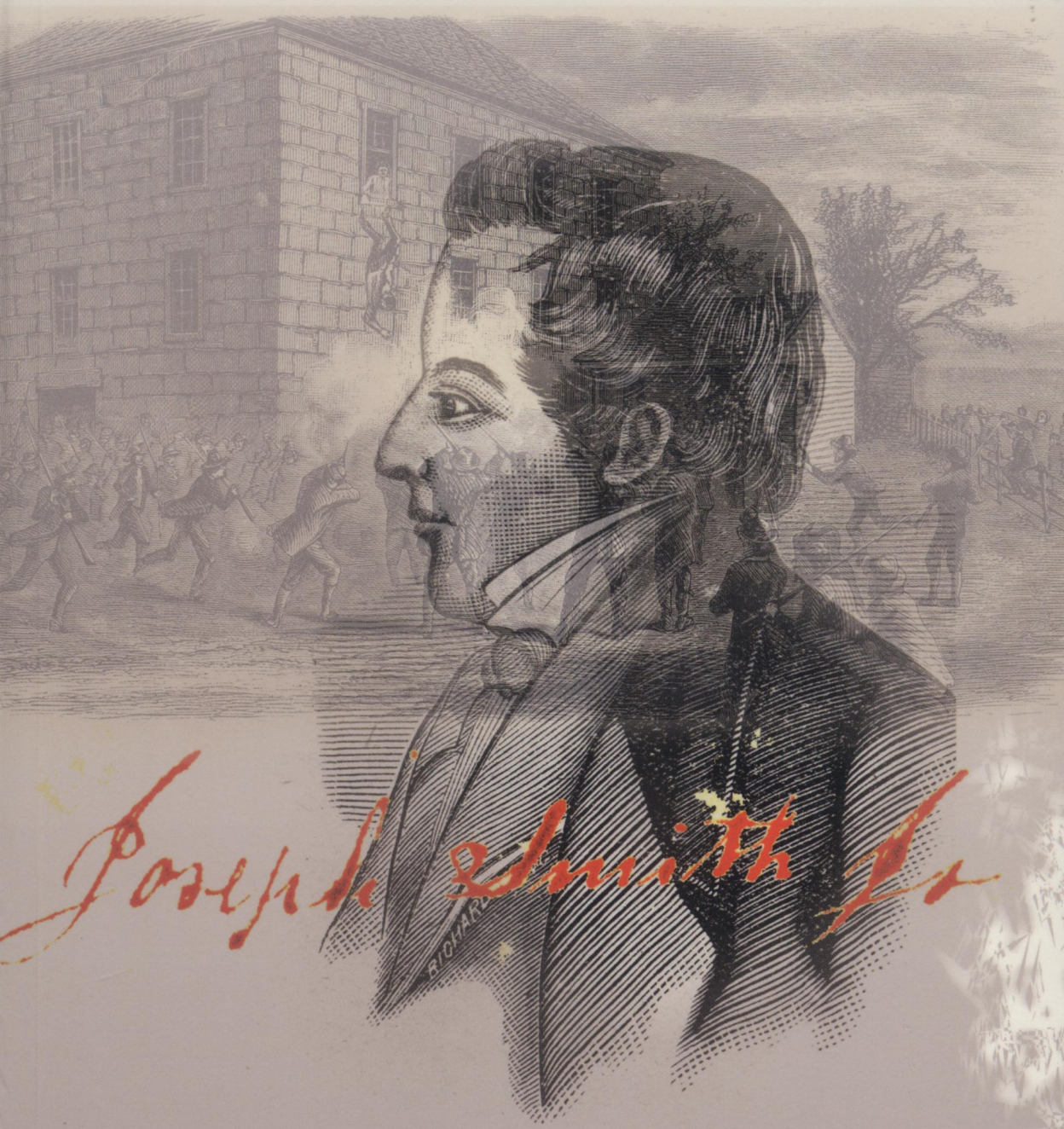
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



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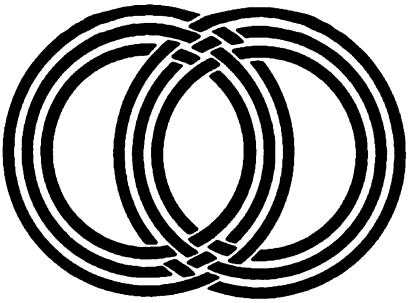

DIALOGUE

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.

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT, VOL. 35, NO. 3, FALL 2002

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Working Documents

The mighty "Black and Blue," *Dialogue Vol. I, No. 1 / Spring 1966* is one of my most cherished possessions. I picked it up years ago in a used bookstore on Center Street in Provo. If I remember correctly, I paid only two dollars for it. I see, as I strum through it now, gobs of yellow highlights and notes in the margins. All my *Dialogues* are like this—working documents, not prissy little things for show.

I thank you and all the past editors of *Dialogue*. Though, by Mormon standards, I may not be holding on to the "Rod" with both hands (most times I'm not holding on at all), I believe your work has helped me to think new thoughts, to grow personal integrity, and to value higher honesty in myself and others.

David L. Hintz
West Jordon, Utah

A "Traditional Mormon" Thanks Gene

The Spring 2002 issue of *Dialogue* (vol. 35, no. 1), in its "Remembering Eugene England" section, contained many stories, images, and remembrances that were heartfelt and deeply moving. To *Dialogue's* immense credit you also included a section called "Encountering Eugene England," which contained three essays written by Gene himself, to remind us of his valuable contribution to Mormon letters. The two sections served to nicely balance the tributes to Eugene England the man with distinctive examples from Eugene's body of work.

I never knew Gene personally. This is perhaps because both my graduate and undergraduate work were done at the university Brigham Young founded, rather than the one that bears his name. Nevertheless, I have often felt that I "knew" Gene through the intelligent, thoughtful, and personal nature of his writing. His family, colleagues, and many friends will, no doubt, continue to cherish and share their personal memories and stories of him. This is as it should be. For myself, however, I know I will continue to return to, and be comforted by, his insightful writing.

It is in this regard that I wish to express my view that the Spring 2002 issue of *Dialogue* contains the most important Mormon essay since Richard Poll's "What the Church Means to People Like Me" was first printed in the Winter 1967 issue. I am speaking of Eugene England's essay "The Weeping God of Mormonism." This seminal work by the Dean of Mormon Essayists, published for the first time posthumously, deserves serious, prayerful study by anyone interested in the future of Mormonism.

In this essay, Eugene illuminates a crisis at the heart of our faith that, until now, has remained hidden. The god of Joseph, Hyrum, and Brigham is under attack by modern neo-orthodox Mormon teachers. If he is not defended immediately and vigorously, he could disappear completely within a generation.

In the centuries following the crucifixion of Christ, the schoolmen gradually changed the essential doctrines of true Christianity. Eventually they created a God that was omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Mormons used to refer to this belief about God as "a mass of confusion." Nevertheless, this same revisionism is happening again and, as before, it is coming from the Church Education System.

I believe Gene has left us with both a warning and a challenge. At peril is the very nature of Mormonism itself. What sort of God do we worship? What sort of God do we preach? Joseph Smith taught that having a correct understanding of God's character and attributes is essential to our salvation. How is it, then, that BYU religion professors can be found preaching a type of God that, when preached by Orson Pratt, was considered by Brigham Young to be heresy?

This essay is required reading. Make copies for everyone you know. Discuss it at dinner. Take copies to your quorum meetings. Post it at work. (Well, maybe I'm getting carried away here, but if you happen to work at BYU, or in the Church Office Building. . .)

As for myself, I will no longer be referring to myself (using Richard Poll's descriptive term that helped me with my self-definition for many years) as a "Liahona" Mormon (as opposed to an "Iron Rod" Mormon). I will now be describing myself as a "Traditional Mormon" in contrast to the growing (and, in my mind, frightening) trend toward "Evangelical Mormonism." I invite all *Dialogue* readers to join with me in defending the traditional Mormon view of God. And thank you, Gene, for once again pointing out something important that we ought to look at more closely.

Brian Ferguson
North Salt Lake, Utah

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Martin Harris: The Kirtland Years, 1831-1870

H. Michael Marquardt

MARTIN HARRIS IS KNOWN for being a Book of Mormon scribe, witness, and financier. However, little is known about his activities while living in Kirtland, Ohio, for over thirty-five years. This article will present what is known about Harris during the Kirtland years. Included will be his relationship to other Restoration churches under the leadership of James J. Strang (including Harris's mission to England), William E. McLellin, and so forth. A brief background of Harris's life in New York will also be given to help understand his place in the early life of the church.

NEW YORK SEEKER

Martin Harris was born on 18 May 1783 at Eastown, New York. He was a well-established farmer of Palmyra, Ontario (later Wayne) County, New York. At the age of twenty-six, Harris married his cousin Lucy; he was nine years her senior. They had a family of four known children. He became a close associate of Joseph Smith, Jr., whom he assisted financially, and he acted as a scribe to Smith.[1] He also financed the publication of the Book of Mormon by mortgaging his farm. As an early convert of Mormonism, he was received into fellowship by baptism on the day the church was organized. Due to the time and resources spent on his new religion, Harris became partially separated from his wife, Lucy.

Orsamus Turner, a printer in New York, described Harris thusly:

> Martin Harris, was a farmer of Palmyra, the owner of a good farm, and an honest worthy citizen; but especially given to religious enthusiasm, new creeds, the more extravagant the better; a monomaniac, in fact.[2]

---

1. See Ronald W. Walker, "Martin Harris: Mormonism's Early Convert," *Dialogue* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 29-43.

2. O[rasmus] Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase* (Rochester, N. Y.: William Alling, 1851), 215.

Harris resided on Palmyra Road, District 9, from 1808-1822. He was the overseer of his district for the years 1811, 1813-15, and 1820. From 1826 to 1829, he is listed in district 13 as the overseer for 1825, 1827, and 1829.[3]

In 1870, Martin recounted his early ideas about religion, dating back to about 1818:

> I was Inspired of the Lord & [taught] of the Spirit that I Should not Join [any] Church although I Was [anxiously] Sought for by [many] of the Sectarians . . .all of the Sects cal[l]ed me Bro[ther] because the Lord had Enli[gh]tened me[.] the Spirit told me to join None of the churches for none had Authority from the Lord.[4]

Although Harris joined no church at that time, he was friendly to many. G. W. Stodard, who had been acquainted with Harris for about 30 years, said: "Yet he was a public professor of some religion. He was first an [orthodox] Quaker, then a Universalist, next a Restorationer, then a Baptist, next a Presbyterian, and then a Mormon."[5]

A statement by 51 citizens of Palmyra said:

> Martin Harris was a man who had acquired a handsome property, and in matters of business his word was considered good; but on moral and religious subjects, he was perfectly visionary—sometimes advocating one sentiment, and sometimes another.[6]

Harris became the last of the three witnesses to the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon emerged, thereby adding his name to the religious testimony of its authenticity. Lucy Mack Smith recalled Harris's behavior after seeing the plates of gold:

> Martin Harris particularly seemed [altogether] unable to give vent to his feelings in words[. H]e said I have now seen an angel from Heaven who has of a surety testified of the truth of all that I have heard concerning the record

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3. Palmyra Town Records, microfilm #812, 869, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

4. "Testimony of Martin Harris Written by my hand from the Mouth of Martin Harris," 4 Sept. 1870, Edward Stevenson Collection, Archives of the Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS archives).

5. Statement of G. W. Stodard, 28 Nov. 1833, in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed* (Painesville [Ohio]: Author, 1834), 261. Methodism could be added to Stodard's list. Stephen Harding wrote concerning Martin Harris: "In early life he had been brought up a Quaker, then took to Methodism as more congenial to his nature" (Stephen S. Harding to Thomas Gregg, Feb. 1882, in Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* [New York: John B. Alden, 1890], 37). Harding was born in 1808.

6. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 261, 4 Dec. 1833.

> and my eyes have beheld him[.] I have also looked upon the plates and handled them with my hands and can testify of the same to the whole world.[7]

At the time of the Book of Mormon's publication in 1830, Harris requested a commandment from Joseph Smith, who then commanded Martin repeatedly in his various duties.[8] On 6 April 1830, Harris was baptized by Oliver Cowdery at Manchester, New York.[9]

Trips to Kirtland, Ohio

On 22 February 1831, Joseph Smith wrote a letter to Harris, requesting him to "bring or cause to be brought all the books [of Mormon]" to Kirtland, Ohio.[10] About 9 March 1831, Harris left Palmyra for Kirtland.[11] Martin Harris was forty-seven when he arrived at Painesville, Ohio, on Saturday, 12 March 1831, bringing with him a large number of Books of Mormon.[12] Harris's eccentric personality was immediately noted in the local paper:

> He immediately planted himself in the bar-room of the hotel. . . .He told all about the gold plates, Angels, Spirits, and Jo Smith.—He had seen and handled them all, by the power of God! . . .He was very flippant, talking fast and loud, in order that others could not interpose an opinion counter to him. Every idea that he advanced, he knew to be absolutely true, as he said, by

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7. Lucy Mack Smith, preliminary manuscript, "History of Lucy Smith," LDS archives. Not included in *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: Published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, 1853), 140. See Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 455.

8. See D&C (LDS version) 19:13, 15, 20, 21, 25-26, 28; and D&C (RLDS version) 18:2f-g, k-l, 3a-b, 4a, [26-31], March 1830.

9. H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 157-58.

10. Smith to Harris, 22 Feb. 1831, handwriting of Sidney Rigdon, signature of Joseph Smith, Jr., LDS archives; see *The Essential Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 11. A letter by citizens of Canandaigua, New York, written in Jan. 1832, reported that "Martin Harris lately testified on a trial which related to the work of printing and publishing the Book that he had sent 2300 copies of it to the west" (copy of letter to Rev. Ancil Beach, Jan. 1832, in the Walter Hubbell Papers, Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Libraries, Princeton, New Jersey).

11. According to a local letter: "Martin Harris, the head man here as it respects property, left here [Palmyra] a few days ago on a sojourn to your country" (letter from Palmyra, 12 March 1831, published 22 March 1831 in the *Telegraph*, Painesville, Ohio).

12. *Geauga Gazette* 3 (15 March 1831), Painesville, Ohio. The *Gazette* reported that Harris "publickly declared that the 'Golden Bible' is the Anti-masonic Bible, and that all who do not believe in it will be damned. He says he has seen Jesus Christ." See Dan Vogel, "Mormonism's 'Anti-Masonic Bible,'" *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 9 (1989): 17-30.

> the spirit and power of God. . .declaring, that all who believed the new Bible would see Christ within fifteen years, and all who did not would absolutely be destroyed and dam'd [damned].[13]

A short time later, Harris traveled back to Palmyra and sold his farm of 151 acres to Thomas Lakey for $3,000.[14] On 3 May 1831, Harris signed over certain personal items into the hands of Thomas Lakey, including "300 Books of Mormon to be sold for $1.25 & account to the said Harris $1.00 for each copy."[15] The Wayne (Palmyra) Sentinel newspaper mentions Harris leaving Palmyra for the promised land of Ohio:

> Several families, numbering about fifty souls, took up their line of march from this town [Palmyra] last week for the "promised land," among who was Martin Harris, one of the original believers in the "Book of Mormon." Mr. Harris was among the early settlers of this town, and has ever borne the character of an honorable and upright man, and an obliging and benevolent neighbor. He had secured to himself by honest industry a respectable fortune—and has left a large circle of acquaintances and friends to pity his delusion.[16]

Harris arrived in Kirtland in time to attend the 3 June 1831 conference, when the "High Priesthood" was introduced to the church. Martin was ordained to this order by Lyman Wight.[17] About two weeks later, Harris traveled with Joseph Smith and others to Missouri. Ezra Booth, who also went to Missouri, wrote: "Martin Harris is what may be called a great talker, an extravagant boaster; so much so, that he renders himself disagreeable to many of this society."[18] Harris returned to Kirtland by 10 October 1831, where he attended a church conference with Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and W. W. Phelps.[19]

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13. *Telegraph* 2 (15 March 1831): 3, emphasis omitted. The *Telegraph* had earlier published that Oliver Cowdery proclaimed "destruction upon the world within a few years" ([16 Nov. 1830]: 3). The *Ohio Star* reported that the missionaries "predict the end of the world in 15 years" (*Ohio Star* 1 [9 Dec. 1830], Ravenna, Ohio). The article also mentioned that David Whitmer and Martin Harris were with Oliver Cowdery. This is incorrect, since Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer, Jr., were the missionaries who accompanied Cowdery to Ohio.

14. Deed recorded in Deed Liber 10:515-16, Wayne County, Lyons, New York.

15. Palmyra Library vertical files, Thomas Lakey's "Record of Court Proceedings 1827-1830," in King's Daughters Library, Palmyra, New York. The list of articles "left in the hands of Thomas Lakey" was signed by Martin Harris.

16. *Wayne Sentinel* 8 (27 May 1831): 3, emphasis omitted.

17. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 6-7.

18. Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, 2 Oct. 1831 in *Ohio Star* 2 (20 Oct. 1831): 3.

19. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 15.

Nancy Towle, an evangelist, visited Kirtland in October and talked with William W. Phelps, Martin Harris, Sidney Rigdon, and Joseph Smith. Harris told her: "I have authority to say to you—You shall not enjoy, the comforts of God's grace, until you believe that book [the Book of Mormon]. . . .I should be willing to bear, all the sins of the human family, beyond the grave—if these things, are not so!"[20]

At another conference in Orange Township, Ohio, on 25 October, "Br. Martin Harris said that he was anxious that all should be saved &c. also read two verses in the book of Revelations, also covenanted to give all for Christ's sake."[21] On 12 November 1831 at Hiram, Ohio, a revelation was given through Joseph Smith regarding the establishment of the "Literary Firm," an organization that would oversee the publication of Mormon books, newspapers, etc. Harris along with other brethren were appointed and ordained "to be stewards over the revelations and commandments. . . .[T]his is their business in the church of God, to manage them and the concerns thereof, yea, the benefits thereof."[22]

During the years 1831-1837, Harris did not reside in Kirtland most of the time. Of the seven times he is known to have been absent, he visited Palmyra five times.

Traveler and Missionary

In the spring of 1832, Martin Harris traveled to see Newel K. Whitney, who had broken his leg and was staying in Greenville, Indiana. In a letter to his wife, Emma, Joseph Smith wrote: "I would inform you that Brother Martin has arrived here. . . .Martin arrived on [Saturday] the Same week he left Chagrin. . . .(martin will come with us)."[23]

In September 1832, Harris, who was known for his prophetic predictions, wrote the following two statements for a friend, "who placed them upon the wall of his office":

> Within four years from September 1832, there will not be one wicked person left in the United States; that the righteous will be gathered to Zion, [Missouri,] and that there will be no President over these United States after that time. MARTIN HARRIS.

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20. Nancy Towle, *Vicissitudes Illustrated, in the Experience of Nancy Towle, in Europe and America* (Charleston: Printed for the authoress by James L. Burges, 1832), 144.

21. Cannon and Cook, Far West Record, 21.

22. D&C (LDS version) 70:3, 5; D&C (RLDS version) 70:1b-c. See also Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 31-32.

23. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, 6 June 1832, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois, in Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, revised edition (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 264-65.

> I do hereby assert and declare that in four years from the date hereof, every sectarian and religious denomination in the United States, shall be broken down, and every Christian shall be gathered unto the Mormonites, and the rest of the human race shall perish. If these things do not take place, I will hereby consent to have my hand separated from my body. MARTIN HARRIS.[24]

A little later, Martin Harris and his brother Emer left Kirtland to do missionary work in Pennsylvania and New York.[25] Together they baptized eighty-two new members as of 7 May 1833.[26] Harris then took a short trip to Palmyra where he sold some property.

Church Experience

Harris became a member of the "United Firm" (a business partnership of church leaders organized to obtain personal revenue and to assist the Mormon church in financial matters) by 25 June 1833. On this day, he signed a letter with the church presidency addressed to Edward Partridge regarding the city center of Zion and the temples that were to be built there.[27]

Later that year, in December, while Martin Harris was at Ira Ames's home, "we were impressed to get up and go to Joseph's house. On reaching his house we found Joseph and Oliver Cowdery at breakfast. Oliver said to us 'Good morning Brethren, we have just received news from heaven,' and pointed to some sheets of paper lying on the table. They had been up all night receiving and writing the revelation. And Emma had just got breakfast for them. It was the revelation given in December 1833 on the 255 [235] Page of the 1st Edition of Doctrine and Covenants[.] Martin Harris took it up and read it to us."[28]

Around this same time, an incident occurred which provides us with another Harris reference. Philastus Hurlbut, a former church member, wrote to Isaac Hale of Harmony, Pennsylvania. Hale, who was the father-in-law of Joseph Smith, replied to Hurlbut. William Hine recalled

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24. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 14.

25. *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (Feb. 1833): 70, Independence, Mo.

26. Emer Harris to Brethren in Brownhelm, Ohio, 7 May 1833, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, as cited in Madge Harris Tuckett and Belle Harris Wilson, *The Martin Harris Story: with biographies of Emer Harris and Dennison Lott Harris* (Provo, Utah: Vintage Books, 1983), 55.

27. Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Rigdon, F. G. Williams, and Martin Harris to Edward Partridge, 25 June 1833, LDS archives.

28. "Journal and Record of the Life & Family of Ira Ames," microfilm #A-311, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah. Period covered: 22 Sept. 1804 - 15 Jan. 1869; commenced writing circa 1858. Original in LDS archives. See D&C (LDS version) 101; D&C (RLDS version) 98, 16 Dec. 1833.

that he "heard Hurlbut lecture in the Presbyterian Church in Kirtland. . . .Hurlbut read Hale's letter in the lecture. Martin Harris said Hale was old and blind and not capable of writing it."[29] Later, on 4 February 1834, E. D. Howe wrote to Isaac Hale and mentioned a letter written by Hale to Hurlbut, postmarked 22 December 1833. Howe said, "Your letter has already been pronounced a forgery by the Mormons, who say you are blind and cannot write, even your name." Hale replied to Howe's request with an affidavit that was published in the Susquehanna Register previous to Howe's publication in *Mormonism Unvailed*. Nathaniel Lewis stated that Isaac Hale was still capable of writing, and Isaac's son Alva said that "the letter sent by his father, Isaac Hale, to Dr. P. Hurlbut was written by Jesse Hale."[30] On 12 February 1834, charges were presented by Sidney Rigdon against Harris before a council of high priests and elders relating to Harris's claim that Joseph Smith drank liquor prior to translating the Book of Mormon. Harris "confessed that his mind was darkened and that he had said many things inadvertently" and "promised to do better." The minutes of this meeting state:

> After the council had received much good instruction from Bro. Joseph, the case of Bro. Martin Harris against whom certain charges were preferred by Bro. Sidney Rigdon. One was that he told [Esquire] A. C. Russell that Joseph drank too much liquor when he was translating the Book of Mormon and that he wrestled with many men and threw them &c. Another charge was, that he exalted himself above bro. Joseph, in that he said bro. Joseph knew not the contents of the book of Mormon until it was translated. Bro. Martin said he did not tell [Esquire] Russell that bro. Joseph drank too much liquor while translating the book of Mormon, but this thing took place before the book of Mormon was translated. He confessed that his mind was darkened and that he had said many things inadvertently calculating to wound the feelings of his brother and promised to do better. The council forgave him and gave him much good advice.[31]

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29. William R. Hine affidavit, circa March 1885, *Naked Truths About Mormonism* 1 (Jan. 1888): 2, Oakland, California, original publication in Yale University Library. The first letter written by Isaac Hale has not been located.

30. "Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 (1 May 1834): 1, Montrose, Pennsylvania. Isaac Hale's affidavit was also printed in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 262-66.

31. Kirtland Council Minute Book, 28-29, LDS archives, typed copy. For Joseph Smith's indulgence in intoxicating liquor, see statements by three Manchester, New York, neighbors: David Stafford (Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 249), Barton Stafford (ibid., 250), and Joshua Stafford (ibid., 258). Pennsylvania resident Levi Lewis, who lived at Harmony when Martin Harris was a scribe for Smith in 1828, said he saw young Joseph "intoxicated at three different times while he was composing the Book of Mormon" (*Susquehanna Register* 9 [1 May 1834]: 1; Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 268).

Member of Kirtland High Council

Five days later, on 17 February 1834, Joseph Smith organized the church's Kirtland High Council. Harris was chosen a member. He attended some meetings but was often out of town, as he made frequent trips to Palmyra. In May 1834, Martin donated $47 for the benefit of Zion.[32] Joseph Smith organized a group known as Zion's Camp to march to Missouri and help the saints who had been forced out of Jackson County. Harris was the only one of the three witnesses to go with this group. He left Kirtland with Zion's Camp, traveling through the states of Indiana and Illinois, to Clay County, Missouri. Although the group's objective was not accomplished, a presidency and high council was organized in Zion (Missouri).

The Far West Record contains brief minutes for a 7 July 1834 meeting held at the house of Lyman Wight in Clay County, Missouri: "Br. Joseph Smith, jr. then proceeded and ordained the three Presidents, David Whitmer as President and William W. Phelps & John Whitmer assistants"[33] It was at this meeting that David Whitmer was ordained successor to Joseph Smith. The minutes do not state that Smith ordained David Whitmer as a prophet, seer, revelator, and translator to the church.[34]

Besides Martin Harris, other converts such as John Tanner were wealthy and contributed to church projects. Tanner, who arrived at Kirtland on 17 January 1835, loaned Joseph Smith $2,000, and the Temple Committee was given $13,000 in merchandise.[35]

On 14-15 February 1835, nine apostles were ordained by the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon (Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris).[36] Harris then left Kirtland, as he was not at the meeting of 21 February when Parley P. Pratt was ordained an apostle. Pratt received his ordination from Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer.

A few months later, Jonathan Hale, Thomas B. Marsh, and David W.

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32. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Journal, 1832-1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992), 2:33.

33. Cannon and Cook, Far West Record, 72.

34. Reed C. Durham, Jr., and Steven H. Health jointly wrote, "It should be perfectly clear that in July 1834, to both the Lord and Joseph Smith, David Whitmer was to succeed Joseph as the President of the Church" (*Succession in the Church* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970], 10). Oliver Cowdery was later ordained Assistant President in the presidency of the church, next to Joseph Smith (Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:24; 2:36).

35. Kirtland Council Minute Book, 83, LDS archives; "Sketch of An Elder's Life," *Scraps of Biography* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883), 12.

36. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., revised and enlarged (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992), 90.

Patten went "to Palmyra in the night went Elde[r] Ma[r]tin Harris to [breakfast] thence to the hill Cumorah all went on the hill and offered up our thanks to the most high God for the record of the Nephites and other blessings we went about in the Neighborhood from house to house to inquire the Character of Joseph Smith jr. previous to his receiving the Book of Mormon. The amount was that his Character was as good as young men in General. this was on the 30 day of May 1835."[37] Harris was still in Palmyra in July when Edward Partridge "lodged with br[other] Martin Harris."[38]

Soon after Harris returned to Kirtland, he received a patriarchal blessing from the hands of Joseph Smith, Sr., church patriarch on 27 August 1835. The blessing stated: "Thou hast left thy family and house for the gospel's sake, and given all for the purpose of spreading the work of thy God: for this thou shalt be blessed and rewarded an hundred fold; yea, thou hast left thy family and consecrated them unto the Lord." He was also told "if thou desirest it with all thy heart and art faithful, thou shalt yet teach them, even thy wife that she may be saved in the day of eternity; but if not they shall be removed from the earth, and their place be supplied with another, and thy heart shall be satisfied, for thou shalt raise up seed unto the Lord to praise him in his kingdom."[39]

Harris returned to Palmyra and sold property on 13 October 1835; the document was co-signed by Lucy Harris.[40] Although still separated in their marriage, they nevertheless managed to sell property for revenue. It was recorded in Joseph Smith's journal that "Elder [Martin] Harris also returned this morning [14 Dec. 1835] from Palmyra N[ew] York."[41]

In January 1836 Martin arrived at Joseph Smith's house, where Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and John Corrill were nearly finished purifying their bodies with pure water and whiskey, perfumed with cinnamon,

37. Jonathan Harriman Hale Journal, LDS Archives.

38. Edward Partridge Journal, entry of 7 July 1835, typed copy, LDS archives.

39. Patriarchal Blessing Book, 2:33, LDS archives. This is a duplicate copy made by Thomas Bullock from volume 1.

40. Deed Liber 18:437-39, Wayne County, Lyons, New York. See also Deed Liber 22:351 (9 April 1833) and 13:2-3 (19 April 1833), land transactions of Martin and Lucy Harris, April 1833.

41. Joseph Smith Journal, 14 Dec. 1835, in Jessee, Papers of Joseph Smith, 2:104. A third-person account reports: "Eld[e]r. [Martin] Harris also returned this morning from visiting his family who live in Palmyra N.Y." (ibid., 1:160-61). William W. Phelps wrote, "Martin Harris has just arrived from Palmyra, New York; he states that the winter in that State is severe and has been for about four weeks" (W. W. Phelps to Sally Phelps, 18 Dec. 1835 in Bruce A. Van Orden, ed., "Writing to Zion: The William W. Phelps Kirtland Letters (1835-1836)," *BYU Studies* 33 [1993]: 571).

that they might be clean before the Lord. Cowdery wrote: "bro. Martin Harris came in and was also washed."[42] Apparently Harris also attended the dedication of Kirtland Temple on 27 March 1836, where he sat with the Kirtland High Council.

Family tradition has it that Martin's wife, Lucy, died in Palmyra in the summer of 1836 at the age of 44.[43] There is no known record that they ever divorced. That same fall, on 1 November 1836, Harris married Caroline Young (born 17 May 1816). She was a daughter of John Young (brother of Brigham Young), and was twenty years old when she married Harris, who was fifty-three at the time.[44]

Brigham Young's history states that in March 1837, he "travelled as far as Canandaigua [New York], where we stopped two nights and one day. While here I visited Martin Harris."[45] Harris, at Palmyra, sold property on 6 May 1837 with his wife Caroline.[46]

Dissention in Kirtland

Internal strife arose in the church early in 1837, stemming from problems with the Mormons' financial institution, the "Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company." On 9 April 1837, while in the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith "proclaimed that Severe Judgment awaited those Characters that professed to be his friends & friends to humanity & the Kirtland Safety Society But had turned tr[a]itors & opposed the Currency & its friends which has given power in to the hands of the enemy & oppressed the poor Saints."[47] Harris had no stock in the Kirtland Anti-Banking institution, but he may have been influenced by its failure.[48]

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42. Oliver Cowdery's Sketch Book, postscript to entry of 16 Jan. 1836, LDS archives, as cited in Leonard J. Arrington, "Oliver Cowdery's Kirtland, Ohio, 'Sketch Book,'" *BYU Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 416. It is probable that Martin Harris also received his anointing in 1836.

43. *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 26 (July 1935):108.

44. Application for Marriage License, 1 Nov. 1836, Geauga County, Ohio, microfilm #873,464, Family History Library, Salt Lake City. The application was signed by John Young, Caroline's father. Except for the birth of the Harris children, nothing is known of Caroline Young Harris's life in Kirtland.

45. Elden J. Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801-1844* (Salt Lake City: Elden J. Watson, 1968), 18, entry for 13 March 1837.

46. Deed Liber 22:218-19, Wayne County, Lyons, New York.

47. Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 1:138.

48. On the Kirtland Bank, see D. Paul Sampson and Larry T. Wimmer, "The Kirtland Safety Society: The Stock Ledger Book and the Bank Failure," *BYU Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 427-36, and Milton V. Backman, Jr., comp., *A Profile of Latter-day Saints of Kirtland, Ohio and Members of Zion's Camp* 1830-1839 (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1982), 121.

John A. Clark wrote concerning the Kirtland banking enterprise: "Ultimately this speculation contributed to sever Harris from [Joseph] Smith and [Sidney] Rigdon. . . .Harris, in one of his late visits to Palmyra, remarked to a friend of mine, that Jo Smith had now become a complete wretch, and that he had no confidence either in him or Rigdon."[49]

On 29 May 1837, Harris was back in Kirtland, where the High Council met in the Kirtland Temple. Charges had been filed by five church members against Presidents David Whitmer and Frederick G. Williams, Elders Lyman E. Johnson and Parley P. Pratt (of the Council of the Twelve Apostles), and Elder Warren Parrish, a seventy. The council decided it could not try Presidents Whitmer and Williams, and they were discharged. In the afternoon, Presidents Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery presided. High counselor "Martin Harris then motioned that Prest. F G Williams take a seat with the Presidents." So Williams now presided with Rigdon and Cowdery. Apostle Parley Pratt objected to being tried by either Sidney Rigdon or Joseph Smith. Rigdon then said he could not proceed to try the case and left the stand. After some remarks, Oliver Cowdery also left the stand. Frederick Williams, the remaining president, said he "should be unwilling to preside in the case and left the stand." The minutes kept by Warren Cowdery read, "The council and assembly then dispersed in confusion."[50]

On 23 July 1837, Joseph Smith received a revelation for Thomas B. Marsh, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

> Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph [Smith, Jr.]. . . .Behold vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth. . . .And upon my house [Kirtland Temple] shall it begin and from my house shall it go forth saith the Lord. First among those among you saith the Lord; who have professed to know my name and have not known me and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house saith the Lord.[51]

A conference met on 3 September 1837 in the Kirtland Temple, where objections were made to the high council positions of John Johnson,

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49. John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (Philadelphia: W. J. & J. K. Simon, 1842), 349.

50. High Council Minutes of 29 May 1837 in Kirtland Council Minute Book, 226-30. Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal: "The Presidents withdrew. The council closed without transacting business" (Wilford Woodruff's Journal 1:148). On this date, three statements were made regarding charges by Warren Parrish (against Sidney Rigdon), by Apostles Lyman E. Johnson and Orson Pratt (against Joseph Smith, Jr.) and by Apostle Luke Johnson (against Joseph Smith, Sr.). (Copy in Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.) These charges are in the same handwriting and are evidently copies made from the originals.

51. Scriptory Book of Joseph Smith, see Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:276-78; D&C (LDS version)112:15, 24-26; D&C (RLDS version) 105:6b, 9b-10.

Joseph Coe, Martin Harris, and Joseph Kingsbury.[52] John Corrill wrote about these events:

> During their mercantile and banking operations they not only indulged in pride, but also suffered jealousies to arise among them, and several persons dissented from the church, and accused the leaders of the church with bad management, selfishness, seeking for riches, honor, and dominion, [tyrannizing] over the people, and striving constantly after power and property. On the other hand, the leaders of the church accused the dissenters with dishonesty, want of faith, and righteousness, wicked in their intentions, guilty of crimes, such as stealing, lying, encouraging the making of counterfeit money, &c.; and this strife or opposition arose to a great height, so that, instead of pulling together as brethren, they tried every way in their power, seemingly, to destroy each other; their enemies from without rejoiced at this, and assisted the dissenters what they could, until [Joseph] Smith and [Sidney Rigdon] finally were obliged to leave Kirtland, and, with their families, came to Far West, in March or April 1838.[53]

Thomas B. Marsh wrote to fellow apostle Wilford Woodruff:

> [I]t seems that [Warren] Parrish, J[ohn]. F. Boynton, Luke Johnson, Joseph Coe, and some others, united together for the overthrow of the church. President [Joseph] Smith, and his company, returned [to Kirtland], on, or about the 10th of December [1837]; soon after which this dissenting band, openly, and publicly, renounced the church of Christ, of Latter Day Saints, and claimed themselves to be the old standard; called themselves the church of Christ, excluded that of Saints, and set at naught Br[other]. Joseph [Smith], and the whole church, denounced them as heretics.[54]

During the week of 24-30 December 1837, twenty-eight members, including Martin Harris, were cut off from the church or excluded (excommunicated) by the High Council of Kirtland. It is not known if any of these church members were present at this meeting. According to John Smith, in a letter to his son, George A. Smith:

> The spiritual condition at this time is gloomy also. I called the High Council together last week and laid before them the case of dissenters; 28 persons

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52. Kirtland Council Minute Book, 234-38. A record of this event also appears in a letter copied into the Scriptory Book of Joseph Smith (Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:217-19). Apparently, Joseph C. Kingsbury reconciled with the church at this time.

53. John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* (St. Louis: Printed for the Author, 1839), 27. Smith arrived in Far West, Missouri on 14 March 1838 (Jessee, Papers of Joseph Smith 2:213).

54. Marsh to Woodruff, no date, in Elders' Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1 (July 1838): 36-37, Far West, Missouri.

were, upon mature discussion, cut off from the Church; the leaders were Cyrus Smalling, Joseph Coe, Martin Harris, Luke S. Johnson[,] John F. Boynton and W[arren]. W. Parrish. We have cut off between 40 and 50 from the Church since you left.[55]

On 7 January 1838, Joseph Smith received a revelation for Edward Partridge instructing: "[L]et my people be aware of [dissenters] among them, lest the enemy have power over them; Awake my shepherds and warn my people! for behold the wolf[56] cometh to destroy them,—receive him not."[57] Five days later (12 January 1838), a revelation to the church presidency said: "Thus Saith the Lord Let the presidency of my Church take their families as soon as it is practicable and a door is open for them and [move] unto the west [Far West] as fast as the way is made pla[in] before their faces and let their hearts be comforted for I will be with them."[58] Joseph Smith left Kirtland at ten o'clock that night.[59]

A Trustee in the Church of Christ

Shortly afterward, a notice was posted on the Kirtland Temple by these dissenters, calling for a meeting of the "Church of Christ." In accordance with Ohio law, trustees were chosen and the original church name was incorporated, with Joseph Coe, Martin Harris, and Cyrus Smalling named as trustees. The records of Geauga County reported:

State of Ohio } Be it known that before me Warren Geauga County ss. } A. Cowdery a Justice of the Peace in and for Kirtland Township in said County personally appeared Joseph Coe, Martin Harris & Cyrus Smalling and took the following oath to wit; You and each of you do swear in the presence of Almighty God, that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of Ohio, and will faithfully discharge your duties as Trustees of the Church of Christ in Kirtland township in said County to the best of your abilities Kirtland Jany 18th. 1838. W. A. Cowdery J. P.

