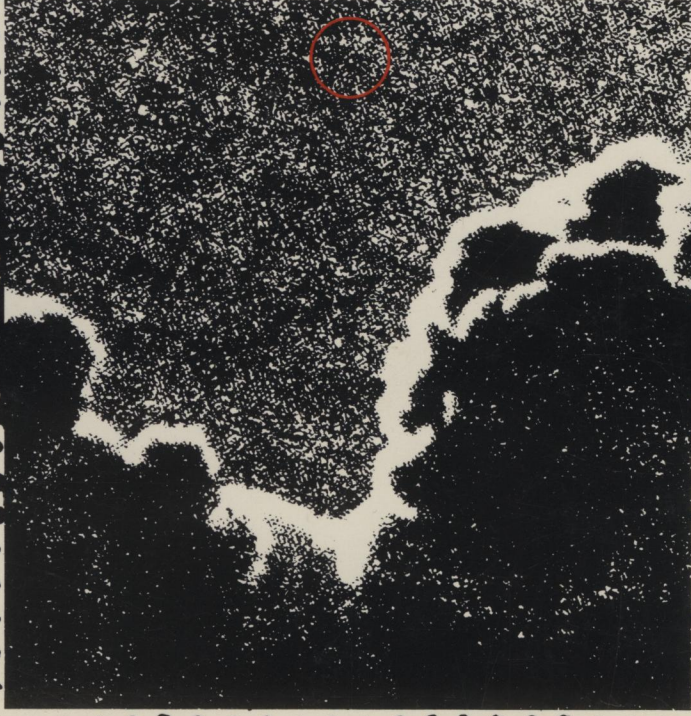


DIALOGUE



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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 the larger stream of Christian thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Mormon Church or of the editors.

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Editors' Note

This issue is the first to be published by the new editorial team in Salt Lake City. We appreciate the assistance of the previous editors, Mary Bradford and Lester Bush, in gathering much of the material for this issue and thank them for their generous cooperation which has done much to expedite the transition to a new location.

For us and for many others, *DIALOGUE* represents an institution of profound importance. In assembling the new editorial board and editorial staff, we are determined to maintain and, if possible, enlarge upon the traditional quality of the journal. We are heartened by the great variety of good and talented people who have already joined in making this new phase of *DIALOGUE* history both fresh and lively. Like most scholarly journals, *DIALOGUE* is a labor of love sustained primarily by people of ideas who are willing to volunteer their time and efforts as well as their thoughts.

In the autumn 1982 issue, we hope to share with you something of our vision for *DIALOGUE* and our hopes for its future.

Linda King Newell
L. Jackson Newell
Editors

LETTERS

brodie's ruler

It is strange how our "liberated" Mormon intellectuals are willing to take a piece of scientific knowledge and run with it *ad absurdum* under the banner of truth just as devotedly as our "enslaved" brothers of faith.

Over and over again we see the extreme positions taken by our friends leaving the fold. If they could just find something that absolutely refutes the Church, then they can leave it comfortably. Then when something comes along—particularly if draped in intellectual terms—which approaches refutation, they jump on it and hold on for dear life, come what may, so that they can forever afterwards prove they have chosen rightly.

In the summer 1981 issue Fawn Brodie reportedly related:

I was convinced before I ever began writing the book that Joseph Smith was not a true prophet — to use an old Mormon phrase. Once I learned about the scientific evidence, which is overwhelming, that the American Indians are Mongoloid, I was no longer a good Mormon. That was relatively easy. It seemed to me that it was decisive.

According to the interview, that would have been over thirty years ago since her book was published in 1945.

An anthropologist I am not. But it seems to me that there has been considerable published since 1945 to indicate that a pure Mongoloid interpreta-

tion of American Indian ancestry is much too limited and simplistic. And yet towards the end of her life, thirty years after publication of her book exposing the Mormon "fraud," she still clings fast to the level of science of the early 1940s which reinforced her prejudice and allowed her to escape from the philosophical clutches of Mormonism.

Brodie says she was a self-taught historian. I don't have any beef with that. But would Brodie's book really qualify for history or would it be more accurate to create a new category for it similar to that for Alex Haley's *Roots*, such a mixture of history and fantasy as not to qualify for consideration under either category?

Brodie talks about the Book of Mormon being a remarkable fantasy. She said of Joseph Smith, "I think he mixed up his own dreams and later came to call them visions."

Then she talks about her own writing experience. "I was working with non-Mormon, anti-Mormon, and Mormon material and I would get three different versions of the same episode—always two, sometimes three—and when I put them together a picture emerged THAT I BELIEVE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ME, nothing to do with my selection." Further she says, "a picture emerged so often as I wrote these chapters that

I thought this must be the way it happened."

Is this a description of how she wrote her history or a description of how she says Joseph Smith wrote his "American Indian History"? They seem inseparable. If hers is history, is not his just as much history if written according to her interpretation and judged by her own standards?

Brodie says, "I had made speculations about the nature of Joseph Smith's relations, and with his brothers in particular, and with his father and how that got into the Book of Mormon." Do her speculations qualify any more as history than Joseph Smith's, or mine or yours?

When Brodie speculates and puts a picture together which emerges such "that I believe had nothing to do with me," it is history, speculative history, if you will, that turns out in her evaluation to be prophetic. When Joseph Smith does the same — according to her "psychological" analysis — it is fraudulent fantasy!

The beauty of science should be its development of standards of measurement by which to judge the facts, not to suit the "facts." Many of our Mormon critics enamored with scientific method have not been entirely fair and honest in appraising their own scientific integrity.

This is not to pretend by any means

that our Mormon faithful have not been equally negligent in applying consistent standards to interpretation and defense of their perceptions of the faith. But a rubber ruler hardly refutes an elastic one.

Stephen Hammer
Santa Monica, California

dear dialogue

The relentless flow of time has brought me to the point where I must terminate my long and pleasant association with *DIALOGUE*. At age 89, I suddenly find myself a widower. My reading is limited mainly to the headlines, and I am deaf. Of course, as friends are aware, reading, writing, research, and teaching have been my career. Well, as Jimmie Durante used to say, "That is the condition that prevails."

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT has served and is serving a highly important and constructive purpose. There was an urgent need for a medium through which Mormon scholars and writers could find an outlet for penetrating study of Mormonism. The official organs of the Church are mainly concerned with indoctrination and organizational information. They are closed to articles of intellectual depth.

But DIALOGUE has opened many windows on the broader aspects and significance of Mormonism. May it continue.

Lowry Nelson
Provo, Utah

word of wisdom status

I found the recent Word of Wisdom articles very enlightening. However, rather than neglect the 1830s with vague references to the unpublished M.A. thesis of Paul Peterson, Drs. Bush and McCue ought to have summarized at least briefly the actual ways in which D&C 89 was then applied or ignored.

It might have been interesting to note, for example, that Presidents John Whitmer and David Whitmer, and Clerk Oliver Cowdery were removed from their high council offices for drinking tea and coffee, among other things. (David Whitmer also used tobacco; "Far West Record," pp. 95, 97, Jan. 26 - Feb. 5, 1838.) Among the charges sustained against Oliver Cowdery during his trial of excommunication, April 12, 1838, was a charge of his having violated the Word of Wisdom (FWR, pp. 118-26). All this undoubtedly reflected the very strong and clear-cut view enunciated at the General Assembly of the Church in Far West, 7 November, 1837, in which the Word of Wisdom was specifically interpreted to forbid the use of alcoholic beverages, tea, coffee, and tobacco — a commandment to be strictly obeyed (FWR, pp. 82-85; cf. pp. 106, 117, 129-30, 132-35; wine continued to be used in the sac-

rament of the Lord's Supper, of course, p. 71).

Who reduced the stringency of Joseph's revelation by adding a short introduction which later became an integral part of the canon? Who had the motive, opportunity, and means? O. Cowdery, J. Whitmer, and W.W. Phelps constituted the 1832 committee appointed to review, select, and correct the commandments for publication (FWR, p. 27; cf. pp. 18-19), and the addition must have been made during that early stage, since the first publication took place in December 1833 or January 1834 (broadsheets, Special Collections, BYU Library). As Leonard Arrington has noted, Oliver Cowdery was not above altering originals and then lying about it (*Western Humanities Review*, 7:354, n. 43). Indeed, David Whitmer later stated that Oliver claimed to have been led into error by Sidney Rigdon in making changes in the revelations (letter of 9 Dec. 1886 in *Saints' Herald*, 34:93b; cf. *SH*, 54:230; FWR, p. 16). Whatever the case, Oliver and the Whitmers repeatedly made it clear that they had little respect for the revelations of Joseph Smith from 6 April 1830 forward (*Times & Seasons*, 4:108; *HC*, 1:217-218; *HRC*, 1:113-114; FWR, pp. 95-96, 120-121).

As with the United Order, Brigham's "new" emphasis on the Word of Wisdom was actually a reemphasis on something that had been tried before, albeit under the waxing and waning effect of strong socio-cultural influences.

Robert F. Smith
Independence, Missouri

presentism in prophetesses?

I very much enjoyed the Winter 1981 issue of *DIALOGUE*. The essays of Ms. Hansen and Mr. Hutchinson were of special interest to me. Within the limits which each set himself, their efforts were successful. I am surprised, however, that neither made what I believe to be the chief problem of the Mormon priesthood and the Old Testament more explicit.

The Old Testament is bad both as a proof text and as a historical document for Mormon theology. Unlike Mormonism, most of the males of ancient Israel were barred from the priesthood. Unlike Mormonism, the priesthood did not rule Israel. Unlike Mormonism, Jewish spiritual and theological leaders often stood outside of the priesthood. Most prophets made no reference to their priesthood and were openly critical of the mechanical aspects of the sacrificial cult led by the priesthood. Indeed, the prophets removed themselves from the circle of the priests and prelates. The prophets spoke as charismatic not as sacerdotal leaders. Many of the greatest formulators of Judaism were nonpriestly. In ancient times as today, there seems to have been a tendency in Judaism to ascribe power to men of piety and learning regardless of their socio-economic position.

To me it is essential that Mormonism cope with the fundamental questions of the relationship of its priesthood to Biblical models before it attempts to pronounce on questions like the authenticity of Deborah and Huldah as prophetesses.

By the way, Isaiah's wife is called a prophetess in Isa. 8:3, a term which

seems to mean no more than "Mrs. Prophet" in distinction to Deborah and Huldah who were prophetesses as Samuel and Nathan were prophets. There is a propensity among Mormons to believe that the kingdom of heaven is like contemporary Mormon society. This propensity leads to an incredible presentism when reading ancient records. I thank Ms. Hansen and Mr. Hutchinson for revealing something of that presentism.

Michael T. Walton
Salt Lake City, Utah

clones, but not enough

Less than two years ago I think I would have uttered a hearty "Amen" after reading Martha Sonntag Bradley's "The Cloning of Mormon Architecture" (14, Spring 1981). Now, after living and attending church abroad, I find it somewhat myopic and suffering from that "Wasatch Front intellectualism" that seems to think the problems found in that narrow strip of Zion from Ogden to Provo are pandemic throughout the Church. Had the author included a section on the temporary and makeshift meeting house, she would have seen that the issue facing the Church's building program is not "Will the Church build architecturally creative chapels or unoriginal, standardized ones," but, "Can the Church afford to build chapels at all?" The physical problem facing too many wards is not how to share a single building with two or three other wards but how to get a chapel built. Bradley's reluctant concession, "the fiscal and functional de-

fenses of standardization form a compelling argument" is a gross understatement.

The Tokyo ward I currently attend meets in one room about the size of a typical Relief Society room on the seventh floor of an office building. "Rooms" for Relief Society, Priesthood, Primary, Sunday School classes, etc., are created by pushing around makeshift partitions; more than once interviews have been held in the elevator, or if it is not raining, on the roof. When the need for another Sunday School class was brought up in bishopric meeting, the suggestion had to be shelved: simply no room. When I was a missionary in Japan, there were only two stakes; now, eight years later, there are twenty. These "one-room, make-do chapels" are repeated not only in Tokyo and Japan but also throughout Asia and South America. Cramped and ill-suited meeting places may be the stuff humorous anecdotes for homecoming talks are made of, but it is a pain to have to try and meet the needs of ward members in them.

Rapid church growth has been complicated by rising energy costs and inflation. Even the Lord's dollar (or peso or yen) does not go as far as it used to. Thus, unless we can find a real "dream mine," the budgetary restraints on church building must be reckoned with. Perhaps a more realistic solution to the cloning of church architecture is not an article on creative needs in architecture but a sermon on tithing.

The concept of a world-wide church suggests more than a chapel in Seoul, Korea, looking like one in Sandy, Utah. Rather it demands us to

ask if a basic tenet of the gospel — love thy neighbor as thy self — can allow one ward to build a chapel that "through the dramatic use of color, line, and light . . . creates a moving atmosphere of reverence and beauty" and a \$9,000 cost overrun, while another ward must meet in a makeshift chapel in an old warehouse?

Roger W. Purdy
Tokyo, Japan

black skin

My letter to DIALOGUE on the removal of "Pharaoh's Curse" should read "black skin" not "black sin." The misprint makes for interesting theological speculation, but that was not my intent!

Actually, Satan's sin (overbearing pride and ambition) is more of a "white" sin than a "black" one! Be that as it may, the change in the temple ceremony referred to "skin" not sin. Please correct.

Frederick S. Buchanan
Salt Lake City, Utah

Famous Last Words, or Through the Correspondence Files

For the past six years, I have been engaged in various dialogues best understood by a quick trip through the editorial correspondence files, a sort of diary (or dia-log) of my term as editor. In that fragmentary record I grope for a synthesis that eludes me. Whenever someone politely asks me what kind of journal *DIALOGUE* is, I usually fall back on words like *quarterly*, *intellectual*, and *scholarly*.

But I am never satisfied with that description. What I would really like to do is put together a paradox, beginning with this year's Memorial Day family home evening when my husband, two sons, my daughter, and I reminisced about certain family members who had passed on. Chick and I went from there to outlining our own funeral and burial plans. (He wants the whole Tab Choir at his funeral; I want to be cremated and deposited in one of my handthrown pots.) At one point I picked up the red issue of *DIALOGUE* and began reading aloud from Claudia Bushman's "Light and Dark Thoughts on Death." She describes in loving detail the preparation she and her sisters made for their mother's funeral—the sewing of the clothes, the dressing of the body. I found that I was crying as I read, for all the world as if I had not been the one to shepherd the article through its several stages of publication process. Claudia herself had once chided me for what she felt was undue emphasis on the personal voice, announcing her own intention to avoid such unworthy self-disclosure. Yet here was Claudia writing in this scholarly intellectual journal about one of the most intimate of all experiences, and here was I weeping as I read it.

I don't like to think of myself as the kind of critic who pronounces something good if it makes her laugh or cry, but I can't help getting personal about the experience of taking *DIALOGUE* into my home and nurturing it for six years. When I think of Claudia and the countless others who wrote for it or worked on it (sometimes against their better judgment), I feel such a combination of pain, guilt, elation, joy, regret, and fatigue that to describe *DIALOGUE* as an intellectual scholarly journal is just not good enough. And when I consider the passion and the energy that went into the founding of it and its continuance for fifteen years, I can only think of another friend of mine who once cried out in frustration, "I must worship in my mind!" Worship is emotional, spiritual, passionate—and yes—intellectual. So is this enterprise called *DIALOGUE*: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT.

As I look back through the years by reading back through the files, I hear a whole collection of dialogues, perhaps beginning with my father's rather puzzled question, intoned when he first heard of my ascendancy to the editorship: "Why did they pick you?"

This question has never been answered to anyone's satisfaction—certainly not mine. When Bob Rees and the other two members of his executive committee called me from L.A. one summer midnight in 1976, and I put the question to them, Bob said, "Because you have so many friends there who will help you."

This didn't seem a good enough reason to shoulder such a momentous burden, so I took him up on his offer to fly to L.A., to be entertained at the homes of the executive committee. I met with the volunteers; visited the office; I even sat in Fran and Tom Anderson's jacuzzi. When I returned home, I received a follow-up call from Tom, the business manager. "Mary, you didn't ask any of the right questions." How could I? I didn't know enough to ask questions. I was dazzled, I knew that—dazzled by the Southern California sun and the heady notion that the journal on which I had served for so many years might be entrusted to me. It seemed like a call—it was a call—a conference call in the middle of the night from three men. How could I resist? But it was also an opportunity to reach beyond myself, and an opportunity to work with some of the most gifted people in the Church. When I later asked Bob Rees what he had enjoyed most during his term as editor, he replied, "The people."

But I was not ready. I would have to talk to some of these people—especially to my own family.

"I like thinking about you and what you're doing and Chick and what he is doing—that unified ambivalence." (Letter from Vivien Olsen, December 1976)

After the call from L.A., panic set in. I just assumed that my husband would save me. He was after all my bishop; we still had three children very much at home; I was working practically fulltime teaching for the government, and I was traveling quite a bit. I told Chick what an impossible thing it would be for us, describing in detail the pros and cons as I only dimly understood them. He listened politely and said nothing. After my investigative trip to L.A., we went to dinner at our favorite French restaurant—on me. He let me tell him all about the trip. I lamented that I was already filling several impossible roles—wife of a bishop, mother of teenagers, government gobbledygook eradicator. Why not take on the *possible* for a change? He listened sympathetically and said nothing.

A bit miffed, I went on to interview possible volunteers. Lester Bush and Alice Pottmyer seemed to appear magically without being recruited. I had worked with Lester on his black article and was close to his family. Alice was the editor of our ward newsletter, and I knew of her considerable experience in publishing magazines and newsletters before her marriage. Royal Shipp took me to lunch, presented several persuasive arguments why DIALOGUE needed *me*, and volunteered as business manager. (Later when I asked my mentor Lowell Bennion for advice, he said, "Take it only if you can turn over the business part to somebody else.")

After calling forty or fifty other close friends and relatives, I again approached Chick. "I think we would have to move the office into our home. What do you think of that?" He said, "Well, the bishop's office upstairs—the DIALOGUE office downstairs—celestial, telestial." I went off muttering to myself. What was I doing—setting up a cottage industry?

Later Chick admitted that he had hoped I would finally refuse, but he hadn't been able to bring himself to exercise such unrighteous dominion by presuming to advise me on such an important matter. He was to be repaid for this remarkable act of forbearance by becoming really attached to the Thursday night DIALOGUE crowd and the product they helped create.

As for the children, they grew up during the DIALOGUE years. Some of their more difficult teenage dramas were enacted around the DIALOGUE schedule. In a rebellious mood, Lorraine once cried out, "I will never be an editor as long as I live. I think it's stupid." But she became a good summer secretary-editorial assistant. Scott was an excellent proofreader, and Stephen our eldest, introduced himself to classes at BYU as "Son of DIALOGUE." (I think it only fitting that the Son of DIALOGUE was chosen to present the BYU Honors Professor of the Year Award to Eugene England, Father of DIALOGUE.)

DIALOGUE now seems more like a beehive than a marathon." (Letter from George D. Smith, April 1978)

"The main reason we are solvent is not the number of subscriptions but the willingness of our volunteers to kill themselves off saving us money. With DIALOGUE in my house, a couple of paid part-timers (paid very little, I might add) and me working night and day, we can safely say that DIALOGUE comes out of our hides." (Letter to Jill Mulvay Derr, April 1981.)

Comprised of as many as forty or as few as two, our volunteer organization was always open to anyone professing the slightest interest in our enterprise. Readers from afar could look us up for an evening; newly married couples moving into the area could call on us for an instant support group, single men and women could stop worrying about marriage for awhile and devote themselves to our nonsexist activities; people from all professions—doctors, lawyers, housewives, accountants, chemists, computer freaks—anybody was welcome to stuff envelopes or proofread copy. In fact the stuffing parties were some of our more memorable evenings. We could sit around and chew on M&M's and church gossip. One night Gene Kovalenko flew in from California and serenaded us with Russian folk songs while we readied the renewals for mailing. We sponsored several "firesides" too—Mark Leone with the inside story of his book, *Roots of Modern Mormonism*; William Collins, writer and librarian from the B'Hai faith in Haifa; Leonard Arrington and other historians on eastern tours; editors from other publications—Roy Branson and crew of the Seventh Day Adventist quarterly *Spectrum*, past editors of DIALOGUE like Gene England, Wes Johnson, Bob Rees, and Gordon Thomasson; and present editors of *Sunstone*, *Exponent II*, and *Utah Holiday*. There was such a variety of

meetings with such a variety of people that we became known as the DIALOGUE salon.

A real bonus was the opportunity to know our supporters in the Reorganization or RLDS Church. Some of them served on our board. Others wrote for us: Paul Edwards, Bill Russell, Alma Blair, Claire Vlahos, Howard Booth, and others. Our relationship with them was cemented by our trips to the Mormon History Association annual meetings in Kirtland, Lamoni, and Palmyra, delightful excursions that opened our eyes to a shared heritage outside our own circle.

"Working with an all-volunteer group is really challenging, especially when you have a professional-looking product to put out. The other day two other women and I went to visit a printer's establishment—Alice Pottmyer, our publications specialist, and Judy McConkie, our art editor. The man got almost through his tour of the plant before he told us how important it would be to bring our bosses to see it too. He turned and said, "You do have bosses, don't you?" We looked at each other a minute, then pulled ourselves up to our full height and said, "We are the bosses!" (Letter to Carolyn Person, July 1976)

Not only was it difficult to convince ourselves that we were really in charge, it was difficult to know how to manage so much good help. After one particularly grueling evening in which about thirty of us sat around and debated policy and procedure, Royal took me aside for a bit of advice. "Mary, this many people can't make decisions. You can listen to all their ideas, but only a few can actually decide." From then we tried to organize around some division of labor. Though our group seldom disagreed on anything of importance, we did decide that since the work was being done out of my home with my name on the masthead as editor and on the legal papers as president of the corporation, the buck would have to stop with me. But it was also decided that anybody willing to work could speak up about anything. Volunteers read manuscripts, copyedited, proofread, typed, stuffed envelopes, and gradually sorted themselves into various specialties. Our group turned over several times, but several stayed on the board after moving away, and other learned enough from the experience to better their careers because of it.

I always knew, however, that the volunteers were vastly overqualified for the work and that I would never really be able to take full advantage of their skills. This was especially true of our paid workers—the managing editor, the administrative secretaries, the artists, the BYU interns. We expected them to do something of everything with precious little direction from anybody. When I think of Benita Brown and Sandra Strahbhaar working on advanced degrees (Sandy finished her Ph.D. while working for us), I can't help but feel a bit guilty. Betty Balcom performed such a variety of professional duties that we finally gave her the title "Renaissance Woman."

Our group also thrived because of the persistence of our five-member executive committee—which we grew to think of as the perfect team. Lester and I created a planning and editing approach that I can only describe as a superlative friendship. Our talents and interests contrasted but blended.

Alice's photographic memory, her delight in the daily flow of life, and her ability to recognize the importance of certain tasks that others deemed unimportant kept the office going. Royal's good sense and Dave Stewart's legal mind kept us out of many a scrape. During our quarterly meetings after dealing with the latest monetary crisis and reporting on the next issue, we liked to fantasize about the future. After several of these sessions we came to think of ourselves as a "transitional" group—or to paraphrase the Bradford of Plymouth Colony "even as stepping stones unto others for the performing of so great a work." We often marveled that we were having to run so hard just to stay in one place, but we reasoned that we were making it possible for the next group to lift *DIALOGUE* to a truly professional level with a real office and real money.

"Bob Rees' response to the media issue was luke to say the least. He marked the errors in his copy and sent it back with the words, 'You must have learned a lot.' . . . An artist friend says it looks as if it had been designed by a committee. Well, it was!" (Letter to Bill Loftus, September 1977)

Even though the first issue to be completed by our group (Vol. 10, No. 3) looked tacky, there was something heady about the fact that it was our very own issue with articles we had planned, solicited, even written ourselves. We had actually sat around a table and designed and pasted it up. Karen Maloney, our first BYU intern was to describe the "curious pleasure of seeing ideas turned into print." Although the issue was embarrassing in many ways, it helped turn our fledgling group into a cohesive family, and we even today feel affection for our deformed child.

"We believe that the main thing is to bring out the magazine regularly, boo-boos and all." (Letter to Bill Loftus, September 1977)

As we struggled to learn our craft, we sometimes cursed the standards *DIALOGUE* had set for itself. "Why," we exclaimed, "did Gene and Wes and the others have to start so high on the hog?" Why hadn't they patterned *DIALOGUE* after the *Reader's Digest* instead of the *American Scholar*? Why the perfect binding, the high-quality paper, the glossy covers and the fine art? It went against nature to be producing such a silk purse on such a shoestring. We spent hours studying the work of previous editors lined up on the family room shelves. We envied Rees his knack with art; we envied Gene and Wes their chance to be first in so many ways. We talked into the night about articles that had made a difference in our lives, and finally we began to realize that we too could set standards and build on them. They weren't too different from past standards, but we gradually learned to forgive ourselves for our growing pains—even for the typos that cropped up like buzzing insects no matter how many times we proofread.

Our ability to do increased as our numbers diminished, and we were able to enjoy what we were doing. We found that our main obsession was to work with those writers who were willing to make the sacrifices necessary to publish in the "unsponsored sector."

It is too bad you are so averse to editorial suggestions. It may be news to you that the best novelists—as well as the popular authors on the newstands—have all been edited sometimes drastically, though presumably with the author's permission. . . . Sometimes an editor can help you tell your story better." (Letter to hopeful writer, September 1981.)

"At your request, we are returning your manuscript. You were right: it is not DIALOGUE material." (Letter to another hopeful writer, June 1979.)

Writing rejection letters was the most painful part of my job. I was so doubtful of my own abilities as a critic and yet so anxious to develop writers that combined fear and anxiety led me to write letters that were not only curt but cruel. In reading these letters, I find that I also sounded deceptively confident and aggressive. And of course, I was always apologizing: "It is really embarrassing to have to write and tell you that we seem to have lost your poems," or "I apologize for the editorial wheels. They grind exceedingly fine, but they grind exceedingly slow." I found that some of the worst moments came when I found myself rejecting work I had actually solicited. Most of the rejected took it in good part, but the following response from one writer whose solicited review was rejected probably expresses the feelings of many others: "You have put me to a good deal of trouble and effort for nothing and you wasted a good deal of my time. My time is not yours to play games with, and I'm afraid I do resent your having decided that it was." Fortunately, for every letter like that one—branded on my conscience with a hot iron—there were two or three others like this from Robert Egbert: "When an editor writes a letter of rejection, I'm sure she must assume that receipt of that letter will bring distress and at least mild depression to the author. For me, the opposite was true. Though I was disappointed that you did not accept my story, I was so pleased with your other comments and with your useful analysis that I have been on a day-long high."

Various staff members kept trying to help me with the task of writing rejection letters and some of them were very good at it—Lester, for instance, and Sandy Straubhaar. One night Greg Prince appeared, took a look at the manuscripts sitting in the bin by my desk and said, "I suppose you think if you leave these here long enough, they will ripen into something wonderful?" He then proceeded to compose a few pithy paragraphs which he assured me I could use in form letters of rejection. Somehow I could never bring myself to do it. It now seems to me that it might have been a good deal kinder to have sent a well-written, good-natured rejection letter than to agonize and struggle with custom-designed letters sent too little and too late.

I suppose it was natural that I would agonize most over fiction and poetry. I think that in some cases we may have succeeded in actually causing a work to disappear by requiring too many revisions. Better to publish an imperfect story in the cause of keeping the creative process alive than require the author to do so much revision that his work goes up in a cloud of blue smoke. Former board member Kevin Barnhurst assures me that I shouldn't worry—that words are written on paper, not carved in stone and that the author can always go back

and retrieve an earlier draft. But I am unconvinced. Won't the author lose heart?

"I was surprised at the number of reactions to my piece in DIALOGUE. For a magazine with limited and specialized circulation, DIALOGUE certainly seems to be getting around." (Letter from Merlo Pusey, March 1977)

Merlo Pusey's comment expresses the reality that DIALOGUE is read by a far larger number than those who actually pay for it. I have come to call these "shadow readers." These are they who check it out at the library (sometimes failing to return it), borrow it from friends, or otherwise "see" it and remark on it. To them reading is a godgiven right, like breathing, so they fail to make the connection between reading and money. Because of the generosity in the lay Church mentality, because of the fact that many Church publications are subsidized, and because DIALOGUE is expensive by Church standards, many readers simply will never make the connection. I understand and sympathize with that mentality myself. I have to be physically restrained by my staff from giving DIALOGUE away as I have gradually given away my personal library over the years. But I have finally overcome my shyness at asking for money for DIALOGUE. I am no longer shy about mentioning it at Church. If we can raise food at the stake farm, why can't we raise food for the mind?

"Don't give up on me, honeybun. I haven't given up on you, even though I feel you are a hostage of the establishment." (Letter from Sam Taylor, 3 March 1981)

"Well, I should keep my big mouf shut. I'd no sooner mailed off my churlish note to you than the latest DIALOGUE arrived—and it was exactly what I'd been screaming for. Once again the mag was a journal of Mormon thought. As such, long may it wave." (Letter from Sam Taylor, 17 March 1981)

Vivien Olsen's characterization of my relationship with my husband as "unified ambivalence" seems to apply to readers' perceptions of DIALOGUE. We never knew whether we were being perceived as Iron Rodders or Liahonas. After writing to a lapsed subscriber to ask why he had departed the fold, I received this reply: "I cancelled because you have been avoiding controversy." Another reader penned this note on his renewal notice: "Please save yourselves some money and send no more notes. Your publication lately is so similar to official Church publications that I can't tell the difference." Of course the minute we published material that could be called "controversial"—as in the Sonia Johnson articles—we were pronounced "sounding board for apostates." One letter, published in *Sunstone*, inducted us into the "unholy triad" along with *Sunstone* and *Exponent II*. In my response I stated, and I still believe, that "we are dedicated to free inquiry within the boundaries of decency and documentation. In fact, we believe so profoundly in the gospel of Jesus Christ that we trust it to withstand inquiry from such as we."

This constant juggling act, this keeping the faith while keeping on, was always difficult and we were not always adept at it. On the whole, though, we held our own.

Many in the Church publishing world seem unable to make distinctions among the various publications. Some actually think of us as competition for the *Deseret News* and other profit-making periodicals.

Our journal is difficult to summarize, as I have already said. When a prospective reader asks for a sample copy, we are often at a loss to know what to choose. Should we send them the one with the First Vision on the cover and the Sacred Grove inside or the Sonia Johnson issue? DIALOGUE needs to be read over a period of time. It should be seen in the aggregate before a judgment can be made. Many times our readers spoke from their own emotional needs when they wrote of our objectivity or lack of it. I am always comforted, however, by the many thinking Mormons who are unafraid to face diversity of opinion and are not taken in by labels. I am fond of the Arrington-Bitton analysis of the Liahona-Iron Rod dichotomy in *The Mormon Experience*: "Conservative Mormons include many highly educated individuals who emphasize strong reliance on the wording of scripture, the authoritative structure of church government, and a church-centered social system. Liberals emphasize the boldness and innovative character of the Restoration, faith in the essential goodness of man and his possibilities of eternal progression, and the church's commitment to education and the resulting emphasis on rationality. The checks and balances give Mormonism both stability and progressivism."

"We all know what happened in June 1978. I like to think some of us 'heretics' helped bring the announcement about. . . . God must love heretics. His Son was the greatest." (Letter from John Fitzgerald, July 1978)

The question of whether or not we should publish the work of "heretics" and other apostates was always being debated among us and our readers. Though we have no intention of becoming a sounding board for apostates or anyone else with an ax to grind, we think active Church members might have something to learn from those who leave, if only the reason for their leaving. Is it worthwhile to engage in dialogue with only those with whom we already agree?

But of course balance is important—and one person's balance may be another person's heresy. Believing that objectivity is the hobgoblin of weak minds, we nonetheless tried to be fair to various thinkers within the Liahona-Iron Rod dichotomy. The most controversial issue published during my tenure was the one carrying interviews with both Sonia Johnson and Fawn Brodie. Although it was almost accidental and coincidental that the two appeared together, we did think it instructive to run them. I prefaced this issue with a very carefully written page outlining the difficulties and the logistics of our decision to publish, which as far as I can tell, went unread. Although the issue is very popular, I am still asked the question, "Why did you have to deal with the Sonia Johnson case at all? Why not let it die?" As if we could in good conscience ignore the most sensational excommunication in recent history with its attendant effect on the Church's public image and the questions it raised about Church trials and women's rights.

"I think this is an exciting time to be the editor of DIALOGUE, knowing as I do how the previous editors suffered over the black problem. Surely this [revelation] will release much

energy in the church, creative and otherwise.” (Letter to Stanton Hall, June 1978)

If this life is indeed a testing ground, certainly my life with DIALOGUE has been an impressive test for me. I have had to marshall every resource of mind and heart in order to do my job, and certainly working on DIALOGUE has released energies I didn't know I had. But it has also led to the suppression of certain talents I thought I had. For instance, I have not written a poem worth showing to anybody since I first took the helm. It seems that I can't write poetry and edit too. A letter from one of my pen pals, Mary Jane Heatherington, expresses the problem:

I've got this desk that used to be a teacher's desk. . . . It's got one of those liftup drawers where you have your typewriter down inside and the desk is flat on top. When you pull up on the handle, the typewriter comes rising out of the bowels of the desk all ready for action. Everytime I raise up the door and get my typewriter out, it reminds me of the Green Hornet—bar—ooo—mmm! But mostly I get depressed and put her back when I can't get her to do right. I've been in a snit for months, not writing anything.”

I replied that “my typewriter is always sitting out—a silent reproach as I glide by. I can't even get it to disappear. It simply reminds me of my lost dreams, my sleeping ambitions.”

I suppose that I realized I was putting certain ambitions on the back burner, but I also realized the possibility of becoming a creative editor as well as a creative writer. I soon discovered the same satisfaction when a new issue comes off the press as I would have felt if I had written the whole thing myself; more so, in fact, because the issue represents the work of so many other good minds I have helped into print. So, although I never did live up to all my own ambitions for myself, I revel in the satisfaction I used to feel in the classroom with its feedback from inquiring minds. I also took delight in that gift of friendship Bob Rees had mentioned. I call it a gift because I believe it is just that—an undeserved gift bestowed by a kindly God. No matter how difficult the tasks, how cross and irritable I became, no matter how inefficient and uncommunicative, how down-right cantankerous I was, my friends always came forward whenever there was work to be done and even when I just needed moral support or a touch of therapy. If certain talents of mine have gone underground, I do not mourn them.

“I am sorry that you are thinking of giving DIALOGUE up. The healthy thing which DIALOGUE has always stood for—an independent, intelligent, cultivated but ultimately faithful study of Mormonism—is at stake. The editor of DIALOGUE should be neither too orthodox nor too liberal. A precise mixture of both qualities is essential.” (Letter from Levi Peterson, August 1981)

During the last two years or so, I began noticing certain alarming traits in myself. Not only was I fatigued and restless, but I had taken to referring to DIALOGUE as “my journal” and its board as “my board.” The fact that Stephen could introduce himself as “son of DIALOGUE” was probably only a harbinger of things to come. Soon I would lose all touch with reality and grow into one of

those obnoxious characters who can't tell the difference between herself and her job. It was time to quit.

