns that imprinted themselves upon her work. Following high school in American Fork, she returned to Provo to enter Brigham Young University as a journalism student. After a year there and another year in the University of Missouri's journalism school, she met and married Frederick Sorensen, also of Utah-Danish heritage. Sorensen was working toward his Ph.D. in English and philosophy at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. She graduated from BYU the same day her daughter Elizabeth (Beth) was born in June 1934. Her second child, Frederick, Jr. (Fred), was born two years later, and for the next twenty years or so, she led the life of a faculty wife, in Terre Haute, Indiana, in Denver, Colorado, in Auburn, Alabama and in Edinboro, Pennsylvania. Her marriage to Sorensen lasted twenty-five years. In 1967 she married Alec Waugh, the British novelist and travel writer (brother to Evelyn) whom she had met at MacDowell Colony, the New Hamsphire retreat for artists and writers. Though they travelled regularly to Britain and the States, Morocco was their home until Fall of 1980 when changes in the Moroccan government and Waugh's retirement brought them back to America to settle in Florida near Virginia's daughter.

Her years as a faculty wife were unusually productive. In 1942, while she was living in Terre Haute, close enough to Nauvoo to do some first hand research, she produced her first novel, *A Little Lower Than the Angels*, a realis-

tic and yet poetic portrayal of a woman forced to share her husband in polygamy. It was considered somewhat sensational at the time because of a love scene between Joseph Smith and Eliza Snow and some "unlovely details" like bedwetting. Most modern readers agree that it has stood the test of time, however, and that it and others "could easily appear on a church reading list for young people."[1]

Her second novel, *On This Star,* set in Manti, met with mingled fascination and dismay. Criticized by some as "just a love story," it described the temple wedding ceremony in some detail. The novel's real protagonist is the town of Manti and its temple which lights up the sky and shines on the young lovers.

On This Star was really just practice for what critics agree is her finest work: *The Evening and the Morning.* To quote Laurel Thatcher Ulrich: "Its plot centers around an ordinary week near the Twenty-fourth of July in Manti in the 1920s. Kate, a wayward Mormon who has long lived in California, returns home to visit her daughter and grandchildren and to see about getting a small pension due her. . . The narrative is an interplay of past and present. Kate's memories of her young married life are woven into an account of the events of six days. The shifting perspective in this book gives Sorensen's theme the complexity it needs.[2] Edward Geary believes that "the artistry of *The Evening and Morning* . . . compares with better known works in the mainstream of American literature."[3]

The Neighbors, written during a stay in Colorado, deals only indirectly with the Mormons (the leading character is married to one), but it explores the same themes of rebellion and reconciliation that appear in her other novels. Her next novel, *The Proper Gods,* was written with the help of a Guggenheim fellowship to Mexico. She had originally intended to use the award to "chase down Sam Brannan," as she puts it, but became so enamored of the Yaqui Indians that she gave up on Sam. While masses of material about the early Mormon explorer mouldered away in a trunk, she fashioned a story of love and tradition as closely woven as one of the rag rugs she loves to make on her Moroccan loom. Though the setting was a complete departure for her, it dealt with a familiar theme: How can people both love each other and remain true to their beliefs?

Another Guggenheim a few years later, as well as several trips to MacDowell Colony, helped her write her children's novels and her remaining adult books. *Curious Missie* grew out of Auburn, Alabama, where she helped convince the legislature that bookmobiles would make readers out of children. *Plain Girl,* the touching story of an Amish child and winner of the Child Study Award, and *Miracles on Maple Hill,* winner of the Newbery Medal, were both written in Pennsylvania.

Her successes as a children's writer did not keep her from returning to early Mormon themes for *Many Heavens* (inspired by Ellis Shipp), and *Kingdom Come,* a missionary story set in Denmark—also supported by the Guggenheim. In going to Denmark, she felt she was answering a "call" from her ancestors, and the resulting research, besides providing another chil-

dren's book—*Lotte's Locket*—is still feeding the work in progress. During this same period, her collection of short stories, really a memoir based on her childhood, *Where Nothing is Long Ago,* vividly returns to the small town life that informed her earlier work.

Virginia Sorensen's life story falls naturally into two sections, like a beloved book opening to a favorite page. The first and most productive period thus far encompasses her childhood, her education and her first marriage, the second her years alone followed by her second marriage to Alec Waugh. This relatively "dry spell," she attributes to her happiness with Alec and her unhappiness over the loss of her parents and especially the loss of her two sisters who died within a year of one another. Her own bout with an aneurysm and her move (with Alec) back to the United States have slowed her down.

When she and Alec were first married, they acted as visiting professors at the University of Oklahoma and lived for a time in Alexandria, Virginia, home of one of her maternal forebears. Out of these settings she fashioned a non-Mormon novel, *The Man With the Key,* and another children's book, *Around the Corner.* For some reason her long stay in Morocco—eleven years—has produced only one book, a children's novel *Friends of the Long Road.* At present she is working on a Mormon novel which will follow the descendants of *Kingdom Come*'s Madsen family from Denmark to modern Mormon country. She is also writing another children's book, a "handcart story."

Most of Virginia's early books are out of print, but the advent of the Mormon Letters Association and the work of students and readers have led to a small Virginia Sorensen renaissance. Her books have always been better known outside of Utah, especially her children's books. In 1956, when I decided to call my thesis, *Virginia Sorensen: An Introduction,* I had no idea I would still be introducing her in 1980. But by this time, I am able to point to a small body of respectable articles and monographs which discuss her work.

Many readers are asking the question, but is she a Mormon writer? Bruce Jorgensen deals perceptively with this subject on page 43. For those who are curious about her private life, she is quick to admit her father was a "jack Mormon," her mother not a Mormon at all. But they raised her in the Church, a church she gradually left during her first marriage. After her second marriage, she joined the Anglican Church. In the interview that follows, she reaffirms her devotion to her Mormon past and her debt to her strong roots. As she grows older, she seems always to represent certain Mormon values. But she does more than *represent,* she *portrays* that most vital thing in literature, the human soul, its strengths and struggles. Though her genuine feeling for the epic background of her people provides much material, she is always reminding us, as does Edward Geary, that the "novel's great tradition is in its treatment of private life."[4] He congratulates Virginia and other Mormon novelists for recognizing this and turning away from "big public events." By narrowing her canvas she paradoxically focuses on a wider truth—that of the individual human heart.

The striving, the becoming, the aspiring in her work represent, in the words of Ulrich, "a celebration of spirit over form, of the future over the past, of freedom over orthodoxy."[5]

In choosing Viriginia for a thesis subject, I did so on the recommendation of my major professor at the University of Utah, William Mulder, whose historical studies of the Mormon Scandinavian migrations inspired Virginia to answer her call to Denmark. He believed that choosing a living writer would allow me to make an original contribution to Mormon studies. I am not sure his hope was fulfilled, but certainly Virginia has made a lasting contribution to my life. As a living literary figure she is instructive; as a lifelong friend, she is a model of decency and courage. She helps to fulfill my need for a role model, which, as Lavina Fielding Anderson puts it, is a search that is "ultimately a righteous one and also a very natural one, possibly an inevitable one."[6] Even though Virginia's life is very different from mine, a role model need not travel the exact same path in order to inspire. Unashamed to live the life of the mind while celebrating the possibilites of the body, she accepts with grace the inroads of time. After discovering the aneurysm midway between her brain and her eye, she set about learning to blot out the twin image in the left eye and the discouragement that accompanied it. Now, nourished by her husband's proddings and her own desires, she has begin to write again. Interviewed in Arlington, Virginia in the spring of 1980, she looks back to her childhood and ahead to her "modern Mormon novel." A short reminiscence about her early life, to be included in that novel, follows the interview along with Bruce Jorgensen's article. Jorgensen delivered this paper at the Mormon Letters Association meeting in the Fall of 1979 at Brigham Young University.

NOTES

[1]Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Fictional Sisters," *Mormon Sisters*, p. 257.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Edward Geary, "The Poetics of Provincialism: Mormon Regional Fiction," *Dialogue*, 4, 3:56.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

[6]Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Mary Fielding Smith: Her Ox Goes Marching On," *Blueprints for Living: Perspectives for Latter-day Saint Women*, Vol. II, p. 3.

"IF YOU ARE A WRITER, YOU WRITE!" AN INTERVIEW WITH VIRGINIA SORENSEN

Do you consider yourself a Mormon writer?

Yes. At least I get more pleasure out of being noticed by the Mormons than anyone else!

You were raised a Mormon then?

My father was what is known as a "jack Mormon," and my mother was a Christian Scientist, but they were both descended from fine old Mormon pioneer families. I was born in Provo and I graduated from BYU.

What are some of your earliest memories?

It's very odd, the memories I put into *Where Nothing is Long Ago*—about the family having a picnic by the main ditch, playing Hide the Peanuts, and the band playing, I didn't realize for a time were combining the three places of my childhood—Provo, Manti and American Fork. I remember only the bare essentials of Provo—I lived there my first five years—I spent first grade and on until high school in Manti—and then later on I went to high school in American Fork. In my stories I put them all together. Since my dad worked for the railroad, we always lived on Depot Street near the railroad station, in each town. Depot Street in Provo, in Manti and in American Fork were all about the same. You went east and then you turned a little bit north. I realize now why my sisters used to get so upset when they read my stories. They always said I didn't get things exactly right. It was because I mixed the three places together in my mind—and in my stories.

I find that I put in whatever suits the story. It doesn't matter whether it happened now or then. Things can be twenty years apart when I was a child. This makes me realize that I am always busy with fiction and no good at history. When I gather masses of material, as I did when I was studying Hans Christian Andersen, and a book I signed to write about Scandinavians in America, I got masses of material, but I was not able to organize it and use it as it was.

Of course, *Kingdom Come* was quite different because I was using church history very straight, much of it from the *Millennial Star.* I was sent a lot of wonderful material by Bill Mulder. Because of that I felt a great obligation to Bill that my book should be accurate. And *The Proper Gods* was sent to an anthropologist.

You mean an anthropologist checked it out for you?

Yes. Some people think there is entirely too much cultural anthropology in it. But I felt, again, obligated as I did to Bill. But those two books were quite different from the fictions that were not based on history.

It's such a special task when you have to fit the lives of your characters into history. The public events impinge on the private events. It complicates the task so much!

It has been said of you that your work has a strong sense of place. Do you have a feeling of belonging in a particular place?

I left Provo early, but American Fork and Manti, and later Springville, especially the old Depot Street in Springville, certainly are important places to me. In recent stories about Dad and the end of the railroad, all those places are mixed up in my descriptions.

I am sure your characters are really more important than place—or you would simply be writing local color—but I think about the heroes in The Proper Gods *and* Kingdom Come. *They are worried about taking their sweethearts out of the places they seem to belong.*

Well, of course, I think I belong in the kitchen more than in any other place in the house! Working on a long novel, as I am doing now, is much like working in the kitchen from an old recipe. I must find all kinds of different ways to awaken the feeling I need to do the work—letters, journals, everything I can find. It is certainly a female thing, don't you think?

Yes. There is a strong domestic thread through your work.

And I feel a great link with my mother in my inability to throw out old clothes. I am always cutting them into strips for rag rugs. My mother made tremendous rugs for the whole family. I now have a Navajo loom made by Moroccan

craftsman. I am now filling my house with rag rugs, but I make them on a loom!

Beautiful.

I also use old stockings, all in lovely browns and beiges. How I dearly love to use my hands while someone reads to me. Alec reads to me every night for two hours. Sometimes I work on small frames and make little woolly designs. I have fallen in love with the American Indian God's eyes. I saw them in Albuquerque in the shops there. My daughter gave me a little craft book, saying "Mama, this is something you can do when Alec reads to you." So I've gone all out for God's eyes—all sizes!

I've become crafty in my old age! The discipline of writing—using your hands and your eyes and your head—everything all at once—is very exhausting, and nothing is so relaxing as handwork. I see women waiting in airports with their crochet hooks and their knitting and I understand what I didn't use to. It's a great solace to me now!

Have you always wanted to be a writer—as far back as you can remember?

Yes, at least after I discovered that nobody wanted me to play the fiddle!

You played the violin?

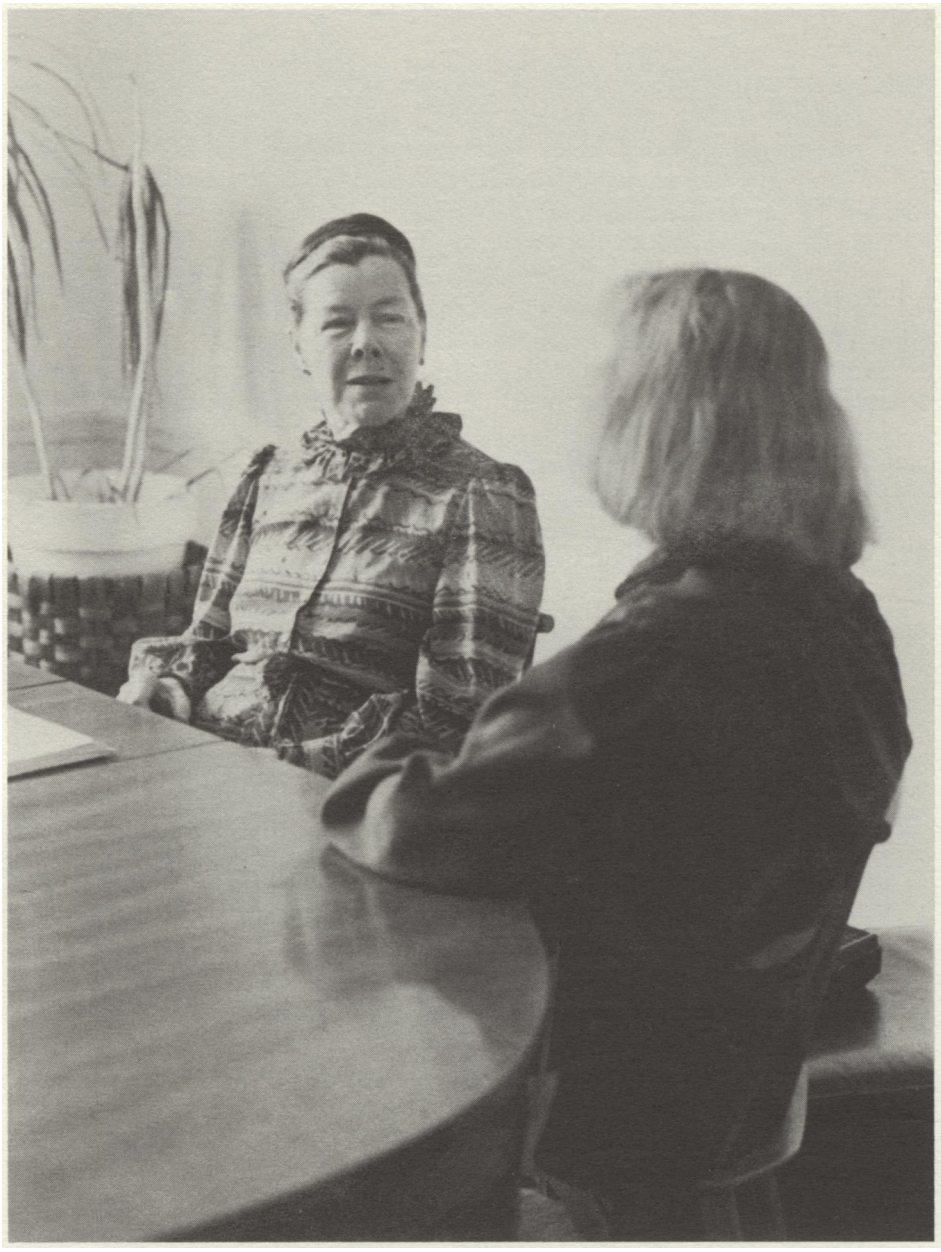
I learned to play the violin because my mother had three daughters and wanted her own trio. Helen was to study piano, Geraldine the cello, and I was to study violin. Mother had to abandon her project because I was so bad. In the little diary I kept for only one year, I include a sketch with two little figures: one with a violin, the other with a pen and a desk. Underneath it says, "Which?" So music has been the enrichment of my life and writing the major love.

Were you one of those children who used to tell stories to your friends?

Yes, my best friend, Carole Reed, who is now Carole Reed Holt, used to make my doll clothes while I read stories. Of course, you should be able to tell a story and sew your own doll clothes, but I didn't think so then.

You speak of your two sisters. Were there others in your family?

Yes, three boys and three girls. Two of the boys came along much later, so there were twenty years between my brother Claude and my young brother Hal. Now I am the only sister left. My sisters have both died. That's a tremendous wrenching, you know. You feel that the family has always been there. It was rather natural for Mama and Papa to disappear as long as the six of us were still here. But now I have a shaky feeling about families, and I see why



people want to believe they are eternal. They want to return to the initial closeness and solidarity they once felt.

You were a close family, then?

My husband, Alec Waugh, had only one brother—Evelyn Waugh. He says he had never heard of a family like mine with such closeness between the father and mother and all the children. When he visited my brother Paul's family in Washington, D.C., he said, "Oh, that's the way your family was. Now I know."

But it's strange what is happening in families now. People say, "If the parents are solid, the children will be too." But I see so many families now who are like mine. Of six marriages, only two have continued unbroken. Mother and Dad wouldn't have liked it. They would have disapproved! But they were intelligent people; they accepted the world the way they found it and they would finally have understood, I think. You can't apply old ideas and ways of doing things to what's happening now. I guess Mormon country is a citadel of that, though. I like to think of family life as Mormonism's greatest value.

Your ancestors were pioneer families?

I've been very much moved by the fact that I have two great-grandfathers who literally walked thousands of miles across this country. And it's one thing that I can tell people when they ask me about my connections with the Mormons. I tell them about my Great Grandfather Simon Peter Eggertsen who walked across the Plains pushing a handcart, and how he later became a landowner and left quite a bit of good land and prosperity to his three sons and a daughter.

And he showed up in your first novel.

Yes. And then the other grandfather, Horace Alexander, was a Virginian who went to Nauvoo and became a carpenter on the temple and one of the men chosen for the Mormon battalion. He walked even farther, toting a gun. He went clear to San Diego, you see, and up to San Francisco so that he was on hand for the discovery of gold. Then he went back over the mountains to Utah. Think how far he walked! They make great heroes now out of people who attempt to walk across the nation. I think if I have any strength, I know where it comes from! It's a tremendous heritage, that!

Have you always felt conscious of it?

Oh, yes! And the older I get the more I feel about it. When I began giving talks about books—after I became a librarian's writer because I had won the Newbery Medal and was asked to speak at a great many library associations—one

of the stories I loved to tell was about how my Great Grandfather Simon Peter Eggertsen, a school teacher, chose to take his books in his handcart. There were many things he could have taken that weighed less and might seem more important in a pioneer society, but he chose his books. Now I find that when I choose to stay anywhere, most of my weight is in books too.

Returning to your parents—you say your mother was not a Mormon?

That was because her mother, Kate Alexander, was an apostate Mormon. Kate was so against the Church because of her experiences as a child that none of her children turned out to be Mormons. My mother, Alice Geraldine Alexander Eggertsen, was a Christian Scientist—a great religion!

Was she a practicing Christian Scientist?

Yes, but she was not extreme and she really read the Bible. I can open Mother's bible anywhere and read what she marked. It is always reassuring.

And you say your father was an inactive Mormon.

He thought the whole thing was rather funny. He made light of what we learned in Sunday School. There was no bitterness, though. Grandma caused her children to leave the Church, but there was not a bitter hair in my father's head. He wanted us to be a part of our community, and he had such a wonderful Danish humor. He dealt with things teasingly.

Thinking about Dad makes me feel such a need to preserve something. When I realized that I was the only one left of three sisters, one of my first thoughts was "When I finish my next book, I won't be able to send it to them." I think half my audience, half the people I always wrote for are no longer around. Why didn't I hurry? Remember, I dedicated *Kingdom Come* to Esther Peterson's mother, my aunt, Ane Grethe Nielsen Eggertsen. I think I put "For her 93rd Festival."

Yes, I remember that.

She was way up in years, and she would say, "If you don't hurry and finish that Danish book, I am not going to read it." I sent her the galleys and she read them with a magnifying glass. And then she died, almost immediately after she read it. I think she felt—and this was important to me—I think she felt I was making a true story.

I have always felt that you were trying to preserve old people and places.

Yes, how I loved the old days in Manti. Manti was as bilingual as you can get, you know. Remember that wonderful Brother Petersen story? How he was guard at the Manti Temple when lighting struck it? And one of the brethren said, "Oh, but God would not let lightning strike the temple," and he answered, "Well, He did, and he knocked hell out of it!" That's so typically Danish!

That's wonderful.

I feel that I am in the old timer category now. I get that feeling mostly from reading *Dialogue.*

Oh, now, did we do that to you?

Where I live, *Dialogue* is my only source, my only connection with what is happening now in Mormon country. I find that some of my old authorities pass by as times change. It's all right to move ahead, but you have to preserve something. Alec has said to me, "The important thing is to stay the course." And I think, really, to last the distance, to stay the course, to go on doing work that you love is the important thing. Alec is now one of the few members left of the original British P.E.N. He joined back in the early twenties when H. G. Wells and Rebecca West were in it.

Getting back to the present, though, I have wondered how I am going to write about the present generations, the new Mormons. I don't even know what is going on in the temple now. I understand it has changed. Imagine that!

It is basically the same ceremony, but the technology has changed.

Don't you think they should do it just the way the prophet did it?

Yes.

The trouble is numbers. They are trying to push too many people through now. Of course, we have another Prophet now, and I am so pleased about the Black revelation.

President Kimball is quite a mover.

Doesn't everybody love a story about somebody who has conquered something? You think, well, if I get cancer of the throat, I might still be President of

the Church some day. I loved reading his biography and that other little small book he wrote about his wife?

One Silent, Sleepless Night.

Yes. My sister, Jerry, had that book beside her when she died of cancer. She wasn't active in the Church, but that book was a comfort.

President Kimball is a great diary keeper. You mentioned that you kept a diary when you were a child.

For only one year.

Only one. Why was that?

I have no idea!

In an interview we did with James Arrington, he says that he has decided that he could live life or he could record life—not both.

I decided that what *happened* to me wasn't as important as what I *thought* about it. So I always have had what is called a "commonplace book." The British Museum is full of those beautiful books—Milton, Macauley and others kept them, so I have always had one before I even knew what they were or how significant they were. Mine is a little notebook I carry in my purse. I have hundreds of these notebooks now, and I'm putting them with my papers at Boston University where they are being catalogued.

I am glad I kept that little diary, if only for a short time. I tell in it that when I was a freshman in high school in Manti, I won a class relay. I was so excited and happy that I ran all the way to the depot in my gym suit to tell Dad. I can see myself now, trotting all those blocks without even waiting to change my clothes. It didn't seem complete until I had told my family.

Did you do your first publishing when you were in high school?

Junior High School. I wrote the graduation poem and my best friend sent it in to the *Children's Friend.* When I graduated from high school, my valedictory was published in the American Fork newspaper. It was a great prose work called "The melody of life." I thought I had to memorize every word, so I would go out in the back yard at night and declaim it.

You went on to publish in college, I suppose?

I published a great deal at the "Y" because by then I knew that writing was it. I thought at first that I would study journalism, so I went off in my junior year to the University of Missouri. It was while I was away that I did my first

consciously Mormon writing. It was a story called, "The Green Road," which I entered in a contest. You see, when I went away, I found my Mormonism was the thing about me that most interested people. And I have found that to be true all through the years. It is what Alec calls "a very great ad*vahn*tage!" To have such a peculiar past.

So you spent one year at Missouri and then returned to BYU?

Yes, I came back to finish because of the money and because some of my religion credits didn't count elsewhere. I was happy at the "Y," though. I shared a little flat with my best friend Carole, and we separated only to be married.

You met Fred Sorensen then?

Yes, he was going with Carole, and studying at Stanford. Carole wasn't very good in English, so Fred would send her letters back corrected. So I wrote to him in her name, rather like Miles Standish. Later, we used to laugh about it.

So he came back from Stanford and courted you?

One night I was studying *Beowulf,* and we began to read together. We had common interests right from the start, and they lasted twenty-five years. I graduated from the Y after I was married. In fact, I was in the hospital having my first child—Beth—on Graduation Day. My mother got a great thrill out of walking up and accepting my diploma. My great uncle Simon got his Masters that year, so we were in the paper—the young girl with a new baby and the old man with his master's—both Eggertsens.

You were at Stanford while Fred worked on his Ph.D. in English?

It was deep in the Depression. Those were years I haven't written about, but I would like to. People are interested in what people did during the Depression. And I have a whole bundle of detailed little budget sheets that tell what we paid for everything. If you read it now, it is unbelievable. We made fifty dollars a month on Fred's Freshman English class besides his scholarship. I would like to have a picture of me in my old grey coat waiting for canned beef, WPA canned beef. I felt that I knew what it was like to be a woman with a child by the hand and a child under the belt going out to find food.

Did you feel it was a hardship at the time?

No, I just took it for granted. All our friends were scholarship students. I remember some people were rich, but we went to Coolidge Concerts where I learned to love the Beethoven Quartets. Later I managed to find records of the

quartets, and I still play them when I write. They help me to concentrate. Fred was a musician with a beautiful voice, choirmaster in the Palo Alto Ward. I worked in the MIA. I met Crawford Gates at that time. He was very young, living with his mother. I still have the hymn book from the branch—I suppose that's robbery.

That's where Dialogue *began, you know.*

Yes, that was a really good place. I had quite an interesting correspondence with Crawford about an idea I had for a musical. It was about a little French woman who was a camp follower in the army. Maybe that's why Crawford didn't want to write the music for it! It was going to be very facetious, about a chorus of wives singing quotations from Brigham Young about fashions. I loved the lines telling the women that if they wanted silk, they would have to raise the worms! So, this little French girl was a spy who infiltrates Salt Lake City and becomes a seamstress and thinks seriously about becoming another of Brigham's wives. I had a chorus of Indians that came to ask Brigham, "How?" I suppose I wanted to interest Gentiles.

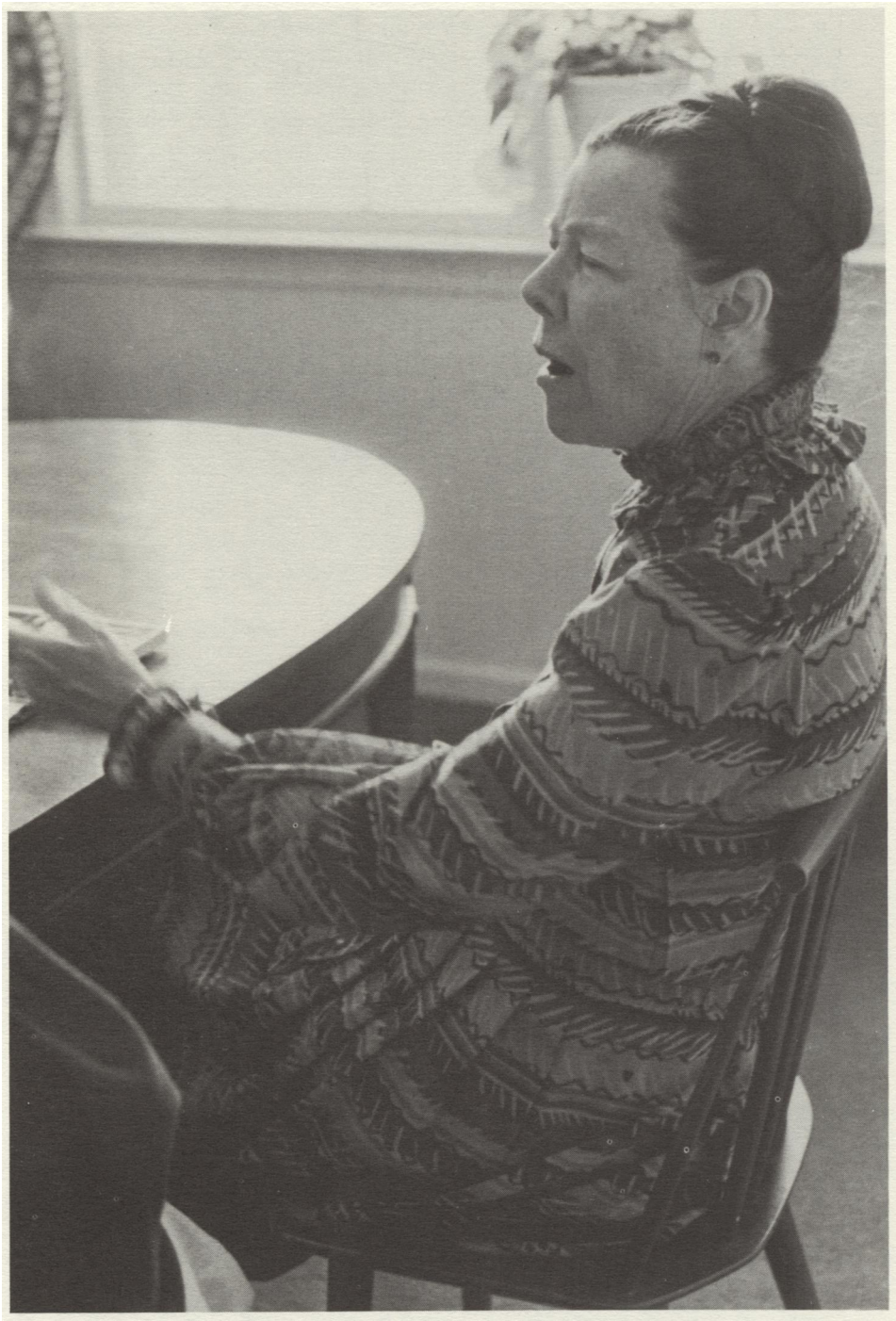
I understand you also went to school with Sam Taylor.

Yes, at the Y, and then he was at Stanford too. When I had my babies and went to the hospital, he brought me reading material. He told me I was a very good writer, and since my husband needed money, it was very silly of me not to earn some. He brought me the pulps, showed me what was in them and was going to help me earn money. I said, "But I have the play to finish." I was taking a poetry class from Ivor Winters, and he liked my blank verse. He read some of it to the class and said, "This is very good. I'm not sure the author quite knows what she is doing, but she's doing it." That interested me and I thought—hmmm, I have an idea for a play. I will do it in blank verse to prove to Ivor Winters that I know what I am doing. That was the first really serious thing I did. I called it the "Hungry Moon" and based it on the legend of Timpanogos.

So you decided not to write for the pulps.

I never really thought of the pulps. I was writing poetry during that period. I might have turned into what you call a Great Occasion Poet. In Copenhagen there is a little shop run by a man called a "Great Occasion Poet." You can hire him to do a wedding poem, to accompany gifts, or whatever. I never give Alec a gift without writing a verse with it. You can make so many statements with gifts!

To return to my life with Fred, after he finished his degree at Stanford, we moved to Terre Haute, Indiana State. This Fred Sorensen was a very stormy petrol. He couldn't get along with authority. I don't know why, with his



Mormon background, but I think he expected all authorities to be infallible. Whenever they were not, he battled with them. He was an advanced liberal, too, very much embattled about the blacks. He led a black singing quartet at Terre Haute, and he was embroiled in controversy over the fact that blacks couldn't use the college pool at the same time as whites. My son, Fred, told me the other day that in his later life, Fred Senior was extremely conservative. I think the same pattern is in the whole church. From the liberalism of 150 years ago to today where conservatism holds the fort. It happens to people. It happens to institutions.

Did Fred's activism bother you?

I went along with it. I thought he was right in everything he did. I do think I got that from the Saints. Do what your husband does.

Didn't your mother-in-law live with you for a time?

For ten years. I dedicated *A Little Lower Than the Angels* to her. It was her story, her family—the Bakers. I used the family names, but it bothered some of the family that the wrong character wet the bed!

Did having Fred's mother with you help or hinder you in the writing?

In fact, she helped me rather more than I liked. You see, I liked to be alone in my kitchen. So I began to write and then I was grateful to her because she gave me the freedom to write. In my dedication, I say "to Mother S/who like one divine/dispenses truth and time."

Did you write Angels *while you were in Terre Haute, not far from Nauvoo?*

Yes, I spent some time alone in a little place called the Nauvoo House. There was a great warehouse of Mormon furniture nearby. I still sleep in the bed I bought there—a great showpiece, with a trundle. It is built so high above the ground, I will soon need a ladder to climb into it!

You spent several months writing in Nauvoo?

About a month. The family came to visit. It was published in 1942. I remember walking down by the river in Nauvoo and watching nuns gathering tomatoes with their white aprons, each of them carrying a basket. I have always wanted to paint that scene, like a picture I saw at the National Gallery in Washington—picking cranberries on Nantucket. Perhaps I will put the colors into a weaving. It is so enriching to have music and weaving and writing going all at once. I suppose my writing suffers, though. I take my notebook and put it beside the loom. I used to have the theory that you could get your ideas while doing housework. This didn't please the women's clubs,

who asked, "How can you take care of your family and washing and still write?" And I said, "Oh, washing windows is great; hanging out clothes is fine." So weaving is good too.

It calms the busybody part of the mind.

When I am reading on my own, I am apt to miss things now and then. When you approach seventy, you start falling asleep, but I can listen to someone else read while I am weaving.

As you are aware, in Dialogue, BYU Studies, *and* Sunstone, *your work is being rediscovered. Ed Geary, Bruce Jorgensen, Linda Sillitoe, Lawrence Lee and others have studied your novels, especially* The Evening and The Morning.

I have enjoyed reading about myself, of course, and Alec has too. He has been very kind about most of my work although he thinks I'm apt to hold forth too long before I get the story going. He felt that in my last novel—*The Man With the Key,* I could have done without the whole first half.

I thought it was needed as background for the characters.

I thought so too, but Alec doesn't think you need any excuse for someone to become fascinated with another race or with something exotic. I see now that it was a book that was necessary for me to write at the time.

I think it a good picture of the sixties.

Of course, I regarded it as an opportunity to look at the campus and some of the things that happened to me there. I put all my campus experiences together, all the problems, the flavor of campus life. That is the only time I ever wrote about it even though I spent many years living on campuses when I was married to Fred.

Was your life so difficult that you felt it easier to escape into the past?

Oh, all my life I was escaping into something—my poetry, my stories. I liked to embroider things even when I was telling something that had just happened. I romanticized it. I made it more interesting than it was.

Was that escape or was it simply your gift?

I think both, don't you?

Some people don't feel a need to embroider the present.

They don't? Of course, some of my experiences really can't be bettered.

What are some?

Well, love. I have never felt able to satisfy myself with any description of how it feels to be in love.

You may have been the first Mormon novelist to deal with a love story in a modern way, especially explaining the feelings of a woman. You also dealt with illegitimate love in a Mormon context. That was really rather daring. First, in Angels. . .

Then, in *On This Star* and *The Evening and The Morning.*

The meeting between East and West. . .

I see now why some people found those stories unsavory. But I didn't think so at the time. It seemed to me to be how life was. I thought every kind of love fascinating. And every age added varieties of feelings. That's why I wanted to write *The Evening and The Morning.* I wanted to compare the child, the mother and grandmother. When you think that I had five generations of experience available to me—my grandmother telling me stories of her childhood and my mother and myself and my daughter, and now my granddaughter! By the time I started writing for children, think what riches I had! Isn't that exciting? You touch five generations.

I think I'd like to do some more of that. I've always dreamed of doing a family reunion. I've had it in my imagination before Eudora Welty wrote her reunion book. It's fascinating how different Mormon family reunions are! I envy the Mormon families who have enough cousins and second cousins to take over a whole area for a day—like Aspen—and read papers to the group.

That's a popular theme right now. Will the character in your novel return to her family reunion?

Yes, that's why I have done all these beginnings. I've considered leaving all the history out and have some family scholar read a journal—like the journals collected by my dear friends, the Hafens. Some scholarly member of the family could read an article, one that *Dialogue* might publish. Or perhaps a little journal could be discovered.

Is your novel going to be a sequel to Kingdom Come?

No, I don't think so. I have invented so many things! I have six or seven chunks of material that will probably end up being chunks. I am writing a great many different beginnings and some endings. I had a notion that I would come back to America to finish the book, but I felt it must be justified so I wrote up quite an application for the National Endowment hoping to get a fellowship. This bothered me, though, because I don't really need the money. I was using it as an excuse to come back, so I abandoned the idea. I began

feeling rather deperate because in Morocco, there are small groups of Americans and English who go out to lunch every day. I was going to lunch and wasn't doing a morning's work. The day is spoiled and I am loggy. I came back to America to finish *The Man With the Key* and *Around the Corner*, you see—but it took a stint at MacDowell. I have never delivered a story in Morocco, except *Friends of the Road* a year ago last March.

Didn't you and Alec first meet at MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire?

Yes, I was working on *Miracles on Maple Hill* and *Plain Girl*, my greatest successes!

They sold more copies and won prizes.