State of Ohio } ss. To the Clerk of the Court of Common Geauga County } Pleas in said County. We the undersigned Trustees of the Church of Christ

55. Letter by John Smith, Kirtland, Ohio, to George A. Smith, 1 Jan. 1838, in Journal History of the Church, LDS archives.

56. David W. Patten stated on 5 February 1838 that the wolf was "the dissenters in Kirtland" (Cannon and Cook, Far West Record, 138).

57. Manuscript in LDS archives. See H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 284.

58. Manuscript in LDS archives. See Marquardt, Joseph Smith Revelations, 286.

59. B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959), 3:1.

do certify under our hands & seals that we do recognize the name of the Church of Christ and that the above proceedings, have been had, and said Church is situated in Kirtland Township in said County.

Joseph Coe [Seal]
Martin Harris [Seal]
Cyrus Smalling [Seal]
Kirtland Jany 18. 1838. [60]

Hepzibah (Hepsy) Richards wrote her brother, Willard Richards, concerning the events occurring in Kirtland:

> A large number have dissented from the body of the church and are very violent in their opposition to the President [presidency, viz., Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Rigdon and Hyrum Smith] and all who uphold them. They have organized a church and appointed a meeting in the house [Kirtland Temple] next sabbath. Say they will have it, if it is by the shedding of blood. They have the keys already.
>
> The printing-office has been attached on a judgment that [Grandison] Newel held against the Presidents of K[irtland] money. Last monday it was sold at auction into the hands of Mr. Millican [Nathaniel Milliken], one of the dissenters. At one o[']clock the night following cousin Mary waked me, and said that Kirtland was all in flames. It proved to be the Printing-office—the fire was then in its height and in one hour it was consumed with all its contents. The Temple and other buildings badly scorched. Tuesday eve a meeting was held and a patrol consisting of 21 men[,] 3 for each night in the week[,] chosen to guard the city to prevent further destruction by fire. A part of these men are members of the church—a part dissenters.[61]

Benjamin F. Johnson wrote: "The printing office and material which our enemies thought to use to bolster up a church organization opposed to the Prophet was set on fire by Brother Lyman R. Sherman and destroyed."[62]

Caroline and Martin Harris's first child was born at Kirtland that same January. Their family eventually included seven children, two of whom died in their infancy. Their children were: Martin, Jr. (28 Jan.

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60. Geauga County, Ohio, Execution Docket 1831-1835, microfilm # 1,289,257, item 1, Family History Library. This entry was located by Lachlan Mckay, director of the Kirtland Temple Historic Center, Kirtland, Ohio, in 1996.

61. Hepzibah Richards to Willard Richards, 18-19 Jan. 1838, original LDS archives as quoted in Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, eds., *Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982), 71.

62. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), 29-30.

1838), Caroline (circa 1839, died by 1850 census), Julia (29 April 1842), John (11 July 1845), Sarah (circa 1849, died by 1860 census), Solomon (1 Dec. 1854), and Ida May (27 May 1856). All the children were born in Kirtland, except Ida May, who was born in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.[63]

Stephen Burnett, an elder who had done missionary work for the church, wrote to Lyman E. Johnson that after some consideration he was about to leave the church, "when I came to hear Martin Harris state in public that he never saw the plates with his natural eyes only in vision or imagination, neither Oliver [Cowdery] nor David [Whitmer] & also that the eight witnesses never saw them & hesitated to sign that instrument [their testimony] for that reason, but were persuaded to do it, the last pedestal gave way, in my view our foundations was sapped & the entire superstructure fell a heap of ruins."[64]

Break with Warren Parrish

On 25 March 1838, in the Kirtland Temple, Stephen Burnett "renounced the Book of Mormon." He was "followed by W[arren]. Par[r]ish[,] Luke Johnson & John Boynton all of who concurred with me, after we were done speaking M[artin] Harris arose & said he was sorry for any man who rejected the Book of Mormon for he knew it was true, he said he had hefted the plates repeatedly in a box with only a tablecloth or a handkerchief over them, but he never saw them only as he saw a city through a mountain. And said that he never should have told that the testimony of the eight [witnesses] was false, if it had not been picked out of [h]im but should have let it passed as it was."[65]

George A. Smith wrote:

> Last Sabbath [Sunday, 25 March] a division arose among the Parrish party about the Book of Mormon, John F. Boyington, W[arren]. Parrish, Luke Johnson and others said it was nonsense. Martin Harris then bore testimony of its truth and said all would be damned, if they rejected it. Cyrus Smalling, Joseph Coe and others declared his testimony was true.[66]

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63. Family Group Record, Family History Library; 1840, 1850, 1860, U.S. Census Records, Kirtland, Lake County, Ohio.

64. Stephen Burnett to Lyman E. Johnson, 15 April 1838, Orange Township, Geauga County, Ohio. See note 65.

65. Ibid. On 24 May 1838, a copy of the original letter was made. This copy was then recopied in 1839 into a letterbook. The above is from the 1839 copy, located in Joseph Smith Letterbook 2: 64-66, LDS Archives. This document contains copies of letters from 20 April 1837 to 8 Feb. 1843, with a few letters from other years. See also Warren Parrish to E. Holmes, 11 Aug. 1838, in *The Evangelist* 6 (1 Oct. 1838): 226, Carthage, Ohio.

66. George A. Smith to Josiah Flemming, 30 March 1838, Kirtland, Journal History of the Church. Luke S. Johnson subsequently rejoined the church in 1846.

Nothing is known of Harris's activities from April 1838 to October 1839, but he was clearly involved with the dissenters who accused Smith and Rigdon of failing to lead the saints as men of God. Heber C. Kimball wrote to his wife, Vilate, about Kirtland: "I anticipated meeting the Brethren united and enjoying the blessings of the people of God, but to my sorrow, I found them all broken up and divided into several different parties."[67] On 10 November 1839, Apostle Kimball compared the dissenters of Kirtland "to a parcel of old earthen pots that were cracked in burning, for they were mostly apostates that were living there. Immediately after I returned to the house of Ira Bond; Martin Harris, Cyrus Smalling and others came in and attacked me on what I had been saying, asking me who I referred to in my comparisons; said I, 'to no one in particular, but to anyone that the coat fits.'"[68]

Harris's Fellowship and Rebaptism

However, by 18 July 1840, Martin Harris had returned to the church. Laura Pitkin wrote to Heber C. Kimball:

> Brother Joseph [Smith] received a letter from Kirtland last week. Martin Harris has come into the church. Oliver Cowdery is very friendly and have pro[s]perous times in that place. W. W. Phelps has also written to Brother Joseph, makes a humble confession and wishes to be received into the church.[69]

Harris was evidently received back into the church, because the next year, on 22 May 1841, a conference in Kirtland was held, and the minutes recorded that Martin Harris was again a member of the High Priests Quorum, with only one vote against him.[70] William W. Phelps had also been received back into fellowship by the church in Nauvoo, Illinois, on 19 July 1840.[71]

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67. Kimball to Vilate Kimball, 16 Nov. 1839 as cited in Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 68.

68. From the History of Heber C. Kimball in Helen Mar [Kimball] Whitney, "Life Incidents," *Woman's Exponent* 9 (15 July 1880): 26, as cited in Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman's View: Helen Mar Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), 25-26.

69. Pitkin to Kimball, 18 July [1840], International Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City; published in Kate B. Carter, comp., *Heart Throbs of the West* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1944), 5:382.

70. "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 2 (1 July 1841): 458.

71. Joseph Smith wrote to W. W. Phelps, "Your letter was read to the Saints last Sunday [19 July] and an expression of their feeling was taken, when it was unanimously resolved that W. W. Phelps should be received into fellowship" (Smith to Phelps, 22 July 1840

In June 1841, rumors abounded that a Martin Harris had been murdered near Nauvoo, and many newspapers reported that it was the very same Book of Mormon witness. Assuming that Harris had died, the *Rochester Daily Democrat*, edited by Alvah Strong, published an article about him:

> We have ever regarded Mr. Harris as an honest man. We first became acquainted with him at Palmyra, in the spring of 1828, shortly after the plates from which the Book of Mormon is said to have been translated, were found. . . .Though illiterate and naturally of a superstitious turn of mind, he had long sustained an irreproachable character for probity.[72]

However, the *Painesville Telegraph* reported that Harris "is now, or was two days since, alive and well, at his residence in Kirtland. . . .As to his present relation to the Mormons—Martin Harris believes that the work in its commencement was a genuine work of the Lord, but that Smith, having become worldly and proud, has been forsaken of the Lord, and has become a knave and imposter. He expects that the work will be yet revived, through other instrumentalities. This we had sometime since from Harris himself, and it has been reported to us within the last week by a brother of his."[73]

On 31 October and 1 November 1842, a conference was held at Kirtland, where Elder Lyman Wight of the Council of Twelve was called to the chair. Shortly thereafter, during a spiritual reformation in Kirtland, 203 persons were baptized within a four-day period. On 7 November, Martin Harris was one of those re-baptized: "Twelve persons were baptized yesterday and information has just reached me that Brother Martin Harris has been baptized, and is now on his way home from the water."[74] Jacob Scott wrote three months later, "Martin Harris, one of the 3 Special witnesses, has been baptized and admitted again into the Church; and scores of other Dissenters."[75]

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in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 509-510). The Kirtland conference of 24 May 1841 resolved "that, as W. W. Phelps had been received into standing and fellowship, by the church at Nauvoo, Ill., he be also received into the same standing and fellowship, according to his 'anointing' by the church at Kirtland" (*Times and Seasons* 2 [1 July 1841]: 459, Nauvoo, Illinois).

72. "Martin Harris, The Mormon," *Daily Democrat* 9 (23 June 1841): 2, Rochester, New York.

73. *Painesville Telegraph* 7 (30 June 1841): 3.

74. Justin Brooks to Joseph Smith, 7 Nov. 1842 in Journal History of the Church; see *Times and Seasons* 4 (2 Jan. 1843): 63. The conference minutes recorded, "Lester Brooks was chosen president, Elders John Young and Hiram Kellogg counsellors" (Copy of minutes in Journal History of the Church, 31 Oct. 1842, LDS archives).

75. Scott to Mary Warnock, 28 Feb. 1843, Nauvoo, Illinois, Library-Archives, Community of Christ, (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Independence, Missouri (hereafter RLDS archives).

Believer in Shaker Book

Four separate sources state that Harris soon afterward became a follower of Mother Ann Lee, founder of the Shaker movement (United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming).[76] Harris appears to have been associated with a divine roll or book published in New Hampshire in 1843, titled *A Holy, Sacred and Divine Roll and Book; from the Lord God of Heaven, to the Inhabitants of Earth: Revealed in the United Society at New Lebanon, County of Columbia, State of New-York, United States of America.*[77] Five hundred copies of the book were printed and bound in September 1843.

At that time, most Shakers believed in receiving messages from the spirit world as well as obtaining instructions from Mother Ann Lee.[78] Communications in this sacred book included a holy roll written by John the Revelator and revelations from biblical personages such as Elisha, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, Micah, Noah, and Peter. The publication also contained many testimonies about visitations of angels, who showed the faithful the roll and book. Myra A. Bean stated: "Thus having received much previous knowledge at different times, I have not the least reason to doubt the divine origin of this Sacred Roll and Book; but affirm it to be the true and unalterable word of our Heavenly Father, sent forth upon the earth, by no other means than that of divine inspiration."[79]

Other experiences, such as those at North Union, Ohio, including "communications from the Spirit World, were taken from the mouths of inspired instruments, copied verbatim, who went in vision, and read as

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76. Phineas Young et al. to Brigham Young, 31 Dec. 1844, copied into the Journal History of the Church, LDS archives; *Millennial Star* 9 (15 Nov. 1846): 124; Thomas Colburn to Elder Snow, 2 May 1855, in *St. Louis Luminary* 1 (5 May 1855): 94; and *Public Discussion of the Issues Between the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Christ (Disciples) Held in Kirtland, Ohio, Beginning February 12, and Closing March 8, 1884 Between E.L. Kelley, of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and Clark Braden, of the Church of Christ* (St Louis: Clark Braden, 1884), 173.

77. Philemon Stewart, *A Holy, Sacred and Divine Roll and Book; from the Lord God of Heaven, to the Inhabitants of Earth: Revealed in the United Society at New Lebanon, County of Columbia, State of New-York, United States of America* (Canterbury, N. H.: United Society, 1843). See Robert F. W. Meader, "The Vision of Brother Philemon [Stewart]," *Shaker Quarterly* 10 (Spring 1970): 8-17.

78. See Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 62-71. See also Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., "The American Theosophical Synthesis," in Howard Kerr and Charles L. Crow, eds., *The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 111-134 and Henry C. Blinn, *The Manifestation of Spiritualism among the Shakers 1837-1847* (East Canterbury, N.H.: author, 1899).

79. Sacred and Divine Roll and Book, 347.

they were inspired to read,—from a Roll, Manuscript, or Letter, which to us, were invisible, until revealed." One such revelation came as "A letter from Father Abraham written by his own hand, in union with Holy Mother Wisdom [Mother Ann Lee]."[80]

Spiritual manifestations such as those recorded in the Shaker book moved Martin Harris in a special way. In a debate held in 1884 in Kirtland, Clark Braden mentioned, "Harris declared repeatedly that he had as much evidence for a Shaker book he had as for the Book of Mormon."[81] By the end of 1844, Martin Harris believed in and had a strong testimony of the sacred roll of the Shakers.

Phineas Young and others wrote to Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles in Nauvoo: "The work (says Bro. Joseph [Smith]) rests upon your shoulders. Consequently, we appeal to you. There are in this place all kinds of teaching, Martin Harris is a firm believer in Shakerism, says his testimony is greater than it was of the Book of Mormon. . .for here we are called Josephites, and at Nauvoo apostates. . .There are at this time some 40 or 50 good brethren in this place, which constitutes a majority of the Church here. . .having every kind of spirit to deal with; but we are favored with the house [Kirtland Temple] and the control of it."[82]

No record has been located to indicate Martin Harris ever repudiated his greater appreciation for the Shaker book, and it is not known how long Harris attached himself to Shakerism. Jeremiah Cooper visited Martin in July 1845 and said, "[W]e saw Mr. Martin Harris, he bore testimony to the Book of Mormon, said he wrote part of it while Mr. Joseph Smith translated it from the plate of Gold."[83]

Association with James J. Strang's Church

By this time, the church was in turmoil over the death of Joseph Smith in June 1844. In the succeeding months and years, several people proposed themselves as Smith's successor, including James J. Strang, David Whitmer, Brigham Young, Sidney Rigdon, etc. Martin Harris, like many church members, did not know whom to follow, and he changed his loyalty several times, choosing first one supposed successor, then another.

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80. See United Society of Believers (Shakers) Papers, MSS 119, Boxes 1-2, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

81. Braden and Kelley Debate, 173.

82. Letter of Phineas H. Young, Jeremiah Knight, Hiram Winters, and Ira Tuft to Brigham Young, 31 Dec. 1844, Kirtland, Ohio, copied into the Journal History of the Church, 31 Dec. 1844, LDS archives.

83. Letter by J. Cooper, dated 3 Sept. 1845, in *The Latter Day Saint's Messenger and Advocate* 1 (1 Sept. 1845): 319, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This was a publication of the organization led by Sidney Rigdon.

In the January 1846 issue of the Voree Herald, James J. Strang published an 1844 letter supposedly written by Joseph Smith regarding the establishment of a stake of Zion in Voree, Wisconsin Territory. On 13 September 1845, four of Strang's followers had unburied "three plates of brass,"[84] which Strang proceeded to translate five days later.[85] Earlier, Strang had professed to being appointed the successor of Joseph Smith by an angel on the day of Smith's death.[86] Many members of the Smith family in Nauvoo accepted Strang's claims, as did "all the living witnesses of the Book of Mormon save one."[87]

Martin Harris was not the exception. By August 1846, he had accepted James J. Strang as church president, prophet, seer, revelator, translator, and successor to Joseph Smith. In August 1846, "William Smith, Patriarch of the church, went to Kirtland. . .and assisted President Strang efficiently in the re-organization of the church there."[88] A church conference was held in the Kirtland Temple.

> A conference was held at Kirtland on the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th, of August and the Stake at that place reorganized according to the Law of the Lord and the word of his prophets.

The attendance was very general, nearly all the branches of No[r]thern Ohio being represented. President Strang presided—L[e]ster Brooks, was ordained an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, Lester Brooks and Moses Smith of the Twelve, and Martin Harris, and Hazen Aldrich, Highpriests with several Elders were appointed to go to England. A full set of officers of the Stake were appointed.

Six resolutions were passed by the conference. The fourth resolution stated:

> RESOLVED, (one vote in the negative), That we sustain and uphold with our faith and prayers, and acknowledge in his administration James J. Strang, as First President of this Church, and as the duly appointed successor of Joseph Smith, as Prophet, Seer, [Revelator], and [Translator] unto this Church, according to the Law of the Church, and the word of God.

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84. Statement of Aaron Smith, Jira[h] B. Wheelan, J[ames]. M. Van Nostrand and Edward Whitcomb in Voree Herald 1 (Jan. 1846): 4, Voree, Wisc. See Roger Van Noord, *King of Beaver Island: The Life and Assassination of James Jesse Strang* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 34-35.

85. *Voree Herald* 1 (Jan. 1846): 1, 3-4, Voree [near Burlington], Wisconsin Territory.

86. "Extracts from the Records of the Church," *Voree Herald* 1 (Aug. 1846): 1.

87. "Progress of the Work," *Voree Herald* 1 (Sept. 1846): 4. The one witness who did not support Strang was Oliver Cowdery.

88. "William Smith," *Zion's Reveille* 1 (Dec. 1846): 3, Voree, Wisc.

The published minutes included the following members of the Kirtland High Council:

Hiram L. Rounds,	William Cowdery,
Amos Ranney,	Daniel Bliss,
Roger Plaisted,	James Stray[,]
Preserved Harris,	James Crompton,
Martin Harris[,]	William Fuller,
Luman Carter,	John Andrews,

The Presidency consists of Leonard Rich, Amos Babcock, and Sylvester B. Stoddard, and Jacob Bump is Bishop.[89]

Mission to England as a Strangite

In August 1846, William E. McLellin wrote to John C. Bennett: "Harris says he is going to England."[90] Within a month of the Strangite conference, Martin Harris signed over his power of attorney to his brother, Preserved, and to Bishop Jacob Bump. Harris wrote:

> Kirtland Sept the 4th 1846
>
> Know all men by these presents that I Martin Harris am about to leav[e] this Continut [Continent] and expect to go to Europe and remain there one year or more I therefore constitute Jacob Bump and Preserved Harris my lawful agents to transact all my business in my name and I do further mor[e] giv[e] the said Bump and Harris the full care and controll of my farm and all my personal property in the township of Kirtland and for the benefit of my family and the Church of Christ of which I am a member It is further understood that the said Jacob Bump and Preserved Harris "is hold there agency for at least one year and if I do not return within one year their agency to continue until my return And I hereby this day, by these presents deliver to the said Bump & Harris all the cattle—sheep—grain—hogs—family utensils for this use abov[e] mentioned with the right to work or lease my farm as my agents shall think proper—
>
> Signed sealed day and year abov[e]
> mentioned In presence of—Nathaniel Milliken Martin Harris Wm H Fuller[91]

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89. "Kirtland," *Voree Herald* 1 (Sept. 1846): 2.

90. McLellin to Bennett, 14 Aug. 1846, in *Gospel Herald* 2 (2 Dec. 1847): 164, Voree, Wisc. At a 20 July 1846 business meeting, "Pres[ident] Strang said that it was contemplated to put Lester Brooks in the quorum of the Twelve and send him on a mission to England" (reproduced in John J. Hajicek, comp., *The Chronicles of Voree* (1844-1849) [Burlington, Wisc.: JJRR Publishing Co., 1991], 96).

91. Copy of Power of Attorney, 4 Sept. 1846, Martin Harris Legal Documents, L Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah;

James Strang claimed a large following of saints, who acknowledged him as the true leader of the church.[92] Harris left on a mission to preach for Strang shortly after executing his power of attorney, arriving in England in October 1846 with Apostle Lester Brooks. The *Millennial Star*—the church publication in the hands of the twelve apostles in England—republished a circular containing a letter of 4 August 1846 from Crandell Dunn to William A. Appleby regarding James J. Strang. (Dunn had presided over the western part of Michigan when Strang presented his claim as a prophet in August 1844.) This letter was published in the 15 October 1846 issue and had some negative effect upon Harris's mission.[93]

Likewise, in the 15 November 1846 issue of *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, under "Sketches of Notorious Characters," were comments on James J. Strang, Leicester [Lester] Brooks, and Martin Harris. Concerning Harris, it was written that he "yielded to the spirit and temptation of the Devil a number of years ago—turned against Joseph Smith and became his bitter enemy. . . .In one of his fits of monomania, he went and joined the 'Shakers' or followers of Anne Lee. He tarried with them a year or two, or perhaps longer, having had some flare ups while among them. . . .Martin leaves the 'Shakers,' whom he knows to be right, and has known it for many years, as he said, and joins Strang in gathering out the tares of the field. We understand that he is appointed a mission to this country, but we do not feel to warn the Saints against him, for his own unbridled tongue will soon show out specimens of folly enough to give any person a true index to the character of the man."[94]

A notice in the same issue of the *Millennial Star* stated:

> We also learn, from Elder Wheelock's letter of Birmingham, that Martin Harris and his escort have paid them a visit. He [Harris] introduced himself to their conference meeting and wished to speak. . . .On being rejected by the united voice of the conference, he went out into the street, and began to proclaim the corruption of the Twelve; but here the officers of government honoured him with their presence—two policemen came and very gently took hold of each arm and led Martin away to the Lock-up.[95]

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photo in *BYU Studies* 24 (Fall 1984): 426. Another copy is located in the Sterling Law Firm Papers 1836-1846, Box Mo-Po, 4 of 8, Lake County Historical Society, Kirtland Hills, Ohio.

92. "Progress of the Work," *Voree Herald* 1 (Sept. 1846): 3.

93. "Letter from Elder Dunn to Elder Appleby, of Philadelphia," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 8 (15 Oct. 1846): 93, Liverpool, England. Orson Hyde and John Taylor arrived in England on 3 October 1846, when Hyde became the editor of the *Star*.

94. "Martin Harris," *Millennial Star* 8 (15 Nov. 1846): 124. The *Star* warned: "Give no place to the Devil, nor to those who have gone out from us, that it might be made manifest that they are not of us. Receive them not into your houses, neither bid them God speed, lest you be partakers of their evil deeds" (ibid. 8:125).

95. Ibid., 8 (15 Nov. 1846): 128. Cyrus Wheelock recorded in his journal: "however he

George Mantle wrote in 1888 about his experience at the conference held in Birmingham: At the afternoon session "an elderly man asked permission to speak a few words to us. . . .He [Cyrus H. Wheelock] told us that it was Martin Harris, an apostate from the faith: that he [Harris] had abused him and his brethren coming across the sea, and he would not allow him to speak, there being many people there who were opposed to the truth. When we came out of the meeting Martin Harris was beset with a crowd in the street, expecting that he would furnish them with material to war against Mormonism: but when he was asked if Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, he answered yes: and when asked if the Book of Mormon was true, this was his answer: 'Do you know that is the sun shinning on us? Because as sure as you know that, I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, and that he translated that book by the power of God.'"[96]

Orson Hyde after learning that Harris and Brooks were in Liverpool, but evidently not having met them, editorialized:

> Just as our paper was going to press, we learned that Martin Harris, about whom we had written in another article, had landed in Liverpool, and being afraid or ashamed of his profession as a Strangite, and we presume both, for we are confident we should be, he tells some of our brethren on whom he called, that he was of the same profession with themselves—that he had just come from America and wished to get acquainted with the Saints. But there was a strangeness about him, and about one or two who came with him, that gave them plainly to see that the frankness and honest simplicity of true hearted brethren were not with them. A lying deceptive spirit attends them, and has from the beginning. They said they were of the same profession with our brethren, when they knew they lied. If they were of our profession, why not call at our office and get their papers endorsed? Because they know that they are of their father, the Devil, who was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. The very countenance of Harris will show to every spiritual-minded person who sees him, that the wrath of God is upon him.[97]

Orson Hyde also inferred that these other missionaries to England were of the devil. The 20 November 1846 issue of the *Millennial Star* men-

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[Martin Harris] was not to be put of[f] so he must and would preach and Accordingly [Decamped] to the Street and Commenced holding forth to the annoyance of the people while thus engaged to [two] policemen [Very] politely [waited upon] him Each affectionately taking an arm and thus the Curtain fell and the Drama Closed to the great amusement of the Spectators" (Cyrus Hubbard Wheelock Journal, entry for 25 Oct. 1846, LDS archives).

96. "Martin Harris in England," *Autumn Leaves* 2 (March 1889): 141, Lamoni, Iowa. John Freeman, who attended the conference at Birmingham, wrote in his journal: "Martin Harris there come[s] as advocate for Strang" (John Freeman Journal, entry for 25 Oct. 1846, LDS archives).

97. *Millennial Star* 8 (15 Nov. 1846): 128.

tioned Harris specifically, and included an invitation to meet with him and his companions:

> The Strangite delegation, namely, Harris, Brooks, and their companion, on arriving in Liverpool, complained very much that they could not get an opportunity to do the work which the Lord sent them to perform. Elder Marsden, of this town, handled them so effectually in Birkenhead, and made Strangism look so contemptibly mean, that Martin publicly denied being sent by Strang, or being in any way, connected with him. This he did in [the] presence of many witnesses.[98]

Martin Harris's expectations of being in Europe for a year were not realized, as he was only in England for about six weeks, one of the shortest missionary trips to that country. The missionaries left Liverpool, England, in November on board the Ship Sea, and arrived in New York on 8 December 1846. Brooks, age forty-four, was listed as an "Iron Moulder." and Harris, age sixty-four, was listed as a "Farmer."[99] Lester Brooks, in a letter to James M. Adams, wrote concerning Aaron Smith, who had left the Strang movement:

> He [Aaron Smith] makes me think of Martin Harris, who says that Joseph [Smith] went to the devil as soon as he would not let him rule, for the Lord showed to him [Harris] one hundred times as much as he did Joseph. That he has taught the church all they know about the things of God, and if Strang does not let him [Harris] dictate the church will go to the devil, and Strang with it. I do not want to go to the heaven that either [Aaron] Smith or Harris will lead men to with their spirit that they have at present. If Martin Harris ever knew any thing about the principles of the gospel he has lost that knowledge, or I never had any. Either Harris or myself are decidedly wrong.[100]

A conference was held in Kirtland on 11-13 December 1846. The minutes recorded a withdrawal of fellowship from Strang as the church's prophetic leader. Among the signatures were those of the Kirtland Stake Presidency (Rich, Babcock, and Stoddard), and William E. McLellin the conference secretary.[101] Strang, incensed, issued a revelation toward those residing at Kirtland, part of which reads:

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98. "Strangism.—Invitation to Imposters," *Millennial Star* 8 (20 Nov. 1846): 137. Zion's Reveille reported: "Martin Harris and William Capner, from Ohio, are the travelling companions of Brother Brooks" (*Zion's Reveille* 1 [Dec. 1846]: 3).

99. Passenger List of Vessels Arriving at New York 1820-1897, microfilm #0002311, vessel #1043, [page 2], Family History Library.

100. Brooks to Adams, 10 Feb. 1847, in *Zion's Reveille* 2 (11 March 1847): 36.

101. Letter sent circa 20 Dec. 1846, *The New Era, and Herald of Zion's Watchmen* 1 (Jan. 1847), Voree, Wisc.

> Because Kirtland is filled with unbelief and apostacy; and those who have gathered there and taken my name upon them regard not my word, and hearken not to my law, neither observe my counsel nor hear the words of my prophets, but have altogether rejected mine anointed, done violence to the truth, refused my word, and rebel[l]ed against my law and mine authority; therefore shall Kirtland be a waste and a desolation, a den of wickedness, and a habitation of the unfaithful, the unbelieving, and the rebel[l]ious.[102]

During the time when the December conference was being held in Kirtland, Harris and Brooks were traveling from New York City to Philadelphia, where they separated. Harris traveled to Pittsburgh to visit James Smith, then arrived at Kirtland by 2 January 1847. Upon his return, Harris filed suit against Jacob Bump and William Fuller. Bump, who had been given Harris's power of attorney, had leased Harris's farm to Fuller for about seventeen months. The jury found the defendant "not guilty as complained against him," except for a small half acre of land.[103]

Around that same time, Lester Brooks wrote a letter explaining that his health was poor: "I did not come home on account of my hea[l]th I came because I thought it very neces[s]ary that Martin Harris leave that country and there was no other way only for me to come with him which I am quite glad that I did I left him in Philedelpha [Philadelphia] could get him no [further]."[104]

After visiting with Harris in December, James Smith of Pittsburgh wrote to Strang: "This man, although he has been buffeted and scoffed at by the world made our hearts glad in consequence of the unwavering testimony which he bore with regard to the origin of Mormonism."[105]

Joining William E. McLellin's Church

After his arrival in Kirtland, Harris must have learned that Leonard Rich and others had rejected James Strang's leadership. However, William E. McLellin had now moved to Kirtland and was promoting David Whitmer as the new church president because of his ordination by Joseph Smith in July 1834.

> At a conference of the church held in Kirtland, Ohio, on the 23d January, 1847, after many remarks by those present, it was motioned by W. E.

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102. "Extract from a Revelation Given Dec. 21, 1846," *Zion's Reveille* 2 (21 Jan. 1847): 8.

103. Martin Harris Legal Documents, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

104. Brooks to James M. Adams, 12 Jan. 1847, La Porte, Ohio, James Jesse Strang Collection, WA MSS 447, Box 1, folder 20, Basic Early Documents, #54, Brinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

105. James Smith to Strang, no date, circa Jan. 1847, *Zion's Reveille* 2 (11 Feb. 1847): 18.

> McLellin, and seconded by Martin Harris, that this church take upon them the name of the Church of Christ, and wear it henceforth—shorn of all appendages or alterations. The motion was put by Elder Leonard Rich, the chairman, and carried with much feeling and spirit, in the affirmative—without a dissenting voice.[106]

The Ensign of Liberty, the official periodical of McLellin, reported on some of the problems of proclaiming David Whitmer as successor of Smith:

> On the 10th of Feb. . .we felt troubled in our minds about our baptisms and confirmations. . . .All who had been baptized and confirmed by any and all the Elders under Joseph [Smith, Jr.] after he had ordained his Successor, consequently had no more power with God in his station.[107]

William E. McLellin received a revelation, giving the following instructions:

> Yea, let my servant William [McLellin] baptize and confirm, and then re-ordain my [servant] Martin [Harris]. And thus shall he confirm his authority upon him by the laying on of hands and saying, Brother Martin I lay my hands upon you in the name of Jesus Christ, and I re-ordain you, and confirm upon you the office of high priest in the church of Christ, after the holy order of the Son of God. And I pray God in the name of Jesus, his son, to give unto you in your calling, all the gifts and blessings and powers thereof, and keep you faithful unto the end, amen.
>
> And then let my servant Martin administer unto my servant William [McLellin] in the same manner, according to the same pattern. And then let my servant Leonard [Rich] likewise receive the same ministration. Yea, let my servants William and Martin and Leonard, do as the spirit of truth now directs them.[108]

On 13 February 1847, Martin Harris joined McLellin's Church of Christ by baptism, confirmation, and reordination "to the same authority which we had held in the Church before Latter Day Saintism was known." This church numbered about 42 members. A committee wrote: "Martin Harris has retired to his little farm, in Kirtland, Ohio, and stands warning all, that the Church will not prosper until they throw away their fictitious name, and take again, as in the beginning, the NAME of 'the

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106. "The Name of the Church," *The Ensign of Liberty* 1 (April 1847): 20, emphasis omitted, Kirtland, Ohio.

107. "Things in Kirtland," Ibid. (Jan. 1848): 54-56, emphasis omitted.

108. "Our Tour West in 1847," Ibid. (Aug. 1849): 100. This revelation was received on 10 February 1847.

Church of Christ,' and return to their first love, and then keep the commandments of God."[109]

Lester Brooks wrote to James J. Strang: "Martin Har[r]is I learn is at Kirtland doing all he can against you. The greatest blunder that ever I committed was in taking Harris to England"[110]

Witness to Ordination of David Whitmer as Successor

McLellin traveled to Missouri in September 1847, where he re-baptized, reconfirmed, and re-ordained David Whitmer. The third issue of McLellin's Ensign of Liberty (December 1847) contained a "Testimony of Three Witnesses" concerning Whitmer's 1834 ordination as successor to Joseph Smith:

> We cheerfully certify, to all whom it may concern, that we attended a general conference, called at the instance of Joseph Smith, in Clay county, Mo., on the 8th of July, 1834, at the residence of Elder Lyman Wight. And while the conference was in session, Joseph Smith presiding, he arose and said that the time had come when he must appoint his Successor in office. Some have supposed that it would be Oliver Cowdery; but, said he, Oliver has lost that privilege in consequence of transgression. The Lord has made it known to me that David Whitmer is the man. David was then called forward, and Joseph and his counsellors laid hands upon him, and ordained him to his station, to succeed him. Joseph then gave David a charge, in the hearing of the whole assembly. Joseph then seemed to rejoice that that work was done, and said, now brethren, if any thing should befal[l] me, the work of God will roll on with more power than it has hitherto done. Then, brethren, you will have a man who can lead you as well as I can. He will be Prophet, Seer, Revelator, and Translator before God.
>
> Martin Harris,
> Leonard Rich,
> Calvin Beebe.[111]

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109. Ibid., 1 (March 1847):11.

110. Brooks to Strang, 14 March 1847, James Jesse Strang Collection, WA MSS 447, Box 1, folder 38, General Correspondence, #258, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Yale University.

111. "The Successor of Joseph, the Seer," *The Ensign of Liberty* 1 [Dec. 1847]: 43-44, testimony not dated. On 7 July 1834 Frederick G. Williams assisted Joseph Smith in ordaining David Whitmer. Max H. Parkin wrote: "This appointment appeared to be a temporary one," as almost five months later on 5 December 1834, Smith ordained Oliver Cowdery to rank next to him ("Kirtland, A Stronghold For The Kingdom," in F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards, eds., *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History* [Lawrence, Kansas, 1973], 70). Wilford Woodruff added to his journal at an unknown date: "I attended the Meeting at Lyman Wight[']s at which time Joseph Smith the Prophet Organized the High Council. Joseph was Clothed with the power of God. He Chastised David [Whitmer] & others for unfaithfulness. Said their hearts were not set upon the building up the Kingdom of God as they should be. After He was chastised He was set apart under the

In the spring of 1848, McLellin's Church of Christ was ejected from the premises of the temple.[112] Patience Cowdery, wife of Warren A. Cowdery, wrote in her journal in 1849 that Harris "called here this morning and warned us of our danger if we did not embrace the gospel and says he has now cleared his skirts whether we give heed or not."[113]

At a conference of the Church of Christ held on 3 June 1849, Martin Harris was appointed president of the meeting. It was resolved that fellowship be withdrawn from William E. McLellin, "both as an Elder or member of the church of Christ."[114]

A Vagabond Preacher

In the fall of 1849, Harris was in Rochester, New York. A local newspaper reported:

> He [Martin Harris] wrote the Book of Mormon from Joe Smith's dictation, the latter reading the text from the Golden Plates by putting his face in a hat. . . .But he no longer goes with the Mormons, saying that they 'have gone to the devil just like other people.' He abandoned them fifteen years ago, when they assumed the appellation of 'Latter Day Saints,' and bore his testimony against them by declaring that 'Latter Day Devils' would be a more appropriate designa[t]ion. Mr. Harris visited England some three years ago. At present he professes to have a mission from God, in fulfi[ll]ment of which he wanders about preaching to 'all who will feed him.' When this essential condition is not performed by his hearers, he shakes o[f]f the dust from his feet and leaves for more hospitable quarters. Mr. H. is exceedingly familiar with the Scripture[s], and discourses theology in his peculiar way.[115]

James Bay visited Harris, who said he knew the Book of Mormon was true, "for he saw the plates and knew for himself[.] I heard his little girl she was 7 years old[.] I read some in what they Called the Holy roll but no God. . . .I staid at Martins all night had quite a talk with him he thought that the 12 was [w]rong but I told him that he was [w]rong and he had better come up to the valley and see for himself."[116]

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hand of Joseph to Preside over the Land of Zion" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal* 1:14) Woodruff's journal—like the minutes in the Far West Record—does not mention that Smith chose David Whitmer as his prophetic successor.

112. Common Pleas Record, Vol. F: 273-75, microfilm #877,776, Family History Library.

113. Patience Simmonds Cowdery Journal, entry for 15 Feb. 1849, LDS archives.

114. *Gospel Herald* 4 (5 July 1849): 74, emphasis omitted.

115. *Rochester* (New York) *Daily American*, 16 Nov. 1849. "Fifteen years ago" would have been 1834, when the church's name was changed in May. Of course, Harris remained actively affiliated with the church at least through the spring of 1837.

116. James Willard Bay Journal, 23 Nov. 1850, written after July 1895, LDS archives. Harris's little girl would have been Julia Harris.