But how? One of the weaknesses in our system seemed to be that retiring editors must go out and seek their own replacements. So I called the executive committee together and asked if any of them wished to take it over. They assured me that they were as ready as I to pass on the torch. Thus began the research that would lead us to decide it was time to move DIALOGUE to Utah.

This was heresy to some. Several of our staff and many readers were adamantly opposed to settling in the center stake. I myself had been one of those who felt I could do a better job at a comfortable distance away from the rumor mills of Utah. We were dedicated also to the ideal of dispersing ourselves enough so that we could more effectively "examine the relevance of religion to secular life." Washington, D.C., had been a good vantage point for "point" men and women to stand, being a crossroads and a network for Mormons and those interested in studying Mormons. But continuing financial problems kept reminding us that we would need to publish where publishing was less expensive and where there might be a chance to move it out of our homes and more nearly into the professional marketplace. Since most of our subscribers and many of our writers are still in Utah and neighboring California, we reasoned that perhaps the time had come to try it in Utah. When I asked Bob Rees's opinion, he said, "Is it time for DIALOGUE to go home?"

Of course, the primary consideration was and always would be the calibre of volunteers who would agree to take it over. Since we are unable to advertise for paid professional labor, we would have to count on the belief that the spirit of DIALOGUE still lives, a spirit of unstinting dedication to an ideal.

I thought. I made lists. I prayed. And one morning I felt inspired to call Fred Esplin, one of DIALOGUE's faithful board members. I asked him if he would agree to head up a search committee composed of other faithful board members in Utah. I felt that Fred's low-key friendly personality, his wide contacts, and his excellent organizing skills were just what we needed. So with the aid of attorney Randy Mackey and other long-time supporters, he formed a research committee and finance committee to find candidates and make recommendations. When I arrived in Utah three months later, we had a good list of prospective editors and some reasonable printing and office bids. The work that went into these lists convinced me that DIALOGUE's spirit was still alive and well in Utah.

"After we checked into the Ramada Inn in Ogden, we were greeted by Paul Edwards and Doug Alder. Doug said, 'Mary, you really pulled off a coup—getting the Newells—they're wonderful!' " (Letter to Carole Lansdowne describing the MHA meeting, May 1982)

In the age of the family, the choice of a husband-wife team as DIALOGUE's co-editors seems inspired. When I interviewed the Newells, they had only one stipulation—that Lavina Fielding Anderson come with them. When Fred and Randy agreed to stay on, joined by Allen Roberts, *Sunstone's* former co-editor, and Julie Randall, our efficient BYU intern, the new group was ready to set up an

accessible office in downtown Salt Lake City. All that remained was a ritual farewell dinner to convince me that I could say goodbye without fear or anxiety. In another letter I wrote, "There is real activity and electricity being generated by the next group. I no longer worry about giving it up."



VALEDICTORY

We consider the conductor of a religious periodical under as much stronger obligations to seek after and publish the truth, as eternity is longer than any portion of time of which we have any connection, or as the soul is more valuable than the mortal tenement in which it now dwells. . . .

Man in the private walks of life may pursue the paths of virtue and peace, worship the God who made him in sincerity and truth, go down to the grave in peace, and almost unknown, and his posterity rise up and call him blessed. But not so the man that takes upon him the conducting of a public periodical, however innocent, however pure he may be. His motives are scanned, his intentions sometimes perverted. . . . He will be censured perhaps, when he least deserves it in his own estimation, and praised when he merits rebuke. . . .

We had one hope on which we relied when we entered upon the duties of our new calling: (viz.) that by diligence and perseverance we should overcome many of the minor obstacles that presented themselves before us, and contribute our share in promoting the great cause for which this periodical was established. . . .

Our most ardent desires are, that the saints and others, should derive a benefit commensurate at least, with the exertions we have made to do them good.

Warren Cowdery, in his farewell "Valedictory" on stepping down as editor of the *Latter Day Saints' Message and Advocate*, 1837

Some things never change. With a little judicious editing, Cowdery's reflective essay could as easily have been that of three succeeding teams of *DIALOGUE* editors. Indeed after reviewing fifteen volumes of "Mormon thought" to see where the last five fit in, one is struck by how few changes there have been over the years. And this consistency has gone well beyond the obvious parameters of format and subject matter—for which rather clear patterns were early established—to such intangibles as the philosophy and the goals which each new group has surely felt to be independently if not distinctively its own.

DIALOGUE was defined in 1966 through several seminal essays. In particular, Wesley Johnson's "Editorial Preface" to the first issue set forth the "general purposes" of this new journal of Mormon thought. In essence the three basic goals were:

- to stimulate and sponsor excellence in literature and the arts,
- to provide "thoughtful persons" with a journal both "directly concerned with their quest for rational faith and faith-promoting knowledge" and which would "sustain a serious standard of objectivity, candor, and imagination,"
- to offer Mormons the opportunity "to develop their identity, uniqueness, and sense of purpose by expressing their spiritual heritage and moral vision to the community of man."

While DIALOGUE's record was to be one of notable successes in all three of these areas, it was apparent very early that each would not receive equal emphasis. The second of these goals clearly struck the most responsive chord among the mainstay of DIALOGUE readers. Many of the young, committed Mormons educated in the fifties and sixties shared a very real and often deeply personal desire, in both heart and mind, for some reconciliation of faith and reason. Not a desire to resolve things in the ultimate sense but to engage in a candid dialogue which would encompass secular as well as ecclesiastical truths and be jointly governed by the rigorous standards of both their spiritual and intellectual heritage. They hoped in this way to illuminate and clarify stress points felt more acutely during this time than before or after. Most of DIALOGUE's character subscribers will remember what it was like.

Keynotes in this now-sixteen-year quest are found in that first issue in Francis Menlove's memorable "The Challenge of Honesty" and Gene England's "The Possibilities of Dialogue." David Bitton followed two issues later with his important perspective on "Anti-Intellectualism in Mormon History." Many landmark articles on various aspects of the Mormon experience, such as James Allen's reappraisal of the First Vision, demonstrated that Mormon scholars actually intended to do what their idealistic essays advertised: apply the highest possible standards of faith *and* scholarship to the most important aspects of their tradition and beliefs. And, as never before, literature and the arts were fostered in a Mormon journal. And Mormons sought openly to enter into "meaningful dialogue" with those outside the faith.

A perhaps inadvertent but nonetheless telltale trail through the minds of the DIALOGUE editors can be traced in the little "fillers" and short reprints inserted here and there into empty spaces over the years. The quotations included that first year reflected the goals expressed at the outset. Especially conspicuous were brief statements by Church leaders expressing what might be called Mormonism's "spiritual heritage and moral vision"—the third and "perhaps most important of all" of Johnson's general goals. By the second year, however, (beginning with a reprint of B. H. Roberts's now well-known endorsement of "intelligent discipleship" in Winter 1966) the unmistakably dominant theme of the not-so-subliminal messages was the sanctity of free inquiry. The first of Hugh B. Brown's stirring endorsements of "the questing spirit" was carried, with eloquent or pithy support from John Stuart Mill, Brigham Young, Hugh Nibley, and others. Excepting those special issues devoted to a single subject with quotations selected accordingly, this theme has continued to dominate *Dialogue* fillers and reprints ever since. And articles designed specifically to

inquire openly and responsibly into the Mormon faith-reason interface have dominated DIALOGUE .

What caused DIALOGUE to focus so exclusively within Mormonism? The answer was hinted at later that first year when Editor Gene England spoke to the LDS Institute at the University of Utah on "DIALOGUE—the Idea and the Journal." He had come, he said, "to talk about the possibility of dialogue," but what he really talked about was the *legitimacy* of dialogue. And he placed in support of his thesis many of the quotations which were to appear in the next few issues. In so doing England expressly endorsed a comment made at the Institute several years earlier: "There are much better resources in Mormon theology and the writings of its prophets to defend freedom of inquiry than can be found in those of a heretic like John Stuart Mill." But in actual practice he and his fellow editors were learning that there were no more than a handful of such expressions. Only Hugh B. Brown in the contemporary church hierarchy seemed to be saying what they most wanted to hear—and they quoted him more often and at greater length than anyone else (and still turned twice to the writings of heretic Mill).

DIALOGUE simply was not embraced by the institutional Church, either in practice or in principle. Nor were even the ideals for which it stood endorsed publicly by anyone but President Brown. After nearly a year of publication, it was still DIALOGUE's aspiration—in England's words at the Institute—"to prove ourselves worthy—if not of their [the General Authorities] support [,] at least [their] allowance." DIALOGUE's dialogue clearly was not going to be with the church leadership, nor therefore was any dialogue between faith and reason going to involve those to whom official Mormon thought was formally entrusted. A sharp public response by President Brown's successor in the First Presidency (and future president of the Church) to DIALOGUE's most significant definitional article in the second year—Richard Poll's "What the Church Means to People like Me"—later signalled that even the DIALOGUE-type of member was viewed with suspicion by important Church leaders.

While disappointing, this must surely have come as no surprise to the early DIALOGUE staff. England's Institute address philosophically prepared the way for the relationship which probably seemed inevitable to many from the first:

One of the resources for dialogue in the Church is that we believe in a lay Church. The Church does not belong to any group or any man. It doesn't belong to the General Authorities or the other leaders; it belongs to all of us. It's *our* Church; we're responsible for it, its failures and its strengths. It's up to us to create, in a large sense, what the Church is. And our vision of what the Church can become in the next thirty years will determine in part what we will do to make it what it can become. I believe it can become, can continue to be, the kingdom of God on the earth and want to use DIALOGUE and my life to contribute to that.

Since at this time DIALOGUE and The Church At Large were not ready for each other, DIALOGUE for practical purposes set out on its own "to create, in a large sense, what the Church is." The "Church" thus created was a distinctive

hybrid of Mormon and scholarly idealism which confidently and candidly opened the door to penetrating self-examination, and which (generally) did not shy away from important questions or conclusions. It was an attitudinal church, the "Church of kindred spirits." And new converts regularly bore their testimonies in letters to the editor. "We thought we were alone. What a joy to discover DIALOGUE."

As pathbreaking articles in succeeding years examined with increasing evidence and sophistication many important elements of the Mormon heritage, both editors and readers became aware of a surprising if not astonishing shallowness in their knowledge of important aspects of the Mormon past. And, until a more definitive understanding of what constituted the "spiritual heritage and moral vision" of Mormonism emerged, DIALOGUE could not readily fulfill what its founders believed to be its greatest purpose: propagating this message to the literate, thinking world. The only true dialogue possible between Mormon and non-Mormon was, and continues to be, limited largely to educating outside students of Mormonism about ourselves more or less as we educated ourselves, or (much too infrequently) asking them to place us into the broader context of their studies.

The impracticality of expressing our "spiritual and moral vision to the community of man" did not stop a few early attempts, but inevitably what was presented was a highly personal synthesis ultimately reflecting only the (often progressive) theology of the author. While this may have been advertised as Mormonism, it really was what some *hoped* Mormonism was or would be. Generally directed at difficult social or political issues on which there was no genuine consensus even among thinking Mormons, such subjective expressions were not particularly popular and were soon largely abandoned.

The attempt to articulate a sense of Mormon identity, uniqueness, and spiritual heritage—"half" of Johnson's major goal—did, however, find an early and important place in DIALOGUE, in the form of moving personal essays directed *within*, to the fellowship of kindred spirits drawn together by DIALOGUE. Richard Poll's "What the Church Means to People like Me" has been mentioned. There was also Lowell Bennion's "Carrying Water on Both Shoulders," and many others, later including Richard Bushman's thoughtful reflections on "Faithful History." In a real sense these essays spoke for all DIALOGUE-oriented Mormons trying to come to grips with their increasingly distinctive position within the larger LDS community.

This then was the legacy passed first to Bob Rees and his associates in Los Angeles just over a decade ago, and later, essentially unchanged, to Washington, D.C., five volumes later. It is the same one we entrust to our successors.

Rees tried, with some success, to place greater emphasis on arts and letters, an effort conspicuously reflected in his "fillers". He also occasionally attempted to bring the "spiritual heritage and moral vision" of Mormonism to bear on current societal issues, but again stumbled over the personal theologies on which the authors were forced to rely, however, well prooftexted with suppor-

tive quotations. Overwhelmingly, however, Rees found himself in essentially the same position as had been his predecessors—still defending the value of open discussion, still examining and defining important aspects of Mormonism. His essays, “A Continuing Dialogue” on assuming the editorship and “The Possibilities of Dialogue” shortly before relinquishing it, could as easily have been written by England or Johnson. Overall, to judge from an informal survey we conducted several years ago, DIALOGUE readers felt it carried as many important studies during the second five years as during the first. The special issues on music, sex, science, and blacks are still milestones in the history of Mormon thought.

But in one way this second stage in the DIALOGUE pilgrimage was significantly different from the first. The intensity of the practical problems was greater than anything before or after.

Much like Warren Cowdery 135 years before, DIALOGUE editors generally have found that it is the “many minor obstacles” that take up nearly all of their time, not the idealistic quest for truth. There is *no* aspect of the manuscript solicitation, editing, or production process that cannot go and has not gone awry. This is an eternal law. In the context of DIALOGUE’s traditionally austere financial and manpower resources, such “minor obstacles” can almost be overwhelming. During the Los Angeles period many such obstacles were encountered, plus a few that were unique.

By the early seventies, much of the intellectual urgency of the previous few years was receding rapidly. This was evident nationally, and it was also true for many who had previously found *Dialogue* essential. Beyond this general mood swing, there were several other developments. *Dialogue* supporters, often bright young graduate students or professionals just getting into new careers, moved into the positions of local church leadership one would expect of competent and committed members. In the process many became so immersed in the overwhelming administrative and counseling problems of the day-to-day Church that little time, energy or—ultimately—inclination remained for the reflective issues which had so engrossed them previously. (And, in fairness, Mormon doctrines and intellectual tradition of the Latter-day Saints, had, and still have, little to do with the everyday Church—indeed, are irrelevant to the practical lives of most members.) Some of these rising leaders were “lost” to DIALOGUE.

Another group of DIALOGUE “casualties” about this time was those fair-weather friends whose support depended upon tacit endorsement by the Church—an endorsement which, of course, never came. While the Church did issue a neutral announcement about the independent status of DIALOGUE back in 1967—much as it might have done for, say, McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine*—a clearer message was signalled to many with friends among the Authorities: senior members of the Quorum were displeased. This, or perhaps merely an Authoritative raised eyebrow, was all the lead that many Mormon intellectuals needed to chart their revised course. A few, in admittedly difficult professional circumstances at BYU or elsewhere, supported DIALOGUE privately but became

unwilling to be openly identified with it.

Perhaps the most unfortunate group of DIALOGUE dropouts during these years were those for whom DIALOGUE had served as a place of refuge during years of particular religious trauma. While DIALOGUE's successes in holding many of these valuable voices is one of its major accomplishments, for too many the refuge proved to be only a waystation. Paradoxically, those with the greatest awareness of how things really were going at DIALOGUE often were the most vulnerable. For, in addition to the shifting sands of support noted above, it was during these same years that DIALOGUE received its greatest direct intimidation from individual General Authorities or their intermediary "friends." Again like editor Cowdery long ago, the "intentions" of the DIALOGUE staff were "perverted," their judgment faulted. But not in any official way. And now there was no longer Hugh B. Brown, whose release from the First Presidency left DIALOGUE with no remaining visible support at the highest levels within the Church. Fortunately, there was, and continues to be, a great deal of "intermediate level support"—including a few of the less senior General Authorities. Indeed, the role of the local and regional leaders in providing a buffer between the DIALOGUE editors and the personal messages of visiting leaders probably cannot be overstated. They provided an important measure of stability in a difficult time.

There were other relevant developments during these years. One that in retrospect was overrated at the time was the appearance of competing journals aimed at a similar audience. The resurrected *BYU Studies* began to carry essays that bore all the hallmarks of those in DIALOGUE. The *Utah Historical Quarterly* turned more regularly to Mormon studies. Both the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Sunstone* appeared. And a new set of in-house magazines, the *Ensign* and the *New Era*, were issued by the Church with undeniable traces of the DIALOGUE style and spirit in each issue. Given the substantial personal costs of running a "volunteer" journal of the quality of DIALOGUE, these developments raised substantial questions. In the words of a widely circulated open letter by a founding editor, Edward Geary, "Is DIALOGUE Worth Saving?"

A measure of the spirit of these times, a spirit of hope perhaps born of DIALOGUE's early idealism, is that some on DIALOGUE's board believed that with the advent of the new church magazines DIALOGUE was no longer needed. And unquestionably, both the *Ensign* and the *New Era* carried material that previously could have appeared only in DIALOGUE. A more farsighted view prevailed among the editorial staff and most DIALOGUE supporters. There was still only one outlet for innovative or unconventional poetry and fiction, and only one outlet for exhaustive, quasi-definitional articles on the sensitive subjects that were often at the heart of many readers' personal dialogues. There was also only one established, widely recognized, and truly *independent* journal of Mormon studies. On reflection it was apparent that whatever independence or scholarship was found in the others was to some degree dependent on the existence of the strong and continuing presence of DIALOGUE. As some of these related publications have gained increased stature and seeming permanence, it

has become evident that there was more than enough work left for all—and that all have about the same number of readers as DIALOGUE. “Independent thinkers,” it seems, are few in the Church, and they tend to subscribe to everything.

A final but deceptively important factor in the unusual trials of DIALOGUE’s second chapter was the small size of the staff during those years—in part a reflection of all the foregoing—and its great vulnerability to the departure of key people. Under the general circumstances, the loss of even one associate could cause insurmountable problems—and did.

In view of all this, it is quite remarkable, and a credit to Bob Rees and the others, that what emerged from this collective challenge was a distinguished legacy, and an essentially intact, readily recognizable DIALOGUE—only a year or two behind schedule. A more mature *Dialogue*, one now well-educated in subjects it might have preferred to avoid. And a DIALOGUE which, despite all, had pressed forward in its spiritual and intellectual quest.

Thus, by the time DIALOGUE came to Washington, there wasn’t much that had not already been weathered. Its recent public history is well known to readers. The internal record has been—in Cowdery’s apt terms—one of unrelenting, even exhausting “diligence and perseverance [in] overcom[ing] many of the minor obstacles that presented themselves before us.” While the Washington staff was larger than that in Los Angeles, it was still modest in size and accordingly there has been little time to contemplate the unsurpassed importance and beauty of the whole enterprise. We’ve had too many problems with the spelling and the paper stock and the illustrations and the biographical notes and . . .

While we have had our share of excitement and trauma, overall the past few years have been marked by a surprising stability. Safely removed from western rumor mills (but also without the accompanying advantages in access and manpower) and with benign or oblivious local Church leaders, we have felt virtually no hint of intimidation. If anything we sometimes wondered if DIALOGUE has been shouting into a vacuum. Our executive “core,” for the first time in DIALOGUE history, remained intact for the duration. The quality and importance of materials submitted, especially in recent years, has been extraordinary, and authors commendably malleable on stylistic questions. Only money has been a major problem. And still is. It need only be said that DIALOGUE could not exist, despite its considerable readership and “outrageous” subscription rates, were it not for several magnanimous benefactors.

As we look through the shelf of “our” issues, several messages stand out. First, we clearly were proud of the DIALOGUE heritage. Our telltale fillers are by-and-large quotations taken directly from the early issues of DIALOGUE. Important quotations from important articles. We celebrated DIALOGUE’s tenth anniversary with both a special issue and—thanks to the efforts of Gary Gillum—a superb and comprehensive ten-year index. We believed DIALOGUE mattered.

A second message is that there is an increasing depth and insight reflected in

research into the heart of Mormonism's intellectual and doctrinal traditions. Much remains to be done in this area, but—as always—*DIALOGUE* continues to be the vehicle for some of the most thought-provoking and penetrating essays in Mormon thought yet published. It is especially encouraging that the interest and momentum in this important area are on the upswing. As a corollary, *DIALOGUE* has taken the small step of inviting for the first time reviews of doctrinal and historical works published unofficially by various General Authorities. In so doing we in part followed the lead of Warren Cowdery who did not hesitate to find Parley Pratt more at home in oral than written exposition in an early book review. More importantly, we felt that the private commercial efforts of these men were entitled to the same serious consideration accorded others. This seemed especially appropriate when such works dealt directly with those facets of Mormonism on which so much effort has been expended in *DIALOGUE*—intellectual history, and arts and literature.

A third message from our five-volume review is that there was still much new ground to be tilled when we took over the ten-year-old field. We now look back on special sections or issues on the media, women in the Church, the Book of Mormon, the international church, medicine, the Word of Wisdom, and many others and wonder how we could have wondered in 1976 what we could do to fill twenty issues. And that does not count many equally important individual essays and interviews carried over the years. Perhaps inevitably, as we pass on the flame we can think of enough “mandatory” things yet to be done to fill five more years! That is the real excitement of *DIALOGUE*.

A final message is that the basic *DIALOGUE* commitment has remained unchanged through three generations of editors. In addition to the encounter between faith and reason explored in doctrinal and intellectual essays, personal voices, literature, and the arts have continued to have a conspicuous place within each issue.

Like those who preceded us, we have found that there is much still to be learned about what defines Mormonism both historically and theologically. One might suppose after sixteen years, especially with the added contribution of several other journals of similar bent, that all the obvious “first-level” questions would have been thoroughly examined. Our non-Mormon colleagues certainly (almost impatiently) encourage us to move on from specialized descriptive histories to a more definitive treatment of the Mormon faith, a comprehensive synthesis akin to that possible in their secular disciplines. Yet one has only to read the last few issues of *DIALOGUE* to see that scholars are still delineating for the first time important aspects of our faith, aspects which must be clearly understood before essential elements of Mormon history and theology can be accurately described. Mormon studies are just now arriving at a point when we can begin the broader analytical works that will place descriptive history into a meaningful historical or theological context. A truly comprehensive synthesis is yet another step beyond.

In practice, *DIALOGUE*'s early goal of disseminating the “spiritual heritage and moral vision” of Mormonism still awaits two major preparatory steps.

First, a fuller synthesis of the central aspects of the Mormon experience has to be achieved, just as our sympathetic critics have demanded. This cannot be simply a clever or authoritarian but ultimately personal synthesis by a creative or ideological writer. It really must follow the completion of both the foundational analytical studies of which the synthesis will be built and the essential descriptive studies of which it will be built. This should allow us, at last, to avoid the pitfalls of equating personal theologies with those we label "Mormon." There is, nonetheless, a possibility that even the accomplishment of a true synthesis will still leave us with only a thoughtful consensus theology unless the second needed step is taken.

The problem is that the slow, almost ingenuous lay reconstruction of Mormon history has called many cherished notions—even doctrines—into question. The true substance of Mormon doctrine has proved to be surprisingly elusive. This growing realization by thinking, reading Mormons has not, however, been accompanied by any concomitant hierarchal reexamination or refinement of Mormon theology. If anything, recent years have seen a distinctly fundamentalistic retreat in Church manuals and discourse. Much of the present tension between the new Mormon history and members of the Church hierarchy stems from this continuing schism, whether manifest in *DIALOGUE* or elsewhere. It is here, then, that we are in growing need of the second step—an inspired, scripturally attuned, well-read and articulate dialogue with all levels of the Church.

For the present, of course, the Church is in an era of administrative development and growth, requiring administratively gifted ecclesiastical leaders. At some point in the future, however, men of comparable theological sophistication will again be included in the hierarchy, men with the educational analytical studies of which the synthesis will be built and the essential descriptive studies of which it will be built. This should allow us, at last, to this happens, as surely it will, we will probably see one of the most important reconstructions of the faith since the Restoration.

Perhaps these "final" steps will take place during the next decade or so; many would say it will be much longer. In the interim, *DIALOGUE* will continue to do its part, bringing together the best of spirit and intellect. Meanwhile, to conclude in the world in which *DIALOGUE* actually exists, there can be no better benediction than that of editor Cowdery under similar circumstances. For those of us to whom *DIALOGUE* has meant and does mean so much,

"Pray for the [editor] in secret, and pay him in public."

The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation

Ever since Fawn Brodie wrote *No Man Knows My History* in 1946 and emphatically denied that there was any valid evidence that Joseph Smith experienced a visitation from the Father and the Son in 1820, an enormous amount of energy has been expended by scoffers and Latter-day Saints to disprove or prove the First Vision story. Until recently both sides have agreed that the truth or untruth of Mormonism was at stake, and neither side has conceded merit to the opposing point of view.¹ It is my purpose to review the issues and arguments, and offer a critique and a tentative interpretation based on available evidence that I believe may reconcile some of the disagreements while giving fair consideration to the various accounts written by Joseph Smith.

Brodie argues that Joseph Smith fabricated his vision in 1838 when he began dictating his history to provide a starting point for his prophetic career that would counter the charge that he was a money digger and charlatan turned prophet. She quotes part of the vision, noting that after a revival, at the age of fourteen, Joseph Smith said that he sought divine guidance in a wooded grove:

I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me. . . . Thick darkness gathered around me . . . at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head. . . . It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, 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 asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight.

Brodie observed that similar visions were commonplace in western New York in this period; that the Palmyra newspapers made no mention of Joseph’s vision although he said he was persecuted for telling it; that his mother and close relatives ignored it, or confused it with the visit of Moroni as did Oliver

Cowdery in the first published history of the Church; and that Joseph himself did not publish his account until 1842.²

What started as an hypothesis in a scholarly biography soon became a dogma to many of the church's enemies. Brodie, out of the church when she revised her volume in 1971, clung tenaciously to her thesis despite much new evidence, adding a supplement to her original work to defend her position.³ She insisted that the recent new discoveries "bear out my original speculation that the first vision, if not an invention, was an evolutionary fantasy beginning in a half-remembered dream stimulated by the early revival excitement and reinforced by the rich folklore of visions circulating in his neighborhood."⁴

In the fall of 1967 Reverend Wesley P. Walters, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Marissa, Illinois, and vigorous opponent of Mormon proselyting,⁵ wrote "New Light on Mormon Origins from Palmyra (N.Y.) Revival" in support of Brodie's position in the *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*. He questions whether a revival of the size which Joseph describes, where "great multitudes" joined various churches in Palmyra, could have occurred in 1820. Walters says "such a revival does not pass from the scene without leaving some traces in the records and publications of the period."⁶

Walters points out that in the first published version of the vision in 1834,⁷ Oliver Cowdery said the revival occurred in 1823, when Joseph was seventeen years old, and that Reverend George Lane of the Methodists preached up the Palmyra revival.⁸ Walters insists that Cowdery in 1834 and Joseph in 1838 had the same revival in mind, since they both agree that the revival started with the Methodists, that Baptists and Presbyterians were also involved, and that large additions were made to these denominations. In both accounts, Walters says, Joseph was confused by sectarian controversy and refrained from joining any church. In both Joseph prayed and received a vision. Walters argues that Joseph Smith could not have been confused about which group was right in 1820, been enlightened by vision that all were wrong, and then have become confused on the same point again in 1823.⁹ There was but one revival, in 1824, so that Joseph Smith was quite wrong in dating it in 1820, and wrong in much of the rest of his First Vision story.

Walters notes that the prophet's younger brother, William, agreed with Cowdery that it was Reverend Lane who stirred the Palmyra revival and states that this minister suggested the James 1:5 text, "If any of you lack wisdom," to which Joseph initially responded. Walters also cites William Smith as saying that Reverend Stockton, a Presbyterian, was also involved in the revival but that Joseph Smith, Sr., did not like him because he affirmed at Alvin Smith's funeral that Alvin had gone to hell. As a result, Walters concludes that the revival must have occurred after Alvin's death in 1824,¹⁰ and scores most Mormon writers who have made use of these details without acknowledging the inconsistencies.¹¹

Walters adds that Stockton first ministered to the Palmyra congregation in October 1823 but was not installed as pastor until 18 February 1824. George Lane labored in the Susquehanna district over 150 miles from Palmyra until

July of 1824 when he was assigned to Palmyra. Thus, Stockton and Lane could not have worked together in Palmyra before the summer of 1824.

Walters cites an account by George Lane in the Palmyra *Wayne Sentinel* for 15 September 1824, which says that the great revival began at Palmyra and soon spread abroad. Walters also cites a Baptist periodical that by the end of the year more than three hundred souls had joined churches in Palmyra.¹² But Walters says "when we turn to the year 1820 . . . the 'great multitudes' are conspicuously missing." The Presbyterians had no awakening in 1820, as James Hotchkin makes clear, and the Baptist records show no significant increase in membership. The Methodist figures for the entire circuit show net losses of twenty-three for 1819 and six for 1820. In addition, the religious press makes no mention of any revival in 1820, although it does so for 1817 and 1824.¹³ Thus Joseph's recollections of great multitudes joining the churches seem accurate only if the date is 1824, not 1820.

Walters maintains that all of this evidence leaves the Mormon believer in a quandary. Walters says some Mormons will try to imagine that a great revival did occur in 1820, but he doubts that there is sufficient factual confirmation. A better line of argument, Walters says, would be to maintain that Joseph was wrong about the date but such arguments would force Mormon apologists to place the vision in the spring of 1825, at which time Smith would be nineteen years old, not an innocent young boy, and his vision would have occurred after the supposed visit of Moroni in September 1823.¹⁴

Walters next compares the version of the First Vision written by Joseph Smith in 1832 with that written in 1838 and notes that the former makes Joseph sixteen instead of fourteen years old, records the appearance of one divine personage, not two, the single personage being Jesus Christ, and has Joseph seek the plates to "obtain riches." This version makes no mention of a revival.¹⁵

These discrepancies, Walters concludes, discredit the 1838 account and thus undermine Joseph's credibility. A more plausible interpretation, he argues, would be that suggested by Obediah Dogberry and E. D. Howe, in the earliest form of the story. In this account Joseph discovered the plates by means of a seer stone, and a spirit came to him to inform him where they were located. Only later did the story take on a religious tone, with the coming of an angel and then a visitation of Jesus Christ as the story gets more elaborate.¹⁶ Thus, Walters takes a position similar to Brodie's, seeing fraud and deception at the root of early Mormonism, as Joseph Smith moved from money digger to prophet.

Two additional heirs of Brodie are Jerald and Sandra Tanner, whose 1968 *Case Against Mormonism* has a chapter on the First Vision. Like Brodie, the Tanners are renunciants of the Church. Their disillusionment was considerably influenced by *No Man Knows My History*, which is maintained as the standard against which the Church's position on Joseph Smith is measured.

Less professional and less historically oriented than Brodie or Walters, the Tanners have been mostly concerned with discrediting Church leaders who have written on the First Vision, often making use of the latest arguments by

active Mormons published in scholarly works. In their 1968 treatment, the Tanners quote the 1838 version of the vision, and then cite various LDS leaders on the importance of the vision for the Mormon believer. James B. Allen is quoted as saying that the First Vision is a fundamental belief to which all loyal Mormons must adhere, George Q. Cannon that there can be no true faith without a true knowledge of God as set forth in the vision, and Bruce R. McConkie that the visitation in the grove was the most important historical event since the end of Christ's ministry, for by this means the "creeds of Apostate Christendom were smashed." Apostle John A. Widtsoe is quoted that upon the reality of the vision "rests the truth and value" of Joseph Smith's subsequent work, and David O. McKay that the First Vision is the "foundation of the faith."¹⁷

The Tanners have had a running debate with Mormon apologists, attempting to demonstrate factual discrepancies in the pro-Joseph interpretations. They dispute Hugh Nibley's contention that Joseph considered his vision sacred and thus did not mention it often, citing Joseph's own remark that his telling of the story in 1820 led to a relentless persecution by sectarian leaders.¹⁸ They argue that one of the most damaging evidences against Joseph's 1820 account is that section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants indicates that no man can see God and live without possessing priesthood authority and ordinances. Joseph, they say, violated his own principle by claiming a vision of the Lord before he received the priesthood.¹⁹

The Tanners picked up on Brodie's argument that the First Vision story was not published until 1842 and noted that James Allen affirms that, if Joseph told the story in the 1820s, he had ceased to do so by the 1830s, since there is no evidence that the story was being circulated at that time. True, they admit, Alexander Neibaur retells the story in his journal, but this is not until 1844, after the vision had been reported in the *Times and Seasons*. Pomeroy Tucker referred to the vision in 1867, but had an angel coming to Joseph in 1823 to say all the churches were wrong.²⁰

Oliver Cowdery's version of the vision seems to the Tanners to confirm their interpretation. Cowdery stated that he would provide a full and correct history of the rise of the Church and tells his readers that Joseph Smith had offered to assist him. But Cowdery affirmed that the vision came in 1823 with but one personage, who delivered the message that Joseph's sins were forgiven and then told him that a history had been deposited in a place nearby. The Tanners note the many contradictions between this and the 1838 story and declare that "certainly this history refutes the story that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820."²¹

The Tanners base much of their theorizing about the writing of Mormon history on a conspiratorial theme. When they learned of the discovery of another version of the First Vision in Joseph Smith's letter book, the main question they asked was, "Why wasn't this made known earlier?" They quote Levi Edgar Young, a Mormon General Authority, as saying that he had seen a "strange account of the first vision" in 1958 but was told to say nothing about

what it contained. They do not indicate who advised him to say nothing. The Tanners assume that this was probably the 1832 version and state that "a careful reading of this document reveals why the Church leaders have never published or referred to it." They point out that in this version Joseph had already decided that the existing churches were untrue before he went into the woods to pray, which contradicted his statement in 1838 that "it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong." In 1832 Joseph's age is given as sixteen, not fourteen, and only Jesus Christ visited him, rather than appearing with the Father. The Tanners conclude that "the only reasonable explanation for the Father not being mentioned is that Joseph Smith did not see God the Father and that he made up this part of the story after he wrote the first manuscript."²²

In their tract, the Tanners also consider an 1835 version of the vision which again fails to mention any revival and has one personage appearing followed by another, contrary to the 1838 account which has them appearing simultaneously. Thus, the Tanners remark, "if this is not bad enough, Joseph also states that there were 'many angels.' " They conclude: "Now we have three different accounts of the First Vision, *AND EVERY ONE OF THEM IS DIFFERENT*. . . . We would, of course, expect some variations in any story, but we feel that there are so many variations . . . that they make it impossible to believe."²³

The Tanners also borrow from Brodie again to maintain that others had visions similar to Joseph's. They affirm somewhat credulously that Joseph Smith was influenced by Charles G. Finney, although they fail to notice that Finney's autobiography was not published until the 1870s and that there is no evidence whatsoever that the story of Finney's vision ever reached Joseph Smith. They say Asa Wild and Stephen Bradley were two who had visions like Joseph's.²⁴

Tenacious in their efforts to disembowel Mormonism, the Tanners give Walters' article full consideration.²⁵ They also hit back at Hugh Nibley, who in 1961 accused Mormon critics of garbling the First Vision account. The Tanners argue that Joseph himself did not always get the story straight, nor did Orson Pratt in 1840, nor George A. Smith, Andrew Jenson, and others.²⁶

The Tanners charge that Joseph Smith changed his doctrine concerning the Godhead, and see this as evidence of deceit. They cite Ether 3:14 and Mosiah 15:1, 5 as evidence that Joseph Smith was initially a trinitarian, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were physically one. They also cite the "Lectures on Faith" to show that Joseph taught that the Father was a personage of spirit. They comment cynically, "Can anyone honestly look at these three different accounts of the First Vision and not admit that Mrs. Brodie was right" in claiming that Joseph Smith was a "mythmaker of prodigious talent."²⁷

When Mormon scholars responded to the challenges made to the First Vision story, it was Walters' revival thesis that largely concerned them. In 1969 *BYU Studies* ran an entire issue on the First Vision controversy, including a piece by Dean Jessee which contained authenticated accounts of the 1832, 1835, and 1838 versions of the vision taken from manuscript sources in the Church

Archives.²⁸ Also in this issue Milton Backman of the BYU Religion Department challenged Walters on the basis of 1820 church records, newspaper reports, and historical accounts to argue that there was some revival activity in Joseph's immediate neighborhood in that year and a great deal more in the "region" and "district of country" where Joseph Smith said the "multitudes" joined the churches. Backman argues that there were camp meetings held by the Methodists in 1819-1820 at Phelps, a few miles from Palmyra, where five joined the Freewill Baptists, and that here Joseph himself caught a spark of Methodism and became temporarily converted. Backman stresses that while Joseph said the excitement began in his town, the vast numbers of converts came from outside it. Backman also says that within a radius of twenty-five miles there were revivals at several towns, and that all of western New York ("the district of country" as Joseph called it) was caught up in the revival. Backman claims that there were 1,513 converts in the Presbyterian churches in the "burned-over district" in 1819 with comparable gains among the Baptists. He adds that the Smiths could have read in the *Palmyra Register* of the revivals sweeping through eastern New York and Joseph could have been thinking of these when he wrote his history.²⁹

In that same year, 1969, DIALOGUE ran a roundtable discussion on the First Vision, printing an early version of Walters' article with a critique by Richard Bushman and a new response by Walters.³⁰ Walters takes exception to Backman's thesis that "district of country" meant a statewide revival, arguing that Joseph would not have considered statewide revivals significant for they were occurring regularly in New York; Joseph's point was that an unusual excitement was going on right in "the place where we lived." Walters also questions whether there was a large enough revival at Vienna (Phelps) to meet the requirements since Methodist Abner Chase speaks of a spiritual decline at the time of the 1819 conference. Walters hypothesizes that the revival on the Vienna road took place not fifteen miles from Palmyra in the town of Vienna, but at the campground on the Vienna road just outside Palmyra, Walters questions whether those at this camp meeting or the converts to the Presbyterian and Baptist faith at Phelps added up to "great multitudes." He affirms that Joseph's error in dating and other details "is far deeper than a mere lapse of memory. . . . it enters into the very fabric of the story itself."³¹

In his response Bushman repeats many of Backman's points and maintains that it is folly to try to explain every change in the vision accounts as the result of Joseph's calulated efforts to fabricate a convincing story. Bushman questions Walters' point that Lane could only have been there in 1824, saying this depends on Cowdery's account, which may be wrong. Bushman notes that Cowdery placed the revival in 1823, two years sooner than Walters' explanation would allow. Thus, how can Mormon apologists or Walters accept Cowdery's narrative uncritically?³²

Borrowing from a point made by Larry Porter, Bushman affirms that George Lane could have been heard by Joseph in 1819 when he passed near Palmyra but warns again that the Lane story was told by Cowdery, not Joseph.