Yes, and twenty years later, they are still providing me with an income. When I worked at MacDowell, that was the absolute peak! I considered that the peak of my efficiency. As you know, MacDowell is a colony for writers to which we come and finish our work in abolute privacy. I was having difficulty working at home, and my agent persuaded me to go. I was getting ready to go to Denmark for my second Guggenheim, so I used the first part of it to go to MacDowell to finish the work at hand, and then to Denmark for *Kindom Come*.

You were greatly helped by fellowships, then.

Yes. They helped me to do *The Proper Gods*. Actually, the first Guggenheim was for following Sam Brannan around, but when I met the Yaqui Indians, I fell in love with them and out of love with Sam. After all, he was interested only in land, mining and railroads. Of course, when Brigham sent his emmisary at San Francisco to collect Sam's tithing, Sam said, "I will send him ten percent when he sends me a receipt signed by God." I rather liked that.

The Proper Gods *certainly has a strong sense of place.*

I try to find stories that came out of the ground wherever I am. Consider the Amish and their big farms—in *Plain Girl*, and the poor in Alabama, which led to *Curious Missie*. Now Morocco has become a strong place in my consciousness, but I may have to leave it to write about it.

There is much talk nowadays about how women can free themselves to write.

Yes, I know. They do need help. If children are omnipresent, you aren't going to do much. I didn't write for children until my children were grown up. It seems very odd to me now. I told them stories, and I used to read to them every night, but I didn't write my stories down. The occasion didn't come until after they were grown. Then I ran into the bookmobiles, and my interest

in both children and books finally came together. When someone said to me, "Your children are the best characters in your novels," I realized that it would be beautiful to write for children. It would get me out from under the obsessive problems of scholarship.

Tell me about the bookmobile.

We had moved to Alabama, and the librarians in Auburn invited me to a dinner honoring writers. I told the story of my grandfather and his handcart full of books and about the Carnegie Library in Manti that didn't refuse me anything! I could take home six books if I wanted to. I told them how awful it was that they had so few libraries, how difficult for their young people, how deprived they must be!

Afterwards, they asked me if I would do a little story explaining to the people how they could get a bookmobile. So I went all over the state on the bookmobile and fell in love with the people who came for the books. It became a very exciting job and I found myself with quite a career, I was even quoted in the *Congressional Record* and that did impress my father. He didn't know that everything gets into the *Congressional Record!*

Shall we talk about Alec some more?

He has written the third volume of his memoirs. It has a chapter called "Virginia Sorensen" and a chapter called "Virginia on Her Own" that ends with his proposal. He says, "And now I think we should be married." He has said elsewhere that it wasn't because his life ended there but because he thinks the marriage is my story to tell.

Has he been a great help to your writing?

Oh. yes. The best thing about it is his idea that there is nothing in life as important as doing your work.

That is not what you were led to believe before?

No, it was always secondary. I always had a guilty feeling when my work succeeded. Maybe success would cause problems at home, or maybe it would hurt somebody. Maybe my children would be better without it. I don't think you ever get over that. But Alec has helped me to believe that staying with my work was the best thing I could do. It was essential to what I was, what I loved to do, what I did well. "You are a born writer!" That was his attitude! If you are a born writer, you write!

Wouldn't it be grand if we could all do that for each other?

Ideal. I have one editor who says, "Virginia only writes when she is unhappy, so we can hope that Virginia will be unhappy." I think she is right. I have

been far too happy the last ten or twelve years. My life seems exactly what I want. I need to come back to America, but I have been happy in Morocco. We have had our flat eleven years, and I have produced only *The Man With the Key* and *Friends of the Road.* Not very much, is it?

I do think though that complete concentration is what leads to fantastic production. That's what MacDowell is and I do wish you could go there. It's really more a case of putting yourself in a position to concentrate rather than being happy or unhappy. Nothing is permitted to interrupt at MacDowell. That is the one place in the world where work is sacred. You forget that things are bothering you. What happens in the real world when a poem is interrupted? You lose the train of thought. It leaves you feeling desperate, you can't get back, and you give up. Now Katherine Anne Porter had a tremendous reputation and very little production. Tillie Olsen published only a handful. The important thing is not doing a great deal but doing whatever you do very well. I can't be satisfied now. I have all these little notebooks, and I do them over and over. I had my son type six chapters form my notebooks so that I could stop writing in them. And the first thing I did was go over his work and change it and start on another notebook.

I don't know how I will ever get complete concentration again. I may have to go to MacDowell, but I hate to leave Alec that long. He'll be eighty-two next July. I need to concentrate long enough to make the characters come into my life and stay with me. Until that happens, the book is not on its feet.

It's not happening yet with your new novel?

Well, I am thinking about it most of the time. And I think I am putting in, quite helplessly, a whole wad of autobiography. I have the character returning to Utah just as I did after my sisters died. There are so many feelings and bits of feelings, reflections about the family, even stories that have come down through the family. My great-grandfather, for instance, Grandfather Blackett, carried lumber over the mountains and was killed by drinking from a poisoned spring. And I want to write about my father. But I think of what Ed Kimball said in his interview about the biography of his father. "Well, you ask me if I've put in any warts. I didn't see any." I feel that way about my own father. If I were to write a biography of my father, he would seem the perfect man.

What other characters will you put in the book?

I've wanted to follow my young man from Copenhagen, you remember Svend Madsen in *Kingdom Come?* I want to find out what happened to five generations, but it's so immense! The number that came from just two people is frightening!

You will have to pick and choose.

Yes, I have the old aunt who is a genealogist—I love her character. Like

many, congenial, testy smart old women I know. When they abandon genealogy, something will be lost. It will be just a bunch of statistics. Anyway, I have her making the family book, the Madsen book. She is the focal point.

Sounds like another wonderful female character. You know, Linda Sillitoe wrote a paper on the women characters in Mormon literature. She pointed out that Kate Alexander is the only one who did not come to a bad end. She was the most fully developed character, almost a feminist.

I am delighted that people thought she was a feminist character. I have always felt that things must change so women can be themselves. Because your children don't last. I sometimes think the Church forgets that. Your children grow up! They're so soon from the nest. In our culture, children are gone by high school.

Of course, the idea is to have so many of them that by the time the older ones leave, the younger ones are still there.

Oh, I see. I had forgotten. If that's the one thing you felt was of any value, you would go on producing children. I do feel a little pang when my best friend writes and says, "I'll soon have my fiftieth wedding anniversary. I have eighteen grandchildren." I have only three. I am not jealous of her life, though. Yes, I had forgotten that they keep on having babies. In this world that seems a reckless thing to do. The Church doesn't feel that there are too many people in the world?

I suppose there is always room for more.

Of course, there is the universe. All time, all space.

When you were growing up, the emphasis was on gods and goddesses. Now the emphasis is "I am a Child of God. I must become worthy to return and live with my Father." A slightly different concept.

I felt that very much when I was a child—To become a god! My mother sent me to all the meetings and there I learned a sense of becoming. My mother gave me roots in that way. Roots that may shake a little but still they hold fast. They provide nourishment.

Some people think that if you are not a card-carrying temple recommend member, you are not a Mormon writer.

I was married in the temple. I was very active in Palo Alto. When I wrote *Angels,* I was going to a little church that met in a lodge hall. It was a very amusing group of people. They all wanted to be officers. I must admit that the

apostasy of my mother's mother—Kate Alexander—had a great influence on my life. You know, I rather like scamps and skeptics in novels. You can do so much more with them than with a saint.

When you were active in the Church, was it easier to write about Mormons?

Oh yes, I am very deprived now that I don't know what's going on. That's one thing stopping me. If I have my character return to Mormon country, I don't know what she will be returning to. I don't know how they're holding their meetings or what the are up to.

You'll just have to come to church with me.

I have a Mormon library in my bedroom that fills four shelves. I have a battery of material that is old, old—

I am almost finished with my children's handcart story, and I am doing a strange thing with it. I found in Bill Mulder's collection—*Among the Mormons*—an account of Dickens visiting a Mormon ship. So I thought, why doesn't Dickens visit *my* Mormon ship? He describes the young people writing and studying English. My little girl is there and Great-Grandfather was the teacher, so he would be on the ship. I have Dickens talk to this young girl the way he does in his article. He tells her that he publishes a magazine called *Household Words* and he would very much like to know what happens to her and where she goes after she gets to America. He says, "It will be a wonderful story and I'm a story teller," so I have her doing the story for Mr. Dickens. How does it strike you?

I like it.

And then, of course, he was a great friend of Hans Christian Andersen, whom she adored, so I bring in Hans Christian Andersen. Dickens could be on the docks to meet Andersen. There's no reason why he shouldn't be there! And that's the way I will use history. I do think it's a very good idea. When I had the inspiration of bringing in Dickens and Andersen, I rushed to tell Alec about it, and I brought him this article of Dickens and he was very doubtful about manipulating history that way. I scolded him, "Why do you discourage me?"

If you have already played a love scene between Eliza Snow and Joseph Smith, surely Dickens can be brought in!

I think I will finish the little book this summer. My agent is waiting.

Do you write differently for children? Do you adjust your style?

I haven't found any adjustment necessary. I have children in my adult novels.

You can tell the same story to a child and to a grown-up, and you will adjust it quite without thinking. There are things that don't interest children.

Where Nothing is Long Ago *is a good bridge between children and adults.*

Of course, I actually used part of *The Evening and Morning*—in there—"The Secret Summer." It seemed the part of the book that hadn't fit in.

You have been able to write on several levels. The Man with the Key *was a picture of a mature woman's sexuality, a subject not much written about in Mormon culture.*

Yes, quite a few women have written me about it. Of course that was not a Mormon novel.

I work so slowly now that I get discouraged with myself. I think that life handed me some big slaps when it took both my sisters and when something went wrong with me too. I thought I wouldn't be here now. I hadn't expected to be alive still. I don't know why I didn't think of leaving some important messages, but I didn't. Now I expect to be around for a while, and I very much want to finish the work I've begun. Life seems more precious to me now. For the last few years I have developed a superior awareness. I am much more calm in spirit.

What do you think about some of the articles and pamphlets being written about you now?

They actually give me a tremendous lift! When your books are out of print and you've given them up to find that someone is reading a book that came out over twenty-five years ago is also very hopeful. When I learned that *Dialogue* readers and professors and writers at BYU and in Salt Lake were reading me again, it made me very much want to do a good modern Mormon novel. I need to get to work!

THE DEPOT

VIRGINIA SORENSEN

DRIVING SLOWLY PAST THE HOUSE she knew that her resentment was unreasonable. The new owners had every right to change it; if she had felt so strongly, why had she let it go? But how could they think an unrelieved expanse of stark red brick better than Mamma's shrubs and vines? What would the deer do when snow covered the mountains and they came down to find protected greenery in the town? Other houses had shrubs, of course, but of a much inferior order; Mamma's had grown rich from the ministrations of her affectionate green thumbs. And most people actually drove the deer away.

At the end of the block she turned into Depot Street. Then, outraged, she pulled to the side of the ditch and stopped. The old depot had disappeared. There was no platform, nothing but the double tracks laid high on cindered ties. The street had no proper end or beginning. Fields lay beyond and a derelict barn. When the sun set there would be nothing remarkable, no peaked silhouette. Had they taken down the marvelous old watertank too?

Slowly, she drove on. She had just seen her father's grave for the first time, having been half across the world when he died. Then the house. And now the missing depot made her feel part of a protracted private funeral. Near the tracks she stopped again. Yes, the tower had disappeared too.

At least the tracks were the same, she thought, sweeping past the cemetery and around the mountain south, diminishing northward into a silver point. Childishly, she decided to get out and walk along the ties. Just as in childhood, her legs were too short to take two at a time, too long for one, so she must leap or mince. For a few seconds she felt an old exhilaration, then turned back heavily, kicking gravel. Nothing, absolutely nothing was left. An archeologist might find signs that a charming little depot had stood here for almost a century. What might have survived? Indelible pencils sharpened by Dad's pocketknife, wires from baggage tags? Perhaps the skeleton of a railroad lamp. Or a worn telegraph key.

There had been no cellar; demolition had simply scraped the ground. Even the two little triangular gardens that had flanked the building had vanished utterly.

Right there, she thought, and stood square on the spot. Built during a period of railroading that was eminently Victorian, Dad's depot had been sturdy, a dark red brick with gingerbread fancies beneath the corners of its eaves. The windows were deepset, no stinting in their carpentry; a child could sit upon the sills. Outside, at either end, somebody possessed of Denver & Rio Grande pride had set two triangular plots of grass. They were encircled by low iron bars to protect them from wandering sheep and cattle. The first day Dad brought the family to see the finest depot of his career, Mamma had noticed at once some stunted rosebushes, one in each corner of the triangles. "We must tend these," she said, and so had water and fertilizer sent before night. After the job felt really Dad's, after a year of watering and cutting and weeding, she planted some of her flamboyant zinnias and marigolds. One summer her Shasta daisies grew so tall she had to tie their stems together for support. Against the baggage-room side where there was only one small window, she set a huge earthen pot of Virginia Creeper. Before many seasons it covered most of the wall and twined itself up to the roof and wound seductively around the gingerbread.

"This is the prettiest depot on the whole railroad!" they always said. Passengers said so too, stepping down during loadings and unloadings.

Mamma always saw to it that they tried the pure cold water of a fountain that ran perpetually, and they'd say, "You'd think it had ice in it!" And she'd say, as if she made it herself, "It comes right down from the snow."

Springville had been an important station then. It was fun to go down and watch ripe animals milling and complaining in the corrals along the sidings. It was exciting to stand on the fences and feel the shudder of hooves on the ramp. Nearby was that splendid water-tank, huge and red, with a long metal nose which came down to appease the thirst of panting engines. Once, magically, it had appeased the thirst of circus elephants while brilliant cars stood by, trembling with the roar of lions. There merry-go-rounds had disembarked amid the bright seats of ferris wheels.

But most important was the fruit. Thousands of crates of cherries and apricots and peaches and apples and pears went out of the valley by this gate. Some went on fast freights, but ripe cherries went swiftly to Denver and Chicago aboard the Zephyrs. Dad and his help threw crates like firebuckets from baggage trucks while passengers emerged to watch. Dad always worked with his sleeves rolled up, laughing and talking with conductors and brakemen who stood by and sometimes with white-coated porters from the Pullmans.

For half an hour sometimes the place was humming. Then the baggage trucks were drawn away, the conductor called "All aboard!" and swung himself up as, the train began to move. Dad stood waving with his kids and his crew; the engine hooted goodby and cars swooshed by, tick, tick, tick, faster and faster and disappeared around the bend.

Where had the fountain been? No sign of it now. But underground somewhere that sweet cold water must be running. She remembered Dad uncoiling a hose kept in the baggage room, sprinkling his grass and flowers on hot summer evenings. Sometimes he hosed down the platform and the trucks as well and then the hot red brick, so that his depot stood bright in the fresh and fragrant circle of its private rain.

She stood still as if listening, remembering another magic—signals from The World.

The World was anywhere outside The Kingdom of God to which had come the intrepid Pioneers, not so much from the West (which had some Mormon Country of its own) as from Back East. Practical English and sturdy Scandinavians had come to Utah by the path the sun used every day. And it was from that direction Dad's orders came over the railroad telephone and the telegraph. Unceasing voices and tappings kept him constant company. Her brothers had practiced the Morse code but she preferred to believe Dad clever beyond ordinary mortals, bringing, like a dove, secret messages from the sky.

"My signal—" and he would tap out his reply and somebody would tap back. He copied messages on his old typewriter with two index fingers. Blunt and thick with flattened nails, they moved unbelievably fast on the keys, leaving lines that were—Dad said—as crooked as a dog's hind leg. He would fold the yellow telegram into a matching envelope that had a window to show a name. "Whose turn?" he would ask. All the kids liked to deliver and pocket the fees; now and then an affluent citizen would add a tip.

The time came when the senders themselves took shape. All telegraphers belonged to The Brotherhood and arranged over the wire yearly mountain picnics. They knew each other's families; their children raced each other while their wives cooked over fragrant campfires. I was once, she thought, the Champion Runner of the Ten-Year-Olds.

But there was one year the picnic happened and they didn't go. Later, in deep winter, Dad went to bed early, sometimes even before supper. She had children of her own before she knew the whole truth of it. How he hung onto his desk with both hands to keep from yelling. Not only pain, but shakes that felt like pain all over. "When a train came highballing, there for a while, it was all I could do not to jump under. . . ."

How had they not known? During his extremity they led their blissfully busy lives, only sometimes missing the laughs. And of course the picnic. And one day The Helper came.

The Helper was Roger. Dad had known him before he went off to business school, a kid crazy about anything to do with railroading. He came to the depot to learn telegraphy during his holidays. Little and quick and terribly sincere, Roger was exactly what the doctor ordered.

Roger was not only fascinated with this depot but with every depot beyond, and not only with the Denver and Rio Grande but with every railroad everywhere. He had started to build his model road when he was ten; one evening he took the whole family to see it in the cellar of his father's house. With reverent fingers he picked up little cars, pointing out perfect details of engines, cabooses, freights carrying tiny animals and lumber and coal and machinery. People sat with their hats on in his miniature Pullmans. He could set the whole train moving. It rushed through valleys, up and down painted hills, around curves, hooting. It stopped at tiny depots complete with swtiches and boards and watertanks and crossing signs.

He had built an amateur telegraphy set. "I called it The Mystic Key," he said. But that was old stuff now. Now he pulled real switches that ordered real trains to stop or thunder through. He wore the most fatuous happy grin you could imagine when he first took real messages. By spring Dad came home to early supper and ate it while Roger watered at the depot. That summer there was not only the picnic but a whole fishing trip. It seemed no time before Roger was a general Relief Man who came and went for visits. Then he had a station of his own. And another. Always better. Dad had never been more proud than he was the day he heard Roger was going into the office in Salt Lake. Years later he wrote that Roger was in the central Denver office: "His heart was always in it."

The time came when she herself was a traveler on trains. Then she shared window seats with her children. Coming around that final curve they'd yell, "There he is! There's Grandpa!" And there he would be, ordering their train to stop, smiling and waving from the platform, between his little gardens, still blooming and green. Growing up, they felt disloyal when they must fly.

When Dad was left alone and she came to stay with him for a while, he was still working at the depot. But it was not like the old days. Provo The Steel Center was only a few miles away, but trucks thundered on a distant highway. Silver Zephyrs no longer so much as paused; passengers were only a blur of faces. Mailbags took to the air.

"Lucky," he said. "I couldn't handle that much business at my age." He still received and delivered those yellow messages. He reported the exact time trains went through. The Mystic Key still clicked away but he had plenty of time for visitors.

He kept hearing of stations closed over the heads of much younger men and worried about when his turn would come. But he retired right off the Springville job, receiving his Golden Service Pin at an elegant dinner in Salt Lake and wearing it proudly in his best suit. For a long time, even after Mamma was gone, he walked down Depot Street to sprinkle the grass and flowers. Then the doors of the depot were locked and the windows boarded over. Depressed, he began to use his Life Pass now and then to visit his children. He wrote that the depot gardens were dead and gone. "I sure as hell hate to see that place go down," he said.

But it did not go down. One year. Two. There it stood. It had one more rather splendid flutter of true life. Some film-makers from Brigham Young University in Provo were given funds to make biographical documentaries on Utah history. The director came over to see Dad about some scenes that required an old depot. "We wrote to the company," he said. "They told us to come over here, that you'd give us all the dope we need. We want it authentic. There's a scene where they telegraph about the meeting of the East and West up at Promontory."

Delighted, once more Dad handled the keys to the front door and the baggage room. He was down there every minute the day they took the boards off the windows. He didn't like it that they took down the sign *Springville* and put up that said *Great Salt Lake City*. But with deep pleasure he sat at the old desk, intact and dusted, and even supplied with yellow paper and envelopes from the same old drawer. The director was a man of considerable wisdom; he realized he couldn't find better hands for his purpose if he searched the world over. So Dad's blunt fingers were memorialized on the key.

In three days boards were nailed once more over the windows. Nobody thought to take down the Salt Lake sign, and there must have been many a doubletake by the passengers rushing by.

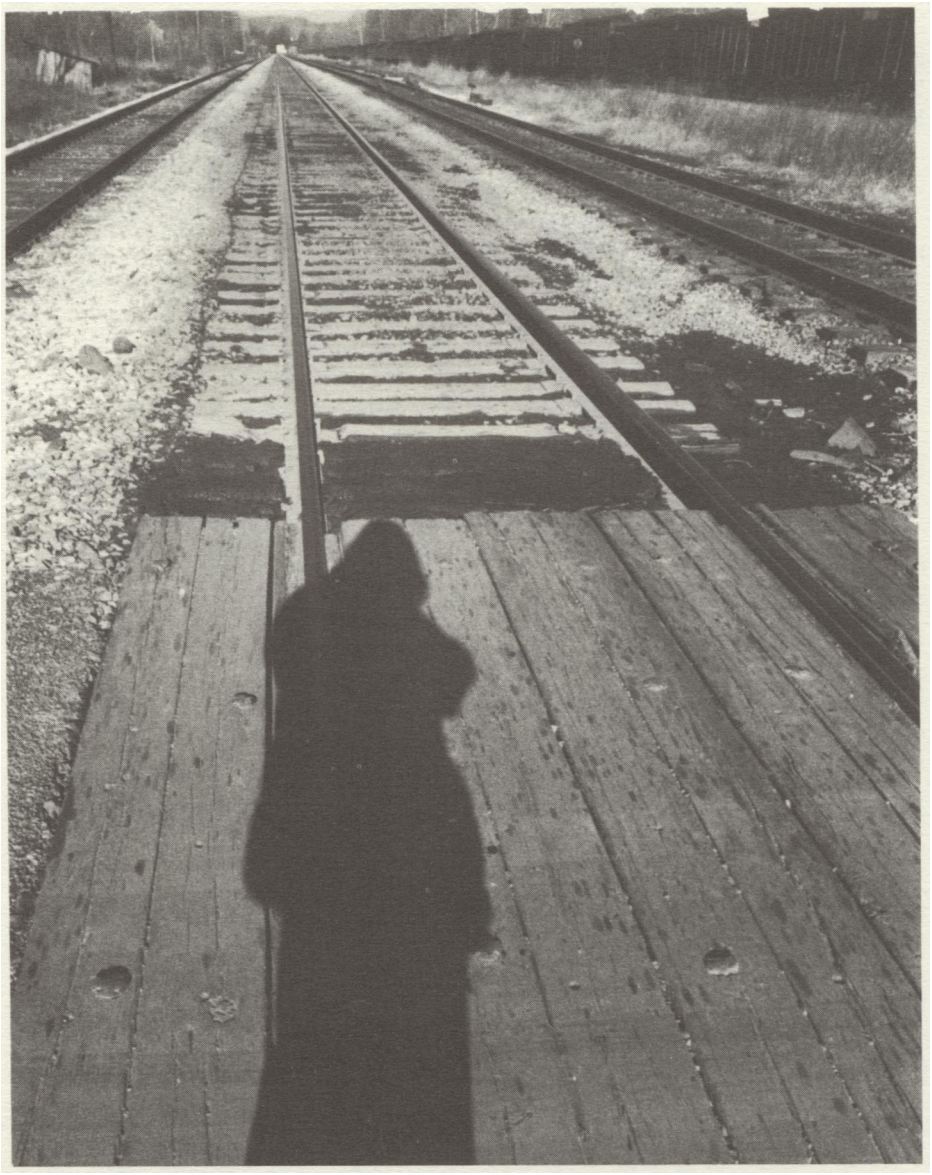
And now—she was cold, sitting there in mountain twilight. And old, she thought, remembering Dad feeling old. Driving back toward the town she had to flip on her lights, and on the corner of Depot and Center Street she saw one of Dad's old friends. He had been a section foreman; she remembered him calling by for the paychecks on Saturday nights.

"Well! Never thought I'd see you around here now your Dad's gone. Looks awful, don't it, no depot on Depot Street? City Council should have

kept it for a museum—could've put in all those old models Roger offered 'em. But they said they couldn't afford to keep it up."

They shook their heads together. They shook hands again. "But you've got to hand the railroad one thing," he said. "Acted real human about your Dad. Boarded the depot up, sure, but didn't knock it down till the week after he died."

A train whistled. The two of them watched it highball through. "Must've been somebody pretty high up that knew how he'd hate to see that depot go down," he said.



"Herself Moving Beside Herself, Out There Alone": The Shape of Mormon Belief in Virginia Sorensen's The Evening and the Morning

BRUCE W. JORGENSEN

. . . the eternal human Self cannot escape from existence nor can it escape from the awareness of its existence . . .

—B. F. Cummings

THE MATTER AT LARGE: MORMON BELIEFS AND MORMON FICTION

WHAT DO THE PHRASES "Mormon novel" and "Mormon novelist" mean? Maybe in the first place we are incautious not to separate novel from novelist. Suppose a "Mormon novelist" in a quite strenuous sense: nominally and actively Mormon, a baptized member who accepts Mormon scripture as canonical, Mormon prophets as authoritative, Mormon doctrine (that is, "the gospel" at least as embodied in the scriptures) as a true and adequate, if not exhaustively complete, vision and interpretation of the world, of the human self and its sights and doings and of God; who both accepts and experiences Mormon ordinances as efficacious channels of God's power; who cleaves to the covenants of baptism, sacrament, priesthood and temple; and who finally also writes the extended prose narratives we call novels. What kinds of novels might such a writer make? At one imaginable limit, he might write detective thrillers, or nihilistic science-fiction,[1] or maybe even pornography; for as James Faulconer once noted, writing is after all a vocation just as plumbing is, and we never seem to bother about whether we've called a Mormon plumber when the drain backs up—the question is simply, how good at his craft is this worker?[2] But of course near its limit the analogy sunders: a writer's beliefs and commitments must influence his craft in ways that a plumber's will not. And some of us, Mormon or not, might regard a writer's very choice of tough-guy, SF, or porn as the kind of self-betrayal that calls in question the

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integrity of all the writer's professed beliefs. We hope that any serious writer's major and minor artistic choices will somehow accord with those life-commitments that lie close to the foundation of his personality and set the angle and force of all his intentions. This brings us near an opposite limit, then: the case where, as with Catholics like J. F. Powers and Flannery O'Connor, the religious life-commitments and the artistic choices seem deeply at one, novelist inseparable from novel.

But most writers and their books, alas or hurrah, fall somewhere between these limits, on muddled middle ground where we have to map and make our way with intelligent care. How "Christian," of whatever variety, are Jane Austen, Tolstoy before conversion, or Faulkner, Hemingway, Warren, Welty, Updike, Taylor Caldwell? How "Jewish" are Roth, Bellow, Malamud, Singer, Chaim Potok? How "Mormon" are Maurine Whipple, Richard Scowcroft, Virginia Sorensen, Douglas Thayer, Don Marshall, Bela Petsco, Shirley Sealy, and their novels and stories? Do Mormon characters, problems, and milieu, or even overt Mormon preachment, make a story "Mormon"? And does LDS membership, or the lack or lapse of it, make a writer "Mormon" or "non-Mormon" in his work? These are questions of "implicit vision," questions of how, other than by explicit statement, writers' beliefs can be "in" their work.

Some splendid critics have considered at length such questions about authors' beliefs and their fictions—Wayne Booth and Sheldon Sacks, to name only two recent Americans. I find Sacks's theoretical chapters (the first and sixth) in his *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* powerfully helpful in pursuing questions of Mormon belief in Mormon fiction. Sacks's most general thesis is that "The ethical beliefs, opinions, and prejudices of novelists do not shape their novels, but rather have a discernible and vital shape within those novels."[3] Sacks first distinguishes three broad types of fiction: satire, apologue and represented action. He argues, cogently I think, that "coherent" instances of the types must be mutually exclusive, unless the "organizing principle" of the work is suspended by "digression" (our recognition of, say, a "satiric passage" in an otherwise realistic novel presupposes an apprehension of its coherence as a novel).

Sacks defines the "organizing principles" of the three types as follows:

> A satire is a work organized so that it ridicules objects external to the fictional world created in it.
>
> An apologue is a work organized as a fictional example of the truth of a formulable statement or a series of such statements.
>
> An action is a work organized so that it introduces characters, about whose fates we are made to care, in unstable relationships which are then further complicated until the complication is finally resolved by the removal of the represented instability (p. 26).

Sacks reserves the term "novel" for only this third type. Examples of the three might be, respectively, *Gulliver's Travels, Rasselas* and *Emma.*

Sacks discerns important differences in the ways authors' beliefs may be inferred from different types of fictions. A satire allows direct access only to

the author's negative judgments, from which we might guess his positive beliefs only in narrow categories: "The positive shape of belief" in satire, Sacks writes, "is essentially limited to the negative pattern implicit in the selection of external objects" of ridicule (p. 49). In apologue, by contrast, "the writer . . . is called upon to reveal by fictional example his positive beliefs;" here "The shape of belief . . . is obviously defined mainly by the themes exemplified" (p. 60).

But a "represented action" or novel presents a harder case: "the shape of belief in actions cannot be the pattern of ridiculed objects peculiar to satire or the exemplified thematic statement of apologue" (p. 61). Here, Sacks suggests (and his main effort is to test and argue this hypothesis) "that the novelist's beliefs, opinions, and prejudices are expressed in the judgments he conveys of his characters, their actions, and their thoughts;" judgments "expressed as . . . signals—which persuade his readers to react to those characters, their acts, and their thoughts in a manner consonant with the artistic end to which all elements in his work are subordinate" (p. 66). Indeed, he argues, the artistic end of an author writing a novel is such that the writer inevitably will incorporate his beliefs this way, since the writer "not merely may but must subtly control our fellings about the characters, acts, and thoughts represented at each stage of the novel if it is to have a coherent effect" (p. 65).

Three readings of Sacks's close but lucid argument persuade me, over any quibbles I might raise in reference to specific and thus imperfect fictions as against his austere theoretical purities, that he is essentially right: the artistic end of making a coherent novel "exerts no pressure on a writer to make insincere judgments" (p. 250) of characters, actions, and thoughts.[4] Thus, if we trust the writer's personal integrity, we may with reasonable confidence trace the shape of his belief in the myriad judgments he must express on every page, in almost every line, to make the novel work at all.

Though surprisingly at first sight, Sacks's argument means, too, that writers of novels (actions) will reveal far more of their beliefs than will writers of satires or apologues: "For the beliefs relevant to apologues are quite likely to be, in some sense, doctrinal and a writer is likely to reveal his long-range commitments only. The satirist, no matter how wide the scope of his satire, need only reveal the negative side of his beliefs . . .;" even "the virtues he describes have no necessary connection with his positive beliefs, since their job is to facilitate not ethical statements but ridicule of external objects." Sacks finds that "it is the novelist, ironically, from whom the greatest degree of ethical revelation is demanded . . . . It is not sufficient for him, as it is for the satirist, to show us what he does not like in the external world. And he may not limit what he reveals to the formulated ideas in which he consciously acquiesces" (p. 271).

The theoretical argument just sketched has some immediate implications for the historical and critical study of Mormon fiction. We seem to have had very little Mormon satire, though much Mormon humor pokes satirically at both Mormon and gentile folly as judged by Mormon standards; and maybe Richard Cracroft would make a case for Sam Taylor's *Heaven Knows Why* as

satire or as comic action mixed with satire.[5] Clearly, the dominant popular and ecclesiastically supported tradition in Mormon fiction has been that of apologue, from *Added Upon* to *Beyond this Moment* and quite likely next month's *Ensign* and *New Era*. I suspect the tradition of apologue is indirectly but massively supported by the way most of us teach literature at BYU, with our emphasis on "theme" as governing principle even while we induct students into the intricate delights of form and style and tone. But the dominance of apologue may be largely accounted for simply by Church members' acceptance of the Church's general commitments to preach the gospel and to strengthen the faith of the already-converted: "If one has a message to deliver," wrote Nephi Anderson, " he puts it into a novel."[6] This "package-message" aesthetic goes largely unchallenged, apparently because too few of us yet understand that fictions can be educative without being didactic, or that "moral purpose" is no less compatible with "action" than with "apologue."

The dominance of apologue, as a quasi-official aesthetic and as an expectation of Mormon readers, might also partly account for the difficulty of the first generation of serious Mormon novelists, the "lost generation" of the 1940s,[7] had staying in the Church or feeling themselves integral with the Mormon community. Not being clearly apologues promoting the faith by overtly exemplifying the Church's long-range doctrinal commitments, their novels, I suspect, were often misread and more often mistrusted (though it is true that the novelists may in fact have been heretical and often earned this mistrust by their posture as superior artist-outcasts of backward, narrow villages). By the nature of the type, Sacks's argument suggests, a novel as "represented action" is unlikely to demonstrate unambiguously the truth of any formulable religious proposition; though also by its nature it will imply its writer's values and beliefs on every page. We might find, if we re-read some of the novels of the forties, that their implicit structures of value are sometimes more "Mormon" than either the authors or their Mormon audience then realized.

Could we say that a "Mormon novel"—that is, either a novel by a strenuously defined Mormon or a novel about Mormon characters—is "Mormon" to the extent that its implicit vision or structure of values accords with some more-or-less normative "Mormon vision" and "Mormon life-commitments?" From this angle, for instance, Halldór Laxness' *Paradise Reclaimed* is "Mormon" mainly in terms of its characters and the beliefs and customs they temporarily espouse; in terms of the author's implicit judgments, it might more properly be called a "humanist novel."[8] Another significant consideration must be the provenance of the author's values: even if we find a Laxness making a judgment we would call "Mormon," still the values behind it might derive from other sources—Lutheran, Catholic, existentialist, even Buddhist.

This raises a large and obvious problem: a "Mormon vision" and "Mormon values" may not be as exclusive, as "peculiar," as capable of strenuous definition, as we sometimes tell ourselves. Most of our ethical standards (not our dietary ones, which we sometimes treat as if they were ethical), like honesty, chastity, benevolence, temperance, charity, have been widely shared in Western Christendom for centuries. And even if we define a "Mor-

mon vision" of experience in general, could we insist on its peculiarity at more than a few points?

To begin with, such a "vision," D&C 93:24 persuades me, ought to mean clear sight of "things as they are;" but this is the titled property of most realists. Further, it would include much of the trivial, tedious, vulgar, and evil as well as the "spiritual," "uplifting," exalted and good, if it were to be in any sense a version of "things as they are:" Pollyanna's "glad game" is not the gospel, unless in a terribly trivialized way; and being brought up on 2 Nephi 2 ought to have given Mormon writers and readers, if anything, a more rather than less acute sense of "opposition in all things." But conflict is the common pasture of all narrative fictions. Still, a "Mormon" or "gospel" map of human experience, as Terry Warner has suggested, will include features of the terrain that, say, Austen or Tolstoy or Chekhov or Hemingway might have overlooked.[9] Such a "Mormon vision" might be less like "seeing the world through a paradisiacal glass, brightly," as Richard Cracroft and Neal Lambert put it,[10] than like viewing an x-ray superimposed on a photograph: things as they look to honest sight, and something more.

Am I almost saying ain't no such critter as a "Mormon novel?" Well, at least that the critter may be harder to catch than we've supposed. We have to spot the "something more:" a "Mormon novel" by definition would have (and perhaps not without contrariety) an implicit vision distinguishably and at some points peculiarly Mormon, not merely in its characters or milieu but in its imaginative perspective, the set of proximate and ultimate judgments within which characters, their actions and their thoughts are placed. *Consonance* might be an apt name for this primary test: do the novel's implied beliefs accord with Mormon beliefs?

This leaves some sizeable problems yet. We may find novels that are only "Mormon in part;" still, such a discrimination may matter sometimes to some of us. Our judgments will be taxonomic rather than normative—to find a novel largely "Mormon" won't necessarily be to find it a good novel; still, to talk about "Mormon literature" at all, we need some taxonomic skill, some stricter definitions. And what of the theoretically possible "Mormon novel" with non-Mormon characters and non-Mormon milieu, with no Mormon references, and written by a non-Mormon novelist who has worked out his own vision and values that just happen to coincide with ours? Here a secondary test would apply—*provenance*, the probable source of the author's beliefs. I doubt my hypothetical limit case will plague us much, since all the "nons" make it unlikely that a reader would suspect "Mormon" values as the source of judgments in such a novel. Still, this negative limit may warn us that, with our usual and quite defensible biographical and historical inferences suspended, *Moby-Dick* or *The Scarlet Letter* or *Anna Karenina* might be found just as "Mormon" as *The Giant Joshua.*

But, skirting that mad abyss and allowing the usual contexts of character, milieu and author's biography, what we most often want to know is, how "Mormon" is this novel about Mormon characters by a Mormon or ex-Mormon or Mormon-watcher? Which brings me at last to

THE MATTER AT HAND: SORENSEN'S THE EVENING AND THE MORNING *AS A POSSIBLE MORMON NOVEL*

At the time she wrote *The Evening and the Morning,* Virginia Sorensen apparently was not "Mormon" by the strenuous definition (how constantly are any of us?), and I would not presume to judge of her (nor of anyone) whether or to what degree she ever had been; she was, in Franklin Fisher's apt phrase, a "black sheep." We can even grant Dale Morgan's assertion in *Saturday Review* that "It is only by accident of her birth or theirs that the people she writes about are Mormons," and that "she is no writer of 'Mormon novels'" insofar as her characters' "problems are the problems of people everywhere who somehow must make good lives for themselves, each bringing order out of his individual chaos."[11] (I find the humanistic notion of "universality" here oddly yoked to an image that for me resonates with Joseph Smith's peculiar doctrine of creation; but let that pass.) Neither the author's biography or the common humanity of her characters' problems will fully settle the question: we must look to the "implied author" (in Wayne Booth's phrase),[12] the author's "second self" created in the novel, and to the judgments that "second self" makes.

