DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

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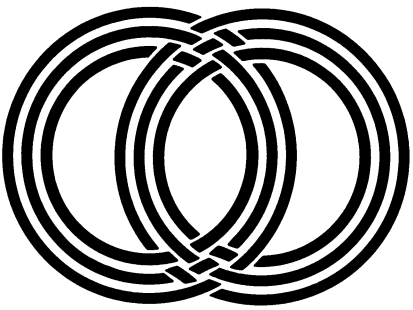

DIALOGUE

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

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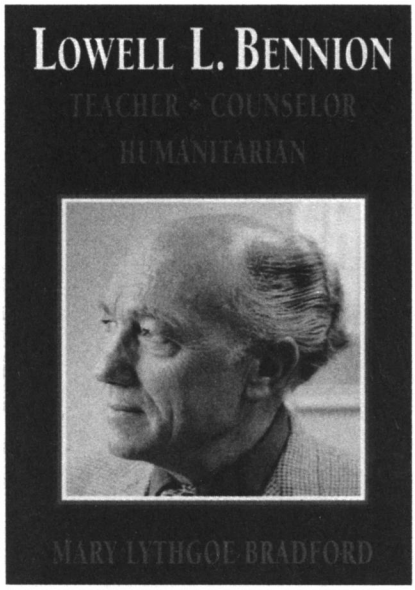

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Leave the Soft Porn Out

After reading "Wide Angle," by Sean Ziebarth, and "Cordoba," by Sam Cannon in the spring student 1997 issue, I went back to the front of the journal to check the statement of purpose. Supposedly *Dialogue* was "established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life."

I see no correlation between these stories and the statement of purpose.

I came up with the following possible explanations:

1. The editors ran out of articles that met the stated purpose.

2. The editors needed more pages to keep the usual thickness of an issue.

3. The editors have decided to increase readership by including articles that would be found in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan.*

4. Mormon culture has changed, and these articles reflect the world of the majority of Mormons.

I have a suggestion for future issues. Leave the soft porn out. I would rather have a thinner issue that is consistent with the original purpose of *Dialogue.*

Howard T. Nelson
Florissant, Missouri

Rustin Kaufman Goes on the 1997 S.U.P. Pioneer Trek

> Conversation during the Utah War: Army wagon master: "For God's sake, don't burn the train." Lot Smith: "It's for his sake we are."

While the much publicized 1997 "Wagon Train" participants traveled in real covered wagons from Nauvoo, Illinois, our S.U.P. group came west in air-conditioned busses—ugly black and yellow busses. A truck in Echo Canyon honked at us several times; but otherwise we were unrecognized as "trekkers."

Fifty years earlier it had been a different story for the Sons of Utah Pioneers (S.U.P.). We had fixed up our cars to look like covered wagons, with plywood oxen jutting forward from the front fenders. We had slept in sleeping bags, within the encircled "wagons." Lionel and I (for we were the "two boys") had blown our bugles to wake the camp, and had played "taps" to put it to sleep. People had stood along the route for hours, waiting to see us.

But now we were nobodies. Instead of having the exact number, representing the "advanced party," which we had in 1947 (143 men, three women, and two boys), we now had about 172 traveling with us—mostly older folks with their spouses. Back in 1947 I had killed a rattlesnake in Wyoming with the pioneer sword that was part of my costume. And I scared an unsuspecting Dorothy Kimball Keddington (Dyer) with it. Now, in 1997, the most exciting thing that happened was getting from Lander to Rock Creek, where we were to meet Elder Russell Ballard for an outdoor sacrament meeting. He was there, but where were *we?*

From my journal:

> We journeyed southwest over a high pass to a dirt road which took us to South Pass City [sic for "City"]. We pushed along to South Pass, and to a paved road which led us to the dirt road which took us back to South Pass

> City, where we turned around and took another dirt road to Atlantic City, where we turned around again and returned to South Pass City, where S.U.P. treasurer Richard Steed offered up a prayer for guidance. But none of us was worried, for Brother Berrett had assured us all that we were merely lost.

As it turned out, shortly after Treasurer Steed prayed, a Bishop Anderson found us and led us to Elder Ballard at Rock Creek. The apostle had gone ahead without us, then was obliged to start the meeting all over again and have the bread and the water blessed a second time.

"How did you hear about this tour?" I was asked by participant Robert Fotheringham, who does P.R. work for the church. I explained that in 1996 I had addressed the 1947 trekkers. Dorothy Kimball Keddington Dyer (who reminded me about the rattlesnake and her fright) had told me there were plans for a 150-year "trek" and that I should contact President Hinckley if I wished to be on it. So I did.

I was clearly the maverick of the 1997 trek. For one thing I almost always wore shorts, which was contrary to the advisory, which I hadn't bothered to read. I reverted to being Rustin Kaufman—that hiss-and-byword guy who had plagued *Dialogue* for twenty years, with his misplaced humor. And I had *failed* with *Dialogue,* for I had never written the books I had promised to write:

> On Mormon history—*The Uncovered Wagon*
>
> On Mormon doctrine—*Questions to Gospel Answers*
>
> On the Mormon system of birth control—*No Man Knows About My Hysterectomy*
>
> On the status of blacks—*A Marvelous Shirk and a Blunder*

Many trekkers were excited when our 1997 group came to Scottsbluff, Nebraska, because they heard that part-Lamanite Nedra Rony was to address us and bring along her Lamanite Dancers from the BYU. They announced that she had flown in the dancers in her jet, but they didn't say whether it was her big jet or her smaller one. I half expected to see white Indians, transformed to that hue by her Nu Skin products, fulfilling a pre-1981 promise in the Book of Mormon. But no ... They were all about the color of the illegal immigrants who have been pouring up from Michuacan to Redwood City, California, where I teach history in a small college.

Back in 1947 there had been 8,000 people living in Grand Island, Nebraska, and there were 40,000 people on the streets to see us come through in our pioneer clothes and made-over cars—and to see our play we were to put on, about Mormon doings in that town. Our great actor, Francis Urry, would take the stage (he was as much at ease giving radio addresses for an absent Salt Lake City mayor Glade as in portraying the prophet Joseph). But now in 1997 there were no crowds to meet us. The "Wagon Train" had preceded us, and had stolen all the thunder.

Yet we *were* met, at each stop, by the local stake people, who not only fed us in the stake houses, but put on entertainment for us as well. And after a while we figured out who we were: We were a professional traveling Mormon AUDIENCE, no doubt contributing to the intra-stake cohesion. Young people practiced and

practiced in anticipation of our coming. At Grand Island we heard a lovely young BYU co-ed sing sweetly, in a voice nearly trained. She was the *best*. But not the most impressive.

Most impressive were the young people at Lander, Wyoming, perhaps eighty strong, who sang song after song (most of them hymns), using at least eight different accompanying pianists from among their own number. Three girls played flutes. Bill Child (who had sold out his eight R.C. Willey furniture stores to the country's third richest man) saw it the same way I did: "Look what fine young people they're raising around here," he said. And it was so true. None of them was talented, but all of them were such great kids! Elder Ballard, and later President Hinckley, remarked on the great leadership of Riverton Stake president Lorimer, in getting the genealogy done for the perished souls of the Martin and Willie handcart companies. But that wasn't the greatness of Lorimer; the greatness was his raising up those enthusiastic clean-cut kids in the wilds of Wyoming.

We had two leaders, one of our movements, and the other of our minds. The first was Elliot Cameron, former president of the S.U.P. and ex-Dean of Students of the BYU. He had worked tirelessly for two years, putting in place the logistics of our journey, traveling back and forth from Nauvoo to do it. Our mind man was retired professor of church history Lamar Berrett—a man who knew were all the bodies were buried. I think he could probably track down the Three Nephites if he set his mind to it. He talked over a microphone on Red bus, which came on, for five-minute intervals, on busses Black, Green, and Yellow as well. Sometimes, though, he got carried away talking about his books, as was the case when we dropped over the rim of the Great Basin, in Wyoming—the highest point on the trail—higher than South Pass, higher than Big Mountain. Sure, he had told us this before we got there; but when we were there—there on the rim—he was talking about his book on Israel, and about his upcoming trilogy on the Mormon trail. The Israel book, he said, cost only $12.50. At dinner I suggested to him that he let Nedra market it for $112.50, using a pyramid scheme.

Back at Council Bluffs, Iowa, I had blown my cool when I had intervened after the telling of the Mormon Battalion story. The received story: Captain Allen came riding in demanding that the Mormons contribute boys for the Mexican War. And so they did—500 of them—boys needed badly to push the wagons West, now lost to the train. But it was a test of Mormon patriotism, and the Mormons rose to the challenge, proving their chauvinism. So of course I couldn't stand by and let them get away with it; and I told everybody that Jesse C. Little had gone to Washington to see if the government couldn't help the impoverished Saints find some money. The government agreed to take 500 Mormon boys into the army so their pay and rations could be used by Brigham Young to move the Saints westward. A few people confided in me that they were glad I spoke up. But I had told them only half the truth: We weren't trying to be patriotic. We were going West to try to carve our own *country* out of territory belonging to Mexico. Don't any of these people read Klaus Hansen?

The other anomaly Brother Ber-

rett told us was that on Windless Hill, windlesses had NOT been used to let down the wagons. Instead, he said, it was named that because somebody thought you ought to have a windless with you so that when you dug a well, you could wind up the water. At the next stop I showed him a maker that said different.

But there were errors all along the way, usually not the fault of our narrators. For example, at the Caspar Museum, at Casper (sic), Wyoming, there was a sign that said that the "advanced party" of Mormons numbered 143 men, *two* women, and *three* children. I complained to the director, who promised to change the numbers. That was more than I had gotten from the editor of the *Daily Illini* when I taught at Champaign, Illinois. His paper had said that with the coming of *The Marriage of Figaro*, soon the walls of Kranert Auditorium would be ringing with "Figaro, Figaro, Figaro." When I called to tell him that that aria was from *The Barber of Seville*, he refused to print a correction, saying (to me), "Nobody around here would ever know."

While Apostle Spencer W. Kimball had been with us on the 1947 trek, we had along with us, on our last excursion, Richard Eyring Turley, a new member of the Second Quorum of Seventy (whatever that is). He was on the Yellow bus with me, as was his son by the same name, keeper of the historical archives of the church. I came to realize both of these were good men and true. They even had senses of humor. For example, Turley Jr. facetiously pretended to be interested in working with me on a *Handbook for General Authorities*. Rick has a degree in English, so he was sympathetic to my insistence upon pointing out social urbanisms (e.g., "Are you going to town with Bill and I?") and singular/plural mixings (e.g., "Each man should do their best").

Lamar would do his best to inculcate an appreciation of the gospel, the general authorities, the principle of authority. Example: He said that in Israel the late counselor in the First Presidency, Nathan Eldon Tanner, said, "If you follow your bishop, and he turns out to be wrong, you are still right."

Right!

Two elderly people from Manti got sick before the trek began; so they sent their grandsons (twenty-three and fifteen) in their places. Delightful young men. I walked up to them while they were playing basketball, outside one of our motels, and asked them if they would like to play against a couple of sixty-five-year-olds. They laughed. So Richard Horsley and I took them on, and WON, for Dick used to be the center on our East High School (Salt Lake City) basketball team. All I had to do was to feed the ball to Dick.

But there were other youngins as well. Bill Child brought his children (twenty-three and nineteen). There were two valley girls from Los Angeles. And there was a fourteen-year-old boy from Boise, traveling with his grandmother. All these kids sat together on our Yellow bus most of the time.

Up the dirt road from Henefer we went, moving toward Big Mountain. I had *walked* that trail in the dead of winter, as an Explorer Scout, using fur climbers on my skiis. I had slept on top, when it was four degrees below zero. Our scoutmasters (including my dad) had stayed up through the night heating bricks to put in our sleeping bags, to keep us from freezing to

death. So when our trek leaders told us of the hardships of the Donner-Reed Party, and of the Advanced Party, I just laughed.

After crossing from Parley's Canyon to Emigration Canyon, our bus people looked left toward the valley, while I looked right to where Pinecrest Inn had been, where I used to meet the church's girls to take them on hikes up there. We had a cabin near that hotel, where I had spent every summer of my childhood. And I knew those mountains well.

We stopped near a beer hall to view Brigham Young's last encampment spot. But I was looking at the beer hall, where I had once won money on a slot machine. Later I made the mistake of telling my father about my success, and he, being a Third District Court judge, called the sheriff and had it removed.

The "Wagon Train" had preceded us, meeting enthusiastic crowds at This Is The Place Monument. We came through later, when everyone was gone. We didn't even stop there, which made me sad because I wanted to show a few people my name on the small monument, next to the big one, commemorating the 1947 trekkers. Once I had stood there listening to a guide tell visitors that all that crowd was dead, he guessed. So I whipped out my wallet and showed them my driver's license, and then my same name on the monument. They laughed at the coincidence. (I still have a full head of brown hair.)

I think I've been a bit hard on Brother Berrett. Actually I liked him more and more as we went along. He was funny, and very knowledgeable! He was the best guide our group could have found. That's for sure. I liked his wife too. They grew up living only a few blocks away from each other, out in Riverton, Utah. Wonderful people.

And maybe I've been too disparaging of Nedra as well. After all, who can argue with tons of money? Maybe Nedra is in the vanguard of Saints moving West. "Westward drifts the course of empire," said Lord Berkeley. And our church moves WEST! First it was New York, then Ohio, then Illinois, then Utah. Next stop—Lhassa, Tibet—right in the middle of those teeming billions in Asia, waiting for conversion. We could make use of our nineteenth-century polygamy and have our missionaries stay in the field forever and never come home, going from one woman to the next, like my ancestor George A. Smith, setting up southern Utah. And this would be fine with the women of Tibet, for their tradition is polyandry, where one woman has several husbands. She could greet one missionary after another.

Then on to Palestine, where we could arrive to make the area our headquarters, just before the great war. Lastly, we could move the main offices to Jackson County, Missouri, for the Millennium. And THIS will be how we shall return to Jackson County—from the EAST!

And for all this we can eventually thank Nu Skin; for they were the first to soften up Asia, with their 400,000 distributors there, in preparation for the church's moving its headquarters to Tibet. In the imperialistic nineteenth century, Christian missionaries went into Asia, followed by armies. In the twenty-first century, it will be Nu Skin, followed by the Latter-day Saints. Do you think?

Joseph H. Jeppson
Woodside, California

History

Philip White

Small things:
the smell of

blocks he cut
from pine light

as balsa; the ripe,
toothed grin

of corn
under husks he'd

stripped back;
handprints

in the mud
around flowers.

It's morning,
I'm very small,

trying to stay
in his shadow,

asking ...
Where did this

come from?
For no clear

reason,
he's alive

in his yellow
cloth hat

and reflective
sunglasses,

and I'm
weeping.

He loves me,
I know,

but he holds out
tools

I can't keep
level in my hand.

Jesus Christ in the New Testament: Part One: The Historical Jesus behind the Gospels

John P. Meier

I. Introduction

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews sums up his Christian faith with the memorable cry (13:8): "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever!" The "yesterday" and "today" of this cry express well both the strong point and the problem of Christian faith. For Christian faith is nothing if not a historical faith. It is inevitably anchored in the historical life and death of one particular Jew of the first century A.D., and yet the meaning of that life and that death has been reinterpreted countless times down through the centuries. The yesterday and the today of Christian faith must always stand in a certain tension or dialectic.

On the one hand, to change the object of Christian faith into a timeless archetype or a set of philosophical propositions for the sake of relevance is to lose what makes Christianity Christianity, namely, the concrete historical figure called Jesus Christ. The pagan historian Tacitus knew that much when he explained to his Roman audience the origin of the name "Christian" (*Annals* 15.44): "The originator of this name is Christ, who during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate." Although Tacitus was wrong on one of the details—Pilate was prefect, not procurator of Judea—he was right about the big thing: no Christianity without Christ. Lose that historical mooring and you lose who you are.

On the other hand, the history of Christianity shows that this historical mooring always needs to be brought anew into contact with each gen-

eration of believers if it is to remain relevant. The New Testament itself witnesses to the changing and varied images of Jesus proposed by different Christian leaders later on in the first century. The dialectic expressed by Hebrews 13:8 was there from the beginning. Indeed, even in the first century we can distinguish two types of "yesterdays": the yesterday of the historical Jesus during his public ministry, as far as historians can reconstruct it, and the yesterday of the earliest interpretations of this Jesus, as articulated in the various writings that later came to be collected in the New Testament. These two yesterdays of the first century define the two essays on Jesus Christ that I offer to readers of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. In this first essay, we will examine the ultimate historical mooring: the historical Jesus.[1] In the second we will move forward to the first interpretations of Jesus by different New Testament authors.

II. Definition of Terms

What do we mean by the "historical" Jesus? A common definition of the historical Jesus is the Jesus we can recover and know by means of modern historical research applied to the ancient sources.[2] This Jesus, therefore, is a modern abstraction and construct. Unfortunately, some authors blithely interchange the adjectives "historical," "real," and "earthly" for this Jesus, but that only creates confusion.[3] Jesus of Nazareth lived for some thirty-five or more years in first-century Palestine. Each of those years was no doubt filled with all sorts of experiences, words, and actions on his part. The real Jesus lived all those years and filled them with his reality. Yet of those thirty-five or so years all we can know are some two or three years, mostly toward the end of his life.

We must therefore face the fact that we are dealing with mere fragments of a life, fragments that we put together as best we can. Hence I use the label "historical" in a special sense—to remind us of the limited and hypothetical nature of this Jesus whom historians reconstruct. Such a fragmentary and "if-y" portrait could hardly claim to do justice to the whole reality that was Jesus of Nazareth. Nor can such a fragmentary reconstruction constitute the object of Christian faith today, for immediately we would have to ask: Whose historical Jesus is to serve as the

---

1. In doing this, I will be summarizing ever so briefly the results of the first two volumes of my trilogy: *A Marginal Jew. Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Volume One: The Roots of the Problem and the Person* and *Volume Two: Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1991, 1994). See also my essay "Dividing Lines in Jesus Research Today," *Interpretation* 50 (1996): 355-72.

2. See, for example, Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus. An Experiment in Christology* (New York: Crossroad/Seabury, 1979), 67-68.

3. This is a recurring problem in much of the literature emanating from the Jesus Seminar and its participants.

object of faith? Many of the great biblical scholars of the twentieth century have come up with diametrically opposed portraits of Jesus. By what right or on what grounds would believers chose one of the many competing reconstructions, only to drop it a few decades later for the new, improved model? Whose Jesus are they to choose: Albert Schweitzer's or Eduard Schweizer's? Rudolf Bultmann's or Günther Bornkamm's? John Meier's or John Dominic Crossan's?

To put the whole problem in a different way: many large universities contain both a department of history and a department of theology. Each department has its proper subject matter and its methods for dealing with its subject matter. Each has a right to examine Jesus of Nazareth according to its own methods. Now if the quest for the historical Jesus is to be truly historical, and not theology in disguise, then it must adhere to the methods and criteria of the history department and limit its judgments to what is verifiable according to the rules of empirical historical evidence. Consequently, whole areas of inquiry that are vital to and rightly treated by theology (for example, the divine and human natures of Jesus, the truly miraculous nature of some of his actions) are not the proper subject of empirical academic history. Academic history must stick to affirmations that can be tested and sifted by accepted historical criteria applied to historical sources. The basic problem with the quest for the historical Jesus in the last two centuries is that usually it has been a theological enterprise masquerading as a historical enterprise.

In other words, a believing Christian engaged in the quest for the historical Jesus must prescind for the time being from what he or she holds by faith. Of course, prescind does not mean deny; it does mean, however, that what is claimed to be known by faith cannot be called upon to adjudicate historical disputes. After the historical endeavor is over, there will be more than enough time to ask about correlations between historical findings and faith. But to attempt such correlations from the beginning would be to short-circuit the whole process. Hence, we shall remain militantly within the realm of academic historical inquiry, not theological reasoning. The first thing we must do, therefore, is examine the available sources and the criteria used to sift them for historical information about Jesus.

III. Sources

The major sources for reconstructing the historical Jesus are also the major problem, namely, the four Gospels found in the New Testament. While the Gospels do contain historical facts about Jesus, the Gospels are also suffused from start to finish with the Easter faith of the early church. To distinguish an original saying or deed of Jesus from a later Christian

creation can be difficult or at times impossible. By the way, the fact that *all* four Gospels are faith-documents reflecting later theology means that the Gospel of John is not to be rejected automatically in favor of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, the so-called Synoptic Gospels. Although the sayings in John's Gospel have undergone massive reworking, some elements in John are more reliable than the parallel material in the Synoptics. Such, for example, is the case with the chronology of events in the final days of Jesus' life. Beyond the Gospels, Paul's letters preserve a historical tidbit here and there, but even these tidbits simply give independent confirmation of what is also found in the Gospels.

What about non-Christian sources outside the New Testament? The first-century Jewish historian Josephus mentions Jesus twice in his vast work, *The Jewish Antiquities* (20.9.1 §200; 18.3.3 §63-64). The longer passage, once stripped of later Christian additions, gives a brief summary of Jesus' ministry.[4] It states that Jesus appeared during the tenure of Pontius Pilate (26-36 A.D.). Jesus is said to have been a wise man, a miracle worker, and a teacher who attracted many followers. On the accusation of some Jewish leaders, Pilate condemned him to the cross. But those who had been devoted to him continued their adherence, and so Josephus remarks with some bemusement that "the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out." This thumb-nail sketch confirms independently the basic picture of the four Gospels without providing any new details.

Scattered references from later rabbinic literature reflect polemics between Jews and Christians in subsequent centuries and contain no independent early tradition about Jesus. As I have already mentioned, Tacitus, writing about 110 A.D., makes brief mention of Jesus' execution. That about exhausts early independent witnesses to Jesus from Jews and pagans, and so we are thrown back upon our main but problematic sources, the four Gospels. To be sure, some scholars, especially those connected with the Jesus Seminar, have claimed that the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* from the Nag Hammadi library represents an early and independent tradition about Jesus. Personally, I doubt this, since in a number of passages *Thomas* reflects the editorial changes that Luke or Matthew have made on Mark's text; in other words, the author of *Thomas* knew at least some of our written Gospels and used them to create his second-century collection of sayings.[5]

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4. See my article "Jesus in Josephus: A Modest Proposal," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 76-103.

5. See *A Marginal Jew*, 1:123-41.

IV. Criteria

How can we hope to discern which material in the four Christian Gospels goes back to the historical Jew named Jesus? Scholars have devised a number of criteria (rules for making judgments) to identify the sayings and actions that come from the historical Jesus. Five criteria are especially useful:[6]

(1) The criterion of *embarrassment* focuses on actions or sayings of Jesus that would have created difficulty for the early church. Such material tended to be softened or suppressed in later stages of the Gospel tradition: for example, Jesus submitting to John the Baptist's baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, or Jesus' ignorance of the exact time of the last judgment.

(2) The criterion of *discontinuity* or dissimilarity focuses on those words or deeds of Jesus that cannot be derived from Judaism before him or Christianity after him: for example, Jesus' prohibition of fasting or taking oaths. Obviously, one must use this criterion with care. Jesus was a first-century Jew from whom flowed the early Christian movement. A total rupture with history before and after him is *a priori* unlikely. Hence one should be wary of claiming that certain sayings or actions of Jesus are unique and unparalleled in first-century Judaism. It is wiser to speak of what was strikingly characteristic of Jesus: for example, the use of "Abba" ("dear Father") to address God in prayer or the use of the affirmative word "Amen" at the beginning rather than the end of statements.

(3) The criterion of *multiple attestation* of sources and forms focuses on material witnessed by a number of different independent streams of early Christian tradition. The Gospel sources generally acknowledged by scholars are (i) the tradition used by Mark, (ii) a hypothetical collection of Jesus' sayings used by Matthew and Luke (which scholars label the Q document), (iii) special traditions found only in Matthew or Luke, and (iv) the very different sort of tradition used by John. In addition, Paul now and then provides a stray saying. The argument from multiple attestation is all the stronger when the different sources present the material in different literary forms. For example, Jesus' words over the bread and wine at the Last Supper are witnessed both in the passion narrative of Mark (14:22-24) and in liturgical instructions by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (11:23-25).[7] Jesus' prohibition of divorce is found in a short saying in the Q document (Luke 16:18), in a longer dispute story in Mark (10:2-12), and again in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (7:10-11).

(4) The criterion of *coherence* or consistency comes into play only after

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6. See ibid., 167-95.

7. See my article "The Eucharist at the Last Supper: Did It Happen?" *Theology Digest* 42 (1995): 335-51.

a certain amount of historical material has been isolated by using the previous criteria. Other sayings and deeds of Jesus that fit in well with the preliminary "data base" have a good chance of being historical: for example, sayings reflecting the imminent coming of the kingdom of God.

(5) Finally, the criterion of the *rejection* or execution of Jesus does not tell us directly what material is historical, but it does direct our attention to those words and deeds that would explain why Jesus met a violent end at the hands of the authorities. A bland Jesus, a literary theorist who spun riddles, or a benign moralist who never posed a threat to the powers that be could not be historical. Needless to say, all these criteria must be used in tandem as mutually self-correcting.

Throughout my two volumes of *A Marginal Jew,* and likewise in the third volume when it appears, I apply these criteria in detail to various sayings and actions of Jesus so as to construct ever-so-slowly, as if with the pieces of a mosaic, a fairly probable picture of this first-century Jew—perhaps the best we can hope for. Obviously, I cannot begin to repeat that exhaustive process in this essay. Instead, I will try, in broad strokes, to lay out for the reader the results of my study without rehearsing all the arguments.

V. Birth

Information about Jesus' birth is found only in the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. These must be used with great care, since here in particular literary conventions from both the Old Testament and the pagan world have been used by Christian theology to make theological statements about Jesus. When sifted with care, though, the infancy narratives do supply some reliable information.[8]

We can say with fair probability that Jesus was born near the end of the reign of Herod the Great, who died in 4 B.C. Most scholars suggest a date around 7 or 6 B.C. for Jesus' birth. Jesus' Hebrew name was *Yēšûaʿ* or *Yēšû*, a shortened form of the Hebrew name *Yĕhôšûaʿ* (Joshua), which means "Yahweh helps." Jesus' mother was named Miriam (Mary); his putative father Joseph. The two infancy narratives place Jesus' birth at Bethlehem, but the rest of the Gospel narratives know only of Nazareth as his place of origin. Whether Bethlehem is simply a symbolic way of affirming that Jesus was descended from David is disputed; I incline toward Nazareth as his birthplace.

Most likely Jesus was thought by his contemporaries to be descended from King David.[9] Jesus' Davidic descent is attested in different streams

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8. See the great study of Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (updated edition; Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1993).

9. The arguments supporting this assertion can be found in *A Marginal Jew,* 1:216-19; see also "Dividing Lines," 363-66.

of New Testament tradition, and neither the title "Messiah" nor the title "King of the Jews" was necessarily tied to Davidic descent at the time. Both Hasmoneans and Herodian rulers—neither group being Davidic—had borne the title "King of the Jews" around the turn of the era.

Being of the family of David and therefore of the tribe of Judah, Jesus would have been a layman in the eyes of his fellow Jews. It is only later Christian theology—and in the New Testament only the Epistle to the Hebrews—that calls Jesus a priest.

VI. Formative Years, Family, and Cultural Background

Jesus spent over thirty years of his life in Nazareth, an obscure hill town in Lower Galilee. We know next to nothing of this period, despite the attempts of ancient and modern imagination to fill in the gaps with trips to Tibet, India, or Egypt. In the entire New Testament, one slim verse (Mark 6:3) is our only warrant for calling Jesus a carpenter or woodworker (*tektôn*). But since no discernible theological point is being scored by this designation, most scholars accept it as historical. Since Joseph, Jesus' legal father, is never on stage during the public ministry, most critics presume that he had already died. In contrast, Jesus' mother, Mary, is mentioned a number of times, as are four brothers, James (alias Jacob), Joses (alias Joseph), Jude (alias Judah), and Simon (alias Symeon). In keeping with an androcentric culture, sisters are mentioned but not named. While some of the brothers became prominent leaders later on in the Christian church, it appears that they did not believe in Jesus during his public ministry.

From early on theological debates have raged over the exact relation of these brothers to Jesus: true siblings, step-brothers, or cousins? If one prescinds from later church teaching, the most likely position from a purely historical view is that they were his siblings. But one must admit that, if the quest for the historical Jesus is difficult, the quest for the historical relatives is nigh impossible.[10]

Curiously, an aside in one of Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians 9:4 mentions that Jesus' brothers were married. In contrast, the New Testament says nothing about Jesus' marital status. One might presume that, like the vast majority of Jewish men of his day, he would have been married. However, from both Jewish and pagan sources we do hear of exceptional cases of religious celibates in Judaism. And, in the face of various references to Jesus' father, mother, brothers, and sisters, the total silence about a wife might be taken as an indication that Jesus remained unmar-

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10. See my article "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus in Ecumenical Perspective," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54 (1992): 1-28.

ried. His unusual celibate status—and the jibes it occasioned—may be the original setting for his strange statement about men who make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:19). One should remember that the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 16:1) accepted celibacy as part of his vocation as a prophet sent to announce judgment to Israel in a time of crisis—an interesting parallel to Jesus' prophetic vocation.

We know nothing of Jesus' formal education, if there was any. Theoretically, it is possible that Jesus was illiterate and acquired his knowledge of scripture simply through oral repetition. However, his acceptance by some Jews as a teacher (a "rabbi" in the loose, nontechnical sense of the word), a teacher who could expound and apply the scriptures to Jewish lives, plus his ability to argue with experts in the Law, incline me to think that he had received enough education at a local level to read the sacred texts in Hebrew. Ordinarily, Jesus would have spoken Aramaic since that was the common language of Galilean peasants. Greek would have been used at times by some Jewish peasants for commercial purposes, and Jesus may have known enough to "get by." That he regularly used it in his teaching is unlikely. All in all, there was nothing in his early life or educational background that prepared his fellow townspeople for the startling career he was soon to undertake: hence the shock that greeted him when he returned home after a preaching tour (Mark 6:1-6).

VII. Beginnings of the Ministry

Sometime around the year 28 or 29 A.D., during the reign of the emperor Tiberius (14-37), the tenure as prefect of Pontius Pilate (26-36), and the high priesthood of Joseph Caiaphas (18-36), Jesus emerged from obscurity to respond to the preaching of an ascetic prophet who baptized people in the Jordan River. This prophet, called John the Baptist by Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 18.5.2 §116-19) as well as by the New Testament, imitated the great prophets of old by summoning a sinful Israel to repentance. What made him different was that he used a once-and-for-all cleansing ritual (baptism) to symbolize the purification necessary to protect one from God's final fiery judgment, which was about to break in upon Israel. Hence John's message was, in the terminology of scholars, "eschatological." That is to say, Israel was living in the last days of the present order of things; soon God would come to judge his people once and for all and begin a new, permanent era of salvation.[11]

The very fact that Jesus submitted to John's baptism shows that Jesus accepted the Baptist's mission and message. Jesus may have stayed for a while in the circle of the Baptist's disciples, and some of Jesus' first and

11. See *A Marginal Jew*, 2:19-233.

closest disciples (Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael) may have been drawn from that circle. When Jesus left John's circle, he took over from his mentor both his eschatological message and his practice of baptizing. These borrowings may have occasioned some rivalry and hard feelings. In any event, the origin of Jesus' message and ministry in those of John the Baptist should make one suspicious of present-day attempts, especially by the Jesus Seminar, to eliminate the element of future eschatology in Jesus' preaching.[12] On one side of Jesus stands the fiery eschatology of John the Baptist, on the other side the fiery eschatology of Jesus' closest disciples in the earliest days of the church. A totally non-eschatological Jesus standing in between his mentor and his followers strains credulity.

VIII. Jesus' Message of the Kingdom

While Jesus continued the eschatological preaching of the Baptist, there was a notable shift away from an emphasis on dire judgment and punishment and toward the joyful news of God coming to regather and save Israel in the end time. Against the tendency of Christian piety to stress Jesus' relation to the individual, we must remember that Jesus was a Jewish prophet seeking to address above all the whole people Israel. It was to Israel at the climax of its history and not to individuals in the privacy of their hearts that Jesus directed his message of the coming of the kingdom of God. Since "kingdom of God" was not a set term in Israelite prophecy before Jesus, and since the phrase was not a favorite theme of Christian preaching outside the Gospels, it seems that Jesus himself purposely chose this phrase to sum up what was special about his message.

What did Jesus mean by the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is better described than defined. It is an allusive, multi-layered symbol that points not to a static, spatial kingdom but to a dynamic action, to the whole story of God coming in power as king in the last days.[13] Jesus proclaimed that God was coming soon to regather the scattered tribes of Israel and to establish his kingly rule over them once and for all. But in the typical clash of metaphors that Jesus enjoyed to exploit in his parables, the God who comes to Israel reveals himself surprisingly not as a remote king and fearsome judge but as a loving, merciful father embracing his prodigal son, as a shepherd seeking his lost sheep.

Jesus hammered home his message of the kingdom with many forms of speech taken from the wisdom and prophetic tradition of Israel, in-

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12. See, for example, John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 227-302; Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 1-21.

13. See, for example, the essays in Bruce Chilton, ed., *The Kingdom of God* (Issues in Religion and Theology 5; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Wendell Willis, ed., *The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987).

cluding beatitudes, woes, and oracles. Most striking was his use of parables (in Hebrew, *mĕšālîm*).[14] In the Old Testament the parable, as used by the prophets, was an extremely elastic form of speech that covered short proverbs, metaphors, taunts, reproaches, oracles, and short stories—usually involving some kind of comparison. In some of the prophets, especially Ezekiel, the parable became an enigmatic allegory arising out of a historical crisis and pointing to a future act of God. Continuing this tradition, Jesus used parables in their many forms to call Israel to decision in the final, critical period of its history. He employed these mysterious sayings and stories to tease the minds of his audience into active thought, to knock his cocky hearers off balance, to destroy their false sense of security, and to open their eyes to the crisis they faced.

Scholars continue to debate which parables come from Jesus himself and which from the early church. While most parables lack multiple attestation of sources, we can speak of a multiple attestation of certain basic themes that keep recurring through different parables in different sources. To summarize: with a tone of urgency, the parables warn that delay is dangerous, for any moment may be too late. Jesus' audience must risk all on a decision to accept and act on his message. No sacrifice is too great, for soon the present conditions of this sinful world will be reversed—a theme also heard in the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-23). The sorrowful will be made happy, the hungry will be fed to the full, namely, by God on the last day.

Far from pleasant Sunday-school stories, Jesus' parables were at times violent verbal attacks on the whole religious world presumed by his audience. These parables promised a radical reversal of values, a revolution wrought by God, not humans. In fact, the parables did not simply speak about this new world of the kingdom that was coming; they already communicated something of the kingdom to those who allowed themselves to be drawn into Jesus' metaphorical world, who allowed their lives to be turned around or converted. In this sense the parables themselves made real in the present something of the future salvation of the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed.

IX. Jesus' Deeds of the Kingdom

The experience of the future kingdom in the present moment was not just something Jesus proclaimed in words. He also acted out his message

14. For an introduction into the vast area of parables research, see Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New Testament Library; London: SCM, 1963); Charles E. Carlston, *The Parables of the Triple Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); John R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

in two striking ways:

(1) Jesus dramatized his message of God welcoming sinners home into the Israel of the last days by choosing to associate and eat with the social and religious "low life" of his day, the toll collectors and sinners. No doubt this offended those who identified the renewal of Israel with stringent observance of the laws of ritual purity. Jesus instead emphasized the joyful message that the eschatological banquet was at hand, a banquet anticipated in the meals he shared with the religiously marginalized. In keeping with this festive mood, he ordered his disciples not to practice voluntary fasting. His nonascetic ways not only distinguished him from the Baptist but also exposed him to ridicule from the more conventionally devout. To them he was a bon vivant, "an eater and wine-drinker, a friend of toll collectors and sinners" (Matt. 11:19).

(2) The coming kingdom was also made present by Jesus' startling deeds of power that we label "miracles."[15] I must stress here that I am not claiming that Jesus actually performed miracles. That is a judgment proper to faith and theology. What the historian can say is that, during his own lifetime, and not simply later on in the church's preaching, Jesus and his followers—and at times even his opponents—believed that he worked miracles. This miracle tradition is widely attested in all the strata of the Gospel traditions and is confirmed independently by Josephus. The significance of these supposed miracles for Jesus' mission is twofold. (a) First, the miracles of healing and exorcism were not just kind deeds performed for poor individuals. Like Jesus' table fellowship with sinners, they were concrete manifestations of God coming in power to Israel in the end time. Jesus defended his exorcisms with the claim: "If by the finger of God I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20). The healing and liberation of a sick and imprisoned Israel that the prophets had promised for the last days was now a reality. (b) But even more important is the implicit claim that Jesus makes by presenting himself as an eschatological prophet who was also a miracle worker. In the Old Testament only Moses, Elijah, and Elisha perform a whole series of miracles. Only Elijah and Elisha are said to have raised the dead, and only Elijah the prophet was expected to return in the last days to regather a scattered Israel. By his eschatological message bound together with his miracles, Jesus the prophet in effect was taking on himself the mantle of Elijah. He was identifying himself as the Elijah-like prophet that God was to send to gather Israel in the last days. Once again Jesus was indicating that the future kingdom was in some way already present in his ministry.

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15. See my treatment in *A Marginal Jew,* 2:509-1038.

X. Various Types of Followers and Competing Groups

Jesus' call to Israel met with different reactions resulting in different types of followers. Using the rough image of three concentric circles, we may distinguish three kinds of followers around Jesus. An outer circle was made up of the nondescript crowds, all those who followed Jesus physically at least for a while. They were large enough to make the authorities nervous enough to do away with Jesus. The middle circle was made up of disciples, a special group called directly by Jesus to follow him literally, physically, and long term, at the cost of leaving home and family and of exposing oneself to hardship and hostility. Most striking in this regard are the women followers whom Jesus allowed into his traveling entourage, a departure from custom that many pious people probably found shocking. Allied with these disciples was a group of sedentary supporters who offered Jesus hospitality during his travels. From the middle circle of disciples Jesus chose an inner circle called the Twelve, a symbolic embodiment of Jesus' eschatological message. As Israel arose in the beginning from twelve patriarchs who begot twelve tribes, so in this end time Jesus chose twelve Israelites to symbolize and begin the regathering of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was for this purpose that Jesus sent the Twelve out on a brief mission to Israel during his public ministry. Jesus was not interested in founding a new movement or sect within Israel; he wished to begin the regathering of all Israel in view of the coming kingdom. Hence Jesus had little direct contact with individual gentiles during his ministry; they were not his major concern. God would take care of the gentiles when he came in his kingdom.

Naturally, as with the Old Testament prophets, not all reactions to Jesus were positive. Probably many Israelites remained indifferent to yet another movement among the many that had sprung up in Palestine around the turn of the era. Most Palestinian Jews, poor peasants and artisans, were devoted to the basic tenets and practices of their religion, but had no time for or interest in the special movements such as the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. While these groups are highlighted by Josephus, none of them was *the* single dominant force in Israel in Jesus' day. Let us look quickly at each of these groups.

Faced with the endless speculation fired by the discoveries at Qumran, we must remember that the New Testament never mentions the Essenes or Qumran. Intriguing parallels have been drawn between Essene beliefs and Jesus' teachings, but they are best explained as natural similarities between two eschatological movements in Palestinian Judaism at the turn of the era. Jesus' lack of concern with the minute details of legal observance was the direct opposite of Qumran's extremely stringent observance of the Law. And Jesus' outreach to all Israel, including toll collectors and sinners, was diametrically opposed to Qumran's sectarian

withdrawal into a separate community of the pure. This physical separation may be one reason why the Qumranites never appear on stage in the Gospels; most probably they never interacted with Jesus.

In contrast, the Gospels present the Pharisees as regularly interacting with Jesus, usually in disputes. Unfortunately, determining who the Pharisees were in the early first century is rife with problems since we have no literature directly from them, as we do from Qumran.[16] The Gospels, Josephus, and especially the rabbinic material all portray the Pharisees from the viewpoint of a later date and later agendas. One should not presuppose that the Pharisees were identical with or were the direct forebears of the later rabbis.

At a minimum we can say that the Pharisees were a voluntary religious movement within Palestinian Judaism that sought reform through careful, detailed interpretation of the Mosaic Law. A predominately lay group, they stressed stringent observance of laws concerning ritual purity, the Sabbath, and tithing. They favored the relatively new Jewish belief in a future life and the resurrection of the body. Their presence in many different layers of Gospel tradition indicates that they did engage in disputes with Jesus and his alternate eschatological vision for Israel. But some of the stories about the Pharisees in the Gospels reflect the conflict between them and the early church and probably do not go back to the historical Jesus. This subsequent conflict has left behind in the Gospels a highly polemical view of the Pharisees that should not be taken as sober historical reporting. Moreover, it should be stressed that the earliest layers of the passion narratives in the Gospels do not associate the Pharisees as a group with Jesus' execution.

We know still less about the Sadducees, and what we know comes only from their enemies. Another voluntary group within Judaism, the Sadducees disagreed with their competitors, the Pharisees, over questions of ritual purity; they also rejected the idea of resurrection and a future life. A relatively small group, they possessed some wealth and political influence, and seem to be represented among the lay and priestly aristocracy in Jerusalem. However, not all aristocrats or priests—including the high priests—were necessarily Sadducees. In the Gospels the Sadducees are mentioned rarely. The only time Jesus engaged in direct debate with them was when he defended belief in the resurrection against their skepticism (Mark 12:18-27). Here, at least, Jesus found himself on the side of the Pharisees.

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16. On the Pharisees and other competing groups, see Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1988); Anthony J. Saldarini, "Pharisees," *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:289-303.

XI. Jesus' Relation to the Mosaic Law

Vis-à-vis these religious movements and Palestinian Jews in general, Jesus would have stood out because of his teaching about the two defining institutions of Judaism: the Mosaic Law and the Jerusalem temple. As for the Mosaic Law, one must stress against any talk about abrogation of the Law that for Jesus, as for any religious Jew, the Mosaic Law was the given—quite literally, given by God. The total abrogation of the Mosaic Law would simply be unthinkable for a religiously-minded Palestinian Jew. Various Jewish groups debated their individual interpretations of the Law, but the existence of the Law itself was not open to question. Hence, nowhere in the earliest Gospel traditions do we find Jesus saying anything about abolishing the Law as a whole.

What we do find is Jesus' own approach to interpreting the Law, one that understandably created conflict with competing religious movements. To be sure, some aspects of Jesus' characteristic emphases would not have caused great opposition. For example, Jesus emphasized unrestricted love of God and neighbor, indeed, even love of enemies (Matt. 5:43-48). This emphasis flowed from Jesus' eschatological message: the radical love and forgiveness that God was showing his people in the end time must be imitated by all those who wanted to share in the coming kingdom. Once again something of the future kingdom was to be made real even now—not only in miracles or parables but also in the moral lives of Jesus' followers.

Now none of this would in itself have created difficulties for other religious Jews. However, Jesus' focus on the centrality of love, compassion, and forgiveness was matched by a relative lack of concern about the details of ritual purity or Sabbath observance over which the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes debated. Jesus' interpretation of the Law was radical in the sense that it both reached back to appeal to God's original intent in giving the Law and reached down into the depths of human hearts to emphasize purity of intention. Sometimes this radicalization simply deepened or broadened the thrust of the Law. For instance, Jesus equated angry words with murder and impure thoughts with adultery (Matt. 5:21-30). While this might sound extreme or unrealistic, such teaching would not alienate large numbers of his fellow Jews. But at times Jesus' radical interpretation reached the point of apparently rescinding individual obligations and institutions imposed or permitted by the Law. For example, Jesus forbade divorce and the taking of an oath (Matt. 5:31-37), and he bade one of his followers to ignore the sacred obligation to bury his father in order to follow Jesus without delay (Matt. 8:21-22). Some scholars even think that Jesus rejected the distinction between clean and unclean foods (Mark 7:14-23), though this is disputed. Other scholars see this rejection as a creation of the early church as it pur-

sued its mission to the gentiles.

One sees, then, the problem: within a basic context of accepting and affirming the Law as God's Word to Israel, Jesus took it upon himself to decide that certain individual precepts or institutions in the Law were to be rejected. Worse still, Jesus made no attempt to defend his teaching by appealing to the tradition of revered sages before him or by claiming, like the Old Testament prophets, that "the word of the Lord came to me, saying ..." Rather, Jesus, as a true charismatic, claimed to know directly, intuitively, God's will for Israel in the end time. His claim is well summed up in his characteristic introductory phrase, "Amen, I say to you." Such an extraordinary claim would have disturbed not just Pharisees or Sadducees but many ordinary Jews devoted to the Law.

At this point one sees the futility of trying to classify Jesus neatly within one of the parties or factions of first-century Judaism. He shared various points with various movements, but the overall configuration of his views was unique.

XII. The Temple and Jesus' Last Days in Jerusalem

As with the Law, so with the Jerusalem temple, Jesus' attitude was complex. On the one hand, Jesus regularly went up to Jerusalem for the great feasts and used the temple as the best place to preach to the crowds. (In this the picture of Jesus' journeys in John's Gospel seems more accurate than that of the Synoptics.) On the other hand, during his last visit to Jerusalem, Jesus performed a prophetic action in the temple which helped to seal his fate. But for this we must turn to the question of Jesus' last days.

In the spring of 30 A.D. (or possibly 33), Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem for his final Passover. As he entered the ancient capital of King David, he apparently chose to make a symbolic claim to messianic status by riding in on a donkey amid the acclamation of his followers (multiple attestation of Mark 11:1-10 and John 12:12-19), thus evoking the memory of a prophecy by Zechariah (9:9) about a righteous, victorious, yet peaceful king entering Jerusalem on a donkey. Jesus followed up this symbolic entry with a symbolic action in the temple, disrupting the selling and buying of sacrificial animals (multiple attestation of Mark 11:15-17 and John 2:13-17). While this so-called cleansing of the temple has often been interpreted as a call for reform of the temple and a purer worship, in the context of Jesus' eschatological message it more likely symbolized the end of the old order, including the temple. These two symbolic actions of Jesus may have been the reason why the priestly aristocracy chose to arrest Jesus during this particular visit to Jerusalem, as opposed to his earlier stays. Jesus himself chose to press the issue, forcing the authorities to

make a decision for or against him.

Various sayings in the Gospels that probably go back to Jesus show that he reckoned with the possibility of a violent death (Matt. 23:37-39; Luke 13:31-33; Mark 10:35-40; 8:32-33; 12:1-12). Actually, granted his own provocative actions, Jesus would have had to have been a simpleton not to have foreseen the possibility of an untimely end. More to the point, Jesus saw himself as the eschatological prophet, and Jewish piety had increasingly come to view the Old Testament prophets as rejected figures and often as martyrs. The martyrdom of the Baptist, Jesus' mentor, turned this theology into an uncomfortably close reality.

That Jesus did reckon with the possibility of imminent death is confirmed by the final solemn meal—what we call the Last Supper—which he held with his intimate disciples. Sensing that he might not live to celebrate the regular Passover meal, Jesus held this farewell meal on Thursday evening, as the 14th of Nisan (the Day of Preparation) began. (Here John's chronology, as opposed to that of the Synoptics, is probably correct.) At the beginning and end of the meal respectively, Jesus used bread and wine to represent his body and his blood, that is to say, his whole life given and poured out in death for the sake of his people (multiple attestation of Mark 14:22-24 and 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Thus did Jesus symbolize his acceptance of this strange dénouement as a part of God's mysterious will for bringing the kingdom to Israel and restoring the covenant made at Sinai. Even to his death, Jesus saw his mission as the regathering and saving of all Israel, his blood "poured out for the many." In a profound sense, this supper was indeed the *last*—the last and climactic supper in a whole series of meals Jesus had shared with his disciples and sinners alike, meals that had been channels of God's forgiveness and salvation to Israel. This last meal served as a pledge that, despite the apparent failure of his mission, God would vindicate Jesus beyond death and bring him and his followers to the eschatological banquet. Hence Jesus insisted that the disciples all perform the unusual act of drinking from *his* cup, not their own cups. He was calling them to hold fast to their fellowship with him even in death, so that they might share his victory when the kingdom fully came.

XIII. Arrest, Trial, and Death

After the supper Jesus led his disciples to a small plot of land on or at the foot of the Mount of Olives called Gethsemane ("olive press" or "oil vat").[17] There he was arrested by an armed band assisted by Judas, one of

17. For a full treatment of the passion narratives, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 2 vols. (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1994).

the Twelve. The arresting group was probably under the control of the high priest Joseph Caiaphas, though Caiaphas most likely would have kept Pilate informed on what was being planned for the Galilean troublemaker. Faced with arrest, Jesus rejected armed resistance, and his disciples fled in ignominious disarray.