Bushman says that Cowdery was in Missouri when he started his 1834 history, and after moving to Ohio, lived in Norton, too far from Kirtland to have worked very closely with Joseph Smith when he wrote his account.³³

Bushman says that when it comes down to it, Walters' argument is subjective: it rests on the judgment of how far is far and how big is big. How close do towns have to be to come within the "region of country" Joseph described? How many converts have to be made for a fourteen-year-old to call it "multitudes"? When Walters describes his 1824 revival, he includes towns like Williamson, Ontario, Manchester, Sulphur Springs, Vienna, Lyons, and Macedon as nearby, and Mendon, Geneva, Gorham, and Clys, another four, as somewhat further away. For 1820 Backman and Walters agree that Farmington, Penfield, Rochester, Lima, West Bloomfield, Junius, and Oaks Corners were within a twenty-five-mile radius and thus within the "region of country."³⁴ Since the Lyons circuit of the Methodist church alone saw an increase of 280 in 1820, even by Walters' standards the 1819-1820 season of revivals was not so dull as Walters said.³⁵

Bushman reemphasizes what for the Mormon position is a critical point—that Joseph only said of the "place where he lived" that there was "an unusual excitement on the subject of religion," while he said the "multitudes" who joined the churches came within the "whole region of the country." Bushman argues that seven revivals within a twenty-five-mile area are sufficient. Further, the Smiths probably covered considerable territory when they sold their cakes and beer at various social gatherings and were thus familiar with a much larger area than Palmyra or Manchester.³⁶

Walters, reacting to Bushman, argues (correctly, I believe) that Cowdery's history cannot be so easily dismissed since Joseph's own history informs us that he and Oliver Cowdery were together on several occasions in the latter part of 1834 and thus it was quite possible for Joseph to fulfill his pledge to help Oliver with his 1834 narrative.³⁷ The 1832 account places Joseph's vision at age sixteen, which is closer to Cowdery's age of seventeen than the fourteenth year which appears in the 1838 account. Walters questions whether, in a day when canal boats carried passengers four miles a day, it is realistic to consider towns ten, fifteen, and in some cases twenty-five miles away as "the place where we lived,"³⁸ but misses the point that Bushman made—that Joseph said only that a religious excitement occurred in Palmyra and that large conversions came in the "region of country." But Walters insists that Joseph was talking about his home town, that the excitement was near enough to Joseph's home that there was pressure on the family to join the local Presbyterian church. It was close enough for Joseph to observe that "a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued" and that converts filed off, "some to one party and some to another." Walters thinks these details make it clear that Joseph was talking about a place he knew very intimately, which could only be Palmyra.³⁹

In 1972, in their enlarged edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality*, the Tanners make use of a discovery by Wesley Walters that the Session Records of the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra show that Lucy Smith and some

children were active members of the Presbyterian Church until 1828, eight years after Joseph was supposedly told that all the churches were wrong. The Tanners question whether Lucy and her children took Joseph's claim of a vision seriously.⁴⁰

The Tanners also make use of another discovery by Walters, that the *Amboy Journal* for 30 April 1879 and 11 June 1879 presented the testimony of Joshua McKune, a minister, and Michael Morse, a brother-in-law to Joseph Smith, that Joseph himself sought membership in the Methodist church at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in 1828. The Tanners say this destroys any credence one can give to Joseph's statement that the Lord told him not to join any church.⁴¹

In 1980 Walters and the Tanners further elaborated on their arguments. Walters calls Backman's study "a mere screen to confuse the average reader," and Walters states that, in citing Blakeslee as to a "flaming spiritual advance" in 1820, Backman misread the date, for Blakeslee meant the denomination's calendar year, or 1821. In writing of a "religious cyclone" in the Lyons Circuit, Blakeslee was three years too early, as Reverend Chase indicates that there was no revival there until 1824.

To reinforce his view that when Joseph said the "place where I lived" he meant Palmyra, Walters cites Joseph's statement in the *New York Spectator* that the reformation took place "among the different denominations in the neighborhood where I lived," and Lucy Mack Smith that the "whole neighborhood . . . flocked to the meeting house" during the revival.⁴² Furthermore, Walters says that in the *History of the Church*, 5: 356, Joseph speaks of the Mormon settlements at Nauvoo as in a "region of country," an area that did not have a radius of more than twenty miles.⁴³ Walters says that Joseph would not be taking hikes of thirty miles to learn what was happening in other villages. On this, Walters perhaps misunderstood Peter Crawley's point in a *DIALOGUE* article where he argued that David Marks in Junius did exactly this in 1821—walking twenty-five and thirty miles at a time to attend revivals without considering it unusual, and thus implying that Joseph Smith could have walked that far at times also.⁴⁴

Walters finds confirmation of his view that the revival in question occurred in 1824 in the manuscript of Lucy Mack Smith's history. Her original narrative reported that the revival at which she became a Presbyterian was after Alvin's death, which occurred in November 1823. Walters then concludes that recent validation of Joseph's 1838 account is wishful thinking by Mormon historians, saying Dale Morgan was right when he said that there is little reality in Joseph Smith's early history.⁴⁵

After weighing the arguments in this long and sustained controversy, where does one come down with respect to the Walters-Tanner, Backman-Bushman-Crawley debate? Three nationally known scholars who have mentioned the First Vision recently do not wholly agree with either side. Jan Shipps, a non-Mormon, admits with Walters that the events described by Joseph better fit the 1824 revival, but she adds that the confused chronology in the official history is no reason to doubt that Joseph had an early vision which

led him to stay away from organized religion. Lawrence Foster, also a non-Mormon, states flatly that "at least as early as 1823, young Joseph began experiencing a series of visions or what might be described as waking dreams of unusual force and vigor which totally reoriented his life." Klaus Hansen, a Mormon writing for a non-Mormon audience, says that "because of their fragmentary nature, these accounts do not support firm conclusions for either side" but holds that Mormon scholars "have raised valid objections" to the contention that there is conclusive evidence that the revival did not occur.⁴⁶

I believe that both sides have overlooked some important points and that a plausible argument can be made for the basic Church chronology despite contradictions between some sources, provided that it is recognized that there are some inaccuracies in the 1838 account. It seems to me that everybody has approached the issue from the wrong end, by starting with the 1838 official version when the account they should be considering is that of 1832. Merely on the face of it, the 1832 version stands a better chance of being more accurate and unembellished than the 1838 account which was intended as a public statement, streamlined for publication. When Joseph dictated his 1838 version (if he did in fact actually dictate it), he was aware of what had been previously published by Oliver Cowdery and aware of his stature as the prophet of a new and important religious movement. It would be natural for him to have smoothed out the story, making it more logical and compelling than perhaps it first seemed in 1820.

In the Walters-Backman "war of words," it seems to me that Walters has scored some important points, although not nearly as many as he professes. I am inclined to agree that the religious turmoil that Joseph described which led to some family members joining the Presbyterians and to much sectarian bitterness does not fit well into the 1820 context detailed by Backman. For one thing, it does not seem likely that there could have been heavy sectarian strife in 1820 and then a joint revival where all was harmony in 1824. In addition, as Walters notes, Lucy Mack Smith said the revival where she became interested in a particular sect came after Alvin's death, thus almost certainly in early 1824.

Indicating that the angel had told Joseph of the plates prior to the revival, Lucy added that for a long time after Alvin's death the family could not bear any talk about the golden plates, for the subject had been one of great interest to him and any reference to the plates stirred sorrowful memories. She said she attended the revival with hope of gaining solace for Alvin's loss. That kind of detail is just the sort that gives validity to Lucy's chronology. She would not have been likely to make up such a reaction for herself or the family nor mistake the time when it happened.⁴⁷ I am persuaded that it was 1824 when Lucy joined the Presbyterians.⁴⁸

Lucy's testimony is the most compelling part of Walters' argument. But Walters has not proved his point about the neighborhood revival beyond doubt since, as Bushman makes clear, Joseph never said that multitudes joined in Palmyra itself. But Walters is right in countering Bushman on Oliver Cowdery. Joseph and Oliver were together frequently in the latter part of 1834 so that

something of the 1834 narrative probably came from him. But we do not know how much.

Cowdery had a lot of things right—that the revival in question came no earlier than 1823, that Lane was there, and that Moroni came afterward.⁴⁹ Larry Porter's argument, that everything occurred when George Lane passed through in July 1819,⁵⁰ does not fit what Joseph said, for he indicated that he attended the revival meetings "as often as occasion would permit." The revival Joseph described was a protracted one covering several days, not a one-night stand.

Walters maintains that an 1824 revival destroys the credibility of Joseph Smith's whole story since the revival occurred after Moroni's visit. Here Walters' scholarly objectivity gives way to anti-Mormon zeal. An 1824 revival creates problems for the 1838 account, not that of 1832. Walters overlooks the fact that Joseph said nothing in his 1832 account about a revival prompting his prayer. According to this version,

At about the age of twelve years my mind became seriously impress with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul which led me to Search 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 instead of adorning 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 . . . my mind became exceedingly distressed for I became convicted of my Sins and by Searching the Scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but they had apostatised from the true and liveing faith and there was no society or denomination built upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ . . . and when I considered all these things . . . I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go . . . the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar of light above the brightness of the Sun at noon day came down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the Spirit of God and the Lord opened the heaven upon me and 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 . . . the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned asside from the Gospel and keep not my commandments they draw near to me with their lips while hearts are far from me. . . .

Not only does this account ignore the revival, so too does the 1835 account, in which Joseph merely reports that he was "wrought up in my mind respecting the subject of Religion and looking at the different systems taught the children of men, I knew not who was right or who was wrong . . . Being thus perplexed in mind I retired to the silent grove."⁵¹

Neither did Lucy Mack Smith mention a revival when she described Joseph's first vision where an angel told him that the churches are "man made"

and also told him about the plates.⁵² She indicated that this vision occurred during the third year after their move to Manchester, which would have been 1820, since they left Palmyra for Manchester in 1818.⁵³ Not only has Walters conveniently ignored this statement by Lucy, he fails to perceive that the absence of a revival in these sources makes his entire argument based on the dating of the revival dubious.

To be sure, Joseph mentioned the revival in 1838, but Walters gives that account no credence. In Joseph's statement to the editor of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* in 1843 he merely said there was a "reformation" in the "neighborhood where I lived" but said nothing about large numbers being involved. In the 1844 Neibaur account, a revival is mentioned where Lucy "got religion," but this was written after the 1838 version had been published and there is no mention here of large multitudes being converted.⁵⁴ Oliver Cowdery stressed the magnitude of the revival, but was obviously thinking of 1824, Lucy's conversion, and the coming of Moroni. William Smith also talked about revivals, but he spoke of several between 1822 and 1823 and said that Joseph's interest in religion came after the "excitement had subsided";⁵⁵ thus, these revivals were not an integral part of Joseph's story. Orson Pratt, in his version published in 1840, said nothing at all about a revival.⁵⁶

The Walters-Tanner argument that Lucy's joining the Presbyterians and Joseph's joining the Methodists destroyed Joseph's credibility fails to consider that, unlike 1838, the 1832 version said nothing about Joseph's being forbidden to join a church. Joseph did indicate here that he himself had decided after studying the Bible that "there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ" and the Lord told him that "none doeth good . . . they have turned aside from the Gospel" but he is not told by divine command to join no church. Thus there is no great inconsistency, as Walters and the Tanners imagine, when Lucy Smith joined the Presbyterians or when Joseph sought to be a Methodist in 1828. He was fairly convinced that all were wrong but perhaps responded to the urgings of his wife, Emma, who had very close ties with the Methodists in Harmony, Pennsylvania.⁵⁷

I am not certain at what point Joseph began to see himself as the leader of a new religious movement, but it may have been later than most Mormons realize. As late as 1829 he received a revelation that told him to pretend to no other gift than that of translation,⁵⁸ as though even this late he had not really assumed the mantle of prophet.

At any rate, if Joseph Smith in 1838 read back into 1820 some details of a revival that occurred in 1824, there is no reason to conclude that he invented his religious experiences. Both 1820 and 1824 were traumatic times in his life; the former because, as a teenager responding to the great pressure that ministers and revivalists put on the youth of that day, he was very much concerned about his soul's salvation and because he found himself in 1824 in the middle between his father, who said he was angry at the Presbyterians and would join no church, and his mother who made the decision to join the Presbyterians and took Hyrum, Samuel, and Sophronia with her. Thus Joseph found himself in

1824 wanting to "feel and shout like the rest,"⁵⁹ but he could not make a commitment without displeasing his father.⁶⁰ If he had been stirred by some local revivals earlier, between the ages of twelve and fifteen, then it was not so hard to confuse some of the details. Revivals had been a key factor in his religious experience.

Giving priority to the 1832 account also makes it more understandable why Oliver Cowdery got his story tangled. He started out telling of Joseph's 1820 vision,⁶¹ perhaps along the lines of the 1832 version with one personage involved. It seems apparent that Joseph must have said something to him in December after he published the story of George Lane and the revival to the effect that the Lane revival was not until 1823. Rather than admitting that his details about the revival were wrong, Oliver decided to jump ahead and tell of Moroni's coming.⁶² I suspect that it was this narrative by Cowdery which influenced William Smith and others to confuse the 1820 vision with the coming of Moroni. But what is significant is that there was no such confusion in Joseph's 1832 account, for the visit of Christ and the coming of Moroni afterward are two distinct events.

Another point deserves comment here. If initially Joseph said one personage came to him in 1820, it became easier for Oliver Cowdery to confuse this visit with the coming of Moroni than it would have been a few years later when Joseph taught emphatically that there were three separate personages in the Godhead.

The Tanners make much of the argument that Joseph Smith changed his view of the Godhead. There is a good deal of evidence that his understanding grew on many points of theology, including his view of man and his potential, his view of salvation, of what it consists and how it is obtained.⁶³ If, as the Tanners argue, Joseph grew in his understanding of the nature of the Godhead, this does not provide evidence of his disingenuousness. I do not agree with the Tanners that the 1835 narrative is no evidence that Joseph believed in two separate personages.⁶⁴ It is true as they note that the two persons are not named, yet it seems unlikely that Joseph would distinguish between them and the "many angels" he said he saw unless he thought the two were other than angels. The 1835 version with its two personages stands at odds with the statement in the "Lectures on Faith" that God is a spirit.⁶⁵ There is a problem here that requires explanation.

It seems to me that if the Latter-day Saints can accept the idea that Joseph gained his full understanding of the nature of God only after a period of time, instead of its emerging fullblown in 1820, then most of the difficulties with chronology can be resolved. There is evidence that some Latter-day Saints have recently come to terms with their history on this point. Two excellent examples are the studies of James B. Allen, and also that of Neal Lambert and Richard Cracroft.⁶⁶ These Mormons examined the evidence first, then drew their conclusions.

What is disturbing about the work of Reverend Walters and the Tanners is that they seem at times to reverse this process. They begin their look at Joseph

Smith by accepting fully Fawn Brodie's basic arguments, and never alter their position regardless of the evidence. The rigid framework within which they perceive their subject, the invariably negative conclusions they reach, the frequent resort to dogmatic declarations, and the finality they assume for their work suggest that they have something more at stake than do most historians.

To some extent Reverend Walters, and to a considerable extent, the Tanners, suffer from what Sidney E. Mead called an anti-historical bias. They allow for no development in Joseph Smith's thought, holding up a very absolutistic model to which he is supposed to conform. They always assume that the worst motives influenced the Mormon prophet. They begin with Brodie's absurd notion that unless Joseph Smith told about his vision sufficiently that the newspapers picked it up and unless all the details are exactly alike, Joseph made the story up. It makes no difference to them that the story does appear in the first history which Joseph wrote in 1832 and that it appears in some form in all the accounts with which he had anything to do.

The sort of rationalistic demands they make of Joseph Smith would play havoc with any belief in the resurrection of Christ. Nothing was written about this event for thirty years after and then only by Jesus' most loyal followers. In telling the story of the resurrection, the gospel writers hardly agree on details as to who saw Jesus first, when and where, under what circumstance, and who else saw him, and in what sequence. To be sure, as Hans Kung says, this is a religious literature, early Christians were not scientists, and we cannot expect the kind of precision that would come in a scientific paper.⁶⁷

A tolerant viewpoint is required in handling any religious sources. Sectarians like Walters and the Tanners will allow for it in their own religious preference but will not extend the same courtesy to the Mormons. Walters accepts the gold digging stories told by Obediah Dogberry in the *Palmyra Reflector* quite uncritically, as he does the testimonies of E. D. Howe.⁶⁸ These stories have been examined with care by Hugh Nibley and Richard Anderson,⁶⁹ and they have demonstrated that there are major inconsistencies and an extreme one-sidedness. Why should one give unqualified credence to Dogberry, who so often resorts to hyperbole and who had a run-in with Joseph Smith regarding his publishing part of the Book of Mormon without permission? Dogberry was obviously contemptuous and this biased what he wrote. Why accept E. D. Howe when Hurlbut went to Palmyra deliberately to get something on the Mormons? Walters' scholarship is one of sectarian advantage, not objectivity.

The sources Walters and the Tanners employ, the conclusions they reach, the places where they publish, and their strong anti-Mormon missionary activities suggest they have other than scholarly concerns.

All the sources that I have considered agree that Joseph had an early vision between the ages of fourteen and fifteen. Even Oliver Cowdery said this at first. All agree that Joseph was troubled about religion and that he sought the Lord in prayer. As James Allen shows,⁷⁰ Joseph never cited his vision with respect to the nature of the Godhead. This use of the vision came long afterward. For

Joseph, it meant something else. He was in quest of finding God in his life, to gain a forgiveness of sins, to know the Lord's will concerning him. All accounts agree that the vision started him on the road to becoming a prophet. It seems to me that more can be explained historically by including rather than excluding the First Vision. For those who begin with an historical inquiry in mind—what happened, why, what the consequences were—this seems to be the starting place. For those who have other objectives this may not be sufficient.

NOTES

1. See Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Case Against Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1968), pp. 89-91 for quotations from Mormon leaders on the crucial nature of the vision, as well as the negative Tanner response.
2. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), pp. 21-25.
3. See the revised edition, 1979, pp. 21-25 and 405-25.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
5. Walters' anti-Mormon attitudes are reflected in an article he wrote in *Eternity* (May 1980), a magazine for "committed Christians," in which he argues erroneously that the Mormons give the Book of Mormon no credence. Significantly, the editor at the close of the article offers free tracts to be given to the Mormon missionaries when they knock.
6. Vol. 10, p. 228.
7. *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Dec. 1834): 42 and (Feb. 1834): 78.
8. Walters, "New Light," p. 228.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 231, 233.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 234-36.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 236-38.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.
17. Tanner and Tanner, *Case*, pp. 89-91.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-98.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-106.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-7.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-9. Their conclusion that Finney influenced Joseph Smith comes from Gilbert Seldes, *The Stammering Century*, but seems to me to be absurd. A much more sensible approach is seen in Neal E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft, "Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 31-42.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-15.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-19. They referred to Nibley's "Censoring the Joseph Smith Story," *Improvement Era* 64 (Oct., Nov., 1961) 490-92, 522, 524, 526, 528.

27. Ibid., pp. 128-29.
28. Dean C. Jessee, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969), pp. 275-94.
29. Milton V. Backman, Jr., "Awakenings in the Burned-over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 301-302, but especially pp. 306-309, 311, 313, 317-18.
30. "The Question of the Palmyra Revival," 4 (Spring 1969): 59-100.
31. Ibid., pp. 68-70.
32. Ibid., pp. 83, 85-86.
33. Ibid., p. 86.
34. Ibid., pp. 86-87.
35. Ibid., pp. 87, 89.
36. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
37. Ibid., pp. 86, 95; and see Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1971) 2:168-69, 174, 176.
38. Ibid., pp. 95-96.
39. Ibid., p. 97.
40. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1972), p. 161.
41. Ibid., p. 162.
42. Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 4 (1980): 95, 99, 103, 105.
43. Ibid., p. 96. In Doctrine and Covenants 58:52 the Lord tells the Saints to "purchase the whole region of country as soon as time will permit." While the Mormons probably bought no large amount of land in western Missouri in 1833, there is no reason to think they had a small area in mind ultimately. Max Parkin has prepared a map showing that at the end of the year the Saints had already bought land over on the western border, some ten miles out of Independence.
44. Ibid., p. 96. See Peter Crawley, "A Comment on Joseph Smith's Account of His First Vision and the 1820 Revival," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (Spring 1971): 106-107.
45. Ibid., pp. 98-99. Lucy Mack Smith's original manuscript, written by Howard Coray, is in the Church Archives in Salt Lake City. Its pages are unnumbered, but the crucial comments by Lucy come toward the middle of the lengthy manuscript.
46. Jan Shippy, "The Prophet Puzzle: Suggestions Leading toward a More Comprehensive Interpretation of Joseph Smith," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): pp. 3-20; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 129; Klaus Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 23.
47. She does confuse Joseph's First Vision and Moroni's visit, but in light of Lambert and Cracroft's analysis of the 1832 version, the vision does not seem to have been as significant in starting the Church as the 1838 account made it seem. In Lucy's mind, Moroni's telling of the plates seemed more important.
48. Although Lucy does not specifically name the church she considered joining after Alvin's death, there can be no doubt that she refers to the Presbyterian Church of Palmyra. She indicates that Joseph told her that she would not remain in the church for long, for she would learn of its wickedness. Joseph warned her that "deacon Jessup" was a man who "would not hesitate to take the last cow from the widow and orphans." Jessup was a deacon in the church at Palmyra. Since we know that Lucy did join the Presbyterians and remained active in that church until 1828, and a member of record until 1830, her joining had to have come after Alvin's death, as she records. She would not join in 1820 and then reconsider joining in 1824. Lucy and her family's withdrawal in 1828 from the Presbyterians is reproduced in Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1981), pp. 182-83. Some additional support for my general view comes from William Smith, who indicated in his notes on Chambers in the Church Archives that Lucy and family "belonged to the Presbyterian Church, of whom the Rev. M. Stockton was the presiding pastor." This would suggest Lucy first joined after Stockton had come to Palmyra in 1824.
49. *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Dec. 1834) and (Feb. 1834): 42, 78-79.

50. Larry C. Porter, "Reverend George Lane—Good 'Gifts,' Much 'Grace,' and 'Marked Usefulness,'" *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 135.

51. Dean Jessee reproduces the 1835 account told by Joseph Smith to his scribe, Warren Parrish, in *Dialogue* 6 (Spring 1971): 85-88.

52. Lucy Mack Smith Mss., Church Archives.

53. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism* (New York, 1867), p. 12 says that the Smiths moved to Manchester in 1818.

54. See the *Pittsburgh Spectator* account, and that by Neibaur in Backman, "Awakenings," pp. 176-77.

55. "William Smith on Mormonism" (1883) is conveniently reproduced in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, 2 vols. (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1951), 2:414-17.

56. Orson Pratt's version may be found in Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, pp. 170-72.

57. See Dean Jessee, "Early Accounts of the First Vision," pp. 278-80; and Larry C. Porter's "Reverend George Lane," pp. 331-32 for Emma Smith's close connections to Methodist leaders at Harmony.

58. *Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ* (Zion: 1833), p. 10.

59. As recalled by Joseph Smith in his retelling to Alexander Neibaur. See Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, p. 177.

60. I commented on this in "A Note on Joseph Smith's First Vision and Its Import in the Shaping of Early Mormonism," *Dialogue* 12 (Spring 1979): 90-99.

61. *Latter Day Saint Messenger and Advocate*, 1 (1834): 42.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

63. Best evidence for this is a contrast between certain passages in the Book of Mormon which bear on theology and some revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, as well as the King Follett discourse. In the Book of Mormon, man is a free agent but corrupt and inclined to sin and self-destruction. There is no suggestion of his potential godhood. Salvation in the Book of Mormon comes by cultivation of the seed of faith (grace) planted by the Lord, and by repentance and baptism, and the gifts of the spirit. There is nothing about a graded salvation, or the implication that punishment might not be eternal. There is nothing about man's potential exaltation coming through temple ordinances. Appropriate passages in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon are found on pages 38, 63-65, 81, 85, 118-20, 188-89, 233, 315, 338. Compare Doctrine and Covenants 19:6 where it is said that torment and punishment may not be without end, and section 76 where the degrees of glory are clarified. In section 132:4, the Saints are told that they must accept the new and everlasting covenant of marriage or be damned, "for no one can reject this covenant of marriage to enter into my glory." In the King Follett discourse Joseph Smith told the Saints that to become heirs of God and Christ meant that they would "arrive at the station of a god, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before." See *History of the Church* 4:306. For an excellent treatment of some aspects of this early evolution in doctrine see Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5 (July-Aug. 1980): 24-46; see also James B. Allen, "The Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 47-48.

64. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism* (Chicago: The Moody Press, 1980), 156.

65. The statement that God is a spirit appears in the Fifth Lecture on Faith, *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, 1 (May 1835): 122.

66. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," pp. 24-45, "Emergence of a Fundamental," 43-62; and Lambert and Cracroft, "Literary Form."

67. Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Pocket Books, 1978), p. 346. Kung details many of the contradictions in the gospel accounts, pp. 346-47.

68. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins," p. 239.

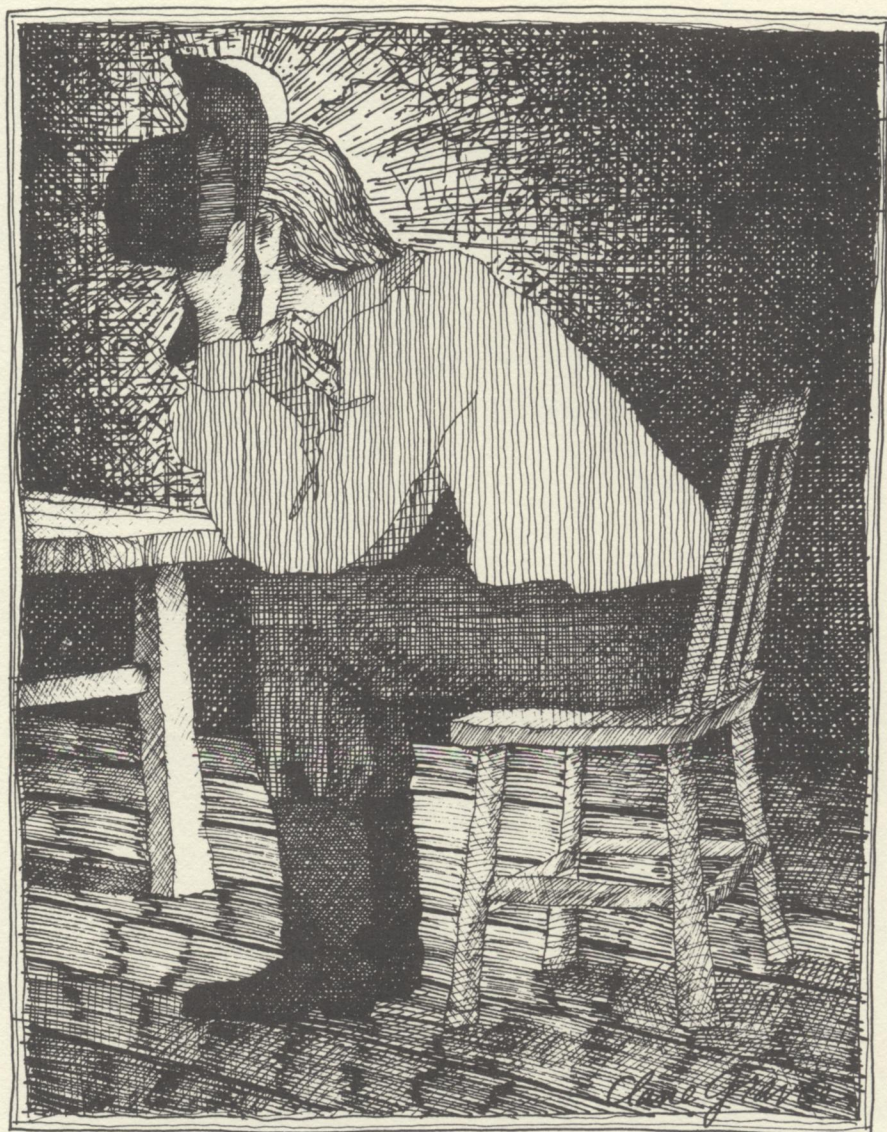
69. See "Digging in the Dark," in Nibley, *The Mythmakers* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1961), pp. 91-190, and Richard L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reappraised," *BYU Studies* 10 (Spring 1970): 238-314.

70. Allen, "Emergence of a Fundamental," pp. 51-52.

Calling

When asked what I do in the Kingdom, I
Reply that I am in the Extraction
Program with my husband and a few friends:

Extracting principles from procedures
And realities from types, determining
Whether we're walking on water or thin ice.



Joseph Smith: “The Gift of Seeing”

Analysis of eyewitness accounts of the Book of Mormon translation is long overdue. Studies of the statements of early witnesses¹ have not attempted to clarify the method of translation, even though testimony is occasionally contradictory, often tainted with bias, always sketchy. We retrace history's footsteps to the scene of the translation in pursuit of better understanding of how the Book of Mormon was translated.

The primary witness to the translation of the Book of Mormon record is the translator himself. But Joseph Smith's procedural descriptions are too brief and general to be of much help. In an 1831 Church conference in Orange, Ohio, Joseph's older brother Hyrum requested a firsthand account of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The Prophet vetoed the idea: "It was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; it was not expedient for him to relate these things."² Joseph maintained this close-mouthed attitude on the subject of the translation throughout his lifetime. His first recorded account of the process, in an 1833 letter to N. E. Seaton, is typically terse: "The Book of Mormon is a record of the forefathers of our western tribes of Indians, having been found through the ministrations of an holy angel, and translated into our own language by the gift and power of God."³

In 1835 he gave an even more abbreviated version to "Joshua the Jewish Minister": "I obtained them [the plates] and translated them into the English language by the gift and power of God and have been preaching it ever since."⁴ Joseph's 1838 account in the *Elder's Journal* adds the additional detail of Urim and Thummim assistance: "Moroni, the person who deposited the plates . . . told me where they were; and gave me directions how to obtain them. I obtained them, and the Urim and Thummim with them, by the means of which I translated the plates and thus came the Book of Mormon."⁵

The Prophet's 1842 description of the translating procedure, in the Wentworth Letter, is no more specific: "Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record, by the gift and power of God."⁶ Public interest in Church history, stirred by this letter, impelled the *Times and Seasons* to initiate an 1842 serial publication of the Prophet's history of the Church, which provides an amplified statement on Book of Mormon translation: "Immediately after my

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arrival there [Harmony, Pennsylvania] I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some of them, which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father in the month of December [1827], and the February following."⁷

The Prophet's final statement about translation procedure, in a 13 November 1843 letter to James Arlington Bennett, adds little more to our understanding of the process: "By the power of God I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics; the knowledge of which was lost to the world: in which wonderful event I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom, and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries."⁸

To find exactly what the Prophet meant in his repeated insistences that the plates were translated through the medium of Urim and Thummim by the gift and power of God, we must turn to other eyewitness accounts. Martin Harris⁹ served Joseph as the first of several scribes in the work of translation.¹⁰ His description of the method of translation is specific, though we have it only at second hand. Edward Stevenson, later of the First Council of Seventy, recorded the testimony of his friend Harris:

The Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he used the seer stone. . . . By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used.¹¹

Martin served as scribe only between 12 April 1828 and 14 June 1828, when his part in the loss of the first 116 pages of completed manuscript cost him the privilege of further transcription.