It has been remarked of Hawthorne that he did not have to believe in Puritanism to write a great novel about it, but rather he had to understand it, which for a man of his time was harder. Similarly, Virginia Sorensen did not have to believe in Mormonism to write a good novel about it; she had to understand it, which for an expatriate might be both harder and easier—harder because she no longer believed certain things, easier because an expatriate's distance allowed a perspective that could matter for the kinds of judgments a novelist must make. Virginia Sorensen herself has described the novelist as a person "in the middle," standing somewhere between the poles of "for" and "against" so as to see a broad span and judge evenly.[13] In our terms, it is the writer of apologue whose "second self" can and must make his long-range doctrinal allegiances clear; the "second self" of the novelist may not stand so close to the pole of "for." Thus, in a novel like *The Evening and the Morning,* it may not make much *novelistic* difference whether the actual writer believes the Joseph Smith story or not; she may represent a character for whom it makes a life-difference, and in her "second self" she may or may not endorse that character, but we ought not to read endorsement of the character as endorsement of the belief or disbelief; rather we must look to the implicit value by which the "second self" judges the character. It will not do, in estimating how "Mormon" *The Evening and the Morning* is, or in judging the beliefs of its implied author, to see simplistically that she generally supports the rebellious and adulterous Kate Alexander against a repressive Mormon village. We must see *why* and *how much* she endorses Kate, and how she makes subtler and often more important judgments of Kate as well as of other characters.

The Evening and the Morning is a technically and ethically complex novel that interweaves past and present during six days, Monday through Saturday, of the 24th of July week of 1922, which the widowed Kate Black Alexan-

der spends with the family of her daughter Deseret in Manti, Utah. Kate has come to get affidavits signed so she can collect the Federal pension due her deceased husband Karl as a Black Hawk War veteran. But her return is also an ambivalent re-immersion in a turbulent past, "good to remember but of course best to forget,"[14] whose unresolved tensions and unconfessed wrongs still vibrate around Kate—in the estrangement between herself and Dessie, the discord between Dessie and her husband Ike Cluff, the adolescent joy, fear and guilt of her granddaughter Jean, and the sour vindictiveness of Marya Olgood, the surviving sister of Karl Alexander's first wife.

Genealogy is thick in this novel—thick and tangled as it can be without centrally involving polygamy—but the relationships among the families of three sisters should clarify it. In the novel's past, Marya Thugerson is married to Charles Olgood, her sister Helga to the fiddlemaker Peter Jansen, who lives in Nephi, and Christina ("Steen") to Karl Alexander. The Olgood children do not figure significantly in the novel, but Peter and Helga have a congenitally damaged daughter who is a painful, pathetic burden to them, and Karl and Steen have two children, Teena and Karlie. Three years after Steen dies, Karl, partly at Peter Jansen's instigation, marries sixteen-year-old Kate Black, and they beget four children, Mose, Tracy, Martha and Dick.

Whence Deseret? Thereby hangs the tale. For it is the introduction of "wild" Kate Black into this web of kinship that generates the novel's central conflicts. Well before reaching sixteen, Kate has become a rebel because her father "was hardly a father at all," a man who "came home only between journeys freighting and bringing immigrants, on his brief visits scattering a munificent seed intended to grow within and console his wives in his absence;" yet he is also a "gentle, kindly man," and Kate "must love him feeling at the same time bitterly deprived of him, and feeling it necessary to blame somebody else" (p. 19-20). The somebody else, of course, could only be "Brother Brigham," who was "forever sending messages which told her father what to do" (p. 20). So even as a child dressed in white and given a bouquet to toss in front of Brigham's carriage, Kate had thrown the flowers behind her and "stepped on them" (p. 21). And behind Brigham, predictably enough, Kate blames and rebels against the Church and disbelieves its teachings.

Notice how complicated, even in this small bit of antecedent action, are the judgments we make. We sympathize with Kate's bitter deprivation on the good Mormon and human ground that a child deeply needs a father's loving presence, and we condemn her father on that same ground, despite his kindliness and his otherwise admirable devotion to the Church. But although we understand Kate's blaming Brother Brigham and by extension the Church, we are not asked to condone it: Kate's childish petulance is excessive and even selfish; and still less excusable is the maturing girl's failure to redress her emotional error and forgive both her mistaken father and Brother Brigham, whom the adult Kate can see as both a "smiling wealthy symbol of power" and ordinarily "hot and human" (p. 20). All these judgments are further complicated by the fact that the episode comes to us through Dessie's memory of Kate's telling, for the story has always given Dessie a "curious uncertainty"

(p. 20), has "always confused" her (p. 21), and thus is part of what has made her the anxious, overprotective woman she is. We see that Kate, in telling this story as self-justification (and much more in leaving Dessie when forced to move away from Manti after Karl's death), has committed a version of the same wrong she condemns her father for.

Almost any moment in the novel, I venture, would exact such delicate and multiple judgments from us; and I venture, too, that most of our judgments would refer finally to central ethical teachings of the gospel. These, of course, are not exclusively "Mormon," but their provenance for Virginia Sorensen must have been largely that. We may suppose, further, that the novel's "moral purpose," if Virginia Sorensen had one, was in part to urge us through such fictive experiences as this to judge more carefully and sympathetically, to attain the fullest measure of justice and mercy and the most delicate balance of their concordantly opposed claims.[15] Our experience and the beliefs we profess demand no less of us.

This episode is also a resonant instance of a problem that runs deep in Christian and Mormon scripture alike: the turning away of the hearts of parents from children, children from parents. The standard by which we measure the pity and terror of this division is not exclusively Mormon, but a Mormon valuation of the family only sharpens the pain: these things should not be, but they are, and who will heal us?

At a level that concerns us more immediately, Kate's childish but fearfully consequential rebellion firmly establishes the most obvious conflict in the novel: the individual against the social order. Other than appearance vs. reality, this seems the most constant tension in the central tradition of realistic fiction: novels are about individuals in society, with society posing constraint even as it offers opportunity, and the individual either happily or painfully integrated or joyously or desperately escaping. So it should not surprise us to find a novelist treating Mormon material in such terms; nor should a black sheep protagonist disturb us, unless we expect apologue rather than represented action. One possible action for a novel about Mormons to represent is rebellion, which after all runs deep in the scriptures too. The question, again, is how does the implied author judge the rebel and the community?

The chief representatives of the community in *The Evening and the Morning* are the ward teachers and Marya Olgood. More types than characters, the teachers enter the first moments of the action as quintessential exponents of the Mormon village as socio-religious institution meeting their polar opposite in apostate Kate. The incident firmly establishes this level of conflict in the novel, but Sorensen's judgments of Kate and the teachers are anything but simplistic. To Kate, Brother Atchisen and Brother Shumaker are "genial, harmless, elderly, homely men," "innocent tools" with "awkward joviality in their voices," as used to serving "in the name of Authority" as they are to the surrounding mountains that almost make one forget the stars beyond. But something of Kate's comfortably superior attitude quite discomforts the brethren, and her blunt honesty flusters both them and Dessie. Yet even as

she flatly declares her preference for California over her old home, Kate judges herself: "She folded coldness with truth into a small envelope of voice, and thought how foolish this was, and yet could not help it" (p. 8). The claims of "honesty" against "ease and manners and kindness" are never easily balanced, but Kate's small, self-justifying and self-excused failure of benevolence is clearly marked.

"Of all things Kate dreaded here" in Manti, "she knew she dreaded Marya most:" "Marya—she who had always been present, like a weed, since growth and time began" (p. 22). Kate's "weed" metaphor, even when we allow for dread and resentment, will shadow all we later learn of Marya; still, Kate's own later judgments are larger and subtler. A self-appointed nemesis, Marya has always mistrusted Kate for taking Steen's place; and after Karl's death, when she has gotten evidence from Karlie of Kate's sixteen-year love affair with Peter Jansen, Marya descends on Kate like an avenging angel: "*Kate Black . . . you are a low and wicked woman—with daughters and grown sons—I wouldn't be surprised if some of your children*—and your poor husband, your poor dead husband—" (p. 226).

So terrible is the moment to Kate that it flashes vividly across her memory each time a meeting with Marya impends (p. 146, 226). By a standard Kate has long since ceased to accept absolutely, Marya's judgment of course is right, but her vindictive cruelty is as excessive as Kate's childhood rebellion. More, when the episode is fully presented later in the novel, we see Marya's dominant motive as an ugly familial selfishness: she and her nephew Karlie have come to demand that Kate give up Karl's property, threatening to "prov[e] in court that Kate was not a responsible woman" (p. 288) if she does not accede to them. Karlie, whom Kate has realized a day or so earlier "would never have had such passion to give anything but property" (p. 287), has even gone so far as to blame her for Karl's death: though seriously ill, Karl had been still vigorous at fifty-four, yet Karlie says he had taken an overdose of sleeping powder because "He wanted to die, we all know that" (p. 287)—ostensibly because Karlie had accused Kate of adultery. But Karl does not seem to have believed his son's story, or if he did he refused to show Kate any condemnation, suspicion, or bitterness; also, Kate finally learns from the present druggist in Manti that "You could take a ton of that [sleeping powder] and not hurt yourself" (p. 296). So Karlie is not only selfish, cruel, vindictive and lacking genuine filial love, but a cunningly stupid liar as well. His and Marya's nearly solipsistic self-righteousness and vengefulness are further underscored by Dessie's having witnessed part of their attack on Kate while standing outside the screen door (p. 289); it is another incident that breeds a deep fear of life in Dessie's spirit.

The righteous by one standard, then, are adjudged unrighteous by other standards. Kate breaks one law, her tormentors another equally high law. The implied author of this novel will not let us rest with simplistic judgments. Even Kate, much as she has dreaded Marya, can go beyond a bitter judgment that "She was always one of the thin cold self-righteous kind," "deliberately

martyring herself for the neighbors to see" (p. 225), to a more empathetic realization that "Marya was a woman, after all, one of those who had expected nothing, watched for nobody, whose hands had hung open without guilt, whose eyes had never flickered at a secret love. One of the good women, untried, and immensely fortunate" (p. 319). Kate can never quite forgive Marya, but she does understand her, and at one moment, ironically, "enjoy[s] her in a way. She's the only one to whom I say anything really true. It was as if they were signalling the truth . . . from one high cold peak to another" (p. 155).

This moment occurs two days before Marya confronts Dessie's unorthodox but forthright and goodhearted husband Ike with the same old vindictive truth, hoping to prevent Kate and Jean, who carries Peter Jansen's iron-red hair "like a banner" (p. 5), from going to Nephi to see Peter. But in a surprising and satisfying reversal, Ike tells her, "You don't need to bother telling Dessie, Marya. I'll tell her myself. I can see it's high time she knows" (p. 300). The only way Ike sees to deal with Marya's kind—"God's spies" (p. 309) Kate calls them—"is by letting on to everything. With the truth" (p. 302). He turns out to be right: the revelation hurts Dessie, but like lancing and cauterizing an abscess it also heals: the "chasm" of estrangement between her and her mother can be bridged, and Dessie, orthodox as she is, can finally understand and try to forgive even the wrong she had not known (p. 310). "Now," Kate hopes, "it would be possible for them to speak later, to be women together as she had hoped. And this was enough" (p. 310). Even Marya's badness—the self-righteousness of a good, untried women—works toward good in the intricate moral economy of experience envisioned in this novel.

But for her early rebellion, Kate herself might have become one of the good, untried kind, too, like Marya or like Steen, who "had been what her neighbors admiringly called an exceptional mother, and . . . had died of this virtue, apparently" (p. 25). As a young wife, Kate "had been like so many, securely nodding to the necessities of virtue and duty" (p. 42), pleased with the "undemanding love" of a decent, good, if unimaginative husband. Peter Jansen's insinuating whisper, "Katie—I keep wondering, I don't know why—*are you flirtatious*?" had made "furious happenings within [her] as if all the orderly arrangements of her body were being tossed about in confusion" (p. 31). Too much later, Kate realizes Peter at first probably intended no more than flirtation: "His life had been tight those days, with his only child an ill-begotten creature, helpless and sad, and Helga close-lipped and martyred with its care and terrified of bearing another such child. He had simply required relief, laughter, kisses. If she had been flirtatious to him, merely, it could have gone along with them a time and been forgotten" (p. 61). But the shock of Peter's words is fortuitously compounded by another shock when later the same evening Kate sees her husband Karl and her young sister Verna briefly embracing on the darkened porch. This, Kate later decides, really was no more than flirtation, but witnessing it is apocalyptic:

> . . . Kate turned away, silently, paralysis broken and all her body suddenly possessed of terrible motion, livingness that seemed to tear her apart in all directions and then restore her again but into a vast trembling that made her teeth clatter. . . . there was a crawling upon her scalp as if myriads of small creatures had invaded the forest of her hair. (p. 39)

A word and a sight, both partly misconstrued, have reduced Kate's moral cosmos of secure virtue and duty to chaos; but the "long month following" later seems to her "the true beginning of herself as a woman" as she "began to build about the painful kernel of a new knowledge a smooth and rationalized rebellion" (p. 42).

Even so, it is a month before Peter asks his question again (p. 45), a month for Kate to brood upon "a possibility of joy, frightening at first and smothered with guilt" but coming "to her more and more freely and insistently" (p. 46), so that this second time, burdened too with the memory of Karl and Verna, Kate makes a bitter addition to her first answer that she is married: "A lot of us are married, Peter, and it doesn't seem to make any difference" (p. 47). This begins, then, "a love which grew gradually and deliberately, at first a frightened and amazed affection, desire at first merely troubling and then becoming turbulent and insistent", although "For a long time unrelieved, she began to suffer with him the terrible paralysis of his need against the obligation of his marriage to Helga and the decency of his friendship with Karl" (p. 48).

Sorensen probably lost a lot of her orthodox Mormon readers here: we cannot look upon adultery with the least degree of allowance. Yet what of the adulteress? If we are to be made to care enough about Kate to follow the action to its close, we cannot be allowed to flatly condemn and dismiss her at this point. Our resistance may be enormous, but it must be overcome and our care for Kate sustained. Especially if Mormons were part of her proposed audience, this may have been the most delicate rhetorical problem in the novel for Sorensen. Not that the form of the action forces her to make insincere judgments—the implied author's belief in the seventh commandment seems no more absolute than Kate's—but a novel creates its reader, too, and some readers, orthodox Mormons particularly, would resist becoming the readers the implied author requires here. Again we must look to less obvious judgments of Kate and her thoughts and actions than simple condemnation or acquittal. Sorensen's primary appeal for our appropriate care for Kate refers ultimately, I think, to distinctly Mormon judgments of the body, of its capacity for joy, and of individual selfhood; values sharable elsewhere, of course, but for Virginia Sorensen, I trust, first apprehended at home in Mormon country.

Kate healthily affirms the body, has "given her body most scrupulous care, always, respecting the materials of existence, the container of great joy" (p. 24). And though "joy" here surely includes sensuous delight, it is not

solely that, for when Dessie acknowledges her pregnancy Kate says, "'I'm glad, Dessie. I never see it in a woman but what I envy it.' She wished she might stand up and reach out and touch Dessie, but there was an embarrassment which troubled her." Laughing, Dessie says, "You can't envy *all* of it!" but Kate answers, "All of it" (p. 29). Kate affirms the body in its capacity for the full range of experience, then, its capacity for labor and sorrow as well as pleasure, its share in the wholeness of personal existence. Kate inherits this attitude from her own mother Martha, who had been "afraid to die. Not afraid of the afterward . . . but of breaking off. In all breaking away there is agony, and Martha had loved to live" (p. 21). With Joseph Smith, Kate would affirm that "happiness is the object and the design of our existence;"[16] and she does affirm to Jean riding the train to Nephi near the end of the novel that happiness "happens right now if it happens at all," and ponders to herself:

> It always had something to do with the senses . . . and with some sort of release; it had to do with experiencing well and freely and without fear.[17] At once she thought of growing flowers and of making music and listening to it and of reading poetry and of exchanging ideas with friends and of bursting into laughter and of getting work done. She looked at Jean, who already possessed the art of being delighted with the world, now, at once. If she could keep it—or if it could be taught to those who did not have it—or if it could be shared, Kate thought, surely there would be less despair in the world. (p. 325)

Kate's lover Peter Jansen had affirmed metaphorically the same value, speaking to Karl and Kate about violins: "each instrument must contain the possibility" of great music, must have that "readiness," "the power to feel and to live" (p. 66).

But the happiness crucially at issue in *The Evening and the Morning* is more specific: it is sexual, "erotic" in the narrow sense. (To Freud as to the ancients, recall, *eros* was not just genital sexuality, was in fact what connects us with anything; its opposite, for Freud, was the impulse to disconnection that is finally death.[18]) To some, Sorensen has seemed sentimental about romantic love; here I think she is not, for while she sympathizes with Kate's rebellious pursuit of happiness, she also exposes the immediate and ultimate waste of anarchic eros. From Peter's earliest kiss, which to Kate seems "at first more misery than joy" (p. 48), Kate lives and moves in a tension between erotic joy and ethical guilt as powerful as any "opposition" I have seen in Mormon fiction. Much as Kate has disbelieved, she still finds, if more through Peter than herself, "that what should be simple and perfect between them must be complicated and troublesome and laden with consequences for this world and another" (p. 48-49). The hour, much after this discovery, when Kate finds herself "overwhelmed . . . with desire" for Peter is the same hour when "her true pity for Helga [begins], later to become an insistent and ever-present emotion" (p. 69). For months after their first physical consummation, Kate feels "that she is being destroyed by the battle of joy and guilt within her" (p. 77).

Yet she does find with Peter—and continues a long time to share—a personal erotic joy she has not known with Karl, an ecstatic wholeness like something she knew in girlhood "one hour when she stood in a creek and the motion of the water touching her gave her such ecstasy as she had never felt again, as if the water were many, many hands touching but outside herself" (p. 45). With Karl, Kate's physical relationship was "lofty and almost solemn, like a sacrament. Like the mere act of drinking water from the sacrament cup it became not drinking and not water but an act of devotion and belief" (p. 45). But it lacked something, too, for Karl "came to her for comfort and release," apparently regarding sex as "for a man simple relief with the reason plain enough, and for a woman the creation of a child" (p. 44).

When Karl is ill and dying, Kate remembers "that she had tried to alter their relationship, to bring something to it she had learned, even in the first few months she loved Peter, that she truly required":

> Even though one had been taught to distrust desire, it could not be discarded; so she had tried to engender it where it could be accepted. And now she recalled this, in what manner she had begged Karl to touch her, and how he had frozen and become far away as if her desire frightened and embarrassed him. And shame covered her because of this and she stammered: "Karl, I didn't mean—" But she did not know what she had not meant, and they never spoke of it again. (p. 280)

It is a small catastrophe of marital understanding, a sad consequence of genteel Victorian sexual attitudes, but it is also central. For if, in Mormon belief, love is a thing "most joyous to the soul" and if only "spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy,"[19] then the sexual love, the erotic personal union, of husband and wife may well be the richest earthly symbol and foretaste of celestial beatitude, and men and women both rightly may and ought to seek and find it in marriage.

Kate seeks and finds it outside marriage, wrongly, and she can never long avoid judging herself for this. Even during her affair with Peter she feels "how blessed if love were in its rightful place, beneath rightful quilt upon honorable pillow" (p. 194); and in maturity, glad for Ike's and Dessie's renewed closeness after the truth of her past has been revealed, she reflects, "It was so good when the love happened to be right, . . . when it was there and remained, when the circle grew around it like fruit about a sound and perfect core. It wasn't always so, but when it happened it was the greatest good fortune in the world, and troubles came and went and it was only strengthened" (p. 311). Looking back on her own love, she realizes "she must deliberately force herself to recall how quickly she had begun to doubt, to weigh the few moments against the many hours, forcing them into balance that she might not, even in her own eyes, be nothing but a fool. . . . she knew she was feeling it had to be worth it and it had not been" (p. 222). That Kate so judges herself, despite the high value she sets on erotic joy, is a measure of both her own and her author's disciplined emotional and moral honesty.

Deeper than the opposition of eros and law or joy and guilt in this novel, I believe, is a tension (perhaps analogous to that of Freud's eros and death) between two fundamental attitudes toward personal experience itself which all of us know in varying proportion and balance: love and fear; the one a courageous openness that meets and embraces and rejoices in experience, the other a self-shielding and vitiating withdrawal from its disquieting abundance and complexity.[20] I lack space and time to analyze how the novel explores this opposition through its major subplots involving Dessie and Jean, but a complete description of *The Evening and the Morning* would have to include this.

At about the same thematic depth lies a last opposition, whose axis might be thought of as crossing that of love and fear at right angles: the opposition of autonomy and belonging, which the action of rebellion poses most sharply, and which touches on the deepest concept of selfhood in Joseph Smith's theology. The opposition is perhaps tragically problematic, for the autonomous existence of selves as eternally individual free agents seems, in Mormon theology, the very ground of any belonging or communion, yet belonging seems to entail the surrender or limitation of autonomy. The amateur Mormon philosopher B. F. Cummings, partly echoing the King Follett Discourse, wrote, "The self is insubordinate, wandering, imperially aloof, solitary, lonely, withdrawn, unvisited, impenetrable;" it "cannot escape from existence nor can it escape from the awareness of its existence" nor from the "inevitable sense of solitude" that is "born of the very fact of individuality," of "being an eternally identical one."[21] The opposition maybe cannot be resolved theoretically, nor finally solved in experience either; it must be lived out, endured.

Kate Alexander endures it one way in the novel, and is finally judged in terms of it. At the beginning, Kate advocates "freedom" (p. 12) while Dessie in her fear and need of safety wonders, "Why did some people think it was good to be alone?" (p. 28). Yet throughout the book Kate bears the tension between her need for autonomy and her need to belong. She reflects, late the first night in Manti, that "it was independence one wanted, not any particular people or home" (p. 61); yet earlier she has felt nostalgia for the "shared . . . quiet life" of "common memories and . . . understanding to live with" (p. 15) that she and Karl might have had. To Dessie's insistence that Jean "has to learn to get along with other people," she replies that "it's harder to get along with yourself" and that "When it comes naturally, maybe we ought to call it a blessing" (p. 27); yet from Jean the next day she catches intimations of the bitter, secret terror of self-knowledge which she knows only too well (pp. 85, 90, 280). She still belives in the individual "pursuit of happiness" and "in justice too," which should make "one's own pursuit include as many others as possible," though balancing these claims becomes a "huge and intricate matter" that makes her feel "lost" (p. 98); yet when Peter and Helga's child died "she despised herself for the egotism of her love" (p. 116), and in a bad moment she thinks, "I did not deserve to be happy—I deserved that Karl should die" (p. 144).

The opposition of autonomy and belonging runs deep into Kate's loves. Waking on her second day with Jean snuggled at her back, she feels "complete well-being" and gratitude "to all those who had given the warmth of their flesh to her during her time," but in an instant, recalling Peter, she feels "stifled" (p. 81). She had idealistically believed that between her and Peter "everything could be understood and forgiven. . . . Each of them would speak aloud at least every single secret thing that had been locked in their own skins and had separated them from the world and every other one heretofore. . ." (p. 60). Yet that was not actually possible, and while "a sudden thought of him" could make her feel "light and superior as if she floated alone in a secret and unfathomable sea," when she became aware again of others she would "feel smothered with unreasonable loneliness" (p. 61). Love was to be "a kind of atonement," meaning a "return to oneness and to belonging with others in the world where one happened to be, to erase the horror of being outside and alone"; yet strangely and bitterly the at-one-ment of lovers, if outside law, must be given up for the public atonement of confession and repentance (p. 148).

But Kate has never believed enough to want that. The words "outside" and "alone," brought together here in a charged context, have sounded an ominous minor chord almost from the beginning, and will be the last chord of the novel. Her first night, sitting on the porch after Dessie has gone in to bed, Kate feels "without boundaries in either time or space, a feeling she always had when traveling, the feeling of being neither one place nor another but between everywhere and everything and therefore nowhere at all" (p. 30). Her fifth night, sitting alone again, she feels "herself outside herself and seeking herself" (p. 311), and becomes "aware of her skeleton, of the grin of her jaw," even while the softness behind her earlobe seems "incredibly sensual." She thinks:

> "I am lonely." And she looked up and the air was emptied out and the stars had moved farther away again; the sound of dripping became hollow also, as if each drop fell into a great drum and sent echoes in every direction. . . . Now perhaps she went to [Peter] . . . in the painful knowledge that time was running out in intolerable loneliness. (p. 312)

The loneliness is remitted somewhat by the next morning, which looks "like the first day ever made" (p. 315) so that verses from Genesis run in Kate's mind alongside fragments of Ute and Pahute creation-myths; it is lightened by Ike's complimenting her, knowing why she is "so carefully dressed," so that "it was as if her most secret and lonely thought had been thrust into the world outside and she stood in the light of knowledge but also in kindness and beautiful ease" (p. 316). But it returns on her as she nears Nephi and her final meeting with Peter, in her knowledge that "she was ill in all ways" and now knows it "better than before. Where the sickness was the

injury of her pride she had been most sick, and where it had been the injury of her conscience" (p. 327).

In Nephi, Peter signs the affidavit; he is polite, kind, but also the one who failed her, "frightened . . . weak . . . the man who looked behind him as if to find the devil at his shoulder" (p. 331). No longer making fiddles (though he promises to make a last one for Jean, who doesn't want it much), filling the empty spaces of his life with cabinet work and with serving as a Bishop, "making amends in some curious way for having been alive" (p. 335), Peter seems almost indistinguishable from the aging ward teachers who visited Dessie's the first night. Kate realizes "He did not even see that they had come a little way together. Even now it seemed sad if it must be true that she had, after all her joy, come even that way alone" (p. 335).

Returning on the train to Manti with Jean asleep on the seat, Kate comes to a kind of peace with all her memory and can echo the benediction of Genesis: "And behold, and behold, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day, morning after evening so one would never make the mistake of thinking anything ended without also being a new beginning" (p. 341).

But the last image is still to come, after Kate lowers the window to keep the cool wind from Jean and shuts out "the night . . . lovely, alive with stars":

> Now in the glass of the window she could see the solemn oval of her own face. Like that other night [when, riding with her and Peter, Karl had fallen asleep leaving her alone with Peter], even to the sharp flash of reflected light which was the pin at her throat. She watched herself moving beside herself, out there alone. (p. 341)

Riding in the nowhere of in-between, Kate finally confronts, as a singular self in unavoidable self-awareness, an image of the solitude of the rebel angel projected on outer dark. I suspect the image has its fullest resonance only for a Mormon writer and reader.

I have described and analyzed *The Evening and the Morning* quite selectively and have not said much that should be said of it: of its apparent relation to Virginia Sorensen's own life, to her self-definition as an artist, and to her other work; of its seemingly uncritical endorsement of Kate's "liberal" ideas; of what I suspect is an insufficient treatment of Peter Jansen's lapse from rebellion into conformity (which may be the novel's one imaginative failure, though Sorensen keeps us from raising this problem acutely). But I have meant to show only that a sufficient part of the novel's implicit vision of experience and its structure of judgments seems distinguishably and distinctly Mormon—enough to warrant our considering it a "Mormon novel" in a fairly serious sense. From a novelistic standpoint, I doubt we can find a subtler or more searching instance of the Mormon novel, even if we must call it only partly Mormon. By kind if not by quality, it belongs to the major

tradition of moral realism. If Mormon writers and readers are ever to move much beyond the impoverished tradition of Mormon apologue, they should understand its achievement.

NOTES

[1]At the Rocky Mountain Writers' Convention held at BYU in July 1979, Orson Scott Card, a Mormon science fiction writer, remarked that God cannot exist in science fiction, though he did not explain why. Of course, it has never been easy to get God into realistic fiction, either.

[2]Faulconer's analogy occurs in his essay, "The Difference Between a Mormon and an Artist," *WYE* (BYU), 30 (Spring 1972):1-3.

[3]Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964, p. 69. Subsequent references to Sacks in the next few pages, where context is unambiguous, will be given parenthetically by page number only.

[4]Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), would probably agree; see especially chapter V.

[5]See his essay, "Freshet in the Dearth: Samuel W. Taylor's *Heaven Knows Why* and Mormon Humor," *Proceedings of the Symposia of the Association for Mormon Letters 1978-79*, pp. 43-56; reprinted in *Sunstone*, 5, 3 (May-June 1980):31-37.

[6]"A Plea for Fiction," *Improvement Era*, 1 (1898):188.

[7]So called at least by myself in "Digging the Foundation: Making and Reading Mormon Literature," *Dialogue*, 9 (Winter 1974):58, and by Edward Geary in "Mormondom's Lost Generation: The Novelists of the 1940s," *BYU Studies*, 18 (Fall 1977):89-98.

[8]See George S. Tate's essay, "Halldór Laxness, the Mormons and the Promised Land," *Dialogue*, 11 (Summer 1978):25-37, and Franklin Fisher's remarks on Tate's essay in "Three Essays: A Commentary," *Dialogue*, 11 (Summer 1978):54.

[9]C. Terry Warner, "An Open Letter to Students: On Having Faith and Thinking for Yourself," *New Era*, November 1971.

[10]*A Believing People* (Provo: BYU Press, 1974), p. 5.

[11]"Fruits of Rebellion," *Saturday Review*, 32 (23 April 1949):13.

[12]Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, esp. pp. 70-75.

[13]"Is It True?—The Novelist and His Materials," *Western Humanities Review*, 7 (1953):285.

[14]Virginia Sorensen, *The Evening and the Morning* (New York: Harcourt, 1949), p. 4. Subsequent references to the novel will be cited parenthetically by page number.

[15]Perhaps the classic statement of such a purpose by a moral realist in the English novel is George Eliot's chapter 17 of *Adam Bede*.

[16]*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1976), pp. 255-56. The prophet goes on to say that happiness "will be the end" of our existence if we follow God's commandments. Kate disbelieves and violates that part of the counsel; the implied author of the novel, however, seems to invoke it in the ways the novel judges Kate and her rebellion.

[17]Ironically enough, Brigham Young had expressed almost the same sentiment—a wish that children might grow up "free and untrammeled in body and spirit"—in an 1853 sermon, "Organization and Development of Man;" see *Journal of Discourses*, 2:94.

[18]Freud's most succinct summary of his theory of opposed instincts occurs near the end of Lecture 32 of the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1932), where he uses the terms "Eros" and "aggression." For earlier developments of the concept, see *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), chapter V; *The Ego and the Id* (1923), chapters IV and V; and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), chapter VI.

[19]See I Nephi 11:23 and D&C 93:33.

[20]The late Scottish natural theologian John Macmurray treats love and fear as basic motives in personal existence in his *Persons in Relation* (London: Faber, 1961), chap. III, "The Discrimination of the Other," esp. pp. 66-75.

[21]*The Eternal Individual Self* (Salt Lake City, 1968), pp. 7, 69, 70; cf. Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies*, 18 (Winter 1978): 203, 204, 205. I use "amateur" here in both important senses: the non-professional who does what he does for love of it; Cummings was surely that.

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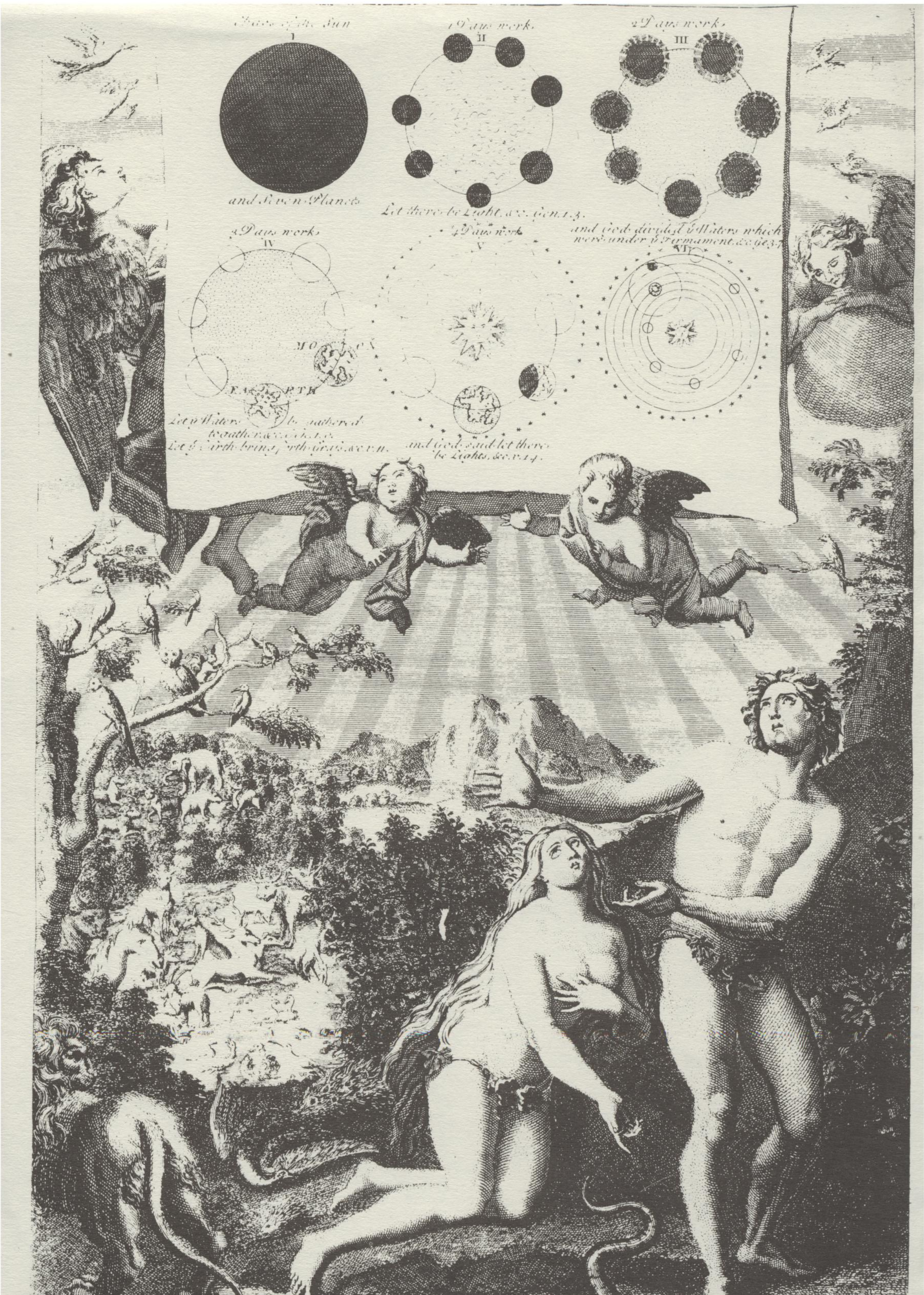
I
and Seven Planets
1 Days work.
II
Let there be Light, &c. Gen. 1. 3.
2 Days work.
III
3 Days work.
IV
4 Days work
V
VI
and God said let there
be Lights, &c. v. 14.

"WE CAN SEE NO ADVANTAGE TO A CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION:" THE ROBERTS/SMITH/TALMAGE AFFAIR

RICHARD SHERLOCK

IN THE MID-1920s B. H. Roberts, General Authority and President of the Eastern States Mission, began preliminary work on a book-length manuscript. By this time Roberts had already written extensively on church history and somewhat less on church doctrine, the latter consisting largely of essays and books explaining or expounding the works of Joseph Smith. This new book was a departure for Roberts, destined to become the most controversial element of his turbulent career as a church leader.

After his return to Salt Lake in 1927, Roberts developed his notes into an imposing manuscript. Intended originally as a study course for Seventies throughout the Church, it almost immediately became a storm center of controversy.[1] As a result, the book, viewed by Roberts as his most important contribution to the Church, remains unpublished to this day.[2]

The scope of *The Truth, The Way, The Life* is more sweeping than anything from a previous Mormon hand, with the possible exception of the works of Orson Pratt. Roberts did not just expound one or several gospel principles or ideas from Joseph Smith; rather, he undertook nothing less than a comprehensive, coherent account of the whole cosmic context of human existence—from the intelligence of God, through the organization of the universe, the creation of man and the development of life on earth, to the role of Christ.

In this process he was sometimes pedantically recitative of simple gospel principles. More often than not, however, he was boldly speculative in an attempt to put the known pieces of the puzzle together into a unified account.

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This speculative boldness is the work's chief merit; it was also the basis of extremely hostile reactions from some of Roberts' fellow General Authorities.