What happened next is difficult to say, since the Gospels disagree among themselves. In my view, the Gospel of John plus Josephus give us the most likely scenario. During Thursday night an informal hearing was held by Caiaphas and some of his advisers, at the end of which Jesus was handed over to Pilate. During the high priest's hearing, Peter, who had followed the arrested Jesus at a distance, was confronted by some servants and in a panic denied knowing Jesus.

Early on Friday morning, the 14th of Nisan, Pilate held a speedy and informal trial and condemned Jesus to crucifixion, the Roman execution used for slaves, bandits, and revolutionaries. The charge was claiming to be the King of the Jews. Whatever the religious disputes between Jesus and the priests, Pilate would have been concerned only with political repercussions. In light of Jesus' Davidic lineage, his constant talk about a coming kingdom, his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and his symbolic action in the temple, the Nazarene's words and deeds could easily have been interpreted by Pilate as indicators of another upstart Jew trying to seize power in Judea.

It must be stressed that the Roman prefect was the person directly responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. Cooperating with him was Caiaphas and the councilors around him, for Rome often preferred to govern subject populations through the local aristocracy. Needless to say, the local aristocrats maintained in power by Rome were not a representative, still less a democratic, regime. One would like to think that in our day it is unnecessary to emphasize that responsibility for cooperating with Pilate must fall on this small group of aristocrats in Jerusalem and not on the whole of the Jewish people of the time, to say nothing of subsequent generations. Sadly, such a disclaimer is still necessary and sometimes still not heeded.

After the usual scourging (a cruel mercy meant to hasten death), a crossbeam was laid on Jesus' shoulders, but so weakened was Jesus that one Simon from Cyrene had to be pressed into service to help carry the beam. The crucifixion took place outside the city walls at Golgotha (Skull Place), possibly an abandoned quarry. Whether Jesus was tied or nailed to the cross is not specified, although nails are mentioned in some of the Gospels' resurrection appearances. Various sayings of Jesus from the cross are recorded in different Gospels, but all of them, including the famous cry of abandonment (Mark 15:34; see Ps. 22:2), may come from later Christian interpretation. Besides Simon of Cyrene, the only sympathetic

witnesses on Golgotha were some female followers from Galilee. The placing of Jesus' mother and the beloved disciple at the cross (John 19:25-27) is probably a symbolic addition by John's Gospel.

Although crucified criminals sometimes lingered for days, Jesus' death occurred relatively quickly. A hasty burial was necessary especially because at sundown (the beginning of Saturday, the 15th of Nisan), Passover would coincide that year with the Sabbath. In the absence of close relatives, Jesus' corpse might have been disposed of unceremoniously in a common grave. But Joseph of Arimathea, an influential Jewish official, interceded with Pilate and obtained the body for (temporary?) burial in a tomb nearby. Some of the women at the cross witnessed the preparations for burial, though the only constant name at both cross and tomb is Mary Magdalene. The account of setting a guard at the sealed tomb must be judged a later creation of Jewish-Christian debates.

XIV. Conclusion

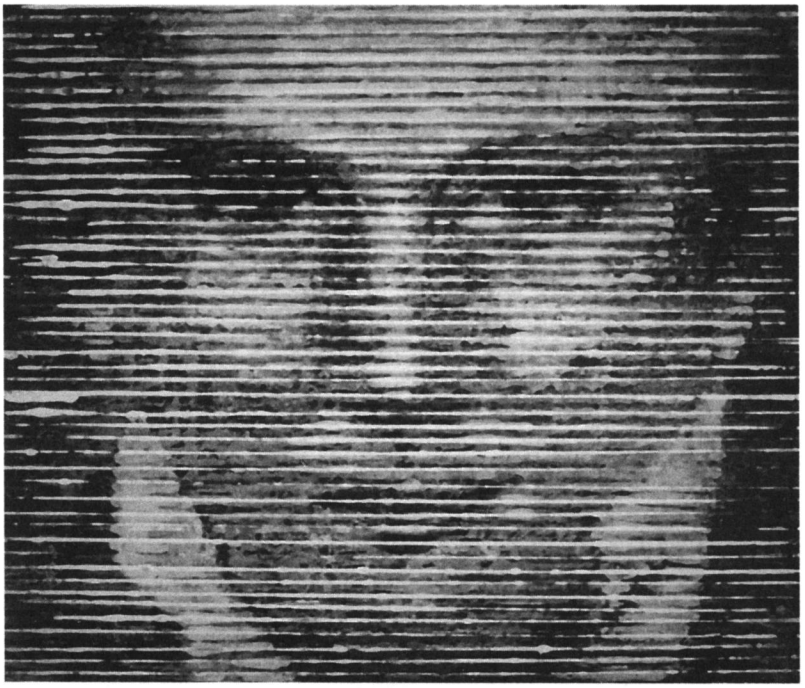
With the burial, the quest for the historical Jesus comes to an end. Since the historical Jesus, a modern construct, is by definition the Jesus who is open to empirical investigation by any and all observers, the risen Jesus lies outside the scope of the quest. This is not to say that the resurrection of Jesus is not real. It is simply to recognize the limitations of modern historical research. In its essence the resurrection of Jesus is an event that transcends time and space; it is something that happens between Jesus and God, not Jesus and this world.

There is a positive point to our ending abruptly with Jesus' death and thus creating a sense of incompleteness. It reminds us that the story of Jesus does continue, but in a different way, with Jesus no longer the proclaimer but the one proclaimed in the preaching of his followers. The various interpretations of Jesus' person and work by these followers, that is to say, the different christologies found in the New Testament, will be the subject of my second essay, which will follow in a subsequent issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*.

Holy Sonnet for Mother's Day

Judith B. Curtis

No need to pierce my side with soldier's sword
Or bleed from every pore as in Gethsemane;
Designed by Thee to shed blood naturally
Cycling with the menstrual moon. Lord,
In accordance with Thy holy word
This fragile body, too, is offered freely
To give others life. Speak to me,
Banish fear, let me be assured
As I descend to Death's dark realm
And drink the solitary, bitter cup
That I will be filled with peaceful, healing balm
And, at last, with Thee be lifted up.
I give birth to you, my brother,
And in return am born of Thee, Christ, Mother.



Musings on Motherhood

Tracie Lamb-Kwon

MOTHERHOOD IS BOTH MORE GLORIOUS AND MORE DIFFICULT than I could have known when I was playing with dolls, pretending to be a mama. The reality of motherhood was beyond me until I became a mother myself. Submersed in the life of my own family, I began to realize the heights and depths of motherhood.

A woman's life is changed forever when another life begins within her. After I became pregnant, I was constantly aware of my precious cargo, my dreams as full of plans and fears as my waking hours. Obsessively, I counted down the days. The pictures and descriptions of developing fetuses in the many books I had absorbed fascinated me. My curiosity about who this little person would be was equaled only by the physical effort of getting her here to find out.

From the moment I knew I was pregnant, my life was no longer my own. The Korean culture in which we were living at the time has the belief that everything a woman sees, hears, and does when she is pregnant affects her baby. So she should listen to beautiful music, read uplifting books, watch lovely scenes. Wanting the best for my child, I tried to follow the example of the Koreans.

It was difficult to do this, however, with my head in a toilet. As sublime as my stewardship was, it also had elements of the disgusting. I was deathly sick for weeks, vomiting three or four times a day. The low point of that particular existence came when I had to get off a bus in the middle of Seoul and throw up on the sidewalk. I tried to be inconspicuous, but as a tall, very pregnant foreigner, I don't think I was.

Finally, a friend recommended something that helped a lot—Gatorade. Like a wino, I carried a bottle around with me, sipping surreptitiously whenever my stomach threatened rebellion. Gatorade was my salvation. And I preach the word now whenever I can.

Nausea was not the only plague of pregnancy. Pregnancy is more difficult for some than for others, but I believe it is never really easy. There are just too many demands on and changes in a woman's body. Once, before I was married, my mother told me about a friend of hers whose daughter

had recently had a baby. The friend had said with enthusiasm, "Doesn't having a baby rejuvenate you?" I didn't understand at the time the disbelief in my mother's voice as she was telling me this. I do now. Now I would respond to that question of rejuvenation, "Hell, no!"

As my body became heavier and clumsier, I remembered the scripture, "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: ... And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days" (Matt. 24:16, 19). The impossibility of fleeing when I could hardly walk was brought home to me. I also felt a kinship with the pioneer women whose stories I had heard. The woman who had her baby in a lean-to during a snow storm. Or the woman who, as labor came on, crossed a river on a log to get to the midwife. I felt admiration and understanding as I never had before.

I also felt envious of women in the early church who had enjoyed the comfort of laying on of hands by other women. Some sisters in the Relief Society were ordained to bless women in travail. How reassuring that must have been to have loving female friends, who could understand your condition, surround you, and place their hands on you in blessing.

As full of hope and expectation as pregnancy was, it was also interminable. I could remember not being married. I couldn't remember not being pregnant. One of the really infuriating abilities of a husband is to forget that his wife is pregnant. Time can go by quickly for the person not expecting. But if you don't think time can stand still, get pregnant. You'll see.

Being pregnant expanded not only my body but also my awareness. I felt a kinship with all womankind. In a lovely coincidence, I was in the hospital with my little daughter on my first Mother's Day. "We honor all women on Mother's Day," the little gift said that came on our dinner trays. I felt a part of that group as I never had before.

My mother has often said that only a woman who has carried a baby for months can look forward to delivery. I felt I was more than ready when the time came. I had studied books and made careful plans, but all my planning went awry with my first delivery. I ended up hooked up and plugged in to all kinds of devices, and my daughter was born Caesarean. My second delivery was a small victory over statistics. My daughter was born naturally, and I had very little medication.

During that second delivery, I discovered a place and a part of myself that I had no idea was there—where manners and refinement were absolutely inconsequential. Even awareness of other people was clouded by the intensity of the process. My delivery nurse, who had the gentlest touch I have ever experienced, discussed the delivery with me later. I expressed embarrassment over my intensity and abandon. She said the delivery had been so normal that she couldn't think what I was talking

about. I groped for the word to describe the experience when she supplied it—primitive. It was a powerfully primitive experience, undiluted by civilized protocol or restraint.

Until I experienced it myself, I never realized what an heroic effort carrying and bearing a child really is—has always been and still is in spite of modern medicine and technology. Adam said of Eve, "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). For him, we are told, it is figurative, but for women, having a baby is a literal sacrifice of the flesh—a sacrifice not usually unto death, but nearer death than I had realized.

I inherited an old book of my great-grandmother's titled *Vitology* which is falling apart from use and age. In the section on pregnancy and birth, it says, "It is no uncommon thing for a patient otherwise healthy to have 'a bad getting-up after labor'—that is, to be a longer time than usual in recovering the general condition, which in some cases is not attained for years." Although most women now probably recover "the general condition" sooner than many did in my great-grandmother's time, recovery often comes slowly.

I hadn't appreciated this before my own recovery. I had heard too many stories about women like the Pearl S. Buck character who delivered her own twins and then went back to the fields to work. Now I know this was an exceptional, not to mention fictional, woman. Having a baby was hard on me, and I think it is on many. I am reminded of a passage from James Michener's *Hawaii.* The brother-husband of the queen would crawl on his belly to her with flowers to show his respect and devotion. Knowing as I do now what a woman endures to bear a child, I believe that is an appropriate thing for a man to do.

I felt a kinship with other women past and present, but I also think new mothers are not so different from their animal counterparts. We went to the zoo one day and were watching the chimpanzees. One was swaying back and forth. I thought it was from being caged, but as we got closer, I could see that she had a baby. She was nursing it and rocking—the common motion of mothers.

After my daughter was born, I was surprised by the intensity of the need to be close to her. I knew I would love her. I didn't know I would be so absorbed in her. It would have been reassuring to have had the constant physical contact of her strapped to my back like a papoose. I have read that perhaps this need for closeness is from our ancestors who had to protect their babies from preying beasts or be ready in an instant to flee. I was ready. When we finally put her in another room to sleep, I felt a fearful urgency to rush to her, grab her, and crush her to me, to save her from the wild beasts that might come through our third-floor apartment window.

When she was very tiny, I surprised myself when a snarl would just catch in my throat if someone was too insistent to hold her and separate us. I understand the bird mother that pretends her wing is broken to distract the predator, or the otherwise mild bear that charges when she has cubs.

My need to be close to her made it a struggle to keep my world from being just the two of us. I was just the two of us for so long. I had encompassed all our being. I wanted to maintain our unity even as she already began to gain her independence. Being pregnant had been the focus of my life for what seemed such a long time that it was difficult to realize that that focus must shift to aiding the separation.

Having a baby means having powerful, new emotions and experiences. But it also means having little of anything else, particularly sleep. I have always been envious of those parents who say their baby slept all night after the second or third week or even the first year. My baby didn't sleep all night until she was well over two. And there are still the nights when a little body comes snuggling into my bed because it is easier for her to sleep when she is by me. It is not necessarily easier for me. But her utter contentment at being next to me makes me willing to forgo some rest.

Nights are rough, but the daytime hours also become full of maintenance jobs. How can one little person generate so much laundry? How is it possible for one little body to make such a mess in such a short time? Sometimes my mind drifts back (if I have time to drift) to my single days at college. The apartment stayed neat for so long. A little vacuuming now and then, a little dusting. How can the presence of a very small being create so much work?

And what about all the other challenges of raising children? I made a brief list of things I worry about: car seats, library cards, child molesters, schools, teachers, friends, plants with strange red berries, saving money, swallowing pennies, rap music, and potty training. And then there are things I've learned to dislike: toy commercials, cereal commercials, people who ignore children, people who ignore me when I have my children with me, rap music, and potty training.

And let me just mention here that I miss being able to concentrate on what I'm doing without being interrupted. I miss using the bathroom without being interrupted. I really miss browsing. I haven't browsed in years.

As they get older, the demands simply change. Just when I get used to one kind of behavior, a whole new set of challenges and questions comes up. They're called "phases." One of the most recent had to do with the birds and the bees. When I was expecting my second daughter, my three-year-old learned all about where the baby grows and how it is born.

But about four years later when we were going over the familiar part of how the baby grows in the mama's tummy, my now seven-year-old asked that dreaded question, "But how does the baby get in the mama's tummy?"

As I do with most challenges in my life, I bought a book on the subject. I was surprised and, I must admit, somewhat embarrassed by the abundance and explicitness of the books. Finally, I found one that met the criterion of being factual without being either too cute or too specific. I also talked to one of my daughter's teachers who has three teenage daughters herself. After commiserating with me and giving me some helpful advice, she said, "Wait until she asks, as my daughter did recently, what an orgasm is." I can't wait.

Life with children is not all challenge and hardship. At night, when they're asleep, I am drawn into their room to be near them a little longer. In Korea little children sleep with adults, parents or often grandparents. When we visited my in-laws there, my husband and I slept with the children in one room. It was very satisfying. When I would wake up in the night and have all my family near me, I felt contented. I realized this was a blessing I would not always have, and I was grateful.

Sometimes when I go into their room at night, a sweet spirit pervades. They hallow the room with their presence, and for a moment I feel the honor that it is to have them in my home, their goodness and innocence blessing my life. What can I do to deserve this honor? How can I live up to the responsibility of this gift?

Since motherhood, life consists of such dichotomous longings. Sometimes I ache to be out and away, to escape the responsibilities that come with children. Sometimes I wish for more time to myself, for privacy, quiet, and order. But then I hold my lap-sized little one. My arms just fit her small roundness. My chin rests on her head. The sweet baby smell of her hair wafts up to me. And my contentment is infinitely deep.

From the Land of Nod

Timothy Liu

I will go on
loving you, even after
you have stopped loving
anyone. What if
God has abandoned
all of us, even
His Son? That I go on
loving is to say
there is a God
unlike anyone
we have ever known.
Without love, I live
in order to create
what does not yet exist
in me, in you.

Seeing the Stranger as Enemy: Coming Out[1]

Edwin B. Firmage

> *Many people—many nations—can find themselves holding, more or less wittingly, that "every stranger is an enemy." For the most part this conviction lies deep down like some latent infection, it betrays itself only in random, disconnected acts, and does not lie at the base of a system of reason. But when this does come about, when the unspoken dogma becomes the major premise in a syllogism, then, at the end of the chain, there is the Lager. Here is the product of a conception of the world carried rigorously to its logical conclusion; so long as the conception subsists, the conclusion remains to threaten us. The story of the death camps should be understood by everyone as a sinister alarm-signal.*
>
> —Primo Levi

IT'S NOT EASY TO MOTIVATE TWO THOUSAND people, about evenly divided among high school students, young parents, and older citizens, to march a mile up a steep hill to listen to speakers on an unseasonably beautiful winter day. But Utah's state legislators had been up to the task. With language so raw, so full of homophobic hatred, they had called these young citizens, our own children, bestial and subhuman. Another had declared that since gays couldn't reproduce, they recruited our children to sodomize. In a bizarre display of frantic ineptitude almost disarming in its naivete, an illegal secret meeting had been held to which selected state legislators had not only been invited but had attended. The exploitive demagoguery that followed violated every code of civility, honor, and human dignity in its attacks on homosexuals.

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1. In March 1996 the Utah state legislature banned gay / straight student support groups in all Utah public high schools. This act, along with the rhetoric of several legislators attacking gay and lesbian students, precipitated a rally of some 2,000 people at Salt Lake City's Wallace F. Bennett federal building and a march and rally on Capitol Hill. The essay that follows resulted from the dialogue engendered by the rally.

Utahns are a conservative lot. But most of us, like most other folks, possess an inner sense of fair play and respect for other human beings, however we may categorize each other by race, sexuality, religion, or nationality. But these words of our state leaders had constituted hate speech, and hate speech invites and seems to legitimize hate crimes.

What moved me to words on 2 March 1996 at the Utah state capitol building was precisely that these words had been spoken by our elected representatives. They had been motivated, I believe, by deep homophobic fear among the leadership of the state's dominant religion, the Mormon church, resonating to its perception of current litigation and debate in Hawaii relating to same-sex marriage. (The church-owned *Deseret News* had reflected this fear in an editorial that was an embarrassment to the journalistic profession.) And since these legislators have the authority to make laws in our name, their actions ceased simply to be individually ridiculous. Their fearful beliefs became embodied in various pieces of legislation which threatened the civil rights and civil liberties of every Utahn.

Their words had been made flesh in the form of laws violating the civil rights of teachers and volunteers in schools and in their private lives. The prevention by whatever means of the formation of gay/straight high school student support groups was clearly in the public record as the ultimate objective of this legislation. Such pressure had been placed on the Salt Lake City School Board resulting in the banning of all extracurricular student clubs.

Thus as I looked at the hundreds of people before me on the capitol steps that winter day, my heart ached with the love of an old teacher, father, and grandfather of my own children. I spoke. My words, which follow, were angry and terse.

> *There will always be people ignorant enough, sick enough, or sufficiently mean-spirited (as a raisin is to a grape—shriveled up and hard) to call others subhuman, bestial. But, as Primo Levi noted, when this process of dehumanization becomes the policy of an institution—church or state—massive, dark evil results.*
>
> *The Utah legislature and the dominant religious leadership of this state, as reflected in legislation, in illegal, secret meetings, and in an editorial in the* Deseret News *have embarked upon this journey into the heart of darkness.*
>
> *Scapegoating other human beings violates the essence of Judeo-Christian religion, which teaches unconditional love and the equal worth of all human beings. Scapegoating reveals individuals and institutions which have not examined their own dark side and have therefore projected it onto others.*
>
> *Scapegoating, projecting, and thereafter attacking a vulnerable and politically weak minority is the antithesis of prophetic religion and democratic politics. As we act by stigma, stereotype, or scapegoating, we practice the politics and the religion of hate. Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Jesus—spoke on behalf of the weak and defenseless, the poor and the vulnerable. They thundered against the tyranny, the*

blindness, and the ignorance of an establishment insensitive to social justice.

Social justice has been denied by the Utah legislature in naked attacks on our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, and all our school children and young adults.

Hate speech has been indulged in by state legislators who thereby invite hate crimes.

And leaders who claim a monopoly of prophetic guidance have abandoned true prophetic leadership—sensitivity to the poor and the vulnerable.

In both church and state Utah is experiencing the cost of inverse Darwinism in its leadership: the survival of the least fit.

Shame on our legislature for this outrage.

Shame on our governor for hiding behind his mantra of federalism in acquiescing to this outrage.

Shame on our senators who have applauded this act in direct violation of federal law sponsored by one of them.

Shame on a school board for caving in to the pressure and the politics of scapegoating, stereotyping, stigmatizing—violating the constitutional rights of students and teachers to assemble and to speak.

And perhaps most serious of all in its moral bankruptcy in this situation—shame on the Mormon leadership for fomenting this spirit of intolerance and hate. I say "worst of all" because I believe this is the source, the cause of such irrational, illegal, and immoral action. In debasing the prophetic role from its honored position of speaking fearlessly for social justice, dominant religious leadership has at once violated the First Amendment and the first and second commandments: that we love God and one another.

I express my love, my admiration, and my support for all students gay, straight, black, brown, white: at East and West high schools and other schools. I honor the image of God in each of you. Reject any idea that demeans your full and complete humanity in the image of God.

Your struggle ultimately will result in greater understanding, greater love, and a greater, healthier community. God bless you.

In my own life I've learned fundamental lessons terribly late and only then through the grace of other people. Usually great pain and personal loss were necessary before I could be sufficiently open—really, to be savagely broken open—to be vulnerable and to learn.

As a young boy and man growing up in Provo, Utah, I don't remember ever seeing a black person. Only once, as a young boy on a buying trip for Firmage's department store traveling to St. Louis with my parents and grandparents, did I see black porters in the Pullman car and waiters in the dining car.

Years later, living on Chicago's South Side while attending the University of Chicago, my learning of race began. Then a graduate course with wonderful teachers at the White House: Hubert Humphrey, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Whitney Young of the Urban League, and Martin Luther King, Jr., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. I fell into the arms of loving teachers who somehow responded lovingly to

what must have been a provincial, crude, and unconsciously offensive young man. But they chose to see beyond that. Slowly, and ever so late, I began to learn.

One would hope that the destruction of the lines that divide us might be done—at least, in part—by deduction and not by personal experience. But I've not been that sensitive or smart. Usually, however similar the categorization, I've not seen the obvious connection. Like a young law student who just couldn't see that cases A and B were really the same, distinguished only by incidentals, not fundamentals, I've had to learn that Hispanic rights are like black rights by working with Hispanics. Young Hispanic students at the University of Utah, the first group of any number, helped me learn. With their support, I became the first faculty advisor to the Hispanic Caucus, which evolved into our Minority Caucus, as other groups grew and joined.

Then women. In my own law class ('63) at the University of Chicago, there was only one woman. I never knew her. Much later, after joining the faculty at the University of Utah, we enjoyed in one year more women in law schools throughout the nation than had been at any time before in all laws schools, the bench, bar, and teaching faculties nationwide combined.

Empathy can go no farther than our experience permits. Usually, when we say, "I understand," we do not. "Human Rights" is a magnificent vision, but the whole is comprised of distinct parts. Women students and faculty taught me numerous lessons that I thought I already knew. But I did not. At least, I did not know that many issues looked very different through a woman's eyes. I had much to learn. I still do. My views on critical issues—abortion, the ERA, many others—turned 180 degrees within a few years as female colleagues in classes and on our faculty taught me.

Even then it was years later, and only in the agony of separation and divorce, that my own unconscious patriarchal pretensions burst into consciousness in a dream—the most powerful archetypal dream of my life. That dream of a beautiful Woman influenced what became the McDougall Lecture I delivered in 1989 at the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City. The audience of 1,000 was predominantly Catholic and Mormon. Neither church ordains women. Though the lecture covered thirty pages on the teachings of Jesus, Gandhi, and Jung, one page dealt with the ordination of women. That lecture, entitled "Reconciliation," with dark cosmic humor, ended a thirty-year marriage and affected my relationship with the church of my birth. Of course, my relationship to both church and marriage was rent by many issues over many years. But what I then thought was a loving statement of personal realization of my own appalling patriarchy was perceived by many as a threatening attack on

the institutions of marriage and church. Hundreds of letters and phone calls, including three death threats, and a media firestorm that lasted six or eight months followed. While 99 percent of callers and correspondents were favorable to my message, I am under no illusion that my views reflected the thinking of my fellow Utahns. A majority, then and now, probably disagrees with me. The debate continues. My views remain as I put them, only stronger, more sure.

Before this debate on the ordination of women, I participated in the struggle against basing the MX missile in Utah and Nevada. I began in an op-ed piece published in the *Salt Lake Tribune* in 1979. Antonia Chayes, then Under-Secretary of the Air Force, responded. We joined in combat from that time. My position, in retrospect, was shockingly conservative and provincial: "Don't put MX in my backyard. Try somewhere else." But an unexpected thing happened as I fought the Air Force and our own politicians. I met wonderful leaders of many religions: Jews, Catholics, Episcopalians, Baptists, the Brethren, Quakers, Hindus, and Buddhists. We organized to beat the MX. And we did. But in the process another line dividing me from others was breached. My Mormonness and their Catholicity or Jewishness were important but lesser truths. To be honored to be sure, but never again to be the basis for derogation or discrimination. For the incomparable transcendence of the higher truth of our common humanity blazed before my eyes like the noonday sun. For this, I owe a special debt to Rosemary Lynch, my dear Franciscan sweetheart, now eighty, who introduced me to St. Francis of Assisi, and to Sister Mary Luke Tobin who introduced me to the works of Thomas Merton.

As this struggle about nuclear weapons raged for many years, my speaking became nationwide and foreign. Other strangers could be seen as either enemies or sisters and brothers. Groups of Germans protesting Pershing II missiles in their backyard joined us, together with young Russians. Again our common humanity clearly bound us together not as adversaries but as mountain climbers roped together scaling a frightfully perilous peak. Together we lived, or together we died.

As a young Mormon boy, I married a lovely Mormon girl after graduation from Provo High School and one year at Brigham Young University. We were both nineteen. I was called on a mission to England and Scotland after one week of marriage. I left my new wife in Provo and went to the United Kingdom for two years. (A long, happy, and fruitful marriage followed with eight children, seven living, and the same number of grandchildren. Our ways later parted, but we are now better friends than we were mates during the last painful years of huge differences.) After Chicago and the White House, I served twice as a ward bishop, twice on high councils, and on the General Board of the Mutual Improvement Association. My first bishopric was interrupted to allow

me to attend the United Nations in New York and the arms control talks in Geneva, Switzerland, as United Nations Visiting Scholar. Under a dear friend, Oscar McConkie, Jr., my stake president, we enjoyed great freedom of conscience and action in our bishoprics. Later changes in leadership, however, gave far more authoritarian, restrictive leadership.

In my ward were two young men. As bishop, I knew one had experienced a homosexual act. I sensed that he was heterosexual, but, of course, I didn't really know. I was only a few years older than the young students over whom I presided. The other young man was open and obviously gay. I knew of no sexual activity on his part. The identity of the first, as far as I knew, was not known by the stake president. The homosexuality of the latter was known, but not through me. Technically, I was obliged to reveal their circumstances to my superior. I did not.

Mormon doctrine on the confidentiality of confession (the sacrament of reconciliation) is far less structured or sacrosanct than in the Catholic or Episcopal traditions. Often information obtained in confession will be given to a succeeding bishop or to ecclesiastical superiors. I refused to divulge such information to successors, superiors, or to any living person, including my spouse. I was ordered by my superior to initiate excommunication procedures against one of these young men. I refused. My superior told me he would come to my ward and release me if I refused. As an M.D., and much older than I, he assured me that homosexuality was learned, chosen. I had no experience or knowledge to refute him, but I sensed deeply and powerfully that he was wrong. His demand aggressed my soul. As angry as I can ever remember being, I shouted in the phone, "You damn well come down and release me, but I'll not excommunicate this young man, neither will he ever know of this conversation." He released me shortly thereafter. One young man married, is highly successful in his profession, and has served his church in ward and stake positions of leadership. The other disappeared from my life. I owe them both an enormous debt.

Of much greater impact, however, and much later, I had the privilege as a teacher of working closely with research assistants. Teaching hundreds of students, teachers can only enjoy the opportunity of intimate friendships with few of them. Three young men and several women fell into that category with lasting power and love. Two men, now not so young (both grandfathers themselves teaching law at Creighton and Louisiana State), are as close to me and as loved as my own children. The third, brilliant, sensitive, and gifted beyond all but a few and at least their equal, I dearly loved. I still do. He worked for me two of his three years. I tried not so subtly to get him to date one of my daughters. I hoped he would become my son-in-law. For two years I invited him to vacation with my family after his graduation and association with a large law

firm. For reasons I couldn't then understand, he always gently declined.

Before "coming out" publicly as a gay man, he flew from New York to have lunch with me and tell me personally what I already had come to know. I owe my friend a great debt, so significant that I can never repay him. I can only love him. I learned to love this magnificent human before I knew he was gay. My own knowledge of homosexuality at the time was appalling. It was simply nonexistent. Speaking and acting from my own heterosexuality, my unconscious ignorant insensitivity must have been as apparent to my young friend as were my racial attitudes in my twenties at the White House with Roy Wilkins. Still, he loved me.

Later, following the McDougall Lecture at the Cathedral of the Madeleine, Mormon gays asked me to speak at their meetings. As I did, at first with trepidation, I had a chance to talk with these young Mormons. I asked each one, alone, how early they recognized their homosexuality and to what degree they considered it innate or chosen. Every one told me that he knew when he was very young: seven, ten, thirteen. And each *knew* it to be innate. I believe them. Scientific research, not present before the 1970s, now powerfully supports my own and others' conviction, personal and anecdotal, on this point. Not one gay person with whom I have ever spoken considers that he or she *chose* to be gay or lesbian. They *knew* they had same-sex attraction early in life. None whom I have met has felt that he or she could change this.

Affirmation, the organization for Mormon homosexuals, with branches throughout the country, met, at least in the gatherings I addressed, in the Unitarian church. They were not allowed the facilities of their own faith. I asked each young man what had been his experience with the Mormon church. Many had been excommunicated. Others had asked to have their names removed from church membership. A few kept their homosexuality secret and were in varying degrees of activity within their church. The majority had suffered greatly by the words and actions of Mormon leaders, from general authorities to local bishops and stake presidents, whose inexperience with this issue led them to respond occasionally with incredible sympathy and support, but more often with well-intentioned ignorance, at best, to callous insensitivity to outright vindictive malice. Ecclesiastical intimidation and action have been taken as well against heterosexual parents of gay children when they too openly defended the integrity and humanity of their children. Mormon parents try to cope with social and ecclesiastical ignorance and ostracism by forming support groups and publishing a newsletter among themselves. Our children in high school deserve no less. I am grateful to the members of Family Fellowship, a voluntary service organization composed primarily of parents of homosexual children and siblings, extended family, and friends.

We Americans fought a civil war and enjoyed a century thereafter in which the nation, not the state, became the final guarantor of our civil rights. What do we find so appealing today in the fragmentation and disintegration of the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia that we want to emulate that catastrophe? The Constitution guarantees these rights to us as Americans, not as citizens of the sovereign state of Utah. These rights include the right to speak; to remain silent; to assemble; to petition the government regarding our grievances; to worship and to be free from the same; to enjoy the rights of privacy and autonomy and conscience; to be free of racial and sexual discrimination. No bill depriving teachers, students, or the rest of us from enjoying these rights should come out of a session, special or otherwise, of our legislature.

Our governor must demonstrate the courage and conviction of one deserving national recognition to prevent such misbegotten legislation in the legislature before it gives birth to such a deformity. If birth occurs, veto any such bill. With an 80 percent approval rating among Utah's voters, he can afford the luxury of following a good heart.

Our national political leaders should defend the very legislation protecting equal access to extracurricular public forums they helped to create. The Salt Lake City School Board must stand up and reverse its decision banning extracurricular clubs. And, of course, gay/straight support clubs should be allowed, encouraged, and guided by loving, qualified professionals.

Most important, every religious denomination should thunder from the pulpits the constant prophetic vision of four millennia: In the name of social justice, we are obliged as humans to protect the powerless and the vulnerable. Our own humanity finds it fruition and fulfillment in the image of God.

I wrote the initial draft of this essay in one night from 9:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. the next morning since my travel schedule started at 8:30 a.m. and allowed no other time. When my son Eddie met me early to drive me to the airport, I handed him many pages of illegible handwritten script and asked him if he and his wife, Carrol, could somehow decipher and type this piece and fax it to me in Nauvoo. Carrol was to give birth to Christopher in two days.

My travel plans took me to Nauvoo to spend a few days with my wonderfully Mormon mother who still refuses to give up on her wayward son. In loving reunion we stood on the banks of the Mississippi River a week after the ice had broken. It was eleven below zero in March. And 150 years and one month after her great-grandmother and my great-great-grandmother Zina D. H. Young with her husband, Brigham Young, crossed that frozen river with 17,000 Mormons following. Wagons fell

through the ice. Women and men ran from other wagons to save the children. Zina later looked back from her wagon and saw their beloved Nauvoo temple in flames. Over 70,000 would ultimately make that trek. Thousands would die along the way. Yet they sang: "And should we die before the journey's through, happy day! All is well!"

I returned home three days later to packets of personal stories from many individuals and families, stimulated by my capitol hill speech. My sources were predominantly Mormon. I read this material through a second sleepless night. It included letters from young people just prior to their suicide. Many young gays commit suicide with no one to talk to: not parents; not friends; not church authorities; not professionals or others. Bereft of anyone to whom they might express bewilderment and pain, they simply chose to die. No one will ever know the cause of their suicide; letters to church leaders pleading for understanding and love; letters from heterosexual women and gay husbands, describing the hopeful beginning and then the growing sense of futility, frustration, failure, the painful understanding that things simply wouldn't work, and the ending of their marriages; letters to and from bewildered parents and children in unimaginable pain and fear. Unable to approach church leaders, fearing excommunication, clinging only to each other. And sometimes not even that. Sometimes parents disowning and rejecting children for being born homosexual. Unable to put these documents down until I finished, I returned the next day to teaching, ragged and spent. Random thoughts and feelings were going through me, only partially integrated. Such as, if homosexuality is as prevalent as even the most conservative studies indicate (from 3 to 10 percent of the population), then in the Mormon faith alone approximately one million people, gay and lesbian children and adults, their parents, siblings, and close friends, would be directly affected by church teachings and ecclesiastical policy. Are these people strangers or fellow citizens? Ostracized or in hiding, or in communion? What is the moral and spiritual quality of pastoral care extended to them? What is the effect of such teachings and practice on the larger political community within which Mormon citizens reside? Upon elected officials who determine state legislation and policies regarding our schools?

Like race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion (and increasingly, I hope, age), being straight or gay is an important but lesser truth. So how does someone gay or lesbian reach that truth? Generalizations for the homosexual community are as difficult as trying to formulate a description of the "typical" heterosexual. Preference for a particular sex is indeed implied, but how each individual manifests this is extremely diverse. They are old, young, celibate, in the early throes of infatuation, in long stable relationships, raising children, living alone. Homosexuals are mostly

born into heterosexual families and have been assumed to be "straight." Knowing they are not becomes obvious to all of them at different times in their lives. Some "know" as children. They innately sense their difference. Others know in young adulthood when, even though they've been taught that they are to desire the opposite sex, they find they simply can't. They don't have those feelings within them. Others believe if they can only marry they will learn to feel "appropriate feelings"; after two days or twenty years they learn that they can't. It is not in their makeup. Wanting to conform cannot change this. It doesn't happen because the individual or society wants or demands it. There are a few who even claim to have chosen this difficult lifestyle, to avoid the repressions of patriarchy, but they are a small minority.

Homosexuals do have one thing in common. All have had to make the same journey. They have had to review their lives, their families' expectations, their religion, their societal norms, and at the end accept that they must face tremendous opposition and discrimination yet stand up for their personal truth. This process is called "coming out." It is facing your personal truth. Admitting to yourself and others that you can only be what you are. They are as male, female, and homosexual as the Creator made them. It is this act that sets the spirit free but subjects your mind and body and emotions to the restrictions of a society that chooses not to recognize an individual's truth, integrity, civil rights, the love that fills his heart, her very humanity. For many this is a terrifying step that is never taken lightly. To be straight or gay is a difference to be honored, respected, acknowledged. But when that runs into the greater truth of our common humanity, it must give way. That is the true meaning of human rights.

And if we follow St. Francis, as I try always failingly to do, even humanity might not be the greatest truth. Increasingly I feel that humankind is but the articulate and self-conscious advocate for a living, breathing cosmos as singular and interconnected as a vast grove of identical aspens connected by a cosmic tap root, animate and inanimate somehow animate.

Primo Levi entered my life as he ended his. I discovered his book in 1987 while writing the annual University of Utah Reynolds Lecture, "Ends and Means in Conflict" (the 1989 McDougall lecture was its sequel) in Canterbury Cathedral in England. The week I read Levi, he took his own life in Italy. This eloquent victim of the Holocaust recognized that there will always be people who will deny the humanity of others. Having denied this humanity, they are then free from the restraint we place upon ourselves as our spirituality, our morality and ethics, and our laws demand respect for each other. But these individual people accomplish random and disconnected acts—horrible but not threatening the in-

tegrity of the whole society. But, Levi says, when *institutions*—church or state—accept the dehumanization of any group (Catholics, Mormons, blacks, women, Jews, Bosnians, Russians, gays, lesbians), that becomes the premise of a syllogism which when carried to its inexorable conclusion ends in genocide. The final solution.

The brilliant Stanford cultural theorist René Girard, and his equally brilliant disciple and my friend Gil Bailie (see Bailie, *Violence Unveiled* [New York, 1995]), have revealed the heart of the politics and the religiosity of the scapegoat: that process whereby society—or an individual—in a state of disintegration attempts to recollect itself by placing its own guilt on a victim, the scapegoat. Biblical religion demonstrates this phenomenon time and again and provides the only way out. Antique religion organized society based on an original scapegoating act: the death of one to foment enough passion that others in the hysteria of the moment might coalesce. The greatest evil in modern time—the Holocaust—is only the latest and greatest example. Hitler, an evil genius, played upon the scapegoat to organize Germany of the 1930s from the disintegrating chaos of loss in war, depression, and the greatest inflation the modern world has ever known. Jews, homosexuals, Slavs, communists, Russians, gypsies became the scapegoats. The sacrificial victims to foster a reunited Germany, and by that process to feed ever more victims to this monster God of Darkness who must be fed an increasing number of human sacrifices. This violence is insatiable. Like heroin addiction, temporary satiation can be maintained for a while only by increasing the dosage. Bailie reveals, from a biblical perspective, the only alternative: Love so enormous that violence and projection of darkness onto another is rejected for deep introspective non-violence. One who withdraws the shadow from projection onto another needs no objective enemy "out there." He has already met the enemy within. And that enemy is reconciled by integrating love.

During much of my life, I have fearfully seen the stranger as enemy. I thank God for friends—old, young, dead—who have helped me change ever so slowly. I have so far yet to go.

When I was sixteen and suffering from pneumonia, Dr. Nixon made that traditional house call, with penicillin in his black bag. He said, "Eddie, you're so healthy, really, that you'll live another ninety years!" I hold him to his promise. At my present stage of evolution, I'll need at least that many years.

I've recently had three back surgeries, and the pain as I write is constant. I've had to write this piece lying on the floor of my office and home. But the pain that matters isn't really in the back. The image that has been coming to me, repeatedly, is from an early episode of the original *Star Trek* series. In that episode, "Devil in the Dark," on a planet far

away, miners are beginning to be killed, inexplicably. They're mining rocklike nodules filled with rich minerals. Kirk, Spock, and crew go to the planet to investigate. Thousands of these goose-egg nodules have been harvested. Spock travels to the heart of the mine. There he finds a large turtlelike creature, but with rough, ugly, rocklike skin. Sensing a relationship between this homely, presumably subhuman creature, Spock places his hand on her to meld his mind with hers. Then he collapses from the pain. Unending, unbearable pain. Pain from this mother of the thousands of eggs, not rock nodules, animate, not inanimate. Those were her children. The miners in their ignorance were slaughtering her children. Isaiah said, "Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb" (49:15). In his own pain, Spock could not remove his hand from this grieving mother.

I put my own hand on thousands of pages of appalling stories of grief, grief and pain so enormous that I think I will die. And I can't remove my hand.

When I write something like this, it pursues me relentlessly. It follows me to my classes, to my home. I become even more absent-minded. Years ago at Chicago, my dear spouse, pregnant with a baby (who would die three months after birth), asked me to go into the bathroom and bring her her morning sickness pills. Reading a book and writing a dissertation, I wandered into the bathroom and somehow found my way back, with the water. She said, "Ed, where are the pills?" I said, "My hell, I just took them!" I suffered no morning sickness throughout the pregnancy.

Tonight I return home to write. I turn on the bathroom faucets to wash and wander out with an idea, pen in hand, looking for paper. I begin to write. Eventually returning to the bathroom, I discover, for the fourth time recently, water pouring out my sink, submerging my carpets. I call Class One; they no longer ask directions to my home. Then I find I put my pen, uncovered, in my favorite faded red shirt. Now with everlasting ink-mark to remind me of this essay.

I'm lying on the floor, listening to a magnificent guitarist, Michael Dowdle, perform a collection of Mormon and other Christian hymns. "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning," "High on the Mountain Top," "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief," "We Thank Thee, Oh God, for a Prophet," "Come, Come, Ye Saints," "Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words," and "Lead, Kindly Light," "All Creatures of Our God and Our King," "I Am a Child of God." There are no words. Just the guitar. I know the words. It's been a long time.

Cynthia, my colleague who helped in the creation of this essay, just handed me music the likes of which I've never heard before. A lesbian singing her sexuality. I hear Jamie Anderson sing "Bad Hair Day," "I'm Sorry," and "Straight Girl Blues." I laughed so hard I rolled around my

office floor. Then I wildly danced. Lord help me if a student or colleague wanders in. I must be violating some new state statute since I'm having so much fun. Sorry, Jamie, but you are now dancing with a straight man. A Mormon man! Sorry, Brigham. On second thought, I think he would laugh, cry, laugh again, and ask where he could get the CD. He would understand.

It is now Sunday morning, Palm Sunday. I'm still dancing with Jamie, taking her CD home and watching through my large front room windows, watching hundreds of my Mormon sisters and brothers stream into the chapel a stone's throw away. As the sun streams over Mount Olympus. No accidents.

Now I'm in my office, listening to Gregorian chants. Thinking of Sister Rosemary and Rome. We've been there together for many weeks, in 1987 and again in 1993. The first time, more naive and therefore more open, I blurted out: "Rose, don't you ever miss having children and a family?" I was then two years from my own divorce but, blessedly, I didn't know it. She said, "Ed, I've always had a family. I have mother, father, brothers, and sisters." With wonderful simple-mindedness, I said, "But you're celibate and can't have a husband or children." She said, "I have hundreds, thousands of children all over the world. I have a community in which I live. My sisters and brothers in Christ. I have friends in hospitals and schools and in jail." With more prescience than I knew, I concluded, "How do you move from one family to another?" She said, "Ed, as one family disappears, or at least changes form, another appears. God works that way. Don't fear."

Who is my family? What is family?

Here I sit in Utah, largely and initially colonized by Mormons fleeing Missouri where a governor issued an extermination order inviting their slaughter. Many were. And then Nauvoo. I've spent nearly a decade of my life writing of that time in the first legal history of the Mormon experience in the nineteenth century, *Zion in the Courts*. Polygamy was secretly practiced in Nauvoo by church leaders. The *Nauvoo Expositor*, a paper published by anti-Mormons and alienated former Mormons, exposed this practice (along with publishing outrageously false claims about Mormonism and church leadership). The destruction of the *Expositor* under the order of Joseph Smith was a precipitating cause of his murder along with his brother Hyrum.

Marriage—strange inexplicable marriage to the majority of Americans—was at the heart of this great mass movement and colonization of a major part of the western United States. Zina had been married and "sealed" to Joseph Smith in a temple ceremony and now, following Joseph's death, at her choice, was married "for time" to Brigham Young. I would come much later through this union, so strange for so many of my

fellow Americans.

The United States would ultimately wage war on the Mormons. Their civil rights, one by one, would all be denied. The right to vote, to serve on juries, to hold office (never mind that the Constitution prohibited a religious test for such honor), to emigrate, to not give testimony against one's spouse. Babies were born in jail to women who, though pregnant, remained there rather than testify against their husbands.

Finally the federal government crushed nineteenth-century Mormon culture, Mormon communality, theocratic government, and polygamy. It took an army and threatened seizure of all corporate property of the church, including our temples. But it worked. The Manifesto came. And statehood.

But did it really work? What are the limits of law? Of force and violence? Within fifty miles in any direction of where I sit on the University of Utah campus, thousands of fundamentalist Mormons continue to live with the people they love. In plural marriage.

The law, with all its savagery, may swoop down in an Arizona town at early morning while people are still asleep and rip children from the arms of their parents.

But then a society gasps at the savagery of what they've done. While never formally possessed of sufficient decency even to apologize for such a violation of fundamental human rights, the institutions of church, state, and media collectively realized that they had been colluding partners to a great crime.

I have no final answers regarding the deep mysteries of human love. I would approach this issue of love and sexuality as if it were a burning bush on sacred ground. I would honor the mystery. No, I'm not proposing a return to polygamy. But I am old enough to remember going with my grandmother Zina when I was six or seven to visit "Aunt So and So" and other "aunts." I vaguely knew that they were surviving widows of men living in polygamy when that practice formally ceased in Mormon culture. They loved each other.

When we marginalize and criminalize whole groups of people, why should we be surprised if some begin to act on that vision seen in the eyes of the predominant culture? If we deny the benefits of monogamy to whole groups of people, why should we be surprised if some are not monogamous?

What are the limits of the law? Where must compassion, non-judgment, inner-spirituality, long-suffering persuasion, and dialogue begin when law passes the point of being effective?

People who love each other will live together. They always have and always will.

We have much to talk about in our state and in our country and in

our world. Talk. And listen. It trumps law and violence most of the time when we reach down into areas as deep, as mysterious, as wonderful as our sexuality, religion, spirituality.

And love. So that we may refrain from judgment when there is so much we do not know. How can we legislate when, honestly, we do not possess the knowledge to know what we should be legislating?

What we do know is that we are all in the same soup. Together. If we drop the pretentiousness of position and power, we know this. We are all wonderfully, humorously, sadly, joyfully human. In the image of God. All of us.

Thomas Merton said it best:

> In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the centre of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed by the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I was theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, or spurious isolation. ... If only we could see each other [as we really are] all the time, there would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. ... I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other ... but this cannot be seen, only believed and understood (*Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* [Garden City, NY, 1968]).

The Last Battle: C. S. Lewis and Mormonism

Evan Stephenson

IT IS COMMON FOR MEMBERS OF THE LDS CHURCH to regard C. S. Lewis, the famous Anglican writer, as a "Mormon in embryo," who, if he were to have read the Book of Mormon, would have seen his life's work retold by its prophets and would have joined the church without hesitation. It is common to think of him as a man "who's Mormon but doesn't know it." (In fact, some Catholics see Lewis as a Catholic in embryo.[1]) His name frequently surfaces in church settings from gospel doctrine classes to general conference. An institute teacher I know once suggested that, to best understand the book of Deuteronomy, his students should study Lewis's *Voyage of the Dawn Treader.*

Because some general authorities like to quote Lewis, a large number of Mormons have concluded that his teachings are inspired. My uncle recalls a branch president telling him that "C. S. Lewis was a dry Mormon, who assuredly has accepted the Gospel in its fullness in the Spirit world."[2] While the church clearly does not derive its doctrine from Lewis, he nonetheless turns up in unexpected places. A recent example is President Ezra Taft Benson's sermon on the evils of pride which in places relied heavily on Lewis's *Mere Christianity.*

> Benson: "The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen."[3]
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> Lewis: "But Pride always means enmity—it *is* enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God."[4]

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1. See Peter Milward, *A Challenge to C. S. Lewis* (London: Associated University Press, 1995), 60. Yvonne Stephenson located this source. I thank Bill and Paul Heaton and Loran Dean, Loran Edward, Yvonne, and Angela Stephenson for their help and comments.
2. Mark Vasicek to Evan Stephenson, 2 May 1997.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," *Ensign* 19 (May 1989): 4-7, quote on 4.
4. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1960), 96.