The second scribe to serve Joseph was his wife, Emma. In 1879 Emma, interviewed by her son Joseph Smith III concerning important events in early Church history, explained, "In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us. . . . The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table-cloth, which I had given him to fold them in."¹² Emma's service as scribe, interrupted as it must have been by the necessity of household chores, was at best brief. Her handwriting is not found on any original manuscript material now available.¹³

Full-time transcription did not become possible again until a young school-teacher, Oliver Cowdery, arrived 5 April 1829. Cowdery wrote in 1834: "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven. . . . Day after day I continued uninterrupted to write from his mouth, as he translated with the *Urim* and *Thummim*, or, as the Nephites

would have said, 'Interpreters,' the history or record, called 'The Book of Mormon.' "¹⁴ Shortly after leaving the Church in 1838, Oliver expanded his description of the translation process: "I have sometimes had seasons of skepticism, in which I did seriously wonder whether the Prophet and I were men in our sober senses, when he would be translating from plates, through 'the Urim and Thummim,' and the plates not be in sight at all."¹⁵ When Cowdery returned to the Church in 1848, Reuben Miller recorded in his diary that Oliver confirmed his testimony to the Council Bluffs, Iowa, Saints: "I wrote with my own pen, the entire Book of Mormon [save a few pages], as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as he translated it by the gift and power of God, by means of the Urim and Thummim, or as it is called by that book, 'holy interpreters' "¹⁶ (The bracketed material is Cowdery's).

After approximately two months of translating at the Isaac Hale home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, Joseph was invited by a friend of Cowdery, David Whitmer, to continue the translation work at his father's farm on the north end of Seneca Lake near Fayette, New York. Thus the Whitmer family witnessed the Book of Mormon translation process as the manuscript grew day by day throughout June 1829. Elizabeth Ann Whitmer, who married Oliver Cowdery in 1832, recorded in 1870, when she was fifty-five: "I cheerfully certify that I was familiar with the manner of Joseph Smith's translating the Book of Mormon. He translated the most of it at my Father's house. And I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours together. Joseph never had a curtain drawn between him and his scribe while he was translating. He would place the director¹⁷ in his hat, and then place his face in his hat, so as to exclude the light."¹⁸

David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, served as scribe during this brief period. He provides us with more specific information about the translation procedure than any other person. In 1887 he published a booklet in Richmond, Missouri, entitled *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, which includes this detailed description:

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated by Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.¹⁹

Whitmer reiterated that account on many occasions, explaining the translation process in a consistent fashion: "Joseph did not see the plates in translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before him would appear what seemed to be parchment

on which would appear the characters of the plates on a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation in English.”²⁰ In an 1881 interview with the *Kansas City Journal*, David Whitmer even details characteristics of the seer stone (multiplied by an enthusiastic reporter into *two* stones):

I, as well as all of my father’s family, Smith’s wife, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris were present during the translation. The translation was by Smith, and the manner as follows: He had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light.²¹

Whitmer explicitly confronted the general confusion between the seer stone and the Nephite “interpreters,” or Urim and Thummim, when he tried to set the record straight through a friend, Edward Traughber:

With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim; but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone, called a ‘Seer Stone,’ which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light. Then, a spiritual light would shine forth, and parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English; at least, so Joseph said.²²

Other early witnesses tend to corroborate Whitmer’s account. Joseph Knight, Sr., a close friend of Joseph Smith, recorded an account of the translation process, possibly as early as 1833: “Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkened his Eyes then he would take a sentence and it would appear in Brite Roman Letters then he would tell the writer and he would write it then that would go away the next Sentence would Come and so on.”²³

Emma Smith’s father, Isaac Hale, provides a valuably frank perspective of the translation process because of the hostility he came to harbor toward son-in-law Joseph Smith during the few months the translation proceeded in the Hale home: “The manner in which he[Joseph Smith] pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for money-diggers, with a stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates were at the same time hid in the woods.”²⁴

Michael Morse, husband of Emma Smith’s sister, Trial Hale, described the procedure as he witnessed it, a description remarkably consistent with previous accounts. He is quoted in 1879 by W. W. Blair, of the RLDS First Presidency:

When Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, [Morse] had occasion more than once to go into his immediate presence, and saw him engaged at his work of translation.

The mode of procedure consisted in Joseph’s placing the Seer Stone in the crown of a

hat, then putting his face into the hat, so as to entirely cover his face, resting his elbows upon his knees, and then dictating word after word, while the scribes—Emma, John Whitmer, O. Cowdery, or some other wrote it down.²⁵

These eyewitness accounts to the translation process must be viewed in proper perspective. Most were given in retrospect and may be clouded by the haze of intervening years. Many were reported second hand, subject to skewing by nonwitnesses. Yet there are persistent parallels among these scattered testimonies. Consensus holds that the “translation” process was accomplished through a single seer stone from the time of the loss of the 116 pages until the completion of the book. Martin Harris’s description of interchangeable use of a seer stone with the interpreters, or Urim and Thummim, refers only to the portion of translation he was witness to—the initial 116 pages. The second point of agreement is even more consistent: The plates could not have been used directly in the translation process. The Prophet, his face in a hat to exclude exterior light, would have been unable to view the plates directly even if they had been present during transcription.

A mental picture of the young Joseph, face buried in a hat, gazing into a seer stone, plates out of sight, has not been a generally held view since the early days of the Church. The view raises some difficult questions. Why, for example, was such great care taken to preserve the plates for thousands of years if they were not to be used directly in the translation process? Is it possible that they were to serve primarily as evidence to the eleven witnesses of the Book of Mormon that the record did in fact exist?

The concept of a single seer stone is another problem area, for we have been taught since the Prophet’s day that the Urim and Thummim were used. The term itself is problematic. The Book of Mormon does not contain the words “Urim and Thummim.” Ammon describes the instrument as “the things . . . called interpreters”—“two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow” which were “prepared from the beginning” and “handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages” (Mosiah 8:13, 28:13-14). Joseph Smith adds in the Pearl of Great Price that “God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book” (Joseph Smith—History 1:35). Furthermore, the Nephite interpreters were not referred to as Urim and Thummim until 1833, when W. W. Phelps first equated the two in the first edition of the *Evening and Morning Star*: “It was translated by the gift and power of God, by an unlearned man, through the aid of a pair of Interpreters, or spectacles—(known, perhaps in ancient days as Teraphim, or Urim and Thummim).”²⁶

That the Prophet should have used a seer stone rather than the Nephite interpreters is puzzling in itself. Martin Harris’s 1875 mention of convenience in using a seer stone may refer to the fact that by all accounts the Nephite interpreters were large.²⁷ An additional reason for using the seer stone Harris conveniently omits, since it directly involved him. David Whitmer explains that after Martin Harris lost the first 116 pages of Book of Mormon manuscript,

. . . the Lord . . . took from the prophet the Urim and Thummim and other wise

expressed his condemnation. By fervent prayer and by other wise humbling himself, the prophet, however, again found favor, and was presented with a strange, oval-shaped, chocolate-colored stone, about the size of an egg only more flat, which, it was promised, should serve the same purpose as the missing Urim and Thummim. . . . With this stone all of the present Book of Mormon was translated.²⁸

When Zenas H. Gurley, editor of the RLDS *Saints' Herald*, interviewed Whitmer in 1855 and specifically asked if Joseph used his " 'Peep stone' to finish up the translation," David replied that

he used a stone called a "Seers stone," the "Interpreters" having been taken away from him because of transgression. The "Interpreters" were taken from Joseph after he allowed Martin Harris to carry away the 116 pages of Ms of the Book of Mormon as a punishment, but he was allowed to go on and translate by the use of a "Seers stone" which he had, and which he placed in a hat into which he buried his face, stating to me and others that the original character appeared upon parchment and under it the translation in English.²⁹

Whitmer's accounts also find support in the *Historical Record* of the Church: "As a chastisement for this carelessness, the Urim and Thummim was taken from Smith. But by humbling himself, he again found favor with the Lord and was presented a strange ovalshaped, chocolate colored stone, about the size of an egg, but more flat which it was promised should answer the same purpose. With this stone all the present book was translated."³⁰

Joseph had apparently possessed this seer stone for several years before using it in the translation process, despite the accounts of a divine "presentation." Willard Chase, a neighbor of the Smiths in Palmyra, New York, relates how the stone was discovered on his property.

In the year 1822, I was engaged in digging a well. I employed Alvin and Joseph Smith to assist me. . . . After digging about twenty feet below the surface of the earth, we discovered a singularly appearing stone, which excited my curiosity. I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat. . . . The next morning he came to me, and wished to obtain the stone, alleging that he could see in it; but I told him I did not wish to part with it on account of its being a curiosity, but I would lend it.³¹

Confirmation of Chase's account is made by Martin Harris in 1859: "Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase twenty-four feet from the surface. In this stone he could see many things to my certain knowledge."³² Wilford Woodruff, writing in 1888, recalled that Joseph Smith found the "seers stone . . . by revelation some 30 feet under the earth."³³

Several accounts document that Joseph often carried the Chase seer stone on his person between 1822 and 1830. In an 1826 trial, "on the request of the court he exhibited the stone. It was about the size of a small hen's egg, in the shape of a high-instepped shoe. It was composed of layers of different colors passing

diagonally through it. It was very hard and smooth, perhaps by being carried in the pocket."³⁴ Martin Harris in 1859 recalled an incident that occurred in the early 1820s:

I was at the house of his father in Manchester, two miles south of Palmyra village, and was picking my teeth with a pin while sitting on the bars. The pin caught in my teeth and dropped from my fingers into shavings and straw. I jumped from the bars and looked for it. Joseph and Northrop Sweet also did the same. We could not find it. I then took Joseph on surprise, and said to him—I said, "Take your stone." I had never seen it, and did not know that he had it with him. He had it in his pocket. He took it and placed it in his hat—the old white hat—and placed his face in his hat. I watched him closely to see that he did not look to one side; he reached out his hand beyond me on the right, and moved a little stick and there I saw the pin, which he picked up and gave to me. I know he did not look out of the hat until after he had picked up the pin.³⁵

A third attestation of the Prophet's possession of a seer stone is the difficulty between Joseph and the family of his 1825 employer, Josiah Staal, a difficulty which apparently arose from Joseph's reputation with such a stone. According to the Prophet's mother, Staal "came for Joseph on account of having heard that he possessed certain keys by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye,"³⁶ and engaged him to seek Spanish treasure near the Susquehanna River. Staal, who later became a member of the Church, related that the young Joseph, who was in his employ for some five months, "pretended to have skill of telling where hidden treasures in the earth were by means of looking through a certain stone."³⁷ Joseph explains the incident in some detail in the Pearl of Great Price:

In the month of October, 1825, I hired with an old gentleman by the name of Josiah Staal, who lived in Chenango county, State of New York. He had heard something of a silver mine having been opened by the Spaniards in Harmony, Susquehanna county, State of Pennsylvania; and had, previous to my hiring to him, been digging, in order, if possible, to discover the mine. After I went to live with him, he took me, with the rest of his hands,³⁸ to dig for the silver mine at which I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it. (Joseph Smith—History 1:56)

Though Staal professed "implicit faith" in Joseph's psychic abilities, the Staal family remained unconvinced. In 1826, Peter Bridgeman, a nephew of Staal's wife, preferred charges against Joseph Smith as a "disorderly person and an imposter"—charges evidently referring to Joseph's "glass looking" psychic abilities. Though the full court record has not yet been discovered and recorded accounts of the trial fail to agree on all points, there is consensus that the Staal family became convinced that Josiah Staal was squandering his resources and urged him to stop.³⁹

Another account corroborating Joseph's habit of carrying a stone on his

person comes from Lucy Smith, the Prophet's mother: "That of which I spoke, which Joseph termed a key, was indeed, nothing more nor less than the Urim and Thummim, and it was by this that the angel showed him many things which he saw in vision; by which also he could ascertain, at any time, the approach of danger, either to himself or the Record, and on account of which he always kept the Urim and Thummim about his person."⁴⁰ Since the Urim and Thummim was too large, by all accounts, to be concealed on Joseph's person, Mother Smith must have been referring here not to the Nephite interpreters but to the Chase seer stone.

That a seer stone was divinely prepared for Joseph's use is suggested in the Book of Mormon. Alma 37:23 reads: "I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem, a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light, that I may discover unto my people who serve me, that I may discover unto them the works of their brethren, yea, their secret works, their works of darkness, and their wickedness and abominations." "Gazelam," with a slight difference in spelling, is identified, in three sections of the Doctrine and Covenants (78:9, 82:11, 104:26, 43), as Joseph Smith. W. W. Phelps, scribe and personal friend to the Prophet, declared in Joseph Smith's funeral sermon that the Prophet was "Gazelam" in the spirit world.⁴¹

The Prophet related in his Pearl of Great Price account that during Moroni's first conversation with him 23 September 1823, "the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it" (Joseph Smith—History 1:42). Joseph does not relate how the vision was opened to his mind, but parallel accounts indicate that it may have been through the Chase seer stone.⁴² Martin Harris recalled in 1859: "Joseph had before this described the manner of his finding the plates. He found them by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase. The family had likewise told me the same thing."⁴³

Willard Chase, on whose property the stone was discovered, points out that in 1827 Joseph Smith, Sr., explained to him "that some years ago, a spirit had appeared to Joseph his son, in a vision, and informed him that in a certain place there was a record on plates of gold; and that he was the person that must obtain them. He [Joseph Smith] then observed that if it had not been for that stone, he would not have obtained the book."⁴⁴

Henry Harris, an acquaintance of the Smith family, confirms these accounts: "He [Joseph Smith] said he had a revelation from God that told him they were hid in a certain hill and he looked in his stone and saw them in the place of deposit."⁴⁵ Further corroboration is provided by W. D. Purple, who had taken notes for Judge Albert Neely during Joseph Smith's 1826 trial: "Smith, by the aid of his luminous stone, found the Golden Bible, or the book of Mormon."⁴⁶ And in 1856, after attending a meeting of the Board of Regents of the University of Deseret, Judge Hosea Stout recorded in his journal that "President Young

exhibited the 'seer's stone' with which the Prophet Joseph discovered the plates of the Book of Mormon."⁴⁷

The Prophet's 1838 account of the manner in which he discovered the plates, though it makes no mention of the Chase seer stone, does not preclude its use: "Moroni, the person who deposited the plates, from whence the Book of Mormon was translated, in a hill in Manchester, Ontario County, New York, being dead, and raised again therefrom, appeared unto me, and told me where they were; and gave me directions how to obtain them."⁴⁸ The seer stone could have been the medium through which Moroni's instructions were given. The fact that the Smith brothers who shared Joseph's bedroom were not disturbed by Moroni's visitation adds support to the possibility of a seer stone vision.

Lest the Prophet's omission of mention of such matters be taken as proof they did not occur, it should be noted that his hesitation to divulge details of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon might be expected in light of the vitriolic public reception of his accounts of sacred matters. If the early response of a nonbelieving Methodist minister as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price is typical, it is obvious why Joseph would hesitate to provide detailed disclosure: "I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them" (Joseph Smith—History 1:21). Given that sort of reaction, it is not surprising that Joseph seldom discussed the Chase seer stone, and showed it only to trusted associates.

Historical evidence indicates that he retained possession of this stone for a brief period after the completion of the Book of Mormon translation. In early 1830, Martin Harris, who had consented to finance publication of the book, was unable to come up with the necessary funds quickly. Hyrum Smith and others became impatient and suggested that Joseph send some of the brethren to Toronto, Ontario, to attempt to sell the copyright. David Whitmer records the Prophet's use of the seer stone in seeking inspiration on the matter:

Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copy-right, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "*Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man; and some revelations are of the devil.*"⁴⁹

Oliver Cowdery, after he had been excommunicated from the Church, related his own account of the 1830 revelation

that some among you will remember which sent Bro. Page and me, so unwisely, to Toronto, with a prediction from the Lord by "Urim and Thummim," that we would there find a man anxious to buy the "First Elder's copyright." I well remember we did not find him, and had to return surprised and disappointed. But so great was my faith, that in going to Toronto, nothing but calmness pervaded my soul, every doubt was banished, and I as much expected that Bro. Page and I would fulfill the revelation as that we should live. And you may believe, without asking me to relate the particulars that it would be no easy task to describe our desolation and grief. Bro. Page and I did not think that God would have deceived us through "Urim and Thummin[sic]," exactly as came the Book of Mormon.⁵⁰

David Whitmer indicated that the seer stone was later given to Oliver Cowdery: "After the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished early in the spring of 1830 before April 6th, Joseph gave the Stone to Oliver Cowdery and told me as well as the rest that he was through with it, and he did not use the Stone anymore."⁵¹ Whitmer, who was Cowdery's brother-in-law, stated that on Oliver's death in 1848, another brother-in-law, "Phineas Young, a brother of Brigham Young, and an old-time and once intimate friend of the Cowdery family came out from Salt Lake City, and during his visit he contrived to get the stone from its hiding place, through a little deceptive sophistry, extended upon the grief-stricken widow. When he returned to Utah he carried it in triumph to the apostles of Brigham Young's 'lion house.' "⁵²

Whatever the exact circumstances of its acquisition, the Chase seer stone remained in Brigham Young's possession until his death in 1877.⁵³ Hosea Stout described in detail the stone President Young displayed to the University of Deseret Board of Regents on 25 February 1856, "a silecious granite dark color almost black with light colored stripes some what resembling petrified poplar or cotton wood bark. It was about the size but not the shape of a hen's egg."⁵⁴

This same seer stone was carried by President Wilford Woodruff to the dedication of the Manti Temple in 1888: "Before leaving I consecrated upon the Altar the sears stone that Joseph Smith found by Revelation some 30 feet under the earth carried by him through life."⁵⁵ Another description of the stone was given by Richard M. Robinson when he returned from a Southern States mission in 1899 and presented a strange coin he felt might be of Nephite origin to President Lorenzo Snow. Robinson relates that President Snow

went and got the money purse or leather bag that President Young had brought to the Rocky Mountains with him, also the Seer Stone and said, "This is the Seer Stone that the Prophet Joseph used. There are very few worthy to view this, but you are." He handed the Seer Stone to me and I couldn't express the joy that came to me as I took that stone in my hands. Words are not equal to the task of expressing such a sublime joy! He then told me to hand the Seer Stone to my wife and I handed it to her. He then blessed us with the greatest blessing I have ever heard fall from the mouth of man!

The Seer Stone was the shape of an egg though not quite so large, of a gray cast something like granite but with white stripes running around it. It was transparent but had no holes, neither in the end or in the sides. I looked into the stone, but could see nothing, as I had not the gift and power of God that must accompany such a manifestation.⁵⁶

Though we seldom hear the Chase seer stone mentioned in the Church today, it remains in the possession of the First Presidency. Joseph Fielding Smith, as an apostle, made clear that “the Seer Stone which was in the possession of the Prophet Joseph Smith in early days . . . is now in the possession of the Church.”⁵⁷ Elder Joseph Anderson, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve and long-time secretary to the First Presidency, clarified in 1971 that the “Seer Stone that Joseph Smith used in the early days of the Church is in possession of the Church and is kept in a safe in Joseph Fielding Smith’s office. . . . [The stone is] slightly smaller than a chicken egg, oval, chocolate in color.”⁵⁸

The final word as to what happened to the Nephite interpreters or Urim and Thummim is usually thought to be the Pearl of Great Price account in Joseph Smith—History 1:59-60:

At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. . . . By the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them I delivered them up to him: and *he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight* [italics added].

Though “them” in this account could refer solely to the plates, Patriarch Zebedee Coltrin, an early acquaintance of Joseph Smith, related in an 1880 high priests’ meeting in Spanish Fork, Utah, that he had once asked Joseph what he had done with the Urim and Thummim and that “Joseph said he had no further need of it and he had given it to the angel Moroni. He had the Melchizedek Priesthood, and with that Priesthood he had the key to all knowledge and intelligence.”⁵⁹ Joseph Smith apparently did not have the Nephite interpreters after the completion of the Book of Mormon translation; Moroni had them in his possession when they were shown to the Three Witnesses in June 1830. David Whitmer explained to Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith in 1878 that he, Martin Harris, and Oliver Cowdery, in fulfillment of a promise made in Doctrine and Covenants 17:1, were shown “a table with many records or plates upon it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the Sword of Laban, the Directors—i.e., the ball which Lehi had—and the Interpreters.”⁶⁰

If the Nephite interpreters were in fact returned to Moroni before June 1830, as the evidence strongly suggests, then why are so many references made to “Urim and Thummim” in Church history after this date? Wilford Woodruff’s journal entry describing a Quorum of the Twelve meeting held 27 December 1841 in Nauvoo shows the problem: “The Twelve, or part of them, spent the day with Joseph the Seer, and he confided unto them many glorious things of the

Kingdom of God. The privileges and blessings of the priesthood, etc. I had the privilege of seeing for the first time in my day, *the Urim and Thummim* [italics added]."⁶¹

Yet Brigham Young, attending the same meeting, recorded:

I met with the Twelve at brother Joseph's. He conversed with us in a familiar manner on a variety of subjects, and explained to us the Urim and Thummim which he found with the plates, called in the Book of Mormon the Interpreters. He said that every man who lived on the earth was entitled to a seer stone, and should have one, but they are kept from them in consequence of their wickedness, and most of those who do find one make an evil use of it; *he showed us his seer stone* [italics added].⁶²

Which apostle was mistaken? Was there actual confusion of objects or simply confusion of terminology? We suggest that the discrepancy results from the popularity of Urim and Thummim terminology. Jane Manning James, a black convert living in Joseph's Nauvoo home, uses the "Urim and Thummim" terminology in her autobiographical reminiscence:

One morning I met Brother Joseph coming out of his mothers room he said good morning and shook hands with me. I went in to his mothers room she said good morning bring me that bundle from my bureau and sit down here. I did as she told me, she placed the bundle in my hands and said, handle this and after I had done it she said sit down. Do you remember that I told you about the Urim and Thummim when I told you about the book of Mormon, I answered yes mam. She then told me I had just handled it, you are not permitted to see it, but you have been permitted to handle it. You will live long after I am dead and gone and you can tell the Latter-day Saints, that you was permitted to handle the Urim and Thummim.⁶³

Lucy Clayton Bullock, wife to Brigham Young's clerk, Thomas Bullock, also tells of "seeing the urim and thummim" during the Nauvoo period.⁶⁴

The brother apostles Orson and Parley P. Pratt relate separate accounts of the Urim and Thummim being used to "translate" the book of Abraham from the Egyptian papyri. Parley was quoted in 1842 as having said: "The Pearl of Great Price is now in course of translation by means of the Urim and Thummim and proves to be a record written partly by the father of the faithful, Abraham, and finished by Joseph when in Egypt."⁶⁵ Orson added in 1878: "The Prophet translated the part of these writings which, as I have said, is contained in the Pearl of Great Price, and known as the Book of Abraham. Thus you see one of the first gifts bestowed by the Lord for the benefit of His people, was that of revelation, the gift to translate, by the aid of the Urim and Thummim."⁶⁶ Wilford Woodruff similarly associates the Urim and Thummim with the translation of the Egyptian papyri: "The Lord is blessing with power to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of God; to translate by the Urim and Thummim ancient records and hieroglyphics old as Abraham or Adam."⁶⁷

In short, the term "Urim and Thummim" appears repeatedly. Joseph Smith's personal secretary, William Clayton, records that in 1843 Hyrum Smith "re-

requested Joseph to write the revelation [on celestial marriage] *by means of the Urim and Thummim* [italics added], but Joseph in reply said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end."⁶⁸ President Heber C. Kimball testified in 1853, after the Chase seer stone had been brought to Salt Lake City by Phineas Young: "Has Brother Brigham got the Urim and Thummim? Yes, he has everything that is necessary for him to receive the will and mind of God to this people."⁶⁹

In addition to Joseph's use of a seer stone in "translation" work with the Book of Mormon and the book of Abraham, evidence suggests that several of the early revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants may have come through this medium. Orson Pratt, who lived for a time in the Prophet's home, related in 1878 "the circumstances under which revelations were received by Joseph . . . he [Elder Pratt] being present on several occasions of the kind. . . . At such times Joseph used the 'seer stone' when inquiring of the Lord, and receiving revelations, but that he was so thoroughly endowed with the inspiration of the Almighty and the spirit of revelation that he often received them without any instrument or other means than the operation of the spirit upon his mind."⁷⁰ Headings to eight sections in the present LDS Doctrine and Covenants—3, 6, 7, 11, 14-17—describe revelations received from July 1828 through June 1829 by "Urim and Thummim." David Whitmer, who stated he was "present when Brother Joseph gave nearly every revelation that is in the Book of Commandments,"⁷¹ records "Brother Joseph giving the revelations of 1829 through the same stone through which the Book was translated. . . . He then gave up the stone forever."⁷²

Revelations given through the seer stone at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, during 1829 include not only sections 14 through 17, but also section 18. Headnote references, which were not added until the 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, list sections 14-17 as having been given through "Urim and Thummim," but David Whitmer also mentions the 18th section (which directs him and Oliver to select the first Quorum of the Twelve) as having come through the Chase seer stone.

Section 10:1 describes the "power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim." But the reference to Urim and Thummim is a retrospective addition which does not appear in the original revelation in the Book of Commandments (Chapter IX).⁷³ This change first appeared in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (section 36:1). The Prophet's handwritten 1832 account of his early history says "the Lord had prepared spectacles for to read the Book,"⁷⁴ and he did not begin to use the phrase "Urim and Thummim" to describe his translation vehicle until after W. W. Phelps equated the interpreters with the "Urim and Thummim" in an 1833 *Evening and Morning Star* article.

President Joseph Fielding Smith thought all "statements of translations by the Urim and Thummim" after 1830 "evidently errors."⁷⁵ If by "Urim and Thummim" we mean exclusively the Nephite interpreters, President Smith is correct. A more feasible explanation, however, is advanced by Apostle Orson Pratt: "The Urim and Thummim is a stone or other substance sanctified and

illuminated by the Spirit of the living God, and presented to those who are blessed with the gift of seeing."⁷⁶ Evidence suggests that the Prophet Joseph Smith used the term "Urim and Thummim" in a much broader fashion than we have become used to. After Martin Harris had lost the 116 pages of completed Book of Mormon manuscript, Lucy Smith said that Moroni appeared to Joseph and demanded the return of the Nephite interpreters. The Prophet responded:

I did as I was directed, and as I handed them to him, he remarked, "If you are very humble and penitent, it may be you will receive them again; if so it will be on the twenty-second of next September [1828]." After the angel left me I continued my supplications to God, without cessation, and on the twenty-second of September, I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the Urim and Thummim, with which I have again commenced translating, and Emma writes for me.⁷⁷

Though Joseph's account appears at first glance to refer to the return of the Nephite interpreters, an 1870 statement by Emma Smith indicates that Joseph in all likelihood meant the Chase seer stone: "Now the first that my husband translated was translated by the use of the Urim and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost, after that he used a small stone, not exactly black, but was rather a dark color."⁷⁸

Another Joseph Smith application of the term "Urim and Thummim" to mean "seer stone" is recorded in the journal of Wandle Mace, a Nauvoo acquaintance of the Prophet. Mace explains that a group of Church members in England had been using two seer stones in exploring "magic or astrology." These two stones, often referred to as the "Sameazer Stones," were given to Joseph Smith's cousin, George A. Smith, who brought them to the Prophet in Nauvoo. Mace records that "Apostle Smith gave them to Joseph the prophet who pronounced them to be a Urim and Thummim—as good as ever was upon the earth—but he said, 'They have been consecrated to devils.'⁷⁹

These stones could not have been the Nephite interpreters, yet Joseph specifically calls them "Urim and Thummim." The most obvious explanation for such wording is that he used the term generically to include any device with the potential for "communicating light perfectly, and intelligence perfectly, through a principle that God has ordained for that purpose," as John Taylor would later put it.⁸⁰

Though a seer stone is referred to many times in the early days of the Church as "Urim and Thummim," the reference is not always to the Chase seer stone. The Prophet used several seer stones during his lifetime. One of the accounts of his 1826 trial in New York records testimony that "Prisoner [Joseph Smith] laid a book up on a white cloth, and looking through another stone which was white and transparent. . . . Prisoner pretended to him that he could discover objects at a distance by holding this white stone to the sun or candle; that prisoner rather declined looking into a hat at his dark colored stone, as he said that it hurt his eyes."⁸¹

Philo Dibble, a friend of Joseph Smith who made early replicas of the Smith

brothers' death masks, preserved a third stone used by the Prophet in Nauvoo: "At the time of the martyrdom, [Dibble] rescued a small seer stone, at the Nauvoo Mansion House, from falling into the hands of the apostates. He brought this seer stone across the plains. Later, as curator of church history, he showed the death masks, the seer stone, and other items of historical value on his lecture tours throughout the territory of Utah."⁸² Though a description of this stone is not given, it is definitely not the Chase seer stone, which was still in the possession of Oliver Cowdery. It may well be the same stone that the Prophet showed to the Quorum of Twelve in 1841, which Wilford Woodruff referred to as the "Urim and Thummim" and which Brigham Young called a seer stone.

Brigham Young documents that Joseph had more than one seer stone: "I met with President W. Richards and the Twelve on the 6th. We spent the time in interesting conversation upon old times, Joseph, the plates, Mount Cumorah, treasures and records known to be hid in the earth, the gift of seeing, and how Joseph obtained his *first* seer stone[italics added]."⁸³

Joseph Smith further expanded the meaning of "Urim and Thummim" on April 2, 1843, in response to a William Clayton question:

God and the planet where he dwells is like crystal, and like a sea of glass before the throne. This is the great Urim & Thummim whereon all things are manifest both things past, present & future and are continually before the Lord. The Urim & Thummim is a small representation of this globe. The earth when it is purified will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim & Thummim whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom or all kingdoms of a lower order will be manifest to those who dwell on it. and this earth will be with Christ Then the white stone mentioned in Rev. c2 v17 is the Urim & Thummim whereby all things pertaining to an higher order of kingdoms even all kingdoms will be made known and a white stone is given to each of those who come into this celestial kingdom, whereon is a new name written which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word.⁸⁴

Though all events surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon are not yet fully known, some things seem clear: Joseph Smith discovered a "singular-looking seer stone" in 1822 which not only served as a medium through which, according to numerous descriptions, all of the present Book of Mormon was translated but which also played a vital role in the discovery of the Nephite record. "Urim and Thummim," the traditional nomenclature for the Nephite interpreters which were used as the medium for translating the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages Martin Harris lost, has a broader meaning; any mechanism capable of eliciting the mind and will of God can correctly be referred to as "Urim and Thummim." Apparent historical discrepancies between references to the Nephite interpreters and the prophet Joseph Smith's seer stones evaporate once this generic use of "Urim and Thummim" is understood. Whatever the actual device used, the Prophet in 1842 provided the most important insight about his Book of Mormon translation: "Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God."⁸⁵

NOTES

1. Two excellent discussions of primary sources are James E. Lancaster, "By the Gift and Power of God—The Method of Translation of the Book of Mormon," *Saints' Herald* 109 (15 Nov. 1962):798-817, and Robert F. Smith, "Translation of Languages," a 1980 unpublished account of primary sources respecting the Book of Mormon translation, privately circulated by the author.

2. Minutes of general conference, 25 Oct. 1831, cited in Far West Record, p. 13, Historical Department Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.

3. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B. H. Roberts, ed., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974), 1:315. Hereafter referred to as *History of the Church*.

4. Warren Cowdery, Manuscript History of the Church, Book A-1, pp. 121-2, LDS Church Archives.

5. *Elder's Journal* 1 (July 1838): 43.

6. Joseph Smith, "Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1842): 707.

7. Joseph Smith, "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 3 (May 1842): 772.

8. *Times and Seasons* 4 (Nov. 1843): 373.

9. Harris, a family friend of the Smiths, was one of the few persons outside the family to know of the "plates of gold" prior to their retrieval from the Hill Cumorah in 1827.

Joseph Knight, Sr., close friend and neighbor of the Smith's, also knew of the plates: "I went to Rochester on business and returned by Palmyra to be there about the 22nd of September I was there several days I will say there was a man near By the name of Samuel Lawrence he was a Sear and he had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them he had talked with me and told me the Conversation he had with the personage which told him if he would Do right according to the will of god he mite obtain the 22nd Day of September next and if not he never would have them. Now Joseph was some affraid of him that he mite be a trouble to him he therefore sint his father up to Sams as he called him near night to see if there was any signs of his going away that night he told his father to stay till near Dark and if he saw any signs of his going you till him if I find him there I will thrash the stumps with him" (Joseph Knight, Sr., untitled and undated manuscript in LDS Church Archives written between the last date of entry mentioned in the manuscript, 1833, and Knight's death in 1847).

Brigham Young in 1855 mentioned an additional person, "a fortune-teller . . . who knew where those plates were hid. He went three times in one summer to get them . . . the same summer in which Joseph did get them. . . . He had not returned to his home from the last trip he made for them more than a week or ten days before Joseph got them." (*The Journal of Discourses. Reports of Addresses by Brigham Young and others*, 26 vols. (Liverpool and London: F. O. and S. W. Richards, 1853-86), 19 July 1857, 5:55. Hereafter cited as *Journal of Discourses*).

10. Dean C. Jessee, "The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript," *BYU Studies* (Spring 1970): 259-78, lists the scribes as Martin Harris, Emma Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Reuben Hale, John Whitmer, and David Whitmer. The Prophet's brother, Samuel H. Smith, is also mentioned as a scribe in the Kirtland Letterbook, 1829-35, pp. 1-6, LDS Church Archives.

11. Edward Stevenson, "One of the Three Witnesses," *Deseret News*, 30 Nov. 1881. Reprinted in *Millennial Star* 44 (6 Feb. 1882): 86-87.

12. *Saints' Herald* 26 (1 Oct. 1879): 289-90.

13. Jessee, "Original Manuscript," pp. 276-77.

14. *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Oct. 1834): 14.

15. Oliver Cowdery, *Defense in a Rehearsal of My Grounds for Separating Myself from the Latter Day Saints* (Norton, OH, 1839); also *Saints' Herald*, 54 (20 May 1907): 229-230.

16. Reuben Miller Diary, 21 Oct. 1848, LDS Church Archives. Also *Deseret News*, 13 April 1859.

17. In Book of Mormon editions from 1830-1920, Alma 37:24 read "directors" instead of the present "interpreters." RLDS Book of Mormon editions have retained the original and printer's copies reading of "directors."

18. Original not available; cited in William McLellan letter to "My Dear Friends," from Independence, Missouri, February 1870, of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, MO; hereafter cited as RLDS Church Archives. Reference courtesy Robert F. Smith.

19. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, MO: n.p., 1887), p. 13.