Roberts' manuscript did not appear in a vacuum, nor were his efforts without precedent in the Church. Beginning with Orson Pratt's writings in the 1850s, a number of Mormons had attempted to reconcile science and religion.[3] But there had also been those who rejected all such efforts as a compromise of revealed truth in deference to the mere "theories of men." In fact Roberts discoursed on a number of subjects that had already been treated extensively within the Church and on which some Authorities had taken firm stands.[4]

The hottest issue was evolution. Given his aims Roberts had to address this subject as well as related subjects, such as the age of the earth. But evolution was hardly a new topic for the Church. The first Mormon reaction to Darwin's theories came in 1861, just two years after publication of *The Origin of Species*, and subsequent treatments of the subject appeared regularly in the decades that followed.[5] At the turn of the century it was still a matter of particular interest among Mormon intellectuals, scientists and General Authorities.[6]

At the time Roberts wrote and shortly after, several Mormon scientists openly declared agreement between current scientific theory and the scriptures. The *Improvement Era* ran several articles from such men, each taking a different route to the same end: the facts of geology didn't conflict with the gospel.[7] Three important books treating this theme appeared with church support. Nels Nelson's *Scientific Aspects of Mormonism* was an openly evolutionary work published with the financial and moral support of the First Presidency.[8] John A. Widtsoe's *Joseph Smith as Scientist*, published first as a serial in the *Era*, offered a somewhat less expansive view but still had an apologetic aim. Widtsoe's Joseph had discovered Herbert Spencer before Spencer and without his erudition—ergo, Smith was inspired.[9] And Frederick Pack, successor to James Talmage as Deseret Professor of Geology at the University of Utah, came out with *Science and Belief in God*, a strong defense of evolutionary thought, and this from Deseret News Press just five years before the controversy over Roberts' manuscript erupted.[10]

Nonetheless, the topic was very controversial. Three faculty members were dismissed from BYU about this same time, in part for failing to discontinue teaching evolutionary theories when warned to do so.[11] Two times the First Presidency had spoken guardedly on the issue.[12] Other General Authorities were less circumspect and had condemned evolution in very harsh terms.[13] Such circumstances might have intimidated another man, but Roberts' determination to unite science and religion was sincere.

Roberts' assertion that the earth was very old, much older than the few thousand years some felt the scriptures indicated, was hardly remarkable. This troubled few persons, in or out of the Church; many of his contemporary General Authorities seemed willing to accept it, even when they disputed evolution per se.[14] But his assertion that, long before the biblical chronology would allow, there had lived and died countless plants and animals, includ-

ing human groups,[15] was very controversial. To Roberts the evidence for this was overwhelming. The problem was to account for this in terms of a scriptural framework that seemed to say that Adam was the first man and that only with his fall did death enter into the world.[16]

At this point Roberts clearly faced a dilemma. To him the evidence for the antiquity of life forms pre-dated the point allotted in scripture by so far that one could not simply move back the date of Adam by a few thousand years, evoking a mistranslation-of-the-Bible theory. But neither could he do away with a literal Adam in favor of a more symbolic interpretation of the first chapters of Genesis. Roberts was never prepared to go that far. Adam was a real person with a special divine mission. He was not, however, the earliest man on this planet. Adam represented the beginning of the Adamic Dispensation, but before him, a whole race of human beings had lived and died on earth. These "pre-adamites" were simply destroyed in a great cataclysm that "cleansed" the earth before Adam, leaving only fossilized remains as the meager evidence of their presence.[17]

Why did Roberts adopt so speculative a theory? Perhaps the most fundamental reason was that he could see no alternative short of the most radical revision of accepted ideas about the first chapter of Genesis. To him the evidence for the antiquity of life, including man, was incontrovertible. To deny it would place the Church in opposition to science and result in the apostasy of many educated members, members whose talents were of inestimable value to the Church. His theory offered the needed reconciliation between science and the scriptures.[18]

Roberts thought his solution was implied in the scriptures. Mormon thought had long held that there were two creations; the popular interpretation of the first two chapters of Genesis was that the first chapter represented the spiritual creation and the second the temporal. However, Genesis 1 implied some orderly progression of the development of life forms while Genesis 2 implies that Adam arrived on a "lone and dreary" world. Roberts suggested that this implied the occurrence of a cataclysmic event destroying all life before Adam. Thus the Adamic Dispensation was ushered in by partially "wiping the slate clean," leaving only the paleontological evidence found by modern science.[19]

Roberts took another scriptural argument from Orson Hyde who had first promulgated the notion of pre-Adamites in an 1856 speech. This argument was simply that God had commanded Adam to "multiply and replenish the earth." Did this not imply that the earth had once been "filled up" with human beings? Here Roberts found both a scriptural argument and prior Apostolic authority.[20]

It was this notion of pre-Adamites that generated the most acrimony in the discussions surrounding Roberts' manuscript, but it was not the only controversial aspect of his evolutionary thought. Roberts also undertook a vaguely worded and somewhat contradictory account of the evolutionary development of life forms on earth—the so called "transmutation" of species at the heart of post-Darwinian evolutionary biology.

At the outset of this discussion, Roberts clearly was impressed with the evidence for evolutionary development—that different species evolved from common ancestors. But he did not forget the scriptural injunction that plants and animals reproduce only "after their own kind." A crucial question, of course, was what the scriptures meant when they spoke of "kind." The widely held view was that it referred to what we mean by "species," such as dogs, cats, horses, etc., and that these species did not all evolve from some common, mammalian ancestor.

In both Mormon and non-Mormon contexts, speciation had been the crucial issue in the long debate over evolution. An anti-evolutionary argument based on the absence of evidence for speciation appeared in the earliest Mormon criticism of Darwin: Since no one had ever seen a plant or animal reproduce anything but its own kind, evolution stood discredited and the "biblical view" vindicated.[21]

Roberts could not reconcile scientific theory and the scriptures in the face of a biblical interpretation equating kind and species. He did, however, try to develop a position he called "the development view," but his statement of it appears to have been intentionally ambiguous. Consider the following passage:

> The development theory starts with the eternity of life—the life force and the eternity of some life forms, and the possibilities for these forms—perhaps in embryonic status, or in their simplest forms (same as to man) are transplanted to newly created worlds there to be developed each to its highest possibilities, by propagation, and yet within and under the great law of life of Genesis I *viz.*, each "after its own kind."[22]

The obvious question is, what are these primeval forms out of which other forms develop? If Roberts made them too remote, he would give up any semblance of connection with the popular argument against evolution noted above. But Roberts seems to have been suggesting that these forms were more remote than our "species." If so, then why not simply go all the way and adopt the total evolutionary perspective of descent with modifications? Roberts seemed unwilling to go that far, but as he tried to explain the origin of these forms, he came close:

> And from a few other forms of life transported to the earth there could be development of varied kinds of life yet adhering closely to the great law of creation so constantly repeated—"each after its own kind". Not necessarily rigidly limited to stereotyped individual forms, but developing the kinds from the subdivisions of vegetable and animal kingdoms into various species through development from primeval forms.[23]

Once this position is taken, however, there is nothing in the logic of the case to prevent this primitive form from being itself descended from a much more primitive ancestor. In his effort to take account of science, Roberts virtually adopted the evolutionary position.[24]

With so many concessions to science it is not surprising that Roberts' manuscript received unfavorable criticism. What is surprising is how narrowly focused this criticism was at first. The manuscript was first reviewed by a reading committee of the Council of the Twelve who drew up a "list of points of doctrine in question." There were thirty-seven items on the list, almost all minor. The Committee felt, for example, that Roberts overstated the evidence in saying the tree from which Adam and Eve had eaten contained the seeds of life and death. The scriptures referred only to the seeds of death. Other similarly minor issues were raised.[25]

The real sticking point was the theory of pre-adamites. The section on the transmutation of species may have been vague enough to avoid dispute, but neither the age of the earth nor the antiquity of life and death were explicitly mentioned. In a covering letter to the Council, the reading committee noted that there were

> objectionable doctrines advanced which are of a speculative nature and appear to be out of harmony with the revelations of the Lord and the fundamental teachings of the Church. Among the outstanding doctrines to which objection is made are: The doctrine that Adam was a translated being who came to this earth subject to death, and therefore did not bring death upon himself and his posterity through the fall; that Adam was placed on the earth when the earth was in a desolate condition and before any other life, belonging to the "dispensation of Adam" was on the earth; that all life preceeding Adam was swept off, even to the fishes of the sea, by some great cataclysm so that a new start had to be made; that God the father is still discovering hidden laws and truth which he does not know but which are eternal.[26]

The committee further reported that they had met several times with Roberts in attempts to get him to delete the offending chapters. He had refused and, rather, added material referring to recent finds of pre-historic men in China. At one point he threatened to publish the book on his own if he could not get church approval.

After the report of the reading committee, the full Council reviewed the matter and reached virtually the same conclusions in its own report to the First Presidency. The Council report, however, also stressed a more basic theme:

> It is the duty of the General Authorities of the Church to safeguard and protect the membership of the Church from the introduction of controversial subjects and false doctrines which tend to create factions and otherwise disturb the faith of the Latter-Day Saints. There is so much of vital importance revealed and which we can present with clear and convincing presentation and which the world does not possess that we, the committee see no reason for the introduction of questions which are speculative to say the least: more especially so when such teachings appear to be in conflict with the revelations of the Lord.[27]

Even as this letter was being sent, Roberts' position was attacked publicly by a member of the Council (and of the reading committee). In an address to

the April 1930 Genealogical Conference, Joseph Fielding Smith went considerably beyond the questioning of the Council. In his mind the issue was clear: Roberts was teaching false doctrine. While this is debatable, Roberts certainly was directly repudiating positions staked out earlier by Smith himself.[28] In his speech Smith was characteristically blunt:

> Even in the Church there are a scattered few who are now advocating and contending that the earth was peopled with a race—perhaps many races—long before the days of Adam. These men desire, of course, to square the teachings in the Bible with the teachings of modern science and philosophy with regard to the age of the earth and life on it. If you hear anyone talking this way you may answer them by saying that the doctrine of pre-adamites is not a doctrine of the Church and is not advocated or countenanced in the Church. There is no warrant for it in scripture, not an authentic word to sustain it.[29]

Moreover, Smith asserted that there had most certainly been no death in the world before the fall of Adam.

When this address was printed in the October issue of the *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Roberts could not remain silent. In December he appealed directly to President Heber J. Grant. In a strongly worded letter he objected to the "strictly dogmatical and pronounced finality of the discussion." If Elder Smith had been speaking for the Church, this fact should have been stated clearly. In the likely event he was speaking only for himself, Roberts was blunt:

> If Elder Smith is merely putting forth his own position I call in question his competency to utter such dogmatism either as scholar or as an apostle. I am sure he is not competent to speak in such a manner from general learning or special research work on the subject; nor as an Apostle as in that case he would be in conflict with the plain implication of the scriptures, both ancient and modern and with the teaching of a more experienced and learned and earlier apostle, and a contemporary of the prophet Joseph Smith—whose public discourse on the subject appears in the Journal of Discourses and was publicly endorsed by president Brigham Young, all of which would have more weight in setting forth doctrine than this last dictum of Elder Smith.
>
> My question is important as affecting finally the faith and status of a very large portion of the priesthood and educated membership of the Church. I am sure and I trust this matter will receive early attention.[30]

After receiving this letter, President Grant referred the matter to the Council for a discussion of the issues. The Council resolved to hear both men in separate sessions. On January 7, 1931, Roberts made his presentation to the assembled Apostles.[31] While a copy of the lengthy paper has not been located, it is not difficult to reconstruct his argument from his letters and his manuscript. Briefly stated, he apparently repeated the arguments from science, scriptural authority and apostolic teaching (Orson Hyde) that he also used in the manuscript itself. Two weeks later, Elder Smith appeared with his own lengthy paper. His was a defense of an extreme scriptural literalism: "The Latter-day Saints are not bound to receive the theories of men when

they do not accord with the word of the Lord to them." What Roberts was preaching was not just erroneous, it was a compromise with forces that were satanic in their origin:

> The doctrine of organic evolution which pervades the modern day sciences proclaiming the edict that man has evolved from the lower forms of life through the Java skull, the Heidelberg jaw, the Piltdown man, the Neanderthal skull and last but not least the Peiping man who lived millions of years ago is as false as their author who lives in hell.[32]

While this is not exactly what Roberts claimed about human origins, he had in fact accepted much of the data on which scientists based this conclusion. Roberts' whole discussion of this matter could be seen as an attempt to avoid the evolutionary conclusion to which he seemed to be driven by the evidence. By contrast Elder Smith flatly refused to accept the evidence; it had been created by Satan to lead men astray. On this point the gap between Smith and Roberts was unbridgeable. To Roberts the evidence of geology and paleontology was established "by the researches of scientists of highest character, of profoundest learning and world wide research."[33] Smith had earlier characterized these men as "narrow" and "contemptible," and his reference here to the work of Satan does not seem to alter his estimation of them.[34]

Elder Smith's position was not new. Various religious opponents of evolutionary thought had been using it for years. As noted earlier, he had expressed most of it in the *Liahona* in 1918 and again in the *Era* in 1920.[35] The title of the first article captures the spirit of his position: "The Word of the Lord Superior to the Theories of Men." Stated in this fashion any church member might well agree. Smith, however, took this view to the extreme. He argued that the gospel stood or fell on the literal existence of Adam and a literal fall exactly as they are recorded in Genesis. Quoting one of his favorite sources, fundamentalist geologist George McReady Price, he once noted: "No Adam, no fall; no fall, no atonement; no atonement, no savior." In short, the whole theological structure of the Gospel was at stake.[36]

To Smith, Roberts' view was dangerous because he indicated that the literal text of the first chapter of Genesis was not sacrosanct and because he was willing to depart from the most literal reading of the text. Elder Smith viewed this as the most insidious threat of all. Once started on this process, he argued, you cannot stop, for there is no reason to stop short of a wholesale departure from the gospel. Lacking either a warrant from the text of the scriptures or from one of the prophets, those who followed this course were bound to wander in a desert of their own creation, ultimately forsaking the historic faith of the Church for their own theories.[37]

After hearing both men, the Council non-committally referred the matter back to the First Presidency, noting only that they regarded Roberts' language as "very offensive" and as "failing to show the deference due from one brother to another brother of higher rank in the priesthood."[38]

Roberts continued to press his case. In early February he wrote directly to President Grant saying he would like an opportunity to point out the "weaknesses and inconsistencies" in Smith's paper, Smith's view he characterized as "sleighter than a house of cards," and he offered to destroy it if given a chance. He also made pointed reference to his now overshadowed manuscript:

> It was . . . such pablum as this that suspended the publication of my book—now in manuscript—*The Truth, The Way, The Life.* This book from my judgement of it is the most important work that I have yet contributed to the Church, the six volumed comprehensive history of the Church not omitted. Life at my years and with an incurable ailment is very precarious and I should dislike very much to pass on without completing and publishing this work . . . If the position he has taken can be met successfully, then I think that the principle cause suspending the publication of my work will be removed.[39]

Roberts did not get his chance. Two months later, in April, the First Presidency replied in a memorandum circulated to all of the General Authorities. They made several important points. First, they called attention to the care which must be exercised by any of the Authorities when they speak publicly on controversial topics:

> We call attention to the fact that when one of the General Authorities of the Church makes a definite statement in regard to any doctrine, particularly when the statement is made in a dogmatic declaration of finality, whether he expresses it as his opinion or not he is regarded as voicing the Church and his statements are accepted as the approved doctrines of the Church, which they should be.[40]

Secondly, they noted that both Smith and Roberts had produced scientific evidence, scriptural texts and quotations from previous General Authorities to bolster their respective arguments. So far as the First Presidency was concerned, however, neither side was able to carry the day. In this crucial section they wrote:

> The statement made by Elder Smith that the existence of pre-adamites is not a doctrine of the Church is true. It is just as true that the statement "there were not pre-adamites upon the earth" is not a doctrine of the church. Neither side of the controversy has been accepted as a doctrine at all.[41]

Given this conclusion on the doctrinal issues the instruction to the General Authorities was obvious: cease public discussion of controversial topics. Concern yourselves instead with the simple truths of the gospel:

> Upon the fundamental doctrines of the Church we are all agreed. Our mission is to bear the message of the restored Gospel to the people of the world. Leave geology, biology, archaeology and anthropology, no

one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church.

We can see no advantage to be gained by a continuation of the discussion to which reference is here made, but on the contrary are certain that it would lead to confusion, division and misunderstanding if carried further. Upon one thing we should all be able to agree, namely, that presidents Joseph F. Smith, John Winder and Anthon Lund were right when they said: "Adam is the primal parent of our race."[42]

In response, Apostle James Talmage wrote in his journal for this date, April 7, 1931:

As to whether pre-Adamite races existed upon the earth there has been much discussion among some of our people of late. The decision reached by the First Presidency and announced to this morning's assembly was in answer to a specific question that obviously the doctrine of the existence of races of human beings upon the earth prior to the fall of Adam was not a doctrine of the church; and, further, that the conception embodied in the belief of many to the effect that there were no such pre-Adamite races and that there was no death upon the earth prior to Adam's fall is likewise declared to be no doctrine of the Church. I think the decision of the First Presidency is a wise one on the premises. This is one of the many things upon which we cannot speak with assurance and dogmatic assertions on either side are likely to do harm rather than good.

Three days after the issuance of the decision Council President Rudger Clawson wrote to George Albert Smith, chairman of the first reading committee, asking him to "make an earnest effort to compose matters" with Roberts and get him to drop the affected material from his manuscript so that "an excellent work may not go unpublished and be lost to the Church." If Roberts refused, he was to be told that the book definitely would not be published without the needed changes.[43] The committee did not succeed in this mission, for better than a year later Roberts was still trying to have the book published "as is." His last letter on the subject reveals a sadness and a bitterness over the fate of what to him was the culmination of his ministry on behalf of the Church:

It had been my hope that the volume still in manuscript, unpublished, which would make a work of about 700 pages—*The Truth, The Way, The Life* would be the climax in the doctrinal department of my work . . . the matter of this book grew up during more than fifty years of my ministry crystallizing practically all my thought, research and studies in the doctrinal line of the Church. It was not the hasty product of the paltry six months at the close of my eastern states mission administration—as some have supposed . . . that manuscript may not likely be printed in my lifetime, comment of course will not be necessary.[44]

It might have been expected that the April decision would have firmly ended all discussion on this topic. Yet six months later the issue again surfaced even more acrimoniously. The key figure this time was Apostle James Talmage, a much more difficult protagonist for several reasons. Roberts had been a controversial figure for years before submitting his manuscript and was already suspect in some quarters. While Roberts was not an Apostle, Talmage was, and his works *Jesus the Christ* and *The Articles of Faith* were even then standards in the Church, revered almost as much as the scriptures themselves. His reputation was only enhanced by the fact that for most of the latter part of the 1920s he was the regular "Church" speaker on the Sunday evening radio broadcasts on KSL. Combined with his unimpeachable reputation for orthodoxy was the fact that Talmage was a trained geologist. While Roberts would inevitably have to be content to quote other authorities whose methods he could not fully explain, Talmage knew first hand how they arrived at the conclusions they so confidently expressed. While Elder Smith may have felt that the evidence for pre-Adamites was authored in hell, it would be a difficult matter to maintain that belief when a senior Apostle of Talmage's stature and geological training was expressing it.[45]

Talmage touched off this second phase of the controversy with a carefully worded talk in the Tabernacle on August 9, 1931. Entitled "The Earth and Man," the address was more of a summary statement on a number of issues relating to evolutionary thought, the coming of man and related topics. In it he argued tentatively for much of what Roberts had already defended. The earth was very old, and for "countless generations" there had been life and death of plants and animals.[46] These were important concessions. But what about Adam and the pre-Adamites? Here Talmage tentatively opened up the possibility of such beings, but he did not commit himself in the manner that Roberts had done:

> Geologists and anthropologists say that if the beginning of Adamic history dates back but 6,000 years or less there must have been races of human sort upon the earth long before that time—without denying however, that Adamic history may be correct if it be regarded solely as the history of the Adamic race. . . . I do not regard Adam as related to—certainly not descended from—the Neanderthal, the Cro-Magnon, the Peking or the Piltdown man. Adam came as divinely directed, empowered and created and stands as the patriarchal head of his posterity.[47]

In direct contradiction to Elder Smith, Talmage asserted that the evidence of geology was God's record, not Satan's deception. Despite this receptivity to modern science, Talmage was more emphatically negative on the question of evolution *per se* than Roberts. He flatly denied that there had been any transmutation of species: species did not evolve. Plants and animals reproduced only "after their own kind." Evolutionary theory was merely an "unproved hypothesis." And certainly, "the Holy Scriptures should not be discredited by the theories of men."

While Talmage displayed an openness to scientific research, he never forsook the idea of "special creation" in favor of the evolutionary hypothesis of descent with modification. He was willing to accept some modification of Biblical literalism in the face of science, but on the most crucial issue of the evolutionary hypothesis he retreated. The wonderful adaptation of structure to function in the natural world implied a definite plan and a series of special creations, but it did not imply the ruthless mechanisms of evolutionary theory.

Talmage's speech was scheduled for publication but realizing that he had contradicted the views of Elder Smith, he stopped publication so that the First Presidency and the Council could consider the matter.[48] There were apparently several Council meetings on the issue and private consultations between Talmage and the First Presidency. A copy of the speech was sent to John A. Widtsoe, then in England presiding over the European missions. He replied on September 9 that he thought the speech was excellent and should be published just as it was.[49] On September 29 a crucial, seven-hour meeting was held on the matter during which Talmage reported that there was "revealed a very strong feeling on the part of a minority of the Brethren against giving public sanction to the views of geologists as set forth in the address." He further related some surprise at the strength of this feeling:

> The insistence on the part of three of our brethren—really to the effect that all geologists and all geology are wrong in matters relating to the sequence of life on earth—has been surprising. The author of the genealogical society address holds tenaciously to his view that prior to the fall of Adam there was no death of plants and animals upon the earth.[50]

At least one further meeting of the Council was devoted to the matter as well as discussions between Talmage and the First Presidency. On November 17 Talmage met privately with the First Presidency and they went over the speech carefully. At that time they informed him of their decision to proceed with publication.[51] It was published on November 21 in the *Church News* and shortly thereafter appeared as a separate pamphlet.

In view of the predictable controversy that followed his address, one wonders what prompted him in the first place? His journals are revealing on this question. He wrote that when he spoke, he was mindful of the injunction of the First Presidency to refrain from such discussion. But, he writes, he also remembered being present at a consultation where the First Presidency expressed a desire that "sometime, somewhere, something should be said by one or more of us to make plain that the Church does not refuse to recognize the discoveries and demonstrations of science, especially in relation to the subject at issue."[52] With Widtsoe away in England, who better to speak for the side of science? This concern seems to have been foremost in his mind at the time he gave the address. He further wrote that President Anthony Ivins

and Apostles Richard Lyman, George Richards and Joseph Fielding Smith were present when it was given and that all except Smith expressed approval of it.

While this is undoubtedly a major part of the explanation, there seem to have been other factors as well. Talmage clearly understood that a major problem with Roberts' manuscript was the finality with which it discussed the problem of pre-Adamites.[53] It seems Talmage felt he could stake out a middle ground on this basis: affirm life and death before Adam, but equivocate on the question of pre-adamites. In combining this with a firm conviction of the truthfulness of the Biblical record of Adam's progeny, he supported orthodoxy where it mattered and innovated on issues that concerned the educated minority in the Church.

In addition, Talmage was clearly dismayed to find that quite apart from the specific question of pre-adamites, some of his brethren felt that "all geologists and all geology" were wrong when it came to such questions as the age of the earth and the progression of life forms upon it. To say this was to attack Talmage's own discipline, one which he had worked hard to master and whose practitioners he knew personally as honorable men. Furthermore, such an attitude questioned one of the basic premises of his career: the unity of science and revealed truth. If all geologists were wrong on these issues, then their very method of study must be wrong; grant this and the value of scientific inquiry disappears. So Talmage struck back with the faithful, tentative style which he felt would offer some hope to both sides. That the Church did print his address suggests that the First Presidency too did not wish to close the door on scientific inquiry. That there were still clear limits on how far the Church was willing to go, however, is evidenced by the failure of Roberts to secure permission to publish his book even after the appearance of Talmage's speech.

With the death of Roberts and Talmage in 1933, the controversy over the manuscript and the subject of evolution in general subsided. The depression directed the energies of the leadership elsewhere. At the end of the decade Widtsoe wrote a widely read series in the *Era* in which he dealt partially with evolutionary theory. Here he argued that the earth was very, very old and that the "day" of Genesis 1 was simply a creative period of indefinite length. But in the section on evolution he pointed out that the idea of organic evolution was only a theory deduced from a given body of facts; as a theory it was not necessarily the only available interpretation of the facts and so could be revised. He did not commit himself on the subject, but the absence of dogmatic hostility left the door open to the scientific community.[54]

After World War II evolutionary theory became well entrenched in Mormon academic circles. Twenty years after Roberts asserted the existence of pre-adamites Widtsoe admitted the existence of "human like beings before the coming of Adam" in the *Era*. He further confessed himself unable to explain either the existence of these "beings" or the coming of Adam: "The mystery of the creation of Adam and Eve has not yet been revealed."[55] By the time of Widtsoe's death in 1952 many Mormon scientists, while remaining

committed to the Church, openly embraced evolution, and such remains the case today.[56]

The anti-scientific position, however, was never completely abandoned. As in the original B.H. Roberts controversy, Joseph Fielding Smith remained the champion of this cause. At the suggestion of other literalist Authorities, he published the strongly anti-evolutionary *Man: His Origin and Destiny* in 1954. While this work was disavowed by President McKay as "unauthorized" and no statement of church doctrine, Smith's basic assertions have attained considerable stature. This has been in part through their emphatic and unqualified presentation in the unofficial but highly regarded and widely used compendium by Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine.* That the final chapter in this controversy has yet to be written is evidenced by the recent publication of distinctly anti-evolutionary concepts in officially sanctioned works. While no official change has taken place in the position of the First Presidency since the Roberts/Smith/Talmage encounter, one finds, for example, that the "Bible dictionary" in the new, Mormon edition of the King James Version of the Bible asserts without qualification that "Latter-day revelation teaches that there was no death on this earth for any forms of life before the fall of Adam" (see the entry on "death," citing 2 Nephi 2:22 and Moses 6:48). Similarly, the 1979–80 Gospel Doctrine text, *My Kingdom Shall Roll Forth* (1979), approvingly quotes Joseph Fielding Smith's assertion that "death for all life came by the fall" (p. 126) and elsewhere asks students to address the question, "What evidence is there in the scriptures that man did not descend from lower forms of life?" (p. 84). Indeed the current Melchizedek priesthood manual, *Choose You This Day,* is if anything even more pointed. In addition to commending for study a particularly outspoken compilation of Joseph Fielding Smith's anti-evolutionary views, students are asked to discuss a Smith assertion that "men who have had faith in God, when they have become converted to that theory [of evolution] forsake him."[57]

The extended debate generated by Roberts' manuscript ended inconclusively. At another level, however, we can see in this episode something of the essence of Mormonism. However else Mormonism may be similar to other religious groups, it differs from virtually all in having neither a mechanism for nor people competent to engage in authoritative debate on the abstract issues of metaphysics and theology at the heart of the Smith/Roberts/Talmage encounter. As a result, Mormonism lacks theological "orthodoxy" in the usual sense. We have few, if any, creedal statements to define our convictions with precise language. What usually passes for "orthodoxy" is simply a widely held opinion.

While the Church does excommunicate people for preaching "false doctrine," these cases have usually dealt with questions of religious authority and revelation, i.e., denying the authority of the prophet or of the Book of Mormon. By contrast, the specifically "theological" disagreements in the past and present life of the Church simply would not have been tolerated within a single denomination in historic Christianity. If we have an orthodoxy, it is more one of authority and structure than of theology and doctrine.

The debate between Smith and Roberts ended, therefore, not because either man was able to carry the day, but because church leaders did not want to encourage the theological speculation which it would have engendered. That in the long run the goals of the Presidency were not necessarily realized is evident from the succeeding history. Ironically, this was in large measure a result of the absence of a creedal "orthodoxy" in the Church—an inevitable corollary, some would say, of our antipathy to authoritative debate or speculative discussion.

NOTES

[1]The plans for the work are outlined by Roberts in a letter to Rudger Clawson, president of the Council of the Twelve, Sept. 17, 1928, Roberts Paper, Church Historian's Office (hereinafter referred to as CHO).

[2]The manuscript has recently been made available to researchers by the First Presidency.

[3]The earliest attempt at this in book form seems to be J. H. Ward, *Gospel Philosophy: Showing the Absurdities of Infidelity and the Harmony of the Gospel with Science and History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1884). It has been a popular theme of Mormon writers. Aside from the works of Pratt, Nelson and Pack referred to below see also Joseph Keeler, *Foundation Stones of the Earth* (Provo, 1891); James Talmage, *The Theory of Evolution* (Provo: Utah County Teachers Association, 1890) O. F. Ursenbach, *Why I am a Mormon* (Salt Lake City, 1910).

[4]Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Word of the Lord Superior to the Theories of Men" *Liahona* 15 (April 1918) pp. 641-644; Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Origin and Destiny of Man," *Improvement Era* 23 (March, 1920) pp. 376-393; Anthony Ivins, "A Study of Evolution," *Improvement Era* 21 (December, 1917) pp. 161-166.

[5]Editorial, *Millenial Star* 23 (Oct. 12, 1861) pp. 651-654; cf. *Millenial Star*, 33 (June 13, 1871) pp. 374-375; "Man and His Varieties," *Juvenile Instructor* (Aug 15, 1868) pp. 24-25; Orson Whitney, "Man's Origin and Destiny," *The Contributor* 3(June, 1882) pp. 268-270.

[6]For comprehensive surveys of the literature see Duane Jeffery, "Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," *Dialogue* 7 (1973) pp. 41-75; Richard Sherlock, "A Turbulent Spectrum: Mormon Reactions to the Darwinist Legacy," *Journal of Mormon History* 5(1978) pp. 33-59.

[7]Frederick Pack, "The Creation of the Earth," *Improvement Era* 13(Sept. 1910) pp. 1023-1027; 13 (October 1910) pp. 1121-1127; 14 (January, 1911) pp. 220-230; J.C. Hogenson, "Natural Development," *Improvement Era* 14 (November, 1910) pp. 28-31; John Thorgeirson, "A Spiritual Evolution," *Liahona* 5 (May, 1908) pp. 1254-1255.

[8]Nels Nelson, *Scientific Aspects of Mormonism* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1904).

[9]John A. Widtsoe, *Joseph Smith as Scientist* (Salt Lake City: General Board of the YMMIA, 1908). This was first published serially in the *Era* in 1904-1905.

[10]Frederick Pack, *Science and Belief in God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1924). After publication of this work Pack was still appointed to the General Board of the Sunday School.

[11]I have treated this episode in more detail in "Campus in Crisis: BYU 1911," *Sunstone* 4 (Jan-Feb., 1979) pp. 10-16.

[12]"The Origin of Man," *Improvement Era* 13 (November, 1909) pp. 75-81; "Mormon view of Evolution," *Improvement Era* 28 (Sept., 1925) pp. 1090-1091. The first statement was issued under Joseph F. Smith and the second, which consists of excerpts from the first, was issued under Heber J. Grant, Jeffrey, op. cit., offers a useful interpretation of both statements.

[13]In addition to the articles by Anthony Ivins and Joseph Fielding Smith cited in note 4 above see also Charles Penrose, *Conference Reports* (April, 1911); Orson Whitney, *Conference Reports* (October, 1925). Others seem to have expressed hostile views in private such as George Richards in his Journal, Feb. 21, 1911 (CHO).

[14]*The Truth, The Way, The Life* (TWL) Chap. 24. Many Church leaders otherwise hostile to evolution, such as Charles Penrose, were prepared to admit that the earth was very old. American religious leaders in general had been doing it since the 1830s. cf. Charles Penrose, "The Age and Destiny of the Earth," *Improvement Era* 12 (May, 1909) pp. 506-509; also see Conrad Wroght, "The Religion of Geology," *New England Quarterly* 14(1941) pp. 335-358.

[15]TWL Chap. 31 passim.

[16]In his initial discussion of this manuscript, Truman Madsen argued that the treatment of these issues was not central and could have been dropped without damage to the integrity of the whole. However, Roberts himself did not feel this way. One of the most important reasons behind his whole effort was to provide some accomodation between Mormon thought and modern science, without which Roberts feared for the educated members of the Church. Given the fact that the most important issue in his day was the question of evolution, Roberts could not have ignored it. Cf. Truman Madsen, "The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Analysis of B. H. Roberts' Unpublished Master Work," *BYU Studies* 15(1975) pp. 259-292.

[17]TWL Chap. 32 pp. 1-2. The idea of pre-adamite races goes back to the seventeenth century. It had its most complete statement in Isaac de la Peyrere's two works, *Men before Adam* (1656) and *Prae-Adamitae* (1655); on this see especially, Richard Popkin, "The Pre-Adamite Theory in the Renaissance," in *Philosophy and Humanism*, ed. E. P. Mahoney, (Leiden:Brill, 1976) pp. 50-69; and his more encyclopedic treatment of the question in his *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). While the theory was not new, Roberts was the first, so far as I can tell, to place it in a dispensationalist framework.

[18]cf. Roberts to Rudger Clawson, Dec. 31, 1930, Roberts Papers, CHO.

[19]TWL Chap. 30 pp. 24-25; Chap. 31 pp. 28-29.

[20]Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses* Vol. II pp. 79-87.

[21]*Millenial Star* 23 (Oct. 12, 1961) pp. 651-654.

[22]TWL Chap. 25 pp. 5-6.

[23]*Ibid.* pp. 10-11.

[24]I have discussed Roberts' treatment of these issues in more detail in "A Turbulent Spectrum. . . ." op. cit.

[25]George Albert Smith, chairman of the reading committee, to Rudger Clawson, Council President, Oct. 10, 1929. Clawson Papers, CHO. The other members of the committee were Joseph Fielding Smith, Melvin Ballard, Stephen L. Richards and David O. McKay.

[26]*Ibid.*

[27]Council of the Twelve to Heber J. Grant, May 15, 1930. Clawson Papers, CHO

[28]See articles cited in note 4 above.

[29]Joseph Fielding Smith, "Faith leads to a Fullness of Truth and Righteousness," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 21 (Oct. 1930) pp. 145-158.

[30]Roberts to Heber J. Grant, Dec. 15, 1930, Roberts Papers; Roberts to Rudger Clawson, Dec. 31, 1930, Roberts Papers, CHO.

[31]Roberts met with the council on January 2 at which time he outlined orally the charges he was making. James Talmage, Journal Vol. 29 p. 9 (Jan. 2, 1931).

[32]Manuscript on file at CHO pp. 2-3.

[33]Roberts to Rudger Clawson op. cit.

[34]The phrases are in "The Word of the Lord . . ." op. cit.

[35]Smith articles cited in note 4 above.

[36]This argument pervaded the fundamentalist literature of the 1920s. For examples see Willard Gatewood ed., *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism and Evolution* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969).

[37]This outlook pervades the manuscript presented to the Council. I have discussed another example of it in "Faith and History: The Snell Controversy," *Dialogue* 12(1979) pp. 27-41.

[38]Council of the Twelve to the First Presidency, January 21, 1931, Clawson Papers, CHO.

[39]Roberts to Heber J. Grant, Feb. 9, 1931. Roberts Papers, CHO. Talmage indicates in his journal that he was called in for a private conference with the First Presidency on these matters on January 14. This was after Roberts had made his presentation but before Smith had made his, indicating that even then they were preparing to make a final decision by getting some geological advice from a trustworthy source.

[40]Copy is in my possession. The quotation is from p. 7.

[41]*Ibid.* p. 6. [42]*Ibid.* p. 7.

[43]Rudger Clawson to George Albert Smith, April 10, 1931, Clawson Papers, CHO.

[44]Roberts to Heber J. Grant, August 30, 1932; also see Roberts to E. H. Lund, Roberts Papers, CHO.

[45]On Talmage's thought on these matters see "A Turbulent Spectrum . . ." op. cit.

[46]Talmage, "The Earth and Man." [47]*Ibid.*

[48]Talmage to John A. Widtsoe, August 27, 1931, Talmage Papers, CHO.

[49]Widtsoe to Clawson, September 9, 1931. Widtsoe may have misinterpreted the speech as dealing only with the age of the earth and the patriarchal status of Adam. cf. Widtsoe to Susa Young Gates, Oct. 30, 1931, Widtsoe Papers, Utah State Historical Society.

[50]Talmage to Widtsoe, November 18, 1931, Talmage Papers, CHO.

[51]Talmage, *Journal*, Nov. 17, 1931; also Talmage to Reed Smoot, Nov. 20, 1931.

[52]Talmage, Journal, Nov. 21, 1931. [53]Talmage, Journal, April 7, 1931.