Benson: "Pride is essentially competitive in nature."[5]
Lewis: "Now what I want to get clear is that Pride is *essentially* competitive—is competitive by its very nature ..."[6]

Benson: "Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves."[7]
Lewis: There is "no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others."[8]

Benson: The proud person's "reward is being a cut above the rest."[9]
Lewis: "It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest."[10]

Benson: "Pride is the universal sin, the great vice."[11]
Lewis: "... the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride."[12]

Lewis has also been used by Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Hugh Nibley, and perhaps his greatest admirer is Elder Neal A. Maxwell.[13] When Mormons

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5. Benson, 4.
6. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 95.
7. Benson, 5.
8. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 94.
9. Benson, 5.
10. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 95.
11. Benson, 6.
12. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 94. We know Benson was familiar with this section from *Mere Christianity;* he quotes from it on the first page but uses a different edition. Lewis saw pride as his "besetting sin" (*They Stand Together: The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves [1914-63],* ed. Walter Hooper [New York: Macmillan, 1979], Lttr. 131, p. 339; cf. Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis,* rev. and enl., ed. W. H. Lewis and Walter Hooper [San Diego: Harvest, 1993], 422; and *Christian Reflections,* ed. Walter Hooper [Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1994], 14).
13. Dallin H. Oaks, "Powerful Ideas," *Ensign* 25 (Nov. 1995): 27 (see 25-27); also Oaks, *Pure in Heart* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 96; Hugh W. Nibley, *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley,* 13 vols. (Salt Lake City: F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book, 1986-94), 1:187; 3:289, 321; 9:595; 10:337, 377; Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 29, 56, 97, 98; *Behold, I Say Unto You, I Cannot Say the Smallest Part Which I Feel* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 6, 15, 17, 18-19, 21, 23, 36, 44, 56, 71; *But for a Small Moment* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986), 56; *Deposition of a Disciple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 47; *For the Power Is in Them: Mormon Musings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 3-4, 15, 19-20, 24, 29; *Meek and Lowly* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 46, 48; *Men and Women of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), 35, 44, 50, 111; *A More Excellent Way: Essays on Leadership for Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 7, 98, 79-80, 129-30; *Not My Will, But Thine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988) 125, 145, 146; *Notwithstanding My Weakness* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 90, 98, 101-102; *Plain and Precious Things* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 48; *Sermons Not Spoken* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 20;*That My Family*

see their divinely inspired leaders borrow from Lewis, who can wonder why they also take a shine to him?

Though Latter-day Saints see parallels to Mormon doctrine in his ambiguous *Chronicles of Narnia,* Lewis actually commits to very little. Take, for example, the conclusion to *The Last Battle.* Aslan, triumphant, no longer assumes the form of a lion, and then what happens? "[T]he things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them," Lewis says. "All their [the childrens'] life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before."[14] What does this mean? Lewis gives no hints, but Mormon readers know the answer: Lewis is talking about "eternal progression."

Of course, members of other religions—Christian and non-Christian—also know what Lewis really meant: the One, the Incomprehensible, He Who Never Ends, Who Goes On Forever, Who Never Changes but Lasts Eternally. Obviously, Lewis was describing the ultimate mystery of all religions. In fact, Lewis himself wrote: "[The author of fiction] will find reviewers, both favourable and hostile, reading into his stories all manner of allegorical meanings which he never intended. (Some of the allegories thus imposed on my own books have been so ingenious and interesting that I often wish I had thought of them myself.) Apparently it is impossible for the wit of man to devise a narrative in which the wit of some other man cannot, and with some plausibility, find a hidden sense."[15]

Should Partake (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 75, 85; *Things as They Really Are* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), where he thanks George MacDonald and C. S. Lewis for "maximizing the light they [have] received"; however, "I do not get my theology from such men," ix; also 10, 20, 47-48, 61, 86; *We Talk of Christ, We Rejoice in Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 9, 18-19, 47, 96, 99, 109, 148-49, 156, refers to Lewis as "our friend," 166; *We Will Prove Them Herewith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 15, 62, 81; *Wherefore Ye Must Press Forward* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 34-35, 72-73, 124; *A Wonderful Flood of Light* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 18-19, 43; and most recently "Enduring Well," *Ensign* 27 (Apr. 1997): 9 (see 7-10). As William G. Dyer put it, Maxwell gravitates to writers such as Lewis at least as often as to Joseph Smith or the scriptures (in *Brigham Young University Studies* 8 [1968]: 463-65). George MacDonald once entitled some of his writings *Unspoken Sermons.* Maxwell wrote a book entitled *Sermons not Spoken.*

14. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: HarperTrophy, 1994), 228. This is the seventh of the *Chronicles of Narnia;* the others are: *The Magician's Nephew; The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe; The Horse and His Boy; Prince Caspian; Voyage of the Dawn Treader;* and *The Silver Chair.*

15. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, 1958), 99-100.

This essay attempts to make available to Mormons an accurate representation of the fundamentals of Lewis's philosophy[16] and compare them with their Mormon equivalents—specifically, the nature of humankind, good and evil, God and time, and the character of God. A simple listing of theological differences between Lewis and Mormonism would be long and probably boring. Instead, I will juxtapose the basic assumptions of the one against the other. In terms of self-consistency, I believe Mormonism surpasses Lewis. Furthermore, the two systems bear little resemblance to one another. One would sooner fit a camel through the eye of a needle than pour C. S. Lewis's wine into Joseph Smith's bottles.

Before beginning, however, a few misconceptions about Lewis need to be corrected. First, Lewis is *not* a theologian. No one insists more on this than Lewis himself.[17] He was a professor of literature, an essayist, and a novelist.

Second, Lewis *had* heard of the Book of Mormon. In the same way the "whole plan" of Milton's work is based on Virgil, he says, the Book of Mormon is based on the Bible.[18] Therefore, as Milton is the author of his own work, Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon.

Third, notwithstanding Lewis's broad-mindedness, he would *not* have favorably viewed the LDS church.[19] In fact, he despised some of its more conspicuous doctrines. The Word of Wisdom, for instance, would have offended him: "I do however strongly object to the tyrannic and unscriptural insolence of anything that calls itself a church and makes teetotalism a condition of membership." Anyone who introduces "the voice of Authority [by] saying that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" has

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16. A good sketch is W. Clayton Kimball, "The Christian Commitment: C. S. Lewis and the Defense of Doctrine," *Brigham Young University Studies* 12 (1972): 185-208. Kimball does not concentrate on his philosophy in much detail, noting: "A critical reader can find many points of doctrine wherein he differs from us. But we must not hold Lewis guilty for not having the insights of modern revelation" (205). *Brigham Young University Studies* also published one of Lewis's essays from *Christian Reflections* ("Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 [1968]: 33-48) five years after his death.

17. See Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (San Diego: Harvest Books, 1992), 101; *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1972), 62); *Mere Christianity*, vi, 43; and *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 426. At the same time, his loyalty to other churchmen and theologians should not be overestimated. See *Reflections on the Psalms*, 61; *God in the Dock*, 201; *Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 74; *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 9-10; and *Mere Christianity*, 38.

18. Lewis, "Literary Impact of the Authorized Version," *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 136.

19. W. Clayton Kimball, who has a soft spot for Lewis, admits as much. After searching the Lewis body of literature, he concludes that of all plausible references to the LDS church, "None of them could be called sympathetic" ("C. S. Lewis and the Defense of Doctrine," 205).

proved himself a "fanatic."[20] He would have called eternal families "unscriptural" and created "out of bad hymns and lithographs," and would sooner dream of "cigars in heaven."[21] He once described the "sort of religion" that believed in a "local deity who can be contained in a particular temple, island, or grove" as "a religion for savages."[22]

Finally, Lewis's powers of persuasion depended largely on his choice of topic: the fundamentals of conventional Christianity. As others have observed: "Lewis's persistent failing, ... was his proclivity for intellectual pastiche—for the debater's darting polemic, the bullying desire to overwhelm his opponent by force rather than reason."[23] He once found himself forced to revise one of his books because of a serious error.[24] Nor was Lewis a first-rate logician. Consider his reasons for believing that men, not women, should preside in the home: "[D]o you really *want* the Head [of the house] to be the woman? ... do you really want a matriarchal world? Do you really like women in authority?"[25] Elsewhere he added:

> If there must be a head, why the man? Well, firstly, is there any very serious wish that it should be the woman? ... There must be something unnatural about the rule of wives over husbands, because the wives themselves are half ashamed of it and despise the husbands whom they rule. ... A woman is primarily fighting for her own children and husband against the rest of the world. ... [The man] has the last word in order to protect other people from the intense family patriotism of the wife.[26]

Not all of Lewis's logic deserves its reputation.[27]

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20. Lewis, *Letter of C. S. Lewis*, 447; *Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper, rev. and exp. ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1980), 37; cf. 38. He further disapproves of the "fanaticism" of vegetarians (44).

21. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1961), 23, 54; cf. *Four Loves* (San Diego: Harvest, 1988), 188, 189.

22. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 167; "any adult religion believes" otherwise (168). Eloise Bell, in her review of *Christian Reflections*, overlooked Lewis's name-calling and advised Mormons to "go to him to learn how to be better Christians" (in *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 [1969]: 221-24).

23. Ralph C. Wood, Book Review, *Christian Century* 96 (1979): 804.

24. The book was *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*; see Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 144-45; referring to the defect in question, he says: "There is indeed a really serious hitch in that chapter (which ought to be rewritten)" (ibid., 179), and he later did.

25. Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 349-50.

26. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 87-88. "I believe that if we had not fallen, Filmer would be right, and patriarchal monarchy would be the sole lawful government" (*Weight of Glory*, 114).

27. Commenting on Lewis's attempt to prove universal morality, Robert Anton Wilson, a science fiction writer, says: "In my impression, Lewis demonstrated only that you can find an amazing amount of similarity between camels and peanuts if you emphasize only the contours of their backs and ignore everything else" (Wilson, *Natural Law* [Port Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited, 1987], 36). Another example of Lewis's sometimes tortuous logic is: "The Father gives all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father, and gives Himself to the world, and for the world to the Father, and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too" (*Four Loves*, 11).

The Nature of Humankind

Mormons have long enjoyed Lewis's wit and insights, but in at least one instance—eternal progression—he left his position ambiguous. Unfortunately, Mormons have relied on their (mis)interpretation of Lewis's writings on this issue in defending their own beliefs against conventional Christianity. One recent example comes from Stephen A. Robinson's entry in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*: "Mormons insist that the two categories [humans and God] are one: Humans are of the lineage of the gods. Latter-day Saints would agree entirely with C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* ..." Robinson then quotes the following passage from *Mere Christianity* (which I have placed in bold type):

> The command *Be ye Perfect* is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. **He said (in the Bible) that we were "gods" and He is going to make good His words. If we let Him—for we can prevent Him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a God or goddess, dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine,** a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness.[28]

Robinson thus presents Lewis as believing in the Mormon doctrine of eternal progression. Mistaken though he is, Robinson is not entirely responsible for his error, considering some of Lewis's other statements. For example: "Now get on with it. Become a god." Or, "the day will come when there will be a re-made universe, infinitely obedient to the will of glorified and obedient men, ... when we shall be those gods that we are described as being in Scripture." God Almighty "calls us to be gods ... [and will turn us each into] a real Man, an ageless god, a son of God, strong, wise, beautiful, and drenched in joy."[29]

If we didn't know better, we would agree with Robinson. It sounds so convincing: "We are bidden to 'put on Christ', to become like God." But then Lewis tells us that to "put on Christ" refers to our participation "in the Divine attributes" and to Christ's supplying us "what we need"

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28. Stephen A. Robinson, "Doctrine: LDS Doctrine Compared With Other Christian Doctrines," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:403 (see 399-403). Another example is Lloyd D. Newell, *The Divine Connection: Understanding Your Inherent Worth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 29. Lewis's words are from *Mere Christianity*, 160. Angela Stephenson helped acquire references from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*.

29. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*, 57; *God in the Dock*, 87, 112; cf. *Letters to Malcolm*, 123, 124; and *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 440; *Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 158.

as well as making us good and happy.[30] This also sounds familiar: "Those who put themselves in His Hands will become perfect as He is perfect." Once again, however, Lewis explains: "—perfect in love, wisdom, joy, beauty, and immortality."[31] None of this adds up to the Mormon view, and the dream of a Mormon Lewis vanishes altogether when he spells out his position: "For though we shall be 'as the angels' and made 'like unto' our Master, I think this means 'like with the likeness proper to men' as different instruments that play the same air but each in its own fashion."[32] Lewis believes humans can fulfill their personal potential, but this potential is not remotely connected to God's. Creator and creature are "different instruments" entirely. Indeed, Lewis concedes the promise that "we shall be like Him"; but this glory is promised "with an enormous wealth of imagery" and must not be taken literally.[33] Godliness to Lewis means to possess power, love, wisdom, beauty, etc., and to dwell in heaven,[34] not that we ourselves will ever attain such attributes as omniscience, omnipotence, or omnipresence, for example.

Latter-day Saints view humans as eternally unique. Their theology gives men and women divine self-existence and a strong, literal parent-child relationship with God. "The intelligence of spirits had no beginning," says Joseph Smith. "God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. ... Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle."[35] All spirits are literally begotten of God (D&C 76:24). "We are the offspring of the Lord," says Elder Orson Pratt. "[W]e are just as much the sons and daughters of God as the children in this congregation are the sons and daughters of their parents."[36] This relationship makes logical

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30. Lewis, *Problem of Pain,* 41-42; cf. *Mere Christianity,* 151.

31. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 161.

32. Lewis, *Weight of Glory,* 67.

33. Ibid., 10; glory is being appreciated by God (ibid., 11ff).

34. A son of God is a "prototype of Christ, perfectly enacting in joy and ease of all the faculties and all the senses that filial self-surrender which Our Lord enacted in the agonies of the crucifixion" (*Problem of Pain,* 66-67).

35. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd. ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 6:311.

36. In B. H. Roberts, *Mormon Doctrine of Deity: The Roberts—Van Der Donckt Discussion* (1903; Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers, 1982), 270; also Orson Pratt in *Journal of Discourses,* 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: F. D. Richards, 1854-86), 19:281, 283; James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (1890; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 474. "The words 'Our Father' are not meaningless, but express the relationship between God and man. And not in any mystical way either, but in reality, the relationship being as much a fact as that existing between any father and son on earth" (B. H. Roberts, *The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles, and Man's Relationship to Deity,* 10th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965], 281); also John Taylor in *Journal of Discourses,* 8:5. God "is actually the Father of your spirits, just as your earthly parents are of your bodies" (George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth,* ed. Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Zion's Book Store, 1957], 128); "we are the offspring of Him and His wife" (ibid., 129; also 1-2, 6, 9-10, 11, 107, 110, 131).

humankind's ascent to godhood—we are just emulating our heavenly father.[37]

Lewis, on the other hand, departs from Mormonism on both counts. God is self-existent; we are not. Earth is our beginning; our lives commence here, not before.[38] Lewis believes God has created the universe from his "imagination," as a novelist creates a plot and characters.[39] God "is original, we derivative." Derived from what? God's mind, like everything else: "He invented—as an author invents characters in a novel—all the different men that you and I were intended to be."[40] Even our minds do not completely belong to us.[41]

Nor is God the father of humanity in the Mormon sense. Lewis finds the Lord's prayer a little strange. After all, we address God as "Our Father," but he isn't *really*: "the odd thing is that He has ordered us to do it."[42] Why odd? Because the "difference between an archangel and a worm is quite insignificant" compared to the gulf separating God and humanity.[43] And how are we different? We are sinful and awful. We soak life with "vomit" and "corruption." It "passes reason to explain why any creatures, not to say creatures such as we, should have a value so prodigious in their Creator's eyes."[44] We, including all of existence, "are other than God; with an otherness to which there is no parallel: incommensurable."[45]

Especially loathsome to Lewis is the human body. It is difficult to imagine anything more grotesque for God than assuming a physical form.[46] He did it for a good reason, but "if self-revelation had been His sole purpose He would not have chosen to be incarnate in a human

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37. "Is it a strange and blasphemous doctrine, then, to hold that men at the last shall rise to the dignity that the Father has attained?" (B. H. Roberts, *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, 33; also 93; cf. his stirring defense of the human intellect, 130-34).

38. Lewis, *Four Loves*, 153: "we know nothing of previous existences."

39. Cf. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 30-31; cf. 39; *Miracles*, 9, 65; *Problem of Pain*, 141-42; *Letters to Malcolm*, 72-73; *Christian Reflections*, 168ff, 171; *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, 1955), 227n1.

40. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 174; *Problem of Pain*, 30; *Weight of Glory*, 119; *Reflections on the Psalms*, 79-83.

41. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 46: "our thinking can succeed only because it is a drop out of the ocean of His intelligence"; "our very power to think is His power communicated to us" (*Problem of Pain*, 30).

42. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 147.

43. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 29; *Miracles*, 74. "What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man. What God creates is not God; just as what man makes is not man" (*Mere Christianity*, 122).

44. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 35.

45. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 73.

46. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 140, says it would be like a human becoming a crab or slug.

form."[47] So finite, so limited are the confines of the human brain that one "could not, presumably, be the vehicle of omniscient consciousness"; consequently, the incarnate Jesus was not omniscient.[48] So how do we relate to God? As a "good dog" does to "its master"—except that people can think.[49] Furthermore, "the infinite value of each human soul is not a Christian Doctrine. God did not die for man because of some value He perceived in him. The value of each human soul considered simply in itself, out of relation to God, is zero."[50]

It should be clear that Lewis does not believe that "as God is, man may be." Our perfection is to "reflect" God's; we have no luminosity of our own.[51] The gulf between original and derivative, creator and creature can never be bridged. Indeed Lewis uses the word "god" not as Spencer W. Kimball does, but as Boethius did: "[A good man is happy;] happy men are gods. Wherefore the reward of good men, ... is to become gods."[52] Mormons should not think that Lewis, a pious Anglican, would teach their church's version of eternal progression. As Lewis always said, however, "almost anything can be read into any book if you are determined enough."[53] And as he wrote to those who try to use his name in support of their own beliefs: "I should be very glad if people would not draw fanciful inferences from my silence on certain disputed matters." His own views were "no secret. ... 'They are written in the Common-Prayer Book.'"[54]

Good and Evil

The subject of good and evil in Mormonism is complex.[55] According

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47. Lewis, *Miracles*, 76. "Christ emptied Himself of His glory to be Man" (*Weight of Glory*, 84).

48. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 122.

49. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 50; cf. *They Stand Together*, Lttr. 188, p. 463ff. To further the analogy of the dog: "I don't want my dog to bark approval of my books" (*Reflections on the Psalms*, 93); likewise, God does not especially need our approval. Lewis gives several analogies to illustrate our relationship to God in *Problem of Pain*. The analogy of the dog and its master is repeated, but he concludes that when it comes to authority and obedience, in that sense alone we are to God as father is to son (*Problem of Pain*, 32-33).

50. Lewis, *Weight of Glory*, 115.

51. Lewis, *Four Loves*, 180. That is what makes God so majestic—how else could he love such worthless creatures? (Ibid. 180-81, 183; *Weight of Glory*, 115; *World's Last Night and Other Essays* [San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1987], 86.)

52. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* IV.3, trans. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1968), 317.

53. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 99.

54. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, vi, viii; cf. *Letters to Malcolm*, 101, and *Weight of Glory*, 47. Orson Pratt had nothing nice to say about the Church of England (*Journal of Discourses*, 19:281, 313), nor did Charles W. Penrose (ibid., 26:25) or Erastus Snow (ibid., 9:321).

55. Two helpful overviews are John Cobb, Jr., and Truman G. Madsen, "Theodicy," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1473-74; and David L. Paulsen, "Evil," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:477-78.

to LDS teachings, evil means immoral and good means moral; the one is the opposite of the other.[56] Furthermore, both are principles, not actual physical events or behaviors. Being opposites, they derive their identity from contrast to each other.[57] If good did not exist to be the opposite of evil, and vice versa, neither would exist. Good proves evil and evil good. Thus Brigham Young said: "We must know the evil in order to know the good. ... All facts are demonstrated by their opposites. ... You cannot know the one without knowing the other."[58] Nor does either vary according to the choices or actions of God or men and women. As moral principles, they are fixed and immovable. That is Lehi's point (2 Ne. 2:16). As Brigham implied, evil is eternal even if we shun it.[59]

God did not create good or evil. They exist independent of him. He transcends neither and cannot be implicated because of their existence. "The principles of truth and goodness ... are from eternity to eternity," continued Brigham. "The principle of falsehood and wickedness ... are also from eternity to eternity. These two powers have ever existed and always will exist in all the eternities to come."[60] And George Q. Cannon noted: "[E]vil is as eternal as good, error as eternal as truth ..."[61]

Free will, good, and evil are inseparably connected. (Church leaders

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56. John A. Widstoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, ed. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 205. In this context opposite means reversed or backwards, not in the Augustinian sense that evil is the "absence" or "privation" of good. See Augustine, *Enchiridion* 11, trans. J. F. Shaw, in Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series*, 14 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 3:240, hereafter cited as PNF1; Augustine, *Confessions* III.7.12, trans. V. J. Bourke, in Ludwig Schopp et al., eds., *Fathers of the Church*, 92 vols. (New York: CIMA Publishing, 1947-), 21:61, hereafter cited as FOC.

57. Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses*,11:234-35. John Taylor in ibid., 26:91; cf. 19:77f; 22:302; 24:194-97; also Nephi L. Morris, *Conference Report* (Oct. 1905): 79; Charles H. Hart, *Conference Report* (Apr. 1913): 75-76; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Century I*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 2:403: "Good implies its opposite, evil. Law, which carries with it the idea of order, implies disorder ... [Without like contrasts,] Universal insanity must result."

58. Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:373; cf. 6:145; *Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A Widstoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1946), 66, 346; cf. Orson Hyde in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:374f; Orson Pratt in ibid., 2:240.

59. Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:2-3.

60. Brigham Young in ibid., 11:234-35; 10:2-3. "Good and evil then, in Latter-day Saint philosophy, are not created things. Both are eternal" (B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History*, 2:404; cf. John Taylor, *Mediation and Atonement* [1882; Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1975], chap. 23, pp. 163, 168).

61. George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth*, 15. "Every principle proceeding from God is eternal" (Joseph Smith, Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 181; cf. 189; hereafter cited as *Teachings*).

commonly speak of evil and free will together.[62]) If we do not have free will, it is impossible for us to choose good or evil for the simple reason that we cannot choose anything. When we cannot choose anything, we cannot be evil, for evil or immorality, by definition, is chosen. Likewise, any being liable to good and evil has free will. God himself, then, must be able to choose evil,[63] or, as Alma says, "God would cease to be God" (42:13, 22, 25). As Lehi requires, a being thought to be good does so by refusing evil (2 Ne. 2:11). God has precisely the same relationship to moral law as we do,[64] and is obedient.

For Lewis, good is inseparably linked to God:

> Are these things [the demands of moral law] right because God commands them or does God command them because they are right? If the first, if good is to be *defined* as what God commands, then the goodness of God Himself is emptied of meaning and the commands of an omnipotent fiend would have the same claim on us as those of the "righteous Lord". If the second, then we seem to be admitting a cosmic dyarchy, or even making God Himself the mere executor of a law somehow external and antecedent to His own. Both views are intolerable.

In other words, if God bases his commands for good and evil on some criterion, there is a law above him which he must obey. But if there is no reason for commanding one thing to be "right" and another "wrong," there is no such thing as ultimate "right." For Lewis, God is the origin of all classifications and yet falls under some classification. He continues: "But it might be permissible to lay down two negations: that God neither *obeys* nor *creates* the moral law. The good is uncreated; it never could have

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62. See, for example, Gordon B. Hinckley: "It is the old eternal battle ... The forces of *evil* against the forces of *good*. We all exercise *agency* in the choices we make" (in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward With Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996], 583, emphasis added); also *Teachings*, 187; James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 4:325f; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History*, 2:405ff; James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 47-49. Other examples include Mark E. Petersen, *Conference Report* (Apr. 1945): 41, see 42, 46; also *Conference Report* (Oct. 1948): 134; Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report* (Oct. 1945): 46; *Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. C. Williams (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 182-86; Marion G. Romney, *Conference Report* (Apr. 1955): 38; cf. Ezra Taft Benson, *Conference Report* (Apr. 1955): 47. "In considering our free agency and the opposition that exists in all things we must never forget that God always functions within eternal laws" (Franklin D. Richards, *Conference Report* [Apr. 1967]: 75). John A. Widstoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, 206-207; Widstoe cites Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Joseph F. Smith.

63. George Q. Cannon in *Journal of Discourses*, 26:188; says God has free will; James E. Talmage, *The Great Apostasy* (1909; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), chap. 2, p. 34n2: "In this respect, man is no less free than are the angels *and the Gods*" (emphasis added).

64. "God always functions *within* eternal laws" (Franklin D. Richards, *Conference Report* [Apr. 1967]: 75; emphasis added).

been otherwise ..." Lewis then links God and good in a way similar to the mystical union of the traditional Christian trinity. "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."[65] Thus God's never-beginning existence *is* the definition of moral law, and as an uncreated principle it defines heavenly eligibility: "not a condition arbitrarily laid down by God, but one necessarily inherent in the character of Heaven ..."[66] Moral law is a principle, a standard or yardstick.[67]

Good is eternal, but what about evil? Lewis's philosophy breaks dramatically with Mormonism on this point. Evil cannot be the reverse of good,[68] since it would then have the same origin and duration. He does not explicitly define what he means by evil, but he does provide some hints. For example, pain is a manifestation of evil. "Pain is unmasked, unmistakable evil; every man knows that something is wrong when he is being hurt."[69] Pain is not evil because of one's vicious action; just "being hurt" or feeling pain is evil. But this evil is of a special breed—God uses it. It is his punishment, his "megaphone." We can differentiate between our own fancies and God's will by asking if our belief is painful[70]—but pain itself is *not* good. It is "immediately recognizable evil" and "evil impossible to ignore."[71] However, its usefulness for the cause of good cleanses it, and just as "suffering is an essential part of what He [God] calls Redemption,"[72] pain is a sanitary evil.[73]

It is not the idea of pain, or the definition of pain, but the experience or event of pain that is evil. Evil, unlike good, is *not* a principle. Evil, for

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65. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 79, 80. Lewis wrote this in 1943. In 1940 Lewis apparently thought differently: "It has sometimes been asked whether God commands certain things because they are right, or whether certain things are right because God commands them. ... I emphatically embrace the first alternative" (*Problem of Pain*, 88). His last utterance (1958) could be interpreted both ways: "He [God] enjoins what is good because it is good, because He is good" (*Reflections on the Psalms*, 61).

66. Lewis, *Four Loves*, 187.

67. Other statements of Lewis confuse the situation. See, for example: "Unless the measuring rod [moral law] is independent of the things measured, we can do no measuring" (Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 73; cf. 66). To call God good is to measure him, yet he cannot be independent of the "measuring rod."

68. God is "*That which has no opposite*" (Lewis, *They Stand Together*, Lttr. 188, p. 462). Remember that God, for Lewis, "is good." Therefore, good also is "that which has no opposite."

69. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 80.

70. Ibid., 86-87; cf. 94-95. This is not to say that anything painful is God's will; rather, if you suspect something to be God's will, and it is painful, you can be sure that it is God commanding and not your fancies.

71. Ibid., 81.

72. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 27. This statement, though contained in a fictional work, is explicit where others are not.

73. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 104.

Lewis, is a perversion of good.[74] Evil is produced, artificial, and its manufacturer is humankind, starting with the fall of Adam. We ourselves are to blame for the calamities of history. Abusing our God-given free will, we have contorted the holy, beautiful nature originally issued us. "It is men, not God, who have produced racks, whips, prisons, slavery, guns, bayonets, and bombs ..."[75] Evil is created, and its nature thus assures that it can never be totally opposite to good.

The same applies to people. Every evil person has an intellect; every evil person has free will; and every evil person exists. These attributes alone establish a minimum good in all beings—even Satan.[76] Lewis observes this and writes: There is no "perfect badness." Evil "is a parasite, not an original thing. The powers which enable evil to carry on are powers given it by goodness. All the things which enable a bad man to be effectively bad are in themselves good things—resolution, cleverness, good looks, existence itself."[77]

Good, then, is an uncreated standard, an intangible law independent of all beings (God excluded). Evil is a perversion of the products yielded by good, a process of events, tangible and dependent on free will for its production. "Badness is not bad *in the same way* in which goodness is good."[78] Furthermore, evil cannot exist without good, but good can and will outlast its parasite.[79]

Lewis supposes good deserves our attention not because it is morally superior to evil but because it is older. Any theological teaching giving an eternal nature to evil "gives evil a positive, substantive, self-consistent nature ... In what sense can the one party be said to be right and the other wrong? If evil has the same kind of reality as good, the same autonomy and completeness, our allegiance to good becomes the arbitrarily chosen loyalty of a partisan."[80] (Again, Mormonism teaches the opposite.)

Also Lewis believes there is no "perfect badness" because every qual-

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74. Lewis, *God in the Dock,* 23f; *Mere Christianity,* 35; *Letters of C. S. Lewis,* 501; *Problem of Pain,* 82.

75. Lewis, *Problem of Pain,* 77. The presence of evil attributable to humanity: *Problem of Pain,* 57, 60, 73, 76; cf. 98-99 and 123; *Letters to Malcolm,* 69; Evil "is not God's contribution but man's" (*Problem of Pain,* 72); also *Miracles,* 121; *They Stand Together,* Lttr. 223, p. 514; *Mere Christianity,* 37ff; "The very idea of freedom presupposes some objective moral law which overarches rulers and ruled alike" (*Christian Reflections,* 81).

76. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters,* vii.

77. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 35-36; cf. 34 and *They Stand Together,* Lttr. 188, p. 465.

78. Lewis, *God in the Dock,* 23; *Mere Christianity,* 35.

79. Interestingly, Arthur Greeves, a lifelong friend of Lewis, advances something similar to the Mormon position. Lewis, *They Stand Together,* Lttr. 188, p. 463: "you [Greeves] say 'no good without evil.' This on my view is absolutely untrue: but the opposite 'no evil without good' is absolutely true." Cf. *God in the Dock,* 23.

80. Lewis, *God in the Dock,* 23; *Mere Christianity,* 34.

ity that provides an opportunity for evil is itself good: existence, will, intelligence, etc. But intelligence is not innately good; it can be used for good. No one argues this point more forcefully than Lewis himself: "The mere event of becoming a General isn't either right or wrong in itself. What matters morally is your attitude towards it." It is "two-edged," like our patriarchal world: "The authority of father and husband has been rightly abolished on the legal plane, not because this authority is in itself bad ... but because fathers and husbands are bad." Everything falls into this category; "it is sometimes good and sometimes bad."[81] Thus Lewis contradicts himself and the obstacle of a minimum good in every evil being is therefore removed. Satan or anyone else may freely attain a "perfect badness."

Finally, Lewis sees the necessity for free will: good must be freely chosen; no choice, no good.[82] But by Lewis's definition, God himself is not "good":

> Whatever human freedom means, Divine Freedom cannot mean indeterminacy between alternatives and choice of one of them. Perfect goodness can never debate about the end to be attained, and perfect wisdom cannot debate about the means most suited to achieve it. The freedom of God consists in the fact that no cause other than Himself produces His acts and no external obstacle impedes them ...[83]

This "freedom" frees God from resistance, but at the price of abolishing his freedom of choice. God has no choice but to do good. Such a being, by Lewis's standards, cannot be praised for its actions. When God doesn't choose to be benevolent, whence his benevolence? Why would we praise

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81. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 15; *God in the Dock*, 56; *Weight of Glory*, 114; "Sex in itself cannot be moral any more than gravitation or nutrition" (*Letters to Malcolm*, 14; cf. 89); "two-edged" things can be, for example, honor or sex (*Christian Reflections*, 21-22); "A bad book is to be deemed a real evil in so far as it can be shown to prompt to sensuality, or pride, or murder" (ibid., 31), but books innately are not evil—they must promote something awful first; *Problem of Pain*, 98.

82. Of all people who have ever lived, nobody has understood this concept better than Lewis: In a "world [or state of being] where wrong actions were impossible, . . . *freedom of the will would be void*" (Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 21; emphasis added); "Try to exclude the possibility of suffering which the order of nature and the existence of free-wills involve and you find that you have excluded life itself" (ibid. 22; cf. 17-18); "one of the things He made, namely free will of rational creatures, by its very nature *included the possibility of evil*" (ibid., 57; emphasis added); "it is better for you and for everyone else in the long run that other people, including wicked ones, should exercise free will than that you should be protected from cruelty or treachery by turning the human race into automata" (*Miracles*, 181); "free will, though *it makes evil possible*, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having" (*Mere Christianity*, 37; emphasis added).

83. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 23; cf. *Letters to Malcolm*, 115, 116.

a being that has no choice but to love us? Is that truly love?[84]

God and Time

In *Mere Christianity* Lewis addresses an interesting problem that has troubled many believers in God. How can God hear the prayers of everyone? Lewis is broad-minded and does not brush aside the question with a list of absolutes. He provides an answer: God exists *beyond* time. In other words, past, present, and future exist for him simultaneously. The infinity of incoming prayers, past, present, and future, exist as one eternal now. Thus God has eternity to answer our prayers. "If a million people are praying to Him at ten-thirty tonight, He need not listen to them all in that one little snippet which we call ten-thirty. Ten thirty—and every other moment from the beginning of the world—is always Present for Him."[85] For God, there "are no tenses ..."[86]

Because of this, God does not differentiate among past, present, and future. This also explains how he is omniscient—he knows everything by continually witnessing everything firsthand. Lewis further reveals God's immutability. Because change occurs in time, and God is not in time, he does not change. In fact, this God must transcend time, for once he exists in all time simultaneously, he is stuck there forever.

Of course, time-transcendence does not begin with Lewis, who likely derived it from Boethius or perhaps Augustine.[87] Boethius' understanding traces either to Augustine, the first Christian to devise it,[88] or

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84. "If a game is played, it must be possible to lose it" (Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 106). But God has no free will and therefore cannot lose. Apparently, Lewis's God isn't even playing the game.

85. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 131; *World's Last Night*, 99f; *Letters to Malcolm*, 48, 109, 110; *Problem of Pain*, 49; *Miracles*, 93, 177-81; *Reflections on the Psalms*, 82; cf. *A Grief Observed*, 22. He admits this time-transcendence doctrine is "not in the Bible or any of the creeds" (*Mere Christianity*, 133).

86. Lewis, *Four Loves*, 176.

87. Lewis mentions Boethius: Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 128; and analyzes him, *Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 88-89; gives credit to Boethius (*God in the Dock*, 22), and recommends his work as among "the Christian classics" (ibid., 202-203); that Boethius is his source is also the conclusion of Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 534; cf. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* V.6.

88. Roland J. Teske, *Paradoxes of Time in Saint Augustine* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1996), 18, 22, 56; this is the Aquinas Lecture for 1996; also Augustine, *City of God* XI.21, trans. M. Dods, in PNF1 2:216; *Confessions* XI.1.1; 7.9; 13.16, trans. V. J. Bourke, in FOC 21:327, 336, 342-43; ibid. XIII.37.52, in FOC 21:455; cf. ibid. I.6.10, in FOC 21:11: "Thy years are but an ever-present day." There is something similar before Augustine by Lactantius, *A Treatise on the Anger of God* 9, trans. W. Fletcher, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 7:264 (hereafter cited as ANF). It seems Ignatius of Antioch conceived of a time-transcendent God. He instructs Poly-

to Plotinus, whom Boethius repeats almost exactly.[89] Both Boethius and Augustine ultimately got the notion from Plotinus—a Neo-Platonist.[90] As Hugh Nibley points out, Neo-Platonism's founder was a Christian apostate.[91]

The doctrine has some fascinating consequences, as Lewis shows. Don't we receive answers *after* we pray? We see it this way, but God doesn't. To him prayer does not precede an answer. Lewis takes it farther: prayers are answered "not only before we make them but before we are made ourselves."[92] Every prayer offered in the universe may have been taken into account in the universe's creation.[93] "Thus, shocking as it may sound, I conclude that we can at noon become part of causes of an event occurring at ten a.m."[94] The crucifixion, the Creation, the virgin birth, the Second Coming, all happen at the same time.[95] Peter is still denying Christ,[96] at the same time he is being forgiven.

Lewis saw some problems with this model, many stemming from the scriptures. How can an unchanging God *become* man? How can he become anything? Lewis seems to stumble here: "On the one hand something really *new* did happen at Bethlehem ... On the other hand there must be a sense in which God, being outside time, is changeless and nothing ever 'happens' to Him."[97] In fact, Lewis finds himself cornered when he commits to the reality of the Ascension.[98] Ancient Christian writers

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carp to "keep your eyes on Him who has no need of opportunities, being *outside* all time" (Ignatius, *Epistle to Polycarp* 3, in *Early Christian Writings*, trans. Maxwell Staniforth [London: Penguin Books, 1987], 110; emphasis added); Gerald G. Walsh translates *Polycarp* 3: "Look for Him who is *beyond* all time, the Eternal ..." (FOC 1:125; emphasis added); the *Ante-Nicene* short version reads: "Look for Him who is *above* all time, eternal ..."; and the long version: "Look for Christ, the Son of God; who was *before* time, yet appeared *in* time ..." (ANF 1:94; emphasis added); cf. *Apostolic Fathers*, trans. K. Lake, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1977), 1:271.

89. Lloyd P. Gerson, *Plotinus* (London: Routledge, 1994), 116.

90. Plotinus, *Ennead* III.7.3; hints are found in Plato, *Timaeus* 37c-38d; *Parmenides* 141; Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948), 97-116; Augustine's model of time "owes at least as much to Plotinus as it does to the scriptures" (Teske, *Paradoxes of Time in Saint Augustine*, 4; cf. 32f).

91. Hugh Nibley, *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, 3:101; on Neo-Platonist influence, see David L. Paulsen, "Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity: Origen and Augustine as Reluctant Witnesses," *Harvard Theological Review* 83 (1990): 105-16; Kim Paffenroth, "Paulsen on Augustine: An Incorporeal or Nonanthropomorphic God?" *Harvard Theological Review* 86 (1993): 233-34; David L. Paulsen, "Reply to Kim Paffenroth's Comment," *Harvard Theological Review* 86 (1993): 235-39.

92. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 48.

93. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 79.

94. Lewis, *Miracles*, 179.

95. Cf. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 72; *Miracles*, 177-81.

96. Cf. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 49.

97. Lewis, *They Stand Together*, Lttr. 214, p. 505.

98. Lewis, *Miracles*, 148ff.

allowed "the spiritual symbolism of the sky [to] flow straight into their minds without stopping to discover by analysis that it was a symbol," and although this means they were mistaken, they were "not entirely mistaken." Jesus did not actually ascend into heaven, "but it also resembles and anticipates a type of thought which will one day be true." Where did he go? Not to Heaven but to his own presence as the Divine, which, of course, never actually ceased. "Christ's divine Nature never left it, and therefore never returned to it: and his human nature ascended thither not at the moment of the Ascension but at every moment."[99] Because this type of thought *will* be true, however, it takes on more than symbolic significance, though it happened entirely differently.[100]

The foremost challenge to the omniscience of God comes from the well-known free-will-versus-divine-foreknowledge debate. If God knows everything before it happens, are we really free? According to Lewis, we err in using the word "before." God does not see the future, because for him no future exists. All is present. How can we blame God for merely watching the present?[101]

In terms of self-consistency, Lewis's model clearly has problems. He proposes a time-transcendent God who has an eternity to answer all prayers. But a God without future or past, for whom all time is present, does not have an infinity to answer prayer—he has no time. Even thinking would be impossible. For what is thinking but successive states of mind? Lewis would be forced to admit this, since he situates memory as the key attribute of consciousness. A being with no memory, therefore, is not conscious.[102] This being could never create anything, for creator must precede creation. Everything he does is done at all times simultaneously. Lewis's God can never "do" anything. These problems are only the beginning of its incompatibility with Mormon doctrine.

Mormonism does not advocate a time-transcendent God. First, it is not part of official Mormon doctrine; second, God progresses incrementally in knowledge; third, an absolute future eviscerates free will; and, last, God's knowledge of the future, unlike his knowledge of past and present, is conditional, not absolute.

True, Joseph Smith once proclaimed: "The great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, ... the past, the present, and the future were and are, with Him, one eternal 'now;' ..."[103]

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99. Ibid., 158-59, 160, 155.

100. The details of the Ascension perplexed Lewis: "There is a mystery here that I will not even attempt to sound" (Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 126).

101. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 133; *Discarded Image*, 89; *Screwtape Letters*, 128; Neal A. Maxwell teaches the same thing (e.g., Maxwell, *Things as They Really Are*, 28-29).

102. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 119-20.

103. *Teachings*, 220; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:597; this quote was showcased in the *Ensign*, "The Great Jehovah: Statements from the Prophet Joseph Smith About the Savior of the World," *Ensign* 24 (June 1994): 8-9.

Yet others of Joseph's revelations and sermons contradict the idea of time transcendence. For example, a month before he delivered the above discourse, his translation of the Book of Abraham, which assumes that God passes through time, began appearing serially in the *Times and Seasons.* God lives near a star named Kolob, the seasons of which define his measurement of time (Abr. 3:4, 9). The following year Joseph reiterated that the measure of God's time is determined by where he resides (D&C 130:4-5).[104] Could God see all time as an ever-present "now," yet measure its passage by the motion of time-bound planets? This suggests a time-transcendent God who does not transcend time. (At least one other Mormon theologian similarly contradicted himself.[105])

Joseph had no qualms about changing his mind.[106] BYU philosopher David L. Paulsen concedes, for example, that Joseph's "understanding of the Father's embodiment was enlarged and refined as he continued to receive and reflect on revelation."[107] "Can a man who makes mistakes and learns by trial and error like other people possibly be a prophet?" asks Hugh Nibley. "If not, we reply, then no man was ever a prophet."[108] In 1840 Joseph interpreted the "offering" in Malachi 3:3 to mean that the church would soon begin practicing animal sacrifice.[109] He later reinterpreted this to refer to "a book containing the records of the dead" (D&C 128:24).[110] Finally, Joseph's sermon on transcendence was never canonized, whereas Abraham 3 and D&C 130 were.[111]

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104. On this, see Hyrum M. Smith, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1941), 1002-1003.

105. Orson Whitney expected that "the future will be an open vision, ... the past, present and future will be one eternal day, as it is in the eyes of God our Father, who knows neither past, present or future" (*Journal of Discourses,* 26:196), while at the same time holding that God's days are a thousand years, "corresponding to one revolution of the great and mighty planet upon which God our Father dwells" (ibid., 26:265; cf. Erastus Snow in ibid., 19:324).

106. See Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Joseph Smith and the Millenarian Time Table," *Brigham Young University Studies* 3 (1961): 55-66.

107. David L. Paulsen, "The Doctrine of Divine Embodiment: Part I," *Brigham Young University Studies* 35 (1995-96): 32 (see 28-32); see *Lectures on Faith,* comp. N. B. Lundwall (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, n.d.), 5:2, p. 48.

108. Hugh Nibley, "As Things Stand at the Moment," *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 (1969): 72 (see 69-102).

109. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church,* 4:211f.

110. Cf. Widstoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations,* 245-47.

111. Even without citing Joseph's canonized revelations, it is apparent that Lewis's ideas of God's transcendence do not prevail in Mormonism. See Kent E. Robson, "Time and Eternity," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* 4:1478-79; see also Orson Pratt, "The Kingdom of God," *Orson Pratt's Works,* vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1945), 36; also 37. In his debate with Cyril Van Der Donckt, B. H. Roberts reproves belief in a time-transcendent God (*Mormon Doctrine of Deity,* 96); and John Taylor in *Journal of Discourses,* 5:261; 10:273-74; 13:15, 229-30; 14:269, 339; 20:222; 21:15-16; 23:334-35; cf. 1:151; also Orson Hyde in ibid., 2:62; 6:337-38; Daniel H. Wells in ibid., 17:347; Brigham Young in ibid., 12:107-108; Orson Pratt in B. H. Roberts, *Mormon Doctrine of Deity,* 272.

What exactly does Joseph mean by eternity? He says that eternity has no beginning and no ending, like a wedding ring.[112] Eternity does not presuppose God's consciousness of time as "now"; instead, it emphasizes the opposite. According to Truman Madsen, "The Mormon reads modern revelation to say that God himself is in time," and that "the 'eternity' of God is his endlessness in time."[113] "From eternity to eternity [God] is the same, and his years never fail" (D&C 76:4), but he still has years to speak of. When Charles Penrose says God lives "in the midst of eternity," he explains that God is like any spot on Joseph's ring, without bound in any direction,[114] unlike C. S. Lewis, who requires God to be *everywhere* on Joseph's ring. Time is a section of eternity; they differ only in amount.[115] Joseph F. Smith asserts that God "is an eternal being," which means "without beginning of days or end of years. He always was, he is, he always will be."[116]

Thus the dilemma posed by Alma 40:8—"all is as one day with God, and time only is measured unto men"—disappears. There is no sunrise or sunset for God—no beginning or end. Eternity is a seamless, unending whole, and mortality (or "time") is so short in comparison that the interval between first and second resurrections makes no difference to him. As Erastus Snow says, "But the scriptures tell us that time only is measured to man [Alma 40:8], that is to say, time is a term used in reference to the short period belonging to mortality, while eternity is used in the measure of the time of the Gods, ..."[117]

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112. *Teachings*, 181, 354.

113. Truman G. Madsen, "Introductory Essay: Mormonism as Historical," *Reflections on Mormonism: Judeo-Christian Parallels*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1978), xii, xiii; Neal A. Maxwell says the phrase, "My course is one eternal round," signifies "a repetitiveness in the execution of His plan of salvation" (in Hugh Hewitt, *Searching for God in America* [Dallas: World Publishing, 1996], 130); repetition requires time.

114. Charles W. Penrose in *Journal of Discourses*, 26:27f.

115. John Taylor in *Journal of Discourses*, 25:93: "We are dual beings associated with time and eternity; I might say associated with the past, the present, and the future"; also 5:191; 13:223-25; *Gospel Kingdom*, ed. G. H. Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 17; also Brigham Young: "here is time, where is eternity? It is here, just as much as anywhere in all the expanse of space; a measured space of time is only a part of eternity. We have a short period of duration allotted to us, and we call it time" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:367); Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 47; Joseph Smith, "King Follett Sermon," in *History of the Church*, 6:313; cf. his usage of the phrases "eternity of felicity" (ibid., 6:316) and "eternity of bondage" (ibid., 6:205); B. H. Roberts, *The Gospel*, 8.

116. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 64.

117. Erastus Snow in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:274. Other scriptures may give the impression of time-transcendence (see Moses 1:6 and D&C 38:2, both of which refer to "all things" without specifying what this means). Cf. B. H. Roberts, *Rasha—the Jew* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1932), 112-13. See also Abraham 2:8: "I know the end from the beginning," which James Talmage explains means God *deduces* the future based on the past, not that he sees it as "now." James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Classics ed. (1915; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 27; all editions, Chap. 3, n1 (=*Great Apostasy*, 2:9, p. 20).

Adopting Lewis's doctrine of God would require that we first discard our belief in eternal progression. As Wilford Woodruff states: "God himself is increasing and progressing in *knowledge*, power, and dominion, and will do so, worlds without end. *It is just so with us.*"[118] Woodruff not only believes God learns but that the same destiny awaits us, thus "As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be."[119] Because human destiny and God's present are one and the same, we understand that since we will learn forever, so does God.[120] Brigham Young went so far as to say that the only beings who don't learn forever are those who have "sinned against God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost ..."[121]

Not all Mormons have agreed with this teaching, notably Joseph Fielding Smith and his son-in-law Bruce R. McConkie.[122] Joseph Fielding accepted the premises but not the conclusion. He admitted that God is an exalted man,[123] and twice quoted Brigham Young saying exalted men learn forever.[124] As for McConkie, he wrote: "It should be realized that God is not progressing in *knowledge*, truth, virtue, wisdom, or any of the attributes of godliness. *He has already gained these things in their fullness.*"[125] Orson Pratt once opined similarly: "The Father and the Son do not progress in *knowledge* and wisdom, because they already know all things past, present and to come."[126] Pratt's belief sparked a sharp response from Brigham Young's First Presidency: "We do not wish incorrect and unsound doctrines to be handed down to posterity under the sanction of great names to be received and valued by future generations

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118. Wilford Woodruff in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:120; emphasis added; George Q. Cannon: "There is progress for our Father and for our Lord Jesus ... It is endless progress, *progress from one degree of knowledge to another degree*" (*Gospel Truth*, 118; emphasis added).

119. "In the Lineage of the Gods," *The Vision, or The Degrees of Glory*, comp. N. B. Lundwall (Independence, MO: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1945), 151; see also Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 390; Stephen A. Robinson, "Doctrine: LDS Doctrine Compared With Other Christian Doctrines," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:399-403.