20. *Kansas City Journal*, 5 June 1881.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 Nov. 1879): 341.
23. Joseph Knight, Sr., account, LDS Church Archives.
24. *The Susquehanna Register*, 1 May 1834. Cited in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painsville, OH: Eber D. Howe, 1834), p. 77.
25. *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 June 1879): 190-91.
26. Phelps was Church printer in Independence, Missouri, and editor of the *Evening and Morning Star*. He was also publisher of the Book of Commandments and while living in Joseph Smith's Kirtland home, assisted the 1835 First Presidency in compiling the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.
27. William Smith, the Prophet's brother, described the interpreters as "too large for Joseph's eyes; they must have been used by larger men (William Smith interview by J. W. Peterson and W. S. Pender, 4 July 1891, reported in *The Rod of Iron* 3 (Feb. 1924): 6-7; *Saints' Herald* 79 (9 March 1932): 238. Professor Charles Anthon, retrospectively recalling Martin Harris's description, agreed: "These spectacles were so large that if a person attempted to look through them, his two eyes would have to be turned towards *one* of the glasses merely, the spectacles in question being altogether too large for the breadth of the human face (Charles Anthon letter to E. D. Howe, 17 Feb. 1834, in *Mormonism Unveiled*, p. 17). Though Anthon's account seems exaggerated, Martin Harris relates that the lenses were "about two inches in diameter, perfectly round, and about five-eighths of an inch thick at the centre. . . . They were joined by a round bar of silver, about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, and about four inches long, which with the two stones, would make eight inches" Harris read proofs of this article before publication and verified the accuracy of the reporting. (Joel Tiffany, *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, pp. 165-66.)
28. *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, 17 Oct. 1886. Also *Saints' Herald* 33 (13 Nov. 1886): 706.
29. "Questions asked of David Whitmer at his home in Richmond Ray County Mo. Jan. 14-1885 relating to book of Mormon, and the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS by Elder Z. H. Gurley," holograph in LDS Church Archives. Another supportive account is a Whitmer interview recorded in the *Chicago Tribune*, 17 Dec. 1885: "The plates were never restored to Joseph—nor the spectacles, but a different Urim & Thummim—one oval or kidney-shaped—a seer's stone, which he placed in his hat, and, face in hat, he would see character and translation on the stone."
- Whitmer's account is also corroborated by William E. McLellan, an early member of the Quorum of the Twelve: "After the 116 pages were lost Joseph translated the rest of the Book of Mormon with a stone," *Saints' Herald* 19 (1 Aug. 1872): 473.
30. *The Historical Record. Devoted Exclusively to Historical, Biographical, Chronological and Statistical Matters*, p.632, LDS Church Archives.
31. Howe, "Mormonism," pp. 241-42. The use of seer stones in upstate New York was not unusual. *The Wayne Sentinel*, 27 Dec. 1825, relates: "A few days since was discovered in this town, by the help of a mineral stone (which becomes transparent when placed in a hat and the light excluded by the face of him who looks into it, provided he is fortunes favorite) a monstrous potash kettle in the bowels of old Mother Earth, filled with purest bullion."
32. *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, p. 163.
33. Wilford Woodruff Journal, 18 May 1888, holograph in LDS Church Archives.
34. W. D. Purple's account in *The Chenango Union*, 3 May 1877, cited in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness For Christ in America*, 2 vols. (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1951), 2:365.
35. *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, p. 164.
36. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith The Prophet, And His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: Published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, 1853), pp. 91-92.
37. *Fraser's Magazine*, February 1873, pp. 229-30.
38. Martin Harris adds that Staal's "hands" included "Mr. Beman (Alva), also Samuel Lawrence, George Proper, Joseph Smith, jr., and his father, and his brother Hiram Smith," *Tiffany's Monthly* (June 1859), p. 164.
39. The trial, reported in *Fraser's Magazine*, February 1873, and *Chenango Union*, 3 May 1877, has long been disputed. But in 1971 Judge Neely's bill of costs for the trial (\$2.68) was discovered. This document designates

Joseph Smith as "the glass-looker" and charges him with a "misdemeanor" (Marvin S. Hill, "Joseph Smith and the 1826 Trial: New Evidence and New Difficulties," *BYU Studies* (Winter 1972): 222-33).

Joseph Smith's cousin, Church Historian George A. Smith, was apparently referring to this case when he related in 1855 that Joseph Smith "was never found guilty but once . . . the magistrate, after hearing the witnesses, decided that he was guilty, but as the statutes of New York did not provide a punishment for casting out devils, he was acquitted" (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:213).

40. Lucy Mack Smith, *Sketches*, p. 106.

41. Joseph Smith Funeral Sermon in W. W. Phelps Papers, LDS Church Archives. In a 10 April 1854 letter to Brigham Young, Phelps, who served as Joseph Smith's scribe in Kirtland, Ohio, states that Gazelam refers to "The Light of the Lord," Brigham Young Letter Collection, LDS Church Archives.

42. An interesting account related by Joseph Knight, Sr., suggests that Emma Smith's involvement in the recovery of the plates on 22 September 1827 was shown in vision through the Chase Seer Stone: "Joseph says when can I have it [the Nephite Record] the answer was the 22nd Day of September next if you bring the right person with you Joseph says who is the right person the answer is your oldest Brother But before September Came his oldest Brother Died [Alvin died 19 November 1823] then he was disappointed and did not[k]now what to do but when the 22nd day of September came he went to the place and the personage appeared and told him he could not have it now But the 22nd day of September next he might have the Book if he brot with him the right person Joseph says who is the right person the answer was you will know then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale daughter of old Mr. Hale of Pennsylvania," Knight manuscript, LDS Church Archives.

43. *Tiffany's Monthly*, June 1859, p. 169.

44. Cited in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, pp. 246-47.

45. Henry Harris Affidavit cited in Kirkham, *New Witness*, 1:133.

46. *Chenango Union*, 3 May 1877.

47. Juanita Brooks, ed., *On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press/Utah Historical Society, 1964), 2:593.

48. *Elder's Journal*, 1 (July 1838): 43.

49. Whitmer, *Believers in Christ*, pp. 31-32.

50. Cowdery, *Defense*, p. 229. An important distinction here is that though Cowdery writes, "through 'Urim and Thummin,' exactly as came the Book of Mormon," David Whitmer's description of the same medium refers to the seer stone. Eyewitness accounts corroborate Whitmer's account.

51. Whitmer, *Believers in Christ*, p. 32.

52. David Whitmer interview in *Des Moines Daily News*, 16 Oct. 1886.

53. President Brigham Young's estate included two seer stones. His daughter, Zina Young Card, in a letter to her cousin, Apostle F. D. Richards, related: "There is a matter that I wish to lay before you, that weighs upon my mind, and seems very important to me. I refer to some very sacred articles I bought at the sale of my father's personal effects,—articles that never should have been given up to the idle gaze; but being brought out, my mother and myself felt it a wish of our hearts to get them, that their sacredness might not be sullied.

"They are: two sear-stones and an arrow point. They are in the possession of President Woodruff now, and very properly too, but I feel dear cousin, that they should ever be the property of the President of the Church, and not of individuals; that at his demise, they are not retained as they were before among 'personal effects,' but considered ever the legitimate property of God's mouth-piece," Zina Young Card to F. D. Richards, 31 July 1896, F. D. Richards Letter Collection, LDS Church Archives.

In addition to the seer stones, President Young also possessed a "bloodstone" which he wore about his neck on a chain "when going into unknown or dangerous places" (See display #1076, Brigham Young Collection, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah).

54. Brooks, *Hosea Stout*, 2:593.

55. Wilford Woodruff Journal, 18 May 1888, LDS Church Archives. Though the reason for the consecration is not given, Orson Pratt related in 1873 that through the medium of Urim and Thummim, "which the Lord God has ordained to be used in the midst of his holy house, in his Temple . . . books of genealogy, tracing individuals and nations among all people back to ancient times will be revealed," *Journal of Discourses*, 16:260.

56. "The History of A Nephite Coin," a personal experience of Elder Richard M. Robinson of Grantsville, Utah, recorded 30 Dec. 1934, LDS Church Archives.

57. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956), 2:225.

58. David C. Martin, *Restoration Reporter*, 1 (June 1971):8.
59. High Priests Record, Spanish Fork, Utah, September 1880, p. 128, LDS Church Archives.
60. Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith to President John Taylor and Council of the Twelve, 17 Sept. 1878, cited in *Millennial Star* 40 (9 Dec. 1879): 772.
61. Wilford Woodruff Journal, 27 Dec. 1841, LDS Church Archives.
62. Elden J. Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, 27 Dec. 1841. Also in "History of Brigham Young," *Millennial Star*, 26 (20 Feb. 1864): 118.
63. Jane Manning James Autobiography, p. 19, holograph in LDS Church Archives. Reference courtesy of Linda King Newell.
64. Lucy Clayton Bullock, Biographical sketch, LDS Church Archives.
65. *Millennial Star*, 3 (July 1842): 47.
66. *Journal of Discourses*, 25 Aug. 1878, 20:65.
67. Wilford Woodruff Journal, 19 Feb. 1842.
68. Statement of 16 Feb. 1874, cited in B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century 1*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 2:106.
69. *Journal of Discourses*, 13 Aug. 1853, 2:111.
70. "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith," *Millennial Star* 40 (16 Dec. 1878): 787.
71. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in the Book of Mormon* (Richmond, MO: n.p., 1887), p. 3. Also *All Believers in Christ*, p. 30.
72. Whitmer, *Believers in the Book of Mormon*, p. 3.
73. Robert Woodford, "Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1974), presents strong evidence that section 10 was given in May 1829 as originally recorded in the Book of Commandments and not in the summer of 1828 as stated in the heading of current editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.
74. Kirtland Letterbook, 1829-35, pp. 106.
75. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:225.
76. N. B. Lundwall, *Masterful Discourses of Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962), p. 452.
77. Lucy Mack Smith, *Sketches*, p. 126.
78. Emma Smith Bidamon to Emma Pilgrim, 27 March 1870, RLDS Church Archives. Joseph described the interpreters in his 1842 Wentworth Letter as "two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow." But Martin Harris described them in an 1859 *Tiffany's Monthly* interview as "white, like polished marble, with a few grey streaks." An interview with David Whitmer ("The Golden Fables," *The Chicago Times*, 7 Aug. 1875) clarifies this confusion by explaining the interpreters as "shaped like a pair of ordinary spectacles, though much larger, and at least half an inch in thickness, and perfectly opaque save to the prophetic vision of Joseph Smith."
79. Wandle Mace Journal, p. 66, microfilm in LDS Church Archives. Priddy Meeks, a Nauvoo acquaintance of Joseph Smith, recorded in his journal, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 10 (Oct. 1842): 80: "It is not safe to depend on peepstones in any case where evil spirits have the power to put false appearance before them while looking in a peepstone. . . . That is my experience in the matter; also the Patriarch Hyrum Smith . . . stated that our faith was not strong enough to overcome the evil influences."
- Imitative use of a seer stone in the early days of the Church was demonstrated by Book of Mormon witness Hiram Page who, in September 1830, "had in his possession a certain stone, by which he had obtained certain 'revelations' concerning the upbuilding of Zion, the order of the Church, etc. . . . many—especially the Whitmer family and Oliver Cowdery—were believing much in the things set forth by this stone." (*History of the Church*, 1:110). Doctrine and Covenants 28:11 responded for Oliver Cowdery: "Thou shalt take thy brother, Hiram Page, between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me, and that Satan deceiveth him."
80. *Journal of Discourses*, 24 June 1833, 24:262-63.
81. *Frazier's Magazine*, Feb. 1873, pp. 229-230.
82. *Millennial Star* 11 (Jan. 1849): 11-12.

83. Manuscript History of the Church, 6 May 1849, Church Archives. The Quorum of the Twelve Minutes of this date record that the Brethren spent the "evening in conversation upon many little incidents connected with finding the Plates, preserving them from the hand of the wicked, & returning them again to Cumorah, who did it &c, also about the gift of seeing & how Joseph obtained his first seer stone. Treasures known to exist in the earth of money &, records."

84. William Clayton Diary, 2 Apr. 1843. Cited in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1980), p. 169.

85. Joseph Smith, "History of the Church," *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1842):707.

Joseph Smith III's 1844 Blessing And The Mormons of Utah

Members of the Mormon Church headquartered in Salt Lake City may have reacted anywhere along the spectrum from sublime indifference to temporary discomfiture to cold terror at the recently discovered blessing by Joseph Smith, Jr., to young Joseph on 17 January 1844, to "be my successor to the Presidency of the High Priesthood: a Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church; which appointment belongeth to him by blessing, and also by right."¹ The Mormon Church follows a line of succession from Joseph Smith, Jr., completely different from that provided in this document. To understand the significance of the 1844 document in relation to the LDS Church and Mormon claims of presidential succession from Joseph Smith, Jr., one must recognize the authenticity and provenance of the document itself, the statements and actions by Joseph Smith about succession before 1844, the succession developments at Nauvoo after January 1844, and the nature of apostolic succession begun by Brigham Young and continued in the LDS Church today.

All internal evidences concerning the manuscript blessing of Joseph Smith III, dated 17 January 1844, give conclusive support to its authenticity. Anyone at all familiar with the thousands of official manuscript documents of early Mormonism will immediately recognize that the document is written on paper contemporary with the 1840s, that the text of the blessing is in the extraordinarily distinctive handwriting of Joseph Smith's personal clerk, Thomas Bullock, that the words on the back of the document ("Joseph Smith 3 blessing") bear striking similarity to the handwriting of Joseph Smith, Jr., and that the document was folded and labeled in precisely the manner all one-page documents were filed by the church historian's office in the 1844 period.

Moreover, the fact that the document is in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock makes impossible any suggestion that the blessing is an invention of someone sympathetic with the later claims of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Bullock was Joseph Smith's personal clerk from 1843 to 1844, an active polygamist since 1843, the principal recorder of Joseph Smith's King Follet Discourse in April 1844 about the plurality of gods and the progressive nature of God, was clerk of the church historian from 1844 to 1865, Brigham Young's clerk, member of the first pioneer company to enter Salt Lake

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Valley in 1847, member of the theocratic Council of Fifty from 1846 to 1882, active member of the Mormon Church in Utah to his death in 1885, and never had any affiliation with the RLDS Church.²

The recent discovery of the January 1844 blessing in papers acquired from a descendant of Thomas Bullock is also consistent. As a clerk in the historian's office in Utah, Bullock kept many church minutes and records in his personal possession. Although Bullock had turned over most official church documents to the historian's office by the time Brigham Young dismissed him as clerk in 1865, Bullock retained some church documents that were in his own handwriting. Such an occurrence is not unknown. When Presiding Bishop Newel K. Whitney died in 1850, members of the Whitney family retained these official documents (including the only known copies of some of Joseph Smith's unpublished revelations) until the 1970s. They then donated these manuscripts to Brigham Young University.³

The significance of Joseph Smith III's blessing of January 1844 is complicated by a decade of previous statements and actions concerning succession by his father. On 19 April 1834, Joseph Smith "laid hands upon bro. Sidney [Rigdon, Counselor in the First Presidency], and confirmed upon him the blessings of wisdom and knowledge to preside over the church in the absence of brother Joseph."⁴ On 8 July 1834, Joseph ordained David Whitmer "To be a leader or a prophet to this church, which was on condition that he [Joseph Smith, Jr.] did not live to God himself."⁵ On 5 December 1834, Joseph ordained Oliver Cowdery as Assistant (or Associate) President of the High Priesthood "to assist in presiding over the whole church, and to officiate in the absence of the President."⁶ If the Prophet had died in 1835, three men would have had indisputable right to claim exclusive successorship to the office of Church president. In addition, on 28 March 1835, Joseph announced a revelation that the recently organized Quorum of the Twelve Apostles "form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three presidents [of the First Presidency]," and on 23 July 1837, he dictated a revelation that "unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times."⁷ On 19 January 1841, Joseph announced a revelation that his brother Hyrum Smith "take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right" and that he "be crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priesthood, that once were put upon him, that was my servant Oliver Cowdery [former Associate President],"⁸ and in a public meeting at Nauvoo on 16 July 1843, Joseph announced that Hyrum Smith should "hold the office of prophet to the Church, as it was his birthright."⁹ Hyrum was now automatic successor.

Even though Joseph had ordained four other men before 1844 to succeed him and had given the Quorum of Twelve administrative authority over the church equal to the First Presidency, it is obvious that he intended his son Joseph Smith III to one day become president of the LDS Church. A revelation

given a month after the birth of young Joseph on 6 November 1832 stated that the priesthood "must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things," and the revelation on priesthood and church officers of 19 January 1841 also stated "even so I say unto my servant Joseph: In thee and in thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed."¹⁰ Prior to this, Joseph had already advanced to be general authorities in the church his father, his brothers Hyrum and William, his uncle John, his aunt's first cousin Amasa M. Lyman, his first cousin George A. Smith, and his acknowledged fourth cousin Willard Richards, fifth cousin Heber C. Kimball, and sixth cousins Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and Orson Pratt.¹¹ Joseph was making the Mormon hierarchy an extended family, and there can be no reasonable doubt that he had every intention of his son serving at the apex one day.

The lineal rights and 1844 blessing of Joseph Smith III relate directly to the pre-Utah practice of giving patriarchal blessings in the LDS Church. Joseph Smith, Sr., was ordained to the office of patriarch to bless "the fatherless" of the church on 18 December 1833, and several other men were ordained to the office of patriarch during the lifetime of Joseph.¹² Until the Mormon Church changed the procedure, ordained patriarchs were authorized to give blessings *only* to the "fatherless" of the church: Latter-day Saints of whatever age whose fathers were either dead, non-members or unworthy members of the church. Published instructions at Nauvoo specified that the ordained patriarch acted "as proxy for their father"; whereas "Every father, after he has received his patriarchal blessing, is a Patriarch to his own family; and has the right to confer patriarchal blessings upon which family; which blessings will be just as legal as those conferred by any Patriarch of the church: in fact it is his right."¹³ By the order of the church as it existed in 1844, eleven-year-old Joseph Smith III could have received his patriarchal blessing only from his father, the president of the church, and the document dated 17 January 1844 is the text of that father's blessing to his son. Like the father's blessings by Heber C. Kimball and other worthy priesthood holders at Nauvoo, Joseph Smith III's 1844 blessing was not recorded in the official record books of Nauvoo "proxy" patriarchal blessings now located at the LDS archives in Salt Lake City and at the RLDS archives in Independence. Like other such blessings of fathers to their sons, Joseph Smith III's blessing was maintained as a private document until its present discovery.¹⁴

We are indebted to James Whitehead for the details of the ceremony of the blessing of Joseph Smith III on 17 January 1844, the event which produced the Bullock text. At Nauvoo, Whitehead had been a financial clerk for the church's Trustee-in-Trust and the Nauvoo Temple Committee. He joined the RLDS Church in 1865. He testified in the 1892 Temple Lot legal suit that at a private council meeting in the upper room of Joseph Smith's red brick store during the winter of 1843, Joseph Smith III "was ordained and anointed at that meeting. Hyrum Smith anointed him, and Joseph his father *blessed* him and ordained him, and Newell K. Whitney poured the oil on his head, and he was set apart to be his father's successor in office, holding all the powers his father held."¹⁵

Whitehead testified that this private meeting was attended by twenty-five people (including Joseph and Hyrum Smith, John Taylor, Willard Richards, Newel K. Whitney, Reynolds Cahoon, Alpheus Cutler, Ebenezer Robinson, George J. Adams, William W. Phelps, and John M. Bernhisel), and in the manuscript transcript of his Temple Lot testimony (though not in the published version) Whitehead stated that this ceremony "might have been early in the year 1844,—it was near that time."¹⁶ This intersects directly with the date of the newly discovered blessing, 17 January 1844. Moreover, in his 1892 testimony, Whitehead said that the ceremony occurred on a Wednesday, and after Joseph's sermon the next Sunday, the Prophet made reference to his son Joseph and the blessing.¹⁷ The blessing date, 17 January 1844, was a Wednesday, and the following Sunday Joseph Smith gave a sermon on "sealing the hearts of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the father," a topic which very reasonably might have caused him to make some personal reference or gesture to young Joseph.¹⁸ It is remarkable that after nearly fifty years, Whitehead could remember accurately the circumstances concerning the blessing of Joseph Smith III, the only known copy of which was lying undiscovered in the possession of a Thomas Bullock descendant in Utah. In 1888 Whitehead had also specified that in the blessing Joseph Smith III "was anointed and set apart to be prophet, seer and revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and to be his father's successor in office." This is almost identical to the actual wording of the blessing text in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock.¹⁹

Unfortunately, these positive characteristics of James Whitehead's famous 1892 Temple Lot testimony are clouded by the incontrovertible fact that he knowingly perjured himself several times while under oath on the witness stand. Although it is reasonable that Joseph might have made some verbal reference or physical gesture to young Joseph after the sermon of 21 January 1844, and that the diarists and minute keepers at the meeting failed to record it because of its incidental nature, Whitehead testified that immediately after the sermon Joseph Smith asked the congregation of 3,000 persons to vote with uplifted right hand to sustain Joseph Smith III as his successor and also asked for a contrary vote.²⁰ It is inconceivable that the minutes of that Sunday meeting in the journals of Joseph Smith and Wilford Woodruff would omit reference to such a dramatic church action, whether or not the minute keepers understood the full significance of such alleged vote.²¹ Moreover, Whitehead testified under oath that the Nauvoo High Council officially endorsed Joseph Smith III as successor prior to the Sunday meeting, when in fact the complete manuscript minutes of the Nauvoo High Council in 1844 make no reference whatever to such action or to the blessing of Joseph Smith III, even though the minutes make at least an oblique reference to the far more explosive action of Hyrum Smith's reading to the high council the revelation on plural marriage.²² More important to the central issue of the blessing ceremony, Whitehead testified under oath in 1892 that "I was there too" at the 1844 ceremony, whereas he told Joseph Smith III's counselor, William W. Blair, in 1874 "that he

did not see the ordination take place, but heard it freely talked over in the office."²³ Whitehead testified in the Temple Lot court case that to his knowledge neither Joseph Smith nor anyone else in church authority taught and practiced polygamy before 1845, whereas Whitehead told Alexander Hale Smith in 1864 and William W. Blair in 1874 that "Joseph did teach polygamy and practice too. That Emma knows it too that she put hand of Wives in Joseph's hand."²⁴ Whitehead also testified under oath that he heard Joseph give the King Follett discourse in April 1844, but that "Joseph Smith did not in that sermon teach the plurality of gods," when in fact the contemporary manuscript minutes of that sermon by four different recorders verify that Joseph Smith taught polytheism in the King Follett sermon.²⁵ Whitehead testified in 1892 that "I withdrew from the Church there [at Winter Quarters] on account of its wickedness," when in fact he accepted a mission from Brigham Young in April 1848 to gather the Saints from the Eastern States to Utah, and remained on that mission until he was disfellowshipped for sexual misconduct.²⁶

James Whitehead's information about the January 1844 blessing of Joseph Smith III is thus in the good-news-bad-news category. Much of his 1892 testimony about the blessing is remarkably consistent with documentary evidence to which he had no access, but his testimony is undermined by his obvious perjuries in other areas where documentary evidence shows he was intentionally lying in order to enhance his credibility and to maintain the official position of the Reorganization about Joseph Smith's advocacy of plurality of wives and gods. Although Whitehead's testimony about the Nauvoo high council and public meeting vote on Joseph Smith III's successorship is highly suspect, his testimony is undoubtedly true in its description of the meeting on Wednesday, 17 January 1844. The best evidence in favor of that conclusion is the fact that when James Whitehead told the welcomed details about this ceremony to Alexander Hale Smith in 1864 and to William W. Blair in 1874, Whitehead also devastated them by informing them at the same time that Joseph Smith had taught and practiced plural marriage, and had been ordained a theocratic king by the Council of Fifty a few months after the blessing of Joseph Smith III. Unlike the 1892 testimony, Whitehead's earliest telling of the ceremony was not designed to give the leaders of the Reorganization what he knew they wanted to hear, as indicated by their stunned reactions to his disclosures about the Prophet's polygamy and theocracy.²⁷ Therefore, despite the present absence of contemporary descriptions of the 17 January 1844 blessing to Joseph Smith III, I feel that we can safely accept Whitehead's testimony that the blessing did in fact occur during a private meeting in the council room of Joseph Smith's red brick store, during which Hyrum Smith (Joseph's ordained and publicly acknowledged successor) anointed him with oil held in a vessel by Newel K. Whitney, after which Joseph Smith the Prophet pronounced the blessing which Thomas Bullock recorded.

But the succession question was complicated by new developments at Nauvoo after January 1844 as it was by the fact that Joseph had ordained four

other men to succeed him before 1844. First, there was Joseph's discovery that his wife Emma was again pregnant, his own impression that the child would be a son, and his apparent intention that this unborn child David would have a claim of succession superseding that of young Joseph. Second, Joseph increased the already awesome powers of Brigham Young and the Quorum of Twelve in a way that related directly to succession. Third, Joseph designated still other men to succeed him in the spring of 1844. Fourth, Joseph's preparations were directed toward his presence with the Saints at a new refuge in the American West, and his sudden death threw the church into a succession crisis where demands for continuity and strength of leadership eliminated any consideration of succession by eleven-year-old Joseph Smith III.

The significance of the birth of David Hyrum Smith to the succession question can be understood only by reference to Joseph's teachings and practices in what was known at the time as the "Holy Order of the Holy Priesthood" or the "Quorum of the Anointed" from 1843 to 1844. Joseph had introduced a series of rites and instructions known as the "endowment" in May 1842 to a group of trusted men of the church, and in September 1843 he began admitting women to the anointing and endowment ceremonies which he taught were revealed from God. As a part of these ceremonies, Emma Smith was sealed for time and eternity to Joseph Smith and was anointed to him on 28 September 1843 as an eternal wife, queen, and priestess.²⁸ Joseph taught that the first son born to a couple after they entered into this new and everlasting covenant of marriage had a special promise superior to any children not "born under the covenant."²⁹ Phebe Woodworth was one of the members of the Holy Order in 1843-1844, and in private conversation she said in 1861:

When her husband, Lucien Woodworth, was gone to Texas in the Spring of 1844 Joseph Smith came to her house and said Emma was going to have a son of promise; and if a son of promise was walled in with granite rock when the power of the Holy Ghost fell upon him he would break his way out. He knew the principle upon which a son of promise could be obtained, he had complied with that principle and Emma should have such a son. The November after David H. was born. Mrs. Woodworth said if she was a man, her testimony would be heard, but as she was a woman, she had only the pleasure of telling it, without expecting any importance to be attached to it. When Prest. Young announced the fact that in Joseph's posterity the keys of the Priesthood should rest and that upon young David the blessing should descend, she wished she were a man that credence might be attached to her words.³⁰

The possibility that Joseph had intentions for his unborn son that rivaled the previously intended succession of Joseph Smith III also appears within advocates of the Reorganization. When James Whitehead told William W. Blair about the blessing of young Joseph, Whitehead also informed Blair that the Council of Fifty had ordained Joseph a theocratic king in the spring of 1844, and that Joseph had predicted that his unborn son David "will yet be a Prince."³¹

Joseph Smith actually anticipated an even greater position for the son which should be born to him "under the covenant." He referred to this in a revelation of 27 July 1842 concerning patriarchal marriage, "that through this order he

may be glorified and that through the power of anointing David may reign King over Israel, which shall hereafter be revealed."³² By March 1844, Joseph undoubtedly knew that Emma was pregnant and that he would now have a child who was born heir to the promises of the Holy Order into which he and Emma had entered in 1843. On 10 March 1844 (just hours before he presided over the first provisional meeting of the theocratic Council of Fifty), Joseph gave a sermon in which he said that "the Priesthood that he received, and the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him and given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage."³³ Mormons of the twentieth century have consistently interpreted these references by Joseph to the future King David as having some distant fulfillment by a Jew in the twenty-first century or beyond, but Joseph's contemporaries understood them to apply to his son who would be born in 1844 and who Joseph told Emma should bear the name David.³⁴

In the spring of 1844 (possibly at a meeting of the Holy Order) Joseph told Brigham Young and others about the succession promise of his soon-to-be-born son: "I shall have a son born to me, and his name shall be David; and on him, in some future time, will rest the responsibility that now rests upon me."³⁵ Although we now have the exact date and wording of Joseph's blessing upon Joseph Smith III, the contemporary record of the prophet's promises concerning the succession rights of David Hyrum Smith is probably in the presently unavailable minutes of the Holy Order for 1844. These minutes are apparently located in the vault of the LDS First Presidency in Salt Lake City.

Joseph Smith further complicated the succession issue by conferring his full priesthood authority upon the Quorum of Twelve about three months after he blessed young Joseph. To refute the succession claim of Sidney Rigdon on 8 August 1844, the apostles publicly testified that Joseph had conferred the full keys of the kingdom to govern the church upon the Quorum of Twelve the previous spring.³⁶ Their veracity is strengthened by circumstances that they did not publicly disclose: Joseph Smith conferred this comprehensive authority upon the apostles during a meeting of the secretive, theocratic Council of Fifty. The youngest man Joseph initiated into the Council of Fifty, Benjamin F. Johnson, later wrote a private account of "one of the last meetings of the council of Fifty," in Joseph Smith's lifetime during which the prophet committed these keys and powers to the Quorum of Twelve, and in a meeting of the Nauvoo High Council two members of the Council of Fifty (an apostle and a man who later organized his own theocratic schism of Mormonism) bore private witness to the fact:

Elder Orson Hyde then made some very appropriate and pointed remarks relative to the organization of the church; the course of Elder Rigdon and others; and also of the appointment of the Twelve by Brother Joseph on the 23d of March last, to stand in their present office, that on them the responsibility of bearing of the Kingdom rested, and tho' they had many difficulties to encounter, they must, "Round up their shoulders and bear it, like men of God and not be bluffed off by any man," which

statements were sanctioned by Councillor Alpheus]. Cutler [a senior member of the Council of Fifty as organized by Joseph Smith].³⁷

Long after a majority of Mormons had accepted the succession claims of the Quorum of the Twelve and during a time when there was no external challenge to their claims that might cause exaggerated statements, Heber C. Kimball stated: "I am still an Apostle, and have never received any greater authority than that I received directly under the hands of Joseph Smith a short time previous to his death, in connection with Bro. Brigham Young and Willard Richards. He placed power into our hands, and all the keys and authority that he had received from God."³⁸ Elder Kimball made this statement on 23 March 1853, nine years after the date on which Orson Hyde stated in 1844 that Joseph Smith conferred the full authority and keys upon the Quorum of Twelve. Since several nonapostolic members of the Council of Fifty began testifying to this event as early as August 1844, the contemporary minutes of that March 1844 charge to the Twelve are undoubtedly contained in the still unavailable minutes of the Council of Fifty. These minutes are in the vault of the LDS First Presidency's office and fill 200 pages for the March-May 1844 period.

The succession claim of the Quorum of the Twelve did not derive from their original ordination as apostles in February 1835 nor from the revelation of March 1835 that gave them authority equal to that of the First Presidency nor from the revelation of July 1837 that the Quorum of Twelve shared the keys of the kingdom with the First Presidency. By the statements of Brigham Young and the other apostles from August 1844 onward, the succession claim of the Quorum of Twelve finally rested upon Joseph Smith's commission to them during a meeting of the Council of Fifty in the spring of 1844. On that occasion he conferred upon the apostles the responsibility to govern and preserve not only the church, but also the secret rites, priesthood keys, and teachings that the prophet had introduced at Nauvoo: polygamy, marriage for time and all eternity, the holy order endowment and anointings, the theocratic Council of Fifty, and Joseph Smith's teachings about God and mankind.

The sudden death of Joseph in June 1844 left the members at Nauvoo without a supreme leader, surrounded by mobs, and without most of the other church leaders who were scattered throughout the United States in a campaign for Joseph Smith's U.S. presidential candidacy. Worst of all, Joseph had left the Latter-day Saints with a multiplicity of succession precedents and not a single published revelation or instruction about the mechanics of an orderly succession in the event of his death.

Why did Joseph Smith leave the church of 1844 in such vulnerability to succession chaos? The answer is quite simple. Despite efforts of others to kidnap and kill him, Joseph Smith expected to escape his enemies again in 1844 and to continue living and leading the church. Joseph did not know that he was going to die in June 1844, and in fact had been assured by revelation that he would not die if he did what the Lord told him to. This is why the prophet did not make use of his ample opportunities to outline succession to his office in a

public sermon or in the church biweekly periodical *Times and Seasons*.

Brigham Young explained in a published sermon that Joseph's martyrdom at Carthage was unnecessary and occurred because Joseph had defied a revelation of the Lord by listening to those who persuaded him to return to Nauvoo on 23 June 1844. Brigham Young told a special meeting of the Mormons:

If Joseph Smith, jun., the Prophet, had followed the Spirit of revelation in him he never would have gone to Carthage . . . and never for one moment did he say that he had one particle of light in him after he started back from Montrose to give himself up in Nauvoo. This he did through the persuasion of others. I want you all to understand that. . . . But if Joseph had followed the revelations in him he would have followed the shepherd instead of the shepherd's following the sheep.³⁹

An earlier manuscript diary of the Nauvoo Legion stated that upon his return to Nauvoo to stand trial at Carthage, Joseph "said that he had went away by the council of the Spirit of the Lord, but I have been forced back by the brethren. . . . On the 27th June Col Markham asked Gen Smith if he could not tell by the spirit as he did at Dixon, how he would come out, to which he said I have heard to [sic] the brethren, & gone to Carthage [sic] contrary to the council of the spirit & I am now no more than another man."⁴⁰ In the final days of his life, Joseph Smith had acted contrary to a divine revelation, and he died as an unnecessary martyr at Carthage on 27 June 1844. This threw a totally unprepared church into an equally unnecessary turmoil.

From June to August 1844, the LDS Church was in an agonizing succession crisis, and no one, including Emma Smith, gave the slightest thought that eleven-year-old Joseph Smith III should lead the church. The revelation of July 1837 had specified that the priesthood keys given to Joseph Smith "shall not be taken from him" until the Second Coming of Christ, and many Latter-day Saints may have shared Brigham Young's religious terror upon learning of the martyrdom: "The first thing which I thought of was, whether Joseph had taken the keys of the kingdom with him from the earth."⁴¹ That possibility was too horrible for the restorationists to contemplate, and they began to grope for a means of succession out of the many the prophet had indicated.

On 4 July 1844, Emma Smith, William Marks, Alpheus Cutler, and Reynolds Cahoon agreed that Nauvoo's stake president William Marks should be made president of the church, but within two days Joseph Smith's private secretary William Clayton described the widening succession crisis of the summer of 1844: "The greatest danger that now threatens us is dissensions and strifes amongst the Church. There are already 4 or 5 men pointed out as successors to the Trustee & President & there is danger of feelings being manifest. All the brethren who stand at the head seem to feel the delicacy of the business. [William W.] Phelps & Dr [Willard] Richards have taken a private course & are carrying out many measures on their own responsibility without council."⁴² The knot of the problem was to whom should leaders of the church go for counsel when there was no supreme head that was generally acknowledged? By 12 July 1844, more

people were inclined to immediately appoint William Marks as Trustee-in-Trust and president of the LDS Church, but Newel K. Whitney privately raised the second most important issue of the succession crisis — continuity of the practices Joseph had secretly introduced as divine during the last years of his leadership of the church. William Clayton wrote:

He referred me to the fact of Marks being with [William] Law & Emma in opposition to Joseph and the quorum. — And if Marks is appointed Trustee our spiritual blessings will be destroyed inasmuch as he is not favorable to the most important matters. The Trustee must of necessity be the first president of the Church & Joseph said that if he and Hyrum were taken away Samuel H. Smith would be his successor.⁴³

As if the succession to the presidency were not complicated enough by Joseph's designation of Sidney Rigdon, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith III, and his unborn son David as possible successors, the prophet had also designated his brother Samuel H. Smith to be immediate president of the church if both Joseph and Hyrum died. Since Hyrum's life was not in jeopardy until he insisted on accompanying Joseph to Carthage Jail, Samuel's designation occurred sometime between June 23 and 27 in 1844.