[54]The series was entitled "Evidences and Reconciliations" and was later edited in book form by Widtsoe's son-in-law, G. Homer Durham, *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960). For our purposes the most important articles were "How Old is the Earth," *Improvement Era* 41 (December, 1938); "How did the Earth come into Being" *Improvement Era* 42 (February, 1939); "What is the Origin of Life on Earth," *Improvement Era* 42 (March, 1939); "To what Extent should the Doctrine of Evolution be Accepted," *Improvement Era* 42 (July, 1939). Widtsoe himself was out of the country at the time the controversy over the manuscript surfaced but he had hoped that the First Presidency would have publicly decided the matter: "I have been afflicted with these questions for a generation of time. It does seem high time that the Church answer them definitively or declare that it does not know, so that more important questions may engage the minds of young and old." Widtsoe to Susa Young Gates, Oct. 30, 1931, Widtsoe Papers, USHS. This letter also reveals a strong fondness for Joseph Fielding Smith and definite support for his efforts to defend conservative orthodoxy in the Church.

[55]John A. Widtsoe, "Were there Pre-Adamites?" *Improvement Era* 51 (May, 1948) p. 205. This selection was the only one omitted from the more accessible book collection.

[56]On this whole matter see Jeffery op. cit. and William Lee Stokes, "An Official Position," *Dialogue* 12 (Winter 1979), pp. 90-92.

[57]*Choose You This Day* (Salt Lake City, 1979), p. 39. Commended was the chapter on evolution in *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City, 1954), a compilation by Bruce McConkie of Joseph Fielding Smith's writings and sermons. The tenor of this discussion is well reflected in such subtitles as "Evolution and Religion Cannot Be Harmonized," "Theory of Evolution Denies Christ," and "If Evolution is True, the Church is False." Even more recently McConkie, in a 14-Stake Fireside at BYU, termed the belief "that revealed religion and organic evolution can be harmonized" one of the "seven deadly heresies" in the Church. Jeff Hurd, "Apostle Warns of Heresies," *The Daily Universe*, June 3, 1980, p. 2.

SHIFTS IN RESTORATION THOUGHT

HOWARD J. BOOTH

> And this is the gospel which God has commanded us to preach to all people, once more, for the last time. And no other system of religion which is now organized among men is of any use; everything different from this, is a perverted gospel bringing a curse upon them that preach it, and upon them that hear it.[1]
>
> —Parley P. Pratt (1838)

> An unfortunate and erroneous concept about the nature of authority is that only one organized church institution at a time may have authority to represent God. It is the testimony of the Reorganized Church of J. C. of LDS that we have been called of God to accomplish the divine purpose in God's world. When we make this assertion it does not necessarily follow that no other person or institution has spiritual authority. . . . Our faith in the majesty and power of that revelation [speaking of God in Christ] would be diminished immeasurably if we perceived the ongoing authoritative ministry of Jesus Christ as being confined to our day and sect.[2]
>
> —First Presidency of RLDS Church (1979)

BOTH OF THE ABOVE STATEMENTS are clearly affirmations of faith, strong declarations of belief in the Restoration movement, each evolving out of presuppositions about the fundamental truth of the message delivered. Each statement, though the former probably more so than the latter, is representative; that is, numbers of Saints have shared the stated convictions. In both cases, the intention appears to be the same, to identify the church of the latter days in relation to other church organizations of its time.

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The basic nature of that identity, however, radically changes from one statement to the other. The former quotation, from the popular Mormon missionary resource, *A Voice of Warning*, penned by Apostle Parley P. Pratt in 1838, registers for the Restoration movement a claim of distinction from all other "systems of religion." In the latter quotation such a claim has been abandoned. The authority to represent God is shared. We are told that the "authoritative ministry of Jesus Christ" cannot be confined to the efforts of "one organized church institution." The exponents of this position are members of the RLDS First Presidency speaking in Independence last January at their meetings with appointees and executive ministers for the purpose of considering the major anticipated thrusts of the Reorganized Latter Day Saint church in the next decade.

Though claiming no attempt to be systematic or thorough, I intend to examine this and other significant shifts in Restoration thought. What I have to say cannot, I suppose, be considered, strictly speaking, historical or theological. It reflects more my personal observations and impressions which have been informed by an analysis of selected literature. For this purpose I reviewed the *Lectures on Faith*, originally called "lectures on theology," delivered to the School of Elders in the Kirtland Temple in December of 1834,[3] Pratt's *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People*, and varied versions of the "Epitome of Faith," sometimes designated the "Articles of Faith,"[4] written later. My examination of the recent literature included the statements of the RLDS Basic Beliefs Committee in the 1970 publication *Exploring the Faith*,[5] *World Conference Bulletins*, from 1960 to the present, with special attention to the reports of the RLDS First Presidency and the Twelve, and four theological addresses delivered by the First Presidency at their meetings last January with appointees and executive ministers.

I confess that my remarks are not the product of research begun with neutralized motivations. I have *looked* for the shifts in thought, sometimes rereading for the sake of finding. For example, in searching for an indication of changes in perspective I turned to the Reports of the First Presidency and Twelve rather than to the sermons by the Prophet and President of the church because the former, in general, reflected more consistently an attempt to deal with the issues of change and growth in the church.

One further caveat needs to be made. Actually "Restoration thought" does not shift. As Sidney Mead has commented, "Institutions don't believe and affirm; persons in institutions do." We cannot talk about Restoration thought, therefore, in the abstract. The statements of the Basic Beliefs Committee, for instance, are not to be construed as beliefs of the church. They represent, to some degree, the beliefs of many Saints in particular; but the statements, in fact, are the product of individual members of a specific committee enjoined to prepare, through dialogue and compromise, affirmations that can be tolerated, if not appreciated, by a majority of the Saints.

It is possible to summarize some of the early claims of Latter Day Saintism. First, the second coming of Christ was imminent and his church was being

restored to participate in the preparation for this event. In October 1834, Oliver Cowdery, editor of the *Messenger and Advocate,* attempted to characterize some of the fundamental affirmations to which the paper would be committed:

> We believe that God has revealed himself to men in this age, and commenced to raise up a church preparatory to his second advent, when he will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.[6]

Probably very few Latter-day Saints disagreed with Judge Higbee and Parley P. Pratt, who in a doctrinal address delivered in 1840, declared: "As to the signs of the times, we believe that the gathering of Israel and the second advent of Messiah, with all the great events connected therewith, are near at hand."[7] It is interesting that in the version of the "Epitome of Faith" appearing in the "Wentworth Letter" published in the *Times and Seasons,* March 1842, Joseph Smith also affirms the "literal gathering of Israel" and that "Christ will reign personally upon the earth," but the notion that this will happen soon has been dropped.[8]

Second, there is a strict demarcation drawn between the church restored and all other Christian bodies, the former being understood to contain the "fulness of the gospel," a complete restoration of the doctrine, organization and authority of the New Testament Church. In the Restoration movement's first "epitome of faith," again, Oliver Cowdery writes:

> We believe that the popular religious theories of the day are incorrect. That they are without parallel in the revelations of God, as sanctioned by him; and that however faithfully they may be adhered to, or however zealously and warmly they may be defended, they will never stand the strict scrutiny of the word of life.[9]

And Sidney Rigdon, writing in 1836, asserts:

> The Latter Day Saints believe that Christ will prepare the way of his coming by raising up and inspiring apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, and under their ministry restore again to his saints all the gifts of the church as in the days of old.[10]

It was understood that this had been accomplished, of course, by the founding of Christ's church in 1830. Arguing for a revealed unity in the New Testament, "one Church, or assembly of worshippers united in their doctrine and built upon the *truth,*" and assured that God could not author "discordant systems," Higbee and Pratt proclaim:

> . . . we have no confidence in the sects, parties, systems, doctrines, creeds, commandments, traditions, precepts, and teachings of modern times, so far as they are at variance with each other, and contrary to the Scriptures of Truth. . . . We have, therefore, withdrawn from all these

> systems of error and delusion, and have endeavored to restore the ancient doctrine and faith which was once delivered to the saints.[11]

They were not calling into question the sincerity of persons in other denominations; it was just that their beliefs were wrong.

Finally, the Latter-day Saints linked a restoration of the old Jerusalem with a new Jerusalem to be built by them, alone, in America. Joseph wrote, "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes [and] that Zion will be built upon this continent."[12] The Restoration movement assumed exclusive responsibility for establishing the kingdom of God on earth, for literally building the city of Zion in America. This task was of utmost importance since Christ's second coming was thought to be ushered in by its completion. As Pratt's "Voice" warned,

> when this city is built the Lord will appear in his glory and not before. So from this we affirm, that if such a city is never built, then the Lord will never come.[13]

Themes of latter-day restoration and distinctives have not been lost to the Reorganization. Barbara Higdon notes that until recently the church had continued to define itself in apologetic, or defensive terms. It upheld its organizational structures and beliefs as parallel to those of the New Testament Church and now uniquely restored. She comments, "Although continuous modifications in language took place, these ideas defined the reorganization in the first half of the Twentieth Century."[14]

William Russell, examining in 1967 the current missionary message of the RLDS church, had drawn similar conclusions. Reviewing tracts produced by the RLDS publishing house and approved by church officials, he observed the following content being espoused: To be distinguished from other Christian denominations, the RLDS church is the "true church"; the New Testament Church, its doctrine, organization, and practices, has been restored through the RLDS body; and the Christian church had fallen so clearly and fully into apostasy that its authority was removed, setting the stage for the preparatory works of the Reformers and finally the full restoration of that authority in the Latter Day Saint movement. Russell criticizes the scriptural, historical and theological distortions present in such notions, and concludes with a succinct indictment: "The basic mis-direction of the RLDS missionary message lies in the fact that it is centered in the RLDS church itself rather than in the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ."[15]

Still there have always been voices in the Restoration crying out for shifts in the wilderness. Two of those voices were heard early on. Of no little significance was Joseph Smith III's alteration of the means to establish Zion. Church Historian, Richard Howard, writes: "Joseph Smith III delivered instructions to the Church which turned its Zionic concepts inside out."[16] The first prophet of the Reorganization discouraged a literal gathering to one

central place, urging, instead, the Saints to contribute as the church to the cause of Zion in terms of community needs wherever they were. Peter Judd and Bruce Lindgren agree with Howard. They observe: "This approach has shaped the church's conception of its Zionic commission. It advocated the building of 'community within community' rather than community withdrawn from society, as had been most often projected by the early Latter Day Saints."[17]

In an important paper on dissent in the Reorganization,[18] Alma Blair concentrates on the influential voice of Jason Briggs, who for ideological reasons eventually left the church. Briggs, whose role was central to the founding of the Reorganization and who served as President of the Twelve most of the time between 1853 and 1885, nevertheless, failed to fit the traditional thought mold of Latter Day Saintism. Briggs considered nothing connected with the church sacrosanct. To him inspiration, scriptures and prophets were all quite fallible. The search for truth involved primarily the best possible use of our reason and experience. No conclusions could ever be considered infallible or final.[19] The tentativeness of faith was an imperative. In a series of articles in *The Messenger,* Briggs spoke up on gathering to Zion. Not only did he think a literal gathering to a specific area was "unscriptural;" it was "dangerous" as well. Such attempts to establish Zion had never worked before, and he saw no reasons for being optimistic about the possibilities in the Reorganization. The principle of gathering, that is, the building of community, Briggs could accept, but when such a principle extended itself beyond the notion of "spiritual Zion to the idea of a place in Jackson County, he judged the cause almost certainly doomed."[20]

Briggs' controversial views on inspiration and the scriptures further represent a shift in Restoration assumptions. Not only did persons not have to be RLDS to have prophetic insight, Briggs believed, they didn't even have to be Christian. Contrary to the popular notion of "propositional revelation," Briggs asserted: "Inspiration is a development, dependent upon the faculties of the mind, and corresponds with the experience, and does not transcend it, though it may seem to."[21]

He believed the Bible, as any scripture, was "full of error," and he denied the validity of a literal interpretation of all its passages, treating the story of Adam and Eve, for example, as mythological. He criticized what he considered to be "weaknesses" in the Doctrine and Covenants, refusing to assume that it was inspired just because the prophet had uttered the words. Inspiration demanded internal verification.

Writing about the subjugation of Briggs' ideas, Blair states:

> Briggs may have found solace in the 1886 Committee report suggesting there should be wide latitude allowed for individual members' opinions on most subjects. But that did not change the restrictions placed on public expressions made by ministers and officers who are always representing the church. The Board of Publications did not liberalize its

> policies on what could or could not be printed and probably printed fewer 'controversial' articles than it had before . . .
> . . . While 'plenary inspiration' had never been authorized as explanation for the scriptures' veracity, the 'three standard books' were declared to be 'true and proper standards of evidence in the determination of all controversial doctrines in theology.' In the context of his long battle to establish the historical relativity and tentative character of the scriptures and inspiration this would seem to be a major defeat for Briggs.[22]

Unhampered by the professional historian's concern for continuity, I am going to take the liberty now to turn the time machine ahead by a half century or so. In the last two decades, in particular, the Reorganized Latter Day Saints, some intentionally, and others, in order to keep abreast of the changes taking place, have struggled with theological issues having to do with some very fundamental questions of identity and role as a worldwide church. We have been asking what it means, and what it might demand from us, to represent Christ in other cultures and in particular historical settings. Judd and Lindgren observe:

> Early Latter Day Saints felt the role of the prophetic church to be largely predictive, i.e., the church was to discern the evils of the times that pointed to the end of history, the destruction of the wicked, and Christ's Second Coming. But the theological reflections of the 1960's have brought to the Saints a somewhat different perception of the church's prophetic role. Increasingly the church sees its role as trying to understand what it is called to be and do in this particular moment of time.[23]

In 1966 a "Statement on Objectives for the Church," approved only three days earlier by the Joint Council, was read to the World Conference delegates on April 17. Among the major goals for the next decade included the task of clarifying the theology of the church. To this end a Committee had been functioning for almost a decade under President F. Henry Edwards' Chairmanship. However, in 1966 Apostle Clifford Cole, president of the Council of Twelve and an original committee member, accepted this responsibility, and in 1970, *Exploring the Faith*, the product of the Basic Beliefs Committee's work was published. It was developed as an enlarged replacement for the Epitome of Faith originally written by Joseph Smith, Jr. The committee intended that it might more adequately represent the beliefs of the modern church. Recognizing the limitations of such a work, however, Cole states in the Preface: "We do not present this statement as a final work. Most of all, we do not want people to ever think of it as a creed. It is intended as a resource to assist interested persons in enriching their understanding of the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[24]

Although President W. Wallace Smith in his sermon at the 1970 Conference describes these new statements of belief as "additional explanation" of

the Epitome of Faith, even a casual comparison reveals some significant shifts in thought, if only in terms of what affirmations of the Epitome of Faith are dropped or redefined in the more recent "Statements" of *Exploring the Faith.* The doctrine of the church, for example, undergoes a major shift. The sixth of Joseph's affirmations, "We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, viz: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists &c.," has been removed altogether. An earlier emphasis on identifying the church as a restoration of the organizational structure of the New Testament Church, thereby attempting to validate its unique authority, fades before the committee's description of the church as "the community of those who have covenanted with Christ" seeking to "surrender itself to him in worship and service."[25]

Another example should illustrate even further this shift in thought. It represents what I call the process of *deliteralization,* a process which facilitates the wider role of symbols in religious movements. Joseph's affirmations of the "literal gathering of Israel," the "restoration of the Ten Tribes," and in conjunction with these events, the building of Zion on the American continent where "Christ will reign personally upon the earth," are muted in the Committee's statement on Zion. Here Zion is generalized to "the implementation of those principles, processes, and relationships which give concrete expression to the power of the kingdom of God in the world." The gathering has been redefined essentially as "signal communities" where a "covenant people" attempt to "live out the will of God in the total life of society."[26] The emphasis is on the nature of the outreach, rather than on the distinctiveness of an identifiable community withdrawn from the world in order to function as a model of righteousness.

As Carl Bangs, Professor of Historical Theology, at St. Paul's Theological Seminary, so astutely points out in his review in *Courage* (1971), Although there is no "process of demythologization" here, a "new spirit" is adrift:

> There is a complete absence of bitter attack on the 'denominations,' [in fact] there are expressions of indebtedness and kinship to them . . . [and there is] a freedom to see that the God who works in the Bible and the LDS history works also in the history of the 'continuing Christian community.'[27]

Some of the so called "distinctives" are not altogether ignored, but they have been rephrased. Bangs observes, "The protestant reader of non-RLDS persuasion will indeed find little to disturb him in the Statement itself."[28]

Further evidence of shifts in Restoration thought can be found in the *World Conference Bulletins* of recent years. Here, particularly in the reports of the First Presidency and the Twelve, statements calculated to convert the Saints to a larger vision of the nature and mission of the church in the world. The *Bulletins* include not only the ideological shifts per se, but reveal very clearly, especially in the Conferences of 1968 and 1970, considerable dissent over the shifts perceived and the church's attempts to handle the problem.

The 1960 *World Conference Bulletin* contains merely a greeting by the First Presidency to the conference participants, previewing for them some of the scheduled activities of the week with the Council of Twelve presenting an unimaginative report of the geographical and statistical dimensions of their missionary work. But in the 1962 *Bulletin*, signals of future issues to be deal with are evident. Reflecting on the commitment of the Saints making possible the completion of the Auditorium, the First Presidency beckon, "What has been done so well in the *Auditorium* is but the prelude to what must now be done, with careful planning but at increased tempo, as we face the broadening times of our growing world."[29]

In an epistle from the Council of Twelve, the conference is exposed to the fundamental questions which will shape the Council's inquiry for years to come:

> But what does it mean to express the gospel in the changing circumstances of modern life with its technical knowledge, industry, rapid communication and the mingling together of many people? What does it mean to express God's word in all cultures? What does it mean to apply the universals of the gospel to the specific and varied ethnic concepts of marriage, the family, and so on? These questions require answers.[30]

In the Conference of 1964, two statements, in particular, reveal that the inquiry spoken of in 1962 had not been shoved aside. The First Presidency report: "We cannot function effectively as a world church with the same simple organization through which we planted the church in Iowa and Illinois and Missouri a century ago."[31] Later they add, setting the stage for changes in expression, if not in thought:

> It may well be that this basic faith [in the Lord Jesus Christ and his coming kingdom] will sometimes be expressed in terms peculiar to our age rather than in phrases which were once new but, which have long since lost their relevance.[32]

The 1966 World Conference shows the increasing experience of the church with missions abroad and consequent principles emerging in the church's thought. The Report of the Council of Twelve states:

> It is advisable to build churches and to establish procedures in light of the cultural patterns of those nations to which we go. To overlay Americanisms upon other nations which may have even more to offer in their own culture is to cloud the essentials of faith and worship and to forfeit the contributions of diverse peoples to the total life of the church.[33]

An ecumenical trend is also openly expressed. In a joint statement of the Presidency and the Twelve, "The Beckoning of the Future," the conference is admonished: "It has always been our practice to join with other groups, both

religious and secular, in promoting movements which are compatible with our vision of the kingdom. This we should continue to do."[34]

In 1968 the conference is advised of a series of Joint Council seminars held during the interim. Designed to "gain a better understanding of the world and the church's mission in it," these seminars were described as "highly significant." There was no little talk among the conference delegates that year about the use of "highly-trained" non-RLDS educators and theologians as major resources for the seminars. Among the conclusions summarized by the First Presidency for the conference, I will mention one which representatively signifies a growing understanding of the Restoration in context:

> The witness of the prophet Joseph Smith is an illumination of God's relevation in Jesus Christ . . . It [the Restoration] is not at odds with Christendom as a whole. The real enemy in today's world is not other Christian Communities but the wickedness and strife, alienation and despair that run rampant in the world.[35]

The events of the 1970 World Conference are perhaps best symbolized by the title of William Russell's report on the conference printed in *Christian Century*, "Reorganized Mormon Church Beset by Controversy."[36] A Report of the First Presidency on the Standing High Council Study of the Ethics of Dissent in the church indicates the circumstances which prodded the development of a policy statement. There had been growing evidence that a number of individuals upset by various developments occurring in the church were appealing directly to the Saints to condemn the trends of "liberalism." In the Report the First Presidency attempts to explain to the satisfaction of the saints the reasons for and significance of recent actions which, as they understood it, clarify and enrich the theology and mission of the church. The committee study had reported to the First Presidency:

> It is time in which many, if not all of the major church denominations, are facing urgent reappraisal of their doctrines in an attempt to speak to a generation very greatly alienated from traditional moral and cultural values. If we cling too tenaciously to a static, institutionalized church structure we run a great risk of no longer having a church after one more generation.[37]

President W. Wallace Smith, in his sermon to the conference, "1970 and Beyond," adds his plea for a more liberal vision of the church's call to speak to the times: He warns, "Too narrow an approach to the interpretation of the gospel of Jesus Christ will not meet the needs of the discriminating individual who sees himself as serving God through the avenue of ministering to the needs of humanity."[38]

Reflecting on the significance of these shifts, and interpreting this for the American public, Russell concludes in his article in the *Christian Century*: "At the 1970 conference in Independence those who favor the trend won an

important test—for the Old Jerusalem Gospel faction tried hard to reverse that trend and failed."[39]

While the 1970 conference does seem to be something of a watershed event for the church, some of the themes and concerns so common to the previous decade are still being raised in the conference of 1972. Speaking to those who remain too "eager to defend institutionalism for its own sake," the First Presidency state plainly:

> Prophetic leadership must point men beyond the institution to the principles and qualities which deserve to be pursued . . . We recognize the validity of the institution when it thus serves the truth. But we must never allow the truth to be distorted so as to serve the institution. This is idolatry. Joseph Smith, Jr., saw this especially in the early years, and did not hesitate to adjust form in order to represent the truth more adequately. Joseph Smith, III saw this, and his revelations are punctuated with the word 'expedient.' Such term does not mean in this context a nonethical pragmatism, but willingness to search for the basic divine intent in settings of constantly changing circumstances.[40]

And in a sermon clearly reflecting the spirit of new interpretations and applications, President Smith declares to the conference:

> Whenever we are faced with the question regarding the purpose of the church, we are sometimes hard pressed to decide just what is our image of the end product. I think we could agree that the church's goal is not to produce white-robed Saints but to nurture mature individuals who can take their places in society and make contributions not only to their family and church but to the welfare of the whole community.[41]

The highlight of the 1974 conference, in my opinion, is Apostle Clifford Cole's sermon, The Cause of Zion—Today and Tomorrow," which speaks to the church's statement of Objectives as modified through wide consultation with the saints in the field in 1973. Addressing the question of "distinctives," Cole first acknowledges the historical rather than the revelational roots of our notions of bringing the kingdom of God into being, our concepts of Zion, and our understandings of apostasy and restoration. Next, echoing a growing awareness of recent conferences, he maintains:

> Where once we were preoccupied with recapturing the past, now we are increasingly absorbed in restoring and revitalizing our relationship to God and his purpose. Without rejecting the past, we must now give increasing attention to our calling into the future.[42]

And what is that calling, to finally build our "city on the hill," and so once-and-for-all convince the world it is possible? Such is not Cole's message. Amazingly, he openly confesses no hope in the lasting meaning of such an accomplishment, even if we could literally offer it;

> We doubt that we have a plan, or an institution, or a social order to offer the world, and if we did have, it would be only a few years until that contribution would be outdated and unable to meet the needs of the time. If the Saints had successfully established a zionic community in Missouri in the 1830's, it is hard to imagine that community having very much of importance to offer to the world today *unless* it changed radically from the Zion the early Saints envisioned.[43]

It would be wrong, I think, to criticize Cole's view as pessimistic or faithless. Rather he was calling the conference to a realistic appraisal of the church's reasons for existence and inviting the membership to attach flesh to the bones of its convictions in a world of critical human need.

The Conferences of 1976 and 1978 reveal still further attempts at refinement with respect to theology, and the concerns for implementing some of the new Restoration principles evolving into being.

My last examples of shifts in Restoration thought are found in papers presented in January 1979 in Independence by the First Presidency to assembled appointees and executive ministers. Apparently these papers were not intended for distribution beyond the confines of the meetings. Perhaps fearing they might thereby become the new "position papers," the Presidency decided to allow their distribution. They are to be interpreted, I believe, as working papers only, not definitive theological statements of belief. They do represent some of the most recent illustrations of the Latter Day Saint struggle to identify and understand more fully its mission in today's world. In The Nature of the Church," two explicit calls are rendered to the participants. The first is an invitation to serve Christ in the world, not in the church: "The interpretation of life and its meaning is not revealed in words from a book nor in structured forms of church organization. Its meaning emerges in life lived out in response to the word that was 'made flesh and dwelt among us.' "[44] The second is a summon to engagement, not withdrawal from the world: "The mission of the church is like that of Jesus to stand in the world rather than against the world."[45]

Of perhaps the most significance, however, are the ways in which familiar Latter Day Saint phrases or concepts have been redefined. In the paper, "Identity of the Church," participants would have nodded knowingly to the claim made early in the address that "the church embodies the fulness of the gospel." They might not have found as familiar, however, the statement explaining its meaning:

> The testimony of the Restoration is not that we have one, two, or three books of scriptures. It is rather that the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, validating our deepest struggles and our highest joy as existence in Christ. This is what we mean by the fulness of the gospel.[46]

In the same address, the terms "restoration" and "apostasy," and the question of authority in the church, so common to our heritage, also undergo

an alteration. They define the restoration as a "process which must permeate the human community from within," and they add, "when we are honest about our own personal and corporate history, we realize that the apostasy and the restoration were not events that happened one time in history but rather are processes continually at work among us."[47]

The Presidency relate the issue of authority to the question of the Church's legitimacy. Unlike the all too familiar attempts to defend the church's authority on the basis of right doctrine and organization, however, the Presidency, avoiding the traditional interpretation, conclude:

> The authority of the church is thus related to its corporate willingness to stand with courage in the context of experienced reality and interpret the meaning of that reality with spiritual insight and integrity . . . Authority in the church relates to the coherency of the relationship between the church and the cultural situation of which it is a part. If there is no relationship between the church and its allocated arena of ministry, the church's authority is diminished.[48]

In retrospect it appears that the process of restoration is not unique to the Latter Day Saint movement. Rather it represents, among those who choose to believe, one among many visions of God's activity.

Latter Day Saintism has learned, it seems, what the noted scholar, Rudolf Bultmann, unearthed about the New Testament. Bultmann came to believe that to be a Christian does not require the acceptance of a pre-scientific world view. By the same token, it seems logical to maintain that to be a Latter Day Saint does not require an adherance to an early nineteenth century world view.

The philosopher of religion, Huston Smith, writes:

> In times of transition an effective answer to the social problem must meet two conditions. It must preserve true continuity with the past, for only by tying in with what men have known and are accustomed to can it be widely accepted . . . [but he continues]. The answer must also take sufficient account of new factors that now render the old answers inapplicable.[49]

Smith refers to Confucius as an example: "He appeals to the Classics as the sole basis for his proposal. And yet it wasn't the old answer. All the way through, Confucius was reinterpreting, modifying."[50] I have attempted to remind us of some of the Confucianists in Latter Day Saintism.

Like the second generation Christian disciples living further away from the presence of the historical Jesus, and for whom the realistic expectation of a literal second coming had faded, we too must learn to find our way in the latter days which will *not* shortly end. We dare not wait for Jesus' body to return; rather we must risk ourselves becoming more fully that body for the sake of the world that God so loves.

NOTES

[1]Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People Containing a Declaration of the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (New York City: W. Sanford, 1838), pp. 140-141.

[2]"The Identity of the Church," a paper delivered by the First Presidency of the RLDS Church at a gathering of appointees and executive ministers (January 9, 1979), p. 12.

[3]*Lectures on Faith,* Independence: Herald House, 1942. For a helpful summary of the historical background on the series of lectures and consideration of the questions of removal from the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants,* authorship and delivery see Leland H. Gentry, "What of the Lectures on Faith?" *Brigham Young University Studies,* Vol. 19, Fall, 1978.

[4]See Wayne Ham, ed., *Publish Glad Tidings,* Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1970 and Wilford C. Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work,* Wilford C. Wood, publisher, 1962.

[5]*Exploring the Faith,* Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1970.

[6]*Messenger and Advocate,* Vol. 1, No. 1 (October, 1834), p. 2.

[7]*Times and Seasons,* Vol. 1, No. 5 (March, 1840), p. 69.

[8]*Ibid.,* Vol. 3, No. 9 (March 1, 1842), p. 710.

[9]*Messenger and Advocate,* Vol. 1, No. 1 (October, 1834), p. 2.

[10]*Ibid.,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (November, 1836), p. 403.

[11]*Times and Seasons,* Vol. 1, No. 5 (March, 1840), p. 68.

[12]*Ibid.,* Vol. 3, No. 9 (March 1, 1842), p. 710.

[13]Pratt, p. 177.

[14]Barbara Higdon, "The Reorganization in the Twentieth Century," *Dialogue,* Vol. VII, No. 1 (Spring 1972), p. 95.

[15]William Russell, "The Missionary Message of the RLDS Church," April 28, 1867, Unpublished paper.

[16]Richard Howard, "The Reorganized Church in Illinois, 1852-82: Search for Identity," *Dialogue,* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring, 1970), p. 75.

[17]Peter Judd and Bruce Lindgren, *An Introduction to the Saints Church,* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1976), p. 26.

[18]Alma Blair, "The Tradition of Dissent—Jason W. Briggs," A paper delivered at the John Whitmer Historical Association Conference in Independence, Missouri, September 27, 1975.

[19]Blair, p. 10.

[20]Blair, p. 12.

[21]Jason Briggs, "Inspiration No. 2," *The Messenger* (September, 1876), p. 41.

[22]Blair, pp. 20-21.

[23]Judd and Lindgren, p. 30.

[24]*Exploring the Faith,* p. 8.

[25]*Ibid.,* p. 12.

[26]*Ibid.,* p. 13.

[27]Carl Bangs, "Review of *Exploring the Faith,*" *Courage,* Vol. 1, No. 4 (June 1971), p. 256.

[28]Bangs, p. 255.

[29]*World Conference Bulletin,* 1962, p. 80.

[30]*Ibid.*

[31]*WCB,* 1964, p. 279.

[32]*WCB,* 1964, p. 284.

[33]*WCB,* 1966, p. 68.

[34]*WCB*, 1966, p. 248.

[35]*WCB*, 1968, p. 223.

[36]William D. Russell, "Reorganized Mormon Church Beset by Controversy," *Christian Century*, June 17, 1970.

[37]*WCB*, 1970, p. 115.

[38]*WCB*, 1970, pp. 245-246.

[39]Russell, p. 771.

[40]*WCB*, 1972, p. 207.

[41]*WCB*, 1972, p. 208.

[42]*WCB*, 1974, p. 8.

[43]*WCB*, 1974, pp. 15-16.

[44]"The Nature of the Church," First Presidency Meetings, Independence, Missouri, (January 9, 1979), p. 2.

[45]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

[46]"The Identity of the Church," p. 10.

[47]*Ibid.*, p. 7.

[48]*Ibid.*, p. 11.

[49]Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man* (New York City: Harper and Row, 1965) p. 176.

[50]*Ibid.*

PERSONAL VOICES

Hying to Kolob

EDWARD A. GEARY

OLD BISHOP LEONARD used to insist that the Spirit World was right here on earth and the dead were never far from home. He was not really the bishop anymore, but the title was for life and carried, to my young mind, an immense weight of dignity and authority. I remember the way his beard quivered as he spoke about the Spirit World, in some otherwise long forgotten church meeting. The dead were all around us, he said, some of them right there in the meetinghouse at that very moment, but we couldn't see them because of the Veil. When you were about to die the Veil would open up, and you would see your parents or your wife or whoever you had on the Other Side. Brother Crandall, on the other hand, who was also old and dignified though without title or beard, maintained that when the spirit left the body it traveled in the twinkling of an eye to the distant planet Kolob where it remained either in Paradise or in Spirit Prison until Resurrection Day. Only the righteous, he said, those worthy to inherit the Celestial Kingdom, would return to the earth after it had been cleansed and renewed.

When Bishop Leonard and Brother Crandall differed on a point of doctrine, as they often did, they debated with great vigor, quoting scripture and prophets and resonant phrases such as "paradisiacal glory" and "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." Brother Crandall had a more epic vision of life after death, I thought, taking in, as it did, practically the whole cosmos. I knew that Kolob was the planet nearest to the throne of God, and we sometimes sang in church a song that began with the line, "If you could hie to Kolob in the twinkling of an eye. . . ." I wasn't sure what it meant to hie to

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Kolob, but it had a grand ring to it, like Brother Crandall's doctrine. Nevertheless, I favored Bishop Leonard's view with its suggestion of a comfortable continuity between this world and the next. It seemed to me that a spirit would be better off in familiar surroundings than it would in some strange new place, even if it was Paradise. Of Spirit Prison I hardly dared to think. Besides, if the earth was to be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory, why should the spirits have to go hying all over the universe? When the graves were thrown open on Resurrection Day, they could simply take up their bodies and go on about their business.

All I knew of earth then was a wide valley in southern Utah with a string of villages along the arable strip at its edge. Our town, like the New Jerusalem, lay foursquare on the land, its length the same as its breadth, but instead of walls we had tall rows of lombardy poplars. Instead of jeweled buildings there were houses of buff-colored brick set deep in shady yards, and big weathered barns crammed with hay. We lived just outside of town. The canal ran east past our place to the corner of Grandpa's lot where it turned south along the top of town, feeding the little ditches that ran beside each street and brought water to the orchards and gardens. Inside the angle of the canal were the family fields. Outside lay the town in one direction, with the meetinghouse steeple visible above the trees, and in the other direction the tall angular form of the mill, the low eminence of Sandberg's Hill, and the graveyard.

The graveyard, which was more populous than the town, was a place I had known from my earliest time, but its real fascination for me began at the death of my great-grandfather when I was five. His passing brought no sense of loss, for I had known him only as an occasional silent visitor in dark glasses, sitting in the big padded rocking chair in Grandpa's front room. It was not the death that impressed me but the funeral. As we filed past the coffin, where it stood banked with flowers at the front of the meetinghouse, my father lifted me up so I could see inside. Great-grandpa lay there not so much stiller than I remembered him but pale and oddly dressed in a white cap and white robe with a green apron. Mother whispered something about temple clothes, and I nodded as though I understood. The coffin lid was left open throughout the funeral service, perhaps, I thought, so Great-grandpa could hear the talks. If he listened he was apparently not displeased, though unmoved. Nor did he protest when, at the end of the funeral, the lid was closed and the coffin carried out to the hearse. I remember the long parade of cars to the graveyard, and Grandpa's praying over the grave that the mortal remains might rest undisturbed until the morning of the First Resurrection. Then the undertaker pushed a lever, and the coffin sank smoothly into the deep, straight-sided hole. I remember with a special vividness how straight and clean-cut the sides of the grave were, like the walls of a house, or rather, since the grave was so narrow, like a hallway leading from one room to another, perhaps a part of a great subterranean mansion whose dim, cool chambers stretched on and on.

For some time afterwards, I looked for someone else to die so we could have another funeral. I knew that Great-grandpa Geary had died of old age. There were lots of old people around: old Mr. Sandberg who lived by the mill and walked with a cane and was deaf; Bert Westover whose house was across the road from Grandpa's and who was bent with rheumatism; Mrs. Johnson who hobbled up the road every day or two to visit Grandma, arriving red-faced and panting and saying, as she settled into the rocking chair, "Lard, I'm going to drop dead in the road someday." If she did, somebody would have to pick her up and dress her in white clothes before they could have a funeral. Even Grandpa and Grandma were old, though not as old as Great-grandpa since he was Grandpa's father. The skin on the back of Grandpa's hands was like thin brown leather, and Grandma, when she had worked too hard, would press her hand against her side and say that she was about out of breath. You could die, I knew, from running out of breath, and also from car wrecks and from getting very sick.

But nobody did die, that I remember, until the summer the headstone man came. Having turned eight the preceding winter, I was baptized as soon as the high waters subsided in the creek. My grandfather baptized me, the two of us wading into the swimming hole in our white clothes until the water reached my chest. After the immersion, Grandpa and Dad and Bishop Wakefield laid their hands on my head as I stood dripping and shivering on the bank and gave me the Gift of the Holy Ghost, which they said was to be a light and a guide to me throughout my life. Then the bishop shook my hand solemnly and told me that I was now accountable for any sins I might commit and advised me to pray often and vocally. I did pray oftener than before, not only kneeling conscientiously beside my bed each night but also going, sometimes, to a secret place in a clump of willows by the canal and praying aloud there.

The summer weather brought an epidemic of polio that year. Several people from our town and the neighboring villages contracted the disease, and there were three or four deaths, including a girl I knew. She was nothing special to me, but I remembered seeing her in Sunday School just a few days before she died. She had been quite normal then, as much alive as I was. By the next Sunday she was dead. I didn't go to the funeral, but I watched the procession to the graveyard, the black hearse leading the way, the family following in the second car. When the last car had passed out of sight over the ridge, a long cloud of dust still hung in the air.

As the summer wore on, I visited her grave several times. It was a short mound of blue-gray earth without a headstone, just a metal stake with a sort of window in which a card had been placed with her name and dates typed on it. The dry remains of the funeral wreaths lay scattered on the disturbed ground.