120. The most outspoken in asserting that exalted beings learn forever is Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:350; 3:203; 6:344; 8:10; *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 248-49; B. H. Roberts, *The Falling Away* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), 213; cf. *The Gospel*, 281f, and John Taylor in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:5; Widstoe is also explicit, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, 182-85.

121. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 249.

122. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956), 1:5-10; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1972), 239.

123. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:10-11; cf. 2:43ff.

124. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Take Heed to Yourselves!* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 90-91; and *Conference Report* (Apr. 1939): 102.

125. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 239; emphasis added.

126. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 2:234; emphasis added; he restates this in many forms.

as authentic and reliable, creating labor and difficulties for our successors to perform and contend with, which we ought not to transmit to them." In fact, these ideas were "errors" so serious that one's "personal feelings ... ought to sink into comparative insignificance" considering their potential to "perplex and mislead posterity."[127] The church's position has not changed since then. In the words of then-apostle Gordon B. Hinckley: "Heaven lies in the growth that comes of improvement and achievement." Dropping any notion of "a static heaven," he notes that in the eternities to come "there will be activity and learning." This learning is "necessary to eternal progress ... and we shall continue in the world to come."[128]

The debate regarding divine foreknowledge and human free will does not hinge on who knows the future but whether an inevitable future exists. Free will implies more than one option and no constraints in choosing a particular possibility. The function and nature of free will are to resolve uncertainty. Uncertainty lies before an action of free will (the future), while the past reveals its certain result. Without uncertainty, free will does not exist.[129] This is why Lewis's argument does not convince. True, if God sees time as an ever-present "now," he could not from his point of view be blamed for depriving humanity of free will. From our point of view, however, time is fixed and certain at every moment, and therefore never unfixed and free. God sees our future activities as present, but that also makes our future part of God's fixed present and therefore predetermined. Rather than rejoice that no time is predetermined because with God there is no "pre-," we mourn because no matter where in time we look, God sees the whole, unalterable course of history, and there is nothing we can do to change it. From our frame of reference, we are not free at all.

Some early LDS theologians including Brigham Young and George Q. Cannon have asserted the absolute foreknowledge of God.[130] They

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127. Ibid., 2:231-32.

128. Gordon B. Hinckley, *What of the Mormons?* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), 8, 12.

129. Truman Madsen, Frank Salisbury, and Hugh Nibley all use uncertainty in arguing for free will; they seem to see a connection between the two (Madsen, *Eternal Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970], 64-65; Salisbury, *Truth: By Reason and Revelation* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965], 242, 243-44; Nibley, *Collected Works*, 9:417). See also Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 137-143. These writers all discuss uncertainty, as in nature, as an argument for free will; the opposite is done by Lucretius *(De Rerum Natura* II.217-20, 251-62, 289-93, cf. 243-50) with his random "swerve."

130. George Q. Cannon, *Conference Report* (Apr. 1899): 67; Cannon in *Journal of Discourses*, 26:188-89; Brigham in ibid., 6:97; 7:290; cf. 10:4-5 and 3:273; a vague reference is Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 13; a more recent example is Neal A. Maxwell, *But for a Small Moment*, 98.

have also defended human free will, not appreciating that they are mutually exclusive. James E. Talmage recognized the logical problems introduced by absolute divine foreknowledge and tried to clear them up. He concluded God's foreknowledge is not "confirmed fact." God reads the future as a father foresees the fate of his children, or as a teacher predicts the success or failure of his or her students.[131] In *Jesus the Christ*, commissioned by the church and approved by three First Presidencies, Talmage writes that God's "foreknowledge is based on intelligence and reason." God deduces the future using "a knowledge gained by long observation and experience in the past eternity of our primeval childhood ..."[132] He does not infallibly observe what *must* happen; he predicts what may happen "under given conditions."[133] Hugh B. Brown, Legrand Richards, and others hold that God foresees logically—that his knowledge is thus conditional, not absolute.[134]

Both the Doctrine and Covenants and Book of Mormon discount the possibility that God knows an absolute future or that he sees it as "now." Take, for example, Joseph Smith's prophecy of the Civil War, where a "voice declared unto me" that it "may *probably* arise through the slave question" (D&C 130:13; emphasis added). A God of absolute foreknowledge would never use "probably." In 1830 the Lord directed Joseph to "go speedily unto ... Colesville ... and they *shall* support thee ... But *if* they receive thee not, I will send a cursing" (D&C 24:3, 4; emphasis added). If God sees a future welcome in Colesville as "now" or infallibly knows it, there are no "ifs" to speak of. If he sees rejection, why mislead Joseph and say "they shall support thee"? Consider also D&C 35:18: "And I [God] have given unto him [Joseph] the keys of the mystery of those things which have been sealed, ... *if* he abide in me, and *if not*, another will I plant in his stead" (emphasis added). Messengers never cease to promise the Nephites prosperity and peace "if" they repent. For absolutists, "if" does not figure in God's vocabulary; its presence in Mormon scripture ef-

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131. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 27; all editions chap. 3, n1 (=*Great Apostasy*, 2:8-9, pp. 19-20); *Conference Report* (Oct. 1914): 103-104; likened to his warning to "a merry party of intending picnickers" (*Conference Report* [Apr. 1933]: 109).

132. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 27.

133. Talmage, *Conference Report* (Oct. 1914): 103, 104; *Jesus the Christ*, 17; cf. *Conference Report* (Oct. 1929): 66.

134. Hugh B. Brown, *Conference Report* (Apr. 1965): 42; Legrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 346; cf. Daniel H. Wells in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:45; says Sjodahl: "Could the people [to whom warnings were issued] have repented and averted calamities predicted and foreseen? If so, how could they have been foreseen, except conditionally?" (in Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, Appendix 10:2, p. 442).

fectively destroys any supposition of absolute divine foreknowledge.[135] Mormonism's God lacks absolute knowledge of the future because the future is not absolute. He knows all things past, present, and that do not change over time (such as eternal laws and truths), yet learns as an uncertain future becomes a certain past.[136] But isn't God then powerless and defeated by time? No, instead of staring at one course for history, he sees every possible course and devises a plan so perfect that its success is always sure.

In Defense of the Inconceivable

We cannot construct Lewis's exact beliefs about the character of God because he did not believe his books do the subject justice. It would be more than unfair, then, to hold him to a set of descriptions he himself did not find adequate. (He spent much of his life trying to "translate" the unthinkable, inexpressible God into the common vernacular.[137]) We can, however, treat his attitude toward a knowledge of God and his defense of the Christian tradition.

Lewis scatters to the wind any attempt to understand something as

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135. For more "ifs," translated by Joseph himself, see 1 Ne. 2:24; 14:1, 5-6; 15:11; 2 Ne. 1:32; 28:17; Jarom 1:10; Mosiah 7:30-31; 27:16; Alma 9:24; 12:33; 36:9, 11; 37:12-13, 15-16, 22; 60:33; Hel. 10:12; 11:14; 15:17; 3 Ne. 10:6-7; 16:4, 10, 13, 15; 20:15-16, 28; 21:6, 22; Ether 13:20. See also D&C 3:9; 5:5, 7, 18-19, 22, 24, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35; 6:11, 13, 22, 25, 27, 18, 31; 10:53, 65-66; 11:8, 10, 21; 12:11; 17:1, 8; 18:8, 28; 19:33; 24:4; 25:2; 33:13; 34:11; 35:18-19; 39:10-11; 42:10, 23, 26; 43:3-4; 56:12; 58:14-15; 63:55-56; 81:1-6; 82:24; 95:11-12; 97:17-18, 25-26, 27; 98:21-22; 105:18; 106:8; 108:5; 110:8; 115:15-16; 124:16-17, 24, 45-46, 108, 115. I may be criticized for laying down one universally-held view of God and time for all Mormons, when, in fact, there are other views. I would point out that, if nothing else, the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants are both remarkably explicit in teaching that God does not see the future as "now" and/or that he is in time but still sees the future absolutely. Every time the Lord or his prophets use terms such as "if" or "probably," it is in referring to the future, and *always* when someone else's free will is concerned. Said Joseph Smith to Stephen A. Douglas: "Judge, you will aspire to the presidency of the United States; and *if* you ever turn your hand against me or the Latter-day Saints, you will feel the weight of the hand of the Almighty upon you" (Roberts, *A Comprehensive History*, 2:183; emphasis altered); said Brigham Young to the Saints: "*If* you will be faithful to your covenant, I will now prophesy that the great God will shower down means upon this people" (*History of the Church*, 7:465; emphasis added).)

136. Peter Crawley once wrote: "A number of times I have asked groups of colleagues whether they believe God continues to grow in knowledge or God knows everything and no longer progresses in this respect; invariably opinion has divided about evenly on this question" ("The Passage of Mormon Primitivism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 [Winter 1980]: 26 [see 26-37]). Actually, we can believe both since the future is not a "thing" to know. God knows "all things" without knowing the future; hence, he learns new "things" with the passage of time, yet knows "all things" at any given time.

137. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 89-103, 240-44, 254-57; *They Stand Together*, Lttr. 11, p. 338; Kimball, "C. S. Lewis and the Defense of Doctrine," 196-97.

ineffable as God.[138] We have no right even to expect such, let alone feel deprived or abandoned.[139] God is so far from us that "there isn't any good talking about Him."[140] This doesn't bother Lewis. In fact, he presents the inconceivability of conventional Christian doctrine as its own best defense.[141] "Indeed, if we found that we could fully understand it [God], that very fact would show it was not what it professes to be ..."[142] He sometimes refers to God as "the thing" or "it."[143] For what else could he call the "inconceivable, the uncreated the thing from beyond nature"; the "incomprehensible," "unthinkable," and "invisible"; the "absolute being of the superpersonal God"; "on the other side of existence"; "a begetting love, a love begotten"; "the abyss of the self-existing Being"; that is "more like a mind than anything else we know"?[144]

Lewis may not know what God *is*, but he certainly knows what God is *not:* anthropomorphic, the idea that God possesses human attributes, such as a physical body, hearing, sight, a physical home, and so on. Perhaps the best single example of modern Christian anthropomorphism is the Mormon doctrine which proclaims God to be an exalted man. Lewis protests against such doctrine. Only "simple-minded" "savages" without an "adult religion" would believe such nonsense.[145] In *The Screwtape Letters,* the seasoned devil Screwtape counsels his up-and-coming pupil, Wormwood, on a sure method for leading souls away from God: While his "patient" prays, fix his mind on pictures of God as an embodied being. This will lure him from the "real, eternal, invisible Presence, there with him in the room,"[146] and into the arms of Satan. What could be more absurd than a God who exists in time and space?

Again Lewis saw problems with the Christian status quo, and pro-

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138. Lewis, *Miracles,* 89.

139. Lewis, *Problem of Pain,* 74.

140. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 127.

141. We cannot comprehend God, "but we can at least comprehend our incomprehension, and see that if there is something beyond personality [such as God] it *ought* to be incomprehensible in that sort of way" (Lewis, *Miracles,* 85); "the troublesomeness [of Christian doctrine] does not of course prove it to be true; but if it were true it would be bound to have this troublesomeness" (ibid.); also *Christian Reflections,* 23; *Mere Christianity,* 32-33, 121; at one point the difficulty of Christian doctrine held him back from believing (*They Stand Together,* Lttr. 172, pp. 426-27).

142. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 43.

143. Ibid.

144. For these expressions, see Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 43 (cf. *A Grief Observed,* 22); *Miracles,* 76; *Christian Reflections,* 80; *Problem of* Pain, 141; *Mere Christianity,* 17-18.

145. Lewis, *Miracles,* 158; *Christian Reflections,* 167, 168.

146. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters,* 22; Lewis once postulated that it is we and not God who are really immaterial and phantomlike, that God is extra-corporeal, so real that the common matter forming us seems like only spiritual gas (*Weight of Glory,* 69; *They Stand Together,* Lttr. 218, p. 511).

posed two rules for scriptural exegetes: "1) Never take the [anthropomorphic] images literally. 2) When the *purport* of the images—what they say to our fear and hope and will and affections—seems to conflict with the theological abstractions, trust the purport of the images every time."[147] Following his rules, we will never believe in a comprehensible or physical God, or honor the "purport" or emotional message of scriptural "images." How can God love us and, as the *Book of Common Prayer* teaches, be without passions? Lewis replies: "God doesn't *have* love. He *is* love."[148] Does this mean that in those scriptures where God suffers grief or gets angry, he *is* grief or anger? No, replies Lewis, in those cases it's "analogical."[149]

Why shouldn't we understand anthropomorphic images literally? Because a broad program of literalism would make unraveling the scriptures an impossible task: "Taken by a literalist, He [Jesus] will always prove the most elusive of teachers."[150] The moment anthropomorphism became an issue, Lewis claims, the church condemned it.[151]

Lewis distinguishes between what the scriptures "picture" and what they mean. Thus much of the Bible is a "picture" for something else, often the opposite of what it seems to say:

> They [the Christians] may picture the Father as a human form, but they also maintain that He has no body. They may picture Him older than the Son, but they also maintain the one did not exist before the other ...[152]

> The first person of the Trinity is not the Father of the second in a physical sense. The Second Person did not come "down" to earth in the same sense as a parachutist, nor reascend into the sky like a balloon, nor did He literally sit at the right hand of the Father.[153]

When on the cross Jesus cries out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (Matt. 27:46), he seems to be saying that God has forsaken him. But Lewis sees it differently, asserting that "The Father was not *really* absent from the Son when He said 'Why hast thou forsaken me'"[154] Wouldn't early Christians disagree? Perhaps, but "the early Christians were not so much like a man who mistakes the shell for the kernel as like a man carrying a nut which

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147. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 52.
148. Cf. Lewis, *Miracles*, 92-93.
149. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 51, 96-97.
150. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 119.
151. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 184; *Weight of Glory*, 86.
152. Lewis, *Miracles*, 73-74.
153. Lewis, *Weight of Glory*, 85.
154. Lewis, *Letters to an American Lady*, ed. Clyde S. Kilby (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 38.

he hasn't yet cracked."[155] Lewis excuses the difficult imagery and doctrine of the New Testament as products of naive, simple-minded ignorance.[156] Thus no matter what the early Christians insist, no matter how soberly they relate their assumptions, Lewis reads it all as an elaborate cryptogram, a primitive allegory stating in naive terms what the creeds spell out in metaphysical jargon.

As for Lewis's opinions on the Trinity, they flow from the pens of Augustine, Chrysostom, and Cranmer. He adds a twist that cannot be ignored by Lewis students, however:

> [To say Jesus was God and man] does *not* mean that He was a human body which had God instead of the normal human soul. It means that a real man ... was in Him so united with the 2nd Person of the Trinity as to make one Person ... if the Divine Son had been removed from Jesus what w[oul]d have been left w[oul]d have been not a corpse but a living man.[157]

Conclusion

Lewis does not disagree with every aspect of Mormonism. For him, all religions have some truth.[158] His view of Satan and hell, for example, has a familiar ring. "I believe in angels, and I believe that some of these ... have become enemies to God ... Satan, the leader or dictator of devils, is the opposite, not of God, but of Michael."[159] Hell is not a fiery dungeon of torture, but "the Nothing,"[160] where the condemned's punishment is "the mere fact of being what he is."[161] Yet, as Lewis himself would say, this parallel is insignificant,[162] since we do not look to Lucifer for our salvation.

Lewis's doctrine shares other similarities. He believes in prayer,[163]

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155. Lewis, *Weight of Glory*, 87.

156. Lewis, *Miracles*, 75; *Weight of Glory*, 85-86. Lewis believed early Christian superstitution could be cured by a course in philosophy at Alexandria.

157. Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 382f.

158. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 29; *Weight of Glory*, 82-83; *God in the Dock*, 54, 102, 132.

159. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, vii. On fallen angels (and / or devils): Lewis, *Four Loves*, 15; *Problem of Pain*, 122f; *God in the Dock*, 56-57; *Mere Christianity*, 35, 36. Reality of Satan: Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 60, 178; *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 501; *God in the Dock*, 23-24.

160. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 56.

161. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 111; cf. 116 and 136.

162. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, vii.

163. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, 40ff; *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 299, 411; *Reflections on the Psalms*, 93; *God in the Dock*, 104-07; *Christian Reflections*, 142-51; *World's Last Night and Other Essays*, 3-11.

miracles,[164] that Jesus is God, that he atoned for us,[165] that he is completely good.[166] Lewis also agrees that God loves us,[167] that God will forgive us,[168] and that the scriptures are true and useful.[169] Like Mormons, he wants us to praise and trust God.[170] But clearly the majority of such parallels corresponds to any number of Christian and non-Christian religions.

Lewis's Mormon admirers like him because he defends "the cause of Christian decency."[171] Yet, as Lewis himself believes, there's nothing peculiarly Christian about decency, which belongs as much to Jew as to gentile, to Christian as to pagan, to Mormon as to Anglican.[172] Lewis was not particularly interested in "the cause of Christian decency." He concerned himself more with the cause of conventional Christianity, his understanding of which assumes either the opposite of Mormonism or something radically different. In C. S. Lewis, Latter-day Saints do not find a unique figure who mirrors their own theology; they find impressive common ground between themselves and their fellow Christians.

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164. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms,* 109-10; *God in the Dock,* 25-37, 72-75, 134ff; *Christian Reflections,* 145, 150; *Miracles, passim.*

165. Lewis, *They Stand Together,* Lttr. 212, pp. 502-503; cf. Lttr. 214, p. 505; *Reflections on the Psalms,* 126-27; (atonement) *Problem of Pain,* 49, and *Mere Christianity,* 43, 44, 47, 121; *Miracles,* atonement redeems from death, 125ff.

166. Lewis, *They Stand Together,* Lttr. 188, 463; *Problem of Pain,* 38-39, 57f, 88.

167. Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis,* 438; *Problem of Pain,* 27-28, 29-30, 34f, 40; *Weight of Glory,* 130-31; *God in the Dock,* remembers us despite worldly standing, 49; "God wants to give you a real and eternal happiness," 52; also 154; *Mere Christianity,* 121.

168. Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis,* 410; cf. *Reflections on the Psalms,* 14, 25; *Weight of Glory,* 119-25; is merciful (ibid., 130, 132); *God in the Dock,* is merciful to the heathen, 110.

169. Lewis, *Letters of C. S. Lewis,* 479-80; *Reflections on the Psalms,* 19, 111-12.

170. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms,* 90-98; *Letters of C. S. Lewis,* 391; *Weight of Glory,* 30; *Problem of Pain,* 41f; cf. 133; will lead to happiness, *Mere Christianity,* 39; (exemplify Christ) 150ff; *Christian Reflections,* glorify God, 26.

171. Kimball, "C. S. Lewis and the Defense of Doctrine," 205.

172. Lewis, *Abolition of Man, or Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), Appendix, 97-121; also *Mere Christianity,* 3-7, 10-12, 64, 121; it is true that in *Abolition of Man* and some essays (e.g., "The Poison of Subjectivism" in *Christian Reflections*), he forms a theoretical defense against subjectivism, but this defense is for all morality, not "Christian decency."

Sacrament Hymn

Lee Robison

Jesus Deathkiller,
God's Lifer, Earth Rover, Gift:

Be sure,
in your name and our hope,
we set these feet where
they will go, these hands—why
they will touch, these lips—how
they will linger at the proxy cup.

Be sure.
Our mouths mix no
sugar or saccharine
with this alter loaf, and we know our
mean aching has not touched the
harrow that raked you back to
Peace. We live with this in
grace.

And be sure.
Yearning's furrow frowns our
mortal brow and bounds our
fleeting plod of
Raker's earth.

And know.
We find hope in
that holy void where
your joy raged like
a doomed son's spurned
heart, raging pure.

The Dilemma of the Mormon Rationalist

Robert D. Anderson

> *Of all hatreds there is none greater than ignorance against knowledge.*
>
> —Galileo

> *[The trial of Galileo] was a vast conflict of world views of whose implications the principals themselves could not be fully aware.*
>
> —Georgio de Santillana[1]

IN THE DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY OVER THE PAST 900 YEARS, no incident has so symbolized the struggle between faith and rationality as has the trial of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). With his development of the telescope and discovery of the moonlike phases of Venus, he concluded that the sun was the center of the universe and challenged a literal interpretation of the Bible. The Catholic church enjoined him to present his views as a hypothesis only and to give equal weight to the traditional view of the universe. When he published a book in 1632 that presented his sun-centered view, he was called to Rome, threatened with torture, and judged by the Inquisition. Strictly speaking, the church never formally declared the theory of a sun-centered universe heretical, and "Galileo was tried not so much for heresy as for disobeying orders." Found guilty of the *Vehement Suspicion of Heresy,* he avoided torture and death by recanting and was condemned to imprisonment in his own house in 1633; he died nine years later.[2] During that time, however, he continued to believe in a sun-

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1. Georgio de Santillana, *The Crime of Galileo* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), both quotes on 137.

2. While Galileo stood condemned by the highest councils in the church, Catholics emphasized that neither the Copernican view nor Galileo was condemned by the pope *ex cathedra.* De Santillana, *Crime,* 315n16, 319, esp. n20. For further information on Galileo's development of the telescope and realization that the phases of Venus made a literal interpretation of the Bible (Ps. 104:5, Eccl. 1:5, Jos. 10:12-13) impossible, see Owen Gingerich, "The Galileo Affair," *Scientific American* 247 (Aug. 1982): 132-44, esp. 143; Santillana, *The Crime of Galileo;* Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), esp. 1-46, 14-15, 38; and Ernan McMullin, ed., *Galileo: Man of Science* (Princeton, NJ: Scholar's Bookshelf, 1988).

centered universe and wrote a work that laid the foundation for modern physics.[3] Today Galileo is universally recognized as a father of modern science, and his trial the *cause célèbre* of the twin conflicts of faith versus reason, obedience versus individual freedom.

In the more than three centuries since Galileo, the results of science have been so profound and far-reaching that we in the West have come to suspect all supernatural claims and to look first for other, more rational explanations.[4] Most religions have accommodated the discoveries of science, but many fundamental religions maintain their belief in the supernatural by frequent appeals to so-called "groupthink."[5] Within such religions group praise is given for maintaining a belief without external evidence and greater praise for holding firm in those beliefs despite considerable contradictory evidence. The conflicts of faith versus rationality and obedience versus free inquiry have become central in the dilemmas facing today's rationalist Mormon, and his or her dilemma can be seen as part of an ongoing history of the struggle between reason and fundamentalism.

Civilized people modify treasured beliefs slowly, and some not at all. Fundamentalism, a label worn with pride by those "who wanted to do battle royal for the Fundamentals of Protestantism,"[6] rose in the United States between 1910-20 in opposition to liberalism, termed "Modernity"

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3. The *Discourses and mathematical demonstrations regarding two new sciences,* whose manuscript was secreted out of Italy by Prince Mattia de Medici, was ultimately printed by Elzevir in Holland in 1638.

4. A Catholic Jesuit scholar a century ago agreed when he looked back 300 years to the witchhunting trials: "[W]e now know how much is purely natural which even the most enlightened men of their age formerly accounted supernatural." Robert Schwickerath, S.J., "Attitude of the Jesuits in the Trials for Witchcraft," *American Catholic Quarterly Review* 27 (1902): 475-516.

5. Groupthink: "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action. ... Groupthink refers to a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment that results from in-group pressures. ... *The more amiability and esprit de corps among the members of a policymaking in-group, the greater is the danger that independent critical thinking will be replaced by groupthink, which is likely to result in irrational and dehumanizing actions directed against outgroups."* Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 2d ed., 9-13, emphasis in original. Methods of group enhancement of religious belief may be found in C. D. Batson, P. Schoenrade, and W. L. Ventis, *Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 204-29; and H. H. Kelly, "Salience of Membership and Resistance to Change of Group Anchored Attitudes," *Human Relations* 8:275-90.

6. A basic work on fundamentalism is James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press, 1977, 2d ed. 1981). The above quote is from Lionel Caplan, "Fundamentalism as Counter-culture: Protestants in Urban South India," in Lionel Caplan, ed., *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 156.

or "Modernism," which seemed to be developing too fast or too convincingly. Modernism consists of scriptural criticism, scientific discovery, and the general conditions of modern culture.[7] Fundamentalist opposition to "culture" frequently includes attempts to "reverse the trend of contemporary gender relations which are seen as symptomatic [or causative] of a declining moral order."[8]

A second defining characteristic of "fundamentalism" is adherence to a "corpus of sacred writings [i.e., scripture], the belief in whose veracity constitutes a prime test of faith."[9] Researchers quickly realized that these two common threads defined "fundamentalism" internationally in both Christian and non-Christian belief systems, and broadened use of the term accordingly. Mormonism is clearly "fundamentalist" by the second characteristic of belief in inerrant scripture, continues today to oppose Modernism,[10] and like other fundamentalist religions rose in response to a "liberal" threat. The roots of fundamentalism have been traced back to the first and second "Great Awakenings" two hundred years ago, and the rise of Mormonism can be understood as part of this reactionary response to this earlier form of Modernism.

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7. Jonathan Webber, "Readjustment of Jewish Society in the Modern World," in Caplan, *Studies*, 96.

8. In our century their original struggles were with evolutionary thought (seen in the 1925 Scopes "Monkey Trial"), secular studies such as the 1910 translation of Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, and the women's suffrage movement. Caplan, "Introduction," in Caplan, *Studies*, 18.

9. Barr, *Fundamentalism*, 1-132. I use the term rationalist for those whose thinking and behavior are not based on acceptance of these scriptures as absolute, and are willing to examine, reexamine, and then modify or even abandon belief if the evidence so warrants. Those who promote scripture as absolute despite lack of historical or scientific confirmation are referred to as fundamentalists and their defenders apologists. Once scripture is assumed to be valid, the thinking of the fundamentalist may be solidly rational. "Protestant fundamentalism places a 'very strong emphasis' on Biblical literalism. For Jewish fundamentalists, it is the rabbinic law (*halacha*) which is regarded as the authentic and inerrant amplification of the Torah; for Sikhs the Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Book which symbolizes and carries the authority of the 'living Guru'; for Sri Lankan Tamil worshippers of Siva, the Agamic canons are as sacred as the Vedas; while for Muslims, it is the Quran [Koran] and the Sunna (the traditions and example of the Prophet and his companions) which provide the irreducible written sources, and upon which ... the body of Quranic laws ... is theoretically based. ... Fundamentalism ... tends to represent these texts as timeless, out-of-time, and so valid for all time ... [and] implies an ahistorical world-view." Caplan, "Introduction," 14-15, 17.

10. Louis Midgley, "The Acids of Modernity and the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," in George D. Smith, ed., *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 189-226; Martin E. Marty, "Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," in Smith, *Faithful History*, 169-88; O. Kendall White, Jr., *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), review by Louis Midgley in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [hereafter FARMS], 1994), 283-334.

Holy Scripture counsels us to seek "nothing higher, nor attempt to know," [and] that we "leap not over the bounds which the Fathers set," [but] Galileo disregards this counsel, [and] subjects the heavens to his invention.

—Friar Campenella, clarifying the position of the Catholic hierarchy while defending Galileo

I am proposing not that this book be not condemned, but that it be not condemned, as they would, without understanding it, without hearing it, without even having seen it.

—Galileo[11]

The Age of Enlightenment immediately preceded the beginnings of Mormonism, and has come to be represented by fifteen to twenty writers united in Deism at the expense of Christianity. The clearest exposition on evaluating miracles came from David Hume, an atheistic Scotsman who looked for a future free of "Ignorance, Christianity, and stupidity."[12] His extreme atheism needs to be considered in his arguments, but he is as good an example from the Enlightenment as Voltaire, Gibbons, or Paine, and demonstrates why these men shook the roots of Christian belief and left many people threatened by the idea that ours was the only world that existed.

Hume noted we live in a world of probabilities and recommended that we weigh belief in miracles by the number of arguments for and against, subtracting the latter from the former to decide the strength of the miracle under consideration. The statistical rarity of a miracle is evidence against its having happened. To believe in miracles requires abandoning daily common experience and therefore common sense. His most famous lines summarize,[13]

> [N]o testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavors to establish. ... When anyone tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable, that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or the fact,

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11. De Santillana, *Crime*, 95n21; Galileo in his *Letter to the Grand Duchess*, quoted by de Santillana, *Crime*, 97.

12. Letter to Hugh Blair, 6 Apr. 1765, in Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), vol. 1, *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, 20; see also 409-19.

13. David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, reprinted from the posthumous edition of 1777 and edited with introduction, comparative table of contents, and analytical index by L. A. Selby-Bigge, and text revised and notes by P. H. Nidditch, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 109-31.

> which he relates, should really have happened. ... [T]here is not to be found, in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned good-sense, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion [or] of such undoubted integrity, as to place them beyond all suspicion.

We sense the general truth in these lines and use their principles in our everyday lives. Such writings led to the so-called "Treason of the Clergy"[14] in abandoning Christian belief. As early as 1720 Cardinal de Bernis said, "[I]t was no longer considered well-bred to believe the gospels."[15] Sermons were pacifying, gentle concepts with no answers, leaving ordinary people with no compensating hopes. In England, beginning at Oxford, and then in the American colonies, the first counter-response, termed "The Great Awakening," came in the 1740s and centered around the emotional message of John Wesley (1703-91), founder of Methodism, who with others began the first form of evangelical fundamentalism.[16] Then followed a relative quiet—almost a dearth—of religious upheaval until the "Second Great Awakening" (1799) ignited a blaze of revivalist fervor that swept over western New York for thirty-five years until the area was termed the "Burned-over District."[17] In this emotional maelstrom Joseph Smith grew to manhood. In part a response to Thomas Paine's anti-scriptural *Age of Reason* (1794),[18] the Second Great Awakening encompassed the beginnings of Mormonism.[19] The "proofs" for God were the hysterical effects of the "holy spirit" in camp meetings, were questionable and ephemeral, and cried out for a more solid "rod of iron" to confirm belief. The effect of writers of the Age of Enlightenment such as Hume and Paine had been so profound that there was a need for a

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14. Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 1:336-58.

15. Ibid., 339.

16. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Voltaire*, vol. 9 of *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 128-37; Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 293-345.

17. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: A. Knopf, 1979), 3-12; Jan Shipps, "The Prophet Puzzle: Suggestions Leading Toward a More Comprehensive Interpretation of Joseph Smith," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): 3-20; Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950), 3-13.

18. Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794), with an introduction by Philip S. Foner (Secaucus, NY: Citadel Press, 1974).

19. Early in their marriage, Joseph Smith's parents attended the Methodist church. This disturbed Joseph's paternal grandfather and uncle who walked into Joseph Sr.'s house, threw Paine's *Age of Reason* at him, and told him to read it until he believed it. Lucy Mack Smith, "Preliminary Manuscript History of Joseph Smith," second fragment, front, in *Early Mormon Documents: Volume 1*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 250.

new, second witness for Jesus.[20]

Psychology and Religious Belief

My dear Kepler, what would you say of the learned here, who have steadfastly refused to cast a glance through the telescope? Shall we laugh, or shall we cry?

—Galileo

I fear the violence of people who do not know.

—Friar Campanella, in defending Galileo[21]

What is it about religions that makes them permanent parts of culture, that drives us to feel desperate if belief is changed too completely or quickly? Listing psychological reasons does not deny the supernatural, but simply insists that there are non-supernatural reasons for religious belief and the comfort it provides. These include: explanations for the manner and purpose of the creation of life; for the conquest of death; for the achievement of perfect justice; for the stunning differences between mental imagery and real life (suggesting a spirit-body duality); and for natural disasters and a method to control nature.

When Sigmund Freud listed these five purposes for religion,[22] friends observed that he had overlooked the primary purpose: the feeling of "fusion" with God, Jesus, Mary, the Holy Ghost, the congregation, the universe, and/or all living beings. This fusion experience varies widely, from the mystic experiences of Ignatius of Loyola[23] to the depersonalization of meditation to the separation of spirit from body in spiritualism.[24] In Western Europe and the United States, the experience of "letting Jesus enter one's heart" is the one most commonly observed. In Joseph Smith's day it was the Presbyterian Benjamin Stockton and the Methodist George

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20. Robert N. Hullinger, *Joseph Smith's Response to Skepticism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), says that Joseph Smith "intended the Book of Mormon to be an apologetic for Jesus Christ"; wrote "in defense of God"; and "intended to bring doctrinal peace to Christendom" (2, 150, 153). Hullinger does not look beneath this cultural interpretation.

21. De Santillana, *Crime*, 9, 191.

22. "The Future of an Illusion," in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (hereafter Standard Edition or SE in 23 vols.) (London: Hogarth Press), 21 (1927): 3-56, 1961; also "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," SE 18 (1922): 69-143, 1955; and "Civilization and Its Discontents," SE 21 (1930): 57-145. Updated and expanded in B. Spilka and D. N. McIntosh, *The Psychology of Religion* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 3-138.

23. William W. Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

24. Will James (1902), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Collier Books, 1961).

Lane who converted almost 450—over one-tenth of Palmyra, New York—in an 1824-25 revival. (Mormon leader B. H. Roberts later wondered if these conversions could have been source material for "falling power" conversions in the Book of Mormon.[25])

Today psychoanalytic theory suggests that these intense feelings may be, in part, a profound temporary partial regression to and replication of the first weeks of life and feelings of fusion with the mother.[26] Such controversial ideas will probably never be confirmed scientifically, but all who have participated in a "grand enterprise" might understand them. Even so, such an experience pales in comparison with participating in the *eternal world of omnipotent perfection,* which catches the three elements that individual and group activity within religious belief alone provides. Still, any attempt to put such feelings into words is bound to trivialize a truly life-transforming experience.

Better known and understood by lay people and mental health workers are the added attachments to religious belief that occur in later development, that are statistically verifiable, and where mental processes are almost observable.[27] Religious beliefs are often an extension of parental attitudes, and to a child in the early stages of life, parents are often gods who speak scripture. The church continues to speak with the moral authority of the parent from childhood on. Catholics raise Catholics, Mormons raise Mormons. If expressed in love, the care from church leaders and imagined or felt from God is a continuation of that original warmth. If raised in an atmosphere of criticism, one might yet find acceptance from God's leader(s) and congregation through obedience. Bending or breaking away from religion creates conflict, for one not only leaves the

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25. Compare the "coincidental" 450 baptized at the waters of Mormon. Book of Mormon (Paymyra, NY: E. B. Grandin, for the author, 1830), 190-94, now Mosiah 18. Brigham H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon,* edited and introduced by Brigham D. Madsen, with a biographical essay by Sterling M. McMurrin (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 284-316. A present-day example is the written testimony of excommunicated Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn in "The Rest Is History," *Sunstone* 18 (Dec. 1995): 50-58.

26. Freud acknowledged he was troubled by these "oceanic feelings" in his discussions with poet-mystic Rolland Romain. The problem awaited later developments and was brought into useful focus by Jesuit psychoanalyst W. W. Meissner in *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984). Meissner argues credibly, I think (161-84, see also 195-218), that religious experience is an adult form, ranging from healthy to pathological, of the transitional object delineated by British psychoanalyst Winnicott in the 1940s (but not published until 1951). The theoretical explanation of the transitional object, so universally seen during early stages of childhood, has now become widely accepted among mental health workers. Further discussions of Freud's position on religion may be found in Peter Gay's *A Godless Jew* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987) and in the discussion of *Freud and the Problem of God* by Catholic theologian Hans Kung (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979).

27. Batson, *Religion and the Individual,* 25-154.

continued experience of symbolic parental love, but behaves in a way to bring parental condemnation. In the adult this may be experienced as guilt, shame, and anxiety. This guilt may be used by fundamentalist religions as a means to keep the members involved and submissive to church authority.

Problems arise not only when the church reinforces internal morality by becoming an external moral enforcer, but also becomes an external ego. Then religion may measure reality and interpret it according to one's doctrinal orientation, determine proper emotional responses, direct goals and accomplishments, determine identity, and so forth. This is a two-edged sword, for such religio-cultural structure(s) can provide an environment that supports families and childhood development, yet to be raised in such a strong culture may make one dependent on it. One grows up with this external psychological institution, and, if one leaves, dangerous vacuums may emerge in the psyche. People who leave such backgrounds for rational reasons frequently feel "empty," "at a loss," "directionless," and wonder what purpose there is to life. They may look to others to make too many decisions for them because of their training that others have authority and truth.[28] A decline in mental health associated with a rapid loss of religious belief has been documented statistically.[29] Compare that to the child raised in a non-fundamentalist home who has been encouraged early on to discover or create his or her own purpose.

Mormonism emphasizes the mental health benefits of religion, yet usually minimizes the psychological reasons for belief. Instead, the main evidence for the believer is development of a "testimony." The method of developing a testimony was clarified in an early revelation to Joseph Smith.[30] One must "study [the question] out in your mind," ask God if it is right who then will "cause that your bosom will burn within you" if "it is right" or, alternately, give the inquirer a "stupor of thought" if it is incorrect. Elsewhere we are told that testimony will come as a result of prayer performed "with sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, and [then God] will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost."[31] The assumption of "faith in Christ" is ultimately irrational, but all other knowledge pales in comparison to the converted,

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28. Ibid., 193-292; Spilka, *Psychology of Religion*, 194-208.

29. See Leo Srole, Thomas Langner, et al., *Mental Health in the Metropolis: The Midtown Manhattan Study* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 1:301-24. This study first documented the "erosions in religious moorings among adults of a generation ago," then the decline of mental health in the children of those who left the faiths of their childhoods. And if parents converted from one religion to another? "The few converts to other religions were favorably constituted in group mental health, but those who had drifted into the 'no religion' stream presented a relatively unfavorable picture of mental health."

30. Book of Commandments, Chap. 8, then D&C 35:3-4 (1835), now 9:6-9.

31. Book of Mormon, 586 (1830); now Moro. 10:4.

who frequently take pride that nothing can or will change their belief in the divinity of the Book of Mormon or the divine calling of Joseph Smith.

The first recorded testimony concerning Joseph Smith's supernatural abilities occurred during his 1826 pre-trial examination as a "glass looker." Josiah Stowell had heard of young Joseph's ability to discover treasure and asked his help in finding a lost Spanish mine by peeping into a seer stone in a hat. At Joseph's pre-trial examination, Stowell[32] "declared he [Joseph] could see things fifty feet below the surface of the earth, as plain as the witness could see what was on the Justice's table." The justice then "soberly looked at the witness and in a solemn, dignified voice, said, 'Deacon Stowell, do I understand you as swearing before God, under the solemn oath you have taken, that you believe that the prisoner can see by the aid of the stone fifty feet below the surface of the earth, as plainly as you can see what is on my table?' 'Do I believe it?' says Deacon Stowell, 'do I believe it? No, it is not a matter of belief. I positively know it to be true.'"

If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, perhaps testimony is as well. No one has ever successfully distinguished spiritual knowledge from psychological wishes and defenses. The question is not just theoretical, but practical, for acceptance of the supernatural origins of Mormonism (or any religion) leads to certain conclusions in one's attitudes and behavior. These include positions on worldwide population problems and birth control, on abortion and euthanasia, or other religions and belief systems, on the acceptance of authoritarianism over reason, on muted forms of sexism and racism, and so forth. Adherence to such a supernatural belief means that one's mental and physical energies are pre-determined in sustaining the church and its activities, especially in expanding its size by large families and missionary endeavors. At times this may divert energies from activities that are more rewarding or mentally healthy for a particular individual.

Based on my experience as a clinical psychiatrist for thirty years, one's personal history often calls into question the absolute certainty of testimony. I know a number of colleagues, friends, and patients whose psychological problems have been successfully and permanently resolved through intensive psychotherapy, without the use of medication. I am not referring to seriously dysfunctional people, but to individuals with considerable talents, education, and motivation. Some of these individuals had had intense conversion experiences in their religions, including Mormonism. Invariably their fundamentalist religious beliefs

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32. W. D. Purple, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism. Historical Reminiscences of the town of Afton," *Chenango Union*, 2 May 1877, in Francis Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1951), 2:362-67.

liberalized as a result of psychotherapy.[33] At the end of successful therapy, some concluded that their beliefs were primarily an extension of childhood illusions and family dynamics and decided to leave religious participation altogether.

One can believe anything, but in our daily lives we have learned to use "objective" or scientific evidences to keep us grounded in reality and to modify dysfunctional beliefs, whether supernatural or natural. With little or no "objective" evidence for religious belief, one would reasonably expect tolerance and continued rational dialogue among believers and non-believers. If rationality casts doubt, however, the fundamentalist response is usually increased dogmatism and demand for submission.

Mormonism's Repeat of the Galileo Affair

> *As a theologian you tell a man to restrict himself to natural philosophy and not to meddle with Scripture; then you invade his own scientific field with your Peripatetic prejudice without troubling to understand his reasons, and you shut him up. He [Galileo] had realized at last that the authorities were not interested in truth, but only in authority.*
>
> —De Santillana[34]

Beginning in 1853 (if not earlier) and continuing some twenty-four years, Mormon church president Brigham Young taught publicly that God was still progressing in knowledge and had come to earth as Adam to physically father his spiritual offspring.[35] Apostle Orson Pratt did not share Young's views, instead teaching the omniscience of God and worshipping the attributes of God, not his personhood. Pratt wanted to rec-

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33. In some cases these profound feelings—either the same or so similar they could not be distinguished—were re-experienced during psychotherapy, but the framework for understanding the experience was different. Instead of a communion with God, the patient's experiences were used to fathom feelings toward and relationship with the therapist. Instead of studying scripture, the patient was trying to "read" what happened in his early family experiences. In other cases the patient spent extensive time talking and working on childhood experiences and their troubling intrusion into his or her adult life. Then came the realization that while this was going on, religious belief—hardly mentioned or discussed—had begun to fade. Frequently there would be a scramble of guilt to reestablish one's religious beliefs, only to have the problem recur.

34. De Santillana, *Crime*, 103, 257.

35. Young said he learned this from Joseph Smith. See Gary James Bergera, "The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies: Conflict Within the Quorums, 1853 to 1868," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Summer 1980): 7-49, on 26 and 46n51; David John Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Spring 1982): 14-58; Boyd Kirkland, "The Development of the Mormon Doctrine of God" and "Eternal Progression and the Second Death in the Theology of Brigham Young," in Gary J. Bergera, ed., *Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 35-52, 171-82.

oncile Mormon scripture with the Bible and stress the "reasonableness" of Mormon teachings. In his own words, "[W]ithout these arguments I have not the most distant idea how to reconcile them [i.e., Mormon doctrine and the Bible]. ... I hope that you will grant me as an individual the privilege of believing my present views ... I am willing to take President Young as a guide in most things but not in all. ... I am not going to crawl to Brigham and act the Hypocrite."[36] Young's response, supported by Pratt's colleagues, was predictable: Pratt was teaching a "lie" that was as "fals as Hell."[37]

The problem surfaced repeatedly over two decades, with Pratt speaking his mind, then eventually confessing, repenting, and capitulating. "If the Prophet of the living God, who is my standard, lays down a ... principle in philosophy ... or science ... We must bow. ... We must yield." Years later he restated to Young in a letter, "I have greatly sinned against you ... and ... God, in foolishly trying to justify myself in advocating ideas, opposed to these which have been introduced by the highest authorities of the Church. ... I humbly ask you ... to forgive me."[38]

Where their conflict began as a difference of opinion, Pratt had the authority of the scriptures behind him, so Young shifted the debate to submission to authority and demanded that Pratt recognize his right as prophet of the church to declare doctrine. Time has been kind to Pratt whose views on divine omniscience, at least, now reflect those of a majority of present-day church leaders. Also, teaching Adam-God today could result in excommunication. Church leaders may be correct that salvation requires "complete surrender" to Jesus Christ,[39] but does this include the surrender of rational thinking to authorities who disagree among themselves?

This struggle between two Mormon giants also touched on the question of honoring the office or its holder, the person or the virtues taught. One aspect of the argument that continues today is whether one must obey past prophets or present ones. In the case of Young and Pratt, the twelve apostles acknowledged the priority of the living prophet, but after Young's death in 1877 they reverted to the priority of the Bible. In our lifetime church leaders have continued to vacillate on this point, while being absolute in their opposing positions.[40]

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36. Bergera, "The Orson Pratt/Brigham Young Controversies," 11, 19.
37. Ibid., 15, 18, 19.
38. Ibid., 22, 40.
39. "Apostle Answers Queries," *Sunstone* 11 (Nov. 1987): 45.
40. Bruce R. McConkie, letter to "Honest Truth Seekers," copy in my possession; McConkie in a speech given at the BYU Marriott Center on 1 June 1980, copy in my possession; compare these to Ezra Taft Benson, "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets," address to Brigham Young University students, Feb. 1980, 1-7. See also Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Spring 1993): 7-64, esp. 13-14.

Young's appeal to obedience to authority in his arguments with Pratt has become a model for some church leaders. One notes that the Young-Pratt debate bridges 1859, the year Charles Darwin published *Origin of Species*. Science in the form of evolutionary theory began to bypass theology, and the Mormon scientist today is sometimes torn between an ancient view of the world and a biblically literal view of the origin of humankind 6,000 years ago. Church scripture seems to warn the scientist away from theory, even theory with overwhelming evidential support.[41] For the rationalist Mormon, the problem has become dogmatism in the face of compelling contradictory information or evidence.

The Mormon-Galileo Conflict Intensifies: Discoveries and Challenges of the Twentieth Century

I hear "that the Jesuit Fathers have insinuated" that my book is more execrable and injurious to the Church than the writings of Luther and Calvin.

—Galileo

Since 1945 Mormonism has had to face considerable challenges to traditional belief. These include discovery of the 1826 pre-trial examination of Joseph Smith for "glass-looking";[42] the apparent absence of a "first vision" in Smith's original story,[43] as well as later, inconsistent versions of his "first vision";[44] the apparent absence of an 1820 Palmyra revival and possible shifting of an 1824 revival to 1820 to fit

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41. D&C (1835) 91:6, now 76:71-78, which makes scientists "honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men." Gene A. Sessions and Craig J. Oberg, eds., *The Search for Harmony: Essays on Science and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993); David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Andrew Dickson White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (New York: George Brazailler, 1955 [1895]).

42. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945, 2d ed., 1971), 30-31, 405-406 (427-28 in the 2d ed.). For added confirmation of the trial, see W. D. Purple, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism"; Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith's Bainbridge, N.Y. Court Trials," *Westminster Theological Journal* 36 (Winter 1974), and "From Occult to Cult With Joseph Smith, Jr.," *The Journal of Pastoral Practice* 1 (Summer 1977), reprinted together by Utah Lighthouse Ministry, Salt Lake City; D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987).

43. Brodie, *No Man*, 21-25.

44. Dean C. Jessee, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 275-94, including n2, 275, also in Dean C. Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, Vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989), 6-7, 125-27.

his last "first vision" story;[45] his mother's preliminary biography, which contains no "first vision" story, confirms an 1824 Palmyra revival, and refers to the family's involvement in magic;[46] Smith's apparently failed claim to translate ancient Egyptian scripture;[47] B. H. Roberts's work on the Book of Mormon and *A View of the Hebrews;*[48] careful naturalistic examinations of the Book of Mormon which began in 1887,[49] achieved technical methodology in 1981,[50] and have since flowered into multiple studies on the origin and historicity of the Book of Mormon;[51] and the problem of the public and private interactions of Joseph Smith. Seldom have the personality styles of coercion, manipulation, and deceit, both before and after the production of the Book of

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45. Wesley P. Walters, "The Question of the Palmyra Revival," *Evangelical Theological (Utah Christian Tract) Society* 10 (Fall 1967), reprinted in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4 (Spring 1969): 59-81, with discussion by Richard L. Bushman (82-93), and reply by Walters (94-100). Compare Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), and review by H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 28-41.

46. Lucy Mack Smith, "Lucy Smith Preliminary Manuscript," in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents, Vol. 1.*

47. In Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 31-32, 222n39: "A scholarly translation published in 1968 revealed the papyri as rather common funerary documents bearing absolutely no relationship to the Book of Abraham." See "The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: Translations and Interpretations," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3 (Summer 1968): 67-105.

48. Roberts, *Studies.* Shortly before Roberts's book was published, a possible connecting link between Ethan Smith and Joseph Smith in the person of Oliver Cowdery surfaced. The Poultney Historical Society knew that Cowdery's family had belonged to Ethan Smith's congregation. They informed David Persuitte, who, in turn, notified Wesley P. Walters. See his master's thesis, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon," St. Louis, Missouri, Covenant Theological Seminary, 1981, which introduced this fact to Mormon historians. Personal communication with Persuitte.

49. M. T. Lamb, *The Golden Bible ... or The Book of Mormon, Is It From God?* (New York: Ward and Drummond, 1887). Lamb demonstrated problems and inconsistencies in Book of Mormon geographic descriptions, travel implausibilities, and population exaggerations. While no Mormon acknowledgment has been forthcoming, Lamb's book was probably the impetus for the "new geographic theory" of the Book of Mormon which puts Cumorah in Central America and limits the whole Book of Mormon history to a geographic diameter of 400 miles.