Reuben P. Harmon, who questioned Martin about his beliefs, stated:

> I was well acquainted with Martin Harris, who was often at my house for days at a time. I have questioned him much about the plates from which the 'Book of Mormon' purports to have been translated. He never claimed to have seen them with his natural eyes, only spiritual vision. He said it was impossible for the prophet Joseph to get up the 'Book of Mormon,' for he could not spell the word Sarah. He had him repeat the letters of the word. He was a very illiterate man. He claimed he would be one of the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation and would not die but would be translated.[117]

Witness to Gladden Bishop as Prophet

On Sunday, 16 March 1851, a religious prophet by the name of Francis Gladden Bishop gave in the Kirtland Temple a description of the golden plates, the Book of Ether, the Book of Life [the Sealed Record], the Interpreters, the Breast-plate of Moroni, and the Sword of Laban.[118] Bishop's description of the gold plates was published in the broadside titled, A Proclamation From the Lord to His people, scattered throughout all the Earth:

> The plates are pure gold; about eight inches in length, and about six inches in width, and in a compact form are about four inches in thickness, each plate being about the twelfth of an inch thick.[119] There are in all forty-eight plates, divided as follows:—The first part, or division, consists of twenty-four plates—from these was the Book of Mormon translated; and on the first

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117. Statement of Reuben P. Harmon, 16 Dec. 1884, *Naked Truths About Mormonism* 1 (April 1888): 1. Emma Smith told Edmund Briggs that she wrote for Joseph as he dictated to her: "Even the word Sarah he could not pronounce at first, but had to spell it, and I would pronounce it for him" (Edmund C. Briggs, "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," *Journal of History* 9 [Oct. 1916]: 454, emphasis in original). The dictated Book of Mormon manuscript has the name as "Sariah" (manuscript in LDS archives).

118. Bishop wrote, "I stood in the Lord's House at Kirtland, to read a description of the Sacred Things, which the Lord had entrusted to me" (An Address to the Sons and Daughters of Zion, Scattered Abroad, Through All the Earth [1851], 24). On Bishop, see Richard L. Saunders, "The Fruit of the Branch: Francis Gladden Bishop and His Culture of Dissent," in Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher, eds., *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 102-19.

119. In 1859, Martin Harris said concerning the plates: "These plates were seven inches wide by eight inches in length, and were of the thickness of plates of tin; and when piled one above the other, they were altogether about four inches thick" (*Tiffany's Monthly* 5 [Aug. 1859]: 165). In 1870 the *Daily Iowa State Register* reported: "Mr. Harris describes the plates as being of thin leaves of gold, measuring 7 by 8 inches, and weighing altogether, from 40 to 60 lbs" ("A Witness to the Book of Mormon," *Daily Iowa State Register*, 28 Aug. 1870, 4). Bishop said the plates were fastened by "three gold rings," while Harris said "three silver rings."

> plate of this division is inscribed in large Reformed Egyptian characters the title of this division, which in the English language is rendered thus—The Book of Mormon. There are also a variety of other characters upon the same page, among which are the characters which stand as the Alphabet of the reformed Egyptian language, in which this whole division is written. The characters are rubbed over with a black substance[120] so as to fill them up, in order that the dazzling of the gold between the characters would not prevent their being readily seen.[121]

According to Bishop, the Proclamation was the "Flying Roll" sent forth by the Lord "as the testimony and power of my three witnesses, whom I have now called." In the proclamation, Gladden Bishop claimed to have in his possession the gold plates and other relics of early Mormonism. The revelation also indicated the following concerning "the greater things to those who received the Book of Mormon":

> And therefore have I again sent mine Holy Angels, even as to Joseph [Smith] at the first and put into the hands of my servant Gladden [Bishop] the same sacred things which I put into the hands of my servant Joseph; and also other sacred things which have been hid up, to come forth when I should set up my Kingdom on the earth.
>
> And therefore that my word might be fulfilled, and also that my people might believe, have I caused that my servant Gladden should call Witnesses of these things; even he, who was one of the three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, (viz: my servant Martin [Harris], and also my daughter Phebe [Bishop's wife], whom I have called these many years that she might be a witness in this, my great and glorious work, which I have now begun, and which shall never be overthrown;) and behold! my Witnesses have borne their testimony before my people in this place, yea, and in my house, even that which my people have built and dedicated unto me in Kirtland.

Harris appears to have followed Bishop, believing him to be a prophet, seer, revelator, and translator.[122] Gladden Bishop also wrote: "[T]he place for the bringing forth of the greater Temporal work. . .is in the Valley of the Saints—even at the great city [Great Salt Lake City]," [123] where the Saints had already begun to gather.

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120. Orson Pratt said that on the plates "were fine engravings, which were stained with a black, hard stain, so as to make the letters more legible and easier to be read" (*Journal of Discourses* 7:31 [2 Jan. 1859]).

121. Gladden Bishop, Kirtland, Ohio, 6 April 1851. Proclamation in LDS archives.

122. Brigham Young said "There is a man named Martin Harris, and he is the one who gave the holy roll to Gladden" *Journal of Discourses* 2:127 (17 April 1853).

123. *A Proclamation From the Lord to His people, scattered throughout all the Earth* (1851). See also Richard Saunders, "'More a Movement Than an Organization': Utah's First Encounter with Heresy, The Gladdenites, 1851-1854," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 16 (1996): 91-106.

Feeling the Old Spirit of Mormonism

David Dille visited with Martin Harris about two miles east of Kirtland in the spring of 1853. He talked to Harris, who said, "I feel that a spirit has come across me—the old spirit of Mormonism; and I begin to feel as I used to feel; and I will not say I won't go to the [Salt Lake] Valley." Martin related to Dille that he had handled the Book of Mormon plates; he also asked and answered his question: "[D]id I not at one time hold the plates on my knee an hour-and-a-half, whilst in conversation with Joseph, when we went to bury them in the woods, that the enemy might not obtain them? Yes, I did. And as many of the plates as Joseph Smith translated I handled with my hands, plate after plate."[124]

Stephen H. Hart wrote that Martin Harris "worked off and on for fifteen or twenty years for me. His judgment about farming was good. When we had finished hoeing the corn he would raise his hands toward the field and pronounce a blessing and say he was sure of a good crop with his blessing. . . .Martin, when closely questioned about the plates from which the 'Book of Mormon' purports to have been taken, would say he saw the plates by the eye of faith."[125]

Harris also seems to have been feeling the urge to join the Saints in Utah. On 2 May 1855, Thomas Colburn wrote to Erastus Snow, editor of the *St. Louis Luminary:*

> We called at Kirtland, found a few that called themselves Saints, but very weak, many apostates, who have mostly joined the rappers. We had a lengthy interview with Martin Harris. At first he was down on polygamy, but before we left he informed me that he never should say a word against it. He confessed that he had lost confidence in Joseph Smith, consequently his mind became darkened, and he was left to himself; he tried the Shakers, but that would not do, then tried Gladden Bishop, but no satisfaction; had concluded he would wait until the Saints returned to Jackson Co., and then he would repair there. . .concluded before we left that "Brigham [Young] was Governor," and that the authorities were there, and that he should go there as soon as he could get away.[126]

Martin Harris's Religious Proclamation

Also in May 1855, Martin Harris published a proclamation purported to have been given by Moses, Elias, Elijah, and John "through a

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124. David B. Dille Statement, 15 Sept. 1853, "Additional Testimony of Martin Harris (One of the Three Witnesses) to the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," *Millennial Star* 21 (20 Aug. 1859): 545.

125. Statement of Stephen H. Hart, Nov. 1884, in *Naked Truths About Mormonism* 1 (April 1888): 3.

126. Colburn to Elder Snow, 2 May 1855 in *St. Louis Luminary* 1 (5 May 1855): 94, St. Louis, Mo. The visit took place after October 1854.

Miss Sexton a Spirit medium of Cleveland," the same medium through whom William Smith received revelation.[127] The following extracts are from that eight-page pamphlet, titled *A Proclamation And a warning voice unto all people, first to all Kings, Governors and Rulers in Authority, and unto every kindred tongue and people under the whole heavens, to whom this word shall come:*

> A Proclamation And a warning voice unto all people, first to all Kings, Governors and Rulers in Authority, and unto every kindred tongue and people under the whole heavens, to whom this word shall come, greeting:
>
> Moses, Elias, Elijah and John set forth and declare the word of the Lord unto you. . .for behold this is the word of the proclamation that we, Moses, Elias, Elijah, and John have appeared unto many to declare unto them and now command it to be written and sent out unto all people. . . .
>
> And to my servant and friend whose name is held in sacred remembrance in the councils of the just, and who is called the messenger of the covenant, and who was first called among the sons of Ephraim to set forth in order the dispensation of the fulness of times—he it is to whom the key of knowledge has been given to go forth in the power of Elijah, and to bear off the ark of the Lord in wisdom and in power; for he shall be filled with light and his bowles shall be as a fountain of knowledge; and none shall gainsay or resist his words; nor shall he be confounded, and he shall divide the inheritance to the saints by lot, when Zion shall be established in the glory and power of her king.
>
> And all who know the power and glory of this work of the gathering up of the sons of Israel for Zion and for the organization of the Church and house of the Lord, shall know this servant and messenger when they hear his voice, for he speaketh the words of Elijah, and is sent to do the work of Elijah, and feareth not to sacrifice, that the kingdom and the glory thereof might be one.
>
> And this my servant is now standing in your midst, and ye know him not. . . .We come to administer to you in spirit, for our bodies are not yet risen from the dead; yet still we are bodies of spirit, or have spiritual bodies.[128]

Christopher G. Crary recalled the following about Harris:

> One day, when working for me, he handed me a leaflet that he had got printed, taken from some of the prophets, telling of a wonderful person that should appear and draw all men after him. I looked it over and returned it to

127. Stephen Post Journal, entry for 5 Oct. 1855, LDS archives.

128. [Martin Harris], *A Proclamation And a warning voice unto all people, first to all Kings, Governors and Rulers in Authority, and unto every kindred tongue and people under the whole heavens, to whom this word shall come* (Cleveland, 1855). Proclamation in LDS archives.

him. He [Martin] said, 'Who do you think it refers to?' I said, "Why, of course, it refers to you.' He looked very much pleased, and said, 'I see you understand the scriptures.'[129]

Reverend Samuel F. Whitney, brother of Newel K. Whitney, mentioned that Martin Harris at one time claimed to be Elijah:

All the time Martin was in Kirtland boys eight years and older would gather about him and dispute with, and annoy him in various ways. Martin claimed to be Elijah and when annoyed would curse them.[130]

Stephen H. Hart stated the following about Harris:

Martin, when closely questioned about the plates from which the "Book of Mormon" purports to have been taken, would say he saw the plates by the eye of faith. He often compared himself to Enoch, Elijah, Paul and other Bible persons. I never doubted that he was insane on Mormonism.[131]

A copy of the Proclamation was sent to Brigham Young by Harris. In his letter to Young, Harris wrote:

[E]nclosed I Send you A Proclamation as you will discover by reading it given by Moses, Elias, Elijah, and John—you no doubt will recollect of a favor asked of me—of the lone of Some money upon the ground of relationship and in the name of god. I now make an appeal to you in the name of god and Command you in the name of god to Publish the Revelation I send you in your deseret news or in some of your public Journals Published in the vall[e]y that the word and Commandment of the Proclamation may go to all the world[132]

Brigham Young did not have the proclamation printed.

Reorganizing the Church with William Smith

In October 1855, Stephen Post arrived in Kirtland to attend a conference with Martin Harris. Post recorded in his journal:

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129. Christopher G. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences* (Marshalltown, Iowa: Marshall Printing Company, 1893), 44.

130. Statement of S. F. Whitney, 6 March 1885, in *Naked Truths About Mormonism* 1 (Jan. 1888): 3.

131. Statement of Stephen H. Hart, Nov. 1884, *Naked Truths About Mormonism* 1 (April 1888): 3. In December 1856, Emma Smith Bidamon told Edmund Briggs that she considered Martin Harris "an honest man, but not naturally as noble and firm in his mind as some" (Edmund C. Briggs, "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," *Journal of History* 9 [Jan. 1916]: 455).

132. Harris to Young, 13 Aug. 1855, written for Harris, emphasis and equal signs (=) omitted, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Archives; photo in *BYU Studies* 24 (Fall 1984): 427. The letter and proclamation were received on 26 November 1855.

> Br Martin Harris had published a proclamation purporting to be given By Moses, Elias, Elijah & John through a Miss Sexton a Spirit medium of Cleveland[.] Wm Smith got a revelation given through the same medium [he?] read to me the purport of which was that We Moses Elias Elijah & John again come unto you &c & go on to give directions to different elders about reorganizing the church and appointing them to select a place for the gathering of the saints fictitious names were used for those who were to be the actors in this thing.[133]

At this time William Smith gave fictitious names to different elders who were to assist him in this work. Two days later, on 7 October, a conference met in the Kirtland Temple. Harris was chosen president, and Stephen Post secretary of the conference: "It was not deemed expedient to organize," but twelve resolutions were accepted[134] and plans for another conference to meet in April 1856. That evening "Br Harris read his proclamation."[135]

Harris's involvement in communication with the spirit world is not surprising, considering his earlier testimony regarding the Shaker book or roll, but it is of interest that the message he received from Miss Sexton was published as A Proclamation And a warning voice unto all people. It was what could be expected at a time when many Americans embraced Spiritualism.[136]

In August 1855, Martin's wife, Caroline Young Harris, was pregnant with their seventh child. Martin was seventy-two years old and Caroline was thirty-nine. She and their family are listed in the 1856 Iowa Census for Rockford Township, Pottawattamie County. Martin is listed apparently as "Martance."[137] It is not known when Caroline left Kirtland, nor is it certain if Martin was in Iowa.[138] Their daughter, Ida May, was born on 27 May 1856 in Pottawattamie County, Iowa. The Harris entry is found near the entry for the Littlefield family, which included Lyman and his wife, Louisa. Louisa was Caroline's sister and may have been influential in the decision to leave Kirtland. Harris's family was headed for Utah Territory.

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133. Stephen Post Journal, 5 Oct. 1855, LDS archives.

134. See resolutions passed at a conference of elders, 6-7 Oct. 1855, Kirtland, Ohio, Stephen Post Collection, LDS archives.

135. Stephen Post Journal, 7 Oct. 1855, LDS archives.

136. See Davis Bitton, "Mormonism's Encounter with Spiritualism," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): 39-50 and Michael W. Homer, "Spiritualism and Mormonism: Some Thoughts on Similarities and Differences," *Dialogue* 27 (Spring 1994): 171-91.

137. 1856 Census Schedule of Rockford Township, Pottawattamie County, State of Iowa, 868, #110, film #1,021,311, p. 868, Family History Library. Five living children, including Ida May, are listed in the census.

138. Martin Harris was at Kirtland in April 1856 (Stephen Post Journal, 6-7 April 1856, LDS archives). Apparently Martin did not accompany Caroline to Iowa.

However, Harris apparently remained in Kirtland. In his role as a minister, he performed a baptism on 24 April 1857. The *Painesville Telegraph*, a newspaper printed about eleven miles from Kirtland, reported: "Elder Martin Harris, of the Latter Day Saints, on Friday last, baptized a happy convert in the river, near the Geauga Mills."[139] At this time, travelers to Kirtland also reported the activity of Martin Harris and William Smith. For example, John Clinton said they had "organized a Church of their own."[140] Enoch Beese reported: "Martin Harris had reorganized the Church in this place with 6 members. Appointed Wm. Smith their Leader Prophet Seer & Revelator. In [a] few days Harris drove Wm. Smith out of the place & damned him to Hell."[141]

Interview of Martin Harris

In January 1859, editor Joel Tiffany of *Tiffany's Monthly*, a Spiritualist publication of New York City, visited Martin Harris. Tiffany's account is important because of his recollection of events in the Palmyra/Manchester, New York, area prior to 1828:

> Mr. Harris had conversed with us many times upon the subject [origin of Mormonism], giving us the history of its earthly development, and desiring us to write it from his lips. It is but simple justice to Mr. Harris, that we should state that he is still an earnest and sincere advocate of the spiritual and divine authority of the Book of Mormon. He does not sympathize with Brigham Young and the Salt Lake Church. He considers them apostates from the true faith; and as being under the influence of the devil. Mr. Harris says, that the pretended church of "Latter Day Saints," are in reality "latter day devils," and that himself and a very few others are the only genuine Mormons left.[142]

Martin told Tiffany about his early association with the Joseph Smith family and the coming forth of the gold plates. Harris said that he asked family members how the plates were found and was told it was through the medium of a stone.[143]

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139. *Painesville Telegraph* 35 (30 April 1857): 3.

140. Journal History of the Church, 18 May 1858, LDS archives. Stephen Post wrote in his journal that William Smith "is now trying to organize as president in Kirtland" (Stephen Post Journal, entry for 25 Oct. 1857).

141. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* 5:198-99, entry for 22 June 1858.

142. "Mormonism," *Tiffany's Monthly* 5 (May 1859): 50, New York City, New York. Joel Tiffany (1811-1893) discussed spiritualism at meetings held in Cleveland in 1855 (*Painesville Telegraph* 33 [28 Feb. 1855]: 2).

143. "Mormonism—II," *Tiffany's Monthly* 5 (Aug. 1859):163-70. An original copy is located at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

In 1860 Martin is named in the census record as living with his and Lucy's son, George Harris, being listed as a "Mormon Preacher." According to recollections of Francis M. Lyman, Harris was showing visitors through the Kirtland Temple at this time.[144] William W. Blair, an apostle in the Reorganization, proceeded to Kirtland, arriving there on 9 August. He recalled:

> Here I met brethren James Twist and family, Martin Harris, Leonard Rich and others, all professing deep interest in the latter day work. The town had a sorry look, and the condition of the temple was pitiful. Its walls inside and out, also its trimmings and decorations, were badly defaced. It appeared that Z[adock]. Brooks, Russel[l] Huntley and others, had effected a small organization and proposed to refit and refurnish the temple. These parties offered us some opposition and we found it best to preach a series of sermons in the Academy Hall instead of in the temple.
>
> On Sunday the 19th of August, after our service in the afternoon in the hall, Bro. [James] Blakeslee and I attended a meeting in the temple where Simeon Atwood, of Erie, Pennsylvania, and Leonard Rich, of Kirtland, were the speakers. By their request Elder Blakeslee and myself took seats in the stand with them and Martin Harris.

Simeon Atwood was an elder in the LDS church. Blair remembered that at the meeting a "long-haired stranger sprang to his feet, uttered an unearthly yell, hissed, stamped his feet, shook his head and looked like the embodiment of evil. Mr. Rich at once dropped into his seat, and the stranger sprang upon the partition between the seats, came to the front, facing the stand, stamping, hissing and making other violent demonstrations. Martin Harris, who sat on my left, whispered to me, saying, 'I guess he has got the devil in him.'" Blair continued:

> [T]he stranger sprang squarely upon the speaker's desk, Harris, Rich and Atwood leaving it with haste; and with another spring he reached the second stand, with another the third stand, and with still another the fourth and highest stand, this being on the Melchisedec priesthood side of the temple. On reaching this high point, he turned and faced the frightened, fleeing congregation, and stripping off his broadcloth coat, tearing it in strigs [strips] and shreds, he again stamped and hissed and shook his head, swinging his torn coat and shouting to the people repeatedly, "Now is come the time of your trial!"

The man then sprang upon the four stands on the Aaronic priest-

144. Francis M. Lyman, "My Mission," *The Contributor* 17 (April 1896): 352. This visit to Kirtland occurred in June 1860.

hood side of the temple. Those in attendance were exiting the temple. William Blair went outside the temple and "saw the before mentioned stranger, his ragged coat rolled up and tucked under his arm, striding down the steps and then down the street in an excited way, after which we saw him no more. Upon inquiry we learned that he was a prominent spiritual medium, resided in New York, and that his name was—Van Deusen [Increase Van Dusen]."[145]

William W. Blair interviewed Martin Harris while in Kirtland:

> [H]e [Martin] in reply to direct inquiries, told me that he obtained the one hundred and sixteen pages manuscript of the Book of Mormon from Joseph [Smith], and took them to his home, where he read them in the evenings to his family and some friends, and that he put them in his bureau in the parlor, locking both bureau and parlor, putting the keys of each in his pocket, and so retired for the night, after which he never saw them. He seemed to be still conscience-smitten for permitting them to be stolen.[146]

William Blair also noted the sad condition of the Kirtland Temple. He recorded in his journal: "I learn that Russell Huntley designs fitting it up. If well done it will cost about $2000. Elder Z[adock]. Brooks. L[eonard] Rich & Martin Harris have formed an organization of 7 Souls[,] 4 of them are women[.]"[147] (The Brooks group of which Harris was a member was called the Church of Christ, and they worshiped in the Kirtland Temple.) The *Painesville Telegraph* published the following:

> Some changes are being made in the Temple, and one is, the old and original inscription high up on its front, to wit—"House of the Lord built by the latter day Saints A.D. 1834," has been removed and the simple one "Church of Christ" put on.[148]

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145. "Memoirs-No. III," *The Saints' Herald* 37 (12 July 1890): 460-61, reprinted in Frederick B. Blair, comp., *The Memoirs of President W. W. Blair* (Lamoni, Iowa, 1908), 35-38. See also "Simeon Atwood," *The Saints' Herald* 36 (9 March 1889): 145. Increase Van Dusen was fifty-one years old. In 1847 he published an account of the endowment ceremony performed in the Nauvoo Temple. At one time he followed James Strang and received revelations. He had recently moved with his wife Maria to Kirtland. See Craig L. Foster, "From Temple Mormon to Anti-Mormon: The Ambivalent Odyssey of Increase Van Dusen," *Dialogue* 27 (Fall 1994): 275-86. Increase died in 1882 and is buried with his wife in the Kirtland North Cemetery.

146. Lucy [Mack] Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Plano, Illinois: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1880), 131, footnote by W. W. Blair; reprinted in *Saints' Herald* 35 (12 May 1888): 297.

147. William W. Blair Journal, entry for 9 Aug. 1860, RLDS archives.

148. *Painesville Telegraph* 38 (14 June 1860): 3. Stephen Post visited Kirtland in March 1864 and wrote in his journal, "The Brooks party I learned have possession of the temple" (Stephen Post Journal, LDS archives, entry for 18 March 1864).

In February 1862, James McKnight was in Kirtland, and Martin Harris visited him. McKnight wrote of his brief visit with Harris:

> Of his property there is little or none left. He has now no home; his son [George], a worthless scape-grace, with whom he lived, being in prison, and the house deserted. Yet, as you have doubtless often heard, he has never failed to confirm his testimony of the truth of that Book. He says he is going to Utah as soon as the Lord will release him! [149]

On 18 April 1862, Russell Huntley purchased by quit claim deed the land on which the Kirtland Temple stands.[150]

Kirtland's Destitute Man

George Morse recalled: "When I was a small boy Martin Harris, one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, was quite a frequent visitor to our house. . . .He was in destitute circumstances and used to visit around among the people, stopping several days at a time among different families."[151]

Christopher G. Crary, a resident of Kirtland, wrote concerning Harris's circumstances:

> In 1867 or 1868, while acting as township trustee, complaint was made to me that Martin Harris was destitute of a home, poorly clothed, feeble, burdensome to friends, and that he ought to be taken to the poor-house. I went down to the flats to investigate, and found him at a house near the Temple, with a family lately moved in, strangers to me. He seemed to dread the poor-house very much. The lady of the house said she would take care of him while their means lasted, and I was quite willing to postpone the unpleasant task of taking him to the poor-house. Everybody felt sympathy for him. He was willing to work and made himself useful as far as his age and debility would admit of.[152]

George Levi Booth remembered that Martin Harris "was very staunch in his belief in Mormonism and I am certain he made no denial. I remember him personally and he was well thought of. He was a small man of stature. He often came and read from the scripture with my

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149. James McKnight to George Q. Cannon, 27 Feb. 1862 in *Millennial Star* 24 (19 April 1862): 251, emphasis in *Star*. For an 1860 domestic problem of George Harris see *Painesville Telegraph* 38 (13 Sept. 1860): 3.

150. Roger D. Launius, *The Kirtland Temple: A Historical Narrative* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1986), 103-104. For various events associated with the Kirtland Temple see Christin Craft Mackay and Lachlan Mackay, "A Time of Transition: The Kirtland Temple, 1838-1880," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 18 (1998): 133-48.

151. *Willoughby Republican*, 29 June 1921. Morse was born about 1848.

152. Christopher G. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences*, 44-45.

parents who were Presbyterians. Their conversation was friendly but Harris was always firm for the Mormons and their belief." When Booth was asked if Harris was ever a public charge in his old age, he responded, "No he was not. There were people who would not have allowed that to take place."[153]

Edward Stevenson's Influence on Harris

In February 1870, Edward Stevenson, on a mission for the LDS church, visited Kirtland to see the temple. He wrote:

> While there [Kirtland], I again met Martin Harris, soon after coming out of the Temple. He took from under his arm a copy of the Book of Mormon, the first edition, I believe, and bore a faithful testimony. . . .He said that it was his duty to continue to lift up his voice as he had been commanded to do in defence [defense] of the Book that he held in his hand, and offered to prove from the Bible that just such a book was to come forth out of the ground, and that, too, in a day when there were no prophets on the earth, and that he was daily bearing testimony to many who visited the Temple.

Stevenson then bore his testimony to Harris: "[T]he work was still onward, and the words of Isaiah, second chapter, were being fulfilled, that 'the house of the Lord was in the tops of the mountains,' and that under the leadership of President Brigham Young all nations were gathering to Zion to learn of God's ways and to walk in His paths, and that the worst wish that we had, was for him to also prepare himself and go up and be a partaker of the blessings of the House of the Lord."[154] Stevenson then continued on to Utah. He recalled: "After my arrival in Utah in 1870, I was inspired to write to Martin Harris, and soon received a reply that the Spirit of God, for the first time prompted him to go to Utah. Several letters were afterwards exchanged. President Brigham Young. . .requested me to get up a subscription and emigrate Martin to Utah, he subscribing twenty-five dollars for that purpose. Having raised

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153. "Interview with George Levi Booth About Kirtland Temple and other matters Conducted by Prof. M. Wilford Poulson," 20 Aug. 1932, M. Wilford Poulson Collection, MSS 823, Box 9, folder 32, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Booth was born in Kirtland on 19 July 1853.

154. Stevenson to Editor, *Deseret News*, 30 Nov. 1881, *Deseret Evening News* 15 (13 Dec. 1881), Salt Lake City, Utah Territory; reprinted in "One of the Three Witnesses. Incidents in the Life of Martin Harris," *Millennial Star* 44 (30 Jan. 1882): 78. Stevenson recorded in his journal: "[F]ou[n]d Bond Temple & Keeper Mertin harris Who Bore testamoney of the angle [angel] Reccords & the T[—] &c took through Temple" (Edward Stevenson Journal, typed copy, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, original in LDS archives, entry for 9 Feb. 1870).

the subscription to about $200, on the 19th of July, 1870, I took the railroad cars for Ohio."[155]

Stevenson also wrote concerning Harris's last known experience in Kirtland:

> A very singular incident occurred at this time. While Martin was visiting his friends, bidding them farewell, his pathway crossed a large pasture, in which he became bewildered, dizzy, faint and staggering through the blackberry vines that are so abundant in that vicinity, his clothes torn, bloody and faint, he lay down under a tree to die. After a time he revived, called on the Lord, and finally at 12 midnight, found his friend, and in his fearful condition was cared for and soon regained his strength. He related this incident as a snare of the adversary to hinder him from going to Salt Lake City. Although in his 88th year he possessed remarkable vigor and health, having recently worked in the garden, and dug potatoes by the day for some of his neighbors.[156]

Stevenson mentioned that Martin had "a great desire to see Utah, and his children that live there. . . .He says he saw the plates, handled them and saw the angel that visited Joseph Smith, more than 40 years ago."[157] "He is coming to the conclusion, after trying everything else. . . that the work of the Lord is progressing in the top of the mountains and that the people are gathering in fulfillment of prophecy."[158]

Harris and Stevenson left Kirtland on 19 August 1870. They arrived ten days later in Ogden, Utah Territory. Martin Harris spent the remaining four-and-a-half years of his life in Cache Valley. He died in Clarkston on 10 July 1875 at the age of 92.[159]

Martin Harris was associated with a number of churches throughout his Kirtland years. He always maintained a belief in the organizations he joined, but he was apparently unstable in his religious ideals. He was influenced by James J. Strang, William E. McLellin, and others. He accepted a number of prophetic leaders after the death of Joseph Smith, and like many spiritual gypsies, he wanted a place where he would be important. Martin followed or believed in James J. Strang, David Whitmer, Gladden Bishop, and William Smith as prophets, seers and revelators, but in all these religious movements, he never denied any of his experiences. Hopefully additional research will broaden our understanding of Martin Harris's Kirtland years.

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155. Stevenson to Editor, *Deseret News*, 30 Nov. 1881, *Deseret Evening News* 15 (13 Dec. 1881); reprinted in "One of the Three Witnesses. Incidents in the Life of Martin Harris," *Millennial Star* 44 (30 Jan. 1882): 79.

156. *Deseret Evening News* 15 (13 Dec. 1881).

157. Letter of Stevenson, 10 Aug. 1870 in Ibid., 3 (19 Aug. 1870): 3.

158. Stevenson to George A. Smith, 21 Aug. 1870 in Ibid. (27 Aug. 1870): 3.

159. See Scott R. Shelton, "Martin Harris in Cache Valley—Events and Influences," (master's thesis, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 1986).

The Earliest Eternal Sealings for Civilly Married Couples Living and Dead

Gary James Bergera[1]

> [I]f I can have my wives and children with me in the morning of the resurrection, . . .it will amply repay me for the trials and tribulations I may have had to pass through in the course of my life here upon the earth.
>
> Wilford Woodruff, 1883 (*Journal of Discourses*, 24:244)

DURING THE EARLY 1840S, founding Mormon prophet Joseph Smith introduced members of his young church to the ordinances of baptism for the dead (1840), eternal marriage (1841), and eternal proxy marriage (1842). These ordinances, and the doctrine underpinning them, united Smith's beliefs in obedience to divine law, the importance of mortality, and the eternal nature of the family. Baptism for the dead guaranteed deceased relatives (and friends)[2] membership in Christ's church; eternal marriage united living husbands and wives after death; and proxy marriage linked spouses to their deceased partners. These three ordinances, Mormons believed, effectively realized the promise of Smith's celestial "kinship-based covenant system."[3] Later, the rituals of the endowment and

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1. I appreciate the advice of Lavina Fielding Anderson, M. Guy Bishop, Todd Compton, Lyndon W. Cook, William G. Hartley, H. Michael Marquardt, and George D. Smith.

2. For example, Don Carlos Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, was baptized for George Washington (see D. Michael Quinn, "The Practice of Rebaptism at Nauvoo," *BYU Studies* 18 [Winter 1978]: 229).

3. The term is Rex Eugene Cooper's in his *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1980), 108.

second anointing would more fully define exaltation, while, after Smith's death, adoption sealings would join entire "sealed" families in an expanding web of eternally procreative relationships.[4] "[T]hat same sociality which exists among us here," Smith taught, "will exist among us there [in heaven], only it will be coupled with eternal glory" (D&C 130:2). Because of these sealing ordinances, "the 'family of God' became more than metaphor."[5]

For Smith's disciples, the efficacy of their prophet's sealings depended on the source of his authority. In 1830 the Book of Mormon referred to "power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven" (Hel. 10:7). The next year Smith elaborated that "the order of the High-priesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life."[6] This sealing power, Smith taught, fulfilled the prophecy Moroni made to him in 1823: "Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers; and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming" (D&C 2:1-3). Thirteen years later, the prophet Elijah conveyed this authority to Smith, announcing, "[T]he keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors" (D&C 110:16). Smith subsequently explained:

> The earth will be smitten with a curse, unless there is a welding link. . .between the fathers and the children. . . .For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times. . .that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to present time. (D&C 128:18)

While Christ's coming would utterly waste the disobedient from the

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4. These adoptions were performed after Smith's death and, according to Glen M. Leonard, "involved sons [i.e., usually husbands and fathers] who chose an apostle as a substitute parent in order to ensure a worthy lineage for him and his family" *(Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* [Salt Lake City/Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co./Brigham Young University Press, 2002], 264). Such adoptions to church leaders ceased in 1894. See also note 98 below.

5. Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 294.

6. Qtd. in Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 20-21. See also D&C 68:2, 12.

earth, Smith perceived an equally cursed state for the righteous: Without an eternal sealing, they would remain forever celibate and sterile, their ultimate destiny one of barrenness. "[I]n order to obtain the highest [of the three heavens or degrees]," he explained, "a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting convenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it" (D&C 131:2-3).

With the founding of Smith's Church of Christ in April 1830, only baptisms performed under his authority were considered valid (D&C 22). Questions remained as to the baptisms of converts' ancestors, and in July 1838 Smith implied that the dead are under the same requirements as the living regarding the ordinances of salvation, including baptism and even marriage.[7] However, not until August 1840, after the church had relocated to Nauvoo, Illinois, did he announce that followers "could now act for their friends who had departed this life, and that the plan of salvation was calculated to save all who were willing to obey the requirements of God."[8] "I have laid the subject of baptism for the dead before you," he proclaimed, "you may receive or reject it as you choose."[9] The next month a woman, recently widowed, asked a male acquaintance to baptize her for a son who had died before joining the church. Though the ordinance was performed without Smith's knowledge, when he learned what had been said during the ceremony, he ruled that the officiator "had it right."[10]

Soon, many other Mormons, fearing for their ancestors' eternal souls, began wading into the muddy waters of the Mississippi River, and subsequent baptisms for the dead were performed with little attention to record-keeping and other formalities. "Faithful Saints simply identified their deceased relatives for whom they wished to be baptized," notes M. Guy Bishop, "and then performed the rite."[11] Early Mormon apostle Wilford Woodruff remembered:

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7. See *Elders' Journal* 1 (July 1838): 43.

8. Qtd. in Simon Baker, Statement, in Journal History, 15 August 1840, Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter LDS Archives. For the origins of the Mormon practice of baptism for the dead, see M. Guy Bishop, "'What Has Become of Our Fathers?' Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23 (Summer 1990): 85-97.

9. Qtd. in Jane Neymon [also Neyman, Nyman], Statement, 15 August 1840, in Journal History.

10. Qtd. in Baker, Statement; see also the statement attached inside the front of "Baptisms for the Dead, Book A," qtd. in Ileen Ann Waspe, "The Status of Woman in the Philosophy of Mormonism from 1830 to 1845," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, May 1942, 127-28.

11. Bishop, "Baptism for the Dead," 87.

> Joseph Smith himself. . .went into the Mississippi River one Sunday night after meeting and baptized a hundred. I baptized another hundred. The next man, a few rods from me, baptized another hundred. We were strung up and down the Mississippi, baptizing for our dead. But there was no recorder, we attended to this ordinance without waiting to have a proper record made. But the Lord told Joseph he must have a recorder present at these baptisms—men who could see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and record these things. Of course, we had to do the work over again. Nevertheless, that does not say the work was not of God.[12]

Throughout 1841, Smith's adherents performed nearly 7,000 such baptisms; during the same period, Nauvoo's adult population numbered 4,000. Smith tried to monitor the practice but eventually decided in October 1841: "There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord's House [i.e., the Nauvoo temple]. . . .*For thus said the Lord!*"[13] The new temple would facilitate a more orderly administration of the rite, and workers quickly completed a temporary font, which they placed in the unfinished basement. The following month, three apostles performed the first proxy baptisms in the temple for "about forty persons."[14] Official records are incomplete, but from 1840 to 1844 Smith's followers baptized at least 11,506 of their dead.[15]

While the church's priesthood holders had been performing civil marriages since the early 1830s,[16] Smith believed that marriage, like baptism, required an eternal sealing to survive death:

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12. Qtd. in *Deseret Weekly*, 25 April 1891, 554.

13. Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Period I. History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet by Himself*, vols. 1-6, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: LDS Church/Deseret Book Co., 1902-12), 4:426.

14. Ibid., 446, 454.

15. Bishop, "Baptism for the Dead," 95. "At noon," wrote William Clayton in late 1844, "we had some conversation concerning recorders for the Baptism of our dead &c. We feel very anxious on the matter but have little prospect of anything being done very speedily. I feel very anxious on the subject myself, in as much as the Records of our Baptisms for our dead have not been kept in order for near 2 years back. The minutes have been kept on loose slips of paper and are liable to be lost and they have not been kept according to the order of God" (George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991], 152). During this early period, baptisms for the dead, endowments, second anointings, sealings, and adoptions were all first recorded on small slips of paper (or in personal diaries) and then usually—but not always—transferred to a more formal record book.

16. See M. Scott Bradshaw, "Joseph Smith's Performance of Marriages in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 39 (2000), 4:23-69; Scott H. Faulring, "Early Marriages Performed by the Latter-day Saint Elders in Jackson County, Missouri, 1832-1834," *Mormon Historical Studies* 2 (Fall 2001): 197-210; and Lyndon W. Cook, comp., *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1994).