I realize now that it was not the little girl I was concerned about as I hovered around her grave, but myself. When Great-grandpa Geary died it had been interesting but not threatening. He had seemed safely remote from

my own life. But this girl was younger than I, and yet she had died. I had heard my parents discuss the symptoms of her lobar form of the disease, and I was aware that they were unusually solicitous of my health. They forbade me to swim in the creek or even wade in the canal as I had done in other summers. So it could happen to me too; there was no special exemption on my account. As that appalling realization came home to me, I started to become morbidly aware of my bodily functions, mentally inventorying the rate of my breathing, the elevation of my temperature, virtually the beating of my heart. When I awoke in the morning I immediately felt my forehead to see if it was hot and swallowed hard to test whether my throat was sore. At intervals throughout the day I would suddenly realize that I had not been thinking about my health, and I would immediately check again. Sometimes I swallowed so hard and so often, making sure that I still could, that my throat did begin to feel sore. Then I became terrified and avoided my parents lest they should discover that I was ill and take me to the doctor, thus confirming the awful fact.

Though my fears began with polio, they did not end there. I worried about getting every disease I had heard of: cancer, diphtheria, scarlet fever. My organism came to seem so vulnerable that I doubted its ability to maintain itself even in the absence of infection. When I had been running and my heart beat rapidly in my chest, I grew alarmed that it might wear out. At night, on the verge of sleep, I would suddenly realize that I couldn't remember my last breath, and I would draw in one deep breath after another until I became light-headed. Then I would lie awake worrying that I might stop breathing in my sleep when I didn't know about it.

It was while I was in the midst of these anxieties that the headstone man came. He arrived late one afternoon driving a large gray van which he parked in the shade of the cottonwood trees just across the canal from Grandpa's place. The van had a bunk and cookstove inside, like a sheepherder's wagon, in addition to the stoneworking tools and some slabs of polished blue-gray granite. The headstone man was gray himself, gray-haired, and his clothes and skin were covered with gray dust. He drove to the graveyard each day, where most of his work was replacing broken stones. Then in the evening he came back and parked under the cottonwoods, getting his drinking water from Grandpa's hydrant. There were many such itinerant craftsmen in those days, piano tuners, photographers, scissors grinders, who stayed for a day or a week in one town then moved on to another through a wide circuit of rural Utah. Most of them passed through and were forgotten, but the headstone man remained for several weeks and I got to know him fairly well. I often went with him over the ridge to the graveyard, watching as he dug out the old stone and prepared a foundation for the new, sometimes helping him by carrying water from the tap in a dented bucket for the concrete that he mixed by hand in a low trough. He seemed like a safe man to me, friendly but still a stranger, not likely to inquire into my health or bundle me off to the doctor. What's more, his profession fit in well with my own fascination with death.

I had a notion at that time (it had originated at Great-grandpa Geary's burial) that the headstones might conceal an entrance to the grave. It seemed reasonable that the larger ones, at least, might open up in some secret way and reveal a flight of steps descending into the ground, rather like Grandpa's cellar stairs. Such an image lessened the finality of death, suggested the possibility of coming and going, made of the grave a sort of home. There was a story in my mother's family that when Great-grandpa Olsen felt himself growing old he went to the carpenter and ordered a double-wide coffin so that he would have room to turn over if he wanted to. He kept it in a shed behind his house until he died and used to show it to visitors when they came to call. I liked that story, but I still preferred the vision of underground rooms connected to one another, where there was no confinement but rather a secret subterranean life. The cellar was my prototype, with its snugness from the weather and its rich compound odor of damp earth and rotting timbers and last year's apples. You could live in a place like a cellar, I thought. Only I was troubled by the dark; I would want a light in there.

It is hard to say why I found this fantasy more compelling than the doctrines of life after death that I had been taught. I was aware of the Church's teachings, certainly, and could have explained, if asked, that only the body was buried in the ground while the spirit went to the Spirit World. But the Spirit World had to be someplace, and since I had no desire to hie to Kolob when I died I preferred to think, with Bishop Leonard, that it was here on earth. And why not at the graveyard where the rows of headstones told of bodies resting below the ground, awaiting resurrection? Yet even the most comfortable image of death that I could conjure up remained disquieting. In all my prayers I asked that I might not get polio or any other disease but might grow up and fulfill my earthly mission. That was a reassuring phrase I had picked up at church. The Lord would protect you, if you were righteous, until you had fulfilled your earthly mission. Of course, when people died young it was said that their earthly mission was finished and they were needed on the Other Side. But I felt sure that there was no pressing need for me on the Other Side and that I had a good long earthly mission to fulfill that would carry me—if I didn't get polio or stop breathing in my sleep—well into the years of manhood and beyond the fear of death. Perhaps, indeed, there was no need for me to die at all. I had heard of the Three Nephites, who had been permitted to remain on earth until the Second Coming. They stayed alive century after century, going about the earth doing good deeds. I would be willing to do good deeds if I could live on like that.

Gradually in my prayers, especially when I went into the willows and offered up my petitions vocally and without restraint, I began asking, not merely to escape the polio epidemic, or even to grow up, but to stay alive forever. For if the spirit and the body were to be reunited on Resurrection Day, why should they have to be separated at all? As my prayer took form through repetition, my confidence grew that my earthly mission was to live forever. It seemed as though my soul had a special harmony with the living

earth that precluded dissolution. I felt, in the midst of mortality, that I was already immortal. Nevertheless, whenever my head felt feverish or my throat felt sore I experienced a sudden sense of panic that I might be dying.

Sometimes, while we waited for the concrete to harden for a footing, the headstone man and I wandered through the graveyard, and he shared his professional observations with me. In the oldest corner, some of the graves were marked with common sandstone from the hills, with names and dates scratched in with a knife, and some were merely wooden planks planted in the ground like a post, so rotten that they would break off at the slightest touch.

"The families done these theirselves," the headstone man said. "In the early days they had to make do with whatever they had."

There was a succession of markers from the crude pioneer stones through the cream-colored Manti limestone to the newer marbles and granites.

"This here don't weather good enough for a monument," he said of the limestone, rubbing the surface and showing me a fine granular powder on his hand. "They used a lot of it, though, before they could get marble or granite from back east. My father done a lot of work in it."

The newer stones were plain, with simple inscriptions, but several of the older limestone slabs bore elaborate decorations or lengthy commentaries. Some of them listed the towns that the dead person had helped to settle; others identified handcart pioneers. Two that I had thought were for soldiers were actually on the graves of missionaries who had died in the field. "Soldiers of the Lord," the headstone man said. The lambs on children's graves, and the doves, he said, were designs brought over from the Old Country, where his father had learned the trade. Other designs were original to Utah, such as the open Book of Mormon, or the cluster of sego lilies on one stone, replicas of the fragile, porcelain-like flowers that I never picked when I found them on the hill, since they had saved the pioneers from starvation and were the state flower. The headstone man pointed out to me the clasped hands carved on several stones and a rather spooky looking eye that stared blankly out from the top of an obelisk. "They're temple signs," he said, and wagged his head significantly. I didn't understand him, but at the mention of the temple and with the image before me of a single, unflickering eye staring down as though from distant Kolob, I began to sense the presence of some intricate network of signs and symbols linking the seen and unseen worlds.

At the top of the graveyard there was a large stone with an elaborate cluster of roofs and towers carved on it, which the headstone man identified as the Celestial City. "It took Father days to do one of those," he said, "but they was his favorites. While he carved he would tell me about the Celestial City where the Saints would dwell all arrayed in spotless white. You see," he continued after a pause, "these things wasn't just for decoration. There's a meaning to them. But there ain't much call for this sort of work anymore. Folks don't want to go the expense."

At the end of the day, after a supper of meat and fried potatos in his van,

the headstone man often brought out an old spindle-legged chair and sat by the canal. Most evenings old Bert Westover came across the road from his place to squat on his heels and jaw for a spell, and I went too, as often as I could manage it, slipping out of the house after supper. When the apricots grew ripe on the tree by the cellar, I picked them on my way, standing on the cellar roof to reach the lower branches and carrying the fruit in my shirt to the men. Then I sprawled on the canal bank, watching the spasmodic motions of the water striders and listening to the men talk.

Bert Westover was one of the most vivid characters of my childhood, a dry, shrunken old man with widely bowed legs. He had a farm up the road toward the canyon, but he raised little on it, only a few acres of hay for his horses. The horses were his only livestock. There were ten or twelve of them, and for all practical purposes they belonged to the whole neighborhood. They grazed freely along the ditchbanks and fencelines, and if we ever failed to close a gate they were sure to get into our fields and gardens. As for the horses, so for their master, no business seemed pressing, though by his own account Bert Westover had led a full life and could talk endlessly of his adventures. Although nominally a Mormon like the rest of us, he didn't go to church or keep the Word of Wisdom, and his true faith, it seems to me now, was in free thought. Whenever he got a chance to talk, he settled slowly onto his heels, legs spread apart and arms draped across his thighs (an easy equilibrium strangely at odds with the stiffness of his usual movements). Then he automatically reached into his left breast pocket to fish out his sack of Bull Durham by the orange tab on the drawstring. With unbroken concentration he spread the mouth of the sack and shook a little of the brown leaf into a white tissue peeled from an orange folder and held just so between his fingers. Then, his hands trembling a little all the time, he leveled it judiciously and folded up the sides, gave a quick motion of the tongue to moisten the joint, twisted the ends, and stuck the cigarette in his mouth. After that came an awkward fumbling in the pocket of his Levi's for a match before he could draw the first deep breath and begin to talk.

"Well," he would say slowly, "you're in a good line as long as folks keep dying, ain't you?"

The headstone man would smile and nod, "Surest thing in the world," while he tilted his chair precariously on its thin legs or perhaps still pottered about, washing his supper dishes in a blue enameled dishpan.

"Course you'll be out of a job come Resurrection Day." Bert Westover paused to draw on his cigarette or spit into the canal, the yellowish bubbles drifting lightly on the water until they hit a rapid stretch and disintegrated. "Hell of a time that'll be, people crawling out of the ground like salamanders in a mud puddle. I figure to move away from here before then. Mine's the first place they'll hit when they come over the ridge, and they'll eat me out of house and home."

Bert Westover's house was a weathered plank cabin. When old Sister Westover was alive, Grandma said, it was a nice little house with floorboards

scrubbed and curtains on the windows. But Bert, being an old batch, had abandoned all but the main room where he had an iron bedstead in one corner and a cookstove in another with a black coffee pot on it. Suckers from a huge yellow rose bush at the rear of the house grew up through the floor of the back room and pressed against the window to reach the light. Years later, when Bert was dead, we used to take girls there on Halloween to scare them.

"The men come first, ain't that right? Then they call up their wives." He spat again and showed his teeth in a yellow grin. "Joe Miller says his old lady will wait a hell of a long time in that old blue clay before he calls her up. Says it'll be the first time he's ever had her where he wants her."

One evening he told of digging up a mummified Indian years before, when he was working on the road across the creek. "He was all folded up till he wasn't no longer than that," he said, holding his hands three feet apart. "Smart way of burying. You don't need such a big hole."

I had seen the tiny, contorted mummies in the museum on Temple Square but had never thought of them as human. Now I saw, in imagination, a body twisted, compressed, shoveled into a shallow pit and covered with suffocating dirt. Caught up by the image of such an end, I missed Bert Westover's next words until, at the end of some longer speech, I heard him say, "Nossir, by damn, when you're dead you're dead."

"Careful," the headstone man said quietly. "The boy."

I remember that exchange of words but do not recall my reaction to it or whether it contributed significantly to my anxieties about death. I don't even remember whether it took place early or late in the headstone man's stay. One day was much like another in the dry heat of midsummer. Every evening there were the same sights and sounds and sensations, the smell of smoke drifting from the headstone man's chimney, the gurgling of the canal, the casual, discontinuous yet continuing talk, the sound of Bert Westover's horses cropping the ditchbank grass somewhere nearby. Only the apricots we ate grew softer with the passing time.

One day I do recall quite clearly, though, near the end of the headstone man's time. Dad and Grandpa and I went to the graveyard to help the headstone man set up a new stone on the family plot to replace the broken limestone monument on Aunt Anna's grave. Dad dug out the old stone and widened the hole for the foundation, and I carried water for the concrete. After the soft gray mud was poured, Grandpa took the shovel over to Great-grandpa's grave, where the settling of the earth had left a depression. He filled in the low place and carefully leveled it off even with the surrounding ground, then leaned on the shovel for a few moments in silence.

"I suppose that's where you'll put Grace and me," he said, indicating a space beside Great-grandpa's grave.

When the job was finished, Grandpa rode home with the headstone man in his truck, but Dad and I, for some reason, walked, taking the long way over Sandberg's Hill. The late afternoon was hot, and an occasional blue-bellied lizard scurried through the dry shadscale under our feet. Dad told me the names he had given to each of the ridges and hollows when he had played on the hill as a boy. It seemed strange to me because I called them by different

names; yet they were the same places. It was strange to think of my father as a boy and of Grandpa as a boy before him. And in all that time the hills hadn't changed. It was only the people who changed, grew up, had children of their own, grew old and died. I began to catch a vision of mortality, of mutability, that went beyond the mere anxiety about my own death, though its outlines remained vague. It had something to do, I felt, with the permanence of the earth and the transience of all who dwelt upon it. Dad and I descended from the hill and walked past the mill where old Mr. Sandberg, sitting on the porch, waved his cane at us and called out a greeting in his strange high-pitched voice. He talked that way because he couldn't hear. The loud machinery of the mill had made him deaf.

After we reached home I slipped away and sought out my secret place of meditation and prayer in the willow patch. I fell to my knees and closed my eyes but for several minutes formulated no words, while the gurgling water and the summer insect sounds seemed to grow louder and louder. When the prayer did come it began as so many others had done that summer, with the petition that I might not die. But now it was not an imminent threat of polio or any early death that impelled my desires, but rather the general weight of mortality. I knew, too, that merely my own exemption from the common fate was not enough. To live on, unchanged, while the others changed and failed and died could bring no comfort. It wouldn't matter whether they were gone to Kolob or just beyond the Veil; either way they were out of reach. I saw a vision of a cold, empty house and the cellar roof caved in, like a grave. For the first time it struck me that the Three Nephites must be lonely, living on and on when all their people were gone. So I prayed that my parents and grandparents and brother and sister might also live forever, unchanged. I thought of Bert Westover and Mr. Sandberg too, but it was unwise, I sensed, to ask too much of the Lord. Probably everyone couldn't stay alive forever, and I surrendered with some reluctance the upper floors of the mill where Mr. Sandberg was my guide. Anyway, maybe on the Other Side he would be able to hear again, so it might be better for him. Other problems presented themselves. What about my mother's father, the grandfather I had never known, who was already dead? And what about my grandparents' parents? Wouldn't they miss them if they stayed alive forever? Emboldened by my need, I asked that they might be made alive again and remain forever too, but even as I named them I was swept by a wave of futility, for where could it end? Great-grandpa had had a mother and father too, and they, and they. I saw a horde of strangers, each linked to those beside them but alien to the rest, marching over the hill and filling the house, the yard.

No, it was impossible. I stopped praying and knelt in silent frustration for a time, then got slowly to my feet. I stepped out of the willows into the slanting light of late afternoon and cut through Grandpa's yard toward the headstone man's camp. The shadows of the cottonwoods covered the gray van and reached clear across the road to Bert Westover's cabin. On this side, the light still shone on the apricot tree beside the cellar, and I could see a few fruits, the last of the season, still hanging on the upper branches, too high to reach from the cellar roof. If I wanted them I would have to climb.

STEVEN GRAVES

The Room of Facing Mirrors

Nothing is omitted. Whatever
is evident in our synoptic vantage
collects: The audience is added row

to row, the chairs submit to accumulation,
angling fashionably to their vanishing
point (or are there two?) Crescents of light,

projections of shadow are strung in cords
to missing corners. The wedgewood, patera
ceiling slides efficiently into

an economized blue, as symbol
of day's dim incremental rise in blue.
This is the glass of awakening.

Amid the scattered sounds of morning,
we approximate oursevles, amused
at a yawn, a multiplicity of yawns.

From our half-focused stares, we recognize
ourselves front and rear, these elliptical
embarrassments in seeing one's self

as others do: a patch of hair upright,
some accident in our attire,
the backside of the best self's stage.

We sit before this gallery
of witnesses finding a renewable
kinship with each, even with the distant

and slightly darkened visage—there
in the tapioca colored garment. Others
before us have noticed in the sixth

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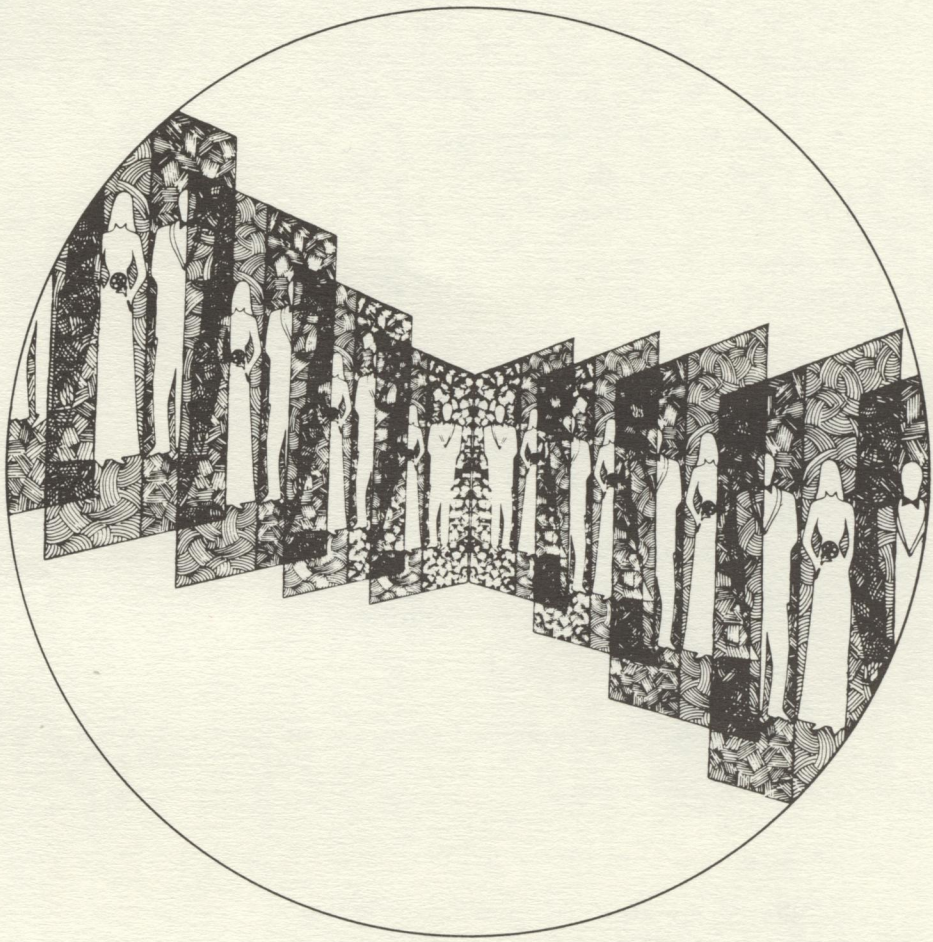

or seventh reenactment, a slight
independence in detail—perhaps
in the grouping seen off to the right,

the salmon furnishings buoying them up.
Still, to most appearances our thin,
balding coach has drilled our ensemble well.

Peripheral movements, panels
of cloud and woodside have been
deleted. The focus is rather on

the bold redistribution of light
(its passing from the hair to the brow
and eyes) as our host enters

unannounced, a visual echo.
We all rehearse arrivals, that
and unpunctuated time.

There's a marginal complexity
in having two centers, to stretch
both north and south, but the stories

of the earliest works attest
to such a collective rise
and flowering. One does not soon

forget the laminated
history of brine and wonder
at this junction of time and space,

where each concentric posture of the self
or other is its own harmonic, chimes:
a realm of possibilities.

True, there are no unmistakable
household smells, familiar tunes, just
a happy resemblance letting itself go,

indefinite in both directions,
perpetual in its endorsement of here,
where we wish for no lesser place.

ROBERT A. REES

Somewhere Near Palmyra

"The glory of the City was the temple of the sun."
—Will Durant

He saw something that morning
deep among the delicate leaves
burning against the Eastern sky

The sun and suns,
radiance enfolded
in oak and elm

visages of light
luminous as seer stones
rinsing the still grasses

personages of fire,
jasper and cornelian,
dispersing the morning dew:

images that bore him
through dark of night,
terror of loneliness,
blood of betrayal,
the ache of small graves,
to death from the prison window
where, wings collapsing
through the summer air,
he fell—

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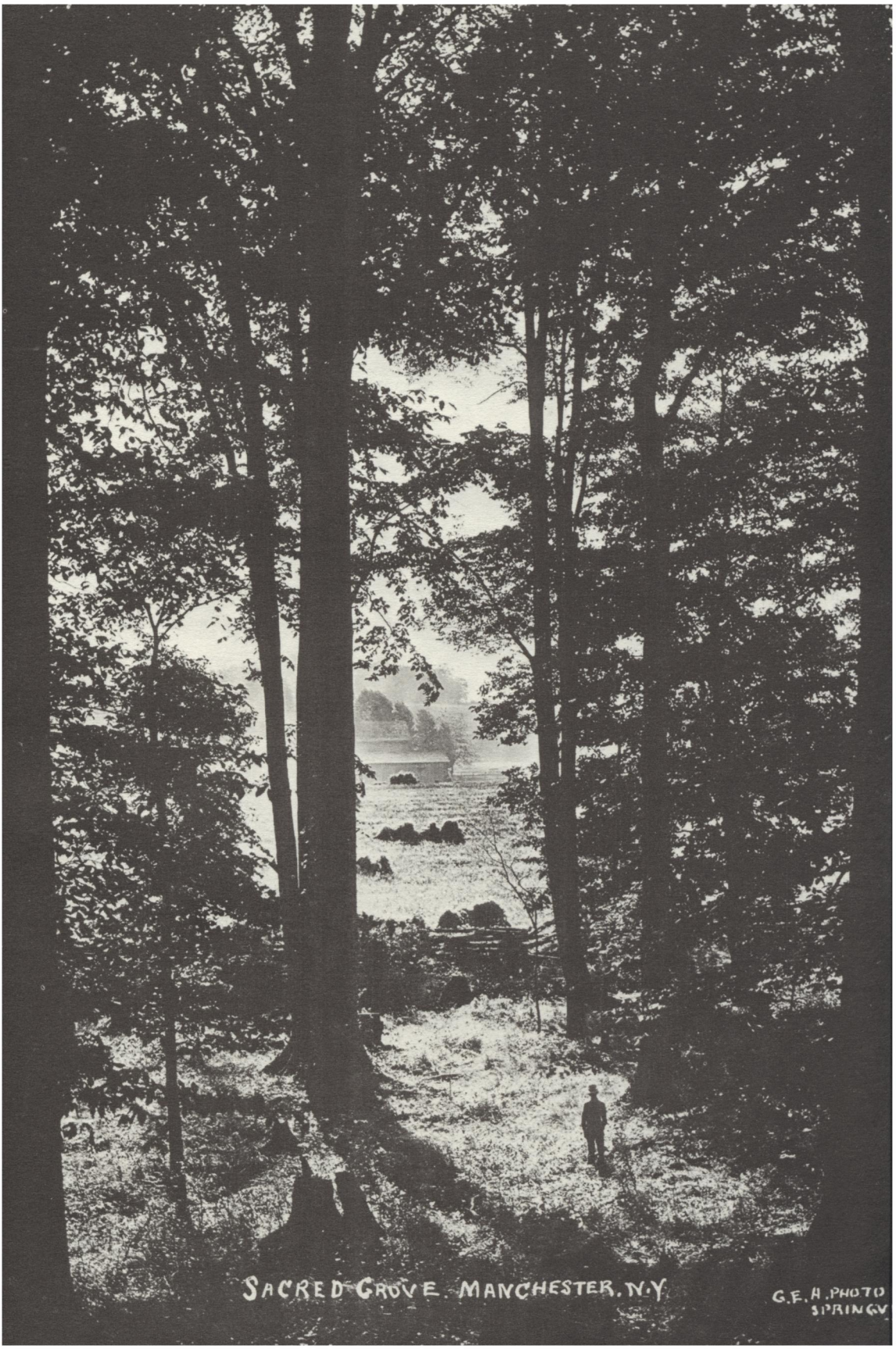
And I know, kneeling
among the secret trees
this winter morning
where no birdsong rings
among the barren bush
and no leaves spring green,
where darkness thickens and gathers
among the withered weeds
and my tongue is a fish
under the river's roof,
that I too see what he saw—

sun, light, fire—

images of glory
flashing through the
morning mist.


SACRED GROVE. MANCHESTER. N.Y.
G.E.H. PHOTO
SPRINGV

NOTES AND COMMENTS

An Hour in the Grove

MARY L. BRADFORD

I HAVE VISITED this spot before—in my youth, in art, in my thoughts—so often that it has become cliche. The grove, a ripe symbol extending back through time and myth, has become too ripe in my mind and has fallen. Scholarly papers about the various versions of the First Vision, not-so-scholarly reproductions of the experience in brochures and in visitors centers had combined to render it hazy, fading in importance as charisma changes to bureaucracy.

I am expecting, therefore, only a pleasant hour in the woods. But as soon as I walk up the path, my mood changes. By the time I am seated on a bench facing a lectern, a piano, two giant tympani (which somehow don't seem out of place), I am borne back again to childhood where the words "sacred grove" were sacred in themselves, denoting expectancy and wonder.

I am surrounded now with friends, even with family. My brother and his wife are seated across from me, my husband at my side. Old friends from college—like Doug Alder and Cherry Silver, colleagues from the *Dialogue* staff, *Exponent II, Sunstone* and *BYU Studies;* friends from the RLDS Church warmly made in Lamoni at last year's Mormon History Association meeting; Leonard and Grace Arrington, who have practically adopted me into their family. In fact, all the folks from the Mormon History Association, who have brought both churches together in a way nobody else has been able to do. This year's president, Jan Shipps, not a Mormon herself, has succeeded in putting on the finest Sesquicenntenial celebration of the year, a festival of research, information, discussion and friendship. This meeting in the grove crowns the three day conference in Canandaigua, New York.

I see Crawford Gates, idolized in my youth by all the young women of the MIA who were taught to sing in giant all-church choruses under his vital baton, looking not one whit older, thank goodness, and his wife Georgia at the piano, readying themselves to lead a chorus pulled together in three days from members of the MHA and a nearby ward. They will sing a work commissioned by the MHA for the occasion, a work based on the Wentworth Letter. I am amazed that a composer could create perfect musical images just because he was asked.

There are short talks by Richard Bushman of the LDS Church and Alma Blair of the RLDS Church, both historians. Richard's personal sensitivity to the life of Joseph Smith derives from his studies of the prophet's life and from his own diffident personality. He reminds us that Joseph's message reached the individual through a transcendent force available to all. Alma Blair's message is so warm and moving that most of us cannot keep from crying. Eternity is with us now, and Joseph Smith found God in his everyday life. Joseph's message and God's message is, "You are loved. You are forgiven. You may become what in your deepest heart you would become."

Paul Dredge from Boston, an anthropologist and musician, leads the choir in a new arrangement of that old hymn, "Joseph Smith's First Prayer." I have always thought the music in the hymnbook inappropriate to the theme. In Paul's arrangement, using the music of Russian composer Kabelevsky's *War Requiem,* the words finally meet their match.

And then a reading of the First Vision, in which all versions come together in the person of James Arrington. For a few minutes James becomes the young prophet in open-necked shirt, his hair combed slightly forward. He begins haltingly, gaining in power, subtly transforming the farm boy to the prophet.

At first I am bothered. I think, why didn't James memorize and act the part, as he does in his Brother Brigham one-man show? Soon I realize that this scholarly interpretation, done simply, without show, much as Joseph himself might have read it, is appropriate. His reading suggests the elusive and the mystical while presenting us with a palpable living presence. At the end, when he lifts his arms and cries, "He Lives!" I truly believe it. It is an androgynous moment in which the political chafings of recent months disappear, intellectual and scholarly pursuits meld with heart and spirit. I think, for some reason, of a friend who recently tried to explain to me why he had left the church of his childhood for another: "I must worship in my mind!" he said passionately. In this place, the passions of the mind are easily joined to the peace of worship.

Both prayers, opening and closing, seem designed to unite disparate elements and melt barriers. Paul Edwards, Vice-President of Lamoni College and a direct descendant of the Prophet and Douglas Alder, a historian from Utah State both invoke the Spirit of belonging and becoming.

Here are the words spoken in the grove on May 4, 1980.

SUNDAY MORNING

7:30 a.m. Chorus members depart for Sacred Grove — Front Lobby

8:00 a.m. General departure for Sacred Grove — Front Lobby

8:30 a.m. GATHERING IN THE SACRED GROVE

"Praise to the Man" by William W. Phelps

Opening Prayer — Paul M. Edwards

"Thoughts on the Mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith" — Richard L. Bushman

"Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning" Adapted from Kabelevsky's *War Requiem*

Choral group made up of MHA members and LDS Fairport Ward Chorus — Arranged and conducted by C. Paul Dredge

"Thoughts on the Mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith" — Alma Blair

Reading — James Arrington

"Prologue on Prophecy" — Crawford Gates

Sesquicentennial hymn commissioned by the Mormon History Association

CHORUS

Rochester Brass Quintet

Bryan Stotez, Tympanist

Roy Samuelsen, Baritone

Closing Prayer — Douglas D. Alder

In the event of inclement weather, this gathering will be held at the Chapel adjacent to the Visitor's Center at the Peter Whitmer Farm in Waterloo, New York

9:30 a.m. CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST — Hill Cumorah Visitor's Center Grounds

PAUL EDWARDS: Our redeeming Lord, seeking a semblance of our personal restoration, we come to this place made sacred in our ordinances. Young Joseph sought this world in his confusion. He came to ask what he could do; he came to talk in humility to the source of his devotions. We, Lord, represent a part of what he found and what he did; and in the silent temples of our souls, we stand in Joseph's place asking as did he—understanding, not to leave here confusion—new light, not vain repetition of old ways—wisdom, not reinforcement of convenient conviction—patience, not the safety of conformity—and true faith, not the promise of victory. We have shared these days in the roots of our fellowship, and we have experienced again the warmth of belonging. We have lived in the shadows of our beginnings and the assurances of our immediate concerns. Now, pausing in our long day of enjoyment and fulfillment, we wish to express our appreciation for the abundance of our lives; and like Joseph, lacking wisdom, we invoke thy spirit to be with us, to grant us courage that we might be fully alive; strength that we might love mercy, practice kindness, and walk humbly with our God; and love that we might be loving people. Bless those of us who come to praise thee in thy Name. Amen.

RICHARD L. BUSHMAN: One hundred and fifty years is a safe distance for looking at Joseph Smith. We have in the past few days reached new levels of understanding as students of early Mormonism, but coming to this grove we can imagine more clearly what it would be like to meet Joseph Smith in person. We would I think be impressed by the presence that overawed so many visitors, and despite our habit of objectivity, perhaps even entranced.

Moreover, we might be offended. It is the nature of prophets that they run against the grain. They stand to some extent outside their culture. Perhaps now, even more than then, it would be hard for us to embrace him without reservations. Gordon Wood suggested yesterday that there were but a few years in our history when the Book of Mormon could have taken root in America. If we think how few today take seriously any revelation, not to mention the inspirations of New York farm boys, we can imagine the difficulty of the restoration occurring now. It seems impossible for this generation to accept anything beyond what we can see and hear or to think that intelligence from invisible spheres can guide us as it did Joseph Smith. Even for the Latter-day Saints few things are more difficult to accept than the Urim and Thummim. When Joseph came back from the hill Cumorah, he met his mother in the log cabin not far from here and handed her two "diamond-shaped stones," as she said, and told her, "See, Mother, I have a key." How hard it is even for us who are believers to think that through those stones messages came from Heaven. At these points the Prophet runs up against the strongest barriers in our culture. So many of the influences that shape us as we grow forbid us from believing in relevation.

One of the great achievements of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was to rid the world of superstition. It questioned all assumptions, all propositions about human life that were not verified by the senses—the

common senses that we all share. It was the Enlightenment's task to banish witches and elves and a hundred other concoctions that had entertained and terrified the human spirit for centuries. But the price paid for that powerful act of cleansing was to debilitate the capacity of educated people to believe in divine messages. Even within our church we pause suspiciously when someone says, "I've had a vision." Warning signals go up, we say nothing, we wonder about psychological stability. Or consider how lethargic we are in the pursuit of everyday, moment-to-moment inspiration, almost as if we did not believe we could have intelligence beyond our own.

I do not wish to discredit the Enlightenment for its achievement in ridding the world of superstition. It may only have gone too far. We seem now to be too confined to the earth, as if we could know for certain that there was nothing else. Certainly the yearning for supernatural contact, for heavenly friendship has not been crushed. Think of the common reaction to the climactic scene of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind,* or the fascination with the memorable words of Ben Kenobi in *Star Wars:* "May the Force be with you." What do we desire more strongly than the presence of the Force? And yet we draw back from faith and commitment.

I do not recommend this morning renewed faith in the Prophet Joseph Smith, although we would all be better for that. I urge rather a renewed belief in ourselves and in the human potentials which our culture has diminished. I ask that we allow the Prophet's words to remind us of what we can be and do. He said that a person may profit by noticing the first indication of the spirit of revelation—"when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you"—and thus grow in the principle of revelation.

We have in our scholarly way examined Joseph Smith these past few days. If we are willing also to confront him as a person, not merely as a subject of study, we may learn still more. We may in time outgrow the limitations of our time and place, and realize more fully the possibilities of our natures, which it is, after all, the primary task of a prophet to help us achieve. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ALMA BLAIR: When some months ago I was asked to participate in this service, I did a foolish thing—I leaped at the chance! It is an awesome thing to stand in the place, or near the place where sacred things happened, where a light shone so strongly that the place was transformed, where heaven and earth came together in a way which transformed not only others but us as well. I cannot speak of Joseph's mission as if it were some abstract historical problem to be solved, as though it were a lecture in which I could state that Joseph did this and did that. I hope the historical experience informs my thought, but fundamentally this is a moment of personal reflection, a moment of testimony—mine and yours.

Nor can I speak of his mission apart from others who have likewise been touched throughout the history of mankind by God's saving grace and love, others who have shared the mission, others who have lived and sometimes died in carrying out that mission. We must not forget the threads which reach

across time and tradition holding together God's intention for all his children. I would also suggest that while "mission" implies a sender, it implies also those who are sent, those who receive the mission and those who help to understand it and follow it. As we interpret the mission, even as did Joseph, our understanding grows and changes as we grow and change. Let us not be hasty in assuming that we now fully understand him, his mission or our mission. What was spoken, and what happened here, were rather simple things. A young man came to a grove. There was no church. There was no doctrine. There were no songs to be sung, except perhaps those sung by the angels.

While understanding all that we may feel we understand, nevertheless, I say it with my own understanding; I pray you will think it in your own understanding. Though there are differences in experience and tradition that may separate us, I think that fundamentally we all can go back.

Joseph's mission was to teach me, to teach you, to teach us that heaven and earth, eternity and time, are inseparably bound together. A few years ago a close friend of mine was dying of cancer. I had been dating her off and on. One day she happily explained to me how on that day she had finally learned to sing the tone of A, something very difficult for her to do. My first reaction was "You're going to die! Of what value is it! It will be lost!" Then I had second thoughts. "What happens after death?" And I realized that my faith saw the linkage. She sang a year or so after that. She sang not just in heaven—she sang here! Heaven and earth are bound together. We live in pain. We live in joy. Is there any less eternity here than there will be, or there has been? We are linked together in time with all that has been and all that will be; but it is "now" and Joseph is "now," not just for the past or future. He saw God in his everyday life.

I think that Joseph's mission was to teach us that we are loved and forgiven; we are free to become more than we are. When one reads the first account we have of the first vision, I think it is very clear that he came to the woods seeking not to start a church but to find his soul's salvation. The vision grew out of the anguish that he had of not knowing what it was that he could be, or whether he could be anything. I have felt that anguish, too. I have sensed in myself the inadequacies that are mine as a human being. I have sensed in myself that understanding of my sinfulness, of my incompleteness, of my unwillingness to follow; and so I am torn as I think he was torn, to ask of God: "What will you do for me, or am I lost forever?" And the answer which has come to me, and the answer which he found and which has informed me was, "You are loved. You are forgiven. You may become what in your deepest heart you would become."

And finally he teaches us to love each other as Christ loved us—loving us as we are, imperfect, incomplete, sinful, hopeful and as we may become. Something reaches across the barriers we set up between ourselves even as we look back at our common traditions. I felt it in the halls as we discussed things. I felt the handshakes. I felt the love which came from you and from me back to you. I think that we misunderstand those statements in Joseph's

account which talk about not joining any of the churches because their creeds are an abomination. I think that we sometimes make them into a barrier as a matter of pride. I think what was being said was that none of us are to make barriers. While we must live within our understandings and be true to them, there is a deeper call when God says, "I will break down your barriers. I will change your understandings. I will teach you that I love you, no matter who you are or who you understand me to be, for I am greater than all of the imaginings you could have of me." I think Joseph must have been overwhelmed, for he touched the source of love of all mankind and he heard the Son of God speak to him of love and of a future.