But Samuel H. Smith died on 13 July and the church seemed to be sliding into chaos. On 30 July 1844 George Miller and Alexander Badlam urged that the theocratic Council of Fifty take the reins of the church. On 4 August Sidney Rigdon returned to Nauvoo and asked that he immediately be appointed guardian of the church "to build the Church up to Joseph as he has begun it," and on 5 August 1844 a virtually unknown but charismatic Mormon named James J. Strang used a forged letter to announce that Joseph had appointed him successor.⁴⁴ Joseph had left the church with an abundance of possible successors, and no clear way in any sermon, revelation, or published instructions for the Saints to know how to sort out the priority that one possible successor should have over another. The church needed immediate stability of strong leadership that represented continuity of priesthood revelations and government that were the foundation of the LDS Church.

It is under these circumstances that the Quorum of Twelve with Brigham Young as senior apostle, became the acting presidency of the church at Nauvoo. At the meeting of 8 August 1844, approximately 5,000 Latter-day Saints listened to two different propositions for providing continuity of priesthood leadership to the church without addressing the question of the appointment of an actual successor to Joseph Smith. Sidney Rigdon, as surviving counselor in Joseph Smith's First Presidency, claimed that he was still counselor in the presidency and should be appointed guardian of the church. On the other hand, Brigham and the apostles argued that Rigdon's authority as presidency counselor ended with the death of Joseph Smith, and that the Quorum of Twelve was the only existing supreme council that had the full authority, keys, and powers of Joseph Smith to govern the church. For many the rightness of the apostolic claim for continuity was demonstrated miraculously by a

transfiguration that occurred as Brigham Young stepped to the podium. Among the accounts written at the time in Nauvoo, the description of George Laub's diary was the most detailed: "Now when President Young arose to address the congregation his voice was the voice of Bro. Joseph and his face appeared as Joseph's face & Should I not have seen his face but heard his voice I should have declared that it was Joseph."⁴⁵ Obviously, not every one present saw this manifestation, because about twenty people voted against the apostles.⁴⁶ And most of the rest of that multitude were persuaded by the calm logic of the apostles rather than by seeing a miraculous transfiguration of Brigham Young.

Some Mormon commentators about the August 1844 vote for the Quorum of Twelve interpret that action as a vote for Brigham Young as Joseph Smith's successor, and some RLDS commentators have described the vote as a common consent "rejection of the church" that ultimately required the church's reorganization. Neither position is true. The Latter-day Saints voted on 8 August 1844 to preserve the LDS Church from fragmentation by sidestepping the succession question: there were too many seemingly unresolvable succession claims for various men to be the sole successor to Joseph Smith, and the church membership simply voted to defer that question by turning to the Quorum of Twelve to "act in its place" as the priesthood quorum that had the full powers and authority of Joseph Smith. In an epistle of 15 August 1844, the Quorum of Twelve also indicated to the members that the question of appointing a successor to Joseph could be deferred indefinitely, rather than risk disrupting the church by trying to choose among various succession contenders: "Let no man presume for a moment that his [Joseph Smith's] place will be filled by another; for, *remember he stands in his own place*, and always will."⁴⁷ The Latter-day Saints voted for stability and ecclesiastical continuity, not for a successor, when they sustained the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1844 as the acting presidency of the church.

But the apostles, William Marks, Emma Smith, and perhaps two hundred others knew that the presidency of the Quorum of the Twelve implied another level of continuity: continuing the secret teachings and practices that Joseph had introduced among trusted associates. Even those most devoted to Joseph and his memory recognized that these secret developments of the last four years of his presidency were radical, revolutionary, dangerous, and revolting to the sensibilities of most people. Nevertheless, Brigham Young, as president of the Quorum of Twelve, vowed publicly and privately to carry out all the measures of Joseph at whatever cost, and he demonstrated that steely resolve personally in September 1844 by starting to marry secretly the widowed plural wives of Joseph Smith.⁴⁸ In December 1844, Brigham Young also began initiating new members into the endowment ceremonies of the Holy Order that Joseph had given to less than seventy people in anticipation that eventually all church members would receive these ordinances in the temple.⁴⁹ On 4 February 1845, Brigham called the first meeting of the Council of Fifty since May 1844, and was sustained Joseph Smith's theocratic successor as Standing Chairman of the Council of Fifty. He

then commissioned the Council to begin preparations for moving the body of the church to the American West as Joseph had originally commissioned the apostles to do on 21 February 1844.⁵⁰

Ninety-nine percent of the Mormons knew little or nothing of these developments, but they followed the strong and productive lead of Brigham Young and the Quorum of Twelve, just as they had done while Joseph was alive. At the general conference of October 1844, the Quorum of Twelve had been sustained as the presidency of the church, and the manuscript minutes of the general conference of 7 April 1845 in Nauvoo show that Brigham Young was unanimously voted on and sustained as "The President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to this Church and nation, and all nations, and also as the President of the whole Church of Latter Day Saints," and within weeks Brigham Young was copyrighting church publications with his title as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁵¹ Brigham Young was president of the church after 1844 by virtue of being senior member of the Quorum of Twelve which was acting as the Presidency of the LDS Church in the absence of a regularly sustained successor to the founding prophet.

Nevertheless, the right of the Quorum of the Twelve to form the Presidency of the Church was not explicit during Joseph Smith's lifetime. He had given them the fulness of the priesthood and all the keys of the priesthood he possessed in the spring of 1844, and he had delegated many spiritual and temporal responsibilities to Brigham Young as President of the Quorum (including the sealing ordinances). But it was not until after the Prophet's death that the apostles concluded that they had the right to constitute the Church Presidency. Brigham Young later told his family that he did not realize the Prophet's death placed the presidency upon the Twelve when he first learned of the Martyrdom.

When I first heard of Joseph's death the first flash across my mind was "are the keys of the priesthood here?" I was sat leaning in a chair, with Orson Pratt upon my left, and *I had no more idea of it falling upon me than of the most unlikely thing in the world*, and I felt it come like a flash of lightening [sic] to my mind, and I said, "the keys of the kingdom are here". *I did not think it was with me*, but I felt they were here, but knew that it was the Lord's business.

He told the apostles in Utah that it was not until he was en route to Nauvoo in August 1844 that he learned "by the visions of the Spirit" that the Quorum of Twelve constituted an acting presidency of the Church and would form a separate First Presidency from among their number.⁵² Therefore, the apostolic presidency had not been specifically designated before Joseph Smith's death, but emerged afterwards as the legitimate consequence of his conferral of keys and authority upon Brigham Young and the other apostles.

Although the blessing of Joseph Smith III was alluded to in an 1844 published history of Illinois as the Prophet's "will or revelation" appointing his twelve-year-old son as successor, members of the Smith family in 1845 did not promote him as an alternative to Brigham Young and the apostles. His grand-

mother, Lucy Mack Smith, temporarily urged that William Smith be appointed church president in June 1845, and during that year she dictated from memory a blessing Joseph Smith, Sr., gave to young Joseph at Kirtland when he would have been less than five years old: "You shall have power to carry out all that your Father left undone when you become of age."⁵³ Nevertheless, six months after Brigham Young was sustained as president of the Church, Lucy Mack Smith endorsed him publicly at the conference of 7 October 1845. And as one of the original members of the Holy Order, she also joined with Brigham Young and the apostles in the endowment ceremonies of the Nauvoo Temple in December 1845.⁵⁴ William Smith acknowledged the authority of Brigham Young as newly sustained president of the church long enough for Brigham and the other apostles to ordain William as presiding patriarch on 24 May 1845, and then William spent the summer trying to become president of the church himself, broke with his fellow apostles, and denounced them in a pamphlet of October 1845 which stated in part:

... this Brigham Young was pampering the church with the idea that although little Joseph was the rightful heir to the priesthood and office of his father as a prophet, seer, and revelator, that it was not prudent to mention this for fear of the little child's life.⁵⁵

Emma Smith apparently did not voice opposition in April 1845 that Brigham Young had been sustained president of the church by virtue of his position in the Quorum of Twelve. Instead of telling Joseph Smith III's private tutor (who was wavering about the succession question himself) that her son was Joseph Smith's rightful successor, Emma Smith told him that Nauvoo Stake President William Marks should be president of the church because "according to the ordination pronounced upon him by Br Joseph he was the individual contemplated by him for his successor."⁵⁶ If that was not just wishful thinking on Emma Smith's part (since Marks shared her hostility for polygamy and other radicalisms of her late husband), then William Marks must be added to the list of those whom Joseph Smith ordained, blessed, or otherwise designated to be his successors to the one-man office of church president. As for Joseph Smith III, by December 1846, his mother Emma "would not let him have anything to do with Mormonism at present."⁵⁷

The only one who was seriously urging the succession of Joseph Smith III in 1845 was George J. Adams. Ordained a special apostle by Joseph and admitted as one of the original members of the Council of Fifty, George J. Adams had been excommunicated on 10 April 1845 for defying the Quorum of Twelve by teaching and practicing polygamy in New England.⁵⁸ In May, he organized a church in Iowa, with Joseph Smith III as the intended president and himself as young Joseph's spokesman, and on 15 June 1845 Adams wrote: "I have suffered much persecution since i left Boston and much abuse because i cant support the twelve as the first presidency i cant do it when i know that it belongs to Josephs Son — Young Joseph who was ordained by his father before his Death."⁵⁹ Adams had told Emma in 1844 that he had witnessed the ceremony, and fifty years later

James Whitehead included Adams in the list of witnesses to the blessing of Joseph Smith III in January 1844. But George J. Adams was an erratic and inconsistent advocate of Joseph Smith III, and even though James J. Strang's claims left little room for lineal succession, Adams testified to the world in 1846 that Strang was the one "appointed and chosen of God, to stand in the place of brother Joseph."⁶⁰

Aside from the erratic Adams, everyone realized that Joseph Smith III was too young to assume the prophet's mantle for many years. Although William Smith publicly ridiculed Brigham for claiming to protect young Joseph by not promoting his succession rights, an 1845 patriarchal blessing to Joseph Smith III (pronounced either by his Uncle William or his Great Uncle John) referred to that vulnerability as well as to anticipations for young Joseph's future:

Joseph Smith 3rd was born Nov 6th A.D. 1832 in Kirtland Ohio

Joseph thou art a child and thy mind is tender yet the enemies of righteousness desire to destroy thy life but thou art in the hands of God and precious in his sight therefore he will suffer the nations to be destroyed before he will permit thee to fall. Thou art and shall be blessed of the Lord: and thy name shall be had in remembrance as long as the name of Israel or as the name of God for thou shalt be as God. Thou shalt be mighty in the earth for thou shalt wield the sword of Laban with might and thousands shall fall at thy feet.

Thy life is secured unto thee: and thy seed shall be as numerous as the hosts of Israel: and thou art sealed up unto eternal life even so in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Amen.⁶¹

By any standard, that is a beautiful blessing to the son of a martyr. The clerk who recorded it, Evan M. Greene, went to Utah with the vast majority of the Nauvoo Saints. They sustained the apostolic presidency of the Quorum of Twelve, in anticipation that one day the sons of Joseph Smith the Martyr would also come to Utah and receive their priesthood opportunities. From 1844 to the 1860s, Brigham Young himself referred to the lineal rights of Joseph Smith III to preside in the priesthood, but did not limit those rights to young Joseph. In 1847, Brigham said, "I am entitled to the Keys of the Priesthood according to lineage and Blood, so is Brother H.C. Kimball & many others." Brigham Young chose two counselors and formed a separate First Presidency in December 1847, but in February 1860 he reassured those who inquired about Joseph Smith III that "blessings will rest upon the posterity of Joseph Smith the Prophet."⁶²

But others who rejected the leadership of the Quorum of Twelve and who could not accept the practice of polygamy that Brigham Young had brought out of the closet and into the canon of Utah Mormonism also waited for Joseph Smith III to take his father's mantle. Officially organized in 1853, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints had extended an invitation to Joseph Smith to become the president, only to have him stormily reject their offer in 1856.

During the 1850s, representatives from the church in Utah had also made friendly visits to the Smith home in Nauvoo, and had suggested that the family

gather to the Great Basin, and specifically asked Joseph Smith III to move to Utah even if no one else in his family did. The memory of his 1844 blessing and the burden of his prophetic heritage hung heavily upon young Joseph; and after rejecting Utah Mormonism out of hand because of his moral and physical revulsion at the practice of polygamy, Joseph Smith III felt inspired in the fall of 1859 to accept the leadership of the Reorganization. Members of the Reorganization were overjoyed that their long vigil for a presidential successor to the martyred prophet came to an end when Joseph Smith III became President of the RLDS Church on 6 April 1860.⁶³

On the other hand, Brigham Young and other Utah Mormons were stunned that young Joseph would affiliate with an organization other than the Utah Church which had been maintained in continuity by the apostles in anticipation that one day the sons of the prophet would receive their full opportunities therein. Two months later, Brigham publicly stated that when Joseph Smith's sons "make their appearance before this people, full of his power, there are none but what will say — 'Amen! we are ready to receive you.'"⁶⁴ Apparently with the urging of church authorities in Utah, Joseph F. Smith and Samuel H. B. Smith went to Nauvoo in July 1860 to visit Joseph Smith III. The first cousin, Joseph F., was the son of the martyred Hyrum Smith, the second was the son of the short-lived Samuel Smith whom the Prophet Joseph said should be the immediate successor if both Joseph and Hyrum died at Carthage Jail. The third, Joseph, was the president of a rival branch of the Restoration. Samuel H. B. Smith reported to the authorities of Utah:

We visited Nauvoo and saw the young Prophet, for I suppose that is the name he goes by, having been ordained by his Father to do a work but what that work was to be we didn't find out, only he intends to be dictated by the Spirit in all things and whether the work was grate or Small it mattered not with him he intends to "leave the result with the Lord" . . . he said that the Spirit has been working on his mind during the last two years and he has felt all the time as though he had a work to do, but it appears that his mind has been so formed against the principle of polygamy that the Spirit has failed in removing its formation, but he told us that if he should come to understand it to be a true principle that he would imbrace it, but untill then he could not, he further stated that one day as he was pondering over in his own mind why he didn't go to Salt Lake that he felt his fathers hands upon his head, and then he thought [of] the reason why he didnt go . . . he said he didn't feel like blaming us for the corse we were persuing, and said he thought we would come out all right, and spoke as though he thought we would view things different some time.⁶⁵

Polygamy was the most revolutionary and (to many like the sons of Joseph Smith) the most revolting example of Mormonism's radicalism at Nauvoo. Despite the expressed openness of Joseph Smith III to accepting it, neither he nor any of his brothers could bring themselves to accept the implications of Nauvoo polygamy during their father's presidency of the church. When James Whitehead informed Alexander Hale Smith that his mother Emma had placed

the hands of plural wives in Joseph's hand at the same time Whitehead informed Alexander of the 1844 blessing of young Joseph, Alexander wrote in his 1864 diary that Whitehead "told me some things that I did not know and cannot understand," and then later tore out the page where he recorded Whitehead's polygamy testimony in his diary.⁶⁶ Not only did Joseph Smith III refuse to believe the testimony from his father's alleged plural wives, but he also refused to accept the testimony of his own counselor and Quorum of Twelve of the Reorganization. In 1865 his counselor William Marks testified to a meeting of the RLDS Presidency and RLDS Quorum of Twelve that Joseph Smith converted Hyrum to polygamy by dictating the July 1843 revelation, and in 1867 half of the Quorum of Twelve in the Reorganization refused to vote for a resolution exonerating the prophet from the practice of plural marriage, because of "the almost universal opinion among the Saints that Joseph was in some way connected with it."⁶⁷

Although Alexander and Joseph Smith III could somehow insulate their minds against the evidence and implications of their father's polygamous activity, David Hyrum Smith could not. During his missionary visit to Utah in 1872 to convert the people he described as "poor deceived souls," David H. Smith wrote:

I know my Mother believes just as we do in faith, repentance, baptism and all saving doctrines, in the books of the church and all, but I do not wish to ask her in regard to polygamy, for dear brother God forgive me if I am wrong — how can I tell you if I did not love you I could not. I believe there was something wrong, I don't know it, but I believe it, the testimony is too great for me to deny. Now you may give up everything if you must and cease to regard me as your friend but I never did deceive you and never will if my father sinned I can not help it. The truth to me is the same he must suffer for his sin. I do not know that he did, and if I had not received such convincing testimony of the gospel in my faith might fail but it does not even though he did sin. The bible is my guide and Christ my pattern there is no religion for me except the gospel we believe.⁶⁸

The Mormons had expected their evidence about Joseph Smith's polygamy to convince David that polygamy was divinely instituted by a prophet; instead they convinced David that his father was an adulterous prophet. Nevertheless David was true to his brother Joseph, as all the sons of the prophet tried to be true to their memory of their father, and David became a counselor to his brother ten months after writing this letter. But the effects of his 1872 mission to Utah were too great for David's sensitive personality and fragile constitution, and he was committed to the Illinois Hospital for the Insane in January 1877. Joseph Smith had spoken in 1844 of his son of promise being "walled in with granite rock," and David Hyrum Smith spent the last twenty-seven years of his life in the asylum.⁶⁹

What was for Joseph Smith III and his family a terrible personal tragedy was an institutional disappointment for the Mormons of Utah who had hoped that

one of the sons of Joseph Smith would eventually preside over the LDS Church. Brigham Young consistently told the Saints in general conferences and other public meetings that he was not Joseph Smith's successor, and that he was president of the LDS Church only by virtue of his position as senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles which was acting as the full-constituted presidency of the Church.⁷⁰ In October 1863 conference, Brigham said, "If one of Joseph's children takes the Lead of the church he will come and place himself at the head of *this* church, and I will receive him as willing as any one here."⁷¹ But Brigham insisted that Joseph Smith's sons could rightfully preside only over the LDS Church of Utah, not over a church which repudiated the practices Brigham had faithfully tried to implement as he had learned them from Joseph Smith the Prophet. Brigham was convinced that Joseph Smith III would never conform, but in 1866 expressed his fervent hope that David H. Smith would accept the fullness of the priesthood.

I am looking for the time when the Lord will speak to David [H. Smith]; but let him pursue the course he is now pursuing, and he will never preside over the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in time or in eternity. . . . It would be his right to preside over this Church, if he would only walk in the true path of duty. ⁷²

David H. Smith's commitment to a mental institution ten years later ended any hope of Utah Mormons for one of the Prophet Joseph Smith's sons to accept and preside in the Utah church. Because the sons of Joseph Smith refused to affiliate with the church that the apostles had maintained in continuity since 1844, the LDS Church continued the caretaker presidency of the Quorum of Twelve. From 1844 to the present, the president of the LDS Church has automatically been the senior surviving member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, whether or not he organized a separate First Presidency of three men. We can be sure that Brigham Young was sincere in his willingness to confer the fulfillment of succession rights upon the sons of Joseph Smith if they would accept the LDS Church in Utah as it was, not as they wanted it to be. But neither side of this last remaining echo of the 1844 succession crisis could change its determined course.

Looking back at the 1844 blessing of Joseph Smith III in relation to the entire succession crisis, it is clear that the positions of the Mormons of Utah and of the Reorganization were irreconcilable on grounds of legalism, continuity, and philosophy. It is virtually impossible to claim that there was only one legitimate successor to Joseph Smith's presidency when on the best of evidence he blessed, ordained, or designated Sidney Rigdon, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith III, David Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, and William Marks to succeed him, and also conferred upon the Quorum of Twelve the full keys, powers, and authority to govern the church and to administer all that he had introduced secretly at Nauvoo. In later years polemic writers in both the RLDS and Mormon churches tried to create a simple legalism by insisting that their path of succession was the only one Joseph

Smith authorized and that all other claims were spurious. These arguments cannot withstand the scrutiny of the documents from Joseph Smith's lifetime. Joseph Smith had provided many paths of succession.

Brigham Young and Joseph Smith III were each loyal to Joseph Smith as they understood him, but from irreconcilable points of view. Brigham Young saw Joseph first and foremost as the divine restorer, and dedicated his life from 1844 to 1877 as an "apostle of Jesus Christ and of Joseph Smith" to give the fullest expression possible to everything Joseph taught, revealed, practiced, and hoped for in the secret councils and public meetings of Nauvoo, where Brigham had his first continuous association with the prophet. Continuity was the key of apostolic succession Brigham Young led and implemented in the LDS Church of Salt Lake City. Joseph Smith III saw the prophet first and foremost as a father whom he loved and respected and who he believed had been called by God to bring forth a work and message of good. RLDS historians have observed that Joseph Smith III sought to continue the work of his father "ignorant of much of its earlier history and its doctrines."⁷³ Joseph Smith III could see nothing good or uplifting in polygamy, secret endowment rituals, overt and covert theocracy, or quasi-scriptural attacks on fundamental Christian theologies of God and humanity. Joseph Smith III forced himself to suspend judgment, despite overwhelming evidence, on the question of whether his father actively promoted these radicalisms, and he adopted the more neutral position that to whatever extent these things may have existed at Nauvoo, they did not do credit to his idealized view of Joseph Smith as father, restorer of righteousness, teacher of truth, and exponent of virtue. Therefore, Joseph Smith III and the Reorganization sought to honor the memory and prophetic calling of Joseph Smith, Jr., through discontinuity with what had occurred at Nauvoo.

There were many complexities and contradictions in the fourteen-year ministry of Joseph Smith as president of the LDS Church. Not only did he establish competing claims of individual succession to his office at the same time, but (with reference to polygamy in particular) Joseph Smith's public statements were moving in opposite directions from his private ministry. Brigham Young resolved the inconsistencies by adhering to the private instructions Joseph Smith the Prophet gave him in the name of the Lord during the last years of his life, and by dismissing the public inconsistencies as diplomatic concealment. Joseph Smith III resolved the inconsistencies by adhering to the public instructions published by Joseph Smith's authority during his lifetime, and by dismissing the secret developments at Nauvoo as aberrations. Both positions required rationalization or denial of discordant elements of the past. Both the Mormons of Utah and the Saints of the Reorganization were loyal to their conceptions of Joseph Smith's prophetic office, and from their differing viewpoints the recently discovered 1844 blessing of Joseph Smith III verified either the tragedy of unfulfilled prophetic office or the glory of a martyr's heritage.⁷⁴

NOTES

1. "A blessing, given to Joseph Smith, 3rd, by his father, Joseph Smith, Junr. on Jany. 17, 1844," manuscript at Research Library and Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Independence, Missouri, with photocopy at Historical Department, Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. Thomas Bullock Journal and holograph minutes of hundreds of meetings by Bullock in LDS Historical Department; Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-1936), 2:599-600; C. Ward Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer" (Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956).
3. Wilford Woodruff Journal, 26 Feb. 1862, 22 Jan. 1865, LDS Historical Department; Inventory of Newel K. Whitney Collection, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, hereafter cited as Brigham Young University.
4. Joseph Smith manuscript 1832-1834 Journal, 19 April 1834, p. 79, LDS Historical Department.
5. Far West Record, 15 March 1838, LDS Historical Department.
6. Manuscript History of the Church, Book A-1, 5 Dec. 1834, in handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, LDS Historical Department.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 107:24, 118:30, Utah edition; Doctrine and Covenants, 104:11c, 105:12, RLDS edition.
8. *Times and Seasons* 2 (1 June 1841): 42; Doctrine and Covenants 124:91, 95, Utah edition; Doctrine and Covenants 107:296b,e, RLDS edition.
9. B.H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970), 5:510; Willard Richards Journal, 16 July 1843, LDS Historical Department.
10. Doctrine and Covenants, 86:10, 124:58, Utah edition; Doctrine and Covenants 84:3b, RLDS edition.
11. D. Michael Quinn, "Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: A Prosopographical Study" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1973), pp. 132, 204-5.
12. Statement and transcribed minutes by Oliver Cowdery in Joseph Smith, Sr., Patriarchal Blessing Book, Vol. 1, pp. 8-9 LDS Historical Department. Other men ordained patriarchs from 1833 to 1844 were John Young about 1834, Isaac Morley in 1838, Hyrum Smith in 1840, Peter Melling in 1840, John Albiston in 1841, James Adams in 1843, John Smith in 1844, and Asahel Smith in 1844.
13. "Patriarchal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (1 June 1845):992, 921.
14. Heber C. Kimball's patriarchal blessing to his daughter Helen in 1843 is not in the church patriarchal blessing record books, but is presently located in W. Whitney Smith Papers, LDS Historical Department.
15. *Complainant's Abstract of Pleading and Evidence, In the Circuit Court of the United States, Western District of Missouri, Western Division, at Kansas City. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Complainant, vs. The Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri . . .* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1892), p. 28 hereafter cited as *Temple Lot*; italics added.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 32; U.S. Circuit Court (8th Circuit), Testimony (1892), transcript, Box 1, folder 2, #5, p. 19, Question 250. In the Alexander H. Smith and William W. Blair diaries, Whitehead omitted Ebenezer Robinson and George J. Adams from the list of those witnessing the ceremony, and added the names of William W. Phelps and John M. Bernhisel.
17. *Temple Lot*, p. 36.
18. Joseph Smith, Jr., Journal, 21 Jan. 1844 and Wilford Woodruff Journal, 21 Jan. 1844, both at LDS Historical Department; Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), pp. 317-19; Roberts, *History of the Church* 6:179, 183.
19. *Autumn Leaves* 1 (May 1888):202. See footnote 1.
20. *Temple Lot*, pp. 33, 37.
21. Wilford Woodruff Journal, 21 Jan. 1844, Joseph Smith Journal, 21 Jan. 1844; Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph*, pp. 317-19.

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22. Nauvoo High Council 1843-1844 Minutes, consecutively numbered and stitch-bound manuscript, LDS Historical Department.
23. *Temple Lot*, p. 28; William W. Blair Diary, 17 June 1874, RLDS Research Library and Archives.
24. *Temple Lot*, 29, 33; manuscript transcript of testimony, p. 24, Question 354; Alexander Hale Smith Diary, 14 May 1864; see William W. Blair Diary, 17 June 1874, both at RLDS Research Library and Archives. The published complainant's abstract, *Temple Lot*, p. 32, omitted Whitehead's very specific denial in transcript question 354: "I never heard Joseph teach that in his life."
25. *Temple Lot*, p. 37; Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph*, pp. 340-61.
26. *Temple Lot*, p. 35; Recommend and Appointment of James Whitehead, Winter Quarters, Camp of Israel, 17 April 1848, James Whitehead Papers, and Pottawattamie High Council Record, 5 Nov. 1848, both at LDS Historical Department; Letter of Orson Hyde to Orson Pratt in *Latter-Day Saints Millennial Star* 11 (1 Jan. 1849):27.
27. Alexander Hale Smith Diary, 14 May 1864, and entry following a torn out page, and William W. Blair Diary, page opposite entry for 17 May 1865, and full entry for 17 June 1874, both at RLDS Research Library and Archives.
28. D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978):83-91.
29. Howard and Martha Coray Notebook, 13 Aug. 1843, Franklin D. Richards Scriptural Items, 13 Aug. 1843, William Clayton Journal, 13 Aug. 1843, in LDS Historical Department and Archives, and quoted in Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph*, pp. 241-42; also Roberts, *History of the Church*, 5:530-31.
30. Historian's Office Journal, 1 Sept. 1861, LDS Historical Department.
31. William W. Blair Diary, 17 June 1874, RLDS Research Library and Archives.
32. Revelation to Newel K. Whitney, dictated by Joseph Smith, 27 July 1842, LDS Historical Department.
33. Roberts, *History of the Church* 6:253; Wilford Woodruff Journal, 10 March 1844, Joseph Smith Journal, 10 March 1844; D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *BYU Studies* 20 (Winter 1980):165.
34. "At the time of his birth, it was intimated by old Mrs Durphee and others that Joseph the prophet had said that he (David Hyrum which name Joseph gave him before his death) was to be the David the Bible speaks of to rule over Israel forever, which David spoken of most people took to be old King David." (Oliver B. Huntington diary, typescript, 1:53 Brigham Young University; E. Cecil McGavin, *The Family of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc. 1963), p. 138.
35. Manuscript minutes of Brigham Young sermon, 7 Oct. 1863, recorded by George D. Watt, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Historical Department.
36. *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 Sept. 1844):651, 5 (1 Nov. 1844):698.
37. Benjamin F. Johnson manuscript autobiography, "A Life Review," p. 96, and Nauvoo High Council Minutes, 30 Nov. 1844, p. 7, both at LDS Historical Department.
38. Unpublished manuscript minutes of sermon of 23 March 1853, Heber C. Kimball Papers, LDS Historical Department.
39. *A Series of Instructions and Remarks by President Brigham Young at a Special Council, Tabernacle, March 21, 1858* (Salt Lake City, 1858), pp. 3-4, pamphlet in Frederick Kesler Collection, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah. Also reported in A. Karl Larson and Katharine Miles Larson, *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 1:25. However, Joseph Smith's immediate plans in June 1844 were to go east to Washington, D.C., to obtain federal protection for the embattled Nauvoo Mormons prior to the eventual westward move he had contemplated since 1842. In 1844 the eventual refuge in the West was apparently not clear in Joseph's mind: the Great Basin, Rocky Mountains, Texas, and Vancouver Island were all possible sites in the 1844-1845 period.
40. Manuscript fragment of Nauvoo Legion History, originally in Nauvoo Collection, LDS Historical Department; also referred to by Stephen Markham in remarks in public meetings in Utah, Provo School of the Prophets, 6 July 1868, LDS Historical Department.
41. Doctrine and Covenants 112:15, Utah edition; Doctrine and Covenants 105:66, RLDS edition; "History of Brigham Young," *LDS Millennial Star* 26 (4 June 1864): 359.
42. William Clayton Journal, 4 July, 6 July 1844.
43. *Ibid.*, 12 July 1844.

44. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:213; William Clayton Journal, 4 Aug. 1844; Crandall Dunn Journal, 5 Aug. 1844, at LDS Historical Department; D. Michael Quinn, "Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16 (Winter 1976): 187-233.
45. George Laub 1845-1846 Journal, p. 91, and William Burton Diary, May 1845, both at LDS Historical Department; Henry and Catharine Brooke to Leonard and Mary Pickel, 15 Nov. 1844, Leonard Pickel Papers, Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, hereafter cited as Yale University.
46. Roberts, *History of the Church* 7:236, footnote, cites William C. Staines Journal as saying that there were "a few dissenting voices," and "History of William Adams, Wrote by himself January 1894," p. 15, says "out of that vast multitude about twenty voted for Rigdon to be Gardian," Brigham Young University.
47. *Times and Seasons* (15 Aug. 1844): 618; italics in original. On the day the Quorum of Twelve Apostles sustained Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards as a separate First Presidency; President Young reminded them, "You admit all the time that Joseph is still the 1st. Presy of the Ch." Miscellaneous Minutes, 5 Dec. 1847, p. 13, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.
48. Brigham Young 1837-1844 Journal, 19 Sept. 1844; Heber C. Kimball 1844-1845 Journal, entry after 27 May 1845, both at LDS Historical Department.
49. William Clayton Journal, 22 Dec. 1844, 12 Jan., 26-27 Jan. 1845.
50. Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members," p. 171; Willard Richards Journal, 21 Feb. 1844. See note 39 regarding the intended location.
51. Manuscript Minutes of Conference, 7 April 1845, in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock, Miscellaneous Meeting Minutes, and Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff, 8 May 1845, Woodruff Papers; and Willard Richards Journal, 15 Aug. 1845, all at LDS Historical Department.
52. Manuscript minutes of Brigham Young sermon "on the occasion of a family meeting, held at his residence," 25 Dec. 1857 (italics added), and Miscellaneous Minutes, 12 Feb. 1849, p. 2, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Historical Department.
53. Henry Brown, *History of Illinois* (New York: New York Press, 1844) p. 489; Statement of Lucy Mack Smith, 27 June 1845, Affidavits Collection, and Blessing of Joseph Smith III, given by Joseph Smith, Sr., in Kirtland, written by Lucy Mack Smith from memory in 1845, both at LDS Historical Department; Journal of John Taylor, 27 and 30 June 1845, quoted in B. H. Roberts, *Succession in the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret news, 1894), p. 19-23.
54. William Clayton Journal, 10 Dec. 1845; Heber C. Kimball Journal, 10 Dec. 1845; Roberts, *History of the Church* 7:470-72, 541-42.
55. Pamphlet printed in *Warsaw Signal* (Warsaw, Illinois), 29 Oct. 1845, pp. 1, 4.
56. James Monroe Journal, 24 April 1845, Yale University.
57. William Smith to James J. Strang, 25 Dec. 1846, Document 27b, Strang Manuscripts, Yale University.
58. *Voree Herald* 1 (Oct. 1846); Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members," p. 193.
59. William Clayton Journal, 23 May 1845; Adams to A.R. Tewkesbury, 14 June 1845, both at LDS Historical Department.
60. William W. Blair Diary, 15 May 1865; *LDS Herald* 8 (1 Oct. 1865); *Voree Herald* 1 (July 1846). Adams' original letter is Document 195 in Strang Manuscripts, Yale University.
61. Blessing given to Joseph Smith III and to Julia Murdock, undated and patriarch not indicated, but signed by E. M. Greene, clerk, in Inez Smith David Papers, RLDS Research Library and Archives.
62. Wilford Woodruff Journal, 16 Feb. 1847; Brigham Young Office Journal, 23 Feb. 1860, both at LDS Historical Department; *Journal of Discourses*, 4:6 John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1877), pp. 155, 161-162, 164; statement of John H. Carter in *Temple Lot*, p. 181.
63. Inez Smith David, *The Story of the Church* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1948); Mary Audentia Smith Anderson and Bertha Anderson Hulmes, eds., *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration* (1832-1914) (Independence: Herald House, 1979). Robert D. Hutchins, "Joseph Smith III: Moderate Mormon" (M. A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977.) Aside from personal visits of Utah Mormons, George A. Smith invited Joseph Smith III to come to Utah in letters of 13 March 1849 and 24 June 1854.
64. *Journal of Discourses*, 8:69.

65. Samuel H.B. Smith to George A. Smith, 10 July 1860, Mss 1046, Special Collection, Brigham Young University; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938), pp. 197-198.

66. Alexander Hale Smith Diary, 14 May 1864, and partial account of the Joseph III blessing ceremony after a torn-out page. See William W. Blair Diary, 14 June 1874, where Whitehead tells what he had told Alexander.

67. Minutes of the RLDS Council of the Twelve Apostles, Book A, p. 11 (3 May 1865) and p. 34 (9 April 1867), RLDS Research Library and Archives.

68. David H. Smith to Brother Sherman, 27 July 1872, RLDS Research Library and Archives.

69. Paul M. Edwards, "The Sweet Singer of Israel: David Hyrum Smith," *BYU Studies* 12 (Winter 1972): 175-176, see note 30.

70. *Journal of Discourses*, 3:212, 5:296, 6:320, 8:69, 11:115, 18:70-71.

71. Edmund C. Briggs Journal, 7 Oct. 1863, RLDS Research Library and Archives; see manuscript minutes of Brigham Young sermon, 7 Oct. 1863, reported by George D. Watt, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Historical Department.

72. Manuscript minutes of sermon, 7 Oct. 1866 recorded by George D. Watt, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Historical Department. Brigham Young looked to David rather than to young Joseph as eventual Church president as early as August 1860. See Brigham Young office journal, 15 Aug. 1860.

73. Alma R. Blair, "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Moderate Mormonism," in *Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, ed. by F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973), p. 218.