> All covenants, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, . . .are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead. . . .Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their convenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world. (D&C 132:7, 15)

"[T]he Prophet felt," LDS educator Danel W. Bachman concluded, "that only those who had his approval could properly exercise the religious ordinance [of marriage], and that he could void marriages that were not valid in eternity."[17]

Still, Smith delayed introducing eternal marriage, knowing that such sealings for the living presumed sealings for the dead, and that both presumed polygamy, at least after death. One of Smith's early apostles explained,

> [I]f the Lord had considered it wisdom [in the mid-1830s] to come foreward and reveal to the children of men. . .that, without the law of sealing, no man could be exalted to a throne in the celestial kingdom, had He revealed this simple sentiment, up would have jumped some man, saying, "What! got to have a woman sealed to me in order to be saved, in order to be exalted to thrones, dominions, and eternal increase?" "Yes." "I do not believe a word of it. I cannot stand that, for I never intended to get married, I do not believe in any of this nonsense." At the same time, perhaps somebody else might have had faith to receive it. Again up jumps somebody else, "Brother Joseph, I have had two wives in my lifetime, cannot I have them both in eternity?" "No." If he had said yes, perhaps we should all have apostatized at once.[18]

Perhaps because eternal marriage sealings presumed polygamy, Smith's first authorized marriage sealing united, not civilly married spouses, but Smith and his first documented plural wife, Louisa Beaman. In fact, plural marriage—known among early participants as celestial marriage—represented the highest order, the *ne plus ultra*, of Smith's teachings on eternal or patriarchal marriage. "The domestic order established by matrimonial sealing," concluded LDS researcher Rex Eugene Cooper, "place[d] the wife perpetually under her husband's jurisdiction, even though they participate jointly in exaltation. . . .As an aspect of the

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17. Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith," master's thesis, Purdue University, 1975, 127.

18. George A. Smith, Discourse, 18 March 1855, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855-86), 2:216.

marriage ceremony, the husband received priesthood keys that gave him 'patriarchal' authority over his wife."[19] Early polygamist William Clayton testified, "From him [i.e., Smith], I learned that the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on the earth, and that without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fulness of exaltation in Celestial glory."[20] Smith's nephew and later church president Joseph F. Smith added:

> Some people have supposed, that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential to the salvation or exaltation of mankind. In other words, some of the Saints have said, and believe, that a man with one wife, sealed to him by the authority of the Priesthood for time and eternity, will receive an exaltation as great and glorious, if he is faithful, as he possibly could with more than one. I want here to enter my solemn protest against this idea, for I know it is false. There is no blessing promised except upon conditions, and no blessing can be obtained by mankind except by faithful compliance with the conditions, or law, upon which the same is promised. The marriage of one woman to a man for time and eternity by the sealing power, according to the law of God, is a fulfillment of the celestial law of marriage in part—and is good so far as it goes—and so far as a man abides these conditions of the law, he will receive his reward therefor, and this reward, or blessing, he could not obtain on any other grounds or conditions. But this is only the beginning of the law, not the whole of it. Therefore, whoever has imagined that he could obtain the fullness of the blessings pertaining to this celestial law, by complying with only a portion of its conditions, has deceived himself. He cannot do it. . . .[I]t is useless to tell me that there is no blessing attached to obedience to the law, or that a man with only one wife can obtain as great a reward, glory or kingdom as he can with more than one, being equally faithful. . . .
>
> I understand the law of celestial [i.e., plural] marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall be damned, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that.[21]

In actual practice, however, not all eternal marriages were plural and not all sealed spouses were polygamists.[22]

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19. Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*, 124.

20. William Clayton, Affidavit, 16 February 1874, original in LDS Archives.

21. Joseph F. Smith, 7 July 1878, in *Journal of Discourses*, 20:28, 29-30, 31. In 1890 the church determined that plural marriage was not a requirement for exaltation. For an informative introduction to Mormon plural marriage, see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986; 2nd ed., 1989). See also Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); and Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias—The Shakers, the Mormons, & the Oneida Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

Hoping to avoid the lax record keeping that had attended the first baptisms for the dead, as well as (more importantly) the attention of unbelievers, Smith required that all eternal marriages, whether monogamous or plural, for the living or the dead, be performed with his permission by specially designated priesthood holders. "All these ceremonies," Cooper explained, "were performed in secret, and the rank and file membership of the Church was not aware that such ordinances were being performed."[23] Joseph Bates Noble, brother-in-law of Louisa Beaman, solemnized Smith's and Beaman's plural marriage in early April 1841 "according to the order of Celestial Marriage revealed to the Said Joseph Smith."[24] Bates later revealed that

> in the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph [S]mith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a "plurality of wives", and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a Revelation from God on the subject, and that the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, Joseph Smith, to move forward in the said order of marriage, and further, that the said Joseph Smith, requested him (Jos. Bates Noble) to step forward and assist him in carrying out the said principle, saying "in revealing this to you I have placed my life in your hands, therefore do not in an evil hour betray me to my enemies."[25]

This earliest plural marriage—for which Smith provided the words[26]—joined Beaman to Smith "[f]or time and eternity."[27] In fact, if the ceremony Smith dictated the next year in marrying Sarah Ann Whitney reflected his vows to Beaman, the couple "mut[u]ally agree[d]. . .to be each other's companion so long as you both shall live, preserving yourselves for each other and from all others[,] and also throughout

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22. "For the common Mormons, eternal [not plural] marriage was the most captivating feature of their domestic theology" (Guy M. Bishop, "Eternal Marriage in Early Mormon Marital Beliefs," *The Historian* 52 [Autumn 1990]: 88).

23. Rex Eugene Cooper, "The Promises Made to the Fathers: A Diachronic Analysis of Mormon Covenant Organization with Reference to Puritan Federal Theology," Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, June 1985, 229.

24. Joseph Bates Noble, Affidavit, 26 June 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, LDS Archives.

25. Joseph Bates Noble, Affidavit, 26 June 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. This affidavit is different from the one cited in the previous note.

26. "The Prophet gave the form of the ceremony, Elder Noble repeating the words after him" (Noble, qtd. in "An Interesting Occasion. Something Relating to Celestial Marriage," *Deseret News*, 11 June 1883, in Journal History, 11 June 1883). See also A. Karl Larson and Katharine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 2:593, 610.

27. Joseph Bates Noble, Testimony, in "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case," p. 425, q. 643, Archives, Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri.

eternity, reserving only those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph by revelation and commandment and by legal authority in times passed."[28]

William Clayton's experience corroborates the fact that most early eternal sealings were plural. Less than a month after his own first plural marriage, Clayton recorded Smith saying:

> nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent him (me) [i.e., Clayton] from inheriting eternal glory for he is sealed up by the power of the priesthood unto eternal life having taken the step [i.e., plural marriage] which is necessary for that purpose." He [i.e., Smith] said that except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity while in this probation by the power and authority of the Holy priesthood they will cease to increase when they die (i.e., they will not have any children in the resurrection[)], but those who are married by the power & authority of the priesthood in this life & continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost will continue to increase & have children in the celestial glory. (Compare D&C 131:1-4)

Clayton then wrote: "I feel desirous to be united in an everlasting covenant to my wife [i.e., his first wife, Ruth Moon] and pray that it may soon be."[29] His prayer was granted three months later when "Prest. Joseph. . .pronounced a sealing blessing upon Ruth and me. And we mutually entered into an everlasting covenant with each other."[30] (At that point, the Claytons' eternal sealing was the church's eighth between civilly married spouses; monogamists Howard and Martha Coray's sealing, performed the same day but by Smith's brother Hyrum, was the ninth.) Of the thirty men who married plurally before Smith's death, only four were sealed first to their civil wives before marrying their plural wives.[31]

Although married since early 1827, Joseph and Emma (Hale) Smith were not the first—or even the second—civilly wed couple to be sealed for eternity. Emma resisted her husband's controversial teachings on celestial marriage, and until she could be convinced, he turned to more

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28. "A Revelation to N[ewel]. K. Whitney," *The Essential Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 165-66; see also H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 315-16. The qualification "reserving only those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph by revelation and commandment" referred to future plural marriages.

29. Qtd. in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 102.

30. Ibid., 111.

31. The exceptions are James Adams, Ezra T. Benson, Heber C. Kimball, and Hyrum Smith.

TABLE 1
The Earliest Plural and Eternal Marriages[A]

Husband	Date of First Plural Marriage	Date of Eternal Marriage/ Sealing to Civil Spouse
George J. Adams	spring-summer 1843	N.A.
James Adams	11 July 1843	28 May 1843
Ezra T. Benson	27 April 1844	19 November 1843
Reynolds Cahoon	fall-winter 1841-42	*12 November 1843*
William Clayton	27 April 1843	22 July 1843
Howard Egan	fall-winter 1843-44	N.A.
William Felshaw	28 July 1843	N.A.
William D. Huntington	5 February 1843	N.A.
Orson Hyde	February-March 1843	N.A.
Joseph A. Kelting	early 1844	N.A.
Heber C. Kimball	fall-winter 1841-42	fall-winter 1841-42
Vinson Knight	spring-summer 1842	N.A.
Isaac Morley	14 January 1844	*26 February 1844*
Joseph Bates Noble	5 April 1843	N.A.
John E. Page	before 27 June 1844	N.A.
Parley P. Pratt	24 July 1843	24 July 1843
Willard Richards	18 January 1843	29 May 1843
Ebenezer C. Richardson	November 1843	N.A.
William Henry Harrison Sagers	fall 1843	N.A.
Hyrum Smith	11 August 1843	29 May 1843
John Smith	13 August 1843	*26 February 1844*
Joseph Smith	5 April 1841	28 May 1843
William Smith	fall 1843	N.A.
Erastus Snow	2 April 1844	N.A.
John Taylor	12 December 1843	*30 January 1844*
Theodore Turley	6 March 1844	N.A.
Lyman Wight	May 1844	N.A.
Edwin D. Woolley	by 28 December 1843	N.A.
Brigham Young	15 June 1842	29 May 1843
Lorenzo Dow Young	9 March 1843	N.A.

[A]This table is based, in part, on the research of George D. Smith.

Note: Dates on which civilly married couples, not otherwise sealed for eternity, received the second anointing appear in italics.

sympathetic followers. Sometime after his return to Nauvoo from England in mid-1841, Apostle Heber C. Kimball learned firsthand of Smith's revelation. According to son-in-law James Lawson, Kimball reported:

> "[T]he Prophet Joseph [Smith] came to me one evening and said, 'Brother Heber, I want you to give Vilate [(Murray) Kimball, his civil wife] to me to be my wife,' saying that the Lord desired this at my hands." Heber said that in all his life before he had never had anything take hold of him like that. He

> was dumb-founded. He went home, and did not eat a mouthful of anything, nor even touch a drop of water to his lips, nor sleep, for three days and nights. He was almost continually offering up his prayers to God and asking Him for comfort. On the evening of the third day he said, "Vilate, let's go down to the Prophet's," and they went down and met him in a private room. Heber said, "Brother Joseph, here is Vilate." "The Prophet wept like a child," said Heber, "and after he had cleared the tears away, he took us and sealed us for time and all eternity, and said, `Brother Heber, take her, and the Lord will give you a hundredfold.'"[32]

Vilate must have been unaware of her husband's dilemma, since Smith also asked Kimball to take a plural wife without informing Vilate, which would have been unnecessary if Vilate knew of Smith's doctrine.[33] Although published more than forty years after the fact, Lawson's account seems accurate and, considering Smith's plural marriage to Beaman the previous April, no doubt documents the first eternal sealing between a civilly married couple. While it is unclear precisely when this sealing occurred, it either preceded or coincided with Kimball's own first plural marriage in early 1842.[34]

Given Smith's emphasis on the primacy of plural marriage, it should be expected that the first eternal proxy sealings also involved polygamy. While the first such documented ceremony united Joseph C. and Caroline (Whitney) Kingsbury (d. 1842), daughter of Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, in early 1843, there is strong circumstantial evidence that proxy sealings actually began the previous year. After Smith married Delcena (Johnson) Sherman, widow of Lyman R. Sherman (d. 1839),

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32. James Lawson, qtd. in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallace, 1945; 1st ed. 1888), 440. Kimball's exchange with Lawson occurred when the latter was courting Kimball's adopted daughter, Elizabeth Ann Noon Kimball, whom he married in 1856. Elizabeth was the daughter of Kimball's first plural wife, Sarah (Peak) Noon, by her first husband, William Spencer Noon.

33. See Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 94-96.

34. Kimball agreed to Smith's demand that he marry plurally without telling Vilate. Vilate sensed that her husband was troubled, and when Kimball explained his predicament, the couple concluded that he should marry two elderly sisters who, they felt, "would cause her [Vilate] little, if any, unhappiness" (Whitney, 336). According to Lorenzo Snow, another early apostle and later church president, when Smith learned of Kimball's plan, he announced that the "arrangement is of the devil you go and get you a young wife one you can take to your bosom and love and raise children by" (qtd. in Stan Larson, ed., *Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Rudger Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993], 12). Smith then "commanded" Kimball to marry thirty-one-year-old Sarah (Peak) Noon, whose husband had recently deserted her. In fact, Kimball's biographer explained, "Heber was told by Joseph that if he did not do this he would lose his Apostleship and be damned" (Whitney, 336n). The sources disagree as to whether or not Vilate helped choose the two elderly sisters, or if Kimball acted alone.

sometime before July 1842,[35] Delcena's younger brother reported that she "had already been sealed to him [i.e., Sherman] by proxy."[36] If her sibling's memory is correct, Johnson-Sherman's proxy sealing probably occurred around the same time as her plural marriage to Smith.[37] Two other early widows whom Smith married, and who may have been sealed at the same time to their deceased husbands, are Agnes (Moulton) Coolbrith Smith (m. Don Carlos Smith) and Martha (McBride) Knight (m. Vinson Knight). Joseph Smith married Coolbrith-Smith in January 1842[38] and McBride-Knight sometime in August 1842.[39]

The second eternal sealing for a civilly married couple also occurred within the context of plural marriage. As briefly noted, Smith married Sarah Ann Whitney in mid-1842, with the permission of her parents, Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney. Less than three weeks later, in a letter to the Whitneys, Smith hinted at the blessings awaiting his new in-laws: "[O]ne thing I want to see you for it is to git the fulness of my blessings sealed upon our heads, &c."[40] Historian Lyndon Cook notes that Smith used "acceptance of plural marriage as a test for eternal marriage sealings," and the following Sunday, 21 August, the prophet rewarded the Whitneys' loyalty by sealing them for eternity.[41] As Whitney recorded:

> Part in the first reserection [resurrection] together with other blessings now added sunday 27st [sic, 21st] day of augt [August] [18]42 myself and wife I now also bless[ed] with part in the first reserrection [resurrection] also with many other blessings together with the promise of all my house the same day & of the same time[.][42]

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35. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 4, 288-305.

36. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review: Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Johnson* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1997; 1st ed., 1947), 85.

37. Following completion of the Nauvoo temple, Sherman was resealed for time and eternity to Lyman Sherman, then sealed for time only to Almon W. Babbitt. See "Book of Proxey [Sealings]," entry no. 79, p. 36, 24 January 1846, photocopy in my possession, original in LDS Archives.

38. Following completion of the Nauvoo temple, Coolbrith-Smith was sealed for time and eternity to Don Carlos Smith, then sealed for time only to George A. Smith. See ibid., entry no. 109, p. 49, 28 January 1846.

39. Following completion of the Nauvoo temple, McBride-Knight was resealed to Smith for time and eternity, then sealed for time only to Heber C. Kimball. See ibid., entry no. 92, p. 42, 26 January 1846.

40. "Dear, and Beloved, Brother and Sister, Whitney, and &c.," in *Essential Joseph Smith*, 167.

41. Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph C. Kingsbury: A Biography* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1985), 75.

42. Marquardt, 316.

Reflecting their change in status, Elizabeth Ann referred to the couple's next child born after their sealing as "the first child born heir to the Holy Priesthood and in the New and Everlasting Covenant in this dispensation."[43] Unlike Kimball, however, Whitney would wait to take his own first plural wife until after Smith's death in 1844. "[A]lthough my husband believed and was firm in teaching this Celestial order of Marriage," Elizabeth Ann recalled, "he was slow in practice."[44]

The Whitneys also participated, albeit indirectly, in the best documented of the church's early proxy sealings: that of Joseph C. and Caroline (Whitney) Kingsbury. According to Kingsbury, Smith sealed him to the Whitneys' deceased daughter after he agreed to marry civilly Smith's recent plural wife (and Kingsbury's sister-in-law), Sarah Ann Whitney. (Kingsbury's decision to act as the public husband of Smith's first teenage wife—Sarah Ann was seventeen—would have deflected unwanted scrutiny in the event of a pregnancy.)[45] In uniting the Kingsburys in March 1843, Smith pronounced:

> I Seal thee [Joseph Kingsbury] up to Come forth in the first resurrection unto eternal life—And thy Companion Caroline who is now dead thou shalt have in the first Resurection for I seal thee up for and in her behalf to come forth in the first Resurrection unto eternal lives (and it shall be as though She was present herself) and thou Shalt have her and She Shall be thine & no one Shall have power to take her from thee, And you both Shall be crowned and enthroned to dwell together in a Kingdom in the Celestial Glory in the presents of God And you Shall enjoy each other['s] Society & embraces in all the fulness of the Gospell of Jesus Christ worlds without End And I Seal these blessings upon thee and thy Companion in the name of Jesus Christ for thou shalt receive the holy annointing & Endowment in this Life to prepare you for all these blessings even So Amen.

Smith sought as well at this time to reassure the couple by blessing Sarah Ann:

> Oh Lord my God, thou that dwellest on high bless I beseach of thee the one into whose hands this may fall and crown her with a diadem of glory in the Eternal worlds. Oh let it be sealed this day on high that she shall come forth in the first reserrection to recieve the same and verily it shall be so saith the Lord if she remain in the Everlasting covenant to the end as also all her Fathers house shall be saved in the same Eternal glory and if any of them shall wander

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43. See her "Reminiscences," in Carol Cornwall Madsen, ed., *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994), 204.

44. Ibid., 202.

45. Of the twelve women whom Smith had married in Nauvoo by the time of his sealing to Sarah Ann, eight [67 percent] had civil husbands who would have also shielded Smith from censure in case of a birth. Four of these women were under the age of thirty.

> from the foald of the Lord they shall not perish but shall return saith the Lord and be saived ~~in~~ and by repentance be crowned with all the fullness of the glory of the Everlasting Gospel. These promises I seal upon all of their heads in the name of Jesus Christ by the Law of the Holy Priesthood even so Amen.[46]

Four weeks later, Kingsbury stood by "Sarah Ann Whitney as supposed to be her husband & had a pretended marriage for the purpose of Bringing about the purposes of God in these last days."[47] Smith performed the civil ceremony.[48]

Before the end of the next month, Emma Smith and her husband's older brother, Hyrum (who also served as presiding patriarch), finally, according to Clayton, "received the doctrine of priesthood" (that is, plural marriage).[49] Hyrum's conversion was total;[50] Emma, though she had participated in the May 1843 resealings of sisters Emily and Eliza Partridge to her husband,[51] was less enthusiastic. As a reward for Emma's cooperation, she and Smith were eternally sealed on 28 May 1843, the church's third such union.[52] Also sealed were Mormon stalwarts James and Harriet Denton Adams (m. 1809).[53] Both couples were sealed during a meeting of Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, scene of the earliest endowment ceremonies.[54] Emma and Harriet, the first women to witness the quorum's activities, would be initiated as full members later

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46. "Blessing Given to Sarah Ann Whitney by Joseph Smith. Nauvoo City, March 23, 1843," typescript copy, LDS Archives.

47. After Smith's death, Joseph C. and Caroline's sealing was repeated on 4 March 1845 by Heber C. Kimball, with Dorcas Adelia Moore standing in for Caroline. Immediately afterwards, Kimball sealed Kingsbury and Moore as husband and wife "for time & eternity." See Joseph C. Kingsbury, "History of Joseph C. Kingsbury," under entries dated 29 April 1843 and January 1845, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. See also Compton, 342-63; and Cook, *Joseph C. Kingsbury*, 75-77.

48. Cook, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages*, 104.

49. Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 106.

50. Smith was preparing his brother to succeed him and relied on him to perform the majority of eternal sealings from this point on.

51. Smith had married the Partridge sisters without Emma's knowledge the previous March. When she subsequently agreed to allow her husband to take additional wives of her choosing, she selected the Partridges. Smith then repeated the ceremony for Emma's benefit. See Compton, 407-409.

52. See Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 381.

53. Ibid., 381. Adams entered plural marriage five weeks later on 11 July. See George D. Smith, "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-46: A Preliminary Demographic Report," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Spring 1994): 37.

54. For introductions to the anointed quorum, see D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 82-100; Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's

that fall. Quorum members accepted Smith's doctrine of plural marriage in theory, if not yet in fact.[55] By the time of his sealing to Emma, Smith had married some twenty-five celestial wives,[56] and the following brethren had, with Smith's permission, taken at least one plural wife: Reynolds Cahoon, William Clayton, William Huntington, Orson Hyde, Heber C. Kimball, Vinson Knight, Joseph Bates Noble, Willard Richards, Brigham Young, and Lorenzo Dow Young.[57]

The next day after the Smith/Adams sealings, Smith officiated, again during a meeting of the anointed quorum, at the sealings of three civilly married couples (the church's fifth, sixth, and seventh): Hyrum and Mary (Fielding) Smith (m. 1837), Brigham and Mary Ann (Angell) Young (m. 1834), and Willard and Jennetta (Richards) Richards (m. 1838).[58] He also performed on this occasion three proxy sealings: that of Hyrum and Jerusha (Barden) Smith (d. 1837), Brigham and Miriam (Works) Young (d. 1832), and Mercy R. (Fielding) and Robert B. Thompson (d. 1841).[59] For these latter sealings, Mary Smith stood in the place of Jerusha Smith, Mary Ann Young in place of Miriam Young, and Hyrum Smith in place of Robert Thompson. "Such a wedding I am quite sure [was] never witnessed before in this generation," remembered Mercy Thompson. "[P]erhaps some may think I could envy Queen Victoria in some of her glory. Not while my name stands first on the list in this Dispensation of women seal[e]d to a Dead Husband through devine Revelation."[60] Within weeks, Hyrum took his widowed sister-in-law, Mercy, as his first plural wife.[61]

Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982; and David John Buerger, *Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 35-68. For the quorum's activities, see D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1994), 491-519.

55. "[T]hese ordinances [i.e., sealings and the fullness of the priesthood]," writes Andrew F. Ehat, "were being administered to those who were at least willing to believe in the divinity of plural marriage. . . .Joseph Smith believed that God told him to employ this principle as a means of testing the faith of those selected to receive these temple blessings" (74-75, endnotes omitted).

56. See Compton, 4-7. "It need scarcely be said," remarked Joseph F. Smith, "that the Prophet [Joseph Smith] found no one any more willing to lead out in this matter in righteousness than he was himself. Many could see it—nearly all to whom he revealed it believed it, and received the witness of the Holy Spirit that it was of God; but none excelled, or even matched the courage of the Prophet himself" (Discourse, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:29).

57. See the data in Smith, "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy," 37-72.

58. See Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 381.

59. Ibid.

60. "Reminiscence of Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson," in Madsen, 195.

61. Thompson's sealing to Smith was for time only: "He [i.e., Hyrum Smith] made an agreement that he would deliver me up on the morning of the day of resurrection to my husband Robert Blashel Thompson, but would take charge of me for life" (Mercy Rachel Thompson, Testimony, p. 247, q. 174, in "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case").

TABLE 2
The Earliest Eternal Marriage Sealings for Living Civilly Married Couples

Civilly Married Couple	Date of Eternal Sealing	Officiator	Date of First Plural Marriage Before 27 June 1844
Heber C. and Vilate (Murray) Kimball*	fall-winter 1841-42	Joseph Smith	fall-winter 1841-42
Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann (Smith) Whitney*	21 August 1842	Joseph Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
Joseph and Emma (Hale) Smith*	28 May 1843	Hyrum Smith	5 April 1841
James and Harriet (Denton) Adams*	28 May 1843	Joseph/Hyrum Smith	11 July 1843
Willard and Jennetta (Richards) Richards*	29 May 1843	Joseph/Hyrum Smith	18 January 1843
Hyrum and Mary (Fielding) Smith*	29 May 1843	Joseph Smith	11 August 1843
Brigham and Mary Ann (Angell) Young*	29 May 1843	Hyrum Smith	15 June 1842
William and Ruth (Moon) Clayton*	22 July 1843	Joseph Smith	27 April 1843
Howard and Martha Jane (Knowlton) Coray	22 July 1843	Hyrum Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
Parley P. and Mary Ann (Frost) Pratt*	24 July 1843	Hyrum Smith	24 July 1843
Thomas and Caroline (Nickerson [Hubbard]) Grover	12-31 August 1843	Hyrum Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
John and Julia (Ives) Pack	12-31 August 1843	Hyrum Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
Cornelius P. and Permelia (Darrow) Lott*	20 September 1843	Hyrum Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
David and Rhoda Ann (Marvin) Fullmer	Fall 1843	Hyrum Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
Benjamin F. and Melissa (LeBaron) Johnson	20 October 1843	Joseph Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
William and Rosannah (Robinson) Marks*	*22 October 1843*	N.A.	N.A. (monogamist)
Wilford and Phoebe (Carter) Woodruff*	11 November 1843	Hyrum Smith	N.A. (monogamist)
Reynolds and Thirza (Stiles) Cahoon*	*12 November 1843*	N.A.	fall-winter 1841-42
Alpheus and Lois (Lathrop) Cutler*	*15 November 1843*	N.A.	N.A. (monogamist)
Ezra T. and Pamelia (Andrus) Benson	19 November 1843	Hyrum Smith	27 April 1844
George A. and Bathsheba (Bigler) Smith*	20 January 1844	Brigham Young	N.A. (monogamist)
John and Leonora (Cannon) Taylor*	*30 January 1844*	N.A.	12 December 1843
W. W. and Sally (Waterman) Phelps*	*2 February 1844*	N.A.	N.A. (monogamist)
Isaac and Lucy (Gunn) Morley*	*26 February 1844*	N.A.	14 January 1844
John and Clarissa (Lyman) Smith*	*26 February 1844*	N.A.	13 August 1843

*Members of Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, initiated during Joseph's lifetime.
Note: Dates on which civilly married couples, not otherwise sealed for eternity, received the second anointing appear in italics.

The next sealings combined celestial, eternal, and proxy marriages. According to LDS historian Andrew F. Ehat, Parley P. and Mary Ann (Frost) Pratt (m. 1837) were sealed for eternity by Hyrum Smith on 23 June 1843, but when Joseph Smith learned of the ceremony performed in his absence and without his permission, he rescinded it.[62] Reportedly, Pratt had been courting Elizabeth Brotherton to become his first celestial wife, whereas Smith had wanted Pratt's first plural wife to be Mary Ann's sister, Olive Grey Frost. One month later, on 24 July, Joseph asked Hyrum[63] to seal Pratt and his first civilly married wife, Thankful (Halsey) Pratt (m. 1827, d. 1837), for eternity, with Frost acting as proxy; then seal Pratt and Frost for time and eternity; and finally seal Brotherton to Pratt as his first plural wife.[64] Joseph Smith subsequently wed Olive Frost, probably at around this same time.[65]

Shortly after Hyrum Smith read his brother's revelation on celestial marriage (D&C 132) to members of the Nauvoo Stake High Council in mid-August 1843, councilor Thomas Grover asked to be married eternally both to his deceased wife and to his current wife. Hyrum had told the stake leaders, "Now, you that believe this revelation and go forth and obey the same shall be saved, and you that reject it shall be damned."[66] Joseph consented and asked Hyrum to perform the ceremony during which Caroline Eliza (Nickerson) Hubbard Grover (widow of Marshal Hubbard) stood as proxy for Caroline (Whiting) Grover (m. 1828, d. 1840), and then was herself sealed for time and eternity to her husband, Thomas Grover, whom she had married civilly in 1841.[67] Like Newel Whitney, Grover did not contract his first plural marriage until after Smith's death.[68] Before the end of the decade, however, Grover and Nickerson would divorce.

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62. See Ehat, 66-71 (Ehat acknowledges the assistance of Pratt family historian Stephen L. Pratt). "[T]he sealing power was not in Hyrum legitimately," reported Brigham Young, "neither did he act on the sealing principle only as he was dictated by Joseph. This was proven, for Hyrum did undertake to seal without counsel, & Joseph told him if he did not stop it he would go to hell and all those he sealed with him" (Young to William Smith, 10 August 1845, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Archives).

63. Mary Ann Frost Pratt, Affidavit, 3 September 1869, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. (Pratt makes clear that Hyrum, not Joseph, officiated.)

64. Mary Ann Frost Pratt, Affidavit, 3 September 1869, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. This affidavit is different from the previously cited affidavit.

65. Compton, 6, 586-92.

66. Qtd. in Thomas Grover to A. M. Musser, 10 January 1885 [1886], in "Elder Grover's Testimony," *Deseret Evening News*, 11 January 1886, 2.

67. Thomas Grover, Affidavit, 6 July 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavits Books.

68. "At that time," Grover later wrote, "I was in the deepest trouble that I had ever been in, in my life. I went before the Lord in prayer and prayed that I might die as I did not

Also in August 1843, Hyrum Smith broached the topic of eternal (and presumably plural) marriage with John Pack, his wife, Julia (Ives) (m. 1832), and his mother, Phylotte (Green) Pack. Smith explained that "all former covenants and contracts in marriage would be null and void after death." He continued that it was Pack's "privilege to have his wife sealed to him for time and for all eternity, and further that he had a right to act for his father, George Pack who was dead, that his father and mother might be sealed or married for time and all eternity, also." According to Pack, Smith "then and there Sealed to him his wife. . .for time and for all eternity, and also Sealed or married his mother. . .to his father. . ., he (John Pack) acting for and in behalf of his father who was dead."[69] Nineteen months later, again after Joseph and Hyrum Smith's deaths, Pack took his first plural wife.

Over the next three months, civilly married spouses Cornelius and Permelia (Darrow) Lott (m. 1823), David and Rhoda Ann (Marvin) Fullmer (m. 1831), and Benjamin F. and Melissa (Lebaron) Johnson (m. 1841) were all sealed for time and eternity—the first two couples by Hyrum Smith, the third by Joseph Smith; all three remained monogamists during Joseph's lifetime.[70] The Lotts were united "for time and Eternaty" on the same day their daughter Melissa wed Smith as his thirty-first plural wife.[71]

Johnson recalled of his sealing at age twenty-five: "In the evening, he [Joseph Smith] called me and my wife to come and sit down, for he wished to marry us according to the Law of the Lord. I thought it a joke, and said I should not marry my wife again, unless she courted *me*, for I did it all the first time. He chided my levity, told me he was in earnest, and so it proved; for we stood up and were sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise."[72] Of the Johnsons' sealing, Clayton recorded:

> Evening Joseph [Smith] gave us much instruction, showing the advantages of the E[verlasting] C[ovenant] [i.e., eternal marriage]. He said there was

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wish to disobey his order to me. On a sudden there stood before me my oldest wife that I have now and the voice of the Lord said that `this is your companion for time and all eternity.' At this time I never had seen her and did not know that there was such a person on this earth" (Grover to Brigham Young, 14 October 1870, Brigham Young Papers).

69. John Pack, Affidavit, 22 July 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavits Books.

70. See the Lott family Bible, LDS Archives; "A Brief Sketch of the Life of Rhoda Ann Marvin Fullmer, Wife of David Fullmer, as Given by Her Own Mouth This 29th Day of Nov. 1885," in Fullmer Family Notebook, LDS Archives; and Benjamin F. Johnson, Affidavit, 4 March 1870, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

71. "Family Record," in Lott family Bible; see Compton, 598.

72. Johnson, *My Life's Review,* 85-86, emphasis in original.

two seals in the Priesthood. The first was that which was placed upon a man and woman when they made the covenant and the other was the seal which alloted to them their particular mansion.[73] After his discourse B[enjamin]. F. Johnson & his wife were united in an everlasting covenant.[74]

The next two proxy marriages are conjectural. On 2 November 1843, Joseph Smith married Fanny (Young) Carr Murray. Young was both the older sister of Brigham Young and widow of Roswell Murray (m. 1832, d. 1839).[75] If their marriage mirrored Smith's plural marriages to other widows, he may have married Young for time (with Brigham Young officiating), then sealed her to her late husband (with Brigham Young acting as proxy). One account of the ceremony refers simply to "the marrying or Sealing of Fanny Murray to President Joseph Smith";[76] however, another says that the marriage to Smith was "for time and eternity."[77] In the second case, Lucy Mack Smith, mother of Joseph Smith and widow of Joseph Smith Sr. (m. 1796, d. 1840), entered the Quorum of the Anointed in early October 1843.[78] One month later, she received that quorum's highest ordinance, the second anointing. Since this ritual was in principle administered only to married couples, Lucy and Joseph Smith, Sr., may have been sealed at or by this time.[79]

That November, Hyrum Smith officiated at the proxy sealing of Jacob and Elizabeth (Holden) Peart (m. 1824, d. 1841). Peart's civil wife, Phebe (Robson) (m. 1842), acted as proxy for Holden, after which Peart and Robson were sealed for time only. (Peart and Robson's reaffirmation of their civil marriage may mark the first such sealing "for time only" in the church for previously married spouses.) Hyrum Smith's wife Mary Fielding was present as a witness.[80]

The last known proxy sealing prior to Smith's death on 27 June 1844 involved the parents of two of his plural wives. Margaret and Edward

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73. This second seal refers to the second anointing, discussed below.

74. Qtd. in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 122-23.

75. Young had previously married and divorced Robert Carr.

76. Augusta A. Young, Affidavit, 12 July 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

77. Harriet Cook Young, Affidavit, 4 March 1870, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

78. Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 418.

79. See Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, 497. Smith, Sr., would also have been initiated by proxy into the anointed quorum, although there are no known examples of this having occurred. At the same time, there are instances of the anointed quorum's highest ordinance being adminstered to men without their wives. Still, it seems barely conceivable that Smith, Jr., would not have somehow sealed his parents for eternity.

80. Jacob Peart Sr., Affidavit, 23 April 1870, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

TABLE 3
The Earliest Proxy Marriage Sealings

Living Spouse	Deceased Spouse	Proxy	Date of Eternal Sealing	Officiator
Agnes Moulton Coolbrith Smith*	Don Carlos Smith	Joseph Smith	6 January 1842	Brigham Young
Delcena Johnson Sherman	Lyman R. Sherman	Joseph Smith	before July 1842	Brigham Young?
Martha McBride Knight*	Vinson Knight	Joseph Smith	August 1842	Heber C. Kimball
Joseph C. Kingsbury	Caroline Whitney Kingsbury	Sarah Ann Whitney	23 March 1843	Joseph Smith
Hyrum Smith	Jerusha Barden Smith	Mary Fielding Smith	29 May 1843	Joseph Smith
Brigham Young	Miriam Angeline Works Young	Mary Ann Angel Young	29 May 1843	Joseph Smith
Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson	Robert B. Thompson	Hyrum Smith	29 May 1843	Joseph Smith
Parley P. Pratt	Thankful Halsey Pratt	Mary Ann Frost Pratt	24 July 1843	Hyrum Smith
Thomas Grover	Caroline Whiting Grover	Caroline Nickerson	12-31 August 1843	Hyrum Smith
Phylotte Green Pack	George Pack	John Pack	12-31 August 1843	Hyrum Smith
Fanny Young Murray*	Roswell Murray	Joseph Smith	2 November 1843	Brigham Young
Lucy Mack Smith*	Joseph Smith Sr.	Hyrum Smith?	12 November 1843	Joseph Smith?
Jacob Peart Sr.	Elizabeth Holden Peart	Phebe Thompson Peart	November 1843	Hyrum Smith
Margaret Lawrence Butterfield	Edward Lawrence	William Clayton	21 November 1843	Hyrum Smith

*The evidence for these proxy sealings is circumstantial.

Lawrence had married about 1822; two daughters, Maria and Sarah, followed in 1823 and 1826. By June 1841, Edward was dead and Smith had been appointed guardian of the Lawrence estate. That same year, or early the next, Margaret married Josiah Butterfield. The following May 1843, Smith wed both Lawrence sisters.[81] Six months later, William Clayton asked Smith to "come to my house & marry Marg[are]t. Butterfield to her first husband [i.e., Edward Lawrence]." Smith was unable to comply and asked Hyrum to perform the rite. During the ceremony, Clayton "stood as proxy for Edw[ar]d. Lawrence."[82]

Throughout the fall of 1843 and winter of 1843-44, civilly married couples Wilford and Phoebe (Carter) Woodruff (m. 1837), Ezra T. and Pamelia (Andrus) Benson (m. 1832), and George A. and Bathsheba

81. See Compton, 6, 475-77.
82. Qtd. in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 123.

(Bigler) Smith (m. 1841) were sealed for eternity.[83] Again, all were monogamists; only Benson married plurally before Smith's death. These were apparently the last civilly wed couples to be joined in a sealing ceremony during Smith's lifetime. Woodruff recorded:

> During the evening, I walked over to Br [John] Taylors & spent some time in conversing about the principle of the Celestial world or some of them. Br Hiram Smith was in with us & presented som[e] ideas of much interest to me concerning Baptism for the dead, the resurrection redemption & exhaltation in the New & everlastig covenant that reacheth into the eternal world.
>
> He sealed the marri[a]ge covenant between me & my wife Phebe W Carter for time & eternity & gave us the principle of it which was interessting to us. After spending the evening pleasantly we returned home & spent the night.[84]

By late 1843, word of Joseph Smith's teachings on eternal marriage for the living and the dead was spreading. The response was not always welcoming. "[A]fter preaching about everything else he could think of in the world," remembered his cousin, Smith "at last hints at the idea of the law of redemption, makes a bare hint at the law of sealing, and it produced such a tremendous excitement that, as soon as he had got his dinner half eaten, he had to go back to the stand, and unpreach all that he had preached, and let the people to guess at the matter."[85] Others were more receptive. Sixty-one-year-old Jacob Scott wrote to his non-Mormon daughter:

> Several Revelations, of great utility, & uncommon interest; have been lately communicated to Joseph & the Church, . . .one is that *all* Marriage contracts, or Covenants, are to be "*Everlasting*["]. . .to be married for both *Time* & *Eternity*: and as respects those whose partners were dead, before this *Revelation* was given to the Church; they have the privilege to be married to their deceased husbands, or wives (as the case may be,) for eternity. . . .
>
> Many of the members of the church have already availed themselves of this privilege, & have been married to their deceased partners; & in some cases where a Man has been married to 2 or three wives, and they are dead he has been married to them all; in the order, in which he was married to them

83. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983-85), 2:326-27; Pamelia A. Benson, Affidavit, 6 September 1969, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books; Bathsheba W. Smith, Affidavit, 19 November 1903, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books; and Bathsheba W. Smith, Testimony, pp. 298-99, qq. 151-61, in "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case."