JAMES ARRINGTON: I was born in the town of Sharon in the State of Vermont North America on the twenty third day of December A.D. 1805 of goodly parents who spared no pains to instructing me in the Christian religion. At the age of about ten years my father, Joseph Smith, Senior, moved to Palmyra, Ontario County, in the State of New York and being in indigent circumstances was obliged to labor hard for the support of a large family, having nine children. It required the exertions of all that were able to render any assistance for the support of the family. My father was a farmer and taught me the art of husbandry. We were deprived of the benefit of an education; suffice it to say I was merely instructed in reading, writing and the ground rules of arithmetic, which constituted my whole literary acquirements.

At about the age of twelve years my mind became seriously impressed with regard to the all-important concerns for the welfare of my immortal soul which led me to searching the scriptures believing, as I was taught, that they contained the word of God. Thus, applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations led me to marvel exceedingly, for I discovered that they did not adorn their profession by a holy walk and godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository. This was a grief to my soul. Thus, from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world of mankind, the contentions and divisions, the wickedness and abominations and the darkness which pervaded the minds of mankind. My mind became exceedingly distressed for I became convicted of my sins. Looking at the different systems taught the children of men, I knew not who was right or who was wrong, but considered it of the first importance to me that I should be right, in matters of so much moment—matters involving eternal consequences.

I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world for I learned in the scriptures that God was the same yesterday, today, and forever; that he was no respecter of persons for he was God. For I looked upon the sun, the glorious luminary of the earth, and also the moon rolling in her majesty and in the strength of beauty, and man, with power and intelligence in governing the things which are so exceeding great and marvelous even in the likeness of Him who created them and when I considered upon these things my heart exclaimed "Well hath the wise man said it is a fool that saith in his heart there

is no God." My heart exclaimed "all these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotent and omnipresent power—a being who maketh laws and decreeth and bindeth all things in their bounds who filleth eternity who was and is and will be from all eternity to eternity." And when I considered all these things, I began to reflect upon the importance of being prepared for a future state, and upon inquiring [about] the plan of salvation. I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment; for, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, "Lo, here!" and others, "Lo, there!" Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.

I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely, my mother, Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; for, notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased; yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued—priest contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.

If I went to one society they referred me to one plan, and another to another; each one pointing to his own particular creed as the *summum bonum* of perfection. Considering that all could not be right, and that God could not be the author of so much confusion, I determined to investigate the subject more fully, believing that if God had a Church it would not be split up into factions, and that if He taught one society to worship one way, and administer in one set of ordinances, He would not teach another principles which were diametrically opposed.

But though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error.

In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if *any* person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to "ask of God," concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

Information was what I most desired at this time, and with a fixed determination to obtain it, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

Having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down. I made a fruitless attempt to pray. My tongue seemed to be swollen in my mouth, so that I could not utter. I heard a noise behind me like someone walking towards me. I strove again to pray, but could not; the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer. I sprang upon my feet and looked around, but saw no person, or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking.

I kneeled again, I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

Exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just

at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me, and filled me with unspeakable joy.

It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. My mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision. A personage appeared in the midst of this pillar of flame, which was spread all around and yet nothing consumed. Another personage soon appeared like unto the first: two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*

I saw the Lord, and he spake unto me saying "Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way—walk in my statutes and keep my commandments. Behold I am the Lord of glory. I was crucified for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life."

No sooner did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. Said he, "The world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good, no not one. They have turned aside from the Gospel and keep not my commandments. They draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to this ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and Apostles. Behold and lo, I come quickly as is written of me, in the cloud, clothed in the glory of my Father." And my soul was filled with love.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; at the same time receiving a promise that the fullness of the Gospel should at some future time be made known unto me, and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home.

I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true.

It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was.

I have actually seen a vision; I know it, and I know God knows it and I cannot deny it . . . and now after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which I give of him: That He lives!!! He LIVES!!!

CRAWFORD GATES: *Prologue:* "Joseph, Prophet, the Lord's anointed Spoke for Jesus in these latter days. God, through him, restored the Gospel; its power and truth will guide all our ways. Now prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ our redeeming Lord, Heed the prophet; obey his precepts; sanctify our lives through God's word."

The *Prophecy* portion of the text comes from the Wentworth Letter by Joseph Smith: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; Persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, But the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly and independently, Till it has penetrated every continent, Till it has visited every clime, Swept every country, and sounded in every ear, Till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the great Jehovah shall say 'The work is done!' "

DOUGLAS D. ALDER: Our Father, we come before Thee in this sacred spot to express gratitude, many of us five generations since the events that occurred here. We mostly live in favor but we are aware of the struggles that began here and the sacrifices that flowed from here and have favored our lives. Many of us, Father, have the privilege of working and laboring with our minds but we are aware that many served with muscle and spirit.

We thank Thee, Father, for the Prophet, who, in this spot, sought Thee. But for more than past events we are grateful for Thy presence continuously. We are grateful for Thy intervention. We are grateful for the sacredness of Thy work and we know that that sacredness is available to all. We ask Thee to help us understand the simplicity as well as the complexities that our minds perceive. We are grateful, Father, that there is enough and more in Thy being to challenge us eternally. We pray Thee to help us that we may serve Thee, eternally. In the name of Thy son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Mormonism: From Its New York Beginnings

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON

THAT THE HANDFUL of early Mormon converts decided to migrate from New York only nine months after their church was organized has led some scholars to suppose that the basic influence on Latter-day Saint doctrines and institutions stemmed from their experiences in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Utah.[1] This would seem the right time and place for me to discuss five developments which occurred in the Palmyra area in the 1820s and 1830 which, as it turned out, formed the principal themes or building blocks of Mormonism in the 150 years that have followed. These events, harbingers of important things to come, were (1) the occurrence of important heavenly visitations, visions, and revelations; (2) the "translation" and publication of the Book of Mormon; (3) the organization of the Church of Christ; (4) the inauguration of missonary work; and (5) the commencement of mutual aid and helpfulness. From these five seeds, planted in the Palmyra nursery of Mormonism, have grown the essential programs of the Restoration, a movement that has found embodiment in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon) and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) and also in some smaller units independent of those two major denominations.[2]

The first event, of course, was the personal vision of Joseph Smith, Jr., believed to have taken place in a grove of trees on a woodlot on the Smith family farm in Manchester township near Palmyra in the spring of 1820.[3] As related by him a few years later, he had gone to many religious services, studied the Bible intently, conducted conversations with many believers, and become "convicted of my sins."

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON *has served as the LDS church historian.* *This is a speech prepared for the Mormon History Association Sesquicentennial Commemorative Convention, New York, May 2, 1980, and reprinted by permission from* New York History, *October 1980.*

> By searching the scriptures [he wrote] I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord, but that they had apostatized from the true and living faith, and there was no society or denomination that built upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament. . . . I looked upon the sun . . . and the moon . . . and the stars shining in their courses, and the earth . . . upon which I stood, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven and the fish of the waters, and . . . man . . . in the likeness of Him who created them . . . walking forth upon the face of the earth in majesty and in the strength of beauty, [with] power and intelligence in governing the things which are so exceeding great and marvelous. . . . [and] my heart . . . exclaimed, "All these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotent and omnipresent power—a being who maketh laws and decreeth and bindeth all things. . . . When I considered . . . that that Being seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth, I cried unto the Lord. . . .
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> While in [this] attitude . . . a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noonday came down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of God. . . . I saw the Lord and he spoke unto me, saying "Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. . . . Behold, the world . . . have turned aside from the Gospel and keep not my commandments. They draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me. . . ."
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> My soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy, and the Lord was with me. . . .[4]

That First Vision, as it is called in Mormon literature, persuaded the fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith that his "sins" were forgiven him and that he need not seek membership in any of the churches of the region.

Young Smith reported a second vision or visitation, occurring during the night of September 21-22, 1823. Joseph had been a jolly youth, with irrepressible zest for life. He enjoyed sports and games and "sometimes associated with jovial company."[5] Finding it impossible to be as consistently grave as he might have expected to be after his earlier theophany, the seventeen-year-old Joseph knelt at his bedside to pray for forgiveness. Soon, as he told his parents and brothers and sisters the next day, he saw a light in his room, and a personage appeared at his bedside wearing a loose robe "of most exquisite whiteness." "His whole person was glorious beyond description. The "messenger," who said his name was Moroni, said that God had a work for Joseph to do, that there was a record engraved on gold plates deposited in a nearby hill, and that this work contained an account of former inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere. The historian finds it difficult to describe such transcendental experiences as fact, but Joseph stated that Moroni impressed upon him that the record contained "the fullness of the everlasting Gospel," and an account of the visit of the Savior to America's ancient inhabitants.[6] According to Joseph, the angel returned three times that night to reiterate the message and instructed him to meet Moroni at a certain spot at the same time each year for four years. On the final occasion, if he proved worthy, the plates would be delivered to him "for translation."

Joseph's father, mother, and brothers and sisters accepted his story. When his older brother Alvin lay dying just two months after the angel's visit, he (Alvin) took the opportunity of saying "last words" to the members of his family. According to his mother, Alvin's last words to Joseph were "I want you to be a good boy, and do everything that lies in your power to obtain the Record. Be faithful in receiving instruction, and in keeping every commandment that is given you."[7]

Joseph met the angel, according to family accounts, at the Hill Cumorah on the four annual September meetings, in 1824, 1825, 1826 and 1827.[8] In the meantime, he had continued working on his father's farm, other farms in the vicinity, and as far south as the Susquehanna River Valley in Pennsylvania. At the latter location he had met Emma Hale and was married to her in South Bainbridge, New York, in January 1827, and they established a home with Joseph's parents in Manchester.

Friends of the family had been told of the imminent delivery of the plates in September 1827, and some had gathered there at the expected time. Sometime after midnight in the early morning hours of September 22, Joseph and Emma drove to the hill, obtained the plates and hid them in an old birch log about three miles from the Smith home.[9] With neighboring ruffians seeking the plates, thinking they were of great monetary worth, Joseph changed the hiding place several times and managed to keep them from being discovered and stolen.

Finding it impossible to translate in peace and quiet in the Palmyra area, Joseph and Emma went to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in December 1827.[10] They were followed by a neighbor (Martin Harris) who believed, and in the spring of 1828 the youthful visionary began to dictate the "translated" material to Harris, his wife Emma, and her brother Reuben. Between April 12 and June 15, 1828, some 116 pages of manuscript had been prepared.[11] Harris then prevailed on Joseph to take them to show his wife in Palmyra. (Harris's farm was one and one-half miles north of the village of Palmyra.) Harris showed the manuscript to his wife and others, but his wife was skeptical of the whole enterprise and incensed at her husband's eagerness to spend time and resources to support the translation work. Apparently she burned or hid the manuscript. When Joseph returned to Manchester and requested that Harris bring the manuscript, Martin could only mourn, "I have lost my soul! I have lost my soul!"[12]

For the next few months Joseph had to work to provide support for his wife, who had lost a baby and was not well. The translation, in which the dictation was made principally to a local teacher, Oliver Cowdery, was not resumed until April 1829, once more in Harmony. The work was moved to Fayette, Seneca County, New York, in June 1829; and the entire production, representing about 600 pages of printed material, was completed by the middle of August. At the conclusion of the translation the plates were shown to three witnesses, and later to eight witnesses, after which, according to Smith, they were returned to the angel from whom Joseph had first obtained them.[13]

Before we discuss the next stage, the publication of the Book of Mormon, we pause long enough to mention another message of the Angel Moroni which was reportedly delivered at the time of his first visit to Joseph Smith in 1823. The ancient biblical prophet Elijah, said the angel, would soon return to earth to "plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers."[14] Believers interpreted that phrase, prophetically mentioned in Malachi, to mean that they had a responsibility to link together children to parents, and parents to their parents, in an unbroken chain that would ultimately join together all God's children in "the everlasting covenant of the Gospel." As a part of the realization of this massive program of kinship between heaven and earth, temples have been erected and sacred "sealing" ordinances performed, and a vast genealogical program was soon underway to provide the names of progenitors who could thus be vicariously united into eternal family groups. To this date, the Genealogical Department of the LDS Church has microfilmed more than one million reels of genealogical data, and members have participated in ceremonies which have linked tens of millions of families together. Eventually, they hope, all mankind will become brothers and sisters in both a formal and a symbolic sense of being connected to each other in sacred ordinances conducted in Latter-day Saint temples.[15]

Despite its acceptance of science and higher learning, Mormonism has never downplayed the importance of heavenly participation in and direction of the building of the Kingdom of God on earth. On May 15, 1829, as Mormons believe, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and his associate, Oliver Cowdery, to confer the Aaronic Priesthood. At work translating the Third Nephi portion of the Book of Mormon, which gives an account of the visit of Jesus to the peoples of this hemisphere, Joseph and Oliver had come across several passages about baptism. Impressed that the ordinances of the Church must be performed with divine authority, they walked to "the woods" to pray. While thus engaged in prayer, they said, "a messenger from heaven" appeared who said his name was John, "the same who was called John the Baptist." Laying his hands on their heads, he ordained them, conferring, in the name of the Messiah, the priesthood of Aaron, which gave authority to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins. Joseph baptized Oliver and Oliver baptized Joseph. Joseph then placed hands on Oliver's head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, and Oliver laid hands on Joseph and ordained him to the same priesthood. On the same day, or shortly thereafter, Joseph baptized his brother Samuel Harrison Smith, and a few days later his older brother Hyrum.[16] To this day, persons on whom the authority of the priesthood of Aaron has been conferred have been baptizing by immersion those who request this holy ordinance.

Sometime during the next two months, if we accept the interpretation of Brigham H. Roberts, while they were still in the process of finishing the translation, "the voice of Peter, James, and John," the apostles of Jesus, came to Joseph and Oliver "in the wilderness between Harmony, Pennsylvania and

Colesville, Broome County, New York, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom." They ordained Joseph and Oliver to the Melchizedek Priesthood and to the Apostleship.[17]

Other visions of fundamental significance to Mormonism came to Mormon leaders in the years that followed. Joseph Smith had a vision of the celestial kingdom in 1836, and that same year he and some associates witnessed the appearance of several heavenly personages in the newly dedicated temple in Kirtland, Ohio. Other remarkable visions include Brigham Young's vision of the Salt Lake Valley as he crossed the Great Plains in 1847, Jason Brigg's vision of the state of church affairs in 1851, Joseph Smith III's vision on temples in 1878, Joseph F. Smith's vision of the resurrection in 1918, and Spencer W. Kimball's 1978 vision of heavenly approval for granting the priesthood to all worthy males. Mormons have always believed that the veil between earthly and heavenly life is thin, and that God is only one prayer away from the valiant and contrite heart.

Another characteristic of Mormonism has been its extensive publication program, and that too had its beginnings in New York. On June 11, 1829, even before he had completed the translation of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith had copyrighted the manuscript. On that date the title page was deposited with R. R. Lansing, clerk of the Northern District Court of New York. For the publication of the manuscript Joseph Smith first went to Egbert B. Grandin, who operated a printing establishment in Palmyra. Publisher of the Wayne *Sentinel,* Grandin did not want to be in the position of lending encouragement and support to what many in the community regarded as a religious imposture and declined. Smith then went to Thurlow Weed, an upstate politician and publisher of the Rochester *Telegraph.* Weed also declined, despite assurances that he would be fully paid. Next Smith and associates went to Elihu F. Marshall, a book publisher at Rochester, who was fully agreeable. Smith returned to Grandin to say that it would be much more convenient for him to have the work published in Palmyra. Since the work would be published in any event, wouldn't he reconsider? Grandin somewhat reluctantly entered into a contract to print and bind 5,000 copies for $3,000, taking the bond and mortgage of Martin Harris as security. In a mortgage dated August 25, 1829, Harris agreed to pay $3,000 to Grandin within an eighteen-month period. If he failed to comply, his land was to be sold at public auction to satisfy the debt.[18]

Grandin's establishment, located on "Exchange Row" in Palmyra, began setting the manuscript in type about August 15. Closely written on foolscap paper, with no punctuation marks or paragraphing, the manuscript which was used was Oliver Cowdery's copy of the original dictated manuscript; this manuscript is extant in the library of the Reorganized Church in Independence, Missouri.[19] The bound volumes of the Book of Mormon were finally released on March 26, 1830. Later, Harris sold his farm to pay his obligation to Grandin. This deed is dated April 7, 1831, and conveys 151 acres to Thomas Lakey, of Palmyra, for $3,000.[20]

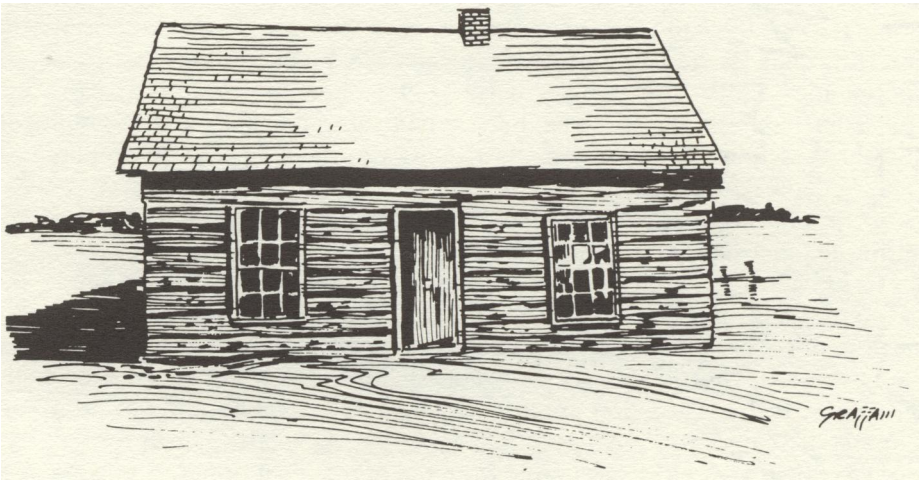
Prior to the publication of the book some pages of the manuscript were published by Abner Cole, an ex-justice of the peace, who published the Palmyra *Reflector* under the name Obadiah Dogberry. On December 29, 1829, Dogberry published the present Chapter 1 of First Nephi and the first three verses of Chapter 2. The issues of January 13, and 22, 1830, published more of the Book of Mormon text, but Smith threatened to take Cole to court for violation of copyright and Cole ran no more of the excerpts.[21] One result of the notoriety, however, was a visit to the Smith family of three officers of the Western Presbyterian Church, to which Lucy, Hyrum and Samuel Smith belonged. Finding Lucy adamant, Deacon George Beckwith tried to persuade her at least not to talk about the forthcoming book. "Deacon Beckwith," she replied, "if you should stick my flesh full of faggots, and even burn me at the stake, I would declare, as long as God should give me breath, that Joseph has got that Record, and that I know it to be true." Hyrum and Samuel being of the same mind, the visitors left and later the Presbyterian congregation suspended the Smiths from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and censured them for their obstinacy.[22]

A unique contribution to religious literature, the Book of Mormon had an undeniable impact on the minds of a few contemporary New Yorkers (and others).[23] Often visited by calamity, surrounded by injustice, perplexed by denominationalism, and mystified by the incongruities of life, they had read the Bible and the Bible declared that God speaks. Here was a new affirmation that He had, indeed, spoken in their day to one of their neighbors. Many were concerned about the spread of deism, "infidelity" and immorality. Here was a document which on its very title page declared that its primary purpose was to serve as another piece of evidence "to the convincing of the Jews and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God." Indeed, the book gave promise of establishing a particular relevancy of Christ for Americans by asserting that He had visited America after His crucifixion and had given a special message to the people of this hemisphere not identical with, but consistent with, the message He had given during his lifetime to residents of ancient Palestine. And for those hard-working, debt-ridden, quarreling citizens of contemporary America who believed that the Millennium was near, here was a thought-provoking statement of the necessary conditions for preparing for that fearsome eventuality.[24]

Count Leo Tolstoy, in speaking of Mormonism, said that, on the whole, he "preferred a religion which professed to have dug its sacred book out of the earth to one which pretended that they were let down from heaven."[25]But as we have seen, Mormonism is a product of forces and influences from both directions. If the vision that implanted the need for a restoration of primitive Christianity came from one direction, the engraved plates which formed the basis for the Book of Mormon came from the other. That publication launched a tradition, still in process, of producing a respectable religious literature. Some of these have been elevated to the status of scripture by one or both churches, such as the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Book of

Moses and Book of Abraham. Others deal with dogma, religious sentiments and exhortation. Just as Christianity from the beginning was a religion of the book, so Mormonism, from its earliest beginnings in upstate New York, has been a religion that used the printed word.

Unlike many religious prophets and mystics who may have had followers but gave little if any attention to organization, Joseph Smith very early set about the establishment of a church. That too occurred in New York. It was on April 6, 1830, that fifty-six persons, about half men and half women, met in the home of Peter Whitmer, Sr., located at Fayette, Seneca County, New York, about twenty-seven miles from Palmyra.[26] There, by unanimous vote, they agreed to form an independent church, with Joseph Smith as First Elder and Oliver Cowdery as Second Elder.[27] (It was at this home of the Whitmers that Smith and Cowdery had finished the translation of the Book of Mormon.) In the years that followed, the name of the Church was expanded to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the organization was perfected with the formation of a First Presidency, Council of Twelve Apostles, First Quorum of Seventy, Relief Society and other important offices and organizational agencies.



There was an impressive ceremony in which the first church members blessed bread and wine and participated in a devout communion. Joseph Smith read "A Revelation on Church Organization and Government" which gave instruction on the manner of baptism, duty of officers, administration of the sacrament, directions for the establishment and government of branches of the Church, etc.[28] Among those present were enough to fill two rooms in the Whitmer home—about twenty from Colesville, Broome County, New York; fifteen from Manchester; and about twenty from the vicinity of the Whitmer home in Fayette. Six Elders "sustained" at this first meeting were designated as "organizers," in compliance with New York State law for incorporating religious bodies. The Elders were: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Samuel Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., and Hyrum Smith.[29]

After the ordination of Joseph and Oliver, the two laid hands on each individual baptized member to confirm them members of the Church and to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost. Some males were ordained to the priesthood. Other persons present, including the parents of Joseph Smith, Martin Harris and Orrin Porter Rockwell, were baptized, some of them in Seneca Lake, some four miles west of the Whitmer home.[30]

There are two aspects of the organization of the Church that are worthy of mention. Organized churches in the nineteenth century, an age that produced more documents than any previous period, would inevitably bring forth written documents. Right from the beginning the Latter-day Saints were commanded to "keep a record."[31] It is remarkable that despite the subsequent uprootings, forced expulsions and periodic migrations (and despite the burning of the RLDS archive in January 1907), a substantial body of precious primary material originating in New York State has been preserved, including:

A sheet of "caractors" from the Book of Mormon gold plates that was given by Joseph Smith to Martin Harris in February 1828 to take to "learned gentlemen" in New York City, with Smith's holograph authentification on the back.

Joseph Smith holograph, letterbook entry, June 14, 1829.

Oliver Cowdery to Hyrum Smith, June 14, 1829.

A letter from Jesse Smith to Hyrum Smith, June 17, 1829.

An 1829 deed.

Manuscripts of the dictated original and printer's copy of the Book of Mormon, 1829.

A letter from Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery, October 22, 1829.

Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, November 6, 1829.

Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, December 28, 1829.

Diary of Samuel Smith, 1830.

Lucy Mack Smith to Solomon Mack, 6 January 1831.

Manuscripts for ten revelations later published as Sections 3, 5, 7, 17, 20, 22, 29, 32, 35, 36 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants.

Asael Smith's letters to his descendants and a genealogy of the Smith family, apparently done about the same time as the letters.

Some miscellaneous papers gathered by George A. Smith including manuscripts about Smith relatives, all originating in New York in the 1820s.

For the years that followed the removal from New York there has accumulated a truly impressive collection of primary documents. These include, in the LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City, the diaries of about 4,000 persons; about a million volumes of record books of organizations of the Church—Priesthood quorums, Sunday Schools, wards, branches, states, missions, Relief Societies, young peoples' societies, and an enormous body of correspondence—virtually all the letters and reports directed to Church headquarters. And of course a substantial body of records maintained by the Reorganized Church Archives in Independence, Missouri.[32] Clearly, the members of the Mormon History Association owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the faithful members and leaders who accepted as religious obligation the commandment to keep a full record.

In connection with this organized, record-keeping church, two points might be made that would be easy to overlook. First, even though no one would describe this little flock of New Yorkers as learned or well-educated in the usual sense of the word (and some people saw them as an illiterate rabble), they did start out by emphasizing the importance of improving the mind. Remember that in order to study the Bible and Book of Mormon, they had to be able to read. In their new book of scripture and in some of the revelations that circulated in handwritten manuscripts they were told to study and learn. Study and learning were necessary for missionary work, for the operation of church programs, for preparation for the next life. From this simple foundation, starting modestly in New York, Mormons have gone on to emphasize education as perhaps no other religious group except the Jews.

And let us notice that attending that organizational meeting on April 6, 1830, were women as well as men. Women were counted among the first converts. From the beginning, women participated along with men in the baptismal convenants, in the reception of the Holy Ghost, in the communion service and even in voting. If they did not preside, they nevertheless played a central role. The record is not bad for a group of upstate farmers in 1830.[33]

Another activity that has characterized Mormons from the late 1820s to the present is missionary preaching. This too began during the New York phase of Mormon history. Even before the organization of the Church—indeed, even before copies of the Book of Mormon were bound and made available to the public—interested parties were taking extracts of the book hundreds of

miles from Palmyra to share with others. To give an example, Solomon Chamberlain, who lived in the vicinity of Lyons, about twenty miles from Palmyra, while on a journey to Upper Canada, lodged for the night in a home just one-half mile from the Smith residence in Manchester. The woman of the house told him of the "Gold Bible," as she called it, which Joseph Smith had found. Chamberlain made his way to the Smith residence and introduced himself by asking, "Is there anyone here that believes in visions and revelations?" Being answered that, yes, they were "a visionary house," Chamberlain gave them a copy of one of his pamphlets which related a visionary experience of his own. They read it aloud with increasing excitement, after which Chamberlain told them an angel had made known to him in a vision that "all the churches and denominations on earth" were corrupt, and that it had been made known to him that God would shortly "raise up a Church . . . like unto the Apostolic Church."

The Smiths related to him the story of the Angel Moroni, the gold plates and the production of the Book of Mormon. Hyrum Smith also took him to the printing office, where they gave him the first two signatures—the first sixty-four pages—which he carried with him to Canada. "I exhorted all people to prepare for the great work of God that was now about to come forth, and it would never be brought down nor confounded," he wrote.[34]

Such sporadic individual experiences led to the distribution of instructions for sending out missionaries on a more systematic basis. Among the first to go was Samuel Smith, brother of the Prophet, who set out almost immediately after the April 6 meeting with a few copies of the Book of Mormon in his saddle bag and with a testimony in his heart that the Gospel was true.[35] Among those who were persuaded to join the Smith family and their neighboring friends as the result of Samuel's testimony and the Book of Mormon he left with them were the families of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, both of whom lived in Mendon township, New York, some eighteen miles southwest of Palmyra (twenty-six miles distant by road). These men became themselves early missionaries, apostles, and ultimately successors of Joseph Smith in the First Presidency of the Church. Virtually all male converts, upon their conversion, set out on short preaching missions, and this became standard practice. The hundreds of missionaries serving each year in the nineteenth century, turned into thousands in this century. At this sesquicentennial moment there are more than thirty thousand young men and women who devote from eighteen to twenty-four months traveling, at their own expense, in some part of the world, preaching the same Restored Gospel first preached by Samuel Smith in western New York State in 1830.[36]

Among the missionaries called from Manchester in 1830 were four sent expressly to make contact with Native Americans. The four, Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Peter Whitmer, Jr., and Ziba Peterson, all Western New Yorkers, preached to the Iroquois at Catteraugus, near Buffalo; to the Wyandots of northeastern Ohio; the Shawnees in present-day Kansas; and the Delawares west of the Missouri River. In a sermon later published in *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt,* Cowdery told the Delawares: "We have travelled a

long distance from towards the rising sun to bring you glad news; we have travelled the wilderness, crossed the deep and wide rivers, and waded in the deep snows, and in the face of the storms of winter, to communicate to you great knowledge which has lately come to our ears and hearts." He went on to tell them of Joseph Smith, of the discovery of the gold plates, of the Book of Mormon, of the visit of Christ to the western hemisphere, and of the great civilizations which the ancestors of the Indian had built. He promised them that their rights and privileges would be restored, they would cease to fight and kill one another, and they would become one people and cultivate the earth in peace. He presented them a copy of the Book of Mormon and assured them it would do them good.

Government Indian agents took a dim view of such preaching and forced them, for the time being at least, to discontinue. "We trust that at some future day when the servants of God go forth in power to the remnant of Joseph," wrote Pratt, "some precious seed will be found growing in their hearts, which was sown by us in that early day."[37]

The fifth and final seed planted in Western New York was the Mormon practice of cooperation and mutual aid. In the town of Colesville, Broome County, lived a small population of farmers who had accepted the faith and who felt a close kinship with each other. Andrew Jenson refers to them as the "first branch of the Church."[38] When Joseph Smith suggested in December 1830 that all the Church of Christ congregations in western New York move to northeastern Ohio, the Colesville Saints decided to move as a group. The sixty-four men, women, and children traveled, in April 1831, as family and neighborhood groups to Ithaca. One witness said the train consisted of three baggage and eleven passenger wagons, all drawn by oxen. At Ithaca, on the south end of Cayuga Lake, they took water to Ohio—first on Cayuga and Seneca canalboats, then into the Erie Canal system. They arrived at Buffalo on May 1, 1831, after a week of travel. Detained two weeks at Buffalo by the ice-filled harbor, they were joined by eighty Saints who had embarked from Waterloo, Seneca County. After three days they arrived at Fairport, Ohio, which was eleven miles from the new Church headquarters at Kirtland.[39]

The little Colesville congregation settled at first on a thousand-acre farm in Thompson, Ohio, sixteen miles northeast of Kirtland. The farm was made available by Leman Copley, a wealthy farmer who had consecrated it to the cause. At Thompson they organized along communitarian lines—under what was called the Law of Consecration and Stewardship. This system provided that each person consecrate his economic property to the bishop, and the bishop in turn assigned stewardships, according to individual needs, of land, livestock, implements, and other property. Those who earned a "surplus" of income were asked to consecrate it to the "bishop's storehouse," and it would be used to supply those who had greater needs than their income permitted, and to finance community edifices and programs. After two months of labor by the Colesville settlers, however, Copley apostatized and sued for the re-

turn of his property. The courts, which were oriented in favor of individual rights, supported Copley's claim, and the Colesville settlers had to give up the farm.[40]

The Colesville community then moved, once more as a group, to western Missouri, near present-day Independence. They travelled in twenty-four wagons, and this sight was sufficiently unusual that, as Emily Coburn wrote, "People all along the road stared at us as they would at a circus or a caravan. . . . We most truly were a band of pilgrims started out to seek a better country." "We were told [by teamsters] that we were the most peaceable and quiet emigrants they had ever carried west; no profanity, no bad language, no gambling, and no drinking."[41]

In Jackson County, Missouri, they re-established their communitarian society. They worked cooperatively as they built houses and fences and sowed grain. With Newel Knight as their leader they continued to maintain their group identity, from their arrival on July 25, 1831, until December 1, 1833. On the latter day they were expelled by "old settler" Missourians who took a dim view of this cooperative Yankee society. Even in the expulsion, during the winter of 1833, the Colesville Branch, as usual, kept together and formed a small settlement on the Missouri bottoms, building themselves temporary houses. Not until 1836, when the Saints in Clay County, Missouri, were required to move to Caldwell County, was the Colesville Branch finally amalgamated with other organizations of the Church and its experiment in economic idealism suspended.[42]

So the spirit of mutual helpfulness, responsibility for each other's well-being, seeking to live a more pure form of Christianity—which itself drew inspiration from the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and several of Joseph Smith's early revelations—was first carried into practice by a group of Latter-day Saints from New York. Forever after, Mormon programs were colored by the Colesville idealism. The sharing with new immigrants later in Nauvoo, Illinois; the mutual assistance in the trek to the Great Basin; the establishment of equalitarian institutions involving the sharing of land and water in pioneer Utah; the founding of Lamoni, Iowa—all were touched by the magic of the Colesville example. Even today, one hundred fifty years later, the ideals of these New York Saints are institutionalized in the Zionic movements of the Reorganized Latter-day Saints and the LDS Church Welfare Program, by which Mormons seek to look after the physical, social, and psychological needs of their brothers and sisters.[43]

In summary, despite the short stay of the Latter-day Saints in New York, it was there that the organization of the Church of Christ, the key visions, manifestations, and revelations took place and the formulative organizational steps and programs were initiated. It was in New York that the Book of Mormon was translated and published. It was in New York that missionary work was inaugurated. It was in New York that the tradition of mutual aid and helpfulness started. The youthful Joseph Smith's "cry in the wilderness" caused a blossoming in the garden place which was Western New York. From the flowers of this nursery has come a remarkable and noteworthy harvest.

NOTES

[1]R. Kent Fielding, "The Growth of the Mormon Church in Kirtland, Ohio" (Ph. D. diss., Indiana University, 1957), esp. pp. 134-152; Mario S. DePillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 1 (March 1966): 68-88; and Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), p. 193. See also DePillis, "The Social Sources of Mormonism," *Church History*, 37 (March 1968): 50-79, in which he says (p. 60), "almost all of Mormonism developed after 1830 in the Midwest: its economics, theology, and social arrangements." The best correction to this (as I believe) mistaken point of view is Marvin S. Hill, "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *Brigham Young University Studies* (hereafter referred to as *BYU Studies*), 9 (Spring 1969): 351-372.

[2]In making brief mention of a number of important episodes in Mormon history which took place in the Palmyra area, I have abstracted from longer accounts which may be found in James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976); Ivan J. Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration: A History of the Church to 1846* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1973); and Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. by B. H. Roberts, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1951), 1:1-146. (Hereafter referred to as *History of the Church.*) The best works on the New York Phase of Mormon history are Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816-1831" (Ph. D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1971); and Richard L. Bushman, *The Beginnings of Mormonism*, forthcoming from Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah. See also James B. Allen and Leonard J. Arrington, "Mormon Origins in New York: An Introductory Analysis," *BYU Studies*, 9 (Spring 1969): 241-274.

[3]In giving 1820 as the probable date of Joseph Smith's youthful vision, I am aware that there are variant possibilities. See Rev. Wesley P. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival," *Dialogue*, 4 (Spring 1969): 60-81. Most scholars, it seems to me, are persuaded that the event most likely occurred in 1820, when Joseph Smith was fourteen. See Milton Backman, in *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1971); and Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith, The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1977), pp. 41-54; and Bushman, *The Beginnings of Mormonism*, chapter 2.

[4]From Joseph Smith, "A History of the Life of Joseph Smith, Jr.," in Kirtland Letter Book, 1829-1835,"pp. 1-6, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. This holograph account has been published in Dean C. Jessee, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 278-294. In preparing this selection I have provided punctuation and capitalization, regularized the spelling, and removed some connecting conjunctions. See also Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision;* and James B. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's 'First Vision' in Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 1 (Autumn 1966): 29-46.

[5]*History of the Church*, 1:9.

[6]Ibid., 1:11-12. This account was dictated by Joseph Smith in 1838. It was first published in the *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo), 15 April 1842, p. 753. For a discussion of these and other references see Richard L. Anderson, "Confirming Records of Moroni's Coming," *Improvement Era* (Salt Lake City), 73 (September 1970): 4-8.

[7]Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Liverpool and London, 1853), pp. 88.

[8]The Hill Cumorah was three miles southeast from the Joseph Smith, Sr., farm, and four miles south of the village of Palmyra on the Canadaigua Road (New York State Highway 21). The hill is situated in the town of Manchester. The term "Cumorah" is derived from the "land of Cumorah" spoken of in the Book of Mormon (Book of Mormon, Mormon 6:2). See Klaus D. Gurgel, "God's Drumlin: Hill Cumorah in the Religious Geography of Mormonism," paper presented at the 70th annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Seattle, Washington, April 28-May 1, 1974, copy in possession of the writer.

[9]Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, p. 104.

[10]*History of the Church*, 1:19-20

[11]Porter, "Origins of the Church," p. 145.

[12]Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, p. 121.

[13]*History of the Church*, 1:21-32, 48-59. Despite later differences with Smith, each of the three witnesses insisted throughout his life that he had seen the plates and that the Book of Mormon story was true. One of them, David Whitmer, was excommunicated in 1838 for a variety of reasons. A second, Oliver Cowdery, was also excommunicated in 1838 but was later rebaptized. The third, Martin Harris, strayed temporarily from Mormonism by joining the Shakers, but in 1870 rejoined the Mormon community in the Far West. Harris, at one point in his life, is quoted as having stated that he had seen the plates with "the eye of faith." See Marvin S. Hill, "Brodie Revisited: A Reapparaisal," *Dialogue* 7 (Winter 1972): 83-85; and Richard L. Anderson, a series of articles on the Three Witnesses in *The Improvement Era* (Salt Lake City), 81-83 (1968-1970).