74. RLDS and Mormons will probably always debate the significance of the words of the 1844 blessing to Joseph Smith III: "Verily, thus saith the Lord: if he abides in me, his days shall be lengthened upon the earth, but, if he abides not me, I, the Lord, will receive him, in an instant, unto myself." Since Joseph Smith III lived to the age of eighty-two as president of the Reorganization, RLDS interpreters quite naturally will regard this as vindication of their position and repudiation of the Mormons of Utah, whereas the latter will tend to be puzzled, at the least. From the most detailed analysis and reflection upon historical evidences, the author feels that it is impossible to adopt an exclusivist argument or interpretation about this issue, as expressed in the concluding paragraph of this article. Both Brigham Young and Joseph Smith III were "True" to Joseph Smith and "abided" in the Lord. Anyone adopting an exclusivist interpretation of the above quoted words of the Joseph Smith III blessing will also have to confront Joseph Smith's blessing of 18 December 1833 to Oliver Cowdery (who by the time he was excommunicated from the church in 1838 was an entrenched opponent of Joseph Smith's theocracy and polygamy): "for he shall have part with me in the keys of the Kingdom of the last days, and we shall judge this generation by our testimony: and the keys shall never be taken from us, but shall rest with us for an everlasting priesthood forever and ever." Blessing of Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery in Joseph Smith Sr. Patriarchal Blessing Book. 1:12, manuscript of blessings in handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, LDS Historical Department.

Journal

*Our experience is the only
Answer we can question.*

Things
As they are—
My own everyday life,
My white space, and my stories—

Foreshadow, follow and are the ordinances
I conceal that reveal I am in the express
Image of them in whose image I am seeking:
To possess the greater knowledge, the keys
To acknowledge and be reconciled to:

The splendor of my being,
The terror of choosing,
And the final
Comforting.

THE GIFT

On a snowy evening, Gerard de Valois stepped from a tram near Quai Marcellis in the Belgian city of Liège. He positioned his hat more firmly, tucked his scarf tightly into the collar of his coat, and went briskly off along the row of apartment buildings opposite the quay. He relished the soft pad of snow under his feet and the spiral of snowflakes in the aura of the streetlamps. Then he saw two young men meandering next to the balustrade of the quay. One of the young men was in a whimsical mood. He talked a little too loudly—in English, Gerard thought, though Gerard did not know English well enough to be sure. The fellow made snowballs and threw them over the balustrade into the river. He elevated his arms and pirouetted like a dancer. He leaped upon the railing of the balustrade and walked, balancing himself as in a tightrope act. He turned suddenly toward the dark river, stretched out his arms, and orated in a loud voice. When he had jumped down, he bellowed a line or two from a song. The other young man, noticing that Gerard had come abreast of them on the opposite walk, struck his companion a blow on the shoulder and scolded him in a muted voice.

The whimsical fellow seemed undaunted. He strode across the street and accosted Gerard. "I thought the street was empty," he said. "I have lived where it rarely snows; this storm has sent me wild."

"Apologies aren't necessary," Gerard said congenially. "It is a fine night for carousing. However, if you are searching for a bar, you have a way to go. You must go past the new bridge to Rue Pitours. There you will find an excellent little bistro."

"Carousing isn't exactly our line," the young man said. "We've been knocking on doors hoping to talk to people. We'd like to talk with you. We have a gift we would like to leave with you."

"You are peddlers," Gerard said. "I was sure you were American soldiers on leave from Germany."

"We are missionaries," the young man said. He introduced himself as Frère Beckwith and his companion, who spoke no French, as Frère Haglund. They were Mormons from Utah.

"*Sacré Dieu*, who has ever heard of Utah?" Gerard said, because he too was capable of whimsey. "So you have created a new religion in Utah. Is it anything like Islam?"

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The missionary had never heard such a comparison. When he had finished laughing, he explained that the Mormons were the inheritors of the authentic Christianity. They also called themselves Latter-day Saints.

"You call yourselves saints!" Gerard said incredulously. He stood back to scrutinize the missionary from a better angle of light. "*Mon Dieu*, I would like to see this place called Utah. The seven deadly sins do not exist there?"

"They exist," the missionary admitted. "There are people in Utah who are not Mormons, and even many Mormons are not faithful. But most of them are truly righteous."

"I can't understand why you have come to convert Liège," Gerard said. "This city has no end of Christians. If anything, there are too many. Why don't you go to some godless place like Chicago or New York?"

"Our missionaries are in those cities too. The entire world needs what we have. We want to tell you about it. You have never heard anything like it."

"I have already been a Christian. My parents were devout Catholics when they were alive," Gerard said. "Now I am an existentialist."

"You are exactly the person we want to talk to!"

"I will tell you something. A long time ago a famous barbarian ruled this land—Clovis, king of the Franks. It was a great day for Christianity when he converted. Becoming a Christian was a natural and reasonable thing in those days; it was the progressive thing to do. But you—you are fourteen hundred years too late. You have come to convert me to a dying religion."

The missionary flung out his arms with enthusiasm. "Dying? Christianity has never been more alive. That's what we are here to tell you. It has been restored."

"You are a very amiable person," Gerard said, "and I am tempted to hear what you have to say just to know you better. But, no, when I think of it, I would be wasting your time."

"Let me be the judge of that."

Gerard shook his head. "Really, I must get on. Look how the snow has accumulated on our shoulders."

The missionary pulled a coin and a bill from his pocket. "Let's gamble. This bill is worth two hundred fifty francs. I'll flip the coin. If it comes down tails, you get the two hundred fifty francs and we'll go away peacefully. But if it comes down heads, I keep the money and you listen to our message."

"Will you risk two hundred fifty francs on a chance to convert me?" Gerard said, laughing loudly. The missionary beamed. Gerard saw that he was perhaps twenty-one; his build was sturdy, and his hair, peeking from beneath

his beret, was blond. He had a wry, affectionate smile and eyes that were simultaneously fine-humored and wistful. Already Gerard liked the young man immensely.

"Well, come along to my apartment. I will introduce you to Katrine," Gerard said. As he led the missionaries along the snowy sidewalk, he remembered what he had said about the conversion of Clovis. Incredibly, he was witness to the replication of something ancient. For a moment he could almost believe that these young men were not his contemporaries but had miraculously arrived in Liège on this very evening, blown in by the swirling mists of snow from ages and epochs long since vanished.

Gerard's apartment was on the third story of a building overlooking Quai Marcellis and the river. As he let himself and his guests into the apartment, he was startled to see his sister Marie in the living room with Katrine. An old belligerence existed between Gerard and Marie, who had not visited her brother in four or five years.

Having stared a moment from the threshold, Gerard said elaborately, "I am honored, astounded, overwhelmed."

"Please withhold your effusions," Marie said in a bored voice. She sat with her pretty dark eyes half closed, her face impassive, her hands thrust into the pockets of the raincoat which she had not taken the trouble to remove.

"I invited Marie for supper," Katrine explained. "It was to surprise you for your birthday."

"My birthday!" Gerard exclaimed with exasperation. He turned to the missionaries. "I have turned thirty today. I had entirely forgotten the painful fact. Please forgive me. It will be very awkward to have your message tonight. You will have to return some other time."

Marie stood up, stretched languorously, and took off her coat. "Why chase them away so unceremoniously?" she said. She pulled chairs from the table. "Please take off your coats and have a seat. Really, Gerard, you are brutal. Have you forgotten your manners entirely? The least you can do is to introduce us."

First he introduced Frère Beckwith and Frère Haglund; then he turned to the women. He had no problem in making his sister known to the missionaries. Marie smiled warmly and murmured her recognition. But it was not so easy in the case of Katrine. Unthinkingly, Gerard had been ready to tell the simple truth about Katrine; he would not have used the word *mistress*, but certainly he would not have lied, as he finally did, by calling her his wife. For fifteen months Gerard and Katrine had lived in this apartment on the bank of the Meuse near Pont Albert le Premier. Katrine was Flemish: a little taller than Gerard, well-shaped, blond, generally placid, though not entirely predictable in temperament. She spoke French as Gerard spoke Flemish, with a heavy accent. She could not understand Walloon and was likely to be irritated if Gerard broke into the patois of his region. Gerard had time to reflect that by calling Katrine his wife, he had given her an advantage; she sometimes said that it was time to settle down, that one should not wait forever to have children. The little lie had

to be. Having known Frère Beckwith scarcely more than ten minutes, Gerard was already hesitant to disappoint him.

"Wouldn't it be fun to share our supper with these gentlemen?" Marie said as she lighted a cigarette.

Katrine wrung her hands. "I am so sorry; I am truly desolated; I would love very much at any other time to show our hospitality, but the plain truth is I have not prepared enough."

"Forgive us," Gerard said. "We will make amends by having you back. How would it be if we think of the same night next week?"

"Don't be so niggardly," Marie said scornfully. "I will be happy to share my chop with one of them. A modest portion of food won't hurt any of us. Gerard regularly overeats."

"It isn't the chops; I have six of those," Katrine said. "It is the éclairs. I have only three. And I bought only a single bottle of wine."

"Splendid," said Marie with enthusiasm. "I never eat éclairs; we will divide mine between the missionaries."

"We don't drink wine," Frère Beckwith said. "Tap water will be fine. Or a little milk, if you have some," he added hopefully.

"Milk?" Katrine said. "Do adults drink milk where you come from? And what would the neighbors think if it were known that we served tap water to a guest? We will serve coffee to everyone and save the wine for another occasion."

"Oh, no, I insist upon tap water," the missionary said. "It is what we always drink. Unless you have a little apple juice."

Katrine shook her head. "Tea perhaps?"

"Tap water," the missionary said fervently. "Belgians really don't know how good it is."

Though at first Gerard shared Katrine's anxiety, he saw as the meal progressed that there was plenty for everyone—a braised chop apiece, a nice portion of salad, a serving of baked chickory sprouts aswim in bubbling gouda cheese, and for each a crusty roll and a two-thirds portion of chocolate éclair. Katrine was pleased by the relish with which the missionaries ate a second helping of the chicory; Frère Beckwith said he had rarely eaten anything so good. Frère Beckwith inquired a little into the lives of the three Belgians, but he was obviously pleased to respond to their questions about Utah and the American West. He assured them that in frontier times cowboys and Indians had fought and killed one another just as the movies showed. The cowboys now rode motorcycles and drove pickup trucks, and the Indians lived on reservations. Utah had been settled by Mormon pioneers who had migrated across the Great Plains by means of ox-drawn wagons or handcarts pulled by the pioneers themselves; their exodus was a saga of incredible heroism. Utah was a land of high, timbered mountains, arid, sagebrush-filled valleys, and deeply eroded canyons. Frère Haglund came from Salt Lake City, while Frère Beckwith came from a desert village called Hurricane. Frère Beckwith's eyes misted for a moment as he spoke of his valiant mother, a widow who supported her son on

his mission with a tiny grocery store, a vegetable garden, and a herd of cattle which her brother helped her maintain. She did not regard it as a sacrifice to keep her son on a mission; she shared his urgency to make known the wonderful fact that an authentic Christianity existed upon the earth. The Latter-day Saints had no less an ambition than to declare to the entire world that salvation was accessible only through the authorized rituals of this restored Christianity.

Gerard realized that the missionary had slipped without fanfare into a religious discussion. Katrine's dull, abstracted eyes showed that she had lost interest. To Gerard's surprise, however, Marie was attentive and alert. Remarkably fresh and pretty for a woman of twenty-eight, she seemed to hang upon the words of the missionary. Her face glowed with sympathetic understanding as he delineated his arguments and emphasized his points; her luminous eyes followed his gestures closely, her moistened lips moved, her brow frowned and relented.

"Do you mean," Marie interrupted, "that even now, even today, there is a living prophet on the earth?"

Gratified by the question, Frère Beckwith nodded soberly and replied, "That's exactly how it is. There is a living prophet whose counsel it is our privilege to hear and obey."

A little later she asked, "How does one know about these things? I mean, how can I know that what you are telling me is true?"

Frère Beckwith exchanged a significant glance with his companion. "You couldn't ask a more important question," he said. "You must hear the truth and think about it in your heart. You must pray sincerely and make sure your life is righteous. Then the Holy Spirit will touch your heart; your bosom will burn and you will know."

Gerard regarded Marie's radiant face with disbelief. Her interest struck him as patently artificial and theatrical. He couldn't imagine a less likely candidate for conversion. He had never known her to be interested in art or history or any other serious subject, including the Catholic religion which she had abandoned instantly upon the death of their mother ten years earlier. Marie was outspoken and uncharitable. She spent beyond her means and failed to pay back money borrowed from friends. Above all she was concupiscent. At twenty Marie had been involved in an impossible affair with a volatile Dutchman who had a wife and children in Maastricht; Gerard believed that his counsel had helped Marie break out of that corrosive entanglement. He had attempted to intervene again when she first moved into her present apartment in Rue Lesoinne, for which her secretary's salary could not begin to pay. The man involved at that moment was M. Turpin, an entrepreneur in real estate from Verviers. Marie pointed out the fact that Gerard had a mistress. Gerard admitted to the hypocrisy of his behavior; nonetheless, he insisted that there was something particularly malodorous when a woman from a recognized family misbehaved. Marie became livid. Gerard did not know that she had a capacity for such fury, and he went away chastened.

The missionary had stopped talking. He pushed back his plate and opened a tiny appointment book. "This has been just a start," he said. "There's much more to tell. May we come back in a few days?"

"What about me?" Marie interrupted. She went across the room and returned to the table with her purse, from which she withdrew her own agenda booklet. "I do not live here, as you know. Is your offer for my brother only, or would you also come to teach me in my apartment?"

With an affable smile, Frère Beckwith turned to Marie, and in a moment they had negotiated a meeting at Marie's apartment. The missionary returned his gaze to Gerard. Gerard could not make up his mind. He stroked the palms of his hands together as he glanced at Katrine, who had rolled her eyes upward in an expression of indifference. To Gerard's surprise, Frère Beckwith closed his appointment book and let it lie on the table. He said to his companion, "Come on, brother, let's pitch in." The two missionaries rose and rolled up their shirt sleeves. "We will wash the dishes," Frère Beckwith announced as he began to stack plates and collect silverware.

"No, you mustn't," Katrine protested. "I will not allow it. A guest cannot wash dishes."

"You can't deprive us of it," Frère Beckwith said. "We are specialists in washing dishes; we love to wash dishes; we would walk ten kilometers anytime just for the chance to do some dishes. You can show us where to put things when we are through."

"What will you think of my messy kitchen?" Katrine cried as the missionary pushed through the kitchen door with a stack of plates.

In a stentorian voice the missionary said, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was without form and was void, and the kitchens of the earth were without order, being filled with clutter, mess, and mayhem. And God said, Let us send Beckwith and Haglund to clean up these kitchens, that order may reign again. And so it was."

Katrine, who had followed him into the kitchen, watched with a gaping mouth. Gerard saw her astonishment. "You have to understand that this fellow cannot resist a jest."

"Back home," the missionary went on, "we don't wash dishes; we just call in the hounds and let them lick the dishes clean."

"They offer their dishes to the dogs! Who could imagine such a dirty thing?" Katrine said.

Gerard was laughing. "I have a weakness for incongruity. Remember, Katrine, this young man loves ironies. You must not be so gullible."

As he scrubbed dishes in a pan of soapy water, Frère Beckwith told stories, which he claimed were true. One story was about an old woman in Hurricane who owned a dozen prize geese. In an adjoining barnyard, a neighbor kept a barrel of mash for his horses. One day a long rainstorm wet the mash, which the neighbor left unattended until it had soured. Then he dumped the mash into a feeding trough to dry. The woman's geese crossed through the fence,

gorged themselves on wet, fermented mash, and became drunk. When the woman came from her house, she found her geese wobbling and reeling; to her horror, they toppled over one by one, apparently dead. To soften the tragic blow to her meagre economy, she plucked the geese and put their down aside for making quilts. By evening, the naked geese had revived and milled in the woman's barnyard, honking angrily. That night the woman suffered the guilt of the damned, thinking of her poor, denuded geese and the approaching winter. In the morning she rose with resolution. She set to work with knitting needles and made a formfitting suit for each goose. During the entire winter her geese were to be seen wandering in her barnyard solemnly dressed in union suits of knitted wool.

Leaning against the kitchen counter, Gerard laughed until tears rolled down his cheeks. He put his hand on the shoulder of Katrine, who sat before him on a stool. "Would it be so bad?" he said. "We could have these young men to supper again. They could tell us whatever it is they have to say about their gospel, and then we could talk about America and perhaps learn a little English."

The missionaries came to supper on the next Wednesday evening and then again and again until the weekly visit had become an established routine. The more Gerard knew of this Frère Beckwith the more he cherished him, though he was not entirely sure why. The doctrine which the missionary preached struck Gerard as primitive and grotesque; it might have been part of a dialogue for the stage, a discourse from the theatre of the absurd. Oddly, its very absurdity appealed to Gerard. The proposition of Gerard's accepting the instruction of foreign heretics was an ultimate irony, a singular, unprecedented joke. Gerard knew that he did not strike other people as perverse. His enviable job as senior buyer in textiles at the Grand Bazaar depended upon the air of solidity and regularity he had. He was perforce civilized, polite, tolerant, good-humored. Yet inwardly he was in a state of angry resistance; it could not be otherwise for any reasonable person, who of necessity must know the horror of the times, the purposelessness of human affairs, the ultimacy of the void. Underlying existence, as the existential philosopher Sartre had emphasized, was precisely nothing. Yet, being perverse, Gerard was free for just such a whimsical adventure as becoming a catechumen to these eccentric Mormons.

With each visit, Frère Beckwith urged Gerard and Katrine to attend a sacrament meeting at the Mormon chapel on Rue de Campine. Katrine flatly refused. Gerard mulled the invitation and at last, upon learning that Marie had begun to attend services, decided to go. He arrived early at the chapel on a Sunday afternoon and saw Marie sitting alone at the back of the hall. As he took a seat beside her, Marie murmured a greeting in Walloon. He turned to her, wishing to say something light and friendly, then found himself swallowing an impulse to accuse her of perfidy. She was conspicuously out of place here. People filed into the barren hall, some of them taking seats, others clustering in the aisles; they greeted one another warmly and took up animated conversa-

tions. It was obvious that they were the kind of people who labored or kept shops. At best their clothes were merely decent; for many, a respectable shabbiness had to do. In a sense, Gerard too was out of place here. He wore fine Italian shoes with pointed toes and elevated heels and an expensive suit with tapered trousers and a coat having narrow lapels. Still, Gerard would not have imputed a sexual cast to his way of dressing. Marie's black hair brushed her shoulders in luxuriant abundance; her lipstick and eyebrow pencil were scrupulously etched; the neckline of her dress showed the barest hint of cleavage, above which hung a fine necklace with a gold chain and an enameled pendant. She was elegant and, in a subtle way, provocative.

A portly woman seated herself next to Gerard. Her aging cheeks sagged, and her white hair was strewn wisply about her head. She introduced herself as Mme. Jardins, though, as she told Gerard, people here called one another brother and sister rather than monsieur or madame. She peered at Marie. "We have had the pleasure of knowing mademoiselle here for some time; now her brother has come," she said, shifting her bulk and setting her large carpeted handbag on the floor. "Well, that is excellent."

Marie glanced at the old woman and offered her the slightest grimace of a smile.

"I am surprised," Gerard said. "This is not a large meeting place. Where have they gone—all the Belgians the Mormons have converted?"

Mme. Jardins lowered her voice. "To tell the truth, there have never been many; people are unbelieving nowadays. Of those who believe, some go to America. That is what lurks in the hearts of those girls there." She pointed to a cluster of girls, the oldest of whom might have been seventeen. "They hope for a missionary; they will go to America, marry him, never come back. Or failing to find a missionary, they fall away."

An aroma of mildew and fried liver arose from the woman's soiled coat. Gerard said, "I am curious about this name you Latter-day Saints have taken. I am told you are like the primitive church; the members live lives of perfection. Are you truly saints?"

Mme. Jardins broke into a grunting chuckle and poked her elbow into Gerard's ribs. "What a notion! Who is perfect? I will be happy for the merest corner of heaven if the good Lord will take me in."

"You are a true believer?"

"Oh, I am a believer. It is not the gospel that lets you down; it is the people." The woman drew her tongue across the scattered whiskers of her upper lip. Gerard had surely known, she said, how things were during the war. The missionaries left; local brothers took charge; people had difficulty getting to meetings. Mme. Jardins herself, who lived at that time on a farm near Flemalle-Haut, could never come, there being the additional matter of her involvement in the Resistance. Mme. Jardins paused, as if she were tempted to elaborate upon her participation in the Resistance. In a moment she went on to say that after the liberation, while things were still disorganized, her son had died. An unmarried man of twenty-five, he was irreplaceable; her husband had

died before the war and she had no other children. She went to Liège and asked the local brothers to come to the cemetery to say religious words and consecrate the grave. But no one came. There had been only the woman herself, the sexton of the cemetery, and the driver of the hearse which had transported the body from the morgue.

"There, it is the man you see," Mme. Jardins said to Gerard, making a gesture toward a baldheaded man who conferred with Frère Beckwith on the platform at the front of the chapel. "He promised to come, but he didn't, because he considered my son an apostate. So I ask you: would you call him a saint? He preaches a pretty sermon; he loves to preside. But God will judge him for abandoning a poor woman when she had to put her only child into the earth."

By now the benches of the chapel had filled. The baldheaded man stationed himself at the pulpit and looked silently over the congregation. A woman began to play solemn music upon a small pump organ. Mme. Jardins leaned toward Gerard and continued to speak in a loud whisper. "That missionary, Frère Beckwith, he is the saint. I will not hide it from you: until he came to me, hardly six months ago, I was one who had fallen away. He came to my miserable room; he found me down, dying of despair; he gave me new courage. He has conviction; he touches people. It is like a fire in the wintertime to be near him. He has converted twelve or fifteen; that may not seem so many, but you should see how few the others convert."

Then the old woman's eyes blazed with disgust. She leaned forward and gazed askance at Marie. "The pretty young things flock to the branch to see Frère Beckwith. Unluckily for them, he has only three months until his mission ends and he will return to Utah. There will be a falling away, you will see!"

Marie, who had seemed to pay no attention to the conversation, suddenly looked the old woman in the eyes. "There are also others who flock to this branch. It seems they have here an abundance of aging addlepaters."

To Gerard's immense relief, the service began immediately. Mme. Jardins, furious for a while, stirred, snorted, and coughed, but gradually she became quiet and slumped into sleep. At the end of the service, many of the people remained to mingle in friendly, buzzing confusion. Children who seemed to have miraculously multiplied, ran here and there in exuberant release. A group of boys gathered on the platform. One boy stood behind the pulpit. He borrowed spectacles from another boy, hefted the large pulpit Bible, and engaged in a pantomime of preaching. Frère Beckwith strolled across the platform. He nudged the boy aside from the pulpit, cocked his mouth into a moronic grimace, pretended to gaze upon the open scripture and lifted his arm with a finger extended. The boys rushed around him, laughing, pulling, and pummelling. Then, quite suddenly, Frère Beckwith leaned among them and spoke and their noise fell away; they came down the stairs of the platform with him, unresisting and cheerful.

Gerard, standing in the aisle with Marie, had watched with his mouth slightly ajar. Shaking his head, he muttered, "Calming the waves of the angry

sea—did you see how they minded him?" Marie murmured agreeably, gazed down, and smoothed a wrinkle from her dress.

Gerard went on, unconsciously shifting into Walloon. "They worship God in a strange way."

"Not so strange," Marie said in a pointed French. "Give them the benefit of the doubt; let them do it in their own way."

"Certainly. I have no objections, whatever their whim," Gerard replied. "Nonetheless, what do you make of this hubbub, this noisy conversation among friends in the chapel, and, really, the sparse, mechanical procedure of their mass?"

Marie shrugged her shoulders. "As I say, it is their own way."

"I take it they have their internal dissensions. What a harridan that old woman is!"

"What else can an old woman be?" Marie said with disgust. "She is jealous; she imagines what she might do if she were young. But she was never anything. She is not worth thinking about."

"I find it strange," Gerard said in a softening voice, "that we who are the remnants of our family meet here in this place."

"Don't come if it bothers you," Marie said. "As for me, I like it here. For the most part these people please me; they are not complicated."

"That is true," Gerard said. "Their minds are not burdened with ideas."

"They are decent people," Marie said with a rising irritation. "Why do you pick at them? You are free to go away."

"I didn't think I was picking at them," he said. Then suddenly, speaking compulsively in Walloon, he came to the question burning in his curiosity. "Why are you here? Do you believe?"

She also spoke in Walloon. "I will tell you so you are not surprised when you learn it from others. I intend to be baptized. I am thoroughly determined. There is nothing you can do about it even if you do not like it."

Gerard released his tension in a long expiration of breath. "You have even stopped smoking?"

"Even," she said.

"*Mon Dieu!* Well, fine, excellent, I congratulate you! Why not be baptized if it pleases you?"

"Do you see that girl?" Marie said. "I should go speak to her."

"Shall I wait?" Gerard asked. "We could ride the tram down together."

"No, I do not know what my plans are; you go ahead," she said.

Gerard took a tram to Place St. Lambert, where he transferred to another which passed by Quai Marcellis. Swaying in harmony with the jolting, twisting motion of the tram, Gerard gazed abstractly out the window into the premature twilight of the rainy afternoon. The lowering, misting clouds pressed down his spirits. He could not bring himself to believe in Marie's conversion. Knowing that the universe neither reasoned nor valued, he should have been prepared for such an absurdity. Christian conversion had always implied a certain irrationality; *credo quia absurdum*, Tertullian had said—I believe because it is

absurd, the things of God being folly to the mind of man. But the prospect of Marie as a Mormon far surpassed Gerard's tolerance for the improbable. It was mindboggling. Gerard could imagine nothing that the Mormons could do for Marie or, for that matter, that Marie could do for the Mormons.

It was the same for Gerard. What could he expect from the Mormons? On this rainy evening, as he got off the tram near Quai Marcellis, Gerard recognized how severely he had been disillusioned by his visit to the chapel on Rue de Campine. The building was drab, the worship service barren, the worshippers impoverished and ignorant. It was a poor showing for a religion claiming to be a restored, authentic Christianity. The intentions of the Mormons were grand and heroic; their attempt to renovate Christianity was an epic project which even an unbeliever could appreciate and to some degree identify with. The missionaries were apparently unequal to their task. Certainly Frère Beckwith had immense personal qualities; as the old woman had said, he radiated warmth wherever he went. But Gerard now recognized a serious flaw in the missionary. He was a cultural illiterate. He knew nothing about logic, art, history, and philosophy. He scarcely knew anything about theology. Frère Beckwith had never heard of the Nicean Creed; he did not know that St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas had ever existed. After living in Liège for more than a year, Frère Beckwith knew little about the city—a fact which piqued Gerard's civic pride. For example, Frère Beckwith had not heard of Vincent de Beuren, who with a brave phalanx of Fanchimontois had resisted the invasion of Louis XI and Charles the Bold, and he had passed the church of St. Jacques many times without recognizing its distinctive architecture, which was widely considered to be the finest example of flamboyant Renaissance style in Belgium.

By the time Gerard had reached his apartment building, he had made up his mind to propose to the missionaries a tour of the cultural and historical sites of Liège. In fact, he would propose several tours. Ostensibly, the outings would be for relaxation and pleasure; in reality, they would be for the serious education of the missionaries. Climbing the stairway toward his apartment, Gerard felt something like a glow of virtue; he would help the missionaries, perhaps more than they had the capacity to appreciate.

On a cloudy Saturday afternoon, Gerard met the missionaries at the Place de la République Française for a tour of the city center. Although Frère Haglund had something on his mind and seemed unable to enjoy himself, Frère Beckwith responded enthusiastically to the notable features of the city. Gerard's pleasure rose as the tour progressed, and he decided that Frère Beckwith's ignorance was nothing more than lack of exposure—a matter of youth and of isolation in that fantastic wilderness called Utah. During the rainy afternoon, they saw the gospel book, a thousand years old and jewel encrusted, which had belonged to Notger, bishop of Liège. They viewed the Perron, the columnar statue which symbolized the liberty of Liège. They discussed the statue of Grétry standing before the opera house, which the missionaries had often passed without learning anything about the illustrious

composer. In the late afternoon, Gerard led them into the church of St. Jean to see a statue of the Virgin and Child entitled *Sedes Sapientiae—The Seat of Wisdom*. On the lap of the seated Virgin the Child sat upright; in the palm of his outstretched hand rested a jeweled sphere overtopped by a cross.

"What beauty the sculptor has achieved!" Gerard said, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. "The Lord sits in calm dominion over all the world, as you see by the globe in his hand. And behind him, the Virgin—majestic, perfect, yet so human. I cannot see her without thinking of my own mother."

From the high dark caverns of the church's vaulted ceiling a concentrated light fell upon the statue. The thin, delicate face of the Virgin was caught in a mood of slight abstraction; the hint of an affectionate, knowing smile rested on her lips. The Child looked steadfastly outward, his face composed by simple, unquestioned authority.

Gerard waited expectantly for the missionaries to respond. But they seemed reluctant and diffident; perhaps they had been distracted by the odor of incense pervading the air of the church or by the scraping of shoes and the coughing of an old man who, across the expanse of the nave, placed a penitential candle before a small altar. Suddenly Frère Haglund, with an angry wave of his hand, said something harsh and contemptuous in English. Frère Beckwith replied in an embarrassed, coaxing voice. The younger missionary turned on his heel and strode noisily along the floor of the nave and disappeared through the doors of the church.

"He is offended. I am sorry for that," Gerard said.

"Please forgive him," Frère Beckwith said. "He has bad news from home. His brother is getting a divorce—he has not been married long—and my companion is angry about it."

"But something here also bothers him," Gerard persisted.

"Maybe you will be surprised: he has never been in a Catholic church until now. Some of the missionaries are afraid of these old churches. They think Satan is in them."

"He thinks of Satan here?"

Frère Beckwith spoke reluctantly. "That really isn't what was bothering him. It was the statue. We aren't accustomed to think of Mary in this way. She seems to displace her son."

Gerard returned his gaze to the statue. He felt stung and vicariously insulted, a fact which he noted with surprise. For the first time in years he acknowledged the hunger he felt for these venerable churches in which he had worshipped as a child. He had loved their soft darkness, the rose and amber splendor of their stained glass windows, the muted echoes of the high vaulted ceilings, the varied perspectives of columns, arches, and aisles. He yearned for the clarity of a Gregorian chant, for the pageantry of red, white, and gold vestments, for the murmuring recitative between priest and congregation, for the elevation of the Host—that moment of daring hope for the transmutation of wafer and wine into the substance of heaven. Against the Eucharist of his childhood Gerard posed the scanty, impoverished ritual he had seen at the

Mormon chapel on Rue de Campine. Two missionaries had uttered brief prayers over plates of broken bread and trays filled with tiny cups of water, which boys had distributed to the members of the church. The Mormons did not call it the mass, but simply the sacrament, as if they did not consider their other rituals to be sacraments.

"I am for you, not against you," Gerard said to Frère Beckwith. "I see the remarkable things you are doing. You have dug up this old corpse, Christianity; you have drawn the embalmer's fluid from its veins; you are attempting to pump fresh, living blood into them. But, good brother, you are not doing it correctly. It is still a corpse."

The astonished missionary shook his head in denial.

"Do you have to start at zero—like fishermen from Galilee, knowing nothing about Jerome or Boethius or Aquinas? Or this lady?" Gerard said, looking again at the serene, imperturbable face of the Virgin.

"You are still a Catholic," Frère Beckwith said.

"No, I am not a believer," Gerard said. "Yet if I consider the matter without reference to myself, I still say you are empty. I am sorry to put it so bluntly. There is nothing in your bottle, neither old wine nor new."

"You are seeking something visible, something of this world," the missionary said.

"Yes, something with color and texture and dimension," Gerard agreed. "If I were a Christian, I would insist upon things that make the abstractions of theology palpable. I would want drama in my religion."

The missionary turned toward the Virgin and her Child and said, "There is no connection between this statue and reality. Your lady is not real; she is a fiction."

"A fiction?" Gerard said. "Yes, indisputably, she is a fiction; that is why she is beautiful. The human heart has created her."

As Frère Beckwith prepared to reply, Gerard put his finger to his lips and silenced the missionary. From somewhere in the immense, cavernous building came a light, melodic tapping. "That tapping—do you hear it?" Gerard said. "In my childhood home a clock from Zurich ticked with the same decorous regularity. I am reminded again of my mother. She sat knitting by the hour; in the net of her lap, beneath the coils of yarn, were a prayer book and her beaded rosary. Wherever she was, there was impeccable order, undeviating regularity. She draped the dining table with lace from Bruges; she decorated the mantel with crystal from Val St. Lambert. She combed her hair into a discreet bun; she hid her face behind the severity of large, round spectacles. Yet she loved me and wished me to have eternal life." Gerard's eyes sparkled with tears.

"What I do not see," Gerard went on, when he had wiped his eyes, "is how you span the abyss. Haven't you ever felt the need for a mother beyond this world? Doesn't it mean something that God had a mother, that a mortal bore God in her womb? This lady is a bridge between his infinity and your disgusting insignificance."

"There is no abyss."

"No abyss! So for you, God is close, convenient, congenial; you will call at his house this evening; he will serve you cookies and Perro; you will converse on the affairs of the day or on the weather."

"Tonight I will pray to him just so," the missionary said. "You do not understand the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit, God is always present—if you are worthy to have him."

Like Gerard, the missionary had stood these several minutes at the ambient edge of the light falling from the ceiling. His hair, nose, and ears, his gesturing hands burned with chiaroscuro brightness against the shadows around him. An uncanny change had come across his face—a look of speculation, of weighing, of risking a hitherto untried opportunity.

"I have the testimony of the Spirit. I am telling you so that you can have it too," the missionary said in a voice strangely elevated.

"I have read about the day of Pentecost. You cannot ask me to believe in the Spirit. It violates every rule of reason and logic," Gerard said urgently. He felt suddenly compelled to parry, feint, and forestall. Inexplicably, the missionary had seized the initiative and had imposed his own premises on their dialogue.

"How can you say that?" Frère Beckwith said with an impatient gesture. "I know what I know. I have the Spirit. Do you feel it?" He stared intensely into Gerard's eyes.

"Feel it! How could I feel it? Look, here is my hand!" Gerard held out a hand, then grasped it with his other hand. "I feel my hand; it is solid, real. But the Spirit! No, I feel nothing."

"It is with us," the missionary said in a voice close to terror. "Do you feel it?"

"Nothing!"

"Take it!" the missionary cried. "This is it!"

"There is nothing here."

"I am telling you there is. Do you think I am a liar? The Spirit is with me. It will leap to you now."

Gerard was aware of the horripilation of his hair along the back of his neck. An ominous electricity seemed hung in the air; an inscrutable potency seemed to have just brushed by. Gerard was aware, too, that his breath had quickened, as had that of the missionary. Though neither of them had moved, Gerard suffered the illusion that he had been pressed to a wall.

And then, looking again at the *Sedes Sapientiae*, noting again for no conscious reason the tranquil marble smile of the Virgin, Gerard said simply, "I do not accept it."

Already the energy of the missionary seemed to diminish, like the dying down of a spinning shaft when the power to its motor has been cut off. "I wanted it for you," he said. Tears glistened on his cheeks.

"I am sorry to have denied you," Gerard said. "I am not a Christian."