84. Woodruff, *Journal*, 2:326-27.

85. George A. Smith, Discourse, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:217.

> while living & also widows have been married to their dead husbands ~~whether one woman, another one may have been~~ but *only to one* husband. . . . There are many things connected with this subject, which I am not liberty to communicate to you. . .other revelations[86] intimately connected with this momentous dispensation and which are almost ready to unfold themselves to us, I cannot communicate to you at present, altho' I know them in part, for you could not bear them now.[87]

Also in late 1843, Smith began introducing to members of his anointed quorum an ordinance he and others referred to as the second anointing, or fullness of the priesthood.[88] On 28 September 1843, Joseph and Emma became the first recipients of this "highest and holiest order."[89] According to Nauvoo historian Glen M. Leonard, Smith's "crowning ordinance" was "a promise of kingly powers and of endless lives. It was the confirmation of promises that worthy men could become kings and priests and that women could become queens and priestesses in the eternal worlds."[90] Brigham Young explained, "For any person to have the fullness of that priesthood, he must be a king and priest. A person may have a portion of that priesthood, the same as governors or judges of England have power from the king to transact business; but that does not make them kings of England. A person may be anointed king and priest long before he receives his kingdom."[91] Such members, added twentieth-century LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie, "receive the more sure word of prophecy, which means that the Lord seals their exaltation upon them while they are yet in this life. . . .[T]heir exaltation is assured."[92] During this ordinance, Cook explains, a husband was "ordained a priest and anointed a king unto God," while wives were "anointed priestesses and queens unto their husband."[93] Ehat continues:

> These ordinances, depending on the person's ecclesiastical position, made

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86. This is an allusion to plural marriage.

87. Jacob Scott to Mary Scott Warnock, 5 January 1844, Archives, Community of Christ. Jacob was the father of Sarah Scott Mulholland, one of the Joseph Smith's "possible" plural wives (see Compton, 8). He died the following January.

88. The first anointing was part of the ceremony of initiation into the anointed quorum.

89. Faulring, *American Prophet's Record,* 416.

90. Leonard, 260-61. For a thorough treatment, see David John Buerger, "`The Fulness of the Priesthood': The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16 (Spring 1983): 10-44.

91. Smith, *History of the Church,* 5:527.

92. Bruce R. Mcconkie, *Mormon Doctrine,* 2nd. ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 109-10.

93. Cook, *Joseph C. Kingsbury,* 94. Husbands and wives did not expect they would act as kings and priests, queens and priestesses in this life.

> the recipient a "king and priest," "in," "in and over," or (as only in Joseph Smith's case) "over" the Church. Moreover, the recipient had sealed upon him the power to bind and loose on earth as Joseph explained in his definition of the fulness of the priesthood. Another blessing, growing out of the promise of the sealing power was the specific blessing that whatever thing was desired it would not be withheld when sought for in diligent prayer.[94]

"There is no exaltation in the kingdom of God," concluded Church Historian, and later president, Joseph Fielding Smith, "without the fulness of priesthood."[95]

Such assurances of virtually unconditional exaltation had figured in Smith's eternal sealings since at least 1841. In mid-1843, the Lord vowed through Smith:

> [I]f a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them—. . .Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to evelasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. . . .and [if] he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation. (D&C 132:19-20, 26)

The previous year, the Lord had told Newel and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "[T]he thing that my servant Joseph Smith has made known unto you and your Family shall be rewarded upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old & young."[96] One of Smith's brides reported him telling her, "If you will take this step it will insure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father's household & all of your kindred."[97] To these promises of eternal exaltation, the second anointing added the particular blessings of title (king/queen), dominion (in/over the Kingdom of God), and power (to ask and receive).

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94. Ehat, 95-96.

95. Qtd. in Bruce R. McConkie, comp., *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956), 3:132.

96. "A Revelation to N[ewel]. K. Whitney," in *Essential Joseph Smith*, 165.

97. Helen Mar Kimball, qtd. in Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 293.

As wives were anointed to their husbands, the second anointing also functioned for those spouses not otherwise sealed for eternity as a *de facto* eternal sealing. (Plural wives would not receive the second anointing until after Smith's death.) From such rituals, notes Cooper, "sprang. . . family kingdoms, organized around each man who had been anointed a priest and king. Since Joseph Smith, by matrimonial sealings, created bonds between himself and at least some other men, it is possible that he envisioned all the priests and kings within the system eventually being linked to him through some form of sealing network."[98] Civilly married couples, not previously sealed, joined forever through the second anointing as heirs of the fullness of the priesthood prior to Smith's death included William and Rosannah (Robinson) Marks (m. 1813), Reynolds and Thirza (Stiles) Cahoon (m. 1810), Alpheus and Lois (Lathrop) Cutler (m. 1808), John and Leonora (Cannon) Taylor (m. 1833), William W. and Sally (Waterman) Phelps (m. 1815), Isaac and Lucy (Gunn) Morley (m. 1812), and John and Clarissa (Lyman) Smith (m. 1815). The Cahoons, Taylors, Morleys, and Smiths had all embraced plural marriage; the remainder were monogamists, although Cutler and Phelps would take plural wives after Joseph Smith's death. Only Marks opposed the doctrine. These apparently were the last couples so united during Smith's lifetime.

Following Smith's death, many of the eternal sealings both living and proxy solemnized while he was alive were (like the rites of the anointed quorum) repeated in early 1846 in the Nauvoo temple.[99] Again, this allowed for greater uniformity in administration and accuracy in recording. During the one-month period from early January to early February 1846, for example, close to 200 proxy sealings were performed,

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98. Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers,* 148-49. While Smith's doctrine of sealing foresaw adult male-to-male father/son-type relationships, the first known such adoption occurred in late January 1846, eight months after Smith's death. According to Brigham Young: "at 10 in the Morning I with a number of the 12 [Apostles] & others assembled in the *Celestial Room of the* [Nauvoo] Temple where I attended to the Sacred ordinance of Sealing by adoption. . . .[T]he Spirit of the Allmighty God attending the administration & filled our hearts to overflowing & many wept for joy that were adopted into my Family" (Young, Diary, 25 January 1846, LDS Archives). The record for John M. Bernhisel to "Joseph Smith (deceased)" reads: "John Milton Bernhisel. . .gave himself to Pres[iden]t. Joseph Smith (martryed) to become his son by the law of adoption and to become a legal heir to all the blessings bestowed upon Joseph Smith pertaining to exaltations even unto the eternal Godhead with a solemn covenant to observe all the rights & ordinances pertaining to the new & everlasting covenant as far as now is or shall hereafter be made known unto him." ("Book of Proxey [Sealings]," entry no. 153, p. 65, 3 February 1846).

99. Some sealings were performed after Smith's death but before endowments began in the Nauvoo temple. See, for example, the following entries from the diaries of Brigham

most of them new. The restricted nature of these temple sealings is evident in the proviso recorded in one such ceremony: "with the understanding that P. H. Young will deliver up Mary Elvira Lyncoln to her Husband (I[ra]. E[lisha]. Lyncoln) in the Resurrection."[100] At least sixty-eight of these ordinances also involved unions for time only between living couples (the first spouse and the proxy).

Included among these proxy sealings were several of Smith's plural wives who were usually sealed first to Smith for time and eternity and then for time only to the living church leader who had just stood as Smith's proxy. A number of Smith's plural marriages had also been repeated after his death but before ordinances began in the temple; some of these were repeated a second time in the temple. The record for Smith's and Sarah Ann Whitney's resealing reads that both

> were sealed husband & wife for time & all eternity (Heber Chace Kimball acting as proxy for Joseph Smith deceased) by Brigham Young her Parents having given her to him for that purpose. She was also sealed to H. C. Kimball for time (His wife Vilate Kimball having presented her to him at the Alter) by Pres. B[righam]. Young in the presence of John Taylor, A[lbert]. P. Rockwood, Amasa Lyman & Jas. Young.[101]

By the time Mormons began leaving Nauvoo in mid-February 1846, they

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Young and Heber C. Kimball (LDS Archives): "in the evening went to Br H[eber]. C. Kimballs. Saw sister Williams and Seald hir to hir husband F[rederick]. G. W[illiams]. Br H. C. Kimball stood as procksay" (Young, Diary, 2 September 1844); "Sister Evens was Sealled to hur Husband fore time and Eternity" (Kimball, Diary, 20 September 1844); "went to Bro Holtons and Sealled Him to his dead wife and gave the family council" (Kimball, Diary, 21 September 1844); "in the morning. went to Titus billings. seeled him to his wife" (Kimball, Diary, 2 February 1845); and "I Sealled B Sanderson and his wife fore time and Eternity this was on the Eve of the 16 he gave me three franks [francs]. he shall be blest" (Kimball, Diary, 17 May 1845).

One of the more unusual out-of-temple sealings occurred between Willard Richards and his celestial wife Alice Longstroth, who covenanted a union between themselves without the aid an outside officiator: "At 10. P.M. took Alice L.....h by the [hand] of our own free will and avow mutually acknowledge each other husband & wife, in a covenant not to be broken in time or Eternity for time & for all Eternity, to all intents & purposes as though the seal of the covenant had been placed upon us. for time & all Eternity & called upon God. & all the Holy angels—& Sarah Long—th [Willard's celestial wife and Alice's sister] to witness the same" (Richards, Diary, 23 December 1845, LDS Archives).

100. "Book of Proxey [Sealings]," entry no. 39, pp. 18-19, 18 January 1846.

101. Ibid., entry no. 4, p. 2, 12 January 1846. Of course, new eternal sealings between civilly married (often in conjunction with plural marriages) were also solemnized in the temple. Consider, for example, Thomas Bullock's eternal marriage to his first wife, Henrietta Rushton, and his plural wife, Lucy C. Clayton (sister of William Clayton): "At dusk I, Henrietta and Lucy went to the Temple, dressed, sat in the Cel[estial]. Room, and shook

had performed a total of at least 369 proxy and 2,420 living eternal marriages.[102]

Smith's doctrine of eternal sealings encapsulated his teachings on marriage, the family, and salvation. It promised glory to the righteous, the dead, those facing death who had not been bound to their spouses by the power of Smith's authority, and comfort to the beleaguered struggling to endure to the end. It assured the continuation in a celestial kingdom of those terrestrial joys which had first united husbands and wives. Joseph Kingsbury's elation at knowing he would join his departed wife no doubt voiced the reaction of most spouses to Smith's teachings: "[T]he full desire of my heart in having my Companion Caroline in the first Resurrection to claim her & no one have power to take her from me & we both shall be Crowned & enthroned together in the Celestial Kingdom of God Enjoying Each other's Society in all of the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ & our little ones with us as is Received in th[e] blessing that President Joseph Smith Sealed upon my head."[103] Twenty-nine-year-old Thomas Bullock added of his own sealing, "I praise the Lord, for this great manifestation of his love and mercy towards me and grant that the happiness which I now enjoy may last for all eternity."[104]

"Who is it that can not see the beauty and the excellency of celestial marriage, and having our children sealed to us?" asked Brigham Young, perhaps Smith's most loyal devotee. "What should we do without this? Were it not for what is revealed concerning the sealing ordinances, children born out of the covenant could not be sealed to their parents; children born in the convenant are entitled to the Spirit of the Lord and all the blessings of the kingdom."[105] Young also promised, "[B]y means of sealing powers and keys, and an everlasting covenant, the sons of men become the sons of God by regeneration, and are entitled, every man in

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hands with B[righam]. Young. H[eber]. C. Kimball. O[rson]. Hyde, P[arley]. P. Pratt, A[masa]. Lyman. Went into the President's room when I and [the] two others were sealed up to eternal life, thro' time to come forth in the morn of the resurrection, and thro' all eternity. Were sealed up against all sin except the sin against the Holy Ghost and the shedding of innocent blood by A. Lyman" (Bullock, Diary, 23 January 1846, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah). This ceremony may read as a second anointing ordinance, but Bullock was not anointed a king and a priest, his wives were not anointed to him, and his name does not appear in the official record of second anointings, "Book of Anointings" (LDS Archives).

102. Richard O. Cowan, *Temple Building Ancient and Modern* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1971), 29. Proxy sealings for spouses both of whom are dead did not begin until 1855.

103. Kingsbury, "History of Joseph C. Kingsbury," 29 April 1843.

104. Bullock, Diary, 23 January 1846.

105. Brigham Young, Discourse, 23 [sic, 21] June 1874, *Journal of Discourses*, 18:249.

his order, to the privileges, exaltations, principalities and powers, kingdoms and thrones, which are held and enjoyed, by the great Father of our race."[106] Thus faithful Saints, sealed forever for the power of Smith's authority, knew that at his coming Christ would not find the earth completely barren.

106. Brigham Young, Discourse, 6 November 1864, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:355.

Prophecy and Palimpsest

Robert M. Price

IN 2 KINGS 22, the priest Hilkiah sends word to Josiah the King: "I have found a book." Hilkiah had been busy locating funds to compensate the work crews refurbishing the temple, when suddenly the shrouding dust and shadows disclosed a surprising secret—nothing less than the Book of the Covenant or what we today refer to as the Book of Deuteronomy (or at least the core of it, chapters 4-33). The passage provides priceless information about the emergence of the Book of Deuteronomy. If only we had such revealing clues at other points in the history of the biblical canon!

The story of Josiah, Hilkiah, and the Book strikes deeper resonances for Latter-day Saints than for any other Christian group, due to the similarities in the way the Book of Mormon came to light. It, too, is said to be an ancient scripture buried in a time of religious and national crisis, only to resurface long afterward when its forgotten message could be heard anew. Today virtually all critical scholars agree that the tale of Josiah and Hilkiah hints at the very thing it tries to hide: that the Book of Deuteronomy was not discovered and dusted off, but actually created by Hilkiah, Huldah, Jeremiah, and others of the "Deuteronomic School" who sought to win the impressionable young king Josiah to their religious agenda. What is set forth in 2 Kings as reactionary (restoring the past) was really revolutionary (pressing on into a new future).

Again, virtually all critical scholars (outside Mormonism and several within) agree that Joseph Smith did not discover the Book of Mormon but rather created it. His goal would have been as similar to Hilkiah's as his methods: In the confusion over which nineteenth-century version of Christianity to embrace—none seeming to have any particular advantage over the others and all seeming to be severely in want of something—Joseph Smith tried to make a clean break with the recent past and go into a new future by invoking a more distant past. In so doing he created something new—an imaginary Sacred Past, the way it should have been.

Seen this way, the roots of the Latter-day Saints within the Campbel-

lite Restoration movement make new sense. When the other Campbellite sects blazed a trail "back to the Bible," i.e., to the early church of the New Testament, they were unwittingly retrojecting onto the past their own ideas of how the church ought to be. Obviously Alexander Campbell et al. derived their ideals from a selective reading of the New Testament documents (noticing certain things and ignoring others), so it was not as if they created their scriptural prototype of Christianity out of thin air. By the same token, neither did Joseph Smith. Assuming he was the author of the Book of Mormon, Smith's fabricated picture of a pristine ("Nephite"="neophyte"?) American Christianity was in fact his own biblically informed ideal of what American Christianity ought to become—and, for a great many Americans, it did. Joseph Smith's creation and retrojection of an artificial, superior biblical past is, thus, seen to be simply the most dramatic and thorough-going of all "restorationist" creations.

Narrative Worlds Without End

What Joseph Smith did, as historical critics understand the matter, is exactly what all ancient pseudepigraphists did, and he belongs to an illustrious company: the authors of the Book of Daniel, the Book of Deuteronomy, the Book of Zohar; the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus), not to mention a greater or lesser number of other epistles attributed to Paul; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 Enoch; 1, 2, and 3 Baruch; the Apocalypse of Moses; Madame Blavatsky's Book of Dzyan; and a number of "rediscovered" Tibetan Buddhist texts. Yet is this a company of saints or rather a rogues' gallery? Traditionally apologist and polemicist alike have equated "pseudepigraphist" with "fraud" or "liar," and in a trivial sense such a characterization is correct.

It is that same sense in which a fiction writer is a liar and a deceiver. That is, even though the book jacket be labeled "fiction," the writer strives to woo the reader into that state of "temporary willing suspension of disbelief" which Coleridge called "poetic faith." For a time, the reader of a novel or the viewer of a play allows himself or herself to be drawn into the events of a fiction, to be moved by the fortunes and misfortunes of the characters, etc. One enters a fictive world, a narrative world, in order to feel and experience things one would never otherwise experience. We now recognize, as Aristotle did, the wholesome and edifying function of temporarily suspending disbelief. Yet it has not always been so. Shakespeare and others were obliged to reassure their audiences that what they were about to see or read was "The True History of Richard III" or whomever. Some were not able to understand the difference between fiction and lying. The problem was one of "bifurcation," the reduction of a complex choice to an over-simple one. One's alterna-

tives are not either "fact or deception," "hoax or history." For example, were the parables of Jesus either factual or deceptive? Did he intend anyone to think he was talking about a real prodigal son of whose improbable homecoming he had yesterday read in *The Galilee Gazette*? Of course not; he knew that his audience knew he was making it up as he went, as an illustration. This is the same kind of "deception" practiced by scriptural pseudepigraphists, whether ancient or modern.

It may help at this point to remind ourselves of the distinction between the author of a story and the narrator. The author is the actual person composing and producing the text. Let Herman Melville serve as an example. The narrator, of course, is one of the characters in the story, chosen by the author as the one from whose viewpoint the story is to be related. Thus, the textual self-designation "I" (or "me") refers not to the author but to the narrator: "Call me Ishmael." Does this mean Melville is trying to deceive us regarding his name? Of course not. We are once again temporarily suspending disbelief, entering into a narrative world. While inside, we are listening to the narrator, a fictive construct of the author. "Ishmael is certainly a tough old salt!" one reader may remark to another, but when they have both laid the finished novel aside, they will begin to speak of Melville's, not Ishmael's, strengths and weaknesses as a writer. Accordingly, we ought to realize that for Joseph Smith to be the author of the Book of Mormon, with Moroni and Mormon as narrators, makes moot the old debates over whether Smith was a hoaxer or charlatan.

"Why Is it that You Ask My Name?"

Envision the situation which led to the production of pseudepigrapha in the ancient world as well as the modern. It all begins with the closing of the scriptural canon. Josephus informs his readers that the authority of the Jewish priests and scribes has come to substitute for that of the ancient prophets since the voice of prophecy has long ago fallen silent. Christians reading Josephus often read him naively at this point. They cite Josephus and then point to John the Baptist as a renewal of prophecy after centuries of silence, failing to realize that Josephus was giving a prescriptive account, not a descriptive one. The priestly and scribal establishment position had officially closed the canon of prophecy. It wasn't that new prophets were no longer forthcoming. Rather, they were no longer welcome.

In fact, the Bible makes clear that prophets had never been particularly welcome. Like Homer's Cassandra, their voices usually went unheeded and were often silenced by force. If a prophet were sufficiently popular, the authorities had to appear to take him seriously in order to maintain credibility with their flock (c.f., Mark 11:27-33). The first step was to silence the prophet; the second was to domesticate his inconve-

nient oracles by a process of official exegesis. Jesus satirized this process as adorning the tombs of the old prophets while secretly building new ones for their present-day successors—like Jesus himself (Matthew 23:29-31): "Blessed are you when all men despise you and cast out your name as evil, for so they did to the prophets who were before you. But woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so they extolled the false prophets" (Luke 6:22, 26) of the past—and the true prophets after they killed them!

In view of this situation, what was a new visionary to do? He had a message to declare, but there was no point in simply announcing it publicly, only to be carried away and executed. Who would then hear the message? So pseudepigraphy was born. Whereas the old prophets had spoken their messages, the new ones, the pseudepigraphists, wrote down their oracles and circulated them in this form as an underground samizdat. They knew it was important, even when speaking in the name of the Lord, to also speak in the name of a famous prophet. One might have established one's own prophetic charisma by personal appearances, as Isaiah and Jeremiah had, but personal appearances were needlessly dangerous. So, in order to gain a hearing, to have their oracles taken seriously, they wrote fictively under the names of ancient worthies such as Enoch, Moses, Daniel, Baruch, etc. Of course, the words themselves would ring with their own truth if they first managed to be read, and that was the trick: One puts Daniel's or Moses' name on it, and the reader soon finds himself recognizing the Word of God no matter the human channel through which it may have come. Did it matter much to an ancient Jewish reader that the Word of God had come through Isaiah or through Jeremiah? No more than to most modern readers of either prophet. All that matters is that one is reading the prophetic Word of God, and then it ought hardly to matter whether the real writer were Isaiah of Jerusalem or a later visionary appropriating his name (as in the cases of the Second and Third Isaiah and the Ascension of Isaiah).

Loose Canon

The closing of a canon is a momentous event in the history of any religion. It signals that establishment authorities (who caused the canon to be closed and chose what belonged in it) have decided the formative period of the religion is over and the religion must now be standardized and consolidated. They are setting about the laborious task of building the ark of salvation, and they don't want anyone rocking the boat after they've built it. They don't want to hammer out a doctrine of the Trinity, only to find some prophet popping up who announces the revelation of a fourth person in the Godhead! So the guardians of the newly minted orthodoxy—disdaining the doctrines taught in this or that gospel or

prophet—cross these off the canonical list, claiming the prerogative of rightly interpreting the contents of what remains: "First of all, you must know this: no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20). Thus, the long unwillingness of Roman Catholicism to open the Bible for everyone's scrutiny. Zechariah knew the situation well: "And if anyone again appears as a prophet, his father and mother who bore him ill say to him, 'You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of Yahve'. . . .On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; he will not put on a hairy mantle [the distinctive "uniform" of prophets, as with Elijah and John the Baptist] in order to deceive, but he will say, 'I am no prophet, but I am a tiller of the soil. . .'" (Zechariah 13:3-5).

In fact, these very oracles are found in a section of the book which critical scholars have dubbed Deutero-Zechariah. The original Zechariah was a sort of cultic prophet attached to the temple and its hierarchy, the very group who wanted to clamp the lid on populist prophecy. In order to be heard, someone—one of those later prophets "ashamed of his vision," i.e., not daring to publish it under his own name—retreats behind the pen-name of an older prophet. Having discovered his imposture (though not his real name), we still call him "Deutero-Zechariah" or "the Second Zechariah." The name hardly matters, but the content does, and this is why "Deutero-Zechariah" set pen to paper. If the sharp edges of the old prophets and seers have been smoothed out by harmonizing exegesis, then it is the pseudepigraphist's aim to sharpen that edge by introducing new and harsh words under the prophets' names. The new visionary may not dare appear in public, but neither will the authorities dare to condemn "newly rediscovered" writings by the old, canonical prophets. In this way, the newer prophets managed to slip under the fence built around the scriptural canon.

It may seem a great irony that a religion whose leaders claim the authority of the prophetic word as their charter of authority will at the same time be so opposed to receiving any new prophecy. Yet it is no irony at all, for the very notion of a canon of scripture denotes that the living voice of prophecy has been choked off and replaced with scribal authority, exercised by the official exegetes who will make the old oracles ring, not with God's voice but with their own: "I have no word from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the grace of the Lord has been found trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 7:25; c.f., 2 Timothy 1:2-3). Jesus "taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22)—which is, of course, why the scribal establishment decided they had to be rid of him! This is well depicted in Dostoyevski's Parable of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* where Jesus reappears on earth and the first thing the church does is arrest him and condemn him to the stake! It has taken the church a long time to consolidate its ab-

solute power over the minds and consciences of the faithful, and they are not about to allow Jesus's living voice to return and stir things up! These are the battle lines: canon versus prophecy. The guardians of the canon use the fossilized prophecy of the past in order to turn back the challenge of living prophets: "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but, as for this man, we do not even know where he comes from!" (John 9: 29).

In short, both the new prophets and the establishment try to hide behind the names of the ancient, canonical prophets in order to claim authority. The establishment scribes use the corpus of the scriptural prophets as something of a ventriloquist dummy to spout their own views, but just as surely, the pseudepigraphists are impersonating the old prophets, speaking with their own voices while donning the deceptive Esau-mask of pseudepigraphy. The question is: Who wears the mantle of the old prophets?

We see the same situation repeated a couple of centuries later when both orthodox bishops and heretical dissidents alike claimed apostolic succession. While the Pope of Rome claimed to be the successor of Linus (Peter's appointed successor in Rome), Basilides the Gnostic claimed to have received his gnosis at the hands of Glaukias (the secretary of Peter). No wonder there were so many New Testament pseudepigraphs penned in the early church, and no wonder so many of them were excluded from the official established list! The same thing would happen again some centuries later when Muslim scholars decided they needed to establish criteria for sifting out false hadith from genuine ones, since all tried to claim the authority of a traditional saying of Muhammad in order to promote their own views.

Even so, Joseph Smith—bitterly disillusioned by the strife and confusion of rival Christian sects in his own day, each claiming the Bible as authority for its distinctive teachings—finally decided to sever the Gordian Knot of Bible exegesis by creating a new scripture that would undercut the debating of the denominations and render them superfluous. He sought to found a new Christianity on a completely new basis: a new scripture from the old source, i.e., more Bible, a third testament called the Book of Mormon. Just as the Protestant theologians followed the example of the scribes and Pharisees of old, resting their claims upon the scribal authority of exegeting ancient revelations, Joseph Smith also adopted the old strategy of putting forth his own revelations in the outward form of an ancient manuscript, a pseudepigraph. If writings of old prophets are the only ones taken seriously, then by all means let's write one! It's the only way to gain media access! I call it both "prophecy" and "palimpsest" (a new document written over an erased text on the same scroll) because the Book of Mormon was both an exciting new disclosure and an over-writing of an underlying text, namely the Bible—specifically, Kings and Acts mixed together.

However, Joseph Smith hardly intended to reopen the gates of prophecy to all who might feel inspired. His own pseudepigraph served rather as a new and ready-made canon, an authoritative pedigree to root his new community in the holy past, to give it instant venerable equality with—even superiority to—the established Protestant sects. Prophecy would continue, but only through his own mouth, as he soon stipulated.

The Same Thing

Thus far we have tried to indicate how, far from being a mischievous or malicious hoaxer, Joseph Smith as the author of the Book of Mormon simply did the same thing done by the authors of the various biblical and extra-biblical pseudepigrapha. If we still wish to dismiss Smith as a hoaxer and a liar, or to put it another way, if we feel entitled to decree that God could never sink to inspiring a pseudepigraph (and if we think we are privy to the literary tastes of the Almighty, we are claiming to be prophets ourselves!), then we have no option but to dismiss the biblical pseudepigraphs along with the Book of Mormon. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. What's good for the stick of Ephraim is good for the stick of Judah. This point hardly escaped the literalistic biblicists of the past, who tried to defend the historical authenticity of 2 and 3 Isaiah, 2 Zechariah, Deuteronomy, Daniel, the Pastoral Epistles, etc., just as zealously as they sought to debunk the Book of Mormon. A case in point would be Gordon H. Fraser, author of the polemical *What Does the Book of Mormon Teach?*[1] One can scarcely imagine him welcoming Higher Critics of Scripture to apply the same critical tools on his beloved Bible as he himself used to vivisect the Mormon scripture.

Such apologists/polemicists saw no problem in accepting the claim of the Book of Daniel to have been penned in the Babylonian and Persian periods and then sealed away to be discovered by Jews living at the time of the events predicted in the book (Daniel 12:4, 9), i.e., the period immediately preceding the ejection of the Seleucid tyranny from Judea. No matter that the "historical" descriptions closer to the time of Daniel are filled with linguistic and historical anachronisms, while the sections closer to the end are eagle-eyed in their "predictions" of Antiochus IV Epiphanies, down to his troop movements in Palestine. When Gabriel directs Daniel to seal up the prophecy and stash it away for the benefit of readers hundreds of years in the future, the same alarm ought to sound in the fundamentalist apologist's head as when faced with Mormon

1. Gordon H. Fraser, *What Does the Book of Mormon Teach? An Examination of the Historical and Scientific Statements of the Book of Mormon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964). This is not to deny the great value of Fraser's research and historical conclusions. I mean only to suggest that his theological-apologetical conclusions may be premature.

claims that Joseph Smith "found a book" on Hill Cumorah. Of course, he does not see them the same way since Daniel is part of his Protestant canon while Mormon is not. Thus, the latter may be safely debunked and discredited (and thereby kept outside the charmed circle of the canon as if by a fiery sword that turns every way), while the former must be guarded and kept safe lest it lose its favored position within the canon and be "cast forth as an unclean thing" (Ezekiel 28) from the Garden of God's Word.

However, in the wake of historical criticism (which one cannot prohibit when one resolves with Martin Luther to admit the Grammatico-Historical Method to the study of scripture, reading scripture as any other human writing), most theologians now accept that God might inspire an authoritative pseudepigraph as easily as he might inspire a parable. There no longer seems anything incompatible between a book being scripturally inspired and authoritative, on the one hand, and being an historically spurious but fictively edifying pseudepigraph, on the other. In fact, Deuteronomy and its theology are probably taken with greater seriousness than ever before in Christian history now that its true character (and, thus, its intention) can be understood for the first time. In the same way, a new treasure may be disclosed in the pages of the Book of Mormon once one recognizes the skill and the goal of the theological artistry exercised by Joseph Smith as the author, not just the translator, of the Book of Mormon.

Seer or Secretary?

We have already indicated that Joseph Smith as the creator of the Book of Mormon simply used the same strategy as many biblical writers, adopting the outward form of an ancient manuscript as a metaphor for declaring that the coming of this Word was "from of old, from ancient days" (Micah 5:2). If we use that basis to dismiss the Book of Mormon as a spurious fake, we have the same theologically tin ear the opponents of Jesus had when they said, "How can this man say, 'I came down from heaven'?" "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" (John 8:57). Presently I will attempt to demonstrate that Joseph Smith followed the same method of composition as that employed by the various biblical pseudepigraphists, and he will come to look more like a writer of new scripture, not merely a discoverer or translator of ancient scripture. First we must pause to ask if, however consistent with the goals and methods of biblical pseudepigraphists, such a role for Joseph Smith would not be incompatible with his own claims for himself and Latter-day Saint claims about him.

In a word: No. We have already recalled the fact that, after setting forth the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith began to prophesy in his own

voice. The Mormon canon obviously contains many such inspired speeches by the Mormon prophet. In fact, the work of a prophet is not simply that of a transcriber or translator, and to equate the two is to deny the vast gap between Moses and the latter-day scribes, the distance between the prophet Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch, or between the Gnostic Revealer and the shepherd Muhammad 'Ali al Samman, who chanced upon the Nag Hammadi texts while hiding from his enemies in an Egyptian cave. According to the traditional story of the origins of the Book of Mormon, the role of Joseph Smith was more like that of John the Baptist—hardly that of a prophetic revealer, but simply the herald for another (in Smith's case, Mormon and Moroni) who would be a prophetic revealer. Yet this picture blatantly belies the central importance of Joseph Smith as revealer, prophet, and Moses-like founder of the Latter-day Saint community. He was a living prophet whose voice was the mouthpiece for God to issue regulations for the fledgling nest of faith. Clearly Joseph Smith is supposed to be on Jeremiah's level, not Baruch's. If not, we would have a problem accounting for the full prophetic dignity subsequently ascribed to him. Would not his "new" character as a prophetic revealer have to be understood as a self-exaltation against the ostensibly sufficient revelation of Mormon and Moroni? Would not Joseph Smith actually be interposing himself between scripture and the faithful? Would it not make better sense to suppose that the Book of Mormon itself was the first revelation to come by Joseph Smith, its author? Seen this way, Smith's authorship of the Book of Mormon would simplify rather than complicate—vindicate rather than discredit—his claim to prophetic inspiration.

Reformed Egyptian as Glossolalia

The clue to this scenario lies in Smith's supposed use of the magical oracular glasses of the Urim and Thummim. These are said to have enabled him to find clear meaning in a text that was to him but a "field of signifiers"[2] or perhaps to create meaning there. The metaphor of the Urim and Thummim glasses is parallel to Paul's characterization of glossolalia not as a human language unknown to the speaker (an indefensible and absurd claim), but as the ecstatic "tongues of angels" singing the glories "which man may not utter." While no mortal may render their meaning exactly, it is nonetheless possible, Paul says, to "interpret" them. Yet this is closer to interpreting omens or dreams (nonverbal) than it is to

2. See Barbara Johnson's discussion of Roland Barthes's S/Z in *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 7.

translating a text. For example, Apollo's oracle at Delphi, overcome with volcanic sulfur fumes, often mumbled in ecstatic gibberish, which an interpreter then rendered roughly into human conceptuality. To imagine glossolalia as a translatable language, as many Pentecostal defenders of the practice do, is to bring the practice into needless discredit since linguistic analysis has more than once demonstrated that there is no syntactical structure among the glossolalic sounds. Pentecostal literalists fear that if they admitted glossolalia is simply the inspired product of the Spirit-energized glossolalist, rather than the tongues-speaker as a stenographer taking divine dictation, the divine quality they attribute to the sounds would be gone. Likewise, we fail to grasp the metaphor of the Urim and Thummim if we imagine Joseph Smith was simply using something like a translating program on a computer.

If we have ears to hear, we will recognize the Urim and Thummim tale as a metaphor for Smith looking at America through the lenses of the Bible and at the Bible through the lenses of the American experience. The Book of Mormon was the inspired result—not an ancient text merely translated, but a creative extended metaphor. To defend the notion of a genuine ancient manuscript merely translated from an imaginary "Reformed Egyptian" language—for fear the Book of Mormon will otherwise forfeit its authority—is like the poor Pentecostals trying to convince themselves and others of the miraculous circumstance of their speaking a genuine ancient language unknown to themselves. In both cases, the proof of the pudding seems to reside in the eating, not in the package design and advertising slogans. Why defend a metaphor as if it were a literal fact when it is manifestly false, yet symbolically it might be profoundly true? Tongues-speaking is not a genuine foreign language. Likewise, the Book of Mormon never existed as a set of golden plates in a foreign language. Neither is the point. However, speaking mysteries in the spirit is genuinely revelatory, and so is a book which translates the frontier heritage of America into the language of the Bible.

Even the designation of the supposed original language of the Book of Mormon can be taken as a clue: The term "Reformed Egyptian" carries resonances, first, of the biblical exodus of Israel from Egypt, which Americans from Benjamin Franklin onward have seen as a paradigm for the journey of American colonists and immigrants to freedom on these shores. Of course Joseph Smith and his followers repeated the story of the exodus as they moved from the hostile East to the promised land of Utah where they could sit in peace, each beneath his vine, and where, delivered out of the hand of their enemies, they might worship without fear. Like Moses, Joseph Smith was not destined to enter the land with them, and at the same time, we cannot help but be reminded of "Joseph in Egypt," the persecuted young visionary despised by his contemporaries but called to greatness.

The enigmatic term "Reformed Egyptian" also signifies the new start Christianity would make in America under Smith's leadership. Smith had begun what he regarded as a reformation of Protestant Christianity. Hence "Reformed Egyptian" was the language which Joseph Smith and his Book of Mormon used. It was no more a genuine but unknown ancient language than is Pentecostal glossolalia, but it was every bit as much a super-verbal metaphor for new inspiration.

Thus, to say the Book was rendered from "Reformed Egyptian" was to carry the foundation myths of both biblical Israel and Protestant Christianity into the modern America of the early nineteenth century. It was to say that the great epic of salvation history was far from over, that it continued to unfold here and now. A powerful image for this was the discovery in one's own time of an ancient bible of American revelation, but an even more potent image for the same thing was the writing of a new chapter of the biblical epic in modern America! This is just what Joseph Smith did. There are not two authorities vying for priority in Mormonism—Joseph Smith's prophecies versus the letter of the inspired text of the Book of Mormon. Instead, there is only one authority—the divinely inspired prophecy of Joseph Smith—and the Book of Mormon is the fundamental prophecy of Joseph Smith.

Latter Prophets and Latter-day Saints

Specifically, the Book of Mormon conforms to the genre of the "Latter Prophets" rather than that of the "Former Prophets." The difference between these two is that the Former Prophets are collections of prophetic oracles or speeches, gathered and recorded by their hearers and disciples (i.e., the Book of Isaiah, the Book of Jeremiah, the Qur'an). The Latter Prophets, on the other hand, are a series of edifying (and usually semi-legendary) histories written from a moralistic standpoint: When the people are faithful, God's reward follows them, but when the nation is unfaithful, they have only God's wrath to anticipate. Since the experience of the Babylonian Exile showed that the prophets had been right about all this, the exiled scribes and priests of Judah compiled what we now call the Deuteronomic History (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) according to the prophetic philosophy of history. They assembled many historical stories, sagas, and legends, welding them into one overarching unity. All victories were turned into deliverances by God, and all defeats and oppressions turned into divine scourges. When a king goes against God's Word, he is terribly punished, while faithful kings are honored by God. Another book of this kind (though written too late for inclusion in either "Prophets" category) is the Chronicler's history (Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles). Clearly the Book of Mormon belongs with these works. It is a sort of Deuteronomic history of ancient America,

illustrating its preachings with object lessons of the fates of wicked Lamanites and virtuous Nephites. It represents an artificial effort to extend the biblical histories of Israel and Judah closer to our own day.