50. Walters, "The Use of the Old Testament," 35-94, which counts the progressive increase in words by Joseph Smith in the sites of biblical interpolations and demonstrates a pattern confirming that Smith began the present Book of Mormon dictation where he had left off at the lost 116 pages.

51. Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993). These studies have been attacked in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994), 6:1, 2.

Mormon, been so well documented.[52]

These, and other, examples demonstrate a systematic pattern, initiated by Joseph Smith and continued by some Mormons, of changing, deleting, and concealing details of the historical record.[53] Nevertheless, the Book of Mormon is not simply an adaptation of pre-existing ideas, nor can it be explained away by technical studies. To quote Mormon apostle Dallin H. Oaks;[54] "The practitioners of that approach typically focus on a limited number of issues, like geography or 'horses' or angelic delivery of nineteenth century language patterns. They ignore or gloss over the incredible complexity of the Book of Mormon record." A remaining challenge would be to explain each of the thirty-five or so stories in the Book of Mormon, while asking, "What is its essence, its naturalistic, psychological source and meaning? Can it be used in any way to understand the psychology of Joseph Smith?"[55]

These potentially disconfirming "evidences" are different from Galileo's observations of Venus, yet they are as compelling in pressuring for modified belief. In Galileo's day others could provide explanations for the Venus phenomenon, but they became increasingly complex and inconsistent with observations in the rest of the universe. With the only evidence for the Book of Mormon history one's subjective testimony, rationalist Mormons are in a more difficult position than the Catholic cardinals and inquisitors examining Galileo. For in addition to their testimo-

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52. This includes brutality toward smaller individuals documented after the Book of Mormon was published. See Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 21, 196n16; and Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 31, 144n60. For pre-Book of Mormon deception, see the references above for his pre-trial examination in using magic. For deception and coercion after the Book of Mormon, see Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804-1879* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 95-168; George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1995), 93-136. Awareness of these personality characteristics were emphasized by Brodie in *No Man Knows My History* and some details have been updated in Dan Vogel's presentation to the May 1996 Mormon History Association Meeting, "'Prophet Puzzle' Revisited," and Susan Staker's presentation at the August 1996 Sunstone Symposium, "'The Lord Said, Thy Wife Is A Very Fair Woman to Look Upon': The Book of Abraham, Secrets, and Lying for the Lord."

53. One such example is the rewriting of both testimony and revelations to change the authority of the twelve apostles from the mission field to the entire church. A condensed summary of this is in Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 165-66. A more comprehensive discussion is in Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), esp. 143-85.

54. Oaks, "The Historicity of the Book of Mormon," speech delivered at the annual dinner of FARMS, Provo, Utah, 29 Oct. 1993.

55. See my *The Book of Mormon as Autobiography: A Psychobiography of Joseph Smith* (forthcoming).

nies about the Bible, there were good "objective" reasons to doubt that the world was spinning at 1,000 miles per hour. Why weren't we hurled into space? Or swept away by the wind? When we jumped up in the air, why did we always land in the same place?[56]

Responses

We should perform with great alacrity, spiritual joy, and perseverance whatever has been commanded to us, persuading ourselves that everything is just and renouncing with blind obedience any contrary opinion, as if "everyone" were a lifeless body [cadaver] "or old man's staff." What seems to me white, I will believe black if the hierarchical Church so defines.

—Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)[57]

When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done.

—LDS Ward Teachers' Message[58]

The responses to such problems by Mormon leaders and apologists have not always been convincing or reassuring to the rationalist and include changing and/or eliminating revelations;[59] revising the *History of the Church,* including "hundreds of deletions, additions and alter-

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56. Finocchiaro, in *The Galileo Affair,* 15-25, summarizes the intellectual and spiritual justifications for believing the sun revolves around the earth.

57. Ignatius of Loyola, sections on obedience from the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, chap. 1, in Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola,* 414-15. *The Spiritual Exercises,* trans. Louis J. Puhl, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951), 160. See also Jean Lacourture, *Jesuits: A Multibiography* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995), 75-97.

58. "Ward teachers message for June, 1945," *Improvement Era* 48 (June 1945): 354. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 220, 510n140, index under "Decision-making," 905.

59. A practice condemned in the Book of Mormon, 28-31, now 1 Ne. 13. Bergera, *Line Upon Line,* throughout, esp. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine" (53-66), Kirkland, "The Development of the Mormon Doctrine of God" (35-52) and "Eternal Progression and the Second Death in the Theology of Brigham Young" (171-182); Dan Vogel, ed., *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), throughout, esp. Richard P. Howard, "Latter Day Saint Scriptures and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation" (1-18), and James E. Lancaster, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon" (97-113); D. Michael Quinn, ed., *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), throughout, esp. William G. Hartley, "Mormons, Crickets, and Gulls: A New Look at an Old Story" (137-52), Klaus J. Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of the Kingdom of God: Toward a Reinterpretation of Mormon History" (221-46); and Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power,* throughout, esp. a condensed summary on 272-75.

ations,"[60] and denying such obvious problems as Brigham Young's Adam-God teaching;[61] generalizing to counter specific contradictions;[62] carefully selecting, interpreting, and rationalizing;[63] using repetitious, "preliminary," or incidental material;[64] issuing official condemnations and actions; and keeping archival material locked away from research or making such materials available only to "friendly" researchers. At the same time former church historian Leonard J. Arrington's belief[65] that stories of Mormon miracles can be accepted as factual or symbolic, historical or metaphorical moves us away from some of the more extreme manifestations of fundamentalism.

Book of Mormon students, along with some believing archaeologists, have had to face story impossibilities with absolutely no support from science.[66] In response, they have effectively rewritten the first official story by Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith[67] and moved the Hill Cumorah to central America. They occasionally suggest that American archaeologists, scientists, and/or academic historians reject the historicity of the Book of Mormon because they are too inflexible to become Mormon con-

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60. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, throughout, esp. 123-29, and 322-29. See, for example, four prophecies by Joseph Smith that were eliminated from the record in n38, p. 328. See also Inez Smith, "Biography of Charles Wesley Wandell," *Journal of History* 3 (Jan. 1910): 455-63, in Richard S. Van Wagoner, "The Making of a Mormon Myth," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Winter 1995): 2.

61. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations: Aids to Faith in a Modern Day*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943), 1:56; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation—Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 1:96, 102.

62. Richard I. Winwood, *Take Heed That Ye Be Not Deceived* (Salt Lake City: the author, 1992-95), 40-42.

63. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 57-58. Bushman takes sections from each of the "early visions" which do not appear to be internally inconsistent among themselves and concludes that the different versions reflect added "experience [which] had enlarged his [Joseph's] perspective." Thus he makes the variations a result of Joseph's changing psychology, not the results of statistical changes in the stories. Bushman concludes that Joseph changed his story as he recognized the importance of certain aspects which "they did not possess at first." He adds that Joseph's mother's failure to report the first vision was due to her "misunderstanding" which resulted from Joseph's unexplained "silence" about the event, despite its contrast with his repeated telling of the angel and gold book. Bushman's book has been described as "magisterial" by Mormon fundamentalists. See Louis Midgley's review of Hutchinson's "The Word of God Is Enough," in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, 6:1, 202n7.

64. These include apologetic articles in *Brigham Young University Studies; Journal of Book of Mormon Studies; Review of Books on the Book of Mormon;* and other FARMS publications.

65. Arrington, "Why I Am a Believer," *Sunstone* 10 (Jan. 1985): 36-38.

66. See Michael D. Coe, "Mormons and Archaeology: An Outside View," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Summer 1974): 40-48; Michael D. Coe, *Breaking the Maya Code* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992).

67. See *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, July 1835, 13, 158-59.

verts, a possible projection of the fixed qualities of the fundamental apologists themselves onto less rigid scientists and historians.[68]

While Orson Pratt surrendered his individual integrity to Brigham Young, we understand that excommunication might have left him no life. Yet I think he pointed a possible theoretical and practical direction for solving the problem of Mormon fundamentalism by rising above it and focusing instead on the virtues taught.

NON-FUNDAMENTALIST OPINIONS

He [Galileo] must save those men in spite of themselves from the disastrous consequences that he could foresee for their obduracy.

—De Santillana[69]

One such approach proposes that the core of the Book of Mormon is authentic history, but that Joseph Smith expanded it by adding elements of his environment.[70] Thus the historical aspects of the book, along with its creation story, are diminished. Others propose that the book has no historical value, but should be revered for its teachings.[71] Some fundamentalist critics attack these as compromised positions, wondering why something that is not what it purports to be should be revered.[72]

Limiting one's involvement to social or charitable activities in the church is another approach. Yet, in many ways, even this may be a compromised position, for the church seems to see these activities as valuable primarily for their enhancement of the church's missionary role. Perhaps this attitude is changing.[73] If so, then the "irrational" teachings of the

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68. William J. Hamblin, "Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2 (Spring 1993): 196.

69. De Santillana, *Crime*, 109.

70. See Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Spring 1987): 66-123.

71. See Mark Thomas, "Lehi's Doctrine of Opposition in Its Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Contexts," *Sunstone* 13 (Jan. 1989): 52; and his "The Meaning of Revival Language in The Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 8 (May-June 1983): 19-25. See also his "Rhetorical Approach to The Book of Mormon," 1992, privately circulated. William D. Russell in the RLDS church has proposed the same view. See his "A Further Inquiry into the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 7 (Sept.-Oct. 1982): 20-24.

72. See, for example, Midgley's review of Hutchinson's "The Word of God Is Enough," and his "The Radical Reformation of the Reorganization of the Restoration: Recent Changes in the RLDS Understanding of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2 (Fall 1993): 132-63.

73. Non-Mormon historian Jan Shipps believes that church members born after the 1940s are moving away from accepting the church's beginnings as literal fact. She made this suggestion at the banquet speech to the August 1994 Sunstone symposium.

church will continue to become less literal and more symbolic or philosophic. Such a phenomenon would continue the process in general Christianity of accepting natural explanations before supernatural ones, thereby decreasing literal interpretations.[74]

In the final analysis adherence to the virtues of Mormonism is not a rationalist escape, for the church sometimes seems to take a dim view of some of the virtues that the rationalist Mormon considers critical.[75] These include, in Pratt's terms, a fullness of truth, wisdom, and knowledge. These require unfettered access to information and pluralistic discussions. Censored history, the rewriting and alteration of history, locked archival doors, and condemnation of study groups, for example, are anathema to a rationalist.

The church can and is forcing its rationalist members to back away and separate themselves from the main body of the Saints. The methods of leaving may be vigorous, firm, or simply passive. Frequently the vigorous separation includes shifting to another form of Christianity. In one-on-one discussions, or from their pamphlets and booklets, one senses the need of some of these individuals to continue in intense belief systems. From there they frequently return to attack Mormonism as a method of trying to complete their separation. Many doubting Mormons sense the desperation behind the material in this anti-Mormon literature and quietly lay it aside. They see little advantage in moving from one form of questionable irrationality to a less organized one.[76]

Firm withdrawal is done by formally insisting on removal from the official membership rolls of the church. Often there is a cooperative spirit from the church in facilitating this for those who want to leave, for the church wants to avoid public exposure or embarrassment as does the member. Frequently these former members continue with an indifferent, uninterested attitude toward the church, but some are angry.

Passive withdrawal is probably the most common form, with mem-

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74. Historian Hugh Trevor-Roper believed that high-level philosophical writings in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries eventually filtered down to the general populations and courts and stopped the burnings and hangings of innocent women for witchcraft. H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 90-192.

75. See Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership"; D. Michael Quinn, "On Being a Mormon Historian (and Its Aftermath)," in George D. Smith, ed., *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 69-111, and his "Dilemmas of Feminists and Intellectuals in the Contemporary LDS Church," *Sunstone* 17 (June 1994): 67-74.

76. See Massimo Introvigna, "The Devil Makers: Contemporary Evangelical Fundamentalist Anti-Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Spring 1994): 153-70; and his "Old Wine in New Bottles: The Story Behind Fundamentalist Anti-Mormonism," *Brigham Young University Studies* 35 (Fall 1996): 45-73.

bers simply becoming "inactive." This form leaves one's options open and does not directly attack friends and/or their beliefs. Because these men and women were raised in the church, or were once "converted," they may experience some doubt or guilt about their withdrawal. If the vicissitudes of life become harsh, they may even feel remorse or wonder if God is punishing them for their own good. Some may eventually return to activity, but others may become more convinced of their position. They may be interested in the writings of others with similar problems which may help assuage their feelings of isolation and guilt.

The Situation Today

> *For he [Galileo] certainly had come in simplicity of heart and as a true son of the Church, as the Pope could not deny. He had come not to make a scandal but to avoid it; not to raise a danger but to make one plain; not to oppose a truth but to offer it.*
>
> —De Santillana[77]

For many rationalist Mormons who are attached to their church, history, and culture, there is continual necessity to work for change. They sometimes place their hopes with the inconsistent response of the church to public opinion. Mormon rationalists Brigham D. Madsen and Sterling M. McMurrin (now deceased) have publicly declared their disbelief in the supernatural origins of the church.[78] They have participated in debates and conferences that raise questions and concerns. The church has allowed them to remain members because of their prestige in both Mormon and academic communities and also because of their friendship to the Mormon culture and people. Their respectful works do not attempt to destroy the church, but to facilitate its continued evolution from fundamentalism.[79] The excommunication of such men and women would be

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77. De Santillana, *Crime*, 138.

78. See Brigham D. Madsen, "The Education of a BYU Professor," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Spring 1995): 21-40; "B. H. Roberts's Studies of the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Fall 1993): 73-76; (as editor): Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*; Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965); "Biographical Essay on Brigham H. Roberts," in *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, xiii-xxxi; "Remembering B. H. Roberts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Fall 1993): 73-76; "Toward Intellectual Anarchy: A Review of the Encyclopedia of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Summer 1993): 209-13; L. Jackson Newell, "Sterling Moss McMurrin: A Philosopher in Action," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Spring 1995): 1-20.

79. Sterling M. McMurrin, "Some Distinguishing Characteristics of Mormon Philosophy," *Sunstone* 16 (Mar. 1993): 35-46. Compare the same respectful attitude by former Dominican priest J. D. Crossan in his brief summary for Mormons: "Jesus the Peasant," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Spring 1993): 155-70.

more damaging to the church than their disbelieving writings. They represent a curious paradox. Usually the church does not act because of what one personally believes or thinks, only if his or her views become public. Yet these two men have been highly public.

Recently the church has excommunicated writers, historians, and other scholars whose goals have been accuracy and truth. For some church officials, such writers apparently endanger the reputation and moral influence of the church by documenting the magical origins of Mormonism, the beginnings of priesthood authority, the role and ordination of women, the questionable ethics of Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy, the changing doctrine of God, the secret political agenda of the Council of Fifty and repeated clandestine attempts to undermine both state and federal governments, the subterranean practice of polygamy after the Woodruff Manifesto, the open statement of church leaders to quell dissent and promote obedience at the expense of the search for truth, etc. Documenting changes and inconsistencies in church history may embarrass the church and distress some believers, but excommunication for such cannot be sustained by reason. Rational belief requires information and evaluation.

If one knows about changes in fundamental church teachings over 165 years, then the pressure of Mormon women for equal authority is only one of many issues of church "policy" that need repeated review. Surely the revision in policy toward black men of African heritage and the priesthood is a model for such change. But in the face of such rational dialogue, the conflict in disciplinary courts may shift from discussing issues to demanding that one submit to priesthood authority "with terrifying speed."[80] This follows the pattern so clear between the Inquisitors and Galileo, and later between Brigham Young and Orson Pratt. Historian D. Michael Quinn was excommunicated not for apostasy, but for refusing to meet with his stake president, which the stake president and high council defined as "conduct contrary to the laws and order of the Church."[81]

Forums for intellectual activity and rational dialogue consist of meetings and periodicals that require interested parties to subscribe and have the time and energy to attend. If we write respectfully and professionally, are genuine in our pluralistic search for truth, and avoid promoting our thoughts in regular church meetings and functions, should we not expect to be tolerated without official condemnation? We will remain perpetually surprised at not being appreciated. When disfellowshipment and ex-

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80. Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership."

81. Quinn, "Dilemmas of Feminists and Intellectuals," 73n2. Quinn had met previously with his stake president and had reason to believe the results were pre-determined, directed from church headquarters, and would result in a kangaroo court.

communication occur for our intellectual activities, however, our attitude may change. Sooner or later we would like our leaders to understand that their condemnation is more damaging to the reputation and moral influence of the church than the works of intellectuals that reach public awareness. Four hundred years ago decent behavior may have included defending one's religion over everything else. Galileo changed that. Giving priority to the defense of religious belief over the search for truth is no longer considered acceptable behavior, and every excommunication of Mormon intellectuals, when placed in public view, damages the "reputation and moral influence" of our leaders in the eyes of decent people everywhere. Church leaders will probably continue to disfellowship and excommunicate until they understand that their behavior is more damaging to the church than the writings they attempt to censor.

Today isolation need not occur for individual thinking, threats of disfellowshipment, or excommunication for work that attempts to help the church evolve and members move to a more honest and truthful understanding of their past. Periodicals such as *Dialogue,* the *Journal of Mormon History,* the *Journal of the John Whitmer Historical Association,* and *Sunstone;* books published by the University of Illinois Press, Utah State University Press, Signature Books, and other independent publishers; and the Sunstone symposia held throughout the U.S. and Canada are useful in forming a group identity, pluralistic views, and avoiding feelings of isolation. The Mormon Alliance continues to document and publicize the possible abuse of church authority.

A little over a century ago the United States attempted to stop polygamy by sending 1,300 husbands to federal prison. Their most prominent imprisoned leader was George Q. Cannon, a ranking member of the First Presidency, who expressed the frustrating problem the church is facing today with its ongoing attempts to silence rational thought: "What is the use of punishment if it does not punish? Any attempt to degrade a man is a miserable failure if he accepts the intended degradation as an honor."[82]

The church must now face the fact that excommunicants and other disciplined members have become an important segment of Mormon society. Instead of nullifying their effect, the church has enabled them to be even more influential. Perhaps church leaders should reconsider their present strategy. To expand tolerance and keep outspoken independent thinkers in the church implies that the church is strong and can weather varied opinions. The Catholic church has tried to handle this by institutionalizing intellectuals within its fold. They feel protected; their writings are progressive and liberal; and the church has not disappeared.

Rational Mormons are not the demons recent church public relations

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82. George Q. Cannon, in *Juvenile Instructor,* 1 Sept. 1886.

may suggest. At best we are scruffy border collies, few in numbers. But we do nip at heels, and eventually the direction of the flock may turn. Our views and beliefs vary, but we are united in opposition to intolerant fundamentalism that has no historical or scientific base. For those of us who may not believe in the supernatural or an afterlife, we hope to leave the world a better place because of what we have done—to give more than we have taken. Our "priesthood lineage" includes Galileo and other men and women who have championed independent thought. Many of the attributes and virtues of Jesus contribute to our ideals. There are those of us who wish to leave undefined the degree of our belief in the supernatural. We are interested in the beliefs, history, culture, and the support the church offers, yet enjoy pluralistic views and opinions, but we wish to diminish literal beliefs that counter reason and to oppose narrow acts of discipline that cause our friends pain. Of those of us who believe in Jesus as the Son of God, we think that he will be pleased with our work, for he defied the immorality and hypocrisy of religious leaders in his day, and within the Book of Mormon he condemned the church of medieval times for its abuse of power. We wait on him and await his return.

Out of the Night: Childness

From my Mystic Life *after near-death accident*

Emma Lou Thayne

More than a state of being
A new being
Suffused in light
Whatever is there like being held
In Father's arms
Way beyond Safe
Carried asleep
From one quiet to another
All of it a heartbeat
Back back back the coming together
Carried in a dark velvet womb
Accepting
Floating from density
Into light
This is only the beginning
Whatever that is
I like the others of no age
Willing for once to wait
Knowing in time
Only the exquisite balance
Of everywhere at once
Saying You are here

Come, you of no name
That Emma fits
Who hears and answers
The answers
Childness knows no blame
Only the lightness of being
In your childness
Nothing will be lost
Though all is right
In the place of no sides at all
Of return without going away
Know this that Time is Life
Enclave born to other enclaves

Every step of the weaning
Still heavy on my pillow
The joy is lifted with me
From even the light am I detached
It takes me in
Till "love calls me to
The things of this world."

A Response to "The Dilemma of the Mormon Rationalist"

Allen D. Roberts

AS ONE ALSO INTERESTED IN CONFLICTS BETWEEN FAITH AND REASON, I find Robert Anderson's essay a well-documented, well-reasoned, literate, and thoughtful presentation of a subject I suspect is relevant for many readers. I would like to share some observations, comments, and questions which might serve to further enhance our understanding of this important topic. My first suggestion is a minor one—that Anderson revise the title by adding an "s" after "dilemma." For he has not presented a single dilemma, but many, each as vexing and troublesome as the next for those who believe that the term "Mormon rationalist" should not be considered an oxymoron, any more than the term "Mormon intellectual," and who desire to delete neither the word "Mormon" nor "rationalist" from their own self-description.

In Anderson's extensively footnoted paper, which shows evidence of a wide study of the subject, we find a definition of "rationalist" which may provide a useful context for this discussion. Anderson says that a rationalist is one whose "thinking and behavior is not based on acceptance of scripture as absolute, and [is] willing to examine, re-examine, and modify or even abandon belief if the evidence warrants." *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* definition is "one who believes the principle ... of accepting reason or intellect as the true source of knowledge, and as the only authority in determining one's opinions or course of action." Webster adds that in theology it is the doctrine that rejects revelation and the supernatural and makes reason the sole source of knowledge (1,496).

Since Mormonism claims to have been founded through a series of revelations and maintains as its core belief the idea of continuing revelation, and the corollary notion that revealed knowledge is higher, more true, and more reliable than secular knowledge or reason, it seems impossible, at least by definition, that there can be such a person as a "Mormon rationalist." By implication, it seems likely that such a person is

either not fully a Mormon, not entirely a rationalist, or perhaps both. Readers may want to form their own opinions as to which of these three possibilities best applies to the Mormon rationalist described throughout Anderson's essay. I will try to give my own answer to this question by the end of my reply, but for now would like to make some observations on specific details within the essay.

Like Anderson, I have long been intrigued by the life of Galileo. When the scientist was exonerated a few years ago, after 359 years of being condemned as a heretic, I had a mixed reaction to the news. I was happy that the Catholic church finally "saw the light" but was disappointed, though not surprised, to learn that the decision came only after eight years of agonizing debate by a committee appointed to study the matter. There was much at stake. Authoritarian religions, Mormonism and Catholicism especially, lose face when they admit to having made a mistake, and do so only very rarely, if at all. When they do, as in this instance, they seem to do it only after great internal hemorrhaging, tongue biting, and blushing. Religions are averse to giving any ground to the rationalist side, and I believe Mormons are more reluctant to make such concessions than even Catholics.

As for Galileo, his recanting, which was insincere, bought him the opportunity, while comfortably "imprisoned," to continue his "heretical" work. Perhaps people in Galileo's time thought he was a Catholic rationalist, because he acquiesced to the church while remaining a scientist. Yet I think that what his example points out is the near impossibility of being true to the core precepts of both philosophies.

Anderson speaks of the struggle between reason and fundamentalism and notes that conservative religions like Mormonism, for example, change slowly. Martin Marty, a keen observer of religious organizational patterns, agrees, concluding at a past Sunstone symposium that religions that thrive do so because "they make very few changes and they make them slowly." After its fast-moving, radical, revolutionary formative period, Mormonism has settled into a comfortable crawl in terms of theological innovation. The changes that do occur are mostly administrative—the result of trying to manage a fast-growing church. Even the change in the policy of denying the priesthood to African blacks is best seen as a practical and necessary response to LDS growth in Brazil where black men were needed to lead largely black congregations, rather than as a "revelation" reflecting a change of mind on God's part.

Anderson has shown how the rise of Mormonism was, in part, a reactionary response to early-nineteenth-century liberalism and modernism. While true, from Joseph Smith on, we have seen attempts to harmonize Mormonism with science. John Widtsoe's book *Joseph Smith as Scientist* is just one example. I believe these attempts have been generally

unsuccessful, yet they show us not only Mormonism's awareness of rationalism, but also its need to be scientifically acceptable to rationalists. This need has been greater in some, such as B. H. Roberts, and less in others, such as Joseph Fielding Smith. Mormons disdain worldliness but seek the adoration of the world. We seek approval, work hard to form and manage the world's perception of us, and feel hurt when others portray us in ways inconsistent with how we see ourselves. We do not accept many scientific, secular, and rationalist ideas but do not want to be viewed as anti-scientist or non-, irr-, or anti-rational. We say, as Jesus did, that we want to be "in but not of the world," but I think the evidence suggests we are otherwise.

The quote by rationalist David Hume on the impossibility of the testimony of witnesses to establish a miracle, unless deluded, is interesting in contrast to Joseph Smith's involvement of three and eight witnesses to establish the reality of the Book of Mormon. Smith seemed quite aware of the rationalist requirement for evidence, and tried to satisfy this need.

The essay's section on psychology and religious belief seems intended, in part, to show a non-supernatural, psychological basis for belief. I would add to Anderson's examples the powerful roles of birth order and child-parent relations, especially as influenced by parental conflict. Frank J. Sulloway's recent book, *Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dymanics, and Creative Lives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996), twenty-six years in the writing and analyzing 6,500 important men and women in history, concludes that first borns are strongly inclined to accept status quo systems of authority, including established religions (unless influenced by parental conflict, as I was), while later children are more creative and more reception to new ideas, including new religions or non-religious philosophies.

In this discussion Anderson describes "vacuums of the psyche, emptiness, a sense of loss, and the directionlessness" that may accompany departure from religious life. Many seem to stay involved, not because they believe it is true, but because they need the emotional support of a community of friends. He tells of three types of people who leave the faith. Those who feel betrayed, become bitter, and turn to active anti-Mormonism are, I think, a rather small minority. I think Sir Richard Burton was right when he observed in the 1850s that those who left Mormonism tended to become agnostics because, having believed in and then lost belief in one authoritative, "true" church, they cannot believe in this kind of organization any longer and tend to become indifferent to religion rather than join another, similar church. Sterling McMurrin expressed the dilemma simply when he opined: "The question is not whether Mormonism is true, but whether religion is true."

Anderson's discussion of the problem of faith versus knowledge gets

to the crux of the Mormon rationalist's dilemma. I agree with his statement that faith is "ultimately irrational." Paul's definition says as much when he calls faith "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen" (Heb. 11:1). To me, the words "substance" and "evidence" are reduced to figures of speech by believers because the words "hope" and "things not seen" are for them the real operative words in the definition. As a rationalist, I am always amazed that so many people view faith as a virtue, rather than as a negative. I am not surprised, however, that it is the "first principle of the gospel" and, as Bruce McConkie says in *Mormon Doctrine,* "the first principle in revealed religion" (261). The key word to him, of course, is "revealed." The other side of faith, or another way of viewing it, is as a principle which allows people to believe things without knowing them, based on trust in men who claim to receive revealed knowledge from divinity. At its worst, it makes a virtue of ignorance and nearly a sin of believing in any kind of knowledge other than so-called revealed knowledge.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that Mormons use the words "knowledge" and "faith" interchangeably—as virtual synonyms. In testimony meetings members say they "know" certain things (often historical events) are true. Since they were not there in person to see God speak to Joseph Smith, or Moroni give him the plates, or Jesus arise after dying, people actually mean they believe these things to be true. Even the strongest belief or faith does not equal knowledge. In my heretical way of seeing things, I see testimony-bearing of what people "know" as actually a statement of what they *don't* know but strongly want to believe, so much so that their faith causes them to try to reach the verifiable knowledge and truth that in fact eludes them. In short, believers confuse faith and knowledge. Rationalists, including scientists, are not necessarily superior in this regard, because in their own ways they often do the same.

The story of Orson Pratt parallels that of Galileo in that Pratt proved to be more "true" (measured by later acceptance of his ideas) than his religious leader and theological antagonist, Brigham Young, but he also recanted when Young "shifted the debate to submission of authority." The same shift occurred during the purge of intellectuals and rash of excommunications in 1993-94. Lavina Fielding Anderson was cut off from the church she still loves and serves not because anything she wrote or said was untrue, but because she dared to speak truth that was unflattering. Michael Quinn, as Anderson noted, was excommunicated not under an accusation of apostasy, but for the insubordination of not attending his own spiritual "hanging."

One of the greatest dilemmas for rationalists is the church's evolving views on truth and its role in the gospel. Shortly after becoming apostles, both Dallin Oaks and Russell Nelson gave speeches advocating the selec-

tive, conditional use of only those truths which paint a positive picture of the church and its leaders. Elder Oaks said it is "wrong to criticize a general authority, even if the criticism is true."

Anderson asks if surrendering to Christ has to mean "the surrender of rational thinking to authorities who disagree among themselves." I regret to say that the orthodox Mormon answer is probably yes. Ezra Taft Benson made this clear in his "Fourteen Fundamentals of Following the Prophet," when he proclaimed that the word of the current prophet takes precedent (in a conflict) over those of past prophets. This allows the current leader to theologically out-rank Moses, Isaiah, Paul, Joseph Smith, and even Jesus Christ himself. Of late church presidents have not abused this principle. In fact, it has become almost equally disconcerting that leaders have distanced themselves from some central Mormon doctrines that rationalists could believe without sacrificing intellectual integrity. Elder Boyd Packer has replaced and changed the meaning of "free agency" with his "moral agency." More recently President Gordon B. Hinckley was asked by *Time* magazine if Mormons believe that humans can become gods. His answer was: "It's of course an ideal. It's a hope for a wishful thing." Such equivocation sounds more like faith than knowledge. When asked if the church teaches that God the Father was once a man, he responded, "I don't know that we teach it. I don't know that we emphasize it ... I understand the philosophical background behind it, but I don't know a lot about it, and I don't think others know a lot about it" (*Time*, 4 Aug. 1997, 56). Some Mormons are dismayed by their leader's uncertainty about such a foundation stone of our theology, but I find President Hinckley's answers refreshingly honest and human. Similarly Anderson wonders if some day the "irrational teachings of the church will gradually become less literal and more symbolic or philosophic." I agree this would be desirable, though I doubt we will live to see it.

Regarding the many Joseph Smith problems, I concur that all of those mentioned are real and that there are many others, such as his "translating" the bogus Kinderhook plates, his fabricating and misrepresenting the Book of Abraham, his establishing an illegal bank, his lying about polygamy, and his unethical land deals, among others. I think that Dan Vogel's recent Mormon History Association presentation, "'Prophet Puzzle' Revisited," offers a fairly accurate view of the man, concluding that in many ways Smith could be termed a "pious fraud." The important thing is to give equal weight and credence to both words. Yes, Joseph was a fraud in many ways, but in just as many other ways he was pious and truly interested in creating a better religion as a means of enhancing human life.

This brings me to a few comments on Anderson's ideas on how a Mormon can remain a rationalist, or vice versa. He suggests that "while

surrendering his individual integrity," Orson Pratt may have kept this dualism intact by "rising above" the problems and "focusing instead on the virtues taught." I am not sure that this is a worthwhile or even possible trade-off—giving up "integrity" for "virtue." Are they not two ventricles in the same heart?

Anderson says that "The church can and is forcing rationalist members to back away and separate themselves." This remains true. The purging continues, though in a less noticed way. Just this year, for example, people we know have been excommunicated, fired, threatened, harassed, and intimidated for communicating—even through fiction and poetry—views considered (by some leaders) not fully orthodox or supportive.

The church tries to paint a good face on the continuing problem. "Inactives" are today called "less active," but a change in excommunication policy now allows leaders to excommunicate a member rather than honor a request to have one's name removed on principle, without excommunication. In defending a much broader criteria for excommunication, Elder James Faust quoted George Q. Cannon, who in 1869 said, in effect, "[A] man may not be necessarily in apostasy for what he thinks, but if he speaks or writes his views he is absolutely in apostasy." Catholics, by comparison, are considerably more tolerant of their intellectuals and even their verbal critics, and use excommunication sparingly in favor of more Christ-like inclusivity. Also Catholics have been open to some suggestions by their rationalists and intellectuals, as evidenced by the remarkable passage of Vatican II policies.

Anderson hopes that Mormon leaders will come to understand that their condemnation is more damaging to the reputation and moral influence of the church than the works of intellectuals that reach public awareness. I hope so too, but our leaders don't seem to get it yet. When asked about the excommunication of five intellectuals three years ago, President Hinckley said that given the baptism of hundreds of thousands of new members that year, the loss of five was insignificant. As in corporate America, executives see losses impersonally and only in relation to gains. If "the worth of souls" is no longer "great in the eyes of God," if we are reduced to playing a numbers game, if our leaders don't care about offending the world's rationalists on the calculated risk that they are unlikely to convert anyway, then thinking Mormons are as good as lost, unless they are willing to recant hypocritically as Galileo did, or sacrifice their integrity as Pratt did, or pick and choose from the Mormon smorgasbord, "believing what they can and ignoring the rest," as J. Golden Kimball quipped he did.

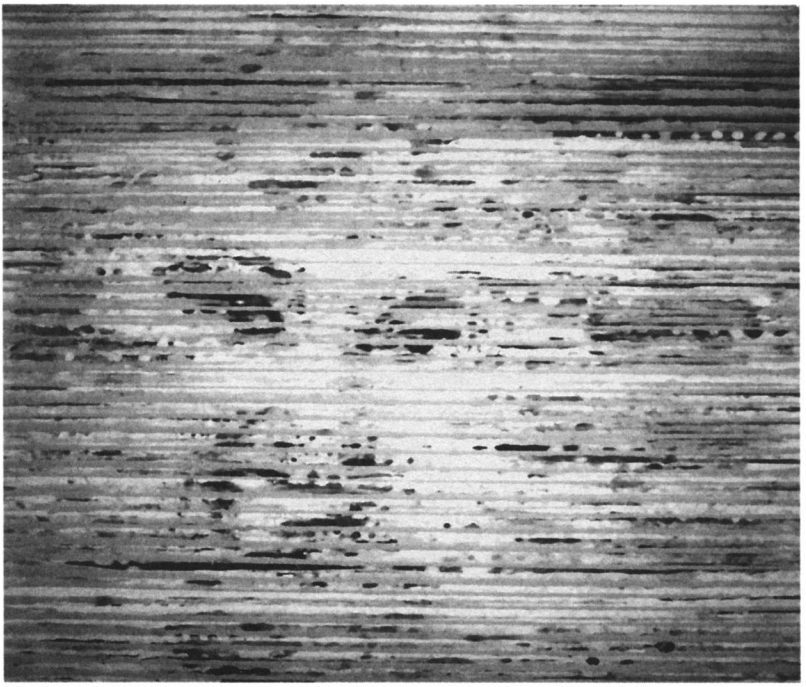
In the latter instance we remain nominal or cultural Mormons and may think we are "real" Mormons because we are being true to the best

and loftiest aspects of Mormonism. But if we think this, I believe we deceive ourselves. We are not Mormons in a real and complete sense. The leaders, not us, establish and control the definitions, and if we are objective about what being a present-day Mormon really entails, we might reconsider seriously our eagerness to have the term apply to us.

Orthodox members, of course, have the same qualms about rationalism and the chosen substitute for many borderline or former religionists—humanism. Mormon leaders are fully aware of the divisive fracturing and weakening of the RLDS church after it changed under the influence of its rationalist intellectuals. The Utah church is protecting itself against such a scenario playing out here. For the orthodox, faith has another dimension that transcends blind belief. Faith is also the seeking of emotional comnfort through commitment to a spiritual community. Many rationalists need this comfort as well, which only intensifies the pain of the struggle to satisfy both the mental need to think logically and skeptically and the heartfelt human aching to belong, to be valued and receive succor from caring believers. Why do so many bright people maintain their faith, and at what effort and cost? Has faith for them become merely a compromise, a personal comfort, a way to justify their deep feelings and needs for a spiritual support system?

Wistfully, I return now to my first question. Can a fully-believing Mormon be a fully-reasoning rationalist, or vice versa? I think not. At least, not without extensive compromising of belief on the one hand or of intellectual integrity on the other. How can we fit a square peg in a round hole, without altering one or the other, or both? And, yet, how can a rationalist fill the great spiritual and emotional void that is left by the departure of faith?

These, it seems to me, are the true dilemmas and plights of the "Mormon rationalist."



Joseph Smith's Emendation of Hebrew Genesis 1:1

Kevin L. Barney

IN THE FALL OF 1980 I WAS A STUDENT in a biblical Hebrew course taught by Professor Keith Meservy at Brigham Young University. One day Professor Meservy shared with the class a letter that had been referred to him for a response. The letter described how a pair of sister missionaries had met a gentleman who taught Hebrew for a living, and how they had decided to impress him by sharing with him Joseph Smith's treatment of Hebrew Genesis 1:1 in the King Follett Discourse. The class collectively cringed, as we could guess what was coming. As we had anticipated, the Hebrew teacher was not favorably impressed by the prophet's performance, and the missionaries were stunned to learn of difficulties in Joseph's treatment of that text. Professor Meservy's response was to point out that Joseph was not translating the text as it stood, but was conjecturally emending it. This was a helpful response and probably the most that could have been said at the time, but, of course, it was also necessarily an incomplete response since the prophet's conjectural emendation of the text (as commonly understood) did not work in Hebrew either.

From time to time I have pondered how Joseph could have mangled the Hebrew so badly. For a long time I simply accepted the explanation given by Louis Zucker in his classic essay on Joseph's use of Hebrew:

> It has not been my intention to imply that Joseph Smith's freehandling of Hebrew grammar and the language of the Hebrew Bible shows ineptitude. Professor Seixas was undoubtedly pleased with him as a Hebrew student. I simply do not think he cared to appear before the world as a meticulous Hebraist. He used the Hebrew as he chose, as an artist, inside his frame of reference, in accordance with his taste, according to the effect he wanted to produce, as a foundation for theological innovations.[1]

1. Louis Zucker, "Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3 (Summer 1968): 53.

TABLE 1

Thomas Bullock Report	*William Clayton Report*	*Joseph Smith Diary, by Willard Richards*	*Wiford Woodruff Journal*
I sup I am not alld. to go into investign. but what is contd. in the Bible & I think is so many wise men who wod. put me to death for treason I shall turn commentator today. I shall go to the first Hebrew word in the Bible the 1st sen: In the beginning — Berosheat — In by thro. & every thing else. Roshed the head when the Inspd. man wrote it he did not put the 1st pt. to it. a man a Jew witht. any authy. thot. it too bad to begin to talk about the head of any man. "The Head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods" is the true meang. of the word — if you do not believe it you do not believe the learned man of God — no man can tell you more than I do thus the H God brot. forth the Gods in the Head council — I want to bring it to English. Oh ye lawyers ye doctors I want to let you know that the H G. knows something as well as you do — the Head God called togr. the Gods & set in Grand Council &c	I suppose that I am not allowed to go into an investigation of anything that is not in the Bible — you would cry treason. So many learned and wise men here — will go the the old Bible the very Berosheit. make a comment on the first sentence of the history of creation. Berosheit want to annalize the word — Be — in by through & everything else — rosh [indecipherable] — the head. sheit — where do it come from — when they inspired man wrote he did not put the Be there — But a jew put it there. It read in the first — the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods — is the true meaning — rosheet signifies to bring forth the Eloheim. Learned men cannt learn any more than what I have told you hence the head God brought forth the head God in the grand council. Will simplify it in the English language. The learned Doctors who have persecuted me I want to let you know that the H.G. — The grand councilers set in yonder heavens and contemplated the creation of the worlds that was created at that time.	— the head, or the head one — The head one of the Gods, brought forth the Gods. — Dr & Lawyers that have persecuted. — The head one called the Gods together in grand council — to bring forth the world.	If I should say anything but what was in the bible the cry of treason would be herd I will then go the Bible, Barasheet in the beginning, Analize the word in and through the head, an old Jew added the word Bath, it red the head one of the Gods, broat forth the Gods, I will transpose it in the english language. I want you to know & learn that the Holy Ghost knows somthing. The grand Council set at the head and contemplated the creation of the world,
* * *	* * *	* * *	* * *
I shod. not have brot. up this word ~~unt~~ only to shew that I am right	Should not have introduced this testimony were it not to back up the word rosh — the head father of the Gods.	— In the beginning the head of the gods called a council of the Gods — and concocted a scheme to create the world.	The Gods came together & concocked the plan of making the world & the inhabitants,
* * *	* * *	* * *	* * *
now I ask all the learned men who hear me wher. the learned men who are preachg. Saln. say that God created the Heavens & the Earth out of nothing & the reason is that they are unlearned & I know more than all the world put togr. & If the H.G. in me com: more than all the world I will associate with it — What does Boro mean it means to organize same as you wod. organize a Ship. — God himself had materials to org. the world out of chaos which is Element & in which dwells all the glory — that nothing can destroy they never can have an ending they coexist eternally	Learned Doctors tell us God created the heavens & earth out of nothing. They account it blasphemy to contradict the idea — They will call you a fool — You ask them why they say don't the Bible say he created the world & they infer that it must be out of nothing. The word create came from the word Barau — don't mean so — it means to organize — same as man would use to build a ship — hence we infer that God had materials to organize from — chaos — chaotic matter. — element had an existence from the time he had. The pure pure principles of element are principles that never can be destroyed — they may be organized and re organized=but not destroyed.	Doctors say, — created the earth out of nothing. Borau. — creates. — it means to organized. — God had materials to organise the world. Elements — nothing can destroy, no beginning no end. —	An other thing the learned Dr says the Lord made the world out of nothing, you tell them that God made the world out of something, & they think you are a fool. But I am learned & know more than the whole world, the Holy Ghost does any how, & I will associate myself with it. Beaureau, to organize the world out of chaotic matter, element they are principles that cannot be disolved they may be reoganized.

Bullock's Minutes
Times and Seasons (1844)

I suppose I am not allowed to go into an investigation of any thing that is not contained in the Bible, and I think there are so many wise men here, who would put me to death for treason; so I shall turn commentator to-day; I shall comment on the very first Hebrew word in the Bible; I will make a comment on the very first sentence of the history of creation in the Bible, Berosheit. I want to analyze the word; baith, in, by, through, in, and every thing else. Rosh, the head. Sheit, grammatical termination. When the inspired man wrote it, he did not put the baith there. A man, a Jew without any authority, thought it too bad to begin to talk about the head. It read first, 'The head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods,' that is the true meaning of the words. Baurau, signifies to bring forth. If you do not believe it, you do not believe the learned man of God. No man can learn you more than what I have told you. Thus the head God brought forth the Gods in the grand council. I will simplify it in the English language. Oh ye lawyers! ye doctors! who have persecuted me; I want to let you know that the Holy Ghost knows something as well as you do. The head God called together the Gods, and set in grand council. The grand counsellors sat in yonder heavens, and contemplated the creation of the worlds that were created at that time.

* * *

I should have not introduced this testimony were it not to back up the word Rosh, the head, Father of the Gods. I should not have brought it up only to show that I am right.

* * *

Now I ask all the learned men who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation say, that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing, and the reason is they are unlearned; they account it blasphemy to contradict the idea, they will call you a fool. — I know more than all the world put together and the Holy Ghost within me comprehends more than all the world, and I will associate with it. The word create came from the word baurau; it does not mean so; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize a ship. Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos; chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time he had. The pure principles of element, are principles that can never be destroyed. They may be organized and reorganized; but not destroyed.

Jonathan Grimshaw
Amalgamation (1855)

I suppose I am not allowed to go into an investigation of anything that is not contained in the Bible. If I do, I think there are so many over-wise men here, that they would cry "treason" and put me to death. So I will go to the old Bible and turn commentator today.

I shall comment on the very first Hebrew word in the Bible; I will make a comment on the very first sentence of the history of the creation in the Bible — *Berosheit*. I want to analyze the word. *Baith* — in, by through, and everything else. *Rosh* — the head. Sheit — grammatical termination. When the inspired man wrote it, he did not put the *baith* there. An old Jew without any authority added the word; he thought it too bad to begin to talk about the head! It read first, "The head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods." That is the true meaning of the words. *Baurau* signifies to bring forth. If you do not believe it, you do not believe the learned man of God. Learned men can teach you no more than what I have told you. Thus the head God brought forth the Gods in the grand council.

* * *

I should not have brought it up, only to show that I am right.

In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted [prepared] a plan to create the world and people it.

* * *

Now, I ask all who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God, and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost; they account it blasphemy in any one to contradict their idea. If you tell them that God made the world out of something, they will call you a fool. But I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and he is within me, and comprehends more than all the world; and I will associate myself with him.

You ask the learned doctors why they say the world was made out of nothing, and they will answer, "Doesn't the Bible say He *created* the world?" And they infer, from the word create, that it must have been made out of nothing. Now, the word create came from the word *baurau*, which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos — chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and reorganized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning and can have no end.

Stan Larson
Amalgamated Text (1978)

I suppose I am not allowed to go into an investigation of anything that is not contained in the Bible. *If I should,* you would cry treason, and I think there are so many learned and wise men here who would put me to death for treason. I will, *then*, go to the old Bible and turn commentator today. I will go to the very first Hebrew word — BERESHITH — in the Bible and make a comment on the first sentence of the history of creation: "In the beginning. . . ." I want to analyze the word BERESHITH. BE — in, by, through, and everything else; next, ROSH — the head, ITH. Where did it come from? When the inspired man wrote it, he did not put the first part — the BE — there; but a man — an *old* Jew without any authority — put it there. He thought it too bad to begin to talk about the head of any man. It read in the first: "The Head One of the Gods brought forth the Gods." This is the true meaning of the words. ROSHITH [BARA ELOHIM] signifies [the Head] to bring forth the Elohim. If you do not believe it, you do not believe the learned man of God. No learned man can tell you any more than what I have told you. Thus, the Head God brought forth the Head Gods in the grand, head council. I want to simplify it in the English language.

O, ye lawyers, ye learned doctors, who have persecuted me, I want to let you know *and learn* that the Holy Ghost knows something as well as you do. The Head One of the Gods called together the Gods and the grand councillors sat in grand council *at the head* in yonder heavens to bring forth the world and contemplated the creation of the worlds that were created at that time.

* * *

I should not have introduced this testimony, only to show that I am right and to back up the word ROSH — the Head Father of the Gods. In the beginning the Head of the Gods called a council of the Gods. *The Gods came together* and concocted a scheme to create this world *and the inhabitants.*

* * *

Now, I ask all the learned men who hear me, why the learned doctors who are preaching salvation say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. They account it blasphemy to contradict the idea. If you tell them that God made the world out of something, they will call you a fool. The reason is that they are unlearned but I am learned and know more than all the world put together — the Holy Ghost does, anyhow. If the Holy Ghost in me comprehends more than all the world, I will associate myself with it.

You ask them why, and they say, "Doesn't the Bible say He created the world?" And they infer that it must be out of nothing. The word create came from the word BARA, but it doesn't mean so. What does BARA mean? It means to organize; the same as a man would organize and use things to build a ship. Hence, we infer that God Himself had materials to organize the world out of chaos — chaotic matter — which is element and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles that never can be destroyed. Nothing can be destroyed. They never can have a beginning or an ending; they exist eternally.

There is certainly an element of truth to this explanation in any event. I continued, however, to have the nagging feeling that this explanation was inadequate, that there was another rationale for Joseph's apparent garbling of the Hebrew.

I began to rethink this issue in connection with my experience in teaching an introductory stake institute course on biblical Hebrew from the fall of 1994 to the spring of 1996. The participants were not college students, but busy, working adults. We met once a week for an hour without significant outside homework, so progress was slow. Some of my students had expressed an interest in Joseph's commentary on Hebrew Genesis 1:1, so I undertook a review of what had been written on the subject. In that connection I also reviewed Joseph's experience in learning Hebrew in Kirtland, Ohio, from 20 November 1835 to the end of March 1836 as recounted in his journal.[2] I was particularly struck by the entry for 7 March 1836, which indicated that Joseph's class had translated Genesis 17 one day and most of Genesis 22 the next, after which Joseph privately read the first ten verses of Exodus 3 in preparation for the next lesson. As a fledgling Hebrew teacher struggling to help my class read even a single verse coherently, I now had a good idea of what it meant for a student to be able to translate whole chapters at a time, and thus of how far Joseph had presumably come in his Hebrew studies. He was obviously more advanced than my students, yet I was confident that, beginners though they were, my students would not have mangled the Hebrew as Joseph appeared to have done. This subjective observation led me to review all of the original manuscript evidence together in one sitting, and from that review I felt that I was able to see at least the outlines of what Joseph's original conjecture may have been, and how that conjecture had been badly misrepresented in the printed sources. Two later treatments made important advances in our understanding but are, I believe, both flawed. In this essay I review the three existing approaches to understanding Joseph's Hebrew conjecture, which I have labeled the "traditional interpretation," the "Ehat and Cook conjecture," and the "Kabbalistic interpretation." I then propose a new conjecture, which I believe better accounts for all of the available evidence.