[14]The visions and heavenly instructions to Joseph Smith are collected and published in *Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1935), hereafter referred to as D & C with the section and verse. See D & C 2:2.

[15]James B. Allen, Professor of History at Brigham Young University, has nearly completed a history of the genealogical work of the LDS Church.

[16]*History of the Church*, 1:29-51; Oliver Cowdery, in *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (Kirtland, Ohio), October 1834, p. 15. Today a mounment of Carnelian granite marks the location of this event in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. The sculpture bears the figures of John the Baptist, Joseph Smith, and Oliver Cowdery. See Porter, "Origins of the Church," p. 156.

[17]*History of the Church*, 1:40-41n; D & C 18:9. Some of the problems associated with this metaphysical experience are discussed in Richard P. Howard, "The Historical Method as the Key to Understanding Our Heritage," *Saints' Herald* (Independence, Mo.), November 1974, p. 53.

[18]Porter, "Origins," 162, 86-92; Thurlow Weed, *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed.*, ed. Harriet A. Weed (Boston, 1884): 1:358-359; Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York, 1867), 52-53.

[19]In 1841 Joseph Smith placed the "original" dictated manuscript of the Book of Mormon in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House. In 1882, when renovating a part of the Nauvoo House foundation and walls, L. C. Bidamon retrieved portions of the manuscript, most of which had been severely damaged by the elements. Some twenty-three complete pages and fragments of perhaps 150 other pages are now in the LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City and have been laminated for preservation. There are differences between the "original" dictated manuscript and the printer's copy, which suggests that the original was a "first draft" and was subjected to editing and emendation in preparation for publication. See Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1969), esp. chapter two; and Dean C. Jessee, "The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript," *BYU Studies*, 10 (Spring 1970): 259-278.

[20]Porter, "Origins," pp. 86-92.

[21]Russell R. Rich, "The Dogberry Papers and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies*, 10 (Spring 1970), 315-320; Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, pp. 148-150.

[22]Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, p. 146. Also Bushman, *The Beginnings of Mormonism*, chapter 3.

[23]An appreciation of the Book of Mormon as literature by a non-Mormon is Douglas Wilson, "The Book of Mormon as a Work of American Literature," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 3 (Spring 1968): 29-41.

[24]On the religious climate of early Western New York see especially Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1950). "The Appeals of Mormonism" to contemporary New Yorkers and others are described in Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 20-43. On the basis of circumstantial evidence, Robert N. Hullinger recently concluded that the

Book of Mormon was intended to convince skeptics of the truth of Christianity. *Mormon Answer to Skepticism: Why Joseph Smith Wrote the Book of Mormon* (St. Louis, Mo.: Clayton Publishing House, 1980).

[25]*Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White,* 2 vols. (New York, 1907), 2:87.

[26]The one or two sources which give Manchester as the place where the Church was organized are probably inadvertent errors. See Porter, "Origins," pp. 243-252.

[27]The Whitmer farm was in the countryside outside of Fayette village, about five miles northwest of the unincorporated village. The farm was three miles south and one mile west of Waterloo, New York. Fayette, named for Revolutionary War hero General Gilbert Morier de La Fayette, had been settled by people of German origin from Pennsylvania. Peter Whitmer, Sr., was born in Pennsylvania, and married Mary Musselman there. Peter Whitmer was an overseer of highways and was a local school trustee; his son Christian, a witness of the Book of Mormon, was a constable of Fayette township. See Richard L. Anderson, "Five Who Handled the Plates," *Improvement Era,* 72 (July 1969): 39; Porter, "Origins," p. 223.

[28]D & C 20-21. It is unclear whether these and other March and April revelations were read before, during, or after the organizational meeting. Clearly, the essence of the revelations was discussed on April 6. At the first conference of the Church, held June 9, 1830, the minutes state: "Articles and Covenants read by Joseph Smith, Jr. and received by unanimous voice of the whole congregation. . . ."

[29]No copy of the incorporation registry has been found.

[30]Joseph Knight, Sr., reported that one evening "Old Mr. Smith and Martin Harris came forrod [forward] to be Baptise[d] for the first. They found a place in a lot a small Stream ran thro and they were Baptized in the Evening Because of persecution." See Dean Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies,* 17 (Autumn 1976), 37.

[31]D & C 21:1.

[32]An account of records in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, is in Max J. Evans and Ronald G. Watt, "Sources for Western History at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Western Historical Quarterly,* 8 (July 1977): 303-312. Those in the RLDS Library are described in Madelon Brunson, "Archival Holdings of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," mimeographed, Independence, Missouri, 1978.

[33]The law for the incorporation of a religious society in the State of New York stipulated, in Section III, "And be it further enacted, That it shall be lawful for the male persons of full age, belonging to any other church, . . . to assemble . . . and, by plurality of voices, to elect any number of discreet persons. . . ." If the first Mormons complied strictly with this, their first act may have been by male voice, and the law of common consent inaugurated for men and women thereafter. Existing records do not make clear whether this was done.

[34]Solomon Chamberlain, "A Short Sketch of the Life of Solomon Chamberlain," original in possession of Mrs. Albert D. Swensen, Provo, Utah, copy in LDS Church Archives Typescript in Porter, "Origins," pp. 277-285.

[35]D & C 12, 14, 15, 16. Diary of Samuel H. Smith, holograph, LDS Church Archives.

[36]See especially S. George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada" (Ph.D., diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1951).

[37]*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City, 1874), 57-59.

[38]Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1941), 152-153.

[39]Larry C. Porter, "The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies,* 10 (Spring 1970): 365-385; Porter, "Origins," pp. 222, 296-306. The Waterloo Saints departed Buffalo about May 9, 1831, and arrived at Fairport about May 11 or 12. The Colesville Saints left Buffalo May 11, and arrived at Fairport on May 14, 1831.

[40]See Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976) esp. chapter 2; and Mario S. DePillis, "Mormon Communitarianism, 1826-1846" (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1961). In "Social Sources of Mormonism," *Church History*, 37 (March 1968): 60 Mario DePillis has asserted that Mormon communitarianism was developed in Ohio as the result of Campbellite and Shaker influences. Actually, the influence (if any) more likely came from New York; the Groveland Society of Shakers was located at Sodus and a Jemima Wilkinson experiment was found at PennYon, both within thirty miles of Manchester.

[41]Emily M. Austin, *Mormonism; or, Life Among the Mormons* (Madison, Wisc., 1882), 63-65.

[42]Porter, "Colesville Branch," p. 384.

[43]Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 272-279 *et passim*.

REVIEWS

Joseph Smith and Thomas Paine?

Mormon Answer to Skepticism: Why Joseph Smith Wrote the Book of Mormon. By Robert N. Hullinger. St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, Inc., 1980. xiv + 201 pp., illus. $14.95

Reviewed by GARY GILLUM, *Ancient Studies and Philosophy Librarian at Brigham Young University.*

Thirteen years ago a heavily publicized and startling book called The Passover Plot, by Dr. Hugh J. Schonfield, daringly asserted that Jesus Christ planned his own arrest, crucifixion and resurrection; that he had beforehand arranged to be drugged on the cross, thereby simulating death so that he could later be removed safely to fulfill Messianic prophecies. Early in 1980 *Mormon Answer to Skepticism* has appeared, awaited eagerly by Mormons and non-Mormons alike ever since the author, Pastor Robert N. Hullinger of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, wrote "Joseph Smith, Defender of the Faith," in *Concordia Theological Monthly* in 1971. Unfortunately, the reader of the earlier article may be disappointed in the present book, for, like *The Passover Plot,* the logic used in *Mormon Answer to Skepticism* is akin to proving the veracity of the Ptolemaic system by using an elaborate system of epicycles.

Hullinger seems to have left no stone unturned in looking for the true history of Joseph Smith's intentions, and the author must be complimented for one of the most charitable and objective studies of Joseph Smith ever written by a non-Mormon. In the author's own words:

> The argument of this study is that Joseph Smith tried to defend faith in the personal God of Christian belief in face of current denominational strife and popular skepticism. He staked out the principle of revelation as the ground for battle and regarded himself as the defender of God. He intended the Book of Mormon to be an apologetic for Jesus Christ. (p. 2)

He insists that the reader let Joseph's expressed motives speak for themselves and draw conclusions from the evidence. But apparently this reviewer is perceiving another part of the elephant, or perhaps even a different animal, for his conclusions differ greatly from those predicted for the reader in Wesley P. Walters' forward [*sic*]: "the end result provides still further evidence that the Book of Mormon is a wholely modern production, not a translation of some ancient, long-buried record." (p. xii) Both Walters and Hullinger, like too many readers and pseudo-scholars, perceive only the skin and bones or trunk and tail of the Book of Mormon instead of its heart. They both seem to value their "scholarly ability" to explain Mormonism more than the Mormonism they are trying to explain. And why not, we could add? Western tradition insists upon rational explanation, so that theologians, by and large, are so concerned with examining the details that they cannot see the Big Picture. They too often miss the general message of salvation even though they are proficient in textual, historical and literary analysis.

Nevertheless, Hullinger is one of the best informed non-Mormons I know of. He must be considered in a kindly light because of his relative objectivity and fairness, compared to the Fawn Brodies and Walter Martins in "scholarship." His introduction shows a seeking spirit—to use his own words, "a seeker mentality" like my own mind: a mind which needs to prove all things. Before my conversion I tried in vain to disprove the Book of Mormon, but my knowledge of ancient languages and the theophilosophy, which issued forth from my own Lutheran theological training, were no match for the spirituality, humility, honest naivete and testimony which came forth from the mouths of babes (read: missionaries). Shortly thereafter my mind could not un-

derstand what my heart felt, knew and accepted, and I denounced the new vehicle for my faith and ripped my baptismal certificate to shreds—only to denounce my intolerant logical mind by leaping ahead ten feet in faith after the one leap of doubt backwards. I discern that Pastor Hullinger feels duty-bound to prove Mormonism wrong, just as I feel bound to prove *him* wrong, but at least he has not gone about it like the Anglican Bishop Solomon Spalding of 1912, whose avowed (and aggressive) purpose was to save America's youth from the "immoral, untruthful, unspiritual, and illogical system of Joseph Smith." Rather, Hullinger should be compared to a Saul of Tarsus, so clearly does his sincerity and need-to help-us-understand-his-message come across. Like all Lutherans, he is tradition-bound to the inerrancy of scripture, and it behooves him from his theological training to de-eschatologize the Book of Mormon. Sadly, however, Hullinger's hermeneutical training has led him to eisegesis instead of exegesis—a fault in much of Mormon scholarship as well!

The chapter on masonry and Mormonism was particularly interesting, especially in light of Dr. Reed C. Durham's Mormon History Association lecture of 1974, "Is There No Help for the Widow's Son?" from which Hullinger quotes. Hullinger echoes these words in Durham's lecture:

> Mormon historians need to respond to the myriad questions like those relative to Masonry instead of burying their heads in ostrich-like fashion in the traditional sand.

It is not mere coincidence, I feel, that I was reading Hugh Nibley's *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment,* when *Mormon Answer to Skepticism* was sent to me for review, for my perspective in the Masonry question was widened beyond Hullinger's nineteenth century America. Others would probably agree if I said that there is nothing at all wrong with Joseph Smith's use of Masonic ritual and symbolism if such came from eternal sources, for it is obvious that both Masons and Mormons derived material from Egyptian Memphite theology, which may have existed long before Judaism and the Mosaic laws. Nibley includes lengthy quotes from newly discovered apocryphal works which show many parallels to the Mormon temple endowment. In addition, a graduate student at Brigham Young University, Michael Lyon, has graphically pointed out Masonic symbolism in Chinese art which dated before the time of Christ. If Mormonism is an international church—then Mormon scholars should no longer avoid studying facets of truth in other religious and cultures—from the chakra points in Kundalini yoga to Chaldaic numerology or Hebrew gematria symbolism in the Thirteen Articles of Faith.

Hullinger makes it clear that he has used the Book of Mormon as primary source material to show how Joseph Smith meant to defend the divinity of Jesus Christ against the deism of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. (This in itself is farfetched since Paine's book appeared in 1794 and 1796, only thirty years before the Book of Mormon was written and published. *The Age of Reason* could hardly have been a burning issue in the "burned-over district.") Indeed, the lengthy index of references shows that Hullinger might be more familiar with Mormon scriptures than most Mormons—unless he made extensive use of Reynolds' *Concordance*. Unfortunately for all of us, the passages he used were lifted out of context in order to prove a point, a practice I thought was beneath Lutheran textual criticism. In addition, Hullinger uses *the* worn-out example of Book of Mormon contradictions (Alma 7:9-10): that Jesus was born in Jerusalem, not Bethlehem! (How many university students have told me they are from Los Angeles, when they are really from North Hollywood or Orange.) If Joseph Smith truly owned and read the scholarly four volume Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures,* before translating the Book of Mormon, he surely would not have made such a serious "mistake," if such a cultural idiom *were* a mistake!

"No matter," I hear the typical Nibley reader respond, "for the Book of Mormon's authenticity can be 'proved'

through ancient Biblical manuscripts." And they might be right, for there are far too many cultural and historical parallels in Old World writings and the Book of Mormon which hadn't found the light of day when Joseph Smith translated the book. If Joseph Smith had only formed a new church—that is plausible; but to write the Book of Mormon unaided—that is impossible: there is too much *Zusammenhang* for there to be any other explanation than the one Joseph Smith has given us.

Physically, there are several problems with Hullinger's book. If it were the book Reverend Walters describes it to be, it would have been published by a well-known publisher. As it is, a vanity press has put together an expensive paperback on cheap paper, using a type face which is difficult to read, and leaving a multitude of typographical errors in both the text and footnotes. The book uses flush-right chapter and section headings, which are also confusing and inconsistent. Moreover, the "Index of References" is not the usual index with page numbers referring to the text, but a list of scriptures ostensibly calculated to impress, not to inform. However, the subject index is good, and the bibliography seems thorough. (But who would quote E.D. Howe's book these days?)

The novelty of *Mormon Answer to Skepticism* is its thesis that Joseph Smith was deliberately writing the Book of Mormon to uphold and defend Christianity from rationalists and deists, and in doing so, he has been fair-minded. The best example he gives of his fairness is found in Appendix I where is discussed Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews:*

> The question is, did he use *View of the Hebrews* in producing the Book of Mormon? The possibility is there and the probability is strong that he did. Nevertheless, the case is circumstantial until evidence is found that ties *View of the Hebrews* to Joseph Smith *before* he produced the Book of Mormon.

Hullinger's entire scenario, then, is built on circumstantial evidence. Yet he has succeeded unwittingly in re-affirming for me and other readers why the Church of Jesus Christ was restored in 1830 to quench the people's thirst for the gospel. If Hullinger could only trust a Mormon source whose findings could be verified, he would discover that the Larsen-Rencher wordprint study of the Book of Mormon, done by impartial computers, showed odds of 10 billion to 1 against single authorship and odds of 1 billion to 1 against Joseph Smith (reported in *BYU Studies*, Spring 1980).

There are yet many unanswered questions and puzzling lacunae in Mormon history, and Pastor Hullinger has done Mormonism a favor by bringing his fresh insights and findings to light. The challenge is clear for both Mormon and non-Mormon scholars of Joseph Smith and the church he left behind.

Torah! Torah! Torah!

The Glory of God is Intelligence: Four Lectures on the Role of Intellect in Judaism. By Jacob Neusner. With Introduction by S. Kent Brown. Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978, xxi + 68 pp, $4.95.

Reviewed by RICHARD D. HECHT, *Professor of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.*

This is a *Festschrift* of four lectures given by Jacob Neusner at Brigham Young University in 1977: "The Glory of God is Intelligence: A Theology of Torah-learning in Judaism," "Cultic Piety and Pharisaism Before 70," "From Cultic Piety to Torah Piety After 70," and "The Mishnah as a Focus of Torah Piety." It also contains a bibliography of Neusner's major publications.

The importance of this volume resides at two levels. First, Professor Neusner's introductory lecture sets forth the distinctive idea of *Talmud-Torah:* man serves God through the use of the mind. In his admirable introduction, Kent Brown reminds the reader of the centrality of learning as devotion to God from the earliest period of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although Neusner subtitled the first lecture "A Theology of Torah-learning in Judaism," its implications extend beyond the confines of one religious community, presenting a striking dialogue between two very different communities which hold human thought and reflection to be of the highest spiritual value. Neusner demonstrates in this first lecture that Judaism's demands upon the mind for reason, criticism, restraint and the rational exchange of ideas, witnessed on every page of Talmud, are not limited to some closed and remote period of antiquity. Neusner states, "The Jew has been taught to engage realistically in the world's tasks, to do so with a whole heart, yet without the need or even the power, to regard completion of those tasks as the threshold of a final and completed fulfillment of history. Because of its mode of thinking, Judaism teaches man to take seriously the wide range of worldly problems without expecting that in solving them—provisionally, let alone finally—they might save the world."

At a second level, the three following lectures—beginning with the question of when in the history of Judaism did the idea of Torah-learning enter the theological complex of Judaism—serve as a most concise guide, to Neusner's more extensive and specialized studies over the past fifteen years. Are the Pharisees to be characterized as a sect devoted to the preservation and mastery of Torah-traditions before 70 A.D. and the destruction of the temple? Neusner summarizes what can be said of the Pharisees from the historical documents (allusions to the Pharisees in Josephus, controversies between the Pharisees and Jesus from the Gospels and laws and sayings attributed to the Pharisees or stories told of this group by the rabbis from the period after 70 A.D., preserved in the Mishnah, Tosefta and later texts). The Pharisees, in Neusner's analysis, appear as a group centering upon table-fellowship and as "Jews who believed that the purity laws were to be kept outside of the Temple" Other sectors of the Judaean population organized their lives around the restriction of purity laws to the precincts of the Temple. The Pharisees' meals appear distinctive from the early Christian community's specific and intense ritual meal. Neusner states that the pharisaic table-fellowship was a "quite ordinary, everyday affair. The various fellowship rules had to be observed in wholly routine daily circumstances, without accompanying rites other than a benediction for the food. The Christians' myths and rituals rendered table-fellowship into a much heightened spiritual experience: 'Do this in memory of me.' " Neusner concludes that before 70 A.D. *Talmud-Torah* was not a central idea of Judaism.

In the third lecture, Neusner indicates the precise manner in which *Talmud-Torah* became one element within the symbolic structure of Judaism, along with the study of Torah, the rabbi and the importance of moral and ethical action, forming a coherent unity in the wake of the Temple's destruction. This transpired through the amalgamation of the pharisaic ideal of Israel as a nation of priests and the scribal tradition of learning or study as a way of life. Before the events of 70 A.D., the Pharisees had extended the Temple's sanctity and purity to the ordinary, but it was after that period and when all hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple came to an end with the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 A.D.) that, as Neusner indicates, "the rabbi is the new priest. Study of Torah is the new cult. Deeds of loving-kindness are the new sacrifice."

The fourth lecture is the most important for general students of religion. Here, Neusner explores the Mishnah as the single most important document in the religious world-view of Rabbinic Judaism. While he treats the manner in which transcendence is made contemporary in Mishnah and how Mishnah by its very ontological structure facilitates memorization, the most important ele-

ment of the discussion is the idea of an open canon. In the same way that Neusner's analysis of the tensions between the Pharisees and the early Christian community overturns a number of scholarly interpretations, his discussion of attaining Torah leads to the conclusion that canon is not really fixed and closed, but that new works are continually added in virtue of what it means to master revelation.

Neusner's four lectures on *Talmud-Torah* provide both an excellent introduction to the critical study of Judaism in late antiquity and a review of many of the most important points in Neusner's own work for the more advanced student.

[*Ed. Note:* See *Brief Notices* for another opinion.].

Two Poets: Their Travels, Their Moods

Once in Israel. By Emma Lou Thayne. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980. 80 pp. $5.95.
Moods: Of Late. By Marden J. Clark. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1979. 81 pp. $5.95.

Reviewed by MARY L. BRADFORD, editor of *Dialogue.*

The scene was just past the gate at summer's end. The pine trees brushed against the two-story mountain house. The poet's study, all windows, looked out over a luxuriant mountain range, yellow and purple with wildflowers. The poet invited me to sit on the porch and listen to an account of her trip to a writer's workshop, an intensive one for published poets, to which poets were invited to bring their work for discussion and revision. Emma Lou Thayne brought her finished book—the one just about to be set in type at BYU, one she had been working feverishly at ever since her trip to Israel two years before. But after the two-week workshop, she called the press and told them she had revised the entire volume. The excitement in her voice as she read me her revisions convinced me that process is as important to Emma Lou as the finished product. Her revisions reminded me of some of the best work of May Swenson, the accomplished imagist and devotee of the specific. All fat cut away, the redolent symbols of Israel were allowed to transcend the travelogue the reader would naturally expect from a one-time visitor. Those of us who feel like adoptive Israelites can rejoice and enter into the imagination of this gifted Mormon poet who has extended herself back into scripture and forward into the teeming present.

Once In Israel alternates prose diary entries with poems describing an uncommon trip, made uncommon, as explained by the poet, through the leadership of Lowell Bennion, a man steeped in his subject and firmly implanted in the soil of it, a man accustomed to opening doors for others—doors that lead to renewed wonder and worship. Emma Lou Thayne, a disciple of his, was fully able to transcend her student status and tourist view of life and translate this trip into art. Many of these poems have been set to music. There is music in them always, some of it ancient music. Others speak with the spare voice of the modern poet. She switches easily from one voice to the other.

Her prose descriptions are often as good as the poems. She begins at Kennedy Airport where "we are bussed like bottled pickles and sit knee to chest across a football field leviathan . . . The meals on the flight are a kind of predigested Kosher for the benign captivity of bodies bent on being bodies!" The images in the prose are always true to the images of the poetry. (Pickles, leviathan, Kosher, etc.). Mundane descriptions give way to sharpened almost photographic images as in this description of a "perilous shopping trip": "Cinnamon and saf-

fron are swaddled in the noises/of alleys. A ripe lamb hangs unwolly in its long/ sacrifice and giant caulifowers stack their airs/like invisible smoke behind the blithe squalor/of black-eyed children playing the jump-the-rope of/home."

The title, *Once in Israel,* is perfect. Emma Lou was only once in Israel so she stays with her own perceptions and the kaleidoscope they produce. She does not present herself as expert. She is modestly amazed that after one trip she could return "with Israel inside me." This book is in itself a journey that asks the question, why? Why is the poet so taken with the place? She shows us by allowing the reader to go along with her. The Wailing Wall is there, the Mount of Beatitudes, the Golan Heights, the Moslems, the Bedouins, the gate of Jaffa. These are also shown in a fine collection of photographs by Don Thorpe in the middle of the book. I am glad the pictures are together in their own section because the poems do not need them. The poems are pictures in themselves.

At Emma Lou's mountain retreat that day, she read me a poem about an old Moslem in prayer that suggests May Swenson's work and shows also that Emma Lou Thayne has risen above the sentimentality that characterizes some of her earlier work. This poem was inspired by the fact that her husband had packed his bags to leave for Hebron and had kept out only two left shoes to wear. "So all day he's been going in uncalculated circles—to everyone's delight." In their travels that day, they see a synagogue in the corner of a mosque with a "squatting Moslem mouthing silences in his Holy of Holies above the rich Persian rugs" and the poet asks what is in his mind. It begins, "Feet. These are feet/This is a place/ to walk to. Toes./These are toes. They/go first. After, the heel./Toe. Heel. Into the/ shoe. Then heel. Toe/In the shoe that walks." Having set up this staccato rhythm, the poem proceeds to "Man. This is a man." and ends with a powerful prayer: "This is a man/praying:/Bless this broken and beloved world./Keep the mountains up/and the deserts down/and the river in its sides. Keep/our brothers passionate/and our women more than safe/and our children's children full of dreams—/ and a way to walk." All this from a pair of mismatched shoes!

If you love Israel either because you have been there or you haven't; if you love Emma Lou Thayne or Lowell Bennion, or if you simply love good poems, buy this book. It is a labor of love and it will repay you.

Marden Clark is a wonderful poet. I said it and I'm glad. I have heard him read his poetry aloud and been moved by it. I have helped him edit some of it for *Dialogue* and been honored. The Brigham Young University Press has given his collection *Moods: Of Late* a respectable format, quality paper and plenty of white space. Marden Clark is a respected professor at BYU and so deserves it.

Marden Clark goes into his workshop where he keeps a goodly store of well-honed tools—images, vigorous verbs, well-wrought classical and modern forms—and he uses these tools to hammer out his experiences, to shape them into lasting word sculptures. Then he brings them out into the light so that readers too may look clear-eyed at facets of their own lives, lives made somehow more bearable and more beautiful because of these poems.

Marden Clark is a family man and he puts his family into his poems, but he does not abuse them. He is not a "Great Occasion" poet, but he uses specific occasions in the lives of his family and certain public occasions and celebrations to bring moods to life: Mother's Day and Father's Day, the marriage of a daughter, the calling of a missionary, the death of President Kennedy, the ordeal of Biafra. As he puts it in the introduction, "Most of the poems grow out of the tight interweaving of my family experiences and my Mormon experiences, reflecting the strong Mormon emphasis on family life."

I once read a whole collection of poems on the death of JFK, but none reached me as did this classical stanza from Marden Clark: "Dante rode Virgil's back down those mighty haunches/ Through the ice past zero gravity of being/And began the purgatorial climb./We might make the same journey/With inverted boots an empty

saddle/On a riderless black stallion—the same journey/Alongside seven whites marching with death."

The Clark family seems to have suffered more than its share of illness and death. But Marden, the poet, does not flinch. What grandparent (or parent) has not thought, "Ah, if only grandparents had the power of proxy/Could suffer a little for a little child." All family ties—parents to children, children to parents and grandparents, husbands to wives, all relationships inform Marden Clark's poems and are given life through his mastery of many forms. He is equally at home with the sonnet and certain modern verse. He closes the book with my favorite of the collection, one that must be seen to be believed because it shapes itself on the page like poems of the "concrete" school. Called "In a Word" it is an Easter poem and a creative play on words: "What's in a name?/In a name/A single word/ and ending: "In a name/from a carpenter a gardener/from the Word/in a word/'Mary!' "

All ye who love poetry, don't stand there—go out and buy *Moods: Of Late.*

Brief Notices

GENE A. SESSIONS

After a veritable flood of local publicity and a few media blurbs outside Mormondom, the World Conference on Records came off at the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City the week of August 11. Providing the Church with a golden (pardon the expression) opportunity to showcase its devotion to recordkeeping in general and genealogy in particular, the meeting attracted some 11,000 registered participants from around the world but mostly from the Great Basin. President Kimball opened the affair with an announcement that the Church would build a lustrous new genealogical library and church history museum just west of Temple Square. Alex Haley called upon everyone to have family reunions, and the other speakers in more or less similar tones extolled the virtues of family awareness and ancestor adoration. For many less devoted and more curious visitors to the conference, however, the really big show was in the exhibition hall where approximately 150 displays set up in a county fair atmosphere did everything from brag about family lines to huckster church history tapes. To be in that hall was a staggering experience. If Mormonism was once considered a radical aberration of the American scene, it no longer bears any resemblance to its former self. For those among Mormon intellectuals who keep thinking that the wonders of nineteenth-century Mormonism still exist, such events as the World Conference on Records have a disabusing effect: The Mormon past is just for fun and faithbuilding. Today's church is multinational, ultrarespectable and very modern. The dream of those last-century pilgrims who gathered from Babylon faded long ago into the computers, the buildings, the hype, the microfilm and the tape machines that contain a Zion that is no more and can never be again.

Inasmuch as longing for lost virtues of the past is very unfashionable, it goes without saying that such old ideas as having very large families are also out of vogue. Then along comes a delightful little book called *My Home Runneth Over* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980, x + 133 pp. $5.50) and even the most modern and socially responsible among us might slip and exclaim (to the great shock of our sophisticated friends): "The devil with zero population, give *me* eleven kids!" (Well, maybe ten would do.) Written by a gregarious English professor named Gordon T. Allred, this sometimes cutesie look at life in a contemporary big family illustrates beautifully the blessings of having a "quiver" full of children. Oddly enough, though the scenes are current, the story seems out of sync, almost anachronistic. In a world of live-ins and abortion, here is a family right out of the nineteenth century praying together, staying together and all that trite stuff. Full of humor and reality, Allred's book makes the two-child family and its concomitant middle-class values seem ultimately boring.

Nothing close to dull is G. M. Warren's pulp novel entitled *Destiny's Children* (New York: Pocket Books, 1979, 404 pp. $2.50). Unlike Allred's book, Warren's has little to do with kidstuff. The children in the title are none other than the same mid-nineteenth-century Mormons that Vardis Fisher also thought of as children. One critic has likened this novel to "Gunsmoke, Mormon Style," indicating that the flavor, the characters and even the plot display all the attributes of a rough-and-tumble horse opera with the Mormon story stirred in for texture. The real tragedy in a book like *Destiny's Children* is that the reader cannot possibly take the characters seriously. As a result, they trivialize the things they represent. So in Warren's hands, Joe Smith is a hard-drinking, foul-mouthed charismatic. Is there any harm in that? Only if we try to imagine how something like Mor-

monism sprang from his being. Good fiction creates plausible, three-dimensional images. *Destiny's Children* cuts everything from the same flat cloth, and nothing of what made a movement such as Mormonism stands out but the names, the dates and the places.

Perhaps even more distasteful than the bludgeoning Mormon history takes in the hands of such writers as G. M. Warren is the continuing stream of books on the Mormon market that seek to flesh out revered characters and events from the past for faith-promoting purposes. Two "profiles" of ancient prophets that have appeared in recent months finish in a dead heat for the quarterly Milk the Mormons Award. In fact, these two works are so watery as to merit their authors only 2% awards. Recognizing that most faithful Mormons who do not read the Book of Mormon or the New Testament will instead buy rehashes of portions thereof, Donald W. Hemingway and Peggy Barton tell us all about their heroes in (respectively) *An Introduction to Mormon, A Native American Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1979, 65 pp. $3.95) and *John the Baptist* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978, 24 pp., illus. $3.95). The trouble is that anyone can pick up the scriptures involved and come up with intepretations perhaps more suited to his or her own perceptions of scriptural figures and their place in the pageant of God's relationship with humankind.

In a change from the typical, John C. Lefgren analyzes a sacred date rather than a sacred name in *April Sixth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1980, 80 pp. $5.95) and does so with some success and some intriguing conclusions. Truman Madsen's meandering "Foreword" undoubtedly helps sell the book but provides few insights into the issues Lefgren scrutinizes, which is somewhat unfortunate because the author plays games with mathematics and calendars but never really comes to the point of telling us what it all means. Do we decide that Joseph's ability to "associate a particular night in Judea as being 1,830 solar years before April 6, 1830" is proof of his divine calling? And do we neglect the volumes of biblical scholarship that dispute the actual date of Christ's birth among the days and months of a five-year period (1 B.C. to 4 A.D.)? Perhaps this is another case of Von Daniken's Disease, where an author begins with the answers and then seeks for the questions. The most troubling part of such works as *April Sixth* is their tendency to encourage the Saints to hang their testimonies on hat racks made of facts. Facts are cold and hard, and they break.

Testimony—its presence or absence, its degree—seems so often to be the very nexus of Mormonism. Nothing holds together without it. H. Stephen Stoker and Joseph C. Muren realized that fundamental aspect of the faith and consequently compiled statements on the subject from the writings and sermons of the twelve latter-day prophets. In order to give *Testimony* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980, 172 pp., author index, $5.95) the flavor of a "General Authority" book, they also included comments from nineteen current church leaders in addition to President Kimball. All the popular church book authors are there—Bruce McConkie, Neal Maxwell, Paul Dunn, Hartman Rector and S. Dilworth Young, to name a few. Other past general authorities also get in a word here and there. The result is a fine compendium on the question of what a testimony is and how to get one. But what these two Ph.D. educators fail to give us is much counsel from the brethren on what to do with one once you have it. It is ceaselessly intriguing to notice all the Saints who can bear a mean testimony and who at the same time have not the slightest idea how to live it. Maybe Muren and Stoker can produce a sequel called *Evidence,* for where there is testimony there must be a coexistent demonstration of its effect.

What all the general authorities both past and present end up saying in *Testimony* is that in the final analysis the Spirit must bear witness. To help us comprehend such a deep concept, the Mormon book market has served up Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Seeking the Spirit* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978, 112 pp. $4.95) and John D. Whetten, ed., *Living by the Spirit* (Salt

Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980, 142 pp., index $4.95). McConkie offers a series of bland platitudes after the order of the following: "All men are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among them are eternal life, spiritual liberty and the endless pursuit of happiness." Whetten chose instead to excerpt statements on "spiritual living" from the Journal of Discourses. While his name will certainly not sell as many books as will McConkie's, Whetten's book is much more worthwile. It fits well into the category of a gospel-study shortcut. Using its index, a student of the Holy Ghost can find virtually everything there is in the Journal of Discourses on the subject in a matter of minutes. Although Whetten argues that the nineteenth-century leaders of the Church preached doctrine on the subject perfectly in harmony with modern teachings, his selections bear out the historian's suspicions that the old-time religionists relied much more on the Spirit than they did the teleprompter.

Among efforts to bridge the gap between such inbred Mormonisms as "testimony" and the broader concerns of the outside world, Jacob Neusner's *The Glory of God Is Intelligence: Four Lectures on the Role of Intellect in Judaism* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1978, xxi+ 55 pp., biblio., indices, $4.95) fails miserably in the attempt. Harris Lenowitz, noted scholar of Jewish studies at the University of Utah's Middle East Center, found the book so lacking in positive qualities that he refused to publish a review largely because he did not "see any real purpose in being publicly nasty about a work that might thereby gain more attention than if left alone." Leonowitz agreed to allow us to mention his name in our notice and in a subsequent letter made a fascinating point about the whole business of pretentious Mormon Theological Symposiums and BYU Religious Studies Centers and so on: "Generally," writes Lenowitz of Neusner's book, "my objections are to the slimness of the enterprise. . . . I am alarmed at the over-simplifications in which he indulges himself, I think, *to meet the audience at its chosen level.*" (Italics added.) When we become convinced despite the evidence that what we are studying is of such importance and of such a calibre that we have arrived in the big leagues of theological enterprise, then we are in serious trouble as a faith and as a culture. If scholars such as Lenowitz can become so offended by the pablum we perceive as delicious, then perhaps it is time to spew it out and analyse its ingredients before we poison ourselves.

In a real sense, many among the Saints seem to relish poison. In *Dialogue* (XII:4), Sociologist L. Kay Gillespie noted the proclivity of so many Mormons for unorthodox medical treatments, or what we snidely call "quackery." Gillespie has since published an extensive study of *Cancer Quackery: The Label of Quack and Its Relationship to Deviant Behavior* (Palo Alto, California: R & E Research Associates, 1979, viii+ 126, biblio., $10.00) in which he takes a long look at the whole value system surrounding so-called quackery. While Gillespie's study concerns itself with the total issue, it spends considerable time on the Mormon connection, hoping to perceive reasons for so much attraction among fatihful Latter-day Saints to non-medical cures. An impressive aspect of his effort is his careful refusal to condemn or condone specific treatments and his ability then to analyse them with reference to their sociological implications. It is a rare scholar who can so effectively remove his own biases from his work.

Bias is the basic problem with so much of the literature dealing with or impinging upon Mormonism. Either the author seeks to debunk or to fortify the faith. The obvious observation is that only when writers (as a few have) contemplate the Mormon experience with neither goal honestly in mind do they successfully accomplish one or the other, and sometimes even both.

Coming in 1981:
Dialogue's Women's Issue

In honor of the tenth anniversary of the "Pink" issue we are now accepting articles, fiction, poetry, essays and art as well as entries for the "Mormon Women Speak" contest.

ARTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS: We would like to illustrate the entire issue with the work of *women artists*. Please send ideas and samples—graphics, slides, photography, etc.—to the *Dialogue* office before February 1, 1981. Special cash awards will be made for cover art selected. Color will be considered.

WRITERS: Rules for "Mormon Women Speak" contest:

- Manuscripts must be typed and double-spaced with the author's name deleted.
- Manuscripts must be in duplicate.
- Manuscripts must be accompanied by a separate sheet bearing the name, address and phone number of the author and the following *signed* statement: "This essay has not been previously published, is not now being considered for publication elsewhere and has not been awarded a prize in any other contest."
- Manuscripts must be approximately 3,000 words.

Deadline: January 1, 1981

Prizes:		
	First	$200
	Second	$100
	Third	$50

Winners of the essay contest will not only be published in *Dialogue's* Woman's issue but they and all other entries will be considered for publication in the volume *Mormon Women Speak* to be published by Olympus Publishing Company.

Awards made possible by a grant from the Silver Foundation.

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