It may help to remind ourselves what sort of book the Book of Mormon is not. For one thing, it is not a Gospel and does not even contain a Gospel, although Jesus Christ appears as a character in the Book of Mormon. His appearance is almost in passing, just as the Deuteronomic historians found space for several long and short episodes of Elijah and Elisha and their miracles and disciples. There are epistles, at least letters, but these are embedded (or "imbricated")[3] in the surrounding narrative, playing a role analogous to that of a Greek chorus, commenting on the action as it moves along, so the reader can keep up with the flow. Luke uses such letters throughout the Book of Acts. Luke has much in common with the Old Testament Deuteronomic History, as recent scholars have noted, and so does the Book of Mormon.

Sacred Combinations

The ancients erroneously supposed that the stories of the Bible were historical reports recorded by witnesses to the events. Once scholars recognized the absurdities entailed by this premise and cast it aside, they simply put a bit more distance between the supposed original events and those who recorded them. Scholars surmised that those who recorded the stories were simply fixing in writing the substance of oral traditions. This would allow for considerable legendary development and other difficulties which had ruled out eyewitness authorship, but in recent years some scholars have questioned even this presupposition. There seems less and less need to posit a traditional basis for biblical narratives, or perhaps one may minimize the extent to which the biblical narrators were dependent upon any prior sources. In the latter event, the biblical authors would have simply derived ideas from traditional stories then retold them entirely from their own standpoint, just as one today compares Hollywood Bible epics with their underlying Bible stories.

It may be, say scholars like Randel Helms, Thomas L. Brodie, and John Dominic Crossan, that the Gospel writers did not so much employ oral traditions of Jesus as the basis for their work as they perhaps took Old Testament texts, disregarded the plots, and reshuffled various details and narrative sequences to use as building blocks for their own stories, which are then provided with a definite biblical ring without recalling a particular story. Helms, Brodie, and Crossan all break down

3. Roland Barthes, "Structuralist Analysis of Narratives," in Barthes, *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Noonday Press, 1977), 103.

numerous Gospel stories into various phrases and motifs derived from this and that Old Testament story. Crossan isolates all the Old Testament passages cited by the Gospel Crucifixion narratives as prophetic predictions of the death of Jesus, demonstrating how the stories seem to have been composed not from historical memory of the events, but by connecting the dots provided by the Old Testament passages.[4] It is not that Mark's account of Jesus' crucifixion (Mark 15) is simple reportage of events mirroring the "predictions" of Psalm 22—Mark does not even refer to Psalm 22 as a prediction. It appears as if Mark possessed no traditional story of Jesus' death, but only the bare preaching that Jesus had died on the cross. The rest he had to fill in. As his material, he used the collection of Passion "testimonia" drawn by early Christian preachers from the scriptures, especially the Psalms.

As another example, Thomas Brodie derives Luke's story of the anointing of Jesus (Luke 7:36-50) from the tales of Elisha in 2 Kings 4:1-37, the episodes of the widow with the vessels of oil and of the Shunammite woman.[5] As Brodie sees it, Luke derived the character of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus' rather chilly host, from both the Shunammite (who is pictured as initially wary of Elisha) and from Elisha's disciple Gehazi (who fails in the healing mission assigned him by Elisha). The sinful woman who anoints Jesus combines traits of the Shunammite woman and the widow of the guild prophet who, at Elisha's direction, pours out the self-replenishing oil to pay her creditors. In Jesus' parable of the two debtors (contained in the anointing story), the two creditors were suggested to Luke by the creditors of the prophet's widow, who threatened to take her two children as collateral for her debts. Simon's invitation to Jesus was derived from the Shunammite's invitation of Elisha to stay with her. Her miraculous conception of a son led Luke to imply that Simon the Pharisee had a change of heart, a sort of rebirth. The debt of the sinful woman is a moral one while that of the guild prophet's widow is a financial one, but both debt crises are mediated by the prophet—Jesus in the one case, Elisha in the other. Thus, Brodie says, the Jesus story has been derived from the two Elisha tales, while not actually modeled upon them.

Helms concentrates on the Gospels, but also commented on another biblical narrative from the Acts of the Apostles.[6] He traces a series of probable connections between the opening chapters of Ezekiel (in the

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4. John Dominic Crossan, *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Franscisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

5. Thomas L. Brodie, "Luke the Literary Interpreter: Luke-Acts as a Systematic Rewriting and Updating of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative in 1 and 2 Kings," *Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Vatican, 1981), 173-189.

6. Randel Helms, *Gospel Fictions* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988), 21.

Greek Septuagint translation) and the story of Peter's vision in Acts 10:9-16. Ezekiel has a series of visions which teach him what he will have to endure as a prophet of God. In the first one (Ezekiel 1:1) he sees heaven opened (enoichthesan hoi ouranoi), while in Acts 10:11 Peter also sees "heaven opened" (ten ouranon aneogmenon). In a second vision, Ezekiel is shown something (a honeyed scroll) and told to eat (phage) it (Ezekiel 2:9) while Peter is shown a great sheet of sailcloth containing all manner of animals, including those deemed unclean by Leviticus. He, too, is commanded, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat (phage)!" In a subsequent vision, Ezekiel is told to eat bread baked over a dung fire, something ritually unclean, which he as a priest is ill-inclined to do. He retorts to God: "By no means, Lord!" (Medamos, Kyrie), just as Peter does at the command to prepare unclean food: "By no means, Lord!" (Medamos, Kyrie). It is hard to resist the conclusion Helms reaches: Luke has invented the episode of Peter's vision based on the series of visions in the beginning of Ezekiel. Luke didn't even have to read very far into Ezekiel to find enough details to mix together into a new story.

While this sort of cannibalizing of old texts to fashion new ones may seem arbitrary, we must note that the technique is not merely the product of modern theory, as if modern scholars had simply inferred that the Gospel writers must have been doing something of the kind. Rather, these practices of recombining bits and pieces to create, in effect, a new Bible verse have long been familiar as a standard exegetical procedure of the old rabbis. For instance, Mark's citation of Isaiah ("As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold. I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight' "[Mark 1:2-3]) turns out to be a conflation of three Old Testament passages: Malachi 3:1 ("Behold I send my messenger [the word translated "angel" from both Hebrew and Greek originals] to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger [or angel] of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts"); Exodus 23:20 ("Behold, I send an angel [or messenger] before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared"); and Isaiah 40:3 ("A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God' ").

Note the effect produced by the silent juxtaposition of the three verses. Mark's "my messenger" comes from Malachi 3:1. His "to prepare thy way" comes from Exodus 23:20, while "Behold, I send [my] angel/messenger before. . ." is common to both texts. This similarity had already led Jewish scribes to conflate the two verses even before Mark's time. The citation of Isaiah 40:3—reemphasizing it to make it say "a voice crying in the wilderness, [saying] 'Prepare the way of the Lord" instead of (as originally) "a voice crying, 'In the wilderness prepare the way of

the Lord,'" denoting the preparation of a clear path for the Jewish exiles from Babylon back through the desert to Canaan—also occurs in the Dead Sea Scrolls. None of the three passages originally meant anything like what Mark makes of them in combined form. We might question whether this sort of treatment of the biblical text counts as exegesis, but in fact it was characteristic of Mark's time and of esoteric Jewish exegesis for long afterward.

The presupposition was the distinctly un-Protestant notion that the Bible, being a divinely inspired book, was susceptible to all manner of clever manipulation. Whatever one made it seem to mean, it must actually mean, since the text could not yield coincidentally such fortuitous recombinations. God must have intended any message the imaginative exegete could squeeze out of it by hook or by crook. There are various well-known Kabbalistic methods including Temurah (reading the Hebrew text from left to right, like a word search puzzle, to find hidden "backward masking" revelations), Notarikon (reading each letter of a word as the first letter of each word in an implied sentence of cryptic revelation), and Gematria (reading the letters of a word as if the digits stood for numbers, so that a given word would be interchangeable with any word elsewhere in scripture that added up to the same sum). New revelations excavated by such methods were called "combinations," and to devise striking new ones was a mark of spiritual enlightenment. In Isaac Beshevis Singer's novel, *Satan in Goray*, one particular Kabbalistic guru, Reb Gedaliya, is acclaimed for this: "He. . .adorned his speech with mystical combinations and permutations." An angel proclaims, "All the worlds on high do tremble at the unions he doth form. The power of his combinations reaches even to the heavenly mansions. From these combinations seraphim and angels twist coronets for the Divine Presence."[7]

The Same Way

It would appear that the Book of Mormon must be the product of that same process discussed by Helms, Brodie, and Crossan: the scrambling of motifs and distinctive phrases from previous literary texts in order to produce a new text of the same basic type. If the Book of Mormon is the literary creation of Joseph Smith—who wrote new biblical-sounding stories by combining familiar biblical vocabulary and motifs—then we may do exactly the same comparative redactional analysis on the Book of Mormon as scholars have done on the Bible. Joseph Smith's fundamental source material still survives: the Bible. Furthermore, like

7. Isaac Beshevis Singer, *Satan in Goray* (NY: Fawcett Crest, 1980), pp. 140, 146-147.

the Gospel writers as understood by Crossan, Brodie and Helms, Joseph Smith seems to have created new holy fictions by shredding the old ones and reassembling the pieces in wholly new combinations. His method appears to be precisely that of the old rabbis and the New Testament evangelists. Not only did Joseph Smith do the same thing biblical writers did to produce a new Bible text, he even did it the same way.

All of which allows us to propose a way in which mainstream biblical scholars and students of the Book of Mormon may come closer together. Biblical scholars ought to realize (as many no doubt do) that the Book of Mormon is much the same sort of thing as the Bible they so love, and it ought to receive the same respect. It is no more a hoax than Deuteronomy. Mormons ought to be more open to the possibility that the Book of Mormon originated as a modern pseudepigraph, the work of Joseph Smith himself. As we have seen, this would only enhance Smith's prophetic dignity, not debunk it as literal-minded critics of Mormonism have always jeered. The most important boon thus gained would be a quantum leap in interpretative possibilities. With the aid of tools like redaction and literary criticism, we may disclose theological riches in the Book of Mormon text which, on the presupposition of literalism, have remained as buried as the Golden Plates themselves until Joseph Smith disclosed them.

Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the American Renaissance

Robert A. Rees

Preamble

> . . .a book I have made,
> The words of my book nothing, the drift of it everything,
> A book separate, not link'd with the rest nor felt by the intellect,
> But you ye untold latencies will thrill to every page.
>
> Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Over the course of a lifetime, I have read the Book of Mormon a number of times and have taught it in seminary, institute, and gospel doctrine classes. I have written about it and read extensively in both the literature that supports Joseph Smith's claims about its origins and the literature that postulates the Book of Mormon is a product of a nineteenth-century imagination. I am a literary critic who has spent a professional lifetime reading, teaching, and writing about literary texts. Much of my interest in and approach to the Book of Mormon lies with the text—though not just as a field for scholarly exploration. I'm drawn to its narrative sweep, complexity of plots, variety of stories, array of characters who inhabit this world, and the premise that the book is about ultimate matters—God's dealings with his children in the New World.

Even before the book's publication, controversy arose about its origins, and immediately after it was published, theories about its composition began to abound. Some claimed that Smith was the author, and others countered that he was too ignorant and provincial to have written the book. Since that time, there have been numerous theories about the authorship of the Book of Mormon. These range from its being a tale told by an idiot *devoid* of either sound or fury while signifying nothing to its

having been inspired directly by the Devil to (the latest claim) its having been authored by a genius who was, in fact, inspired by God.

Louis Midgley has summarized the various attempts to explain the book into four categories: 1) "Joseph Smith wrote the book as a conscious fraud"; 2) "Joseph Smith wrote the book under the influence of some sort of paranoia or demonic possession or disassociative illusion"; 3) "Joseph Smith had the help of someone like Sidney Rigdon in creating the book as a conscious fraud"; and 4) "Joseph Smith wrote the book while under some sort of religious inspiration."[1] Alternately, these explanations present Joseph Smith as a country bumpkin and a brilliant sophisticate, as a simple self-delusionist and a complicated conspirator, as an idiot and a genius, and as a Devil-inspired and God-inspired seer.

Assessments of the Book of Mormon itself are no less extreme. Early views of the book included seeing it as "the result of gross imposition, and a grosser superstition,"[2] the ramblings of a digger for treasure, a book inspired by Satan, and a compilation of "every error and almost every truth discussed in N[ew] York during the ten years before its publication."[3] Some saw it as a clear work of plagiarism, contending that Smith took the basic plot and much of the substantive content of the book from Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* or a fictional narrative written by Solomon Spaulding. In his *Comprehensive History of the Church*, B. H. Roberts catalogues some of the early anti-Mormon assessments of the Book: Governor Ford of Illinois saw it as "the fumes of an enthusiastic and fanatical imagination"; for Lily Dougal it was "the work of a genuinely deluded. . .but undisciplined brain," and, according to I. Woodbridge Riley, it was the product of "subjective hallucination, induced by hypnotic suggestion."[4] Mark Twain gave it the cleverest and briefest of sobriquets when he said the book was so boring it should be considered "chloroform in print."[5]

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1. Louis Midgley, "Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon? The Critics and Their Theories," in ed. Noel B. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS], 1997), 104. Hereafter *BMAR*. I would like to thank Eugene England and Richard Dilworth Rust, life-long friends and fellow scholars of both the Book of Mormon and the American Renaissance, for reading the original manuscript of this study and offering helpful insights and suggestions.

2. Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon*, Vol. 1 (Independence, Mo: Zion's Publishing, 1959), 149.

3. Alexander Campbell, *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon. . .*(Boston: Benjamin H. Greene, 1832), 13, as quoted in Richard Bushman, "The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 1: 20.

4. B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Vol. 1 (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 150-51.

5. Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, Harriet Elinor Smith and Edgar M. Branch, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 107. Twain wrote, "If Joseph Smith composed this

In the eighteenth century there was a controversy over the authenticity of a collection of prose poems called *The Poems of Ossian*, which James Macpherson had written but tried to pass off as the work of a third century blind epic poet named Ossian. The book was extremely popular in both America and Europe, and most people considered it authentic. However, the venerable Samuel Johnson, upon being asked whether he thought the work could have been written by a modern man, replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children."[6] I get the impression that some critics have the same opinion of the Book of Mormon—that not only could many men, women, and possibly even children have written it, but that any fool could have and that one particular fool, Joseph Smith, did.

While nineteenth century estimates tended to dismiss the book as the product of a deluded or demonic mind, twentieth century evaluations have tended to be more sophisticated, if no more reasonable. Bernard DeVoto postulated that Smith wrote the book under the spell of epileptic seizures, producing "a yeasty fermentation, formless, aimless, and inconceivably absurd. . . ."[7] After the advent of Freud, it was inevitable that someone would try to explain the Book of Mormon in strictly psychological terms. The first significant attempt was Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* (1954, revised 1971), which argued that the book was nothing more than a playing out of Joseph Smith's fantasies and the Smith family's psychological history.[8] Robert Anderson's *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith* (1999) is the latest attempt to provide a psychological explanation of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Unfortunately, because Anderson relies so slavishly on Freudian analysis and so heavily on Brodie's study, he is even less successful in finding a convincing explanation as to how Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon than was Brodie.

As a literary critic I am aware of the multiple ways of looking at a book. Sometimes when I teach a text, I encourage examination through

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book, the act was a miracle—keeping awake while he did it was, at any rate. If he, according to tradition, merely translated it from certain ancient and mysteriously-engraved plates of copper, which he declares he found under a stone, in an out-of-the-way locality, the work of translation was equally a miracle, for the same reason"(107).

6. Quoted in: James Boswell, "*From* The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 4th Edition, ed., M.H. Abrams (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), Vol. 1, 2395.

7. Bernard DeVoto, "The Centennial of Mormonism," *American Mercury*, 19, no. 5 (Jan 1930), 5, as quoted in Louis Midgley, "Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?" *BMAR*, 105.

8. Fawn McKay Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd ed., revised and enlarged (New York: Knopf, 1971), 43, 413-17.

various critical approaches—new critical, historical, biographical, Freudian, Marxist, feminist, deconstructionist, reader response, etc. All of these may be legitimate approaches to the text as long as they don't become too extreme or doctrinaire, which they often do. Reading contemporary criticism of the Book of Mormon reminds one of Emerson's statement, "Tell me your sect, and I'll tell you your argument." Often, the authors' contentions proceed far more clearly from their critical ideologies than from evidence in the text.

Over the years as I have read the opinions, analyses, examinations, and theories of various Book of Mormon scholars. I have been intrigued by the chasm that divides believers and apologists (those who consider the Book of Mormon divine) from non-believers and naturalists (those who insist on more naturalistic explanations). One of the things that characterize the relationship between these opposing camps (I call it a relationship since I don't think "dialogue" accurately describes their discourse) is their tendency to dismiss and label one another. Since I have been labeled both an apologist and a naturalist critic, sometimes in pejorative terms, I have watched this exchange with interest.

Those who have challenged the traditional explanation of the Book of Mormon by exploring its nineteenth-century setting[9] have often raised important issues, which apologists sometimes dismiss too easily. On the other hand, when devoted Mormon scholars have likewise raised crucial issues, deepening or broadening our perspective on the text and the purported connection to its ancient setting, naturalists often dismiss the findings of this group without giving them fair consideration.

It is fascinating that each group looks at the book and finds its own predictable set of parallels. The naturalists find parallels with the late decades of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries, and this convinces them that the book is a product of a modern American mind. Meanwhile the apologists find numerous parallels with the ancient world and conclude that the book could only have originated with ancient peoples. One often feels that the discourse concerning the Book of Mormon has been reduced to, "My parallel arguments are more sophisticated, more authentic and more persuasive than yours!" [10] And, indeed, since everyone uses parallel arguments, since at least some of the parallels discovered by each camp appear genuinely persuasive, and

9. For example, the writers of the articles in Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1993), 1, 2; hereafter *New Approaches*.

10. For a discussion of the use of parallel arguments, see Douglas F. Salmon, "Parallelomania and the Study of Latter-day Saint Scripture: Confirmation, Coincidence, or the Collective Unconscious?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 129-156.

since no parallel argument is likely to be conclusive, the questions we can ask are: "How legitimate is the parallel?"; "How many points of correspondence exist between the two things compared?"; and, finally, "Is the comparison unique or, at least, compelling?" The more general the parallel and the more widely it can be found in the culture, the less convincing it is likely to be.

Gordon C. Thomasson argues that parallels that can be found outside what he calls "the information environment" of Joseph Smith and the period of the Book of Mormon's publication have "a different apologetic weight than something which was known." "For example," he writes, "the Dead Sea Scrolls (including biblical variants) were not part of Joseph Smith's or any one else's information environment in 1830, whereas, for example, the writings of Ixlilxochitl were known or knowable." [11] If in the Book of Mormon we find striking parallels to content or style in the writings of Ixlilxochitl, which Joseph Smith might have encountered either directly or indirectly, that is interesting, but if we find such parallels to unique material in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which Joseph Smith could not possibly have encountered, then such evidence would weigh much more convincingly in the case argued by the apologists.

In the past decade a new group of scholars has staked out territory between the apologists and naturalists. These scholars consider Joseph Smith a prophet and the Book of Mormon inspired, but they do not consider the book to be an authentically ancient work. They argue that even though they are fictional characters, the speakers of the Book of Mormon have important things to say to our generation. For example, Anthony A. Hutchinson feels, "The Book of Mormon should be seen as authoritative scripture." He explains: "God remains the author of the Book of Mormon viewed as the word of God, but Joseph Smith, in this construct, would be the book's inspired human author rather than its inspired translator."[12]

Clearly, such a view provokes ultimate questions about the Book of Mormon and more. If Alma is a fictional rather than an historical character, and if the Jesus who speaks in 3 Nephi is really Joseph Smith's inspired *imagining* of what Jesus would have said had he, in fact, visited ancient America, and if the central purpose of the text is to guide 19th century behavior (moral or otherwise), then what does it mean to call the book a second testament of Jesus Christ? Clearly we have radically altered the meaning of the text. Such a reading tends to make irrelevant, or

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11. Gordon C. Thomasson, "Personal Parallel Perspectives on Parallelomania," unpublished paper in my possession, 3, 4. Thomasson's paper provides a direct rejoinder to Salmon's arguments.

12. Anthony A. Hutchinson, "The Word of God is Enough: The Book of Mormon as Nineteenth-Century Scripture," *New Approaches*, 1-2.

at least unimportant, the matter of whether God moves through history or of whether Jesus was the literal son of God who atoned for the sins of all Adam's children.

A related approach is taken by Mark Thomas in his *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives*. Thomas, who hopes his book will provide "a foundation for a new tradition in Book of Mormon studies," states, "In the end, a book's authority lies less in its origin than in its messages." Although he tries diligently to keep a neutral position on the question of textual origin, I believe that Thomas reveals a bias against the apologist position. For example, he states, "We will never find the book's real value or message until we set aside the apologetic issues of authorship, at least temporarily. . . ." He points out that "Biblical scholarship has faced similar interpretive problems with apologetic interests interfering with interpretation."[13] One could argue that a balanced position would be as demanding of naturalist issues of authorship and acknowledge that rationalist interests at times also interfere with interpretation.

Thus, while the text is paramount, questions about its origin are hardly irrelevant. I am willing to concede that some such discussion may be irrelevant and some certainly misguided. Were Moroni a fictional character in an historical novel written by Joseph Smith, I think I would still find his discourse on charity (Moroni 7:44-48) and his invitation to come unto Christ (10:32-33) inspiring, but they have far more meaning and a more profound impact when I consider that they are the words of an actual man who walked the earth and who struggled with his soul and its relation to his Savior just as I do. Thus, while the text is paramount, questions about its origin are hardly irrelevant, I do not believe these are Joseph Smith's thoughts or that these words came out of his specific experience, even though they are expressed in his language.

One primary reason to read scripture is that, in seeing how God acts in the lives of others, we feel emboldened to invite him to act in similar ways in ours. When we see him acting in history, we believe that the ultimate fate of the world is in his hands. When we believe that he truly sent his son to die for our sins, we are inspired to change our hearts, and, in the words of the Lamanite king, to give away our sins to know him (Alma 22:18). While fictional characters, especially if artfully drawn, can so inspire us, ultimately, we are distanced from them. We suspend our disbelief for a time, but it is still disbelief that we are suspending.

Hence, I find myself constrained to ask if it is reasonable to argue

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13. Mark D. Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2000), 1. In conversation, Thomas stated that he did not intend his words to be taken as critical of the apologist position.

that Joseph Smith could have written rather than translated the Book of Mormon? Could he reasonably be considered its author, given his literary imagination and talent, his maturity as a writer when the book was published, the amount of time he had to produce the book, his education, his knowledge base, and the sophistication necessary to design and execute a complicated work with such a rich array of characters and literary forms and styles? In considering each of these questions, I will look at Joseph Smith in relation to his contemporary authors, those who make up the pantheon of American Literature from early to mid-nineteenth century.

The Book of Mormon came out of the richest creative period of American culture, a time the critic F. O. Matthiessen termed "The American Renaissance." In his book of the same title,[14] Matthiessen chronicles what Van Wyck Brooks has called "the Flowering of New England."[15] That flowering, which produced such masterworks as Poe's stories and poems (1827-1848), Emerson's Essays (1836-1850), Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855), not to mention the astonishing poetry of Emily Dickinson and a host of minor masterpieces, took place in the same fertile ground out of which the Book of Mormon was published. Was the Book of Mormon a product of what David S. Reynolds has called "the subversive imagination in the age of Emerson and Melville" (the subtitle of his *Beneath the American Renaissance*),[16] or was it what Joseph Smith claimed it to be—an ancient sacred text whispering out of the ground to modern readers?

Literary Imagination and Talent

> The highest species of reasoning upon divine subjects is. . .the fruit of a sort of moral imagination.
>
> Emerson, Journal, 18 April 1824

> Blessed are those who have no talent.
>
> Emerson, Journal, February 1850

While many critics disagree about Joseph Smith's character, there is almost universal agreement that he had an unusually creative and energetic imagination. Fawn Brodie wrote that "the rare quality of his genius

14. F. O. Matthiessen, *The American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

15. Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England* (New York: Dutton, 1952).

16. David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988). Hereafter *Beneath the Renaissance.*

was due not to his reason but to his imagination. He was a mythmaker of prodigious talent." [17] Harold Bloom, one of the preeminent humanistic scholars of our generation, has praised him as having an "extraordinary capacity for speculative development." [18] Yet, what we know of Joseph Smith at the time he produced the Book of Mormon reveals no proclivity for artistic expression. That he was imaginative there is no doubt, but that he had the ability write a five hundred-page fictional narrative there is substantial doubt. There is an enormous difference between being able to conceive of something imaginatively and being able to shape it into a unified, complex, and concrete artifact. Many of us may think of wonderful novels we would like to write or symphonies we would like to compose, but only those with true gifts are able to produce novels or symphonies.

Was Joseph Smith a gifted creative writer? Did he have narrative or fictional capabilities similar to those of contemporaries such as Cooper, Melville, or Hawthorne? Did he have any poetic ability like Emerson's, Lowell's, or Whitman's? Was he a lesser literary light like John Neal or William Gilmore Simms? Or could he, in fact, be placed even in this latter category of writers?

Although Harold Bloom praises Joseph Smith's charisma and imagination, he sees him as "an indifferent writer."[19] Smith achieves moments of eloquence and was beginning to develop a mature writing style by the time he was martyred, but none of his own writings indicate either the narrative style or poetic complexity found in the Book of Mormon. Richard Rust observes, "I have spent a good deal of time reading the journals and letters of Joseph Smith, and I consider his style to differ markedly from the style (really, the styles) I find in the Book of Mormon."[20] The word-print studies by Hilton, Larson, Rencher, and Layton point to markedly different styles among Book of Mormon writers. Not everyone is convinced by their findings,[21] but whether the word-print analysts are convincing or not, there is no disputing the fact that there are a number of strikingly different authorial voices in the Book of Mormon. To invent these would be an extremely challenging task, especially for a novice writer creating the entire narrative orally, as Joseph Smith's scribes describe him as doing.

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17. *No Man Knows My History*, ix.

18. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 80. Hereafter *American Religion*.

19. *American Religion*, 80.

20. Letter from Richard Rust to Robert A. Rees, 20 July 2000, in my posession.

21. See, for instance, Edward W. Ashment, "'A Record in the Language of My Father': Evidence of Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew in the Book of Mormon," *New Approaches*, 372-74.

Consider what this would have involved: to compose the various narratives within the Book of Mormon orally, Joseph Smith would have had to keep in mind the distinctive rhetorical style and vocabulary of each character. This would mean mentally cataloguing and tracking each writer or speaker's way of expressing himself. For example, since Alma the Younger has by far the largest vocabulary in the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith would have had to be aware that he was putting a number of words into Alma's mouth that he could not employ in the vocabulary of any other writer! Even had he had a photographic memory and been a brilliant novelist, I don't believe he could have kept this sorted out as he was *dictating* the book.

I contend that not only was the composition of the Book of Mormon far beyond Joseph Smith's capabilities, but that he was, in fact, unaware of the subtleties and complexities of the text. There is surely no evidence that he knew anything about writing intricate parallel literary structures or creating a wide range of characters, a complicated fictional plot, or a variety of styles. Again quoting from Harold Bloom, Joseph Smith's "life, personality, and visions far transcended his talents at the composition of divine texts."[22]

Maturity as a Writer

> Until I was twenty five I had no development at all.
> Melville

To produce a mature work of literature, a writer must be seasoned in the craft of literary invention and construction. No masterpiece springs full-blown from the writer's mind without prior experience in working out style and subject matter. Without exception, Joseph Smith's contemporary authors produced their major works when they were mature writers. Each writer's *magnum opus* was years in the preparing and writing. The works of each author show progressive development from early literary expressions to later master works. In most cases their early works reveal writers attempting to find their voice as well as their subject matter. For example, Emerson's *Nature*, as Matthiessen observes, "contains in embryo nearly all his cardinal assumptions,"[23] but the essay is philosophically opaque and stylistically difficult. Although Hawthorne's early style "shows remarkable finish,"[24] the contrast between his first novel, *Fanshaw* (1828), and *The Scarlet Letter* (1851) is dra-

22. *American Religion*, 81-82.
23. *American Renaissance*, 12.
24. Ibid., 203.

matic. Whitman's early journalistic writing reveals only the vaguest promise of the powerful poetry that he would later produce. In fact, it wasn't until he read Emerson's comments on the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855) that he seemed to fully realize his vocation as a poet. As he later said, "I was simmering, simmering, simmering; Emerson brought me to a boil."[25]

By way of comparison, we have only two minor, extant examples of Joseph Smith's writings before 1830, the year the Book of Mormon was published—a letter to Oliver Cowdery and a one-paragraph introduction to the Anthon Transcript. [26] Neither shows promise of literary expression. There is no evidence before 1830 that Smith was developing as a writer or that he had any ambitions as an author. The material written in the years immediately following the publication of the Book of Mormon shows Joseph Smith as a writer with little literary style or polish. Certainly there is evidence of the beginnings of an eloquent voice, but that voice is tentative and immature. Nowhere in Joseph Smith's early writing does one find the kind of literary ability necessary to write a book which has since been translated into more languages and sold more copies than any book written by his illustrious contemporaries.

By comparison, we might point out that Nathaniel Hawthorne had been working on *The Scarlet Letter* for twenty-five years before it was actually published. That is, most of the themes, character types, and situations in his novel were developed to one extent or another in the notes, sketches, and stories Hawthorne wrote between 1825 and 1850. As to the actual time of the writing of the novel, Arlin Turner notes that by the end of August 1849, Hawthorne "was writing immensely, so his wife phrased it."[27] Typically, Hawthorne would put in nine hours a day at his desk. He wrote his friend Horatio Bridge that the book had been finished on 3 February 1850, making a total of more than five months' time for the novel's composition.

Critics speak of Melville's "try works," the works of fiction he wrote that prepared him to write *Moby Dick*. His previous novels of the sea, *Mardi, Omoo, Typee, Redburn,* and *White Jacket,* were all novels in which he was working out both his subject matter and his style. *Moby Dick*, which took him more than eighteen months to complete, reveals indebtedness

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25. Ibid., 523.

26. In his *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1996), Dan Vogel lists Smith's letter to Oliver Cowdery of 22 October 1829 as the only extant pre-Book of Mormon document written by Joseph Smith. Dean C. Jessee includes the introduction to the Anthon Transcript as possibly having been written in 1828 (*The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1984], Vol. 1, 223-24).

27. Arlin Turner, *Nathaniel Hawthorne, A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 187, 193.

to all of these earlier works. Melville, whose education, both formal and experiential, was far superior to Joseph Smith's, said, "My development has all been within a few years past. . . .Until I was twenty five I had no development at all."[28] In other words, at the same age at which Joseph Smith wrote a book as ambitious as *Moby Dick*, Melville—recognized as one of the literary masters of American literature—was just beginning to feel confident as a writer, and *Moby Dick* was still far in the future.

Henry David Thoreau spent nearly nine years writing *Walden*. Here again, Thoreau's early writing both prepared him for and contained many of the ideas and themes of his major opus. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote nothing as sustained as the Book of Mormon, but his essays, which represent his major contribution to the literary age that bears his name, were produced over a lifetime. Walt Whitman wrote and rewrote his great collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass*, over his entire adult life, seeing it through many permutations and numerous editions.

Thus, each of these authors was significantly older and more mature as a writer when he published his literary masterpiece than was Joseph Smith when he produced the Book of Mormon. Emerson was thirty-eight when his first volume of essays was published, Thoreau was thirty-seven when he published *Walden*, Hawthorne was thirty-six when *The Scarlet Letter* was published, and Melville thirty-two when *Moby Dick* appeared. Whitman was thirty-six when he sent an autographed first edition of *Leaves of Grass* to Emerson.

Time

> Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in.
> Thoreau, *Walden*

Writers know that writing takes time. As Donald Hall, one of our most venerated contemporary poets says, "It's typical for me to spend three to five years on a poem, but not working on it every day but maybe every day for six months, then nothing for six months, then starting it again. At the beginning, every draft changes a lot, but toward the end I may spend a lot of time changing a word from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. . . .There are several poems I've worked on over twenty years." [29]

In an article entitled "For Authors, Fragile Ideas Need Loving Every

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28. Herschel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, vol. 1, 1819-1851 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1996), 842.

29. Donald Hall, *The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets*, ed. James Haba (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 144. Hereafter, *Language of Life*.

Day," the novelist Walter Mosley speaks of the importance of a routinized, disciplined approach to writing. Arguing that writing is a quotidian endeavor, Mosley says that interruptions and distractions (which Joseph Smith experienced in abundance during the translation of the Book of Mormon) cause the life to drain out of one's writing: "The words have no art to them; you no longer remember the smell. The idea seems weak, it has dissipated like smoke." He adds, "Nothing we create is art at first. It's simply a collection of notions that may never be understood. Returning every day thickens the atmosphere. Images appear. Connections are made. But even these clearer notions will fade if you stay away more than a day. . . .The act of writing is a kind of guerrilla warfare; there is no vacation, no leave, no relief. In actuality there is very little chance of victory. You are. . .likely to be defeated by your fondest dreams."[30]

Most writers recognize that good writing is seldom easy and rarely flows seamlessly from the writer's pen or keyboard—and certainly not in unprepared or unrehearsed dictation. The more complicated, complex and sophisticated the text, the more time it takes to compose. While some writers speak of writing mellifluously flowing lines as if under a spell, in reality, this seldom happens, and if it does, it doesn't last. When asked about the place of impulse or inspiration in writing poetry, Hall states, "It's twenty seconds of impulse and two years of attention." [31]

How much time did Joseph Smith have to write the Book of Mormon? This much is part of the historical record: After losing the first 116 pages of the book through Martin Harris's negligence, Joseph did not resume his work of translation until 22 September 1828, although he seems to have written little until Oliver Cowdrey became his scribe on 5 April 1829. Between that date and 11 June 1829 (the day Joseph applied for a copyright), a period of approximately sixty days, Joseph and Oliver completed the bulk of the translation. By any measure, this was an astonishing accomplishment. As a straight work of translation or inspired dictation, this would be a formidable task.

Scholars have pointed out that during the time he was translating the book, Joseph Smith was plagued with numerous mundane concerns—finding work, feeding his family, protecting the plates, burying a still-born child, etc. In other words, there were so many stresses and strains that, for the most part, sustained daily writing would have been out of the question.

The Book of Mormon is a complicated narrative with many twists, turns, returns, foreshadowings, and archetypes; numerous kinds of parallelism, including extensive and complicated chiasmi and complex

30. Walter Mosley, *New York Times*, 3 July 2000, B2.
31. *Language of Life*, 143, 146.

poetic forms; and many different styles. This is not the kind of book one dashes off in a few months as one might a romance novel. This kind of writing takes time and lots of it.

EDUCATION

> Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings.
>
> Emerson, "The American Scholar"

The authors of the American Renaissance had educations vastly superior to Joseph Smith's. Hawthorne graduated from Bowdin and Emerson and Thoreau from Harvard. Melville attended Albany Academy, and Whitman, although having only about six years of formal education, was a school teacher and for many years engaged in various aspects of journalism, including reporting, writing, and editing. In addition, all were intimately involved in the cultural life of their communities, attending lyceums and concerts, lecturing, publishing and, with the exception of Thoreau (who said that he had traveled much in Concord), traveling far beyond their local environs. This is a stark contrast to the education and culture of Joseph Smith. His formal education was limited to only a few years of schooling, and that, most likely, involved sporadic attendance.[32] In his earliest history (1832), Smith summarized his education: "We [the nine Smith children] were deprived of the bennifit of an education suffice it to say I was mearly instructid in reading and writing and the ground [rules] of arithmatic which constuted my whole literary acquirements"[33] (spelling and punctuation in the original).

For the writers of the American Renaissance, not only is there evidence of early composition that prepared and influenced their masterpieces, but there is ample evidence that they benefited from belonging to a literary culture, one full of cross-fertilization. Emerson's influence on Thoreau and Whitman is well documented, as is Hawthorne's on Melville, and vice versa. Although Emerson's shadow on the age is the longest, Emerson himself reveals and acknowledges indebtedness to a number of writers including Swedenborg, Carlyle, Coleridge, and Goethe.

Like Joseph Smith, all of the writers of the American Renaissance

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32. Dan Vogel postulates that in addition to attending school in Royalton, Vermont between 1808 and 1813, Joseph may have attended school during other periods of his youth but that he "was probably not a regular attender" (*Early Mormon Documents*, Vol. 1, Note 3, 27).

33. *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 4.

were influenced by the King James Bible, and all of their works have allusions to that sacred text and reflect biblical style although none of their works reveals the depth and sophistication of biblical indebtedness that characterizes the Book of Mormon. However, Joseph Smith shows no influence at all from the writers, historical or contemporary, European or American, who served as models for the writers of the American Renaissance. There are no allusions in his writings or in the Book of Mormon to such important writers and thinkers of American culture as Cotton Mather, Edward Taylor, Jonathan Edwards, John Neal, James Fenimore Cooper, Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, or even the more popular writers of the time who were, as David S. Reynolds says, "part of a heterogeneous culture which had strong elements of the criminal, the erotic, and the demonic."[34]

The popular hunger for such sensational, sentimental literature seems not to have infiltrated Joseph Smith's creative imagination. Reynolds describes the "seamy fiction" written in "a succinctly American irrational style whose linguistic wildness and dislocations were also visible in the grotesque American humor that arose during this period."[35] It is curious that Reynolds makes no mention of the Book of Mormon, possibly the most subversive text (in the sense that it had the potential to overturn so many established ideas about religion and culture) written in nineteenth-century America.