Our first task is to recreate as accurately as possible what Joseph said on the subject. Table 1 sets forth the text of the three most relevant extracts from the King Follett Discourse, given 7 April 1844. The first four columns in the table represent the four manuscript reports of the sermon recorded by Thomas Bullock, William Clayton, Willard Richards, and

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2. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:87-203.

Wilford Woodruff as published by Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook on pages 340-62 in *The Words of Joseph Smith* (hereafter *WJS*).[3] Bullock and Clayton had been assigned as clerks for the conference at which the discourse was given, Richards kept the prophet's diary, and Woodruff later entered his version of the sermon in his journal from notes he made at the time. From 23 to 28 April 1844 Bullock prepared the minutes of the conference based on a comparison of his own account with that of Clayton; these minutes were published in the *Times and Seasons*, 15 August 1844, which is the source for the fifth column.[4] The sixth column derives from the *History of the Church*,[5] and represents the "amalgamation" of the *Times and Seasons* minutes and the Richards/Woodruff accounts prepared in 1855 by Jonathan Grimshaw, a clerk in the LDS Church Historian's Office. This is the traditional text that has been followed in most printed versions of the discourse since Grimshaw's amalgamation was first published in the *Deseret News*, 8 July 1857.[6] The last column is the more recent amalgamated text of the discourse prepared by Stan Larson in 1978.[7] Table 2 sets forth the text of a parallel discussion in the prophet's 16 June 1844 discourse. The first column of that table represents Bullock's manuscript report,[8] and the second column is the edited version in the *History of the Church*.[9]

To understand Joseph's treatment of the text, it is necessary to have a basic comprehension of the traditional translation of Hebrew Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew text may be transliterated as:

b^{e}rē'šît bārā' 'ĕlōhîm ʿet haššamayim w^{e}ʿet hāʿarests

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3. Ehat and Cook's work was published in 1980 in Salt Lake City by the Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center and Bookcraft.

4. See Van Hale, "The King Follett Discourse: Textual History and Criticism," *Sunstone* 8 (Sept. 1983): 6.

5. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 6:307-308 (hereafter *HC*).

6. For the publication history of the discourse, see Donald Q. Cannon, "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 190-92. The most widely accessible printed source for the discourse today is probably Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 342-62.

7. Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 193-208. Larson used the Bullock account as the base text, superimposing the Clayton version, comparing the Richards account, and finally considering the Woodruff account (which was somewhat less contemporary to the discourse than the other three accounts). Material added from the Woodruff account appears in Larson's text in italics.

8. As published in *WJS*, 379.

9. See *HC*, 6:475-76.

TABLE 2
(16 June 1844 Discourse)

Thomas Bullock Report

Twice I will shew from the Heb. Bible & the 1st. word shews a plurality of Gods — & I want the apostate & learned men to come here — & prove to the contrary an unlearned boy must give you a little Hebrew — Berosheit &c In the begin. rosheit — the head — it shod. read the heads of — to organize the Gods — Eloiheam Eloi. God in sing. heam, reanders Gods I want a little learning as well as other fools

Popes quot: Drink deep

all the confusion is for want of drinking and draught the head God — organized the heavens & the Earth — I defy all the learning in the world to refute me —

In the begin the heads of the Gods organized the heaven & the Earth — now the learned Priest — the people rage — & the heathen imagine a vain thing — if we pursue the Heb further — it reads

The Head one of the Gods said let us make man in our image I once asked a learned Jew once — if the Heb. language compels us to render all words ending in heam in the plural — why not render the first plural — he replied it would ruin the Bible — he acknowledged I was right. I came here to investigate these things precisely as I believe it — hear & judge for yourself — & if you go away satisfied — well & good — in the very beginning there is a plurality of Gods — beyond the power of refutation — it is a great subject I am dwelling on — the word Eloiheam ought to be in the plural all the way thro — Gods — the heads of the Gods appointed one God for us

HC, *6:475-76*

I will show from the Hebrew Bible that I am correct, and the first word shows a plurality of Gods; and I want the apostates and learned men to come here and prove to the contrary, if they can. An unlearned boy must give you a little Hebrew. *Berosheit baurau Eloheim ait aushamayeen vehau auraits,* rendered by King James' translators, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." I want to analyze the word *Berosheit. Rosh,* the head; *Sheit,* a grammatical termination, The *Baith* was not originally put there when the inspired man wrote it, but it has been since added by an old Jew. *Baurau* signifies to bring forth; *Eloheim* is from the word *Eloi,* God, in the singular number; and by adding the word *heim,* it renders it Gods. It read first, "In the beginnning the head of the Gods brought forth the Gods," or, as others have translated it, "The head of the Gods called the Gods together." I want to show a little learning as well as other fools —

> A little learning is a dangerous thing.
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.
> There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
> And drinking largely sobers us up again.

All this confusion among professed translators is for want of drinking another draught.

The head God organized the heavens and the earth. I defy all the world to refute me. In the beginning the heads of the Gods organized the heavens and the earth. Now the learned priests and the people rage, and the heathen imagine a vain thing. If we pursue the Hebrew text further, it reads, "*Berosheit baurau Eloheim ait aushamayeen vehau auraits*" — "The head one of the Gods said, Let us make a man in our own image." I once asked a learned Jew, "If the Hebrew language compels us to render all words ending in *heim* in the plural, why not render the first *Eloheim* plural?" He replied, "That is the rule with few exceptions; but in this case it would ruin the Bible." He acknowledged I was right. I came here to investigate these things precisely as I believe them. Hear and judge for yourselves; and if you go away satisfied well and good.

In the very beginning the Bible shows there is a plurality of Gods beyond the power of refutation. It is a great subject I am dwelling on. The word *Eloheim* ought to be in the plural all the way through — Gods. The heads of the Gods appointed one God for us;

This verse is rendered in the King James Version (KJV) as "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The sentence begins with a prepositional phrase, *bᵉrēʾšît* ("in (the) beginning"), which is formed by the prefixed preposition *bᵉ* ("in") and the noun *rēʾšît* ("beginning").[10] The subject of the sentence, *ʾĕlōhîm* ("God"), is preceded in the word order by the verb *bārāʾ* ("created"). There are two objects of the verb, each preceded by the (untranslatable) particle *ʾēt*, which marks the direct object, and joined by the conjunction *wᵉ* ("and"): the first is "the heaven" (*šāmayim*, preceded by the definite article *ha*), and the second is "the earth" (*hāʾārets*, also with the definite article).

Preliminary Observations

Joseph begins his analysis by breaking down *bᵉrēʾšît* into three parts, as described in the Clayton report: "Be—in by through and everything else—rosh [indecipherable]—the head. sheit."[11] This tripartite division of the word seems to have been suggested by the explanation of *bᵉrēʾšît* given by Joshua Seixas, instructor at the Kirtland Hebrew school, as described in his grammar.[12]

Having broken down *bᵉrēʾšît*, the first change suggested by Joseph is the deletion of the preposition *bᵉ*. As recorded in the Bullock report: "when the Inspd. man wrote it he did not put the 1st pt. to it. a man a Jew with. any authy. thot. it too bad to begin to talk about the head of any man." Ehat and Cook, the editors of *WJS*, seem to have understood the abbreviation "pt." to mean "point." In *WJS*, p. 397n70, they state: "While in fact, the Dagesh' [or point] in the bosom of the letter Beyth [*b*] that begins Genesis 1:1 removes the aspiration of the first vowel,[13] the Prophet says the B (meaning "in, by, through and everything else") should also be dropped." The suggestion seems to be that Joseph's argument was as follows: (a) the *dagesh* in the initial letter did not belong there and (b), in fact, the entire initial letter also did not belong and should be deleted. That Joseph was aware of the technical term "point" is evidenced by his descrip-

10. As we will see, the KJV probably mistranslates this verse, but for our purposes it is only necessary to understand the KJV treatment.

11. Note that Larson normalizes the last element of the word from "sheit" to "ITH," as the "sh" at the beginning of that element belongs at the end of the word "ROSH."

12. J. Seixas, *A Manual Hebrew Grammar for the Use of Beginners*, 2d ed. (Andover: Gould and Newman, 1834), 85 (hereafter *Hebrew Grammar*), where Seixas separates the *bᵉ* as a "prefix" and the *ît* as a "termination."

13. I assume that they meant to say (somewhat awkwardly) that the *dagesh* removes the aspiration "of the first consonant," not "of the first vowel." The presence of *dagesh lene* renders the letter *bêt* a stop (pronounced with a hard b as in "boy"); its absence transforms that letter into its spirantized counterpart (pronounced with a b sound followed by the aspirate /h/, usually represented in English by the letter v).

tion of the characters on the Egyptian antiquities he possessed as being "like the present (though probably not quite so square) form of Hebrew without points."[14] Nevertheless, it seems apparent to me that the abbreviation "pt." here does not stand for "point" but for "part," and the reference is to the entire preposition *b*^{e} (the antecedent to "it" being the full word *b*^{e}*rē'šît*). Larson correctly renders the abbreviation as "part," and both the conference minutes and Grimshaw, following the Clayton report and the Woodruff journal, correctly interpret the reference as being to the letter *bêt* (which is the name of the letter transliterated as *b*). The reference to the "first part" of the word is easily intelligible, as the preposition *b*^{e} is an inseparable preposition that is joined directly to the noun it governs (in this case, *rē'šît*). Joseph never said anything about the *dagesh* or point in the letter *bêt*; his argument was simply that the letter *bêt*, and thus the word *b*^{e} (which was the "first part" of *b*^{e}*rē'šît*), did not belong and should be deleted.

There are a couple of unusual textual circumstances here that conceivably may have influenced Joseph's deletion of the preposition. Although I am aware of no hard evidence that Joseph was influenced by either of these textual circumstances, I remember noticing them myself when I was a beginning Hebrew student, so I mention them simply as possibilities for further research. If we transliterate the first two words of Genesis 1:1 without vowels (which is the way those words would have been written originally), we get *br'šyt br'*; note that the first three letters of the first word are repeated, in sequence, by the three letters of the second word. It is possible that something about this repeating letter sequence suggested to Joseph's mind the potential for scribal manipulation. For instance, if the first word were simply *r'šyt* or, as Joseph claimed, *r'š*, then the first two letters of that word would have been identical to the last two letters of the next word. A scribe's eye could have picked up the *bêt* from the beginning of the second word and accidentally added it to the beginning of the first word. On this theory, the *bêt* preceding *rē'šît* would have resulted from an accidental doubling of the *bêt* at the beginning of *bārā'*.[15] Of course, such an error would have been highly unlikely at the beginning of a text, and the rest of the syntax in the sentence as it stands now would not have worked. If, however, as Joseph suggests, this

14. *HC*, 2:348. Seixas also refers to the *dagesh* as a "point"; see Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 7.

15. In scholarly terms this could be described as dittography (or letter doubling) resulting from the combination of homoeoarchon ("like beginning") and homoeoteleuton ("like ending") in the juxtaposition of the words *r'š br'*, where the beginning of the first word is identical to the ending of the next word. In articulating this possibility, I do not mean to suggest that Joseph had necessarily thought through the scribal mechanics that could have led to the letter *bêt* being added to the word *rē'šît*. If this repetition of letters influenced him at all, it may have simply looked suspiciously artificial to Joseph, who needed little pretext to exercise prophetic license in modifying the text.

text originally read differently than it does now, and if it were originally present in another source and, after the manipulation had occurred, incorporated into the beginning of this text (which would be consistent with the significant editorial processes assumed by the documentary hypothesis[16] of the textual origins of the creation account in Genesis), then this suggestion is at least a possibility worth considering.[17] Although it may be unlikely that the text was actually manipulated in this fashion by ancient scribes, what is significant for our purposes is the possibility that Joseph may have been influenced in his conjecture in some way by this repeating letter sequence.

One also cannot help but wonder whether Joseph might have been influenced to consider deleting the preposition by the absence of the article in the Masoretic Text. Presumably Joseph would have expected the word *bᵉrēʾšît* to correspond to the three English words "in the beginning," but in fact the word "the" is not there. The raised *ᵉ* in the transliteration is the half-vowel *šᵉwaʾ* and indicates that the article was not explicitly present in the prepositional phrase; if the article had been present, the vowel in that position would have been *qāmets* and the word would be transliterated *bārēʾšît*. That the Masoretic vocalization preserves an ancient tradition is shown by the Septuagint, which translates Genesis 1:1 into Greek without the article (*en archē*, as opposed to *en hē archē*; compare John 1:1, which follows LXX Genesis 1:1 in reading *en archē*). There was a tendency in antiquity to supply the missing article. Origen in his transliterations into Greek uses *bresith* (suggesting the absence of the article as in

16. The documentary hypothesis posits that the Pentateuch was developed from multiple documentary sources, classically referred to as J (the Yahwist document), E (the Elohistic document), D (the Deuteronomic source), and P (the Priestly source). For an extensive description of the documentary hypothesis and its development, see Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 3-82.

17. For a known case of scribal addition of the preposition *bᵉ* to the noun *rēʾšît*, see Proverbs 8:22, which begins *YHWH qānānî rēʾšît darkô* (New English Bible: "The LORD created me the beginning of his works"). A manuscript tradition developed (reflected in the Syriac and some Targum and Vulgate manuscripts) that read *bᵉrēʾšît* for *rēʾšît* here (which is followed in the KJV: "The LORD possessed me *in* the beginning of his way"). See *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990), 1285 at apparatus note 22a; Gary Anderson, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:1 in the Targums," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 24; C. F. Burney, "Christ as the *APXH* of Creation," *Journal of Theological Studies* 27 (1926): 167. In this case the addition of *bᵉ* reflects scribal assimilation to the wording of Genesis 1:1. In Proverbs 8:22 and the following verses, the argument is made that the Lord acquired Wisdom at the outset of the creation. Accordingly, these verses make profound use of the vocabulary of Genesis 1 (such as "earth," "heavens" and "waters"), including such specific allusions as *ʿal-pᵉnê tᵉhôm* "upon the face of the depth" (Proverbs 8:27 = Genesis 1:2). It is interesting in this connection that these verses not only use the word *rēʾšît* without the preposition *bᵉ*, they also use the word *rōʾš* twice, in Proverbs 8:23 (KJV: "beginning") and 8:26 (KJV: "highest part"). One wonders whether the word *rōʾš* might have been a part of the vocabulary of the creation account as it was known by this author.

the Masoretic Text), but the form *bareseth* (suggesting the presence of the article) is attested in marginalia to Origen, and the Samaritan Pentateuch reads *bārāšit*, also suggesting the presence of the article.[18] Perhaps Joseph viewed the absence of the article as evidence that the preposition had been improperly added to the noun.[19] In reality the article is not present because *bᵉrē'šît* is not an absolute prepositional phrase, as the KJV renders it, but rather introduces a temporal clause: "When God set about to create heaven and earth ..."[20]

The second change suggested by Joseph is the extraction of the word *rō'š* (head) from *rē'šît*. This word is then made the subject of the sentence. The two words are in fact related, *rē'šît* being derived from the word *rō'š* with the added ending *ît*.[21] The word *rō'š*, though literally meaning "head," more figuratively may refer to one who is the first in authority or the chief person in a group, as in the expression *kōhēn harō'š* "chief priest." Therefore Joseph's use of the term to refer to a head or chief God among many Gods is a correct application of the word. In fact, the word in at least one instance has been applied to God; in 2 Chronicles 13:12, which in the KJV reads: "And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain" (*wᵉhinnēh 'immānû bārō'š hā'ĕlōhîm*), the word rendered "captain" is *rō'š*.[22] In this passage God is the leader of a group including humans; Joseph uses the word to refer to God as the leader of a group including other gods.

These two changes (the deletion of *bᵉ* and the extraction of *rō'š* from *rē'šît*) are fairly clear. It is also fairly clear that the revised sentence in English is to begin "the Head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods," wording that is preserved in all four manuscript sources of the King Follett Discourse. Unfortunately, as we have suggested, the remainder of the

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18. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 1 at apparatus note 1:1a; Fridericus Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), 1:7.

19. Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 54, explains how when prefixes such as *bᵉ* "expel the article [*h*] ... they take its pointing." Here the pointing for the article is not present.

20. E.A. Speiser, *Genesis, The Anchor Bible*, vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 3.

21. The great semiticist Wilhelm Gesenius, in his *Hebraische Grammatik* (originally Halle, 1813; translated in numerous editions, including *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* [Oxford: University Press, 1966]), Sec. 76, no. 5, explained that "abstract" nouns may be formed from "concretes" by the addition of *ît* (as in the case of the English terminations -dom, -hood and -ness), citing as an illustration *rē'šît* (*principium*) being derived from *rē'š* [= *rō'š*] (*princeps*). Moses Stuart, in his *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language*, 4th ed. (Andover: Flagg & Gould, 1831), 124, which was one of the grammars used by students at the Kirtland Hebrew school, makes the same point using the same example with nearly identical wording to Gesenius' (including describing the feminine ending *ît* as a "termination").

22. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906; rprt. ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 911. The New International Version for this passage reads "God is with us; he is our leader," where "leader" translates *rō'š*.

argument is more obscure.

The Traditional Interpretation

The traditional understanding of the remainder of Joseph's argument is based on the Grimshaw amalgamation, which at this point follows Bullock's conference minutes in the *Times and Seasons*. There are essentially three aspects to the traditional understanding. First, the ending of *bᵉrē'šît*, "sheit," is said to be a "grammatical termination." Although it is not obvious on its face what is meant by the expression "grammatical termination," the Seixas grammar uses the word "termination" to refer to the feminine singular ending *ît*, both generally and specifically with respect to this word.[23] The implied argument is that this part of the word should be deleted. Second, the verb "brought forth" is understood to be a translation of *bārā'*. Third, *'ĕlōhîm* is transformed from the *subject* of the sentence to its *object*, understood as a literal plural. Therefore, according to the traditional understanding, the text originally read *rō'š bārā 'ĕlōhîm*, which is supposed to mean something like "the Head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods."

Louis Zucker states that "the syntax he imposes on his artificial three-word statement is impossible."[24] Although a syntactically possible (though nonsensical)[25] arrangement of words, Zucker's point is that, having cannibalized *bārā'* and *'ĕlōhîm* from the remainder of the sentence, there is now no way to connect the first part of the sentence (about bringing forth the Gods) with the second part of the sentence (about creating heaven and earth). Perhaps even more significantly, the use of *bārā'* for "bring forth" (in the sense of a call to assembly) is also lexically unprecedented.

Zucker assumed that the traditional understanding of this text is an accurate reflection of Joseph's meaning. This is a natural assumption given the wording of the modern published versions, and one that has been widely held throughout the history of the church (and remains the most common understanding today). There are, however, important reasons why the traditional interpretation should not uncritically be taken as correct, and in fact may be erroneous. The aspect of the traditional interpretation that is most problematic is its treatment of the verb *bārā'*, both

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23. Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 21 and 85. As we have seen, the Gesenius and Stuart grammars also refer to this word ending as a "termination."

24. "Student of Hebrew," 52-53.

25. This three-word construction would be translated something like "a head created gods," which is a meaningless jumble of words. The most glaring internal problem in this construction is the lexical one of understanding *bārā'* to mean "brought forth." The real syntactic problem is in joining this three-word construction to the rest of the sentence.

by cannibalizing it from its correct position later in the sentence and by translating it to mean "brought forth" (in the sense of a call to assembly). This treatment, however, is not attested in the original manuscript evidence. If Joseph said "*baurau* signifies to bring forth," none of the manuscript sources picked it up; yet all four manuscripts, even the cursory Willard Richards report, dutifully report Joseph's mention of the verb *bārā'* later in the sermon (used in its correct context).

The traditional interpretation can be traced to one source: Bullock's conference minutes in the *Times and Seasons* (as opposed to Bullock's or any other manuscript report). Bullock, however, could not have made it up; it had to come from someone who knew some Hebrew and, specifically, from someone who had (1) learned from Seixas, (2) learned from a Seixas-trained student, or (3) taught himself from the Seixas grammar. We deduce this from three characteristics of the conference minutes that are not reflected in the manuscript evidence. First, the expression "grammatical termination" is partially attested in the Seixas grammar. As we have seen, other grammars of the day also used the expression "termination" to refer to the feminine singular ending *ît*, so this in itself does not necessarily point to Seixas. Second, Bullock in his manuscript report spelled the word *bārā'* as "Boro," based on what he heard Joseph say, but in his conference minutes he spelled that word as "*baurau*." This is precisely the Seixas manner of transliterating the word, using "au" to represent the vowel *qāmets*[26] Third, Bullock in his conference minutes spells the name of the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet "*baith*," which, once again, reflects the Seixas manner of transliteration.[27]

It is unlikely that Bullock himself was the source for this additional information. He could not have attended the Kirtland Hebrew school, having emigrated from England to Nauvoo in 1843. His professional training was as a law clerk, and we have no indication that he had an independent knowledge of Hebrew.[28] Since the Seixas spellings would not

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26. Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 6. For additional examples of the influence of the Seixas transliteration method, consider the following: (1) Nauvoo (*nā'wû*, *pilel* of *nā'āh*, "be comely," as in Isaiah 52:7 and Song of Solomon 1:10), where the vowel *qamets* is represented by "au" and the vowel *šûreq* is represented by "oo" (this rare verb form is listed in Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 111); (2) gnolaum (*'ôlām*, "eternity"; see Abr. 3:18), where the guttural letter *'ayin* at the *beginning* of a word is represented by "gn" (see Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 5); and (3) raukeeyang (*rāqî'*, "firmament" or "(solid) expanse"; see Abr., Fac. 1, Fig. 12, and Fac. 2, Figure 4), where the letter *'ayin* at the *end* of a word is represented by "ng" (Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 5).

27. Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 6. The only manuscript report to record this word is the Woodruff account, which spells the word "bath."

28. For general background on Bullock, see Jerald F. Simon, "Thomas Bullock as an Early Mormon Historian," *Brigham Young University Studies* 30 (Winter 1990): 71-88, and the introductory essay in Greg R. Knight, ed., *Thomas Bullock Nauvoo Journal* (Orem, UT: Grandin, 1994).

have been available from Bullock's memory of the discourse, Bullock must have derived the information from some other source. If that other source were Joseph himself (who, of course, learned his Hebrew from Seixas at the Kirtland Hebrew school), and if Bullock correctly understood Joseph's explanation,[29] then the traditional interpretation reflected in the conference minutes would correctly reflect Joseph's understanding. In contrast, if someone else were Bullock's source, while that in itself would not prove the traditional interpretation to be erroneous, it would certainly open the door to the possibility that Bullock's source had misunderstood the prophet's Hebrew arguments.

In order to assess the likelihood that Bullock's source was Joseph or someone else, I present below a synopsis of relevant entries from Bullock's journal[30] for the period surrounding the conference and Bullock's preparation of the minutes:

[April 1844]
6 attended Conference as a Reporter - after rain down to Phelps - with El Taylor writing in German & Hebrew [Bullock then describes the rainstorm]
7 [Bullock continues to attend the conference as a reporter]
10 in morning met with the twelve to arrange the minutes ... [Bullock spends the period from the 10th until the 23rd planting his garden]
23 went to the mill - meeting - Joseph and others speaking then went with Elder Taylor to his house, home at 2, began writing out the minutes ...
24 ... afternoon at home writing out conference minutes ...
25 ... then to Elder Taylor with 30 pages of writing - staid till 3 o'clock [Bullock then returns home and continues writing out the conference minutes]
26 [Bullock spends most of the day at home writing out the conference minutes]
27 [Bullock spends the entire day hiking from 20 to 25 miles in search of his cow and enjoying nature; he does not appear to have worked on the minutes this day]
28 [Bullock and his wife attend a meeting at which Hyrum Smith

29. We cannot assume that Joseph's historical clerks correctly understood his Hebrew arguments. This point may be illustrated by the edited version of Joseph's 16 June 1844 discourse, reproduced in Table 2. When Joseph turns his argument from Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 1:26, instead of transliterating Genesis 1:26 a clerk has simply repeated the Hebrew transliteration of Genesis 1:1. This error still appears in the *History of the Church.*

30. Known for this period as the Journal of the Church Historian's Office, available at the LDS archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

> presides and Brigham Young speaks] ... in afternoon at home writing conference minutes. ...

In Bullock's account of his activities during this time period, several things stand out. First, following the conference, Bullock only mentions seeing Joseph once, at a public speech he gave on 23 April 1844.[31] There appears to have been little opportunity for Bullock to have received a clarification of the prophet's Hebrew arguments directly from Joseph.

Our second observation relates to the possibility that Joseph had explained his conjecture to Bullock *prior* to delivering the King Follett Discourse on 7 April 1844. Van Hale suggests in passing that Bullock and Willard Richards may have prepared the Hebrew and German quotations for Joseph, based on the 6 April entry in Bullock's journal.[32] This is a puzzling assertion, since, like Bullock, Richards did not attend the Kirtland Hebrew school, and it is therefore unclear how either man could have prepared the Hebrew quotations for the prophet. Hale's suggestion appears to be mistaken, as neither Joseph nor Richards was mentioned as being present. Although it is possible that W. W. Phelps, John Taylor, and Bullock[33] were engaged in preparing German and Hebrew quotations for the prophet's use the next day, this seems unlikely without the presence of the prophet (who presumably would have been mentioned by Bullock had he been there). Joseph only quoted a few words of Hebrew and less German, all of which he knew by heart; there would have been no need to have scribes writing out German and Hebrew texts for him. Furthermore, it must be remembered that Bullock spelled the verb *bārā'* phonetically in his conference report (Boro), and only spelled it with the correct Seixas spelling (*baurau*) later in his conference minutes. This suggests that Bullock received the added details reflected in his conference minutes (but not in his conference report) *after* the conference itself, not *before*. My impression is that the evening at Phelps's house was more a pleasant social event. The interest of Phelps and Taylor in studying German and He-

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31. See *WJS*, 365 and 401. Ehat and Cook mention an address by Joseph on this date based on this entry from Bullock's journal, which they quote. No report of the content of this address has been preserved.

32. Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 210n11.

33. The syntax of Bullock's 6 April entry is ambiguous; the word "writing" could refer to Taylor, Phelps, Bullock, or any combination of the three. As "writing" immediately follows "El Taylor," Taylor is probably included in the reference. Since we know that Phelps knew Hebrew and that Taylor knew German, this may be a situation where Taylor was teaching Phelps German and Phelps was teaching Taylor Hebrew. Although it is possible that Bullock was also involved in learning Hebrew from Phelps, my impression is that Bullock was a guest at this study session. I am not aware of any other indication that Bullock had studied any Hebrew.

brew had no doubt been sparked by Joseph's own enthusiasm for those languages. Thus it does not appear likely that Joseph personally explained his conjecture to Bullock on the evening of 6 April, although I know of no way to dismiss that possibility completely.

The third item of interest from these journal entries is that, while Joseph does not emerge as a likely source for Bullock's more detailed Hebrew information, John Taylor does. Elder Taylor did not attend the Kirtland Hebrew school himself, as it was not until 9 May 1836 that he was baptized in Canada by Parley P. Pratt. Bullock's 6 April entry suggests, however, that Taylor had been studying Hebrew with W. W. Phelps, one of the better students at the Kirtland Hebrew school.[34] There are several additional indications that Taylor had studied some Hebrew.[35] Bullock met with Taylor twice during the course of his preparation of the conference minutes; first, at the outset of the project on 23 April, and again on 25 April, when he had completed thirty pages of writing. There are at least three reasons why Bullock may have met with Taylor. First, as indicated by Bullock's 10 April entry, preparation of the conference minutes was under apostolic supervision, and Taylor may have been Bullock's contact with the Quorum of the Twelve. Second, Taylor edited the *Times and Seasons*, where the conference minutes would eventually be published in mid-August.[36] Third, Bullock had recently spent an evening with Taylor in which Phelps and Taylor were studying Hebrew. It is easy to imagine Bullock coming to the Hebrew portion of the sermon, realizing that the Clayton account was scarcely more illuminating than his own, and going to Taylor (who he knew was acquainted

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34. On 19 February 1836 Seixas selected ten students for advanced instruction: Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps, Edwin Partridge, William E. McLellin, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Sylvester Smith, and Warren Parrish. See Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:177. Zucker mistakenly refers to this group as the "first class"; what the prophet's Ohio journal indicated was that these ten were selected *from* the first class (meaning the *original* class as opposed to additional classes formed to meet student demand). The mistake is a minor one, however, as these ten students were clearly considered by Seixas as superior in ability to the others, and the "first class" is therefore an apt description.

35. Consider, for instance, the following three circumstances: (1) the copy of the Moses Stuart grammar on microfilm at the library of the LDS church historical department has John Taylor's signature on the flyleaf; (2) in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: Latter-day Saints' Bookseller's Depot, 1854-86) (hereafter *JD*), 1:25, Taylor describes in generic terms how useless it would be to have a knowledge of French, German, and Hebrew without also having common sense (Taylor knew French and German, so this quote may imply that he also had been exposed to Hebrew); and (3) in *JD* 25:213-14, Taylor describes how he heard Joseph speak to the effect that the suffix "mem" makes the word "Eloheim" a plural ("mem" being the name of the last letter of "Eloheim" and, once again, representing a Hebrew detail that is nowhere reflected in either the conference reports or the conference minutes, suggesting that Taylor had independent knowledge of such matters).

36. As the minutes were not published until more than a month and a half after Joseph's death, it is unlikely that Joseph reviewed them prior to publication.

with Hebrew) for editorial guidance.

For these reasons, I believe that the source for the glosses in the conference minutes that are not attested in the manuscript evidence was most likely John Taylor. Now, as I have indicated, it is possible that Taylor was acquainted with Joseph's Hebrew conjectures and understood them, but the probability that Taylor's understanding of Hebrew was superficial at best suggests that he may have misunderstood Joseph's argument.[37]

An additional reason for rejecting the traditional interpretation is provided by Joseph's own specific, detailed, explicit discussion of the verb *bārā'* in the second part of his argument. Zucker complains that Joseph understands the verb *bārā'* narrowly—too narrowly in Zucker's view—and Zucker is right, Joseph does understand the verb *bārā'* in a narrow sense. The Hebrew verb *bārā'* cannot mean "to bring forth" in the sense of a call to assembly, and Joseph understood that perfectly well. It is doubtful, given his understanding of *bārā'* to mean "to organize" as in organizing raw materials into a ship, and given the weight he placed on that understanding in denying the dogma of *creatio ex nihilo*, that Joseph would have understood that word in the incredibly loose sense to mean a call to assembly. Such a double usage of the verb *bārā'* would have eviscerated the second part of his argument.

Although for the most part the original manuscript evidence does not support the traditional interpretation, there are two passages in the original manuscript reports that do seem to support that interpretation, at least indirectly. In his 16 June discourse, Joseph is reported as using the verb "organize," which was his favored translation of *bārā'*, with "the Gods" as object. This may suggest that Joseph did indeed conceive of the verb "brought forth" (which is also used with "the Gods" as object) in the first part of his argument as a translation of *bārā'*. A possible supporting passage is in the Richards account of the King Follett Discourse, where Richards represents Joseph as using the verb "to bring forth" with "the world" as object. That is, perhaps Joseph saw the verb *bārā'* as capable of being translated either as "organized" or as "brought forth." Although we normally think of the first part of the argument as "brought forth the Gods" and the second as "organized the heavens and the earth," if the verb is identical in both parts of the argument, we should not be surprised to find the English translations reversed, as in "to organize the Gods" or "to bring forth the world."

Thus we are faced with a situation where the available evidence seems to be contradictory. Portions of the original manuscript evidence

37. For a discussion of the factors contributing to this possible misunderstanding, see "A New Conjecture" below.

suggest that *bārā'* was not the verb rendered "brought forth" in the first part of Joseph's argument, while other portions suggest that it may have been. This sort of problem explains why different explanations of Joseph's Hebrew conjecture have arisen. It is difficult to know to what extent such contradictions may result from ignorance or ineptness on the part of the prophet or a lack of understanding and incomplete reporting on the part of his clerks. Perhaps at times Joseph played with the Hebrew and moved from one explanation to another.

On balance, however, I believe that Joseph did not understand the verb "brought forth" to be a translation of *bārā'*, and that the two passages which suggest that are scribal mistakes. Richards had correctly used "brought forth" at the beginning of his cursory report, and only a few lines later writes "to bring forth the world," so he may have been assimilating the second use of "bring forth" to the first. This is suggested by the more detailed Clayton and Woodruff accounts, which report that Joseph did not repeat the verb "bring forth," but said that the Gods in the grand council "contemplated the creation of" the world. Also we must remember that the scribe for the 16 June discourse was Bullock himself, and 16 June is *after* Bullock had completed his conference minutes and thought that he understood Joseph's argument. Therefore, Bullock's first use of "to organize" may have been a scribal anticipation (based on Bullock's own understanding) of the actual use of the verb "organize," which in fact appears a couple of lines later. That Bullock may have realized this to be an error is suggested by the fact that the *History of the Church* version, which Bullock himself would have either drafted or reviewed, corrects the verb from "to organize" back to "brought forth."

The very aspects of the traditional interpretation that are problematic are those that are not reflected in the original manuscript evidence and seem to be based on editorial glosses suggested by John Taylor, who had an exposure to Hebrew but did not have the strong beginner's knowledge that Joseph and the other leading students of Seixas had. In view of the apparent carelessness with which Joseph presented his argument, which was then filtered through someone with a superficial exposure to Hebrew, the potential for misunderstanding was great. Accordingly, I believe that the traditional interpretation is an error that originally made its way into the conference minutes and has been the source of much confusion ever since.

The Ehat / Cook Conjecture

Ehat and Cook have gone a long way toward correcting this error by publishing the four manuscript sources and making them available for study. Based on the manuscript evidence, they clearly reject the tradi-

tional notion that *bārā'* was the verb rendered "brought forth." But if the verb was not *bārā'*, what was it? They suggest their own conjecture on this point at *WJS*, 399n107:

> If we are following the Prophet's reasoning correctly, he believed that the word *re'shiyth* should have been the two words *re'sh* and *shiyth*; that the two words were originally there, and the letter [*š*], which is both the last letter of the first word and the first letter of the second word, was somehow dropped from one of the words thus fusing the two words into one. As Joseph Smith indicates, one meaning of the word *shiyth* is "to bring," and the word *re'sh* means "head."

The idea is that the text originally read *rō'š šît*, and that the two words were combined by haplography of the letter *šîn* (transliterated *š*) into *rē'šît*. This is a clever conjecture, and I believe that Ehat and Cook are on the right track in rejecting the traditional interpretation, relying closely on the manuscript evidence and giving careful consideration to Joseph's perceptions of possible letter manipulation.

The rationale for the Ehat and Cook conjecture is twofold. First, the Clayton account preserves the words "rosheet signifies to bring forth the Eloheim." Larson editorially expands that sentence in a manner so as to be consistent with the traditional interpretation; Ehat and Cook have attempted to understand the sentence as it stands in the Clayton account, as if Joseph had said "rosh sheet signifies to bring forth the Eloheim." Second, in apparent confirmation of this approach, when Clayton records the tripartite analysis of "Berosheit," he writes the last element not as "eit," as we might expect and as Larson understood it, but as "sheit," keeping the "sh" at the beginning of that element, notwithstanding the "sh" at the end of "rosh," the middle element.

Although this is a step in the right direction, ultimately I believe that their conjecture is wrong. We cannot press the significance of retaining the "sh" at the beginning of "sheit," as Joseph appears to have had an idiosyncratic habit of pronouncing suffixes as whole syllables. Although the suffix itself of *b^{e}rē'šît* is *ît*, the final syllable is *šît*, because a Hebrew syllable always begins with a consonant. Joseph does the same thing with a different word in his 16 June discourse, where he says "Eloiheam Eloi. God in sing. heam, reanders Gods." Ehat and Cook have a footnote following "heam," which begins "The transliteration should be 'elôhîym (pronounced el-o-heem'). The singular for god is simply 'êl (pronounced ale)." The first sentence of this footnote is incorrect, the second is misleading; Ehat and Cook misunderstand Joseph's argument here, which is adequately captured by Bullock's report. If I may paraphrase the argument by expanding it with bracketed material: "Eloiheam [is a literal plural meaning 'Gods.'] Eloi [Eloah] [is the word for] God in [the] sing[ular;

adding the suffix] heam reanders [the singular Eloah into the plural Elohim; that is,] Gods." The word "heam" should not be transliterated "elohim," but rather is simply a reference to the male plural suffix *îm*. Again Joseph idiosyncratically gives *hîm*, the final syllable of *'ĕlohîm*, for the suffix *îm*.[38] Although it is true that *'ēl* is a singular term for God (and is probably related in some fashion to *'ĕlohîm*), the singular of *'ĕlohîm* is not *'ēl* but *'ĕloah*,[39] a synonym of *'ēl*, as correctly explained by Joseph.

Another difficulty with the Ehat and Cook conjecture is that *šît* does not lexically fit the necessary meaning "to bring," meaning rather "to put" or "to place." This verb appears in the Seixas grammar,[40] but the meaning suggested by Seixas for the *qal* perfect form of the verb is "he placed, appointed"; to derive "he brought forth" from that verb is a stretch. Furthermore, the *qal* perfect form of this verb, which is the form given in the Seixas grammar, is *šāt* (without the middle letter *yôd*, represented by the diacritic mark over the letter *î* in *šît*); the form *šît*, which would be the form required for the Ehat and Cook conjecture, is an infinitive form, not the necessary perfect form.[41]

There is another important reason why the Ehat and Cook conjecture is wrong: Joseph himself tells us his understanding of the derivation of the letter *yôd* in *b^{e}rē'šît*, and it has nothing to do with a verb. In his 16 June discourse he says "rosheit—the head—it shod. read the heads of" and then later says "the heads of the Gods appointed one God for us." The *History of the Church* account preserves the later plural but completely misses the former explanatory aside. Those six words—"it shod. read the heads of"—are significant. Joseph's English rendering of his conjecture in

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38. Later in his 16 June discourse, Joseph repeats this usage: "if the Heb. language compels us to render all words ending in heam in the plural—why not render the first plural[?]" Although the spelling "heam" is Bullock's, Joseph must have pronounced the suffix with an initial "h" sound to result in that spelling. My conclusion regarding Joseph's pronunciation of suffixes as whole syllables is also supported by Stuart, *Grammar of the Hebrew Language*, 41, which, as an illustration of syllabification, provides the following analysis of Genesis 1:1: "[*rē'*] *rē*, with a quiescent long vowel ... [*šît*] *shlth*, with the like vowel followed by quiescent Yodh ... [*šît*] is a mixed syllable ... [*'ĕlōhîm*] *^{e}lōhîm*; [*'ĕ*] with composite Sheva ... [*lō*] *lō*, simple syllable ... [*hîm*] *hlm*, with Yodh quiescent ... and Hhireq protracted ..., and in a mixed syllable."

39. Note that the singular form is given in the Seixas grammar on p. 85. Eloi is simply Bullock's phonetic spelling.

40. Seixas, *Hebrew Grammar*, 36.

41. "Hollow" verbs (verbs that have a *waw* or *yôd* used as a vowel for a middle letter) such as this use the infinitive construct as their lexical form (i.e., the form you would look up in a lexicon), whereas other verbs use the *qal* perfect third person masculine singular as their lexical form. Ehat and Cook apparently assumed that the lexical form *šît* was a *qal* perfect third person masculine singular; since the form required by the Ehat and Cook conjecture would be the perfect and not the infinitive, the middle *yôd* would not be present, and the notion that the *yôd* in the word *b^{e}rē'šît* would have derived from the *yôd* in the verb would be impossible.

the King Follett Discourse suggested that he perceived the word *rō'š* to be in the construct state,[42] but with only that account it would be difficult to decide conclusively whether he perceived *rō'š* to be (1) in construct with "of the Gods" or (2) an absolute noun (with "of the Gods" not explicitly present in the text but implied), because in the singular there is no difference between the construct and absolute forms of the word *rō'š* (the vowel *chôlem* being unchangeably long). In his 16 June discourse, Joseph begins the same way he did in the King Follett Discourse, with the singular "head," but then either reveals a little more fully the nature of his conjecture or suggests an alternative,[43] telling us that it should read "the heads of." This means that (1) Joseph conceived of this word as being a construct form,[44] and (2) the perceived source for the letter *yôd* in *bᵉrē'šît* was not a verb but was the end of the male plural construct *rā'šê*, which means "heads of." That this was Joseph's conjecture should be obvious to a Hebraist, but if further confirmation is necessary we find it in the Seixas grammar. Page 85 of the grammar contains Seixas' word-for-word explanation of Genesis 1:1. The facing page summarizes various forms explained elsewhere in the grammar. Roughly 10 percent of the examples on that page (eight out of 76 Hebrew words) involve some form of the word *rō'š*. Near the bottom of the page is a section that illustrates the "terminations" of various words; in that paragraph we find this sequence: "[*rē'šît*] *beginning*, [*śiprê*] *books of*, [*rā'šê*] *heads of*." This added insight seems to reject the Ehat and Cook argument from haplography.

Joseph did not understand the verb "brought forth" to be *bārā'*, and he did not understand that verb to be *šît*. He gave the verb as "brought forth" in English, but he never did give the verb in Hebrew. His public explication of Hebrew Genesis 1:1 was simply incomplete. At this point Joseph was only commenting on the first word (*bᵉrē'šît*) for the rhetorical

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42. Genitival relationships between nouns in Hebrew are expressed by juxtaposing the nouns in what is commonly referred to as a construct relationship. In any expression "*x* of *y*," the first noun *x* is said to be in the construct state (generally, a shortened form of the noun to the extent such shortening is possible), and the second noun *y* is said to be in the absolute state (the normal or lexical form of the noun). For instance, in the place name *bêt lechem* (house of bread), the word *bêt* is a construct form meaning "house of" (shortened from the lexical form *bayit*, "house"), and the word *lechem* is the absolute form of the word meaning "bread."

43. I know of no way to discern for certain whether this is just a more detailed accounting of the conjecture that he had previously given in the King Follett Discourse or an alternative to that conjecture. That Joseph begins with the singular but then stops and offers the plural ("the head—it shod. read the heads of") suggests that he may have had "the heads of" in mind all along but only offered the simpler version on 7 April. It is possible, however, that Joseph modified his conjecture from a singular to a plural during the 70-day interval between the two discourses.

44. There would not appear to be an absolute noun for *rā'šê* to be in construct with; I argue below, in "A New Conjecture," that part of Joseph's conjecture involved supplying an absolute noun ("the Gods") at this position in the text.

purposes of (1) demonstrating his learning and (2) supporting his doctrine of a plurality of Gods. He does not give us the Hebrew verb of his conjectured introductory clause because the Hebrew verb is not to be found in the extant word *bᵉrē'šît*, and because most of his audience did not know Hebrew, and to go into more detail than he did would not have served his rhetorical purpose.

The Kabbalistic Interpretation

The fundamental errors inherent in the traditional interpretation seem inconsistent with Joseph's apparent success as a student of Hebrew. It is difficult to fathom how Joseph could have made such errors. I have suggested that he did not make the errors attributed to him, but that they were an editorial mistake. A different approach was recently suggested by Lance Owens.[45] Owens quotes the relevant section of the King Follett Discourse, then states (correctly) that "by any literate interpretation of Hebrew, [the traditional interpretation] is an impossible reading."[46] Joseph could not have intended such an interpretation. As an alternative, Owens suggests that Joseph's interpretation was Kabbalistic; that, although it is nonsensical by normative Hebrew standards, it is consistent with an interpretation of Genesis 1:1 found in the Zohar, the foundation text of Jewish Kabbalah. Joseph may have been introduced to Kabbalistic concepts by virtue of his relationship with Alexander Neibaur, a Jewish convert to Mormonism who arrived in Nauvoo in April 1841.[47] Owens deduces on the basis of a piece written by Neibaur[48] that he may have had (or had access to) a library of Kabbalistic works. Various entries in Neibaur's and Joseph's journals show that they studied German and Hebrew together in 1844.[49]

There are essentially three elements to Owens's Kabbalistic interpretation. First, and most important, "Bereshith bara Elohim" was interpreted by certain Kabbalists to mean something like "through the medium of the beginning, the Hidden Nothing emanated the Elohim."[50]

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45. Lance S. Owens, "Joseph Smith and Kabbalah: The Occult Connection," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Fall 1994): 117-94 (particularly 173-84).

46. Ibid., 179.

47. Owens details Neibaur's background and relationship to Joseph in ibid., 173-78.

48. "The Jews," *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 June 1843): 220-22, and 4 (15 June 1843): 233-34.

49. Owens, "Joseph Smith and Kabbalah," 177n128. The only such entry preceding the King Follett Discourse is that for 18 March 1844, which only mentions German; nevertheless, it seems reasonable to suppose that Joseph and Neibaur had already begun studying some Hebrew together by the time of the discourse.

50. Where "beginning" refers to Hokhmah or "Wisdom," the primordial image of the Father God in the Kabbalistic Sefiroth; "Hidden Nothing" (that is, the unstated subject of the verb) refers to the vast unorganized mystery preceding creation; and "emanated" refers to creation in the sense of unfolding. See ibid., 180-81.

This interpretation matches the traditional understanding of the King Follett Discourse by transforming Elohim from the subject to the object of the verb. Second, by virtue of a complex Kabbalistic anagram, Rosh is derived from Reshith.[51] Third, Genesis 1:26, which Joseph cited in his 16 June 1844 discourse, is used in the Zohar as the basis for a discussion on the plurality of gods.[52]

Owens's interpretation is intriguing. It seems to me that the strength of his argument is his recognition that Joseph's understanding was simply too great to have intended the traditional interpretation. This is a helpful contribution to resolving the problem. Ultimately, however, the Kabbalistic interpretation is beset with too many difficulties to be credible.

First, Owens's argument depends on the traditional wording. As I have shown, however, the traditional wording is likely an editorial gloss not intended by the prophet. If true, then Owens's strongest evidence becomes a coincidental oddity. A further problem is that Joseph's approach seems to be normative and rational rather than esoteric and mystical. Taking Owens's three elements in reverse order, we know that Joseph's introduction of the idea of a plurality of Gods predated Neibaur's arrival in Nauvoo, so Neibaur could not have been the source for that idea.[53] Although it is interesting that a Kabbalistic reading of Genesis 1:26 suggests a plurality of Gods, a rational reading of that verse could yield that idea just as easily. In his 16 June discourse, Joseph himself points to his learning that *'ĕlōhîm* is plural in form as critical to the development of the idea, the groundwork for which had already been laid by Joseph's encounter with biblical references (both real and apparent) to a plurality of Gods while preparing his "new translation" of the Bible.[54] Neibaur may have seen the Zohar as supportive and confirming of Joseph's view, but Joseph arrived at that view independent of the Kabbalah.

It is unnecessary to posit an elaborate anagram to derive *rō'š* from *rē'šît*, since, as we have seen, the two words are in fact related. That Joseph analyzes *bᵉrē'šît* in precisely the same tripartite manner as Seixas strongly suggests that Joseph's source for this point was the Seixas gram-

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51. Ibid., 182. The full text of the relevant passage from the Zohar is quoted by Owens at 182n142 as follows: "A further esoteric interpretation of the word bereshith is as follows. The name of the starting point of all is Ehyeh (I shall be). The holy name when inscribed at its side is Elohim, but when inscribed by circumscription is Asher, the hidden and recondite temple, the source of that which is mystically called Reshith. The word Asher (i.e., the letters Aleph, Shin, Resh from the word bereshith) is anagrammatically Rosh (head), the beginning which issues from Reshith" (*Zohar* 1:15a).

52. Ibid., 182-83.

53. See Hale, "Doctrinal Impact," 224-25.

54. Compare, for example, the following KJV passages with their counterparts in the Joseph Smith Translation: Gen. 11:7, Ex. 7:1 and 22:28, 1 Sam. 28:13, and Rev. 1:6.

mar, not Kabbalistic speculation.