Afterward, Gerard and the missionaries ate a little supper in one of the open pastry shops in an alley off Place St. Lambert. Gerard bought a slice of cheese and a basket of fine grapes in a grocery store along their way; he found crusty rolls in an adjacent bakery; and here, in the little shop where they sat on stools

before a narrow counter, he bought them sweet waffles and apple juice. A Saturday crowd still filled the square and its surrounding streets. The rain had stopped; the clouds promised to break. Frère Beckwith had recovered his composure and talked cheerfully about a letter he had received from his mother in Hurricane. She wrote that the peach trees were loaded with green fruit, and she rejoiced to think that her son would be home for the harvest. Gerard supposed that this woman could not look like a woman of the Belgian countryside, yet his mind refused to create any other image of her. There she was: a broad, sturdy woman with a bonnet, coarse dress, apron, and the wooden sabots which the Belgian countryfolk still used for garden work. Gerard saw her weeding potatoes with a hoe. Her face was not demeaned with passionate feeling; serenity filled it as serenity filled the face of the Virgin in the *Sedes Sapientiae*.

Gerard poured another round of apple juice into their glasses. A trifle remained in the bottle; he gave it to Frère Beckwith. Gerard was reassured to see that Frère Beckwith had not cast him off. Oddly, he cherished the missionary more than ever. An awe and a reconciliation had settled upon Gerard. He would attend Marie's baptism. Having felt the intensity of the missionary, he no longer doubted the miracle of her conversion. He would make no further judgments against the worship of the Mormons. He knew that Frère Beckwith was the timeless Christian. The missionary had no need for reason, for culture, for tradition; he had the Spirit. Gerard could not remember having ever met a person who was so unintimidated by a fallen world, who had such a frank and open confidence that he had pacified his God. Frère Beckwith walked with a pass of safe conduct through the warring world; the blood of the Lamb preserved him from the angels of destruction.

On another Saturday, Gerard went to the baptism of his sister. A hushed crowd had gathered in the basement beneath the chapel for the ceremony; afterward, because of the excellent spring weather, there was to be an excursion to the citadel at the head of Rue de Campine. Marie and three others, dressed in white, sat in a row at the edge of the baptismal font. Clear water sparkled and splashed against the tile of the font. Marie's black hair spread across her shoulders; she sat quietly, her hands in her lap, her lips slightly tremulous. The service began. Frère Beckwith, dressed in white pants and shirt, took Marie by the hand and led her down the steps of the font. He paused a moment while Marie struggled to force the floating hem of her robe to sink around her legs. The missionary took her wrist in one hand, raised his other arm, uttered a brief prayer, and laid her back into the water. She arose drenched and spluttering. Frère Beckwith and Marie clambered from the font and passed close by Gerard on their way to the dressing rooms, leaving behind them a trail of water. Gerard had not realized how muscular and well proportioned the missionary was. He seemed a perfect match for Marie, who despite her twenty-eight years had a splendid body; her drenched, clinging robe revealed the undercup of her breasts, her flat belly, her sinuous thighs. Yet

Gerard could detect nothing concupiscent about the way in which she leaned against the missionary's shoulder, subdued, dependent, strangely unlike herself. Like Adam and Eve before their fall, they seemed oblivious to the sensual perfection of their bodies.

Gerard had never before seen the making of a Christian in this manner. He had been prepared for disappointment, the idea of baptism by immersion having struck him as unseemly and indecent. On the contrary, the spectacle of the cleansing rush of water over his sister's body left Gerard touched and elevated; for a moment, he felt renewed and purified. Then a sense of deprivation came over him. He could not remember a time when he had been free from guilt. His inadequacies and failures were innumerable; among them were his abandonment of his parents' faith, his refusal to marry, his recurrent doubt that mankind excelled in anything other than theft, butchery, and oppression. Gerard could only envy Marie for having found a means of absolution. In his mind, he defended her before their father and mother, who would not have approved of her becoming a Mormon. He saw himself in earnest speech with each of them. If they could know how dead the old forms had become, how the old truths had lost their potency and conviction, they would understand. It was far better that Marie take on the eccentricities of this revived Christianity than that she go on as she had been—angry, cynical, and promiscuous.

After the baptismal service, some thirty persons crowded into a tram in front of the chapel and rode to the top of Rue de Campine, where they got off and strolled along a tree-lined promenade to the citadel overlooking Liège. Seeing that no one waited to walk with Mme. Jardins, Gerard fell in beside the old white-haired woman and kept her pace, although she was so piqued by the neglect of the others that she could scarcely be polite to Gerard. In time, Gerard and Mme. Jardins overtook the others in the anterior courtyard of the citadel. Viewed from the air, the citadel of Liège gave the outline of a traditional hilltop fort, but in close perspective its colliding walls formed a confusing maze. The structure was no longer a fort. The majority of its rooms were used now as a military hospital, and at the back of the citadel the white crosses of a cemetery spread in a harmonious grid upon green, groomed lawns.

Gerard knew already the object which the people examined in the courtyard. Nonetheless he pushed with a morbid curiosity through the quiet group until he could see it. It was a wooden post, splintered and chipped until it was scarcely more than a stub. To this post the Germans had bound the best citizens of Liège and had shot them in retaliation for acts of the Resistance. Nausea crept over Gerard as he viewed the post. Each splinter and shard had been torn away by a bullet which had first passed through the body of a patriot. Dozens had died: lawyers, physicians, aldermen, men of commerce and finance—the most respectable, honorable citizens of the city, who now lay in the cemetery behind the citadel. Gerard could remember clearly one of the executed men, M. Besier, a pharmacist who with his wife had frequently visited Gerard's father and mother. Gerard pushed away from the crowding circle of people. It was an

outrage too terrible, too irremediable to think about.

The group, broken into clusters of chatting people, strolled on, coming in time to an overlook of the city. A bank of clouds burned in the setting sun. Steeples, façades, and domes glimmered above the haze of the city's exhaust and smoke. The wide Meuse threaded a silver path through the city center. An aromatic breeze stirred greening plants.

Mme. Jardins had come again to Gerard's side. He murmured a recognition of the beautiful evening, which she ignored. Peering beyond him, she grumbled, "Your sister is a troublemaker. Things would be better without her."

Gerard was startled, but he said, with an increased politeness, "That is regrettable. However, it is no affair of mine. I have nothing to do with her."

"I suppose you are right, seeing that she is twenty-two years old and therefore of age."

"Twenty-two years old!" Gerard whistled.

"It isn't true?"

"Well, certainly there's no question about it," Gerard replied hastily. "Somehow I had imagined she had already turned twenty-three, but her birthday is several months away. How did you know her age? Doubtless she told you."

"*Par bleu!* She wouldn't speak to me in any circumstance. It is marked on her papers of baptism. I saw them in Frère Haglund's lap as we sat in the service."

The people had turned back now, laughing and chatting as they made their way toward the trams on Rue de Campine. Mme. Jardins motioned with her hand: "Notice that your sister has captured Frère Beckwith." Gerard saw that the missionary and Marie walked in a straggling cluster of young people, though they were not precisely side by side. The old woman went on, "He stays too close. You watch: she is always nearby; she will not leave him alone. She is in love with him."

"*Ça m'assied!*" Gerard said. He was stunned. He wished fervently to interpret the old woman as a malicious gossip. What an eagle eye she had! "Well, what of it?" he said at last. "Such things happen. A handsome young man, a pretty young woman—no harm can come from it, I suppose."

"No harm? You don't understand things in this Mormon church. Now as for me, no, there is no harm to this missionary, whom I respect enormously. We have an understanding, he and I," she said proudly. "But the others! It is unbelievable how closely they watch the missionaries. And when tongues wag, the mission president hears; then off goes the good missionary to another city—instantly. Not so serious, you could say, but disgraceful nevertheless."

"He has only a month or two before he goes home to Utah," Gerard reminded her.

"That doesn't matter. If word gets to the president, off goes the missionary. Such a pity that one so fine should go home with a cloud over him. And when he is gone, your sister will fall away. That is how deep her conversion is."

After returning to his apartment, Gerard fell into a lassitude from which he did not recover even after the pleasant supper of ham, oiled salad, buttered

rolls, and wine which Katrine set on the table. Before going to the baptism, Gerard had talked to Katrine of a movie for the evening. Now he persuaded her to stay home. Katrine did not mind. She propped up a small easel on the table and tried her hand with a set of oil paints she had just bought. Gerard browsed in the evening paper and pretended to get into a novel but finally resigned himself to querulous thoughts. He could scarcely bear to remember his cheerful feelings at the baptismal service. He was swept by embarrassment for his romantic ideas about Marie's conversion. What a shameful exercise Marie had put herself through! Like a schoolgirl, like a calf, she had assumed this histrionic posture, giving up smoking, accommodating herself to a congregation of stolid shopkeepers and thickfingered streetworkers, performing the charade of baptism—her body clothed in white, her face painted with innocence. Passionate love—*Bon Dieu* what people wouldn't do for it! Gerard was tiring of the Mormons. He thought of Frère Beckwith with irritation. The missionary was simply a callow, naive young man with no ability to distinguish a sincere conversion from a pretension. Gerard was of half a mind to break off with the missionaries instantly rather than to wait as he had planned until the departure of Frère Beckwith.

Two weeks later, on a Monday morning, Mme. Jardins came by Gerard's office on the top floor of the Grand Bazaar. Having never accustomed herself to the telephone, she had come in person to consult him. She glared belligerently at Gerard's fellow buyer, whose contempt for the wispy-haired, soiled old woman was obvious. Gerard led her into the corridor, where he convinced her of the impossibility of his talking with her during his working hours. She left with his promise to meet her in the late afternoon. At 5:15 Gerard joined Mme. Jardins on a bench in Place St. Lambert. The square roared and clanked and rushed with arriving and departing trams and crowds of people making their way toward home. Near Gerard and the old woman, a multitude of pigeons bobbed, pecked, and pushed around the feet of a man who scattered grain to them; a pigeon balanced itself with fluttering wings upon the man's beret.

With decided firmness Mme. Jardins said, "I have come to ask that you control your sister."

"Control my sister? What on earth has she done?"

"The missionary is on the edge of disaster. If your sister were not present, it would all end well."

"Those wagging tongues, I suppose," Gerard said with a sigh. "The mission president will send him to another city for his last weeks."

"It is not as simple as that. Things have happened between them."

"*Mon Dieu*, of course!" Gerard exclaimed. "What else would you expect? Things have happened between them!" He shook his head.

"It is not so bad as it might be, But to prevent things getting worse—that is why I am here. It would be simple: you speak to your sister; she takes a vacation; or perhaps she makes herself scarce in the city."

"You do not understand things anymore," Gerard said. "One does not control his sister these days."

The old woman, reeking of onions, leaned toward Gerard and wagged a finger in his face. "There are things you also do not understand. I will say nothing about your sister; as for the young man, it will not only ruin his mission it will ruin his life. You do not know how the Mormons are. They count adultery next to murder."

Gerard laughed. "Really, the missionaries are always together. Are you telling me that the three of them are having a love affair?"

"Your sister is a contriver," Mme. Jardins protested. "I will tell you how I know. I thought I would give Frère Beckwith a tiny warning from a friend. I stopped him on the streetside before the chapel, and I told him how visible this attachment between the two of them had become. I did not expect more than that. Suddenly he wept; he made a confession; he spoke of private moments between them that would astound you—on the stairwell between the basement and the chapel, behind the stage curtains while practice for the branch drama was in progress, in the kitchen of her apartment while the unsuspecting Frère Haglund snored in the living room, thinking that his companion and your sister were busy washing dishes."

"He would tell you this?" Gerard said incredulously.

"There is a loyalty between us of which God approves even if others might not," she said. "He knows that I do not judge him, that I would not abandon him even if he fell. But if you know him, you know that he must go home honorable. That is the kind he is."

Gerard was filled with loathing for the intimate discourse of the unkempt, mildewed woman. Again he wished to believe that her gossip-honed mind had created the situation she pretended to see. Gerard set himself to doubt, he willed disbelief—and could not achieve it. The only surprise he felt was that Marie had not contrived sooner and more completely, that she had not long ago brought the vulnerable missionary to the thing she desired.

"Will you influence your sister?" the old woman asked. "If something is not done, Frère Beckwith's life is ruined; he will be excommunicated; he will live as a pariah. You do not understand how much chastity means with these Mormons."

"I prefer to have nothing to do with this matter," Gerard said.

Gerard was angry with the old woman for bearing this news to him. He was angry with Marie for being always in heat, always itchy between the legs. Most of all, he was affronted by Frère Beckwith's defection. There was no such thing as a saint. Wasn't it true that the very word *saint* had a terrifying sound? To claim such a word, to bind it seriously to one's identity was like playing ignorantly with a dangerous object. Gerard was filled with disgust for himself. His own behavior regarding these Mormons was scarcely less shameful than Marie's. The Mormons had no gift for Gerard. He must shake himself savagely awake; he must eradicate entirely his puerile intrigue with Frère Beckwith; he must deny once and for all his longing for an impossible innocence.

"Please influence your sister," Mme. Jardins repeated.

"It will be irrelevant to you, though not to me," Gerard said, "that my father was killed during the second week of the war. This post here brings it to mind." He waved toward one of the green, corrugated lamp posts which circled Place St. Lambert. "I experience sometimes the fancy that the Germans tied my father to the post we saw at the citadel and shot him, but that isn't how he died. He was second in command at Fort de Troncière heights between Namur and Charleroi. The defense of the fort was neither intelligent nor heroic. The blitzkrieg bypassed the fort; a week later a mop-up force arrived and burned out the defenders with flamethrowers."

"Everyone suffered in the war," Mme. Jardins said.

"Yes, and I have no right to complain more than any other," Gerard said. "Why should I blame the Germans? Why should I blame them even for the brutal retaliations against the innocent citizens of Liège? They practiced a standard counterinsurgency, in which they were nothing more than the agents of reality. As Sartre and Camus correctly point out, life is absolutely senseless, absolutely nauseous."

"I know nothing about Sartre and Camus," the old woman murmured.

"Why shall I be concerned if this missionary compromises himself?" Gerard went on. "It is apparent that he is spineless, to say nothing of the fact that my sister would do something drastic if I spoke to her."

Mme. Jardins sighed, sat back on the bench, and gazed abroad upon the scurrying square and the encircling streets filled with surging autos and motorcycles. "Then I must do it myself," she said. "It would be better coming from you, but I will do what has to be done."

"*Zut alors!* What do you intend to do? If you think you can persuade Frère Beckwith to change his ways, good luck to you. But I warn you not to approach my sister. She is volatile; she is worse than gasoline or dynamite!"

"I am not afraid of your sister," Mme. Jardins said. She grasped the material of Gerard's coat sleeve and tugged his arm toward her. "I will also tell a story about the war. As I once told you, I was in the Resistance. My stable loft was one of the posts for the downed aviators on their way toward the Channel. I once stood at the gate of my farmyard near Flemalle-Haut, knowing that six British flyers were in my loft, and I stared into the eyes of a German patrol leader, who stood on the road with his men. I gave him a fierce look which silently said, Come in if you dare. Luckily for him and his men, he chose to go on."

Looking into the old woman's resolute, passionate eyes, Gerard did not doubt her story. Who could explain why a poor country woman should have the nerve for such heroic action? "I am impressed by those who resisted," Gerard said. "I honor and respect you. But, honestly, I do not think you can succeed with my sister."

"I will try. A person must not become weary of good causes. I know what it is not to have a good cause; one can die simply from despair. The missionary is worth saving. I have an interest in his innocence. It belongs to the public, like

the treasures of the cathedral museum, which for a few sous you and I may go see."

Gerard found himself agreeing with the old woman. The missionary ought to be retrieved, innocence being the rare thing of a world overripe with corruption. As Mme Jardins had said, it should be Gerard who approached Marie. He had a vague notion that if he spoke to her with an immense tact she might see the point of view he and Mme. Jardins had taken. He said goodbye to the old woman, warning her not to expect too much. On the next afternoon, not knowing what he should say, he took a tram to the Guillemins station, then walked along Rue Varin before turning into Rue Lesoinne, where Marie had her apartment. Along Rue Varin were a movie house offering pornographic films and a dozen or more houses of prostitution. Even at this early hour, a few women were on display behind plate glass windows; they sat in padded chairs, their hair impeccably coifed, their evening dresses well-fitted and suggestive. It was a remarkable transition to turn into Rue Lesoinne, where recently renovated apartment buildings spoke of prosperity and social elevation. Their brick was new, their woodwork freshly painted, their façades perforated here and there by broad garage doors behind which automobiles were likely to be parked.

Having offered Gerard an overstuffed chair, Marie went for a moment into her tiny kitchen and turned down a burner on the stove; on the counter were a piece of cheese and a cauliflower. When Marie had joined Gerard in the living room, she asked him whether he would take supper with her. Gerard did not believe her to be sincere; in any event, as he told her, Katrine expected him. He could not keep his legs still; he crossed them first in one way, then in another. He admired the decoration of the apartment. It was painted in the merest tint of peach pastel; satiny curtains hung at the windows; an excellent rug covered much of the waxed parquet floor. Gerard particularly admired one of the lamp shades, an import from Denmark whose quality he had the ability to judge because of his work at the Grand Bazaar. Marie shrugged off his compliments; it was an apartment like any other and not so badly priced.

"Well," Marie said, "you have come to see me, which is very nice, but there must be a reason."

Gerard came to his point, though not in a heroic way. "I think the missionary—Frère Beckwith, I mean—has only four weeks. Then he will go home to Utah."

Marie put out her hands with palms up and fingers spread, as if she wished to hear no more. "Yes, of course; sooner or later all of them go home."

"Perhaps we should let him go without complicating his life," Gerard went on. "He impresses me as a fragile person. Really, it would be easy to crush him."

"By all means, let him go. I am not aware of anything holding him here," Marie said impatiently.

"He is naive. He does not know how to take care of himself."

"I find this discussion absolutely strange!" Marie cried. "You have come to preach to me about something. Well, for God's sake, tell me what it is."

"I have come to make an appeal."

"An appeal is always in order; I have never been known to refuse an appeal," Marie said mockingly.

"These Mormon missionaries are like our priests," Gerard said. "They marry later on, but for the time that they are missionaries, they are persons apart, they are celibates."

"I don't need lectures on facts which I gathered for myself a long time ago," Marie said, rising and going to the kitchen. "Excuse me; I will get on with my supper." She picked up the knife and sliced the cauliflower into a pan.

Gerard stood in the doorway to the kitchen. "My point is that we can scarcely comprehend how difficult it would be for one of them if he should sin. It would destroy him."

Marie turned on Gerard and spoke with an exaggerated calmness. "You have two choices: you can leave my apartment now, which is what I would prefer, or you can speak out clearly what it is you think I have done."

Gerard sighed; his task might have been easier if he had known more precisely what he wanted to say. "Do you think to marry with Frère Beckwith?"

Marie opened her mouth several times but finally, puckering her lips into a scornful pout, refused to speak.

"Do you think to go to America with him, because that is what it means, isn't it?" Gerard said.

"Why should I go to America?" Marie said defiantly. "What if he were to stay in Belgium?"

"It would be like holding a rabbit under water; he would die here," Gerard said.

Marie stared intently upon the last bit of cauliflower in her hands. Tears gathered in her eyes, but she spoke indignantly. "How is it that you have your pleasure with women but come relentlessly to me with suggestions of chastity?"

Gerard felt irresistible tears forming in his own eyes. "You are in love with him," he said. "You must do something paradoxical: you must let him go. Make pretexts; give reasons for missing church services; fail to be at home when the missionaries call. It is only for four weeks."

Her tears flooded. She seemed to have sagged, to have diminished in stature. Gerard held out his arms and took her in. She spoke in Walloon. "Since Papa was killed, since Mama died, I am always lonely; I have no one."

Gerard stroked her shoulders and pressed his cheek against hers. He said, also in Walloon, "We must see each other often; we must not abandon one another."

Gerard was filled with strange, cutting emotions. He had been braced for tirades, explosions, torrents; he had no strength for Marie's tears. They posed a compelling, irrefutable argument. If one or the other in this abominable love

affair was doomed to suffer, why should it be Marie? What interest did Gerard have in the innocence of the missionary—or in the innocence of anyone, for that matter? He could not understand the passion the human animal had for penitence, self-denial, renunciation. Was the human conscience any less a genetic accident than the trunk of the elephant or the plumage of a male peacock? The missionary would have to look out for himself. If he fell and suffered, it would be no more than happened to anyone else.

Gerard left Marie apologetically and without any attempt to extract promises from her. He believed himself resolved to withdraw from the affair and let things unravel as they must. Yet before he had entered his own apartment, he was afflicted again with feelings that the missionary should be saved. He spent the evening in a confused paralysis. He did the usual things with an air of calmness while his mind looped and rotated like a wheel broken free from a speeding railway car. He ate his supper, chatted with Katrine, read the newspaper for an hour, lay on his bed, and tried to sleep. Tentative solutions coalesced and evaporated in his mind. By custom, the missionaries would come for supper on the following evening. If Gerard wished time with Frère Beckwith, he could arrange it as easily as Marie had apparently done.

Katrine had come into the bedroom. She sat on the side of the bed and undressed. She dangled her bra in Gerard's face and asked whether he was awake. She stood on the rug at the foot of the bed and did the steps of a little dance while she put on her nightgown. She turned out the light and got into bed. She snuggled close to Gerard, rubbed her hand along his chest, and nibbled at his shoulder.

"I have no spirit tonight," Gerard remonstrated.

"No spirit! Let me give you spirit," she crooned, running her hand along his thigh.

Marie was absolutely correct in accusing him of hypocrisy, Gerard was thinking; he was always wanting her to make sacrifices which he was not prepared to make.

"I have given it up," Gerard mumbled.

"But we always make love on Tuesday," Katrine protested.

"It is time we were getting married," Gerard said. "Really, this has been an indecent thing we have been up to all this time."

Katrine took up an accusing voice. "You have been with someone else. That is why you were late tonight."

"*Mon Dieu*, no!" Gerard said. "I am thirty. I think it is time for children. And a little respectability."

Katrine withdrew to her side of the bed. It seemed to Gerard that she turned and sighed and threw off the covers and pulled them up again for a long time before she went to sleep. The next morning, having apparently forgotten the incident of the previous night, Katrine agreed to Gerard's plan for the visit of the missionaries. After supper, Gerard and Frère Beckwith went onto the balcony overlooking Quai Marcellis and the river. Through the open door

Gerard heard the faint murmur of voices from the kitchen where Katrine and Frère Haglund washed dishes. The ballooning canopies of the trees on the quay caught the yellow light of the late sun. The image of puffed clouds refracted across the wake of a deep laden boat making its laborious way up the river. The captain of the shovel-prowed boat, standing at the spokes of its steering wheel, puffed calmly on a pipe; his wife took in clothes from a line stretched between the cabin and a mast; a little dog darted back and forth across the deck, barking at the city first from one side of the boat and then from the other. The missionary leaned over the balcony. He spoke of leaving Liège. He said it would be hard to go, though he had awakened in the night during these recent weeks thinking of the deserts and mountains of Utah. Gerard caught himself shrinking from his purpose; he would have to move with a predatory abruptness.

"You are in love with my sister," he said.

The missionary scrutinized Gerard's face as if he doubted what he had heard. Blood rose slowly along his neck and colored his jaws and ears. "She has the Spirit, and I am not worthy of her," he said at last. "I have shamed myself because a missionary should not fall in love though I do not know how to keep from it. She is beautiful."

"But I think you are in trouble."

Frère Beckwith did not understand.

"I mean that things have happened between you," Gerard insisted.

The missionary was silent for so long that Gerard thought that his words had been lost in the high, melodious call of a rag merchant who pushed his two-wheeled cart far down the quay: "Rags bought here and old iron too; brass, glass, nails, pails, anything at all; rags bought here and old iron too."

When the call had died away, the missionary said, "I am glad she was brave enough to tell you. Don't be angry with her. I take full responsibility. I am horribly ashamed. I did not intend to take liberties. I never dreamed about any such thing; I am astonished at my carnality; I did not know I could feel so strongly."

"Please, I am not a judge; I would rather not know about it," Gerard protested.

The missionary gestured impatiently. "Telling you is a relief. I didn't mean to deceive anyone. I should have confessed to the mission president, but I couldn't bear to do it. However, it is a matter of the past now. I do not think the Spirit has deserted me."

"The problem remains," Gerard said.

The missionary looked shamefully downward. "Yes, because I have compromised my mission. Now you will never believe."

"You are relentless; you think always of conversions," Gerard said. "I am not thinking about me. I am thinking about what will become of you."

"I will make it good to her; I will marry her," the missionary said, his voice sinking more deeply into apology. "When I get home, I will write to Marie. I

can't speak to her about it now; that would be breaking the rules again. Maybe she will come to Utah; my uncle would sponsor her immigration—that is, if she wants to come and if you don't object."

"In the meantime," Gerard said, "you are still in jeopardy. What if things continue to happen?"

"I am resolved. It will not happen again. Your sister is safe."

"It is not my sister I am thinking of," Gerard said. "What if my sister herself should contrive to give the two of you an hour, or even a half hour of unquestioned privacy? What if she let you know unmistakably that you could do with her as you wished? What if, in fact, she approached you so closely, so intimately, that the man in you had no choice?"

For an instant the missionary's face carried signs of collapse; he seemed to weave uncertainly, like a boxer whose senses have been shaken. Then his determination returned, and he spoke with a rapid belligerence, as if he meant to stave off the full recognition of what he had heard. "No, that is not the kind of person she is, no, not at all!"

A great pity welled up in Gerard. "I am trying to tell you that you are in danger."

"You are wrong," the missionary fervently insisted.

Gerard went recklessly forward. "She is not twenty-two; she is twenty-eight. There is more to be told."

The two men stared fixedly at each other through a long, entropic silence. The missionary appeared to be on the verge of surrender; helplessness, defeat, pleading emerged upon his face. Then again, in time, resistance and defiance. "That isn't true. I know her better than that!"

Anger kindled in Gerard. Strangely, it was detached from the missionary. The image of the old white-haired woman was in his mind. Gerard cursed her for having set him upon this haggling, hopeless business. He should have known by common sense that there could be no intervention in an affair such as this. He shrugged his shoulders and, in a voice whose coolness surprised him, murmured, "I apologize for what I have said. There is nothing of importance in it. Let us go inside and see whether the dishes are done."

They sat at the table with Katrine and Frère Haglund. Gerard tried not to watch the face of the suffering missionary as he delivered the scheduled lesson. The others saw nothing unusual. Katrine yawned; Frère Haglund perused a notebook. Frère Beckwith stuttered, made false starts, paused, searched for words, broke off sentences. Within twenty minutes he had concluded and with his companion went out the door. Gerard followed them into the hall, watching their figures disappear into the stairwell. Nothing had been said of another meeting.

Turning back after closing the door, Gerard bumped into Katrine, who had followed him closely. She smiled, searched his eyes, put her arms around his neck. "Sweetheart, I am so sorry about last night," she said affectionately. "I didn't listen to what you were really saying, did I? Please forgive me for pouting. If you want this little whimsey, if you think we should be chaste until

we are married, well, I am willing." She kissed him again and smiled happily into his eyes. "It would be nice to be married. And little ones would be nice, too, wouldn't they?"

Gerard resented Katrine's clinging to his neck. He had an impulse to scold her or at the very least to denounce his proposal of the previous evening as a mad irrelevancy. Before he could speak, the doorbell rang. Frère Beckwith stood alone in the hall. He beckoned Gerard out and motioned for him to close the door. Terrible recognition was in the eyes of the missionary.

"What do you have against me?" he said. "Are you afraid of losing your sister?"

"I am truly sorry I said anything about it," Gerard said.

"I will not believe it," the missionary said. "She would not lie to me."

"It is all right, whatever you do. My sister knows how to take care of herself, and you will have to learn how to take care of yourself too. I am not angry with you. If you want her, she is waiting for you."

The missionary tried to speak, found his words stifled, buried his face in his hands.

"You did not come back to tell me I am wrong," Gerard said.

"She doesn't believe," the missionary said.

"No, she doesn't believe."

The missionary wept with retching breath and heaving shoulders. Standing silently by, enduring the long minutes as best he could, his own face streaming with tears, Gerard struggled to maintain perspective on this episode between Marie and the missionary. The incident was not tragic; it was wrong to grieve. Yet Gerard was shaken, even stunned.

"She is not a Jezebel or a Salome," Gerard said at last. "She has loved you, and she has honored you by the unusual exertions she has taken to be near you. I am sorry that for her love is an explosion. A few weeks, several months—you cannot guess how quickly she would have had enough of you."

They heard the opening of the street door three stories down the stairwell. The missionary looked about in a panic. "It will be my companion," he said. "I told him I would not be long."

"This is goodbye then," Gerard said, stretching his hand to the missionary. "I have admired you and I will always remember you."

The missionary took his hand and seemed ready to say more, but the sound of mounting steps pulled him away. The image of the retreating, vanquished face burned in Gerard's mind. His gift hung in the air, and Gerard lingered in the hall, unwilling to relinquish this moment of seizing it. *This little whimsey*, Katrine had called Gerard's refusal to make love to her—a parody upon true renunciation; yet Gerard was determined to marry Katrine, to give children to the world, to forgive God for not existing.

AMONG THE MORMONS

A Survey of Current Literature

1981 is destined to be remembered as a year of indelible significance in Mormonism. Within a two-month period early in the year, stories about the Church twice achieved front-page status. During March the discovery of a 137-year-old document threatened to renew the succession arguments between the LDS and the RLDS. Then in May, the LDS First Presidency's statement on the MX missile system produced a myriad of provocative editorial comments. Of the two events, the latter had greater impact. The president of the Organization of American Historians, William Appleman Williams (in a 5 September 1981 *Nation* cover story), characterized the Mormon statement on MX and the arms race as a truly radical action. For Williams the Church had displayed "a very shrewd understanding of the kind of national power that can grow out of organizing a relatively small number of people in a specific region." He concluded that "they comprehend the politics of demography and ecology at least as well as any other group in contemporary America." Of course, other writers had widely differing opinions.

Early in 1982, a more personal struggle erupted within the Church that Kenneth L. Woodward aptly characterized in *Newsweek* as "Apostles vs. Historians." This controversy revolved around the "methods and motives of LDS scholars who attempt 'objective' histories of the church," and "place what are supposed to be divinely inspired church doctrines in a relevant social and historical context." Woodward believed the conflict was a "long way from being settled, but the scholars may have the advantage. If . . . faith in Mormonism means faith in the Church's history, they would seem to have the edge over their adversaries."

In reflecting on this latest "newsworthy" event, one recalls that when Alvin R. Dyer announced "the Church's exciting new reorganization of its historical department under the direction of the general authorities in 1972," he foresaw a "truer picture of the past" emerging, an "unexpurgated inspirational history" in which the "intimate images of the early Church" would prove useful aids "to our appreciation of the present." By making the Church's archives and history more accessible, he announced, the "historian can view the development of a man's thought or of an organization's growth and understand how ideas are formed, developed, and brought into action." (*Ensign*, Aug. 1972, pp. 59, 61)

Some believe that recent events have shown this to be an unrealistic aspiration. Even so, several Mormon historians during the past decade have distinguished themselves through their responsiveness both to the concerns of the Church hierarchy and the standards of fellow scholars. One can only hope that this tradition of responsible access to Church archives will be allowed to continue. If not, most of the scholarly work acknowledged in these pages may cease.

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REVIEWS

Nothing New Under the Sun

Mormons & Women, by Ann Terry, Marilyn Slaght-Griffin and Elizabeth Terry, Santa Barbara, California: Butterfly Publishing Inc., 1980, 150 pp. \$1.95.

Reviewed by SUSAN TAYLOR HANSEN, *an attorney practicing in Rochester, Minnesota.*

I admit an acquired skepticism about books with pretentious titles, so my eyes narrowed at the sight of a slim volume with the weighty title *Mormons & Women*. I became even more suspicious when I read the authors' stated purpose . . . "to trace the women's movement from its beginnings to the current issues surrounding the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, with an indepth discussion of the modern Latter-day Saint woman . . . to detail the position of the Mormon leaders regarding the Equal Rights Amendment fairly, as well as shed light on their misrepresented lobbying activities. The true works of the Lord and his people will never be cloaked in secrecy. Let the truth be known." And all that in 150 pages . . . whew!

Unfortunately, ambition exceeded ability in *Mormons & Women*, and the book falls far short of the promise of its tantalizing title.

The three authors, a mother and daughter team and a nonmember (the

one with the hyphenated name) seem to have divided up the writing of the book—thus the resulting unevenness in quality and tone and hodge-podge construction.

The first twenty-five pages of the book are a discussion of doctrinal and social roles for women in Mormon life, touching on problems with stereotyping the "down-trodden" Mormon mother, briefly discussing the difficulties of mothers of small children, discrimination at BYU and elsewhere, quoting, at one point, BYU professor Dr. Brent Barlow, that "Mormons are beginning to divest themselves of 'Archie Bunker type notions' about the role of women which are not justified by LDS doctrine about the patriarchal role of the family."

The authors of this section (presumably the Terrys) make clear their understanding of church directives as requiring mothers to stay home as primary caretaker, leaving to work only out of economic necessity and then, citing Alison Craig's *Ensign* article, preferring working from one's home. The Terrys describe man as "by nature more aggressive and bold . . . best suited to confront the world . . . His physical part in nurturing offspring is small when compared to the female."

A well-written though brief section

on the history of American feminism follows. The Terrys discuss the dangers of the ERA and reasons for church opposition to it. After reciting a statement by the First Presidency carried in the *Ensign*, the authors fall back on what must sound best to them: the words of Senators Orrin Hatch and Sam Ervin, and Phyllis Schlafly (through her organization, STOP ERA and its publication, *Eagle Forum Newsletter*).

This is the greatest disappointment of the book, for the authors defend and explain the Church's stand on ERA with Phyllis Schlafly's political argument. Where does that leave the member who finds these arguments unacceptable? On the outside, according to chapter 10 of the book, entitled "Can a Good Mormon be a Pro-ERA?" While the authors acknowledge church spokesman Don LeFevre's official statement that "support for ERA is not ground for court action," they nevertheless conclude that supporters are not good Mormons. The Terrys use, as an example, Susan Howard, who, during the height of the Sonia crisis, wrote a letter in defense of the Church to the *LA Times*, which read, in part:

The answer to the question, posed by columnist Ellen Goodman, "Can a Mormon be a Feminist?" is a definite yes . . . Speaking for myself as a fifth-generation Mormon and a feminist supporter of the ERA, I believe that the Church and the women's movement have much to learn from each other."

To Howard, the Terrys say:

It is difficult to reconcile the fact that her views, as an ERA proponent, are in direct conflict with those of President Kimball.

The Terrys describe Howard with words used by a Catholic priest in explaining his ability to live with a church which he does not entirely believe, saying that she evidently feels she is "loyal to the church, enjoys being a part of it, without necessarily taking seriously everything the Church leadership says."

The authors describe free agency as a process whereby each faithful member has had to search and study, fast and pray until he or she could say that the beliefs and doctrines of the Church are true and that it is led by a prophet, whose direction the members follow. Once having received that witness, having gained that faith, one does not need to struggle daily with each social issue that erupts.

The book offers no alternative for those who, try as they might, have been unable to gain a testimony of Phyllis Schlafly; and certainly it contains no new insights or information for the many members who are trying to come to terms with the issue.