In relation to the writers of the American Renaissance, Eugene England observed: "Joseph Smith thus strikes straight to the heart of the major epistemological and ontological dilemma the great Romantics struggled with. And his resolution was no mere compromise but can be understood as an integration of the great Romantic impulses and Classical realities."[36]

Although non-Mormon literary critics have essentially ignored Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon—and it is scandalous that this is so—some recent critics have begun to pay attention. Harold Bloom has praised Joseph Smith in relation to his contemporary writers: "I myself can think of not another American, except for Emerson and Whitman, who so moves and alters my own imagination. . . .So self-educated was he that he transcends Emerson and Whitman in my imaginative response, and takes his place with the great figures of our fiction, since at moments he appears larger than life, in the mode of a Shakespearean character. So

34. *Beneath the Renaissance*, 169.

35. Ibid., 170.

36. Eugene England, "How Joseph Smith Resolved the Dilemmas of American Romanticism," in ed. Bryan Waterman, *The Prophet Puzzle: Interpretive Essays on Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1999), 178. Hereafter "American Romanticism."

rich and varied a personality, so vital a spark of divinity, is almost beyond the limits of the human, as we normal construe those limits."[37]

And yet Bloom, a master at deciphering and delineating texts, seems to have missed much of the intricate complexity of the Book of Mormon. He saw it, along with other scriptures in the Latter-day Saint canon, as "stunted stepchildren of the Bible."[38] He summarized it thusly: "It has bravura, but beyond question it is wholly tendentious and frequently tedious. If one compares it closely to Smith's imaginings in the Pearl of Great Price and the Doctrine and Covenants, it seems like the work of some other writer." He is quick to add, "and I don't mean Mormon or Moroni."[39] Frankly, I don't believe Bloom gave the book his best critical effort.[40] This seems evident from his comment, "I cannot recommend that the book be read either fully or closely, because it scarcely sustains such reading."[41] That a scholar of Bloom's reputation could conclude that the Book of Mormon was the result of "magical trance-states"[42] and explain its astonishing Hebraic absorption (of "the archaic or original Jewish religion"[43]) as the result of Joseph Smith's being "drowned in the Bible,"[44] only demonstrates, once again, that scholars who insist on a naturalistic explanation for everything (Bloom sees "all religion [as] a kind of spilled poetry"[45]) have difficulty seriously considering any non-naturalist explanation of the book's origin.

Knowledge Base: What Did Joseph Smith Know?

> And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
> And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own.
> Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, Stanza 5

How much of the information contained in the Book of Mormon would have been available to someone living in Joseph Smith's environs prior to the publication of the book? In the most serious study to date of this question, Gordon C. Thomasson contends that "empirical investigation of the information environment in Joseph Smith's time shows it to have been far richer than commonly has been assumed." Thomasson

37. *American Religion*, 127.
38. Ibid., 81.
39. Ibid., 85.
40. In conversation, one of Bloom's former students told me that Bloom confessed to him that he had not read the Book of Mormon.
41. *American Religion*, 86.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., 87.
44. Ibid., 86.
45. Ibid., 80.

adds, "Critics of, and apologists for the Book of Mormon have at various times both under-, and over-estimated the extent of the information environment of early America, and especially the Burned-over district."[46] Of the information generally available, to just how much was Joseph Smith likely to have had access? And, beyond this, a still more critical question—to what extent was he capable of integrating such information into a composition of his own devising?

Equally significant to what was or might have been known to a writer in Joseph Smith's time is what was *not* known. As Thomasson argues, "Any attempt to deal with the Book of Mormon as a testable historic document must examine its contents in the light of at least two criteria. First: its assertions must be evaluated in terms of what is known today. Second: those same assertions should be considered in terms of what was known or 'knowable' in 1830. If the book supplies information which was otherwise unavailable at the time of its first publication (not part of the information environment) then its claim to historical validity is enhanced."[47]

To write a history of ancient Hebrew people who immigrated to the New World, an uneducated person living on the edge of the American frontier would, among many, many other things, need to have known the English Bible (and the Hebrew culture it represents); its many kinds of stylistic parallelisms and poetic forms; its various cultures; its economic system; its characters, images, and symbols; its religious rites and customs; and its legal system.

How well did Joseph Smith know the Bible? In her memoirs, Lucy Mack Smith recalled that as a boy of eighteen (i.e., in 1823 or 1824) young

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46. Gordon C. Thomasson "'Daddy, What's a Frontier?': Thoughts on the 'Information Environment' That Supposedly Produced the Book of Mormon," unpublished ms. in my possession, 18 (hereafter "Frontier"). Thomasson, who coined the phrase "information environment," provides the most detailed account yet as to what information might have been available to someone living in Eastern New York in the late 1820s. Thomasson says, "There are two types of critical tests which can be made on Book of Mormon data:

1) The first type involves subjects about which an information vacuum can be shown to have existed in 1830–and about which the Book of Mormon takes a position which can be compared to new data revealed by contemporary scholarship (textual comparison of the Book of Mormon with otherwise unparalleled Qumran and/or Nag Hammadi documents might fall in this category).
2) The second class of tests includes those cases in which the information environment of 1830 can be shown to have documented a particular position which the Book of Mormon took exception to–and these two conflicting ideas can be compared to current scholarly opinion. These are tests which the Book of Mormon can pass or fail–taking into consideration the open-ended dialogue which is true scholarship. These are tests to which it generally has not been subjected.

47. Ibid., 16.

Joseph "had never read the Bible through in his life." Moreover, she said, "he seemed much less inclined to the perusal of books than any of the rest of our children."[48] Bloom's contention that "Smith had drowned in the Bible, and came up from it in a state of near identification with the ancient Hebrews"[49] is speculative at best. In fact, it's really quite incredible when one considers that absorbing the Bible is a far cry from replicating its forms, styles, and patterns in highly specific ways. And this must be seen in light of Lucy Mack Smith's statement about her son's acquaintance with the Bible and David Whitmer's statement about Joseph during the time Joseph was translating the record of Lehi: "In translating the characters, Smith, who was illiterate and but little versed in biblical lore, was oftentimes compelled to spell the words out, not knowing the correct pronunciation."[50]

Given the hardscrabble nature of Joseph Smith's life prior to the publication of the Book of Mormon, would he have had time to immerse himself so completely in the Hebrew scriptures as to have mastered its literary styles and cultural complexities? When Bloom states that Smith imaginatively recaptured "crucial elements in the archaic Jewish religion" (which had evaded both "normative Judaism and. . .[the Christian] Church after it"[51]), he leaves unexplained how someone of Joseph Smith's naiveté and lack of exposure to such ancient and arcane material could have been capable of such a feat.

There are many other such examples. Joseph Smith would also have had to have a thorough knowledge of olive horticulture, the detailed information contained in Jacob's parable of the olive tree (1 Ne. 10 & 15, Jacob 5). How likely does that seem? Someone raised on an American farm would have surely known about wheat and beans, but he wouldn't have known beans about olives.[52]

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48. *Joseph Smith and His Progenitors* (Independence: Herald House, 1969), 92, as quoted in Daniel C. Peterson, "Nephi and His Asherahin," in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), 243.

49. *American Religion*, 86.

50. Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, Utah: Grandin, 1991), 174, as quoted in Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *BMAR*, 76.

51. *American Religion*, 99.

52. See Wilford M. Hess, "Botanical Comparisons in the Allegory of the Olive Tree," *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon*, Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1990), 87-102. Gordon C. Thomasson cites Johannes Jahn's *Biblical Archeology* (1823) as reporting that in Arabian culture "a subtle olive culture was practiced in which the branches of wild olives were grafted into barren orchard trees to cause them to become fertile" ("Frontier," 36). This shard of information, however, could hardly account for the many specific particulars of olive horticulture found in the book of Jacob.

Joseph Smith would also have had to have knowledge of ancient travel routes taken by Lehi and his family. As Gene England has summarized, "For Joseph Smith to have so well succeeded in producing over twenty unique details in the description of an ancient travel route through one of the least-known areas of the world, all of which have been subsequently verified, requires extraordinary, unreasonable faith in his natural genius or his ability to guess right in direct opposition to the prevailing knowledge of his time."[53] In other words, the unlearned and untraveled American prophet would have had to know how to guide his characters through the Arabian Desert.

We now know that the use of Baal and El names was out of favor during Lehi's time but not during the time of the Jaradites.[54] I would guess that even if Joseph Smith understood the significance of such names, he'd have had no idea as to when it had and hadn't been appropriate to use them, again keeping in mind that he was dictating the book orally without text or notes.

And then there are matters of literary style. Chiasmus is an ancient poetic form and mnemonic device. It strains credulity that Joseph Smith could compose numerous examples, some of them extremely complex, by dictating them spontaneously. As John W. Welch points out, the Book of Mormon, "especially in its most literary portions, is replete with precise and extensive chiastic compositions." After citing an example of chiasmus in Mosiah 5:10-12, Welch states, "Again, the repetition here is precise, extensive and meaningful. It simply strains reason to imagine that such structure in this oration occurred accidentally." Later he concludes, "The use of chiasmus is. . .a conscious creation of an imaginative and mature artist. . . .No one seriously contends that Joseph Smith or anyone associated with him knew or could have known of chiasmus or had the training to discover this principle for himself. The evidence is overwhelming against such a claim."[55] This is not external, but internal evidence. That is, the chiasms (at least some of those so identified) are clearly there; they are not the invention of modern readers. No naturalist critic of whom I am aware has seriously answered the question as to their origin. [56] And as Mark Thomas says in "A Rhetorical Approach to

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53. Eugene England, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1982), 153.

54. Hugh Nibley, *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), vol. 8, 387-88.

55. John W. Welch, "What Does Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon Prove?" *BMAR*, 205, 207, 208. See also Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981).

56. In a paper presented at the August 2001 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City entitled, "The Use and Abuse of Chiasmus in Book of Mormon Studies," Dan Vogel argues

the Book of Mormon," "Letting the text speak requires attention, sincerity, and integrity."[57]

In an interview with her son, Joseph Smith III, Emma Smith, who knew Joseph more intimately than anyone, said her husband had limited knowledge of spelling and "could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well worded letter; let alone dictate a book like the Book of Mormon." She added, "I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this [translate the Book of Mormon], and for one as unlearned as he was it was simply impossible."[58]

Hiram Page spoke of Joseph's inability to produce such a book on his own: "[It would be unreasonable] to say that a man of Joseph's ability, who at that time did not know how to pronounce the word Nephi, could write a book of six hundred pages, as correct as the Book of Mormon, without supernatural power. . . ."[59] This seems to be corroborated by two interviews David Whitmer gave toward the end of his life: in one he said, "In translating the characters Smith. . .was oftentimes compelled to spell the words out, not knowing the correct pronunciation," and "Sometimes Joseph could not pronounce the words correctly, having had but little education. . . ."[60]

Early theories that Smith copied the book from another author or that it was written by someone else were based on the assumption by

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"that there are fundamental problems with the whole theory of chiasmus" (p. 1, typescript in my possession). While Vogel is correct in postulating that some scholars have played fast and loose in finding chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, and while his challenging of some purported examples of chiasmus is persuasive, the fact remains that there is chiasmus in the Book of Mormon and that even non-chiastic parallel passages required either conscious composition or absorption of parallel structures so completely as to produce them unconsciously, which strains credibility. There is a difference between the simple parallel structures which Vogel finds in the writings of Joseph Smith and others and the sometimes lengthy and complex parallel forms one finds in the Book of Mormon as, for example, in Mosiah 5 and Alma 36. It is the presence of such examples that has yet to be explained as coming out of Joseph Smith's information environment or out of his inventive mind.

57. *New Approaches*, 55.

58. "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Herald* 26 (1879), 290, as quoted in Richard Bushman, "The Recovery of the Book of Mormon," *BMAR*, 25.

59. Letter to William E. McLellin, 30 May 1847, *Ensign of Liberty*, 1 (January 1848): 63, as quoted in Richard L. Anderson, "Personal Writings of the Book of Mormon Witnesses," *BMAR*, 53.

60. James H. Hart interview, 1884, as quoted in Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *BMAR*, 66.

those who knew him that Joseph Smith simply did not have the education or intelligence to write such a book. According to Louis Midgley, "The gossip about the presumed activities of the young Joseph Smith published in [E. D.] Howe's book yield a portrait of someone incapable of the intellectual effort necessary to produce a long, complicated history like the Book of Mormon."[61] Richard Bushman says, "We must remember that he was only twenty-two, truly unlearned, with no worldly standing, living in an obscure rural backwater, and with only a few visionary glimpses of what lay ahead."[62]

Those who assisted Joseph in the translation of the Book of Mormon testified that he dictated the narrative of the people of Lehi at times for hours on end, day after day, without any reference materials, and that he would pick up the dictation the following day at the very place where he left off, with no prompting to tell him where the narrative was to continue. Had he been "free-composing" his narrative, rather than translating as he claimed, he would have had to keep in his consciousness not only the various threads of his narration, but the structure and intricate pattern of the history he was inventing, the array of characters who peopled that history, the cultural and religious traditions that informed their actions, and the various forms of their literary style. Consider the magnitude of such a feat. In all of literary history there is not a single example to match such an accomplishment. The only thing to approach it is the theorized ancient oral spinning of epic tales, but that was done only by poets who had spent years memorizing vast "word hoards" of narrative formulas and images which they would then weave into constantly changing epic poems. If Joseph Smith composed the Book of Mormon out of his imagination and in the manner in which his scribes said he did (and we have no reason to disbelieve them), he is the only writer in human history to have accomplished such a feat. I contend that Joseph Smith's critics have never satisfactorily demonstrated how he could have done this.

Sophistication

> I always feel like drinking that heroic drink [brandy] when we talk ontological heroics together.
>
> Melville to Hawthorne, 29 June 1851

Joseph Smith was, according to contemporary accounts, a typical frontier figure. He had little education, culture, or polish. Jan Shipps calls him

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61. "Who Really Wrote. . . ?" 110.
62. "The Recovery of the Book of Mormon," *BMAR*, 29.

"an unsophisticated farm boy."[63] In his mid-twenties he had little knowledge of history, languages, politics, or the arts and humanities. Except for a few passages in the Doctrine and Covenants and some of his sermons, all written after he expanded his education, there is nothing in Joseph Smith's writing to suggest a sophisticated literary style. In fact, like many of his American contemporaries, he wrote in a plain style significantly different from the style or styles we find in the Book of Mormon.

I first learned of the literary complexity of the Book of Mormon from Robert Thomas. Thomas, who had written his undergraduate thesis at Reed College on the Book of Mormon as Hebrew literature, was the first scholar to see the intricate biblical parallelism in the book.[64] Richard Dilworth Rust in his valuable study, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon*,[65] gives a much more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the book's many literary forms and styles, opening the text in many new ways.

In his insightful new study of the Book of Mormon narratives, *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives*, Mark Thomas describes the book as "complex, "subtle," "unique," and "artful." It has, he says, "enormous variety" and "great subtlety," and uses the Bible in "diverse and intricate ways." Then he adds, "It would be difficult to find a more original religious text."[66] Thomas speaks of its use of symbol systems, image patterns, shadows, figures, repetitive triads, and narrative linkings. His study illustrates what David S. Reynolds says of a text: "The distinguishing quality of the literary text is not radical subversiveness, but unique suggestiveness and great reconstructive power."[67]

Another distinguishing mark of a sophisticated mind is the conscious use of irony. While this subject deserves a fuller treatment than can be given here,[68] it is sufficient to note that the Book of Mormon is replete with examples of verbal and dramatic irony. It includes many of the varieties of irony distinguished by classical rhetoricians and used by classical authors and the writers of the Hebrew scriptures, yet is devoid of the kind of irony that one might expect of someone living in Joseph Smith's nineteenth century environs—the deliberate overstatement or

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63. Jan Shipps, "The Mormons: Looking Forward and Outward," in *Where the Spirit Leads: American Denominations Today*, ed. Martin E. Marty (Richmond, Va.: John Knox, 1980), 29-30, as quoted in Louis Midgley, *BMAR*, 103.

64. Robert Thomas, "A Literary Analysis of the Book of Mormon," A.B. thesis, Reed College, 1947.

65. Richard Dilworth Rust, *Feasting on the Word: the Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997).

66. *Digging in Cumorah*, 49.

67. *Beneath the Renaissance*, 10.

68. I addressed the use of irony in a paper given at the August 2001 Sunstone Symposium entitled, "Irony in the Book of Mormon."

exaggeration that is a characteristic of American Southwestern humor. Again, it is important to note that Joseph Smith's own early writing is devoid of any conscious use of irony, which is what one would expect in a naïve writer.

Some Analogies

> Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in milk.
>
> Thoreau, Journal, 11 November 1850

To me Joseph Smith's inventing the Book of Mormon would be akin to a frontier craftsman, a maker of rag rugs, suddenly producing an oriental rug requiring a knowledge of ancient weaving traditions, dyes, and fabrics, and then weaving a rug of such complexity that only in the twentieth century would someone be able to discern and decipher its intricate figures and patterns. Or it would be as if a frontiersman able to pluck out a few bars of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" on a banjo were suddenly to compose and dictate an elaborate fugue or a symphony for full orchestra and chorus.

I still think Nibley has the best analogy: "To put it facetiously but not unfairly, the artist [who sets out to create such a work] must not only balance a bowl of goldfish and three lighted candles on the end of a broomstick while fighting off a swarm of gadflies, but he must at the same time be carving an immortal piece of statuary from a lump of solid diorite."[69]

Two Cultures

The problem, as I see it, with Book of Mormon scholarship is that all sides in the argument seem to be talking past one another or, to use Paul's words, to be "speaking into the air" (1 Cor. 14:9). Thus, Edward Ashment contends, at the end of an essay on "evidence" in the Book of Mormon, "Unfortunately there is no direct evidence to support the historical claims of the Book of Mormon—nothing archeological, nothing philological. As a result, those for whom truth is the product of spiritual witness, not empirical inquiry, resort to developing analogies and parallels to defend the book's historic claims. That is the apologetic historical methodology."[70] It is interesting and ironic that this charge parallels the one leveled against the naturalist critics by apologists, who see them as

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69. Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 159.

70. Edward W. Ashment, "'A Record in the Language of My Father': Evidence of Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew in the Book of Mormon," *Approaches*, 374.

ignoring compelling historical, textual, and philological evidence and developing analogies and parallels to attack the book's historicity.

Ashment's dismissal of the apologist methodology is no less disturbing than the tone of some of the fully fourteen apologist critics who reviewed *New Approaches* for FARMS. One of these critics dismisses Ashment (referred to as "a California insurance salesman who once studied Egyptology at the University of Chicago") as having a "faulty (and occasionally amusing) methodology." Another accuses him of outright dishonesty.[71]

Although I have lived most of my life in academia where this type of behavior is all too typical, I don't think there should be a place for nastiness or insults in scholarly discussion. We should all be humbled by our vast ignorance and respectful of those with opinions or interpretations contrary to our own. As John Stuart Mill says, "For while everyone well knows himself to be fallible, few think it necessary to take any precautions against their own fallibility, or admit the supposition that any opinion, of which they feel very certain, may be one of the examples of the error to which they acknowledge themselves to be liable." Mill says further, "It is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the. . .truth has any chance of being supplied."[72]

There is, of course, reason for distrust and suspicion when each side has been so quick to dismiss the methods and observations of the other, to question the motives and scholarship of opponents, to rush to judgment about each other's discoveries. We need to recognize that, as extremes, each position is limited. Those who defend the Book of Mormon primarily with their testimonies tend to be closed to hard questions and real challenges the book presents in its claim to be a translation of an ancient text. They need to acknowledge that some questions are legitimate and that not everyone who challenges Joseph Smith's account is an enemy of the truth or the church. They also need to understand that merely invoking spiritual authority closes off dialogue.

On the other side, naturalists who refute the divine origin of the book dismiss the spiritual experience of believers as well as any evidence that suggests the book has an ancient primary source. They need to acknowledge the challenges that face their scholarship if they contend that

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71. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, 6, no. 1 (1994), x; John Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon," 88 ff. Peterson's biographical sketches of other contributors to *New Approaches* seem designed to diminish their credentials and credibility, and the tone of some of the reviews is, unfortunately, as nasty and negative as some comments the naturalist critics make about the apologists.

72. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. David Spitz (New York: Norton, 1975), 54, 82.

Joseph Smith was the author of the book. The believer-apologists need to be less pious and the non-believer-naturalists need to be a little less enamored of their empiricism.

Until the Enlightenment, academics and religionists alike tended to see the world through two lenses—*logos* and *mythos*—and considered each essential in the process of seeking truth. As Karen Armstrong argues in *The Battle for God*, "The *mythos* of a society provided people with a context and made sense of their day-to-day lives; it directed their attention to the eternal and the universal. It was also rooted in what we call the unconscious mind." She adds, "*Logos* was equally important. *Logos* was the rational, pragmatic, and scientific thought that enabled men and women to function well in the world. . . .In the pre-modern world, both *mythos* and *logos* were regarded as indispensable. Each would be impoverished without the other."[73] Using both is what Lowell Bennion called "carrying water on both shoulders."[74]

I believe we need to recapture this older way of looking for truth, to recognize that *logos*, with its emphasis on empirical proof, is ultimately no more reliable nor no less essential than *mythos*, with its emphasis on ritual and mysticism. It is the dialogue between the two, the respect for what they both can teach us, which should inform our quest for both immediate and ultimate meaning.

A Tentative Theory

> Words may be a thick and darksome veil of mystery between the soul and the truth which it seeks.
>
> Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, 19 May 1840

It appears that the naturalist critics and the apologists are caught in a hopeless standoff over the Book of Mormon. Each side has dug in for the long battle and each uses whichever weapons from its arsenal seem expedient to press its position. But what if neither side is entirely right—nor, for that matter, entirely wrong? What if there were a third option? I doubt that such an option would appear tenable to either camp because it would mean retreating from their strongly defended positions, but as I read the Book of Mormon and try objectively and fairly to consider the arguments on each side, and as I try to incorporate both my scholarly analytical skills and my spiritual experiences with the book, which have been consistent over a lifetime, I have come to the conclusion that the Book of Mormon may be genuinely *both* an ancient and a modern text. I

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73. Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Random House, 2000), xv, xvi-xvii.

74. Lowell L. Bennion, "Carrying Water on Both Shoulders," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1971): 110-12.

believe that there were real people named Nephi, Alma, Moroni, and Mormon who lived and wrote on the American continent. The records they kept were like the records kept by other ancient peoples, containing a chronicle of their cultural experience and religious history, expressed in the forms and styles of their literary tradition. But I also accept that what thoughts and feelings they hoped to pass on to future generations were in practice "translated" or expressed in Joseph Smith's language and through the experience of his nineteenth-century mind.[75] This would explain why one finds examples in the Book of Mormon of expressions and verbal coloring that most likely were not in the original source. For example, David Wright argues convincingly that in his expression of ideas found in Alma 12-13, Joseph Smith "transformed" Paul's letter to the Hebrews. This seems much more plausible than the proposition, advanced by some apologist critics, that there was an ancient prototype that served as a source for both Alma and Hebrews. But, while Wright's argument is persuasive, I do not agree with him when he states, "It goes almost without saying that this conclusion means further that the rest of the Book of Mormon was composed by" Joseph Smith.[76]

The position I am arguing is similar to that which Blake Ostler articulates in his essay, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source." Ostler makes a convincing case for the possibility of both an ancient source and a modern transformation of that source so that the book presents "a modern world view and theological understanding superimposed on the Book of Mormon text from the plates."[77] Although somewhat parallel, my argument is more conservative than Ostler's. It seems to me that one has to do too many intellectual and spiritual gymnastics either to see the Book of Mormon as a perfectly literal translation of an ancient text source or to see it as entirely a product of a nineteenth-century mind. On the one hand, there are simply too many things in the book that neither Joseph Smith nor any of his contemporaries could possibly have known; too many complexities, subtleties, and intricacies in the text that were beyond his or any of his contemporaries' capabilities; too many examples of spiritual depth and profound expression that were certainly beyond his cognitive or expressive abilities when the Book of Mormon was produced. I believe that the integrity

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75. The translation/compositional process by which Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon may have been similar to that which he employed in his revision of the Bible and in his production of the books of Moses and Abraham. In each instance, Joseph created new or revised texts through inspiration or revelation.

76. David Wright, "'In Plain Terms that We May Understand': Joseph Smith's Transformation of Hebrews in Alma 12-13," *New Approaches*, 207.

77. Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no.1 (Spring 1987): 39, 66.

of the text requires us to look for the source of all of these things outside of Joseph Smith.

On the other hand, there are matters of composition, style, and subject matter that require us to have a more liberal, open concept of translation to include transformation, expansion, extrapolation and perhaps even invention. That is, it would not be surprising that as he was translating, Joseph Smith came to prophesies concerning our day in which he took the basic idea presented by an ancient author and through inspiration expanded on it or, as in the case of Alma 12-13, turned to a scripture with which he was familiar in order to find a fuller expression of the idea. In some instances, perhaps because of the difficulty of translation or simply for convenience sake, Smith apparently copied the King James text, even when that text was corrupt. This seems to be the case with the Sermon on the Mount. As Stan Larson argues, when one compares Christ's sermon in 3 Nephi 12 to the King James Version and the earliest extant Greek texts, "where the KJV mistranslates [a phrase]. . .the Book of Mormon simply follows this mistranslation."[78]

The position I am presenting here is different from that of Mark Thomas who argues that the entirety of the Book of Mormon is a God-inspired nineteenth century creation.[79] The problem with Thomas's position, besides the fact that it requires us to make what for me is an impossible leap in seeing the unlettered Smith as the inspired author, is that it requires that we see either God, Joseph Smith, or both as deceptive. That is, if God has important things to say to his children living in the latter days, why would he need to pretend to put his words into the mouths of fictional characters who are presented as real historical figures, especially when he seems to have no problem putting them into the mouth of Joseph Smith and others in the Doctrine and Covenants? And, if it is Joseph Smith who is creating a fictional setting while presenting it as authentic history, then one has to ask why a writer whose essential purpose is to convince people that Jesus is the Christ must resort to fraud and subterfuge to do so. As C. S. Lewis observed about those who see Jesus as the world's greatest moral teacher but not as the Son of God he declared himself to be, one can't have it both ways.[80]

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78. Stan Larson, "The Historicity of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount," *New Approaches*, 113-63.

79. See especially Chapter 1 of *Digging in Cumorah*.

80. C. S. Lewis, *The Case for Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960). "I'm trying to prevent anyone from saying the really silly thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That's the one thing we mustn't say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn't be a great moral teacher. He'd either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he's a poached egg—or else he'd be the Devil of Hell. You must

Hearts and Minds

I believe that the Book of Mormon is best approached through a combination of rational and spiritual methods. Those who are skeptical of cognitive approaches to the book's origin and meaning tend to forget, as Sir Thomas More says in Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, that "God made the angels to show him splendor. . . .But Man he made to serve him wittily in the tangle of his mind,"[81] or as an Episcopalian ad has it, "Christ came to take away our sins, not our minds." We are not simply to testify of the hope that is in us, but, as Paul said, to give reasons for it.

But if believers need to be re*mind*ed, so to speak, that God expects us to think, non-believers or skeptics need to remember that God gave us hearts as well as minds and that he expects us to use both in seeking truth. Increasingly, scientists are speaking of what they call "heart intelligence" or "emotional intelligence," ways of knowing that are different from but which complement cognitive intelligence.[82] It is, thus, by thinking and feeling, by intuition and inspiration as well as by cognition that we may have the best chance of arriving at the truth, keeping in mind that neither heart nor mind nor the two in concert are infallible. Robert Frost speaks of poetry as a "thought-felt thing," which may also be a good way for us to think of the best critical evaluation. Eugene England argues that this is the only way to understand Joseph Smith himself: "If we are better to know him, better to know his history, which he said we would never know until the judgment day, we must know both his heart and his mind, much better than we have."[83]

The danger of our age is that we have become too intoxicated with reason, too slavishly dependent on strictly empirical processes. In his important book, *Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West*, John Ralston Saul chronicles the extent to which we have exaggerated the importance of reason since the Enlightenment. The price we have paid for this over-reliance on the mind is that we have become an increasingly scientific, technological, and mechanistic society. As Saul says, with the Enlightenment "[r]eason began, abruptly, to separate itself from

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make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But don't let us come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He hasn't left that open to us. He didn't intend to" (45).

81. Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons: A Play in Two Acts* (New York: Random House, 1962), 126.

82. For a summary of this research see *Science of the Heart: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance* (Boulder Creek, CA: Institute of HeartMath, 2001).

83. "American Romanticism," 181.

and to outdistance the other more or less recognized human characteristics—spirit, appetite, faith and emotion, but also intuition, will and, most important, experience." [84]

In *Life is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstition*, Wendell Berry speaks of the current scientific reductionism that sees the world and everything in it as if they were mechanical and predictable. Like Saul, Berry deplores what he sees as "the preeminence of the mind," and the "academic hubris" that thinks it can understand the world when it has "no ability to confront mystery (or even the unknown) as such, and therefore has learned none of the lessons that humans have always learned when they have confronted the mystery." According to Berry, when we accept the non-rational or mysterious "as empirically or rationally solvable," we never find them.[85]

Over the years I have had a number of conversations with students, colleagues, and fellow writers about the Book of Mormon. When Kurt Vonnegut asked me how I could possibly believe the book, I replied that if I was intellectually honest with myself, I could not discount either my experience as a textual critic or as a reader who surrenders to the book's spirit. I gave a similar response to Allen Ginsberg when we were sitting in a restaurant in Sujhou, China. When I told him about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, he asked incredulously, "This is believed?" I assured him that it was indeed believed, by me and by many others.

Mark Thomas says, "This visionary book speaks to us—children of the Enlightenment—of the non-rational, spiritual world."[86] I believe this is so, but I also believe that it speaks to us of the rational world, of the analytical and discursive processes of the mind. We need both, in concert with one another, in approaching so challenging a text.

Conclusion

> In this world of lies, Truth is forced to fly like a scared white doe in the woodlands; and only by Shakespeare and other masters of the great Art of Telling the Truth,—even though it be covertly, and by snatches
>
> Melville's review of Hawthorne's *Mosses*

I have tried to demonstrate that Joseph Smith did not possess the literary imagination or talent, the authorial maturity, the education, the knowl-

84. John Ralston Saul, *Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West* (New York: Vintage, 1992), 51.

85. Wendell Berry, *Life is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstition* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2000), 15, 27

86. *Digging in Cumorah*, 2.

edge base or the sophistication necessary to write the Book of Mormon; nor, had he possessed all of these things, was the time in which the book was produced sufficient to compose such a lengthy and elaborate narrative.

Could any of Joseph Smith's more illustrious contemporary authors have written the book? I don't believe that Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau, and Whitman, colossal writers that they were, *together* could have written the Book of Mormon. Further, I don't believe that, if all the scholars in the world in the mid-1820s had gathered in a large room with access to every extant book and manuscript and a decade to work on it, they could have written such a book. That is my considered, scholarly opinion. There is simply too much the book points to that no one in nineteenth century America knew or could have known.

This belief is both intellectual and spiritual. As a scholar I believe that the best and most inclusive objective evidence, the most persuasive empirical evidence leads to the conclusion that no one living in the world of the 1820s, let alone an untutored, inglorious farmer, could have produced the Book of Mormon. And yet it bears the unmistakable imprint of Joseph Smith's own nineteenth-century mind and heart.

The Book of Mormon speaks to *my* heart as well as *my* mind, and I have come to trust both experiences as real and valid. I am challenged by the book to be a better Christian. I find my understanding of God broadened and my understanding of Jesus Christ deepened by the words of this book. I have written before that the Book of Mormon "has opened my heart wider to experience [God's] love."[87] I rejoice in a book that has such an expression as Moroni's final invitation: "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him. . . .And. . .if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, . . .then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot" (Moroni 10:32-33).

Coda

Not "Revelation" 'tis that waits,
But our unfurnished eyes.
Emily Dickinson, Letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, 1862-63

When he gave his "Address" to the Divinity School at Harvard in 1838, Emerson made a dramatic break with both traditional Christianity and with the long line of clergymen in his own family. He scandalized

87. Robert Rees, "It Has Opened My Heart Wider to Experience His Love," in Eugene England, ed., *Converted to Christ Through the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 192-98.

the faculty with his call for "perpetual revelation" ("It is my duty to say to you that the need was never greater of new revelation than now. . . .God is, not was; . . .He speaketh, not spake") and for personal revelation ("Intuition. . .cannot be received at second hand").[88] Emerson had come to the conclusion, to use the words spoken several decades earlier to the boy Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove, that the creeds of the churches "were an abomination" and their ministers "were all corrupt."[89] (Joseph Smith—History 19). He spoke words that Joseph himself might have said, "Men have come to speak of the revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead." [90]

Had Ralph Waldo Emerson met Joseph Smith, I believe he would have felt an immediate kinship with him, would have recognized the prophetic mantle of his visionary countryman. He might have recognized him as the prophet he himself imagined coming to the New World: "I look for the hour when that supreme Beauty which ravished the souls of those Eastern men, and chiefly of those Hebrews, and through their lips spoke oracles to all time, shall speak in the West also. . . .I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws that he shall see them come full circle; shall see their rounding complete grace; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy."[91]

The canon-making critic Harold Bloom places Joseph Smith in the same pantheon as Emerson and Whitman. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman were great writers. . .Joseph Smith did not excel as a writer or as a theologian, . . .but he was an authentic religious genius, and surpassed all Americans, before or since, in the possession and expression of what could be called the religion-making imagination."[92] The period of spiritual and imaginative expression that flowered in early to mid-nineteenth century America is called the Age of Emerson, but given the growing reputation of the Vermont farm boy who saw the Father and the Son in a woodland grove and of the book—more widely read than any other written in that productive time—which he miraculously brought forth, it is not inconceivable that sometime this century that renaissance may find itself renamed the Age of Joseph Smith.

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88. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Address [to the Divinity School]," *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Essays and Lectures* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1983), 79, 83.

89. Joseph Smith—History: Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, 19, *The Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979).

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid., 91-92.

92. *American Religion*, 96-97.

A Uniform and Common Recollection: Joseph Smith's Legacy, Polygamy, and the Creation of Mormon Public Memory, 1852-2002

Stephen C. Taysom

Introduction: A Theory of Historical Consciousness and Public Memory

Historians have long believed that history does not consist simply of recounting the past according to the Rankean ideal of telling it "as it really was."[1] The process of researching, selecting, and emplotting historical evidence within a narrative structure is often idiosyncratic, and may be employed to further a host of goals. Within communities, history represents a way of appropriating the past in order to serve the needs of the present. Maurice Halbwachs's[2] work emphasizes the role history plays as the "collective memory" of a community. Halbwachs argues that "no memory is possible outside frameworks used by the people living in so-

1. Leopold Von Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker*, ed. by W. Andreas (Wiesbaden, Germany: 1957), 4. In the original German, Ranke's famous phrase is rendered "wie es eigentlich gewesen."

2. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Halbwachs (1877-1945) was among the most influential students of sociologist Emile Durkheim. A Frenchman of German extraction, Halbwachs attended the prestigious Ecole Normale Superieure and later occupied a professorial chair at the Sorbonne.

ciety to determine and retrieve their recollections."[3] This process involves the retention of useful historical emplotment points coupled with the suppression of those "facts" which threaten to undermine a community's structures.

Halbwachs views "collective memory" as a social process in which memories serve to "express the general attitude of the group; they not only reproduce its history but also define its nature and its qualities and weaknesses."[4] As will be argued below, this process is much more complicated than simply "reproducing" the past. Indeed, the process of creating a historical consciousness, or public memory, derives from a variety of impulses designed to serve the immediate needs of the community; the need to capture the past for its own sake is not important to the functionalistic creation of historical consciousness.

Religious communities in particular tend to be quite rigid regarding their official interpretations of the past. Halbwachs notes:

> [W]hat is peculiar to the memory of religious groups is that, while the memories of other groups permeate each other mutually and tend to correspond, the memory of religious groups claims to be fixed once and for all. It either obliges others to adapt themselves to its dominant representations, or it systematically ignores them; contrasting its own permanence with the instability of others, it relegates them to an inferior rank.[5]

As this paper will show, this process becomes even more complicated when the "permanent" collective memories of these groups present a challenge to the current situation in which a group finds itself.

While Halbwachs's approach is useful, it does have some serious limitations, including the idea that a "collective memory" can actually exist in which certain knowledge is actually lost. The research presented here indicates that communities often construct a "historical consciousness," or "public memory,"[6] in which a certain emplotment scheme is agreed upon or enforced by a group of elites, but which exists in tension with competing public and private memory systems.

The idea of emplotment is borrowed from Hayden White. White argues that "historical discourse should not be regarded as a mirror image of the set of events that it claims simply to describe." Rather, it should be viewed as "a given set of events, arranged more or less chronologically

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3. Ibid., 43.
4. Ibid., 59.
5. Ibid., 92.
6. Throughout this article, I use the terms "public memory" and "historical consciousness" interchangeably. I do this for two reasons: first, they are repeated so often that the use of one term tends to weary both author and reader; second, both terms help carry the true meaning of the concept better than either one alone.

but encoded so as to appear as phases of a *process* with a discernible beginning, middle, and end, [which] may be emplotted as a Romance, Comedy, Tragedy, Epic, or what have you, depending upon the valences assigned to different events in the series as elements of recognizable archetypal story-forms."[7] While no attempt will be made herein to classify the various public memories discussed in this article as specific story forms, my theory of historical consciousness depends upon the idea, articulated by White, that events are selected, arranged, and emplotted, rather than "discovered and recovered." Historian James Deetz made a similar observation when he wrote, "[W]hat we do is construct [rather than reconstruct] the past, and in so doing, decide what is important and what is not. . . .[S]uch constructions invariably reflect the values and biases [and, I would add, goals] of the time they were written."[8] The most important point here is that history and the past are not the same thing. The literal past is, of course, completely inaccessible; it is fixed and unchangeable. History is fluid, malleable, infinitely changeable, and open to a myriad of potentially conflicting interpretations.

The theory of historical consciousness developed and applied herein consists of six basic elements. First, as is the case with collective memory, a discourse develops from which certain historical elements are dropped and others emphasized. Second—and this is where my theory diverges from Halbwachs's—the discourse community does not literally forget its own past. Rather, the community agrees upon an "official" history which exists in tension with the public memories of other communities and the private memories of individuals. Third, when the historical consciousness narrative is imposed from above, institutional sanctions are often imposed upon those who openly criticize or seek to undermine the discourse of historical consciousness while at the same time rewards are parceled out to those who reinforce the historical consciousness. Fourth, historical consciousness is both functional and heavily presentist. In other words, the narrative is designed to serve the needs of the community as defined by the controlling parties at the time the narrative is constructed. Thus, the emplotment points of the historical consciousness narrative shift as the needs of the community change. This approach often puts the creators of the historical consciousness at odds with liberal or intellectual forces which profess to find the value of history in studying the past "for its own sake" rather than seeking to further the goals of community elites. Fifth, historical consciousness is defined in many

7. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 106.

8. James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz, *The Times of Their Lives: Life, Love and Death in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 11.

ways by what is left out of the narrative; these remnants are frequently emplotted in counter-narratives which function as public narratives for competing communities. Finally, people may inhabit multiple communities simultaneously and in the process partake of multiple, discrete, and sometimes competing historical consciousness narratives. Attempts by such individuals to harmonize the varying public memories are often met by resistance from elites who seek to punish such behavior.

This paper is a study of how one community, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has constructed public memories and a historical consciousness of its past. The object is to apply the principles described above to the study of the creation of public memories within various Mormon discourse communities over the issue of plural marriage. While plural marriage is the general issue around which this article revolves, the historical consciousness narratives emerging from this context touch on a wide range of issues, not all of which may be dealt with here. Among these are the "ownership" of history, the need to appropriate and carefully sculpt the image of Mormonism's founding prophet Joseph Smith, the role of women in the church, the part played by popular culture in the Mormon community, and the importance of public history (especially historic sites) in the construction of historical consciousness narratives.

We will begin by recounting the "facts" relative to the Mormon doctrine of plural marriage and its demise, followed by an exploration of the creation of related narratives and how public memories have changed from 1852 to the present. As a member of this particular religious tradition, I am sensitive to the importance of historical consciousnesses in the minds and hearts of believers. As a believer myself, I accept doctrinal interpretations as determined by those whose right it is to do so. However, as a historian, I am interested in understanding how public memories are constructed and how religion stays relevant and vibrant—or stagnates and atrophies—in response to constructed public memories.

Emplotment Points: LDS History, 1820-1890

According to Joseph Smith, it was in the spring of 1820 when he first saw God. Confused by the "war of words and tumult of opinions" raging among various revival groups in and around Smith's home in western New York state, the teenager retired to a stand of trees near his family's farm to ask God which church was right. What happened next has been narrated in a number of different ways, but the story is consistent on several points. Depending on the account, either God the Father or Jesus Christ—or in the official account, both—appeared to Smith, indicated that Smith's sins were forgiven, and told him not to join any church then in existence because "all religious denominations were believing in-

correct doctrines, and none of them was acknowledged of God as his church and kingdom."[9]

This experience apparently had little immediate impact on Smith's life. He continued his usual pursuits as the son of a poor, hard-scrabble farm family for the next three years. In 1823 he again recorded an experience with the divine, in which an angel visited him and told him of a book buried in a hill near Smith's home. This book contained the text of what is known as the Book of Mormon, which Smith translated "by the gift and power of God" between 1827 and 1830. On April 6, 1830, Smith and six followers organized the Church of Christ (later renamed the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) in Fayette New York.

Over the course of the next fourteen years, Smith's church grew to include tens of thousands of members, many immigrating thousands of miles over sea and land to "gather" with the church. During this period, the church's headquarters moved from New York to Ohio to Missouri and—following their violent expulsion from that state—to a small town on the Mississippi River in west central Illinois. Smith dubbed this city "Nauvoo," and from his arrival there in 1839 until his murder in nearby Carthage in 1844, he introduced radical new doctrines which enraged and inspired religious and non-religious alike. Among these was the doctrine of "plurality of wives."

A central tenet of the Mormon faith was the doctrine of "restoration." Smith believed God had called him to restore the true ancient religion, including the practices of the Old Testament patriarchs. Among these was polygamy. Early in his prophetic career, Smith had demonstrated an intense interest in the Bible, undertaking an "inspired revision" of the King James text in the summer of 1830. He had been confused over the apparent contradiction between the biblical injunction against adultery and the practice of polygamy among some Old Testament figures. Following his usual course, he asked God for clarification on the matter. The answer, referred to as the "revelation on plural marriage," was committed to paper in July 1843 although Smith apparently had been practicing this style of marital relationship from the early or mid-1830s.[10] This document announced that Abraham and the other ancient patriarchs were under no condemnation for taking "many wives and concubines" because "the Lord commanded it."[11] As part of the "restoration of all

9. Joseph Smith, "Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1, 1842): 707.

10. It is not clear exactly when Smith began taking additional wives, or how many women he married during his lifetime. The most recent estimate places the date of the first marriage in 1833 and the number of wives in the low 30s. See Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1997).

11. D&C 132: 35.

things," Smith was commanded to enter into this practice, something he later claimed he was reluctant to do. Smith kept this practice to himself until the early 1840s when he introduced several key advisors to the concept of plural marriage and used their reaction to gauge their loyalty. Among those who resisted was Smith's first wife Emma. The actual text of the document cited above was committed to writing in a vain attempt to convince Emma that the doctrine was of God.

Smith's clerk noted that when Emma was presented with the revelation, "she said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious," a turn of events that "much troubled" Joseph.[12] Emma vacillated throughout the early 1840s, variously refusing to countenance even the thought of plural marriage, and at other times actively participating in her husband's plural marriage ceremonies. One thing is clear: Emma Smith knew that her husband taught and practiced the doctrine of plural marriage during his lifetime, a fact that would later carry great importance.

In the 1840s, Smith introduced at Nauvoo a new doctrinal complex, closely related to plural marriage, centering around what came to be known as the "temple endowment." This ceremony represented (and continues to represent) a process of initiation in which faithful Mormons are instructed in what they believe are the most sacred rituals connecting God and man. The ultimate goal of these rituals is to guide the participants along the path to godhood.[13] This period marked a major shift in Mormon cosmology. Previous Mormon teachings throughout the 1830s, including those found in the Book of Mormon, were actually quite similar to those being taught by other Protestant sects of the time. The major difference was not in the message, but in the delivery: Mormons believed that God continued to communicate with people on the earth and that the canon was not closed, but beyond that they preached a rather straightforward brand of Protestant Christianity.

The introduction of the endowment rites and plural marriage at Nauvoo changed everything. Smith kept his teachings on the subject of plural marriage close to his vest. Throughout the 1840s, he maintained the public fiction that accusations of polygamy represented "false epithets and charges," and as late as 1844, people were standing trial in Nauvoo for "falsely" charging Smith with this practice.[14]

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12. William Clayton's Nauvoo Journal Two, July 12, 1843, MS LDS Archives, Salt Lake City, also in ed. George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 110.

13. David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994). The doctrine of human divinization is spelled out in D&C 132.

14. For example, a "Dr. Foster" stood trial in 1844 for accusing Smith and others of

Before Smith could fully explore and develop all the theological implications of these new teachings, he and his bother Hyrum were murdered while in jail at Carthage, Illinois. Following some confusion, the church eventually came under the control of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, headed by Brigham Young, who had come to fully embrace the doctrine of plural marriage. Young and Smith's widow, Emma, had never cared for one another, and in the months following Smith's murder, the tension between the two became palpable. Emma regarded her husband's successor as a profane, loutish brute while he accused her of being a greedy, conniving thorn in the side of the church. Emma and Young wrestled over Joseph's estate and the feelings of bitterness thus engendered grew deeper as the situation in Nauvoo grew bleaker. In late 1845, facing invasion by armed groups laying siege to the city, Young agreed to leave Nauvoo, along with most of his followers. In February 1846 the first company of Mormons struggled across the frozen Mississippi River toward Iowa and from there to the Great Basin to rebuild their promised land, this time in the American West. Noticeably absent from the pioneering party were Emma Smith and her children, who remained in Nauvoo.

By 1852 Young had made considerable progress in taming the harsh wilds of what was then known as Utah Territory. In August of that year, safely ensconced behind the Wasatch mountains, Young directed apostle Orson Pratt to announce to the world at the church's general conference that plural marriage was, in fact, an important element of LDS doctrine and that the chief design of this principle was to allow for a "numerous and faithful posterity to be raised up and taught in the principles of righteousness and truth."[15] Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, polygamy came to be regarded as the centerpiece of Mormon theology. By the 1870s the U.S. government had grown tired of the practice, embarrassed by the "immoral" conduct of the Mormons, and began exerting legal pressure on the Mormons to abandon it. The Edmunds Act (1882) and the Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887) served to disenfranchise Mormon women and threatened to confiscate church property.[16]

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various bad acts, including plural marriage. See entry for 27 April 1844 in Scott Faurling, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Journals and Diaries of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1989), 474.

15. *Deseret News Extra*, September 14, 1852.

16. Several academic histories of plural marriage have been published over the last twenty years, including: B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), Richard S. Van Wagner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1989) and Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

In 1890, after nearly a decade of living "on the underground" to hide from U.S. marshals, President Wilford Woodruff, prompted by prophetic visions, came to the conclusion that Utah statehood and the future ability of the church to own and operate temples depended upon the abolition of plural marriage. In September of that year, he issued a declaration known as the "Manifesto."

This is the skeleton of the story. Now we will consider how these events have been emplotted to construct public memories.

Public Memory Phase 1, 1852-1890: The RLDS Challenge

In 1860, Joseph Smith's oldest son, Joseph Smith III (then 28 years old) agreed to assume leadership over a group of former Mormons who had rejected the teachings of human divinization and the related doctrine of plural marriage. This group, officially known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, maintained that the elder Joseph Smith had had nothing to do with temple rites and plural marriage, charging Brigham Young with inventing these blasphemies after Smith's death. Emma Smith, still bitter about her late husband's polygamous relationships and Young's successful appropriation of her late husband's role as president of the church, had always told her children that their father was completely innocent and had never had another wife. She maintained this position until the end of her life. In 1876 a Mormon from Utah paid Emma a visit. During their conversation he asked Emma if her husband had had "any more wives than you" and if she believed that "he received the revelation of plural marriage." To both queries she responded, "not to my knowledge."[17]

As president of the RLDS church, Joseph Smith III actively preached against Brigham Young and the Utah church, charging Young with soiling the good name of Mormonism's founding prophet by associating him with the doctrine of plural marriage. In the RLDS newspaper and in public speeches, the younger Smith and his associates continually strove to separate the name of their father from the "Brighamite" wickedness being practiced with such abandon in Utah. In the process, they created a public memory in which Joseph Smith, Jr., had had nothing to do with any of the doctrinal innovations of the 1840s. The RLDS public memory effectively froze Mormon history in 1839, before the troublesome doctrines of the Nauvoo period appeared. As early as 1855, Joseph Smith III asserted that "the Mormons of Salt Lake City are not the Mormons of my

17. Statement of Nels Madsen, LDS Archives, reproduced in Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 298.

father's faith. They teach doctrines which are bound to carry those believing and practicing them to eventual destruction, but my father never taught or believed them."[18]

The combined charges of lying and defiling the memory of Joseph Smith enraged Brigham Young, and when young Smith came of age to take over the RLDS church, Young set out to counter his assertions. When the practice of plural marriage was officially announced in August 1852, Brigham Young mentioned, almost in passing, that after Smith received the revelation justifying the practice, "sister Emma burnt the original" text in anger.[19] Over the next twenty-five years, Young repeatedly pointed out Emma Smith's flaws and her "rebellious" nature. In October 1866, Young told the assembled Mormons that "Emma has made her children inherent lies [sic]. . . .[T]o my certain knowledge Emma Smith is one of the damnedest liars I know of on earth. . . .[Joseph himself] told me that she was a child of hell, and literally the most wicked woman on this earth."[20] Six years later, more than a decade after the organization of the RLDS church, Young took on Emma and her sons publicly:

> As for the doctrine that is promulgated by the sons of Joseph, it is nothing more than any other false religion. We would be very glad to have the privilege of saying that the children of Joseph Smith, Junior, the Prophet of God, were firm in the faith of the Gospel, and following in the footsteps of their father. But what are they doing? Trying to blot out every vestige of the work their father performed on the earth. Their mission is to endeavor to obliterate every particle of his doctrine, his faith and doings. These boys are not following Joseph Smith, but Emma Bideman. Every person who hearkens to what they say, hearkens to the will and wishes of Emma Bideman. The boys, themselves, have no will, no mind, no judgment independent of their mother. I do not want to talk about them. I am sorry for them.[21]

Young's assertion notwithstanding, he continued to speak on the subject frequently until his death in 1877. As strong as this rhetoric was, his effort to discredit Emma and her sons represented only one prong of the creation of historical consciousness by the second LDS president. In an attempt to remind his followers and the RLDS church that Joseph Smith was involved with plural marriage, he and other leaders spoke often on that very topic. Several of Joseph Smith's plural wives traveled

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18. Joseph Smith III to Emma Knight, 24 May 1855, Utah State Historical Society.

19. *Journal of Discourses* 6:281.

20. Brigham Young Address, 1 October 1866, MS LDS Archives, Brigham Young Collection.

21. *Journal of Discourses* 15:126. Emma Smith married Lewis Bidamon in late December 1847. The scribe misspelled her new surname in the above account.

to Utah, where little effort was made to hide their connection with him. His most famous wife—a poet and one of the few prominent female leaders, Eliza Roxy Snow—was identified as Eliza R. Snow Smith in official church publications throughout the Utah period.[22] Young and other leaders rarely made a reference to plural marriage without recounting that it was Joseph Smith who received the revelation from God on the topic, and it was he who took the first plural wife. For example, in a short address given in Provo, Utah, in 1855, Young reminded the audience no fewer than five times that it was the "Prophet Joseph [who] revealed this holy law and order to the Latter-day Saints" as he "received it from Israel's God."[23] In response to the counter-narrative being offered by Smith's sons and widow through the medium of the RLDS church, Young made every effort to link Joseph Smith and plural marriage.

The third prong of the nineteenth-century historical consciousness tactic was the increasingly important role played by plural marriage in Mormon theology. During Joseph Smith's lifetime, the question of whether or not plural marriage was required for exaltation remained ambiguous. This may have stemmed from Smith's attempts to keep the practice secret from the general public as well as from rank-and-file Mormons. His own references to the practice, as recorded by those closest to him, were always veiled and often parabolic. A fine example of this is found in a letter Smith wrote to Nancy Rigdon. Apparently Smith had approached Rigdon about becoming one of his plural wives, but she rejected the notion out of hand. In his letter to her, Smith never mentioned polygamy, or even marriage. Instead, he explained, "[T]hat which is wrong under one circumstance, may be and often is, right under another." In a curious parable, Smith added that "a parent may whip a child, and justly too, because he stole an apple; whereas, if the child had asked for the apple, and the parent had given it, would have eaten it with a better appetite, there would have been no stripes—all the pleasures of the apple would have been received, all the misery of the stealing lost."[24] Smith intentionally wrote such letters in an obscure style and often instructed the recipients to burn the letters once they had been read.

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22. See Augusta Joyce Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret: A Book of Biographical Sketches* (Salt Lake: J.C. Graham & Co., 1884), 1-9, for an example of Eliza Snow being known as Eliza Snow Smith. Also in this book, the author writes that after Smith's murder in 1844, "Eliza, widowed, turned again to the work Joseph had established" (3).

23. *Journal of Discourses* 3:266.

24. Joseph Smith to Nancy Rigdon, no date, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, Dean C. Jessee ed., 2d ed., (Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 2002), 538-539. This letter first surfaced in the *Sangamo Journal* in Illinois on 19 August 1842, and was probably written in 1841. The

Another example of this ambiguity may be found in an incident recorded by William Clayton, an English convert to Mormonism who served as Smith's personal secretary and close friend from 1842 until Smith's death in 1844.[25] On 16 May 1843, Smith and Clayton stayed at the home of another Mormon (and the brother of one of Smith's plural wives), Benjamin F. Johnson. In the evening the men engaged in a discussion of the afterlife, and Smith gave "some instructions on the priesthood." During the course of this conversation, Smith "put his hand on [Clayton's] knee and said. . .nothing but the unpardonable sin[26] can prevent him from inheriting eternal glory for he is sealed up by the power of the priesthood unto eternal life having taken the step which is necessary for that purpose." Clayton had yet to receive the temple endowment and gain admittance into Smith's elite "anointed quorum" (he would be admitted on 3 February 1844), but he had taken his first plural wife on 26 April 1844. Thus, it seems logical that the only "step" Smith could have referred to was Clayton's entrance into the practice of plural marriage. The matter is complicated, however, because Smith then told the group that "except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood they will cease to increase when they die."[27] Smith made no mention of the need to take plural wives, mentioning only the authorized sealing of a man and a woman as a requirement for exaltation. Clayton's account is extremely valuable because it provides one of the few contemporary records of Smith's teachings on this subject. As demonstrated below, later reminiscences of Smith's teachings on this subject were more specific and placed a heavier emphasis on polygamy than did earlier, contemporary accounts of his teachings.

Although Smith never made the point specifically, Young and others interpreted the revelation on plural marriage to mean that, at least theoretically, the practice was required for exaltation.[28] Especially after 1852,

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newspaper received the letter from former Smith confidante and ex-Mormon John C. Bennett. Research and witness testimony have demonstrated that the letter, despite being published by Bennett, was in fact written by Joseph Smith.

25. For an excellent biography of this important witness to the behind-the-scenes events in Nauvoo, see James B. Allen, *No Toil Nor Labor Fear: The Story of William Clayton* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2002.)

26. According to Mormon theology, "if ye deny the Holy Ghost when it once has had place in you, and ye know that ye deny it, behold, this is a sin which is unpardonable" (Alma 39:6). Joseph Smith gave further meaning to this term in a revelation from 1832 which stated that the unpardonable sin consists of "having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame" (D&C 76:35).

27. George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1995), 102.

28. In Mormon theology, "salvation" is offered to nearly everyone regardless of

Young drew a hard line, asserting that "the only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy."[29] On another occasion, after reminding the audience that "Joseph received a revelation on *celestial marriage*," Young told those who were "determined not to enter into a plural marriage" that they could look forward to an eternal life lived "single and alone, for ever and ever, and be made servants, while others receive the highest order of intelligence and are bringing worlds into existence."[30] The emphasis on the phrase "celestial marriage" is mine, and it is important. As the context of this passage clearly illustrates, Mormon doctrine after 1852 equated "celestial" marriage with plural marriage. When the practice was officially acknowledged in the fall of 1852, Young oversaw the publication of the text which served as the basis for Mormon temple and sealing theology (now D&C 132).[31] Although the revelation never had an official title during Smith's lifetime, it was published in the *Deseret News* as "The Principle and Doctrine of Having Many Wives and Concubines, A Revelation to Joseph Smith, Jr., 12 July 1843."[32]

From this point forward, Brigham Young made a concerted effort to associate exaltation with polygamy, based largely on this text. In a later address, Young related an incident which typified his public discourse during this period. According to Young, Joseph Smith told him that those who did not enter polygamy would have no spouses in the hereafter, indicating that the only eternal marriages would be polygamous marriages performed by authorized individuals in connection with special temple rites. Again, there are no accounts from Smith's lifetime specifically indicating that Smith connected polygamy with exaltation. Such accounts enter the historical record only after 1852.

Heavily influenced by Young's interpretation of section 132, accounts of Smith's Nauvoo teachings related by Smith's former associates have no trace of the ambiguity found in earlier, contemporary writings. For example, in 1874, William Clayton wrote, "[F]rom him [Smith] I learned that the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most important doctrine ever revealed to man on earth and that without obedi-

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behavior during life. "Exaltation," however, is defined as "life with God as God," and is reserved for those who strictly adhere to Mormon teachings and covenants.

29. Brigham Young address, 19 August 1866, *Journal of Discourses* 11:272. In this address, as in many others during this period, Young used language drawn directly from Smith's revelation on marriage, which also promised that men could become "gods, even the sons of gods."

30. Discourse by Brigham Young, 17 August 1873, MS LDS church Archives.

31. Unless explicitly stated, all references in this paper to the Doctrine and Covenants refer to the 1981 edition.

32. *Deseret News Extra*, 14 September 1852.

ence to that principle no man can ever attain to the fullness of exaltation in the celestial glory."[33] Yet nowhere in Clayton's earlier writings from the Nauvoo period was such a stern statement from Joseph Smith actually recorded. Although some of Smith's followers may have reached such a conclusion, there is scant evidence that Smith himself made this explicit point.

More evidence for this ambiguity may be found in another statement recorded by Clayton one night in March 1843 at Benjamin Johnson's home. Clayton recorded Smith as saying, "In the celestial glory there was [sic] three heavens or degrees, and in order to obtain the highest a man must enter this order of the priesthood and if he don't [sic] he can't obtain it." Just before recording this statement, Clayton wrote, "I feel desirous to be united in an everlasting covenant to my wife and I pray that it may soon be."[34] Apparently, Clayton viewed plural marriage as possible without an eternal sealing, since he was already a polygamist though not yet sealed to any woman for eternity.

In 1856, four years after the official announcement of plural marriage, the *Deseret News* published a version of this same entry from Clayton's diary which had been modified and combined with various other statements made by Joseph Smith. In the 1856 version, a bracketed insertion was added: "[I]n the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [*meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage*] and if he does not, he cannot obtain it."[35] This bracketed material remained when this revelation was included in the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

This article was apparently an attempt to convince the LDS membership that polygamy was central to Mormon theology. In April 1856, only a few months before the *Deseret News* published the entry from Clayton's journal, Apostle Wilford Woodruff wrote of a meeting he attended with Brigham Young in which they read again "the revelation on patriarchal marriage [section 132]." During the course of the discussion, they pondered, "[W]hat does the saying mean that sayes [sic] all shall be damned that does not keep this law unto whom it is revealed? Does it mean that they shall take more wives than one or be damned?"[36] Woodruff

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33. Statement by William Clayton made on 16 February 1874, reprinted as "William Clayton's Testimony," *Historical Record* 3 (6 May 1887): 225-26.

34. Smith, *Journals of William Clayton*, 102, emphasis added.

35. *Deseret News*, 24 September 1856. Beginning with the 1876 edition and continuing to the present, this text was known as section 131 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

36. The text of the revelation paraphrased by Woodruff reads: "[P]repare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have

recorded the group's decision that this law consisted of "the whole law with its covenants."[37]

Apparently Young and his fellow leaders were still puzzled by the ambiguity of this revelation, but were taking rapid action to provide a more concrete interpretation—hence, the decision to add the bracketed material to section 131 just five months later. It seems strange that Young and Woodruff still felt section 132 needed clarification, especially given the tone of Apostle Orson Pratt's address given in August 1852, in which Pratt forcefully argued that plural marriage was required in order for Mormons to "inherit the blessings and promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (The promise of these blessings remains a central part of the sealing ceremony in LDS temples today.) Significantly, Pratt believed the only possible way to receive those blessings was to engage in plural marriage. According to the revelation on marriage, godhood consisted chiefly of the "continuation of the seeds forever and ever"[38] in order that these gods "shall be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all."[39] Pratt interpreted this to mean that gods would need multiple wives in order to fulfill such a requirement. With this interpretation of the link between polygamy and the promised fecundity of those covered by the Abrahamic covenant, the use of the term "everlasting" in this context would logically refer also to polygamy. From 1852 on, this became the accepted interpretation of what it meant to live a life as god—the kind of life promised in the revelation to all who "entered into the new and everlasting covenant."

Further evidence linking the "new and everlasting covenant"[40] with polygamy in the post-1852 era may be found in Pratt's 1852 warning that "there will be foolish among the wise who will not receive the new and everlasting covenant in its fullness; and they will never attain their exal-

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this law revealed unto them must obey the same. For behold, I reveal to you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant ye are damned."

37. *Journals of Wilford Woodruff*, 4:411.

38. D&C 132:19.

39. D&C 132:20-21.

40. Since 1843, the term "new and everlasting covenant" has been most closely associated with marriage and LDS temple theology. However, it was not a new term for Mormons. The first recorded occurrence of its use was in a revelation received by Smith in April 1830, indicating that the entirety of the doctrines and ordinances of the new church would constitute this new covenant. Frequently in the 1830s, Mormon leaders would end correspondence with the phrase "yours in the new and everlasting covenant." Such references stopped after the term took on a new meaning in the 1840s. For a more in-depth treatment of the meaning of covenants in Mormon theology, see Thomas G. Alexander, "'A New and Everlasting Covenant': An Approach to the Theology of Joseph Smith," in Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History: Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake: University of Utah Press, 1987), 43-62.

tation; they will never be counted worthy to hold the scepter of power over a numerous progeny, that shall multiply themselves without end, like the sand upon the seashore."[41] Pratt also spoke of exaltation granted only to those who obeyed the "new and everlasting covenant in its fullness."

One of the first major attempts to make the case for the exalting nature of plural marriage came in 1853, when Brigham Young sent Orson Pratt to Washington, D.C., to publish a periodical called *The Seer*. In the paper's prospectus, Pratt promised to "fully publish" the "views of the Saints in regard to the ancient patriarchal order of matrimony, or plurality of wives, as developed in a Revelation, given through Joseph, the Seer."[42] Young chose the nation's capital as the publication site for this periodical because it was intended to function as a lobbying device. Perhaps, Young thought, if a strong enough case could be made for the morality of plural marriage, the government would leave the Mormons to enjoy their desert solitude unmolested.

While this did not happen, *The Seer* nevertheless shed light on the central role polygamy was beginning to play in LDS theology. Pratt republished Smith's revelation on marriage under the title: "Celestial Marriage: A Revelation on the Patriarchal Order of Matrimony, or Plurality of Wives."[43] He also devoted hundreds of pages to demonstrating that polygamy was not inconsistent with Christian principles, again placing heavy emphasis on Abraham and the promises of "eternal increase" which Mormons associated with the Abrahamic covenant. In a series of rhetorical questions, Pratt asked his readers, "[I]f plurality is offensive in the sight of God, why was Abraham, who practiced it, called a Friend of God? Why require all the families of the earth, to be adopted into the family of a polygamist in order to be saved? Why choose a polygamist to be the Father of all saved families?"[44] *The Seer* clarified that plural marriage was part of the "restoration of all things" and those who have lived the "law of the gospel" in its entirety have been polygamists. In addition to the ubiquitous references to Abraham, Pratt cited the forty-fifth Psalm as evidence that "the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion, was a polygamist, as well as the patriarch Jacob and the prophet

41. Orson Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," delivered 29 August 1852, published in *Journal of Discourses* 1:58-62.

42. *The Seer* 1, no. 1 (January 1853): 1. Photo reprint editions of *The Seer* have been in and out of print on a regular basis for decades. In this paper, I refer to the 2000 photo reprint edition produced by Eborn Books of Salt Lake City, Utah. In the notes, I have supplied the original publication information, as well as the page numbers corresponding to the photo reprint compilation.

43. Ibid., 1:7.

44. *The Seer*, 1, no. 12 (December 1853): 187.

David from whom He descended according to the flesh." More dramatic still was Pratt's claim that "God the Father had a plurality of wives."[45] The implication of these and similar passages was that full integration into celestial life in the hereafter involved polygamous marital relationships.

In an 1856 journal entry, Wilford Woodruff referred to the necessity of keeping "the whole law." Apparently, during this period the Saints had begun to believe that a partial fulfillment of the law could be achieved through monogamous temple marriages for eternity. However, the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom would only be achieved by those who obeyed the whole law, meaning polygamy. Further evidence for this interpretation may be found in a sermon delivered by then-Apostle Joseph F. Smith: "The marriage of one woman to a man for time and eternity by the sealing power is a fulfillment of the celestial law in part—and is good as far as it goes." Smith reminded his listeners, however, that monogamous marriage in the temple represented "only the beginning of the law, not the whole of it," and "whoever has imagined that he could obtain the fullness of blessings pertaining to this celestial law, by complying with only a portion of its conditions has deceived himself; he cannot do it."[46] Apostle Orson Pratt similarly remarked in 1880 that "if a man has no divine right to marry two wives or more in this world, then marriage for eternity is not true, and your faith is all vain, worthless, good for nothing; for as sure as one is true the other must be true."[47]

This evidence points to the fact that Young and his fellow leaders were actively engaged in altering the historical consciousness of the Mormon people by linking the theology of exaltation and endowment with plural marriage. By the mid-1850s, Brigham Young believed the "new" covenant of marriage to be the same as celestial marriage, which was, in turn, coterminous with plural marriage. Based on the statements and publications of LDS leaders during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, section 132 undoubtedly referred to plural relationships, and LDS leaders, furthermore, believed this requirement was mandatory.

Young's attempts to define and strengthen the connection between plural and celestial marriage succeeded extremely well. In 1881, for example, Artemesia Beman Snow wrote, "I have lived in the order of Celestial marriage thirty-five years; I have no wise—I have no desire—to have it changed or abolished." Thirty-five years earlier, Snow's husband "first asked my consent to take other wives [and] I freely gave it, believ-

45. *The Seer*, 1, no. 11 (November 1853): 172.
46. *Journal of Discourses* 20:24.
47. Ibid., 21:296.

ing such an order of marriage to be a pure and holy principle."[48] Likewise, Zina D. H. Young, one of Brigham Young's plural wives, reminisced in 1874 about the early days when she and her "sister wives" had "bravely commenced to live in the newly-revealed order of celestial marriage."[49] Only in her 1874 account, not in any earlier accounts, does she refer to this kind of marriage as "celestial." In 1859, John D. Lee, an adopted son of Brigham Young, recorded in his diary that "Mary Ann Lee. . .was the 16th Woman [sic] that was seald [sic] to me in the New & Everlasting covenant."[50]

In 1879, Wilford Woodruff provided evidence in a speech at the St. George, Utah, temple that Young's vision of the meaning of section 132 and the link between polygamy, the Abrahamic covenant, and godhood had firmly taken root. Joseph Smith, said Woodruff, had received a revelation from God in which He had commanded the Saints to:

> [h]ave our wives and children sealed to us for time and eternity that we may have them with us in our family organization in the resurrection to dwell with us forever in the eternal worlds that we may have an increase of posterity forever in connection with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the ancient patriarchs. God our heavenly father, knowing that this was the only law ordained by the Gods of eternity that would exalt immortal beings. . . commanded Joseph Smith the Prophet and the Latter-day Saints to obey this law or you shall be damned.[51]

Although some may argue that Woodruff could have referred to either monogamous or plural marriages performed in LDS temples, later that year he clearly referred to polygamy when he wrote that "God says we shall be damned if we do not obey this law, Congress says we shall be damned if you do obey it."[52] Congress never opposed monogamous Mormon marriages, so there is no question but that the "law" referred to by Woodruff is plural marriage.

From the 1850s on, Snow, Zina Young, Lee, and Woodruff—reflecting Young's interpretation, as did the majority of Mormons—had come to see celestial marriage and the "new and everlasting covenant" as plural marriage; such a thorough indoctrination would soon prove a difficulty which twentieth-century LDS leaders would have to negotiate.

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48. "Artemesia Beman Snow on Polygamous Marriage," reproduced in Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake: University of Utah Press, 1971), 747.

49. Zina D.H. Young, as quoted in Edward Tullidge, *Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge & Crandall, 1877), 327.

50. Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, eds., *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848-1876* (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1955), 1:191.

51. *Journals of Wilford Woodruff*, 22 February 1879 7:456.

52. Ibid., 7:457.

After Young's death in the late summer of 1877, his successor, John Taylor, continued to maintain the public memory just as Young fashioned it. As noted earlier, from the 1870s on the church faced increasing pressure from the federal government to abandon the practice of polygamy. The Edmunds Act, passed in 1882, landed more than 1,300 Mormon men in prison for "unlawful cohabitation." Failing to break the back of the Mormon practice with the Edmunds Act, the government tried again, and in 1887 passed the Edmunds-Tucker Act which disenfranchised Mormon women, declared the children of polygamous unions to be legally illegitimate, and authorized the seizure of all church holdings valued at more than $50,000. The Mormons responded to these actions by sending leaders "underground" while simultaneously challenging the legitimacy of the laws. This forced the public memory of the importance of polygamy and its association with the beloved Joseph Smith even more firmly into Mormon thought. During this period, John Taylor spoke at length of the necessity of practicing polygamy at all hazards because "if they would not enter into this covenant, then the kingdom of God could not go one step further." As Young had done so many times, Taylor emphasized that, "It was the Prophet of God [Smith] who revealed that to us in Nauvoo, and I bear witness of this solemn fact before God, that He did reveal this sacred principle to me and others of the Twelve, and in this revelation it is stated that it is the will and law of God that 'all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.'"[53]

When John Taylor died, in hiding, in July 1887, Wilford Woodruff assumed leadership of the church. Another Mormon of long standing and a friend of Joseph Smith from the 1830s, Woodruff was also an ardent polygamist who faced a grave dilemma. The U.S. Supreme Court had finally ruled on the Edmunds-Tucker Act and had directed law enforcement officials to seize more than $3 million worth of church property, including their temples. They also emphasized that if Woodruff wanted statehood for Utah, and he clearly did, he would have to abandon polygamy. To the shock and horror of many Mormons, Woodruff declared in his "manifesto" of 1890 that, "we are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice."[54] However disingenuous this claim may have been, it soon became clear that Woodruff was serious, at least about slowing down the number of authorized plural marriages.

For the next decade the church struggled with its identity. Despite the manifesto, half the members of the Quorum of the Twelve took additional

53. *Journal of Discourses* 24:229.
54. D&C, Official Declaration 1.

wives within one year.[55] In 1904, Joseph F. Smith (Joseph Smith, Jr.'s nephew and church president) was called before a Senate committee investigating the continued practice of polygamy in connection with the seating of a Mormon senator, Reed Smoot. Humiliated by the experience, Smith issued the so called "second manifesto," again decrying plural marriage, and announced to the church that "all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize (perform) or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church. . .and excommunicated therefrom."[56] The most prominent casualty of this new policy was John Taylor's son, apostle John W. Taylor who refused to abide by the new law and was excommunicated in 1911. As the Mormon polygamous chapter slowly and painfully came to a close, Mormon public memory had to be re-fashioned.

Public Memory Phase 2(a), 1904-1933: The Rise of Mormon Fundamentalism

While the church undertook to find and excommunicate people practicing and sanctioning polygamy during the early decades of the twentieth century, it was left to deal with a public memory that held that polygamy was a doctrine essential to the success of the church and to the exaltation of individual members, which had been revealed to and practiced by Joseph Smith, Jr. If the task of recasting that public memory were not difficult enough at this point, another counter-narrative arose from an unexpected source. The RLDS church had grown far more slowly than its Utah-based cousin, and by the turn of the century, it became clear to many RLDS members that their ideas about Joseph Smith, Jr.'s involvement with plural marriage were off base. The LDS church did not need to compete with the RLDS counter-narrative anymore, and after 1904 it had become a moot point anyway. What did emerge, however, was the so-called "Mormon fundamentalist" movement. During the second decade of the twentieth century, as the church began to track down and punish polygamists, a group introduced a secret revelation supposedly received in 1886 by then-church president John Taylor. The first mention of this revelation actually came in February 1911 when church leaders convened to discuss the fate of John W. Taylor, son of John Taylor. The younger Taylor told the assembled leaders that "my father received a revelation which however was never presented to the Church."[57] The

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55. D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 1 (Summer 1985): 9-105.

56. Conference Report, 6 April 1904, 75.

57. Minutes of Council of Twelve Meeting concerning fellowship of John W. Taylor, son of John Taylor, and Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, held in the Salt Lake Temple,

text of this "revelation," which John W. Taylor claimed he had discovered in the church's vault, consists of God telling John Taylor that

> my son John, you have asked me concerning the New and Everlasting Covenant, how far it is binding upon my people. Thus saith the Lord, All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling themselves by my name unless they are revoked by me or by my authority. And how can I revoke an everlasting covenant; for I the Lord am everlasting and my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand forever.

Following this statement, the revelation reiterates the necessity of obeying the principle: "[A]s I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph, All those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law."[58] Interestingly, Joseph Smith's name emerged yet again in close connection with plural marriage, and the "new and everlasting covenant of marriage" clearly meant plural marriage, just as it did in the earlier LDS public memory.

According to the fundamentalist narrative, after this 1886 revelation President Taylor ordained a number of men to carry on the practice of plural marriage when the church did away with it (a development supposedly foretold to him). These men and their plural wives started their own church and created their own public memory.

The historical consciousness created by the Mormon fundamentalists posed a unique challenge to mainstream Mormons. After all, the fundamentalists were using a narrative consistent with nineteenth-century mainstream Mormon ideals. For example, the fundamentalists continued to identify the "works and blessings of Abraham" and the promise of "eternal increase" with polygamy as had the mainstream church after 1852. After quoting the LDS temple marriage ceremony in