Joseph's English vocabulary for his suggested interpretation of Genesis 1:1a is much more straightforward than the mystical Zohar version. Owens argues that this is in essence a translation of the esoteric concepts of the Zohar into Joseph's simple frontier language, but this seems unlikely. Joseph's expanded conjecture in his 16 June discourse concerning the male plural construct *ra'šê* gives us an important window to his reasoning and suggests that Joseph's approach was normative and rational (subject, of course, to inspiration), based on his perceptions of possible letter manipulation and thoroughly grounded in the Seixas grammar.[55]

In summary, there have been three principal interpretations of Joseph's Hebrew commentary. The traditional interpretation is nonsensical; people have either been unaware that it is nonsense in Hebrew, or have assumed that Joseph was mistaken in his Hebrew reconstruction. Ehat and Cook, based on the original manuscript evidence, reject the traditional wording, but offer in its place a conjecture that is unlikely. Owens follows the traditional wording, but suggests that that which is a mistake in normative Hebrew actually reflects a Kabbalistic interpretation based on the Zohar. I agree with Ehat's and Cook's historical judgment in rejecting the traditional wording, and have buttressed that view with evidence from Bullock's journal. I believe that Joseph's argument was based on normative Hebrew (as opposed to mystical Kabbalistic concepts) and can be partially recovered based on a careful review of the Seixas grammar (drawing on Abraham 4 for support).

A New Conjecture

The traditional interpretation has been so influential for so long that it is difficult to reassess the textual evidence from a fresh perspective. Nevertheless, if we ignore the printed sources and focus on the original manuscript evidence, the structure of the prophet's argument becomes clear. The first part of Joseph's argument, about the head one of the Gods bringing forth the Gods, is based entirely on his analysis of *b^{e}rē'šît*, the first Hebrew word. So in the Bullock account, Joseph says, "I shall go to the first Hebrew word in the Bible." After analyzing the word, he says, "'The Head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods' is the true meaning of the word," where "the word" refers back to *b^{e}rē'šît*.[56] He later says, "I

55. For a more extensive critique of Owens's argument, see William J. Hamblin, "'Everything is Everything': Was Joseph Smith Influenced by Kabbalah?" *FARMS Review of Books* 8/2 (1996): 251-325.

56. Bullock, in his conference minutes, edited the singular "word" to a plural "words" so as to conform to the traditional interpretation; this plural has been followed in all subsequent printed sources.

shod. not have brot. up this word ~~unt~~ only to shew that I am right," which supports the earlier statement to the effect that Joseph's entire initial conjecture was based on the single word *bᵉrēʾšît*. Similarly, in Bullock's account of the 16 June discourse, Joseph says that "the 1st. word shews a plurality of Gods."[57]

In the Clayton account, immediately after the analysis of *bᵉrēʾšît* Clayton records Joseph as saying, "It read in the first—the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods—is the true meaning—rosheet signifies to bring forth the Eloheim," where the antecedent to "it" is *bᵉrēʾšît*.[58] Elucidating the argument using bracketed material, the sense of this passage is as follows: "It[, meaning the first Hebrew word, *bᵉrēʾšît*,] read in the first[, that is, originally, prior to scribal corruption] — the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods[, or, to be more precise, a Hebrew phrase that, rendered into English, would read "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods"] — is the true meaning — rosheet[, that is, the first Hebrew word after the deletion of the preposition but without deleting the termination,] signifies to bring forth the Eloheim." The word "rosheet" was the foundation of Joseph's entire initial conjecture. Contrary to the assumption of the traditional interpretation, Joseph did not argue that the "termination" of "rosheet" should be deleted; rather, he used those letters as part of the basis for a conjectured expansion of the word "rosheet" into a Hebrew clause that could be rendered "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods."

When Joseph comes to the second part of his argument (about the Gods organizing the heavens and the earth), he moves from the first to the second word, *bārāʾ*, which he understands to mean "to organize." This is consistent with the idea that Joseph's initial conjecture was based entirely on his analysis of the first word of Hebrew Genesis 1:1. Joseph was not cannibalizing *bārāʾ ʾĕlōhîm* and using those words twice, in both the first and second parts of his argument. Rather, the first part of his argument was based entirely on his analysis of the first word; the second, third, and following words all belong to the second part of his argument.

Joseph was careless and incomplete in the way he described his arguments, so it should not be surprising that John Taylor misunderstood them when editing Bullock's conference minutes (if that is in fact what

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57. Bullock's manuscript report of the 16 June discourse begins "twice I will show from the Heb. Bible." An advocate of the traditional interpretation could read "twice" as referring to two words of Hebrew Genesis 1:1; however, it seems clear to me that "twice" refers to the two prooftexts cited by Joseph in that discourse, Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:26.

58. The traditional interpretation reads the word "it" as referring loosely to the whole passage, but, particularly in light of the evidence described above from Bullock's conference report, this loose understanding does not seem to be supported by a plain reading of the Clayton account.

happened). Two factors would have contributed to this misunderstanding. First, Taylor probably assumed that there was something like a word-for-word correspondence between the extant Hebrew and Joseph's English conjecture; after all, how could Joseph have derived ten English words from but one Hebrew word? In fact, I had noticed that Joseph's initial conjecture seemed to have derived entirely from the first word alone on a couple of occasions in the past, but each time I dismissed the idea based on this same objection. I might never have gotten beyond this apparent difficulty were it not for the experience I mentioned at the outset of this essay. When I recently reviewed all of the manuscript evidence, something clicked in my mind, and finally I was able to see that Joseph was conjecturally emending the Hebrew prior to translating it. That is, Joseph was not translating the single word *bᵉrē'šît* directly into "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods"; rather Joseph was modifying and expanding *bᵉrē'šît* into a Hebrew phrase that could be rendered "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods." The idea was that his conjectured Hebrew phrase had been original, but was altered by scribes until all that remained was the extant word *bᵉrē'šît*. We can see the beginnings of Joseph's reasoning in emending the text, but his public explication was incomplete and did not give a full accounting of that expansion.

A second factor leading to the traditional interpretation is that Joseph's conjectured initial clause used the word *'ĕlōhîm* twice. This word had obviously been *suggested* to Joseph by *'ĕlōhîm* the third word of Hebrew Genesis 1:1. By assuming a word-for-word correspondence between the extant Hebrew and the English conjecture, Taylor apparently assumed that the object in the English phrase "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods" had to be *'ĕlōhîm* the third word of Genesis 1:1. If the subject ("head") were derived from the first word and the object ("Gods") were the third word, then the verb ("brought forth") must be the second word, *bārā'* (following normal English word order, subject + verb + object). As we have seen, however, based on the original manuscript evidence, the structure of the argument, and Joseph's lexical understanding of the word, it seems unlikely that Joseph was cannibalizing the word *bārā'* into the first part of his argument. If the verb rendered "brought forth" was not *bārā'*, then it is also unlikely that either use of *'ĕlōhîm* in the first part of the argument is to be equated with *'ĕlōhîm* the third word of Genesis 1:1. The word *bārā'* forms a barrier that effectively prevents the word *'ĕlōhîm* following it from being a candidate for either of the two uses of *''ĕlōhîm* in the first part of the argument. Joseph did not cannibalize the word *'ĕlōhîm*, but doubled (or, rather, tripled) it. Thus the whole notion of cannibalization is a red herring. Taylor could probably appreciate that his interpretation did not work well at all, but since he

never contemplated a textual expansion it was the only way he could approximate enough Hebrew words to result in the translation "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods."

Although I believe it is clear, strange as it may seem to us, that Joseph somehow derived the ten English words "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods" from the single Hebrew word *rē'šît*, we simply do not have enough textual evidence to document fully how he accomplished this or what his thought processes were along the way. In the absence of such evidence, at this point I undertake a speculative reconstruction of what the details of his conjecture may have been. My aim is simply to demonstrate that, given the available evidence (the original manuscript reports, the Seixas grammar, and Abraham 4), a plausible textual expansion of *rē'šît* into a Hebrew clause that could be rendered "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods" can be constructed. However, given the omissions and contradicions in the manuscript reports, *any* attempt to understand fully Joseph's treatment of the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1 is necessarily speculative.

To gain insight into what Joseph's conjectured expansion might have been, I have translated the English phrase "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods" backward into Hebrew. There are two possibilities, depending on whether Joseph understood the subject to be singular or plural:

1. [singular verb] *rō'š hā'ĕlōhîm 'et hā'ĕlōhîm*
2. [plural verb] *rā'šê hā'ĕlōhîm ʿēt hā'ĕlōhîm*

There is at least circumstantial evidence, mostly from the Seixas grammar, suggesting that Joseph may indeed have had such a phrase in mind.

Note that normal Hebrew word order would place the verb *before* the subject, not after (as in English). As it so happens, Seixas explains this pattern on page 85 of his grammar, in the middle of his discussion of Genesis 1:1, by a footnote following the word *'ĕlōhîm*, which reads (emphasis in original): "Nominatives generally *follow* their Verbs, and adjectives their substantives." Because of the fortuitous placement of this explanation, I believe Joseph may have known of this rule and conceived of the verb as being *before* the subject, not after, as others have assumed. He had read enough Hebrew (including Genesis 1:1 itself) to be familiar and comfortable with this word order.[59]

What did Joseph perceive to be the verb? My working hypothesis

59. When Joseph refers to the "first" word of the Bible, I read him to mean the first word as we have it today, not the first word of his conjecture. Although positing normal word order makes this reconstruction easier, it is not critical; it remains possible that Joseph perceived the subject as coming first.

(based on the English target "brought forth") was that the verb was something like *ʿāsap* or *qābats*, but in reviewing the Seixas grammar I found two strong candidates for the verb. The first is the *hiphil* of the verb *bôʾ*. My reasoning for this is: first, this verb would lexically fit Joseph's meaning. In the *qal* or simple active stem that verb means "to come," but in the *hiphil* stem, which has a causative force, that verb means "to cause to come" or "to bring." Second, Seixas, on page 37, gives an example of a verb that loses one of its letters in conjugating: "[*wayyābēʾ*] *and he brought*, from [*bôʾ*]." This is a third person, masculine, imperfect *hiphil* form with *waw*-consecutive. Seixas gives the English translation as "brought," which, but for the compound "forth," matches Joseph's English rendering. Third is the circumstance that, in the form quoted by Seixas, the verbal root consists of the letters *bêt* and *ʿālep*, and these are two of the letters in the duplicated sequence of letters *bêt rēš ʿālep* (*brʾ*) in the first two words of Genesis 1:1 that may have influenced Joseph's deletion of the letter *bêt* from *bᵉrêʾšît*. Fourth is the fact that this is a *hiphil* form. As Michael T. Walton has demonstrated,[60] Joseph shows a special awareness of *hiphil* verb forms in his translation of Abraham 4. For instance, KJV Genesis 1:4 reads, in part, "and God divided the light from the darkness." The verb translated "divided" is the *hiphil* form *wayyabdēl*, the causative force of which is emphasized in Abraham 4:4: "and they divided the light, or *caused it to be divided*, from the darkness" (emphasis added). A similar emphasis of the *hiphil* of this verb occurs in Abraham 4:17: "and *to cause to divide* the light from the darkness" (emphasis added). Fifth is the fact that Joseph was almost certainly exposed to this verb in its *hiphil* form in his studies of the early chapters of Genesis. Consider the following texts:

> And out of the ground the LORD God *formed* [*wayyitser*] every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and *brought* [*wayyābēʾ*] them to Adam to see what he would call them (Gen. 2:19).
>
> And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, he made a woman, and *brought* her [*wayᵉbiʾeha*] to the man (Gen. 2:22).
>
> And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain *brought* [*wayyābēʾ*] of the fruit of the ground an offering to the LORD. And Abel, he also *brought* [*hēbîʾ*] of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord (Gen. 4:3-4).

The *hiphil* of *bôʾ* is repeated four times in the first four chapters of Genesis

60. "Professor Seixas, the Hebrew Bible, and the Book of Abraham," *Sunstone* 6 (Mar. 1981): 41-43.

(each time with the translation "brought"), so Joseph was certainly exposed to it. In fact, two of these occurrences are precisely the same form quoted by Seixas in his grammar. Sixth, and most important, Seixas, immediately following his use of the *hiphil* of *bô'*, goes on to give another example: "[*wayyitser*] *and he formed,* from [*yātsar*]." This is the *qal* imperfect of the verb *yātsar,* which is also attested several times in the early chapters of Genesis, as Genesis 2:19 above shows.[61] This is significant because Abraham 4:1 reads, in part, "and they, that is the Gods, organized *and formed* the heavens and the earth" (emphasis added). I had always assumed that Joseph used the two English verbs "organized and formed" to translate the single Hebrew verb *bārā'* by merismus; whether that is the case, or whether Joseph specifically understood *yātsar* to be present in the text, it is clear that the English rendering "and formed" was influenced by this Hebrew verb.[62] Thus there is every indication that Joseph had focused specific attention on this very line of the Seixas grammar in connection with a text that parallels Genesis 1:1.

Another strong possibility for the verb is the *hiphil* of the verb *yātsa'*. The *hiphil* form is cited in Seixas' grammar on page 39, immediately following the *hiphil* form of the verb meaning "to divide," which was emphasized in Abraham 4: "[*habdîl*] *to cause to divide,* from [*bādal*]; [*hawtsē'*] ... *cause to come, bring out,* from [*yātsa'*]." Note that this verb would be lexically consistent with Joseph's intended meaning. Joseph also would have been exposed to this verb in the early chapters of Genesis, as in Genesis 1:12: "And the earth *brought forth* [*wattôtsē'*] grass," and 1:24: "And God said, Let the earth *bring forth* [*tôtsē'*] the living creature."[63] The KJV not only translates this verb with the word "brought," but with the compound "brought forth," which is precisely the English translation Joseph has in mind. I have summarized the evidence supporting these two words as the verb in Table 3.

Thus the first word of Joseph's conjecture may have been the verb, which may have been the *hiphil* of either *bô'* or *yātsa'*. On the analogy of *bārā,* the form would have been third person, masculine, and perfect. Whether the verb would have been singular or plural depends on whether Joseph understood the subject, "head," as singular or plural. This suggests the following four possibilities:

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61. See also, in particular, Genesis 2:7: "And the LORD God *formed* [*wayyîtser*] man of the dust of the ground."

62. Note that in poetic texts *yātsar* is often paired as a synonym to *bārā'*. For citations, see Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 2:246.

63. The last verse that Joseph privately read in Hebrew on 7 March 1836, Exodus 3:10, also uses this word in its *hiphil* form: "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest *bring forth* [*w'hôtsē'*] my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

1. *hēbî'* [singular of *bô'*]
2. *hēbî'û* [plural of *bô'*]
3. *hôtsî'* [singular of *yātsa'*]
4. *hôtsî'û* [plural of *yātsā'*]

One of these words could have been the verb rendered "brought forth."[64]

TABLE 3
Summary of Evidence for the Verb

Evidence	*bô'*	*yātsa'*
Attestation in Seixas grammar	p. 37	p. 39
Seixas rendering	and he brought	cause to come, bring out
Possible perception of letter manipulation?	yes	no
Hiphil form?	yes	yes
Attestation in early Genesis	Genesis 2:19, 2:22, 4:3-4	Genesis 1:12 and 1:24
KJV rendering	brought	brought forth (bring forth)
Adjacent verb in Seixas grammar	[*wayyitser*] and he formed	[*haḇdîl*] to cause to divide
Abraham 4 attestation of adjacent verb	Abraham 4:1	Abraham 4:4 and 4:17

The next word would be the subject, either *rō'š* (head of) or *ra'šê* (heads of). Because the subject is in the construct state, it is not necessary to prefix the definite article; a noun in the construct state always derives its definiteness or lack thereof from the noun in the absolute state which it governs. As generally nothing is allowed to separate a noun in the construct state from the noun in the absolute state which it governs, the next word must be the noun in the absolute state (what Seixas on page 32 refers to as the "Genitive Case") that is governed by the noun in the construct state, and it must be a definite noun: *hā'ĕlōhîm* (the Gods).[65]

We know from the English target and from the statement "rosheet signifies to bring forth the Eloheim" that the object of the verb would also be "the Gods" or "the Eloheim" (Hebrew *hā'ĕlōhîm*), and a definite object is usually preceded in the word order by *'ēt*, the sign of the direct object. I

64. In spelling these words out, I do not mean to suggest that Joseph had necessarily committed his conjecture to writing or that he had gone so far as to determine the appropriate form for the verb to take in this setting. To that extent, this presentation may be more detailed than Joseph's actual conjecture.

65. For the sake of clarity I have appended the definite article, but it may be that Joseph did not explicitly supply the article here. Such usage would nevertheless be acceptable, as the noun *'ĕlohîm* could be taken as implicitly definite. As noted in Ludwig Köhler, *Old Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), 241n30: "The use or ommission of the article [with *'ĕlohîm*] in ancient times is entirely arbitrary. Indeed even later there was no complete agreement about it."

believe that Joseph may have understood the final *taw* at the end of *rē'šît* (which, if it is not to be deleted, remains to be accounted for) as the remnant of the accusative particle *'ēt*, which marks the direct object of a verb, for three reasons. First, this possibility is suggested by page 85 of the Seixas grammar, which identifies the "termination" of *b^{e}rē'šît* separately as *ît* (which is close in appearance to *'ēt*), and then lists the particle *'ēt* twice in the third and fifth lines below *ît* (as the particle appears twice in Genesis 1:1). This is particularly important, because it may have been the appearance of the word *rē'šît* (by itself and without the preposition) on the bottom of the facing page in sequence with the male plural construct *rā'šê* that first moved Joseph to conjecturally emend the first Hebrew word of Genesis 1:1. Second, a footnote on page 60 of the Seixas grammar, the page that explains the accusative particle, contains a fairly close parallel to Joseph's "rosheet signifies to bring forth the Eloheim," referring to a pronominal suffix used as an object of a verb: "[*nî*] at the end of verbs signifies *me*; as [*p^{e}qādanî*] *he visited me*, etc." This usage is similar to my understanding of Joseph's "rosheet signifies to bring forth the Eloheim" because (1) both use the English verb "signifies" (which is particularly appropriate for a grammatical structure that marks the direct object of a verb) and (2) both refer to lettering at the end of a word as indicating an object of a verb. Finally, an understanding of this *taw* as the remnant of an originally present accusative particle fits Joseph's conjecture, as the Hebrew equivalent of "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods" would in fact require the presence of the accusative particle. Admittedly, this evidence for the use of *taw* (the last letter of *rē'šît*) is not as strong as the evidence for the use of *yôd* (the next to the last letter of *rē'šît*) as part of the male plural construct *rāšê*. Joseph's conjecture concerning the male plural construct demonstrates, however, that he did not intend simply to delete the termination *ît*. If my conjecture is mistaken, and if we continue to reject the Ehat and Cook conjecture, then the *taw* should probably be deleted, because it is difficult to see what other possible use Joseph could have made of it.

Thus I believe that Joseph's conjecture for his expanded initial clause would be something like one of the following four possibilities (I have placed the conjectured expansions of *rē'šît* in brackets):

1. [*hēbî'*] *rō'š* [*hā'ĕlōhîm 'ē*]*t* [*hā'ĕlōhîm*]
2. [*hēbî'û*] *ra'šê* [*hā'ĕlōhîm 'ē*]*t* [*hā'ĕlōhîm*]
3. [*hôtsî'*] *rō'š* [*hā'ĕlōhîm 'ē*]*t* [*hā'ĕlōhîm*]
4. [*hôtsî'û*] *rā'šê* [*hā'ĕlōhîm 'ē*]*t* [*hā'ĕlōhîm*]

These possibilities could be translated as follows:

1. The head one of the Gods brought [forth] the Gods
2. The heads of the Gods brought [forth] the Gods
3. The head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods
4. The heads of the Gods brought forth the Gods

In these reconstructions, the subject and the object are both expressly identified in Hebrew by Joseph in the original manuscript reports, and the verb and the accusative particle are supported by evidence from the Seixas grammar (and, in the case of the verb, Abraham 4). Although the presence of the first *hā'ĕlōhîm* is not supported by such evidence, it may nevertheless be inferred, both from the English target and from the fact that the subject was definitely perceived by Joseph as a construct form, thus requiring that an absolute noun follow it.

I see Joseph's conjecture as transforming Genesis 1:1 into two independent clauses, something like the following (brackets indicate variations in the sources): "The [head one][heads] of the Gods brought forth the Gods, and the [Gods][head God][heads of the Gods] organized [and formed] the heavens and the earth." The first clause is derived entirely from *rē'šît*, the first Hebrew word, and the second clause is derived from the remainder of Genesis 1:1. Joseph may have perceived the transition from the first to the second clause as being formed by a simple *waw*-conjunction, which seems to be suggested by Abraham 4:1, where "at the beginning" (=the first Hebrew word) is joined to the remainder of the sentence by the English word "and" (which is not present at this position in KJV Genesis 1:1).

Some of this can be seen in the Bullock account of the 16 June discourse. Joseph begins with "Berosheit &c In the begin.," which sets out the extant text. The next word in the report is "rosheit," which is significant because, like the Clayton report of the King Follett Discourse, it deletes the prepositon but does not delete the termination. This may suggest, as I have argued, that Joseph intended to use the termination as part of his conjecture. He then gives his conjectured expansion of rosheit, but he gives it this time both with a plural construct subject and with the English verb "to organize" rather than "brought forth" (I have argued that this last change is a mistake and that the edit here is actually correct, but this point remains uncertain). A little later he gives his second conjectured clause: "the head God—organized the heavens & the Earth." He then says, "In the begin the heads of the Gods organized the heaven & the Earth." I have always found this statement frustating, because under any theory he has already conjecturally emended *bᵉrē'šît* into something else, so it is no longer available to be rendered "in the beginning." It occurs to me, however, that here he is focusing on the *second* clause, and so he may be converting his initial conjecture back into the extant first word

bᵉrēʾšît ("in the beginning") for the sake of simplicity and to retain his focus on the second clause with his audience. If this suggestion is correct, then "In the begin the heads of the Gods organized the heaven & the Earth" would be the fullest statement available to us from the original manuscript evidence of how Joseph understood Hebrew Genesis 1:1, because it combines the two clauses (although the first clause has been converted back into extant Hebrew form). To make this statement truly complete, however, we would need to replace "In the begin" with the conjecture he had earlier derived from *bᵉrēʾšît*, "the [head one][heads] of the Gods brought forth the Gods."

Conclusions

As we have seen, the available evidence is sparse, difficult to work with, and at times contradictory. It is therefore not surprising that different interpretations of that evidence have arisen. My argument to some extent relies on speculative reconstruction and, absent more definitive evidence, is tentative. With that caveat, a summary of my conclusions follows:

1. Although there is a textual argument to be made for it, on balance I believe it is more likely that the traditional interpretation does not correctly reflect Joseph's argument. This is suggested by the original manuscript evidence, the structure of the argument, and Joseph's lexical understanding of the word *bārāʾ*. This interpretation may have originated from John Taylor's editing of Thomas Bullock's conference minutes. (If there is something to the traditional interpretation, it would appear to be more complicated than the simplistic three-word construction commonly assumed.)

2. Ehat and Cook correctly concluded that the traditional interpretation is erroneous. Their alternative conjecture, however, to the effect that Joseph understood the verb to be *šît*, is wrong.

3. The Kabbalistic interpretation is premised on the traditional wording; if, as suggested in conclusion number 1, that wording derives not from Joseph but from an editorial gloss, then the Kabbalistic interpretation is also wrong. If the traditional wording is correct, then the Kabbalistic interpretation is possible, but it has other problems, and on the whole I do not believe that it is correct.

4. Structurally, Joseph's initial argument is based entirely on his analysis of the first Hebrew word, which he conjecturally emended and expanded into a Hebrew phrase that could be translated "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods," and which he understood as an independent clause from the remainder of Genesis 1:1.

5. Joseph analyzed the first Hebrew word, *bᵉrēʾšît*, by breaking it into

three parts, as suggested by the Seixas grammar.

6. Joseph then deleted the preposition, for reasons that are not entirely clear (three possibilities being [1] the repeating letter sequence in the first two words of Hebrew Genesis 1:1, [2] the absence of the definite article in the first word of Hebrew Genesis 1:1, and [3] the appearance of *rē'šît* without the preposition on the facing page to Seixas' explanation of Hebrew Genesis 1:1).

7. The Seixas grammar (and not Kabbalistic speculation) was the source for Joseph's extraction of *rō'š* (or *rā'šê*) from *rē'šît*.

8. Rather than delete the "termination" of rosheet, as assumed by the traditional interpretation, Joseph used those letters as part of his textual expansion. (Ehat and Cook saw this but misunderstood Joseph's use of those letters.) Joseph understood the *yôd* as the end of the male plural construct meaning "heads of," and he may have understood the *taw* as the remnant of the accusative particle.

9. The Seixas grammar and Abraham 4 suggest that Joseph may have perceived the verb "brought forth" to be the *hiphil* of either *bô'* or *yātsa'*.

10. In general, Joseph may have known what he was doing and, although he freely experimented with the Hebrew, he did not completely butcher it, as has long been assumed. It should scarcely surprise us that Joseph Smith, who produced such extensive and creative biblical expansions in the English of the Joseph Smith Translation, had the capacity to construct a comparatively modest textual expansion in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1.[66]

66. I have focused on attempting to understand Joseph's argument as it relates to the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1. Whether Joseph's conjecture ever actually existed in an ancient Hebrew text and whether the ideas reflected in his conjecture are worthy of religious consideration are beyond the scope of this essay.

FICTION

Pioneers

Michael Fillerup

MY WIFE, FREIDA, COULD HAVE WORKED FOR Cecil B. DeMille or Steven Spielberg, given her cast-of-thousands knack for the spectacular. Take tonight, for instance. In the name of fellowshipping, and to beef up our numbers, she's invited two other families to join us in our weekly Family Home Evening activity. She's also borrowed a life-size model handcart from the Millets, made ten trail signs (wooden, authentic, hand-carved), and staked them out at odd intervals along a bumpy dirt-bike trail behind Witherspoon Park: NAUVOO, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, COUNCIL BLUFFS ...

Sixteen of us, ages five to fifty, have gathered around the first trail sign, reluctant teenagers in Teva sandals and Oakley sunglasses, the younger children in costume: blue jeans, straw cowboy hats, paper bonnets, long loose cotton dresses to the ankles. Big, blue-eyed blondes, the seven Boyak girls look like a tribe of Swedish immigrants, while the Huntingtons bear the swarthy genes of the south. We (the Tolmans) are a 50-50 mix.

Following an opening song and prayer, Freida introduces tonight's lesson, "Our Pioneer Heritage," and objective: on this balmy midsummer night, we will take turns, by family, pushing and pulling the Millets' handcart from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley, stopping at each trail sign to read the note Freida has diligently thumbtacked to it.

While Freida fields questions from the children ("Is it a race?" "No." "Do we get a prize?" "Maybe."), my eyes and thoughts drift south to the grassy playing field where a middle-aged man in a tie-dyed t-shirt is chasing two mop-haired boys around a fortress of wooden logs and rope nets, growling like the cowardly lion of Oz. Their happy shrieks are echoes from a time not long ago when I too pursued my son around the jungle gym: "I'm the Hot Lava Monster! The Hot Lava Monster! Grrrrrr!"

"Hey, Dad!"

Andrew motions for me to join him at the front of the handcart, an unfinished plywood box with a wagon wheel on either side. "Come on! We'll be the pullers. Mom can be the pusher!"

Pusher? This unwitting allusion to my 1960s youth elicits an unexpected grin as I step over the handle, resting on the dirt, and position myself beside my son. The cart and its load are laughingly light by pioneer standards, yet the handle, a two-inch thick pine dowel, feels like lead in my hands. Gripping it, my son innocently taunts me with one of my own aphorisms: "Come on, Dad! Be a help, not a hurt!"

Freida hollers from the rear: "Hey, let's get this show on the road!"

Straight ahead, the sun is slowly being sucked under the hilly horizon. Framed in Rubenesque clouds, it's a gaudy image, idolatrously surreal, like the Golden Calf caught in quicksand. From its fiery center, a steamy pink residue floats towards the blue-gray mounds amassing overhead. The swollen sky looks and smells like rain. I estimate thirty minutes before the first drops. Silently I pray for a swift, hard downpour that will chase us under the ramada and rescue me from tonight's ordeal.

We drag the handcart along the narrow trail, the Boyaks and Huntingtons sauntering alongside us in the surrounding weeds and wild flowers, chatting innocuously. I wear a smile throughout, even when the Boyak girls break into song, like the Von Trapp family: "Put your shoulder to the wheel push a-lo-ong! Do your duty with a heart full of so-ong! We all have work! Let no one shirk!"

Pausing at the second trail sign, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, Freida gazes north where a jet plane is angling above the silver peaks, red, white, and blue lights winking on its wings like patriotic stars. Interlacing her fingers behind her neck, with a quick but disciplined motion she lifts her hair up, deftly withdrawing her hands so that the strawberry blond coils settle gently, like soft little springs, on her shoulders. This motion, which in words sounds long and calculated, takes a fraction of a second and seems as natural and routine to her as taking a breath of air.

We relinquish the handcart to the Boyaks. Andrew snatches the envelope thumbtacked to the wooden sign and pretends to read: "Bad water. Half your party gets dysentery and croaks." He grips his throat, gagging, and flings himself back-flat onto the dirt, his skinny bare legs issuing a few spasmodic kicks, like a cartoon death. His clownish antics have not escaped the obsidian eyes of Connie Huntington, a lithe little gymnast who inherited her father's poker face and her mother's bewitching black hair. Noticing her noticing him, Andrew claps his hand over his mouth in mock horror and adds a couple kicks for an encore. Freida casts him the Evil Eye, momentarily throwing ice on his antics, and then proceeds to read the true contents of the envelope, the first of several excerpts she has photocopied from the pioneer journals of her ancestors:

> *Leaving New York, we went by train and boat to Iowa City and after a short delay, to one of the worst journeys that was ever recorded. We were light hearted and worked with zeal preparing our hand carts. Because of the great demand for carts of*

the previous companies, the wheels were made of green material. We met morning and evenings for devotional exercises. On one of these occasions Brother Levi Savage, who was returning from a mission, spoke and portrayed the intense sufferings the saints would have to endure if we started so late in the season to cross the plains, the thoughts of which made him cry like a child. Captain Willie sternly rebuked him for such a speech. He was afraid it would dishearten the saints, and told us that if we would be faithful and do as he told us winter would be turned to summer. But subsequent events proved Elder Savage was correct ...

As Freida's voice summons up spirits from the dust, I begin rewriting in my mind procrastinated passages from my personal history:

I met Freida at a Spring Singles Dance. I'd just turned forty, but she was six years from crossing that middle-age milestone that seems to stand up and scream with quiet desperation: LAST CHANCE! (for temple marriage, eternal family, exaltation, et cetera). Ironically, I'd resigned myself to Celestial Singlehood, which is to say I was no longer looking for a mate, eternal or otherwise, only occasional companionship to share a movie, a concert, a meal, an evening of TV and microwave popcorn.

I'd been coaxed to that evening's function by a well-intentioned friend who introduced me to Freida (who looked as unenthusiastic as I felt). Commiserating over the punch bowl, we soon discovered we'd both planned a backpacking trip into the Grand Canyon over Memorial Day weekend. "Small world!" I proclaimed, and when she smiled her teeth sparkled as if half the Milky Way had taken up residence there. By the time a crew of resurrected Credence Clearwater wannabes had finished a tortuously long rendition of "Susie Q," we agreed to hike the Grand Canyon together.

Unchaperoned? Well, why not? We were both mature adults, temple-endowed, returned missionaries. We shared the same code of ethics and virtue. Who needed a chaperon?

Our only child was conceived in a moment of ecstatic sin in a dome tent on a sandy bank at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, as a chorus of frogs sang approvingly in the faint trickle known as Monument Creek. Afterwards, lying together on my sleeping bag, her head on my chest, I asked the inevitable:

"Was that your first time?"

"Could you tell?"

"I wouldn't know."

She gave my arm a gentle squeeze. "I love you," she whispered, and we dozed off like that.

We were married civilly that week, and eternally shortly after, following the requisite channels of sackcloth and ashes. An insightful bishop kindly spared us the humiliation of public confession and abbreviated the standard year's probation prior to a temple sealing.

Colleen and her seven daughters maneuver the handcart towards Council Bluffs. Bradley Boyak nudges me in the ribs. "See? That's why you need ... more kids!" I laugh, nod. Is that right? No kidding? Like my son the thespian, I too am playacting, but in an altogether different manner. I seriously wonder if I'll be able to complete this abbreviated journey to the Promised Land. Gazing down the dirt trail that gradually wraps around the northern rim of the park, I find it hard, near impossible, to believe that only two years ago I finished first in my age category in our local Mountain Man Triathlon: a mile swim across Emerald Lake, thirty-two miles on bicycle around the lake's paved perimeter, and a four-mile run up Jackson Mesa and back.

Up ahead Billy Huntington, sporting a thick, dark mop spilling over shaved sidewalls, is flirting with the oldest Boyak girl, a double-braided Brunnhilda wearing a too-tight t-shirt that proclaims, rather ironically: ABSTINENCE: I'M WORTH IT! Freida is strolling alongside Gary Huntington, a big, burly accountant with a sailboat, a palatial home on the golf course, and a brand new head of hair, partly subsidized by a hefty life insurance windfall: a little over a year ago he lost Cheryl to a fast-acting cancer that sneaked into her pancreas and devoured it termite-like in a month.

Freida's arms are folded just below her chest, so that it appears as if they are hoisting up her breasts, supporting them like shelves. They look especially full tonight, milk or love-laden, thanks to the tight cut and fit of the flimsy cotton fabric. Her suntanned hand lights on Gary's shoulder, gently as a bird, and slides smoothly down the length of his arm. It's an innocent gesture, as simple and spontaneous as a little girl's smile, and she has no idea how deeply it wounds me.

Wedging myself between them, I ask Gary if he's been to the lake lately? When he asks me if I've lost weight, I laugh, patting my belly. "I think I've gained a little, actually." Call this a pink lie: survival. Freida nods reassuringly. "Oh, he has. He really has."

When I tell Gary it looks as if he's lost some, he beams proudly: "Ten pounds!"

"Watch that Sizzler salad bar or you'll start looking like me!" Bradley Boyak says, sneaking up behind us.

"Salad bar nothing!" Colleen cuts in. "Try Dairy Queen Blizzards!"

Everyone laughs but Freida.

At Council Bluffs we sing the first verse of "Come, Come Ye Saints." Cynthia Boyak reads the note tacked to the trail marker:

> *We left Iowa City on the 15th of July 1856, in what is known as The Captain Willie Handcart Company. This Company consisted of 500 souls, 120 handcarts, 5 wagons, 24 oxen, and 45 beef cattle. We were happy in the thought that we were going to Zion, and the 100 miles all went well, the scenery being beautiful and game*

being plentiful, and the spirit of joy reigned in these Camps of Israel. However, on the 4th of September, our cattle were run off by a band of Indians. This proved to be a great calamity.

I'm not superstitious by nature, especially when it concerns religion. I prefer to picture God as a benevolent, loving father rather than the Old Testament vindicator of hellfire and fury. However, I'm no revisionist whitewasher either. God will temper justice with mercy, but justice will be wrought, sometimes down to the seventh generation.

Consequently, from the moment I learned Freida was expecting, I begged Heavenly Father not to punish us as he had David and Bathsheba, delivering up a dead child. "Do anything you want to me," I pleaded, "but not Freida, not the baby."

Nine months I waited on pins and needles, all the time hiding my anxiety from my wife, assuring her that everything would be fine, just fine, although in my dreams I was forewarned of a troglodyte-looking creature as my solitary heir. In the delivery room, when the baby's head crowned, I rushed forward to count fingers, toes, eyes, ears. Ten, ten, two, two. Perfect! Our child was a perfectly beautiful blue-eyed baby boy.

I treasure that moment of delivery, as I do the moment of conception and all of the good things leading up to it. And if this is the price I have to pay ex post facto for Andrew's unblemished birth, then I've got no complaints. God may work in mysterious ways, but I don't believe that he operates in ledger-book fashion—not if the Atonement is a bottomless pit that no amount of sin and misgiving can overflow. I don't believe that my present condition is the result of past transgressions or payback for private covenants years ago. And that's exactly what makes this whole thing so damn difficult.

Freida continues talking to Gary Huntington, talking right through me. She doesn't do this to be rude or to inflict pain. That's just Freida.

"Gary," I say, pointing to the handcart. "You're up!"

Gary calls to his two teenage boys, who reluctantly surround the handcart, mumbling and murmuring in the manner of the two original Lamanites. They quickly get into the spirit of the occasion, however, trotting side by side humming the *Bonanza* theme.

Bradley Boyak hitches his blue jeans a little higher on his bullfrog belly and invites me to join him and Gary for a racket ball game. "You ever played racket ball?" No, but I'd sure like to. Tonight? Oh, no, not tonight. Tonight I have to ...

I invent an excuse: grade papers, mend the garden hose, fix a leaky faucet, build a garage, pole vault over Mt. Rushmore. Anything.

Bradley nods. Maybe some other time then.

Sure. Yes. Please. By all means. I'd really like to.

Colleen floats up beside me like a big Hawaiian queen in her multicolored muumuu and wraps a motherly arm around my bony shoulders: "Brian, are you cold?" Caught off guard, I almost topple over. "A bit," I reply. This is a blue lie: the long-sleeved shirt and baggy pants are intended to conceal the hasty disappearance of my flesh. The extra t-shirt underneath adds false bulk. I smile extra big, extra wide, even as the Invisible Agent, my Unholy Ghost, gives the corkscrew in my gut another sadistic twist.

Everything hurts now. I bruise like a banana.

I remind myself to walk, laugh, smile. Whatever happens, I absolutely must smile. Last night, during what I'd thought was a private moment, Andrew sneaked into my bedroom and caught me hunched over in the rattan chair. "Dad?" When I looked up, his face grew small and sad, like a balloon losing air. He was wearing his new baseball glove on his left hand, holding a ball in the right. He must have heard me groan.

"Don't you want to play catch?"

"No no—it's not that. Of course I want to play catch. I always want to play. It's just that—bad day, Andy. I got a little bad news is all."

"I'm sorry, Dad."

When I got in bed later that night, I found his teddy bear, Snuggles, propped up against the headboard. A half-joke. Warm fuzzy comfort.

Another time it was Freida. Late one night she crawled out of bed and shuffled down the hall and into the kitchen. An hour passed before she returned.

"You okay?" I whispered.

My iron-willed wife began sobbing in her pillow. I turned over, groping for her face in the dark, framing it gently with my hands, kissing her tenderly. "Hey, what's wrong? What's the matter, sweetie?"

"I'm worried," she sniffled.

"Worried? What about?" I asked

"You!" she barked angrily.

I tried to laugh it off. "Me? You don't need to worry about—"

"I heard you mumbling—then you got up—all the weight you've been losing—the doctors—"

"I'm fine," I insisted. "I got up to pee, that's all. You didn't want me to pee in the bed, did you?"

She laughed—a small, cautious laugh. Over and over I reassured her, kissing her cheeks, her chin, her eyelids, everything except her potent lips: I'm fine, fine, feeling better, stronger every day.

I curled up behind her, my front to her back, and kissed the nape of her neck. Several minutes passed before she reached back, grasped my hand, and placed it gently on her belly, her fingers silently counting mine in the dark.

The next morning we joked about it, embarrassed, self-conscious, uncertain what to do or say.

"I mean, you wake up in the middle of the night and suddenly you say to yourself, 'Now what's *really* important?'"

"Don't kid yourself," I said. "You were just trying to seduce me."

"You wish!" she said, and her smile caught momentarily, like a bad lock, as she read my mind: you're right. And: she's right. Intimate little jokes that were no longer funny.

Dusk has buried the last bit of sun, and the pine tree silhouette fringing the horizon has turned to midnight lace. We plod on past a solitary home, a humble crackerbox where fruit trees spill over a chainlink fence and a wiry teenager, naked from the waist up, sits on a tree stump finger picking a steel string guitar. Drawn by some primordial magnet he doesn't comprehend, my son has drifted to within three feet of Connie Huntington. Does he have any idea his gait is miming hers exactly, stride for stride?

Gaining the Missouri River, we take over again, Andrew jockeying his way to the rear. "Boys in back, girls in front!"

Billy Boyak reads excerpt number three:

> *Now the weather was getting cold, rations short and work hard and sister Eliza became weaker with the cold and hunger each day. One of those cold bleak days her life of hardship ended and she passed away and was buried along the trail. With hope and courage, we joined the company and the little ones trudged along day after day, until their feet would bleed and yet I was unable to assist them, only with encouraging words. (Many times I wrapped a blanket around them while I dryed their frozen clothing by the fire.) I remember well the last time we crossed the Platte River. It was almost sundown when I got to camp. My clothes were frozen so that I could scarcely move. I stood by the fire with a blanket around me while mother dryed my clothes by the fire. She often said she would be the happiest woman alive if she could reach Zion with all her children.*

Sometimes the pain is almost unbearable, like the weekend Freida took Andrew to a soccer tournament in Albuquerque, while I stayed home, ostensibly with a strained back. Saturday morning Jim Reynolds, an old running buddy, stopped by to see how I was doing. He had no idea the spasm in my spine was nothing compared to the rodents chewing up my insides.

I looked like hell: baggy sweat pants, baggy sweater, ski cap, whiskers dripping from my chin. I could barely make it from the sofa to answer the front door. Jim tried to appear oblivious, but he couldn't miss the stains on the floor and the dirty dishes stacked in the sink.

We talked. When's Freida coming home? Tuesday. You okay for

food? She left a two-year's supply of frozen dinners. Still going to work? In body, not spirit.

Then I began shaking uncontrollably, hot and cold needles streaking and freaking up and down my body everywhere, and just as suddenly I was itching all over, clawing my arms, chest, legs, my stockinged feet.

Jim looked worried, but I told him I was okay, just a little chilled. He said, "Hey, I've got just the thing! Let's get you over to the Athletic Club and put you in the Jacuzzi. That'll warm you up real good!"

It sounded like a good idea, but it backfired. The instant I slipped into the hot, bubbling water, my eyes blackened, my body melted, and I went under. Jim pulled me out, helped me to the concession stand, and bought me a 7-Up, thinking that maybe I needed a sugar fix. He had to carry me in his arms, like I was a baby or his bride, into his Land Cruiser where I vomited over and over until there was nothing left inside me to spew out. Curled up in his front seat, dry heaving, I told Jim I wanted to die. It was the first time I'd admitted it to anyone.

Then he started bad-mouthing Freida. "She should be here, nursing you, not gallivanting off to Albuquerque." But I told him no, stop, shut up. Just shut up, please. You don't know what you're talking about. You mean well but you don't understand. I made him promise not to repeat what I'd said to anyone. "You're my best friend, Jim. I have to count on you." That was a yellow lie: Freida's my best friend. Was.

Jim said okay, have it your way, but I looked like a clock slowly winding down. He said I looked like Death eating a cracker.

Fortunately, it's a short walk to the next trail marker, and I let Andrew and Freida do most of the work up front. Bradley Boyak walks alongside, enthusiastically informing me that there really wasn't all that much game on the plains until the farmers came and started growing crops. "Well, buffalo maybe, sure, but as far as the other ..."

I finger the plastic vial in my pants pocket, debating whether to pop the lid and surreptitiously slip one of the turquoise blue capsules into my mouth. If I do, within thirty minutes, the dagger will be withdrawn from my gut, leaving only a residual ache and sting for the next four to five hours, but my body and brain will close up shop, and I'll be a walking zombie for the rest of the night. That's the tradeoff, as Dr. Clark likes to call it.

Each blue capsule is a last temptation, a micro dose of suicide, which is why I try to hold off until bedtime. Usually.

"Hey, loser!"

It's Andrew, reminding me that I'm falling behind again. I release the vial and mentally slap the offending hand, as if it were a disobedient child's. Bradley reads the excerpt at Winter Quarters:

One night when we were to go to bed hungry, Sister Rowley got two very hard sea biscuits, that were left from the Sea Voyage. She put the biscuits in their frying pan and covered them with water, and placed them on the fire to heat. She then asked our Father in Heaven to bless them, that there may be sufficient amount to feed our hungry children. When she took the lid off, we were all happy to see the pan full of food. We all thanked our kind Father in Heaven for such a wonderful blessing.

The second hardest part will be trying to explain to my son something I don't understand myself. First, there were the doctors, a whole slew of specialists. We held a family fast, then a ward fast. I've received three priesthood blessings. After the first one, administered by Jim Reynolds, Andrew glowed with innocent optimism.

"You're going to be all better now, right, Dad?"

I glanced at Freida whose smile looked as if it were being held up by guy wires.

"God willing," I said.

My son's instant grin confirmed what was a given in his mind, for what reason could God, who is perfectly good, possibly have for not healing his ailing father, a righteous priesthood holder, a high councilor, and, of course, his one and only dad?

Blessings two and three were administered in more exclusive company, minus Andrew.

I keep postponing that inevitable talk, not because I'm secretly hoping for a miracle cure, but because once I state the obvious, things will never be the same in our home again. They are different enough now, but at least we maintain a charade of normalcy. And I want to preserve that for as long as possible. In the meantime I mentally rehearse the script, hoping that when the moment arrives, Andrew will know his lines better than I know mine.

As we cross the Platte River, a little irrigation ditch that even the smallest in our pioneer party can leap with a single bound, Bradley hands out sticks of beef jerky. "Here, have some pioneer snack!" I thank him and take a giant bite, chewing voraciously, although it, like everything else I put in my mouth now, tastes fecal and raises havoc within. When I think no one is looking, I spit it out like a wad of tobacco. But I'm too slow on the take, and one of the Boyak girls catches me. She kindly averts her eyes, embarrassed for me, and I avert mine.

Fort Laramie is a boulder at the top of a ridiculously gentle rise that sucks and squeezes the oxygen from my lungs. By the time I reach the summit, I'm panting like an asthmatic. Breathing is futile, like trying to blow up a balloon with a hole in it. I smile at everyone: Freida, Andrew, Gary, Bradley, Colleen ... "Nice scenery," I gasp, motioning to a weedy area where thistles with fat purple bulbs and cheap yellow flowers bloom.

Eying me nervously, Gary reads the note:

> *We were delayed at times on account of our handcarts becoming rickety, having been made of green timber. We would have to wrap them with rawhide, saved from the animals that had died or been killed for beef. The hide was cut into strips, and these were used to wrap the rim of the wheels when the tires became loose. The end of a strip was fastened to the felly by means of a small nail to hold it in place. As the weather became cooler with more storms, the tires tightened up, and the hide strips wore through and the pieces were left hanging to the wheels. I remember pulling some of these pieces off and roasting the hair off and eating them.*

I'm still trying to comprehend the lessons I'm supposed to learn from this. Empathy for the chronic sufferers of the world? Gratitude for the little pleasures in life, like enjoying a sunset meal with my family? Pride goeth before the fall? Or is this a crash test of my spiritual mettle?

I search the scriptures daily for comfort and relief: If I walk into the very jaws of Hell, fret not, for you have trod a thousand miles in my moccasins. Am I greater than thee? You will give me no trial or temptation greater than I can bear ... There must be opposition ... Those you love, you chasten ... (Then, Sir, love me a little less, please.)

Or are you reducing me to a cross for someone else to carry? Is this Freida's trial too? Unconditional love, patience, long-suffering? But why instruct her at my expense, or vice versa? Is this your way of pushing the envelope? Putting our feet to the refiner's fire? But why burden us both? And why create crosses? Hasn't the planet got enough to go around already? All the screaming orphans! You know I really think sometimes this would be a whole helluva lot easier if I were suffering frostbite and cholera to build the New Jerusalem. At least I could go down swinging, and leave some kind of legacy behind. Something besides stained sheets and a bottle of pain killers. Because right now I'm not feeling one bit noble or courageous, in case you haven't noticed. Right now I'm feeling weak, tired, humiliated, degraded, ashamed, abandoned, used up, worn out, cast off, and pretty pissed off at life, death, the universe, and just about everything in it!

Do you, Richard Tolman, comprehend the fabric of eternity?

I know that line! I KNOW ALL OF THAT! Doing a job on Job. Curse God and die. Thy ways aren't my ways. You see the big picture, I'm living in the lowly here and now. To you it's the twinkling of an eye; for me every day's hell freezing over and thawing out again. I hate this! Do you know what it's like—of course you do! You know everything! Then tell me, how do you do this graciously? How do you do it without being a pain in everyone's butt including my own? How do you—oh, I know. I know I know I know I know I know. But, Father, I wanted to grow old with her, not without her.

It's our turn again, already, to drag the handcart. "Come on, Dad!" Andrew hollers, grabbing me by the hand. "Let's get in back! Let's be pushers again!"

Yes. Let's. And thank God it's downhill. This quarter-mile trek has exhausted me. I feel, and probably look, a hundred years old. I'm counting the minutes until I can swallow that sweet blue capsule that will mercifully deliver me to another time and place, where I inhabit a new and glorified body that can outrun, outjump, outbike, outswim, outlove anything remotely resembling what I've turned into. On the outer edge of the park, healthy young couples are swatting tennis balls like speeding comets inside a chain link cage. The clouds are big black boxing gloves colliding in slow motion as lightning pulsates ominously on the mountain. Freida begins singing in her soft, haunting alto: "Come, come, ye saints, no toil nor labor fear ..."

By the time we reach Independence Rock, a slightly bigger boulder than Fort Laramie, my body is numb but nauseated, the double ache you feel when the novocaine wears off. I turn away from the group, trying to gather myself and clear my eyes, which are blurring around the edges, like windows frosting up in winter. I resist the pending blindness, nagged by an irrational fear that if my eyes shut now, they may never reopen. Emily Boyak reads:

> *On the 12th of October, Captain Willie was forced to cut our rations again, this time to 10 ounces for men, 9 for women, 6 for children and 3 for infants. Leaving the Platte River, we soon came to more hilly country. We dragged along, growing weaker every day with our provisions getting lower. We had to leave everything we had no immediate use for and toiled on in our weakened condition with very little to eat until we came to what was known at that time as the 3 Crossings of the Sweetwater. Here the last dust of flour was dealt out, and the next morning we found 18 inches of snow on the level. Captain Willie and a man by the name of Elder left our camp in search of help.*

One night I woke up drenched from the waist down, and not with sweat. I let out a grotesque groan: "Noooo!" Freida rolled over to comfort me, stopping abruptly as her hand searched the sheets: "Brian? Oh, Brian!"

I crawled out of bed, peeled off my soaked garments, and ran a hot bath. In the meantime she changed the bedsheets, covering the wet spot with a towel. But I hid in the bathroom until the alarm bleeped at six-thirty.

"Brian!" she said, knocking on the door. "Brian, I've got to get in there! I've got to get ready for work."

I didn't look at her when I passed by. I couldn't. She didn't say anything about it, which was good in some ways, worse in others. When I re-

turned from the office that afternoon, there was a box of DEPENDS on the bathroom sink. That night I stayed up until she went to bed, then curled up on the living room sofa. I'd barely dozed off when I felt the soft press of her body behind me, her voice whispering in my ear. "I want you in there, with me."

"I won't wear those damn things!" I said.

"That's okay," she said. "It was a bad idea."

There were moments like that, when she could be so gentle, handling my ego like a delicate little bird. But other times the stress and strain wore her patience threadbare, like that awful afternoon in Dr. Clark's office, after shelling out another thousand dollars for more x-rays, lab work, an alphabetical battery of acronymic procedures signifying nothing.

"So what you're telling me," Freida said belligerently, "is there's nothing wrong!" She crossed her arms threateningly, like a hit man with a bone to pick, or several to break. She wanted a name for the damn thing—a fancy, ugly, polysyllabic, Latin-sounding, validating name.

Dr. Clark cleared his throat and clarified. "Whatever the problem is, it's not showing up on the charts."

"So it's psychosomatic!"

"No. The pain is real—very real. And his condition is obviously ... We just can't detect—"

"Psychosomatic!"

As they tilted with semantics, I sat on the edge of the examination table like a little child being metaphorically cut in two, Solomon-style. They sounded like a cranky husband and wife bickering over the spoils of their imminent divorce. I had become a third party in the debate, having given up hope months ago.

"I don't know how long, if that's what you're asking. It could be years."

"That's not what I'm asking!"

"Look, we'd nuke the damn thing if we knew what it was!"

A week later Freida and I had it out, more or less. It was Christmas Eve, and we were up late wrapping a few last minute gifts to slip under the tree. I wanted to talk about it, she didn't, but I kept pressing her, like a pathetically desperate lover, until finally she said what I knew she'd been thinking for some time: I was selfish, obsessed, a one-track boor; all I ever thought or talked about was myself, my silly condition.

I exploded. I roared at her. "YOU THINK I ENJOY THIS! YOU THINK I LIKE BEING THIS WAY! YOU THINK—"

She closed her eyes and took a deep, calming breath, choosing her words carefully. "When we got married, I think we both had certain expectations ..."

"Expectations! What you're really saying is, if it were cancer or leukemia, that would be different. But somehow this is all my fault!"

I waited several moments, then answered for her: "The bottom line is, you can't respect someone like that—someone who allows something like this to happen. And you can't love someone you don't respect."

No answer. A rough, angry tearing of paper. Creasing and folding.

"Is silence assent?"

"Pass me the Scotch tape, will you?"

I imagine myself back in their lonely camp, tired, hungry, my flesh burning wherever the cold has chewed it to the bone, and no relief in sight. My eyelids close without resistance as the first faint drops of rain tickle my face. For a moment I see myself charging down the mesa a few desperate feet ahead of the pack, the salty sweat from my terrycloth headband dripping in my eyes, half-blinding me, the lactic acid hardening like cement in my legs and arms. Every stride I can hear terrible snapping sounds. They may be twigs or they may be bones. If they're mine, I can't tell. I'm beyond pain or thanksgiving. My eyes are pinwheels, the world around me a psychedelic blur of blue, brown, and green. Yet I hear Freida's voice above all the others cheering me as I stagger like a drunkard across the finish line, feel her hands on my shoulders easing me down onto the pavement, her lips softly touching mine. I hear words of love and praise and miracle whispered in my ear, words I thought had been lost at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

When I look again, Freida is watching me with the most peculiar expression, a mixture of fondness, love, compassion, and fear. Her eyes seem to ask, across the mass of friends: You okay?

I almost smile. I almost bow my head and say yes.

She grabs the handle on the handcart and orders everyone to heave-ho: "Let's go, we've got weather! Let's high-tail it to Zion!"

As if on cue, a crooked scimitar splits the blackened sky. Seconds later a bomb explodes and the mountain roars like a badly wounded beast. Suddenly it looks and sounds like a scene from *Götterdämmerung.* Any moment Wagner's Valkyries will swoop down to gather up the warrior dead.

The sixteen of us swarm the model handcart, speeding it past Fort Bridger without stopping as the summer rain pellets down. Plucking the note from the trail sign, Freida reads one-handed as she walks and pulls:

> *When we broke camp, we waded the Sweetwater Springs. Here the country began to level out again, for we could see the campfires for hours before we reached them. In traveling after night through the frost of that altitude, my brother, Thomas' right hand froze while pushing on the back of the handcart. My brother, John, over-*

come by exhaustion, was laid by the roadside to await the sick wagon. When he was picked up, he was frozen in 2 places on the side of his body nearest the ground. When Thomas got to the fire with his frozen hand, it soon presented a sad picture. It had swollen up like a large toad. That night we had to make camp without water. Twelve people died and in the morning 3 more died. All 15 were buried in one grave. Mother had to melt snow to thaw our hair from the ground where we slept. My brother, John, and I had pulled together on the same cart from Iowa City. We toiled on, doing the best we could, until he became disabled the evening we reached South Pass. My two younger brothers, Richard and Thomas, being too small to render much service.

Five minutes later we are all gathered around the barbecue pit near the ramada where Freida staked the last trail sign: SALT LAKE VALLEY. The sky is a big ugly bruise, but the rain has softened to intermittent spittle, more refreshing than annoying. Kneeling beside the lacquered wooden bucket, Bradley flicks a switch that sets his automatic ice cream-maker in motion. Freida offers some closing remarks about our debt to our pioneer ancestors, admonishing us to demonstrate similar faith and resolve in our equally trying times. "Our trials are different," she says. "Theirs were snow, hunger, thirst, disease. Physical villains. Ours are much more subtle and devious and cunning ..."

"Like MTV," suggests Colleen gravely.

"Or Democrats," quips Bradley Boyak.

Colleen reads the last excerpt:

When we arrived at the last crossing of the Sweet Water, Cyrus H. Wheellock of Don Jones' party met us with provisions. He could not restrain his tears, when he saw the conditions the saints were in. Some of the people were so hungry that now they had food they were unwise in eating and died from the effects of it. Louisa herself was very sick and while traveling next day lay down on the snow and begged Mother to go and leave her. We had been 3 days before relief came and many had died with hunger and cold. 14 being buried in one grave at Pacific Springs. My brother John and Thomas were both badly frozen. But on the 19th of November 1856 Mother was truly rewarded for her faithfulness in arriving in Salt Lake City with all her children. Although she had laid her frail, sweet stepdaughter Eliza on the plains, she was privileged to bring all her lambs to the fold. As soon as she arrived, she had a piece of sagebrush removed from her eye, which had been causing her a great deal of pain for some time.

Sometimes I hear him howling late at night, flinging hail like wedding rice against the glass, calling me out. The morning after I can see his breath and fingerprints on the window, marking the spot where he's been watching, like a peeping Tom or a cat burglar casing the house. I imagine him in different guises. Maybe he's a used car salesman, Tex Earnhardt with a ten-gallon hat and a bolo tie, straddling a brahma bull: "Come take advantage of our Mother's Day sale! A one-thousand-dollar rebate

on all ..." Maybe he's Monty Hall screaming, "Come on down and Let's Make a Deal to End All Deals!"

More often, though, he comes not as a dark-hooded clansman but the kindly, frosty-haired grandfather with swollen arthritic knuckles who from his sickbed mesmerized my child's mind with bear-hunting tales. He puts his gnarled hand in mine and leads me towards the translucent veil where I can distinguish the sketchy silhouettes of my father and mother on the other side, waiting eagerly to greet me. I hear sweet angelic music, and voices as tranquil as the sound of summer rain.

I step boldly forward, but each time, nearing the threshold, I'm stopped by reconsiderations. Am I being lured away prematurely? Seduced by a little travail? Once I cross the line to that kinder, gentler place, I'll never be able to cross back again; this border check is final and unforgiving. The smiling attendant in white asks if I have fruit, knives, or other mortal contraband? He doesn't tell me in advance what or how much I can take with me. Or is this the great leap of faith? Discarding all earthly pleasures and pains to move on to a bigger and better? Are we ants in a jar blinded by the security, or insecurity, of the known?

Come, follow me.

Try it, you'll like it.

But he doesn't tell me that I just may miss the smell of peppermint and jazz and woodsmoke on a cold winter morning. Doesn't remind me I'll never again stand on top of Engineer Peak gazing across the Colorado Rockies, or watch my boy execute a slide tackle or bear his testimony in Japanese at his missionary farewell; or make love to my wife, or cook her a Spanish omelet, or make her laugh. Not in this life. And he doesn't tell me that someone else will.

As we commence the closing song, the last verse of "Come, Come Ye Saints," Gary Henderson leans towards my wife and whispers in her ear. Their half silhouettes look like two pieces of a puzzle that could fit perfectly together. She turns and smiles at him oddly. It is a gesture of friendship, but not altogether friendship. I'm surprised at what a striking couple they make, but not altogether surprised. And I wonder: What am I doing here, beside Bradley and Colleen, when I should be over there, between Andrew and Freida?

We squeeze under the ramada for refreshments, Bradley's homemade rootbeer floats. The kids devour theirs in seconds, then sprint off to the playing fields, half of them tossing their Styrofoam cups into the trash can, the other half dropping them thoughtlessly on the ground.

"Pick that up, you litterbug!" Colleen scolds one of her errant seven.

As the Boyak girls play Keep-Away with a soccer ball, Andrew assumes a catcher's crouch behind a paper plate in front of a ponderosa

pine. He punches his fist into his baseball glove and hollers to me: "Come on, Dad! Throw some smoke!" Freida flashes me her Milky Way smile, the one I can't refuse. I trot over to accommodate.

Andrew tosses me a fluorescent green tennis ball and begins flashing fingers between his skinny bare thighs. I paw the imaginary rubber, shake off his first sign, okay the second. Leaning back, I cock and lift my left leg while wrenching my right arm geekishly behind my back, delivering a cool sidearm fastball, at the ankles, in the manner of Don Drysdale. I tell my son nice catch, waita block that plate! I add a little play-by-play, from my sandlot days, dating myself: "Runners on first and third, two outs, bottom of the ninth, Mantle at the plate, Maris on deck ... Here's Drysdale with the windup, the pitch—curve ball, got him swinging! Mr. Clutch takes three and sits down!"

Grinning, Andrew glances over at Connie Henderson, watching from under the ramada. Her thread of a smile quickly widens to a half-moon. Noticing me noticing him noticing her, Andrew looks away, happily embarrassed.

The tennis ball feels like a shotput in my hand. Every pitch is a cigarette, shaving two hours off my life. Or two years. Yet for a moment, surely the first this evening, perhaps the first in months, I enjoy a brief respite, call it peace. And to me it's as miraculous as those three sea biscuits were to Freida's starving ancestors crossing the Plains.

So I wonder, second guess: Does God grant us these occasional Kodak moments as a celestial carrot to keep us going, enduring to our predestined end? If it's a trick, a holy ploy to persuade me against my will, it almost works.

I look at the ramada where Freida is laughing, her voice floating effervescently above the crowd. If I exit early, she'll have as many suitors as Penelope panting at her door. And unlike the crafty Queen of Ithaca, she won't have the luxury of unweaving by night what she has woven by day. She will remarry in time. Of course the lucky fellow will have her on loan only. But I wonder: while she is sharing her life and body with someone who is at his best while remembering me at my worst, will these last two years obscure the previous eleven, and in her heart will she belong to this stranger, although by eternal covenant she'll be mine? Or will she? Is there reneging on the other side? If the heart plays more or less fondly?

But my selfishness is showing, or my humanness. If I truly love my wife, won't I have that other inevitable talk, the one I can't even begin to script in my mind? Or is this where I draw a line on the law of consecration?

Another silver flash above the peaks, followed by more mountain bellows, and a shot of cool summer spray. As Gary and Bradley begin

packing up the ice chests, the women holler to the children who stampede across the field like a herd of wild ponies. We load up our vehicles and say our farewells. Gary magnanimously offers to return the handcart to the Millets—he insists—sparing me the burden of dragging it back the half mile I brought it. (Thank you, my priesthood brother, or did you know all along?)

By the time we arrive home, the rain has stopped and the clouds are breaking up. Seth, running on the infinite energy of youth, rounds up his friends for a short game of flashlight tag. Exhausted from her Cecil B. DeMille production, Freida collapses on the living room sofa to catch the last ten minutes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation.* I tell her to go to bed, I'll take care of things. "After a performance like that! What a show! You really outdid yourself—"

She smiles and thanks me for all my help, extends her hand. "I never could have done it without—"

I load the dishwasher, sweep the kitchen floor, and call Andrew inside. It takes a while, but eventually he bursts through the back door, hot and winded. By the time I trudge upstairs, he is sitting up in bed, poring over strategy manuals for his Wing Commander game. I plop down beside him and wrap an arm around his bony shoulders. Kisses are out: he's too old, too tough, too almost junior high.

"Good night," I say. "Don't forget to say your prayers!"

"Okay."

"I love you, Andrew."

"Love you, Dad."

I linger in the doorway admiring his perfect little face, and the way his chest lifts and settles like a gentle ocean swell. There's something I need to tell him, something about Connie Huntington and the secret smile that passed between them, but I'm not sure exactly what. Is now the time for our inevitable talk?

He lowers his Wing Commander book and looks up, annoyed. "Do you have a staring problem?"

I smile, blow him a mock kiss. "Don't forget—"

"I know, I know."

When I reenter the family room, Freida is crashed out on the sofa, while Worf the Klingon warrior tries to negotiate peace with a bizarre-looking hermaphrodite from Planet Somewhere. Freida's face appears to have aged in her brief sleep. Scrunched against the sofa pillow, her lips look swollen and pouty; her mouth sags sadly, and the skin around her eyes appears wattled. Threads of gray are tucked strategically behind her ear. And I realize, for perhaps the first time, that she too is growing old. I bend down, brush her ringlets back, and kiss her tenderly on the cheek, as if for the last time.

Then I slip out the sliding glass door, past Freida's flower garden, and kneel in my private spot between two gambol oaks. My eyes rise to the heavens where a half-moon is squeezing between two bulging black clouds, like a breech birth. When its full face appears, I see this image: Death eating a sea biscuit. Splitting it with me. That skull-faced smile. It's a fluorescent tombstone, the dimmer, lesser glory I may inherit if I'm judged solely by the intentions of my heart.

I bow my head, close my eyes, and begin my nightly talk with my Father. Tonight I don't debate the justice of my plight or petition for an early release. I don't rant and rave about my powerless position. Tonight I thank him for carrying me safely to the Promised Land. I assure him I'm not being facetious. I thank him for those priceless moments on the mound throwing sidearm strikes to Andrew, and for fifty-one years on this beautiful planet, eleven years with beautiful Freida. I thank him for the pioneer men and women of steel plodding across the wind-swept plains, wearing rags on their feet, pulling strips of rawhide from the handcart wheels and chewing them for dinner.

Ten minutes into my prayer I'm feeling better, stronger. I think maybe I can skip the blue pill tonight. Just maybe. But first I have some questions about this wonderful promise called Resurrection, our bodies gloriously restored to their youthful prime and vigor. I ask him what if you never had a prime? Suppose you were born armless or legless or eyeless or clueless? Then what of body restoration? Or suppose you prefer blue eyes to brown, or the nose is a little too hooked in your opinion, the hips a bit too wide? Will there be plastic surgeons in heaven? Or will it be more like shopping for new clothes, a mix and match of body parts with racks and racks to choose from? Will we be uniformly bleached celestial white? Or will brown, black, red, yellow, and California tan be among the color options? Will there be mountains to climb, races to run, kisses to give and receive? Or have I run my last footrace, in the here and in the hereafter?

I tell him it's all academic, beside the point. I want Freida. I want Andrew. Anything else is icing.

After a Late Night, Waiting

Dixie Partridge

Again, that rim before sleep:
I tried to pause there—listened
to the mantle clock, the distant
sprung rhythm of a dog barking,
and a faint electrical hum
no one else in my family can hear.
An aura of dizzy strings
from a symphony recording
came back to repeat and repeat.

And even as I began to vanish
into these faint sounds
my last sense pulled with me
the perceivable things until
when I crossed into dream they rose up
hounds of light in chameleon shapes
to teach me.

What I have missed survives
my waking, revising past fears
and faces into visions, darkness
to a warp of light.
Some days to decipher the levels of the nights
is what keeps me.
Almost I enter the code
during the aching phrases of Mozart;
with sheerest shadows that approach
like an act of will against the light;
in moments time seems reversed

and I scour language to consider
how those lost hours and fears,
those diminishing sounds,
are trying to tell us
what we are not; that we can't
quite know all that our mounding need
has convinced us we must;
how what has already passed
even in dream
collects—polish or rust—
on the future.

Old Man

Theresa Desmond

ONCE, WHEN I WAS TWENTY-ONE AND FRETTING about my future, my aunt said, "Why, you have the world by the tail! You can have anything you want!"

Today I feel that I have the world by the tail. After weeks of cold and snow in January, it's sunny today, the snow is melting, and it's Friday. I take a lunch hour and get in my car with the radio turned up and look for a place to eat. I remember a bakery nearby and pull into a space right in front of the door. The smell inside is overwhelming—sweet and fresh and warm. The sun is shining through the large front windows on a boy and his mother at a table eating a muffin. As I decide among cookies, bread, or muffins (and realize I can get any of them, as I have plenty of money with me), the owner greets me heartily and cuts off a large, free slice of banana-nut bread. I get some cookies, too, and smile as the clerk who rings me up compliments me on my silk shirt.

I'm putting my change in my wallet when an elderly man enters the bakery. He is shorter than I am and seems to be sinking into the old, belted trench coat he's wearing. His shoes are old, too, and his polyester pants are in a 1970s shade of blue. He shuffles in, looking a bit bewildered, the effect heightened by a large purplish bruise that surrounds his left eye, partially hidden by his big glasses. He looks around timidly until the owner calls out a cheery, "Hello, sir!"

The old man says, shyly and confusedly, "Can you tell me where Deseret Industries is?"

The owner stops wiping the tables he's cleaning and looks up easily. "You know, I don't know," he says. He actually scratches his head. "Hey, does anyone know where Deseret Industries is?"

The clerk and I shake our heads, and the mother at the table says, "Uh-uh."

"You know, I thought the nearest DI was in Bountiful," the owner says. Then he brightens. "Well, we'll just have to look it up, won't we?" he asks the elderly man, leading him behind the counter to the phone book.

I haven't taken my eyes off the elderly man. I can't figure out if the bruise is some kind of skin condition or the temporary result of an accident. I think about how fragile he looks, sort of bent over in his trench coat, a shy, friendly look on his face. I wonder how old he is, and if there is someone in a car waiting for him.

I quickly leave the bakery. The scene is killing me. One of the first things I learned when I moved to Utah was that Deseret Industries is the Mormon equivalent of the Salvation Army thrift store. (I learned, too, that everyone calls it "DI" and that you pronounce the "t" in Deseret and lots of other facts you don't need outside of Utah.) So I understand that this man is on his way to shop, not to donate, and out of necessity, not out of a sense of retro funk.

I juggle my wallet, the bread, and the cookies as I try to open my car door and shield my eyes from the sun. I feel now that something else has *me* by the tail, or that the tail is wagging the dog, or that all these cliches have just jumped up and bitten me in the ass. I can barely stand myself, with my car and cookies and silk shirt and happy little moment.

As I curse the sun and feel the buttered side of the banana-nut bread flop onto the front of my shirt, the door to the bakery opens and the elderly man exits, smiling, pushing the door with one hand and bringing a free slab of bread to his mouth with the other.

Waters of Mormon

Brett Alan Sanders

WHEN SHE WENT DOWN INTO THOSE MORMON WATERS, she must have been eighty years old. No one exactly knew, but it'd been a lot of years, at least sixty, her daughter thought, from that other baptism in her native land, where she'd brought down the wrath of her father's gods and the sun had gone out.

The daughter was present for this one. The lights were electric and didn't flash. Dona Julita was dressed all in white, but the brightness shone more from her ivory teeth, brilliant eyes, and radiantly black skin. The daughter, for her part, was present only out of respect, because of the undeniable spiritual gifts that'd been present in her mother since the beginning, and that'd helped to raise her and later her own children within a sense of family that endured whole the scathing northern cold. For that reason alone, though privately she couldn't stand it, she'd publicly ignore the fact that a mere decade earlier her mother's new church had still denied full sanctity to black races, and sit with her mother beside those waters.

As Dona Julita descended into the font, resplendent and calm, her daughter recalled the stories that she'd been told as a child, spiritual tales that were always painted for her in vivid colors. The painter of those stories, herself never burdened with the gifts of written literacy that would to her daughter become a mixed blessing, had borne them straight from the heart, which faithfully learned and correctly interpreted whatever she heard. The biblical narrative, shaped on her tongue to the African-based Latin rhythms of her untutored experience, was fused with her own private *mythos*, which became indistinguishable from the other. To the child nourished at her knee, it was as if Dona Julita were in the flesh a new page from that timeless, spiritual saga.

Before she was anyone but simply Julita, skinny daughter of a nativist priest, given by her father to the worship of strange gods, she'd rebelled against that destiny, wading into the evangelist's muddy water, being lowered under it, rising up again in defiance of the black clouds that out of nowhere came between earth and sun. Her father, who in turn

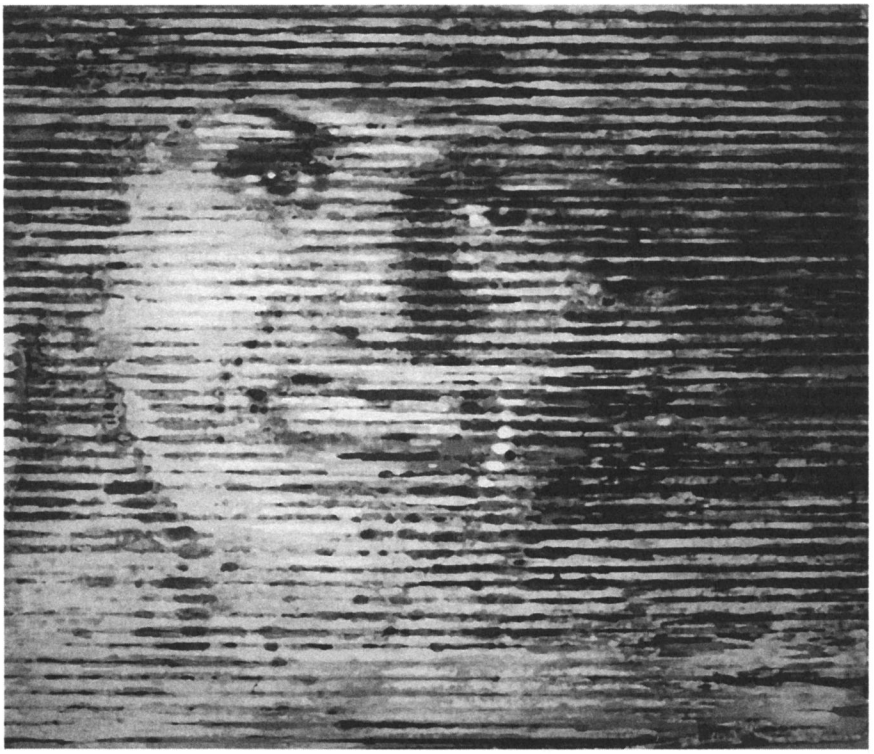
had been given by an aunt to be "Satan's priest," as Julita would later tell it, had appeared as suddenly, mysteriously, on a hillock overlooking the pool. His arms were folded squarely. A piercing light shot out from the narrow slits of his eyes. His presence seemed to command the storm, which came forth in torrents in the instant before her immersion, subsiding immediately as she emerged from that burial to an even brighter light. In that moment, defeated by an unknown god, her father pronounced the curse that would remain in force long afterwards. For her infidelity she was abandoned to the grinding poverty that, years later upon his death, was only slightly eased when she finally married a man who, for all of his lack of warmth, could afford to keep the last of her children, a strange, moody girl who would take the mother with her to the faraway north.

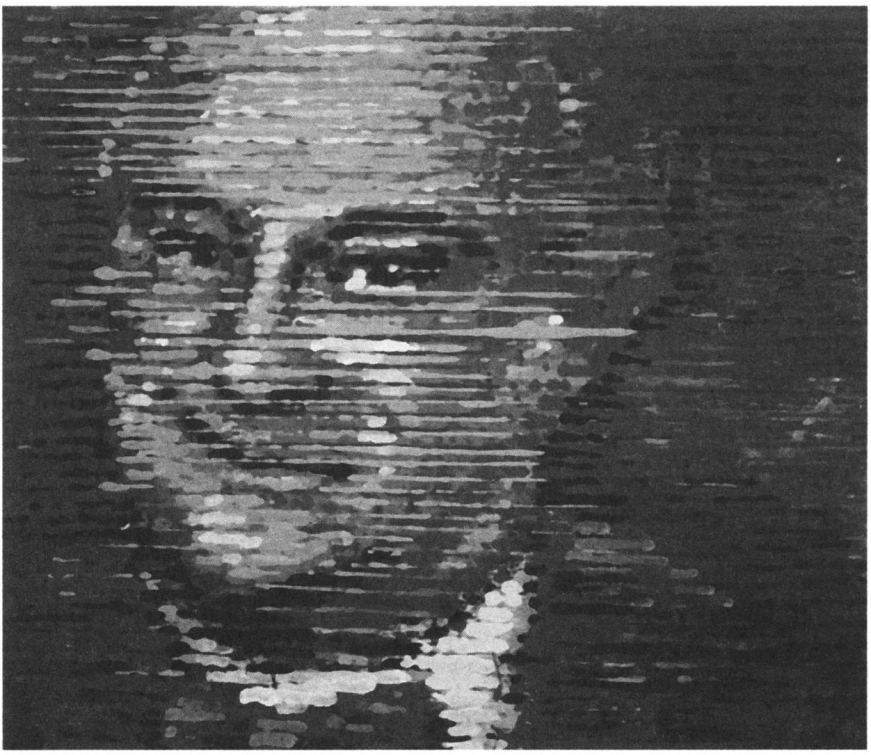
The outlines of that poverty were visible on her skin, now, as the daughter watched her grasp, with one hand, the white missionary's wrist, leaving her other hand free to stop her nose against the water. The prayer would be pronounced in English, the daughter translating since no one else could. Afterwards, because her daughter couldn't be asked to go farther than her own will took her, Dona Julita would attend the meetings alone, understanding few words but drinking in a spirituality that to the daughter it seemed she already possessed in greater abundance than anyone there.

Those Mormons would continue to flutter around her, anyway, cute and black as she was, so much more like a biblical prophetess than anyone they'd ever imagined to really exist. Eventually, though, the language barrier and strain of small talk became more than most of them could sustain. When she was home ill, for months before her passing, they forgot to visit. Yet it was she, the daughter remembered, who'd asked to go there in the first place. She'd seen the place for the first time in a dream, recognizing it then when her daughter chanced to drive past it. Or had she seen it first and then dreamed it? In any case she'd then made her daughter take her there so she could be taught and re-baptized. Those missionaries had never experienced anything like it. The daughter, who didn't share their proselyting faith, nevertheless served as interpreter to the fulfilling of her mother's will.

One might have expected, then, that knowing her mother as she did, the daughter would've been prepared for the miracle that did happen at that baptism. They never spoke about it to each other, but she knew by what her mother didn't say that together they'd seen what the others couldn't. The heavens had opened to them, in fact, as the water coursed off her face, and the daughter knew that it was Dona Julita's father who, snatched from Satan by his daughter's prayers, and by his own consent, now extended his arms to her.

Then there were the lost children, living and dead, whom the mother's poverty had forced to be given away. Mother and daughter wept, and Dona Julita chattered joyously in her own language, though no one else in that room seemed to notice. Then mother and daughter saw Father and Son, who in their private vision were blacker than the brightest sliver of night, and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and assuming the form of a black madonna. It was then that the heavens rained fire across worlds, reconciling all of those beings who'd been thought to be lost from each other. What had been broken was made whole. Dona Julita smiled as never before. It was that smile, in fact, that after her mother's passing would sustain the daughter through all the months of loneliness.





A Classic Reprinted

West from Fort Bridger: The Pioneering of Immigrant Trails across Utah, 1846-1850. Edited and with an introduction by J. Roderic Korns and Dale L. Morgan; revised and updated by Will Bagley and Harold Schindler (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1994).

Reviewed by Melvin T. Smith, Ph.D., Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

WHEN PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY IN 1951 as volume 19 of the *Utah Historical Quarterly,* this book made a major contribution to understanding the history of overland routes traveled west from Fort Bridger to California. No other work since has superseded it. One primary option for emigrants had been to continue north and west along the Oregon Trail route to the vicinity of Fort Hall, and then take the California branch to the southwest, catch the Humbolt River, and find passage across the Sierra Nevada Mountains to their California destinations. Routes across the Salt Lake Valley and the salt desert sought to eliminate the extra miles of this northern route "dog leg."

The original book resulted from the "field work" of Roderic Korns, Dale Morgan, and Charles Kelley. They shared freely their interests for locating routes through the Wasatch Mountains, as well as their knowledge of historical documents and sources that could be recovered. It was a remarkably competent team effort: however, Korns died before the work was completed, and the task of committing it to paper fell to Dale Morgan who was anxious to ensure that Korns's work would be appreciated and available to students.

Because the original edition printed fewer than 1,000 copies, the book has long been out of print. Finally, and fortunately, two very able historians, with the support of the Crossroads Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association and Utah State University Press, were enlisted to revise and update the original work. Bagley and Schindler acknowledge their debt to Morgan for his own beginning revision efforts. They obtained the actual copy that Morgan had "worked" on.

The book discusses, briefly, the Bartelson-Bidwell wagon route of 1841, and John C. Fremont's expeditions of 1843 and 1845. He made the first crossing of the Salt Lake Desert route in the fall of 1845 on his trip to California. However, Lansford W. Hastings promoted it as an emigrant route. The editors see him as both dishonest and downright irresponsible.

Included in this work are excerpts from various journals, letters, and reports of several travelers over these routes between 1846 and 1850.

The "Journal of James Clyman" (21 May-June 1846) reports on the Hastings-Hudspeth trek from Sutter's Fort to Fort Bridger. This party traveled with horses and mules, as Fremont's expedition had the previous fall, and arrived in good time and condition.

The "Journal of Edwin Bryant" records the Bryant-Russell trip from Fort Bridger (17 July 1846), south of the Great Salt Lake to Mary's River in Nevada (8 August 1846), also on horses and mules. They were the first to "choose" the Hastings Cutoff.

The Harlan-Young company was the first to take wagons over the "cut-off." The "Journal of Heinrich Lienhard" reports on the struggles and heroics of their trip through the mountains and across the salt flats between 26 July and 8 September 1846. This "Journal" also provides new insights into the information contained on the T. H. Jefferson map. The editors have included a copy of that map in a pocket inside the back cover, along with an updated trails map correlated to current road maps.

The next materials are "excerpts" from the "Journal of James Frazier Reed," of the tragic Donner-Reed party, which left the Fort Bridger area 31 July. His account ends 4 October 1846. A brief epilogue contains a report of their trials by his daughter Virginia Reed to her cousin.

While these "journals" provide important information about these routes, the history is complete only because of the excellent introductions both to the book itself and to each of the documents used. Of equal significance are the extensive and careful footnoting and correlating of data from these sources with other historical documents. Bagley and Schindler have provided the latest scholarship in their update. For some readers the task of reading all of these footnotes may become tedious, but history students will find the effort well rewarded.

Korns and Morgan believed that Hastings's map, drawn for the Mormons, as well as his "way bill," might be held in the LDS church archives; however, they were not able locate them. After 1976 the LDS archives "catalogued" the Hastings's materials, and their existence came to the attention of the current editors in 1991. Copies of these documents have been included in this edition, as well as another "map," drawn also by Thomas Bullock, of Miles Goodyear's suggested route into Salt Lake Valley.

"The Golden Pass Road," which came down Parley's Canyon into the valley, was promoted by Parley P. Pratt in 1850 but with limited success. The final chapter introduces new information about the "Salt Lake Cut-off," the route around the north end of the lake, reflecting recent scholarship in that area.

West from Fort Bridger is the major work dealing with these routes into Salt Lake Valley and on west into Nevada and California. It has an excellent index, extensive illustrations and pictures, and a wealth of information for anyone interested in this aspect of the westering of Americans a century and a half ago.

A Collective Yearning

Tending the Garden: Essays on Mormon Literature. Edited by Eugene England and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996).

Reviewed by Thomas J. Lyon, Professor of English, Utah State University, Logan.

THERE IS A COLLECTIVE YEARNING

The Harlan-Young company was the first to take wagons over the "cut-off." The "Journal of Heinrich Lienhard" reports on the struggles and heroics of their trip through the mountains and across the salt flats between 26 July and 8 September 1846. This "Journal" also provides new insights into the information contained on the T. H. Jefferson map. The editors have included a copy of that map in a pocket inside the back cover, along with an updated trails map correlated to current road maps.

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here, a palpable sincerity, that you can't help but like and respect. The desire that practically radiates from these pages is for Mormon literature to be taken seriously, both by outsiders and by members (the latter may be a harder nut to crack), and for literature, period, to mean more in our lives. By engaging the Socratic question of what sort of "imitation" ought to be allowed in the ideal republic, these Mormon critics ask some deep questions. What is fiction, and what is truth? How much, and in what way, does literature really count for us? How then shall we live? This is a Puritan book, in the best sense—a soul-searching, and a culture-searching.

First come the overview and some history. In his introduction, "Critical Issues," editor Eugene England says that the theologically distinct Mormon ideas, coupled with "the dramatic and mythically potent Mormon history" and with the "demands of service, covenant-making, and charismatic experience in the Mormon lay church" (xvi), make a rich resource for fine writing: "Mormon writers, then, certainly have at hand sufficient matter with which to produce a great literature. But does Mormonism also provide insight into the resources and limitations of the means of literature: language, form, style, genres, critical perspectives?" (xvi)

Matter and means ... but there is something else that makes it all work, and that something else is really what this book is about. That something is the freedom to discover, to engage the world with the love that is beyond the range of thought and ideas and the merely social-historical level of existence. Karl Keller, in "On Words and the Word of God: The Delusions of a Mormon Literature," says that "One of the mysteries of literary life in America is why Mormons have contributed so little to it" (13). He goes on to propose an answer to the mystery, and by the way to state the essential theme and position of *Tending the Garden:* "But significantly, when thought of as having a message, a moral point, a communication to make, most literature is going to be thought of by the church as being irrelevant, perverse, untrue, pornographic, for as a work explores personal experience or a personal point of view, it will naturally diverge from the authoritative doctrinal norms of the church. Literature does not have meaning; rather it provides one with the Christian exercise of getting into someone else's skin, someone else's mind, someone else's life" (18).

That "Christian exercise," the great dare, is very much at the heart of three fine essays here by Marden J. Clark, Bruce W. Jorgensen, and Tory C. Anderson. These essays affirm the relational feeling and the relational world; they haven't divided existence into an "us and them" thing—all is fundamentally in order, logical, integrated, in a sense "friendly." But the hard thing is to perceive in wholes, for to move toward what Clark calls "family" or "that one great whole" (16, 18) requires that love, and not thought- and idea-generated identity, be our guide. Bruce Jorgensen writes of the generosity of spirit found in Homer and in the gospel authors and of course in Jesus Christ: it is stranger-welcoming. "The imagination of Jesus, I'm suggesting, which is the ordinary Christian and Mormon imagination, will take precisely the risk Socrates warns against as the ruin of the soul: to understand an other, whoever the

other is, however bad or mixed" (59). And Tory Anderson (using Madame Bovary as his main text) speaks of the truth of action as experiential—much more profoundly involving, more complete in terms of consciousness, than ideas and judgments. "This is where fiction comes in. Good fiction is refined life. It gets at the heart of the meaning of life without ever talking about it like sermons do" (73).

The first part of *Tending the Garden*, then, establishes the significance in religious life of truly free reading and writing. The second part deals in practical criticism, bringing specifically Mormon examples under scrutiny. Here, to my mind, Levi Peterson's tribute to Juanita Brooks's courage and overriding faith, and Eugene England's discerning, hopeful "Beyond 'Jack Fiction': Recent Achievement in the Mormon Novel" best demonstrate the very high-minded and universal aims of the book's first, theoretical section. Although I think Cecilia Conchar Farr and Phillip A. Snyder are incorrect to say that Henry David Thoreau "looks to Nature as a singular Other to his Self" (205), I see what they're after in doing a comparison-and-contrast between Thoreau and Terry Tempest Williams, whom they regard as a "Self-in-Relation." They are promoting relational perception, and in a way this is what *Tending the Garden* is all about: seeing the world relationally means to transcend the dualistic, egoistic identity. It means to live freely, moved by empathy.

Fiddler with a Cause

Leroy Robertson: Music Giant from the Rockies. By Marian Robertson Wilson (Salt Lake City: Blue Ribbon Publications, 1996).

Reviewed by Ardean Watts, Professor Emeritus of Music, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

LEROY ROBERTSON WAS ONE OF MY mentors. I played in the Brigham Young University orchestra under him in 1945-46, studied music theory from him as a graduate student at the University of Utah in 1955, and was appointed to the U of U music department as a faculty member during his chairmanship in 1960. I was interviewed by the author shortly after she commenced work on her father's biography and either performed in or conducted many performances of his works during my twenty-two-year tenure with the Utah Symphony.

Marian Robertson Wilson's book is essential reading for those who would understand music in the American West during her father's lifetime and since, for that matter. Her perspective as a devoted daughter is seasoned by her own professional competence as a language scholar and editor. The book is replete with detail, amply documented, and yet provides intimate access to Robertson's private life—fortuitous for the reader since he granted glimpses of his personal

other is, however bad or mixed" (59). And Tory Anderson (using Madame Bovary as his main text) speaks of the truth of action as experiential—much more profoundly involving, more complete in terms of consciousness, than ideas and judgments. "This is where fiction comes in. Good fiction is refined life. It gets at the heart of the meaning of life without ever talking about it like sermons do" (73).

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life rather grudgingly.

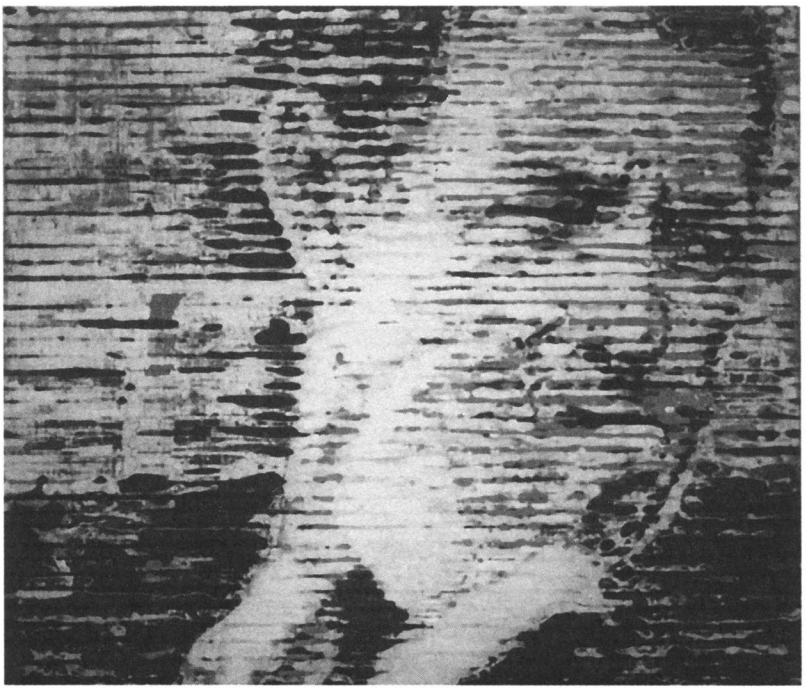
The first section of the book dealing with his family background up to the time of his marriage reads like a classic rural Mormon family saga though presented in a graceful literary style. The author's view is broad and authoritative, her treatment rich in detail, with her unequivocal devotion to her father evident on every page. The Robertson of the biography seems too much an individualist to be an archetypal Latter-day Saint, but his Mormon roots seemed to serve him well throughout his personal and professional life.

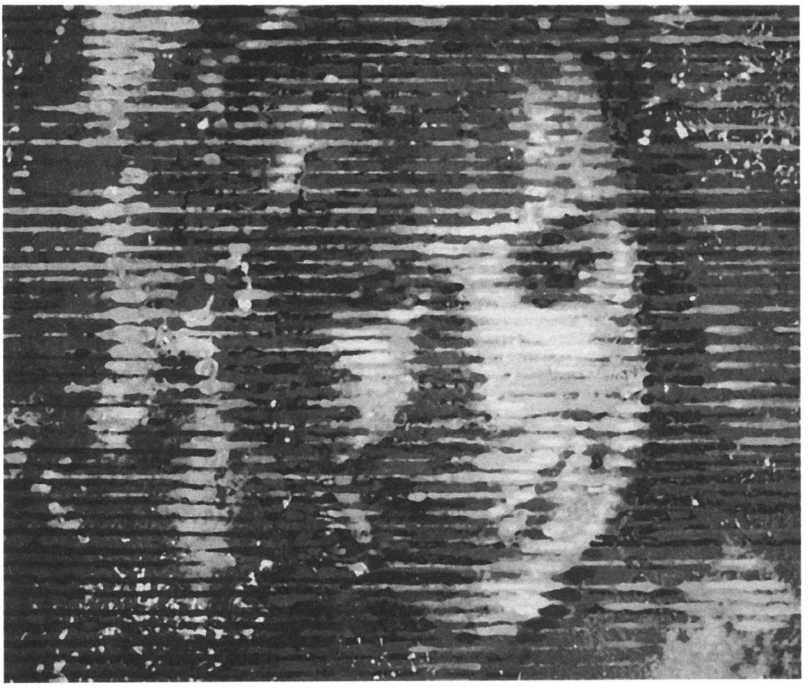
One doesn't need Marian's testimony to affirm his role as Utah's leading resident composer of classical music. His eminence during his lifetime has not been seriously challenged, to my knowledge. The proof of the pudding is in the consumption. I continue to be nourished by the integrity, imagination, lyricism, and the impeccable musical craftsmanship of his works. I treasure a stereo recording of his *Book of Mormon Oratorio,* which was described by critics as "monumental, historic," and "one of the musical masterpieces of the twentieth century," recently reissued on CD by Vanguard Classics in Europe but not currently available in the USA. The author informed me recently that performance, publishing, and recording royalties worldwide continue at a consistent and ongoing rate. Western United States performances are sadly not keeping pace, which forces us to conclude that the adage that prophets are without honor in their own country applies to composers as well. In a time when support of symphony concerts seems to be on the wane, it would appear that better use could be made of this giant's considerable output, particularly in his home state.

Robertson's international acclaim began with his receiving the Henry H. Reichhold prize of $25,000 in 1947 in a competition open to all composers of the Western Hemisphere, perhaps the largest single award ever given to a composer up to that time. His acclaim as a composer is better known but not more important than his untiring work in creating the foundation for the culturally rich environment for which Utah has a deservedly national reputation. As a pioneer in the establishment of symphony orchestras in Utah which could give creditable performances of the great masterworks, he deserves our thanks and our praise. I have heard Maurice Abravanel speak his name with the highest regard hundreds of times both for his compositions and his work as a music educator. His pioneering effort to provide a home on the University of Utah campus for a major symphony orchestra (the Utah Symphony) became a model that has been emulated but not exceeded.

Thanks to this biography we are treated to a liberal amount of the Robertson wit and wisdom. However, one can never get the full impact without hearing his own droll voice intoning it. That I had the opportunity on a daily basis to enjoy it was a joy of my student days. In spite of notable successes, this biography is full of great and unrealized expectations. He is one of many composers of a high order whose works have not achieved the level of familiarity they need and deserve. He dealt with disappointments philosophically in the spirit of a line penned in some class notes while he was a graduate student at USC, "Transitory trials are nothing to the life of the soul."

The jury is still out when it comes to defining with any degree of satisfaction if there be such a thing as "Mormon" or even "American" music. If that issue is ever to be resolved, it must include taking Leroy Robertson's output seriously. His branches reach out over the wall requiring that his output be measured against the finest composers our country has produced. This book generously fills a compelling need that we face our own history. Marian's book reminds us both of what we have had and what we may have forgotten. It is a fitting way to have marked two singular centenary celebrations in 1996, the birthdays of the dean of Utah composers and the State of Utah.





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PHILIP WHITE lives in Amherst, Massachusetts.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My work investigates the Mormon church, specifically its transition from a revolutionary religious movement to a mainstream institution. As the church Joseph Smith founded has grown to a worldwide organization, its leaders have made strides to downplay its radical beginnings. By making efforts toward wider ecumenical acceptance (and abandoning economic separatism and polygamy), they have constructed a public face centered on the ideal of the American 'middle' class nuclear family. Starting from their position of extreme radicalism Mormons adapted to the mainstream well enough to become nearly invisible.

Many people today know about the Mormon church from its long and successful campaign of television commercials. In addition, recent network news programs such as *Nightline* and *60 Minutes* have run segments on the church and its culture. *60 Minutes* featured famous representatives from professional spheres that typify Mormondom: sports (Steve Young), business (Bill Marriott), politics (Orrin Hatch). Television is a central tool in the effort to project a clean, respectable image for Mormonism. Interestingly the inventor of the television, Philo T. Farnsworth, was a Mormon and native of my home state Utah.

The suite of paintings "Twelve Famous Mormons" focuses on the end result of the Mormon struggle: acceptance by the larger culture and transformation into a religion of the American suburbs. In these paintings I am exploring an alternative public image of Mormonism. The project seeks to undermine this microculture's conception of itself and to invent a new image of Mormons in the culture at large. The figures I've chosen are involved in a wider range of activity than those generally presented by the church. The number of women depicted is equal to the number of men to counter the male dominated church culture. And one portrait of a "mythic member" represents a persistent cultural pattern of perpetuating rumors of who is, or was, a famous Mormon.

The claim to famous Mormons by the institutional and cultural churches is an expression of a people seeking to legitimize themselves. Over the last hundred years Mormons have been incredibly adept at moving from cultural outcasts to the center of American respectability. These paintings project a more complex image than the carefully constructed face of contemporary Mormonism.

Lane Twitchell, New York City, 1997

PAINTINGS

Cover : "Philo T. Farnsworth," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
Back : "Sonia Johnson," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 20: "Eliza R: Snow," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 20: "Joseph S," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 42: "Mark Hofmann," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 102: "Eldridge Cleaver," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 102: "Roseanne Barr," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 136: "Anne Perry," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 162: "Marie Osmond," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 162: "Gordon Jump," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 168: "Wayne Thiebaud," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997
p. 168: "Harper Pitt," 12"x 14" latex on panel, 1997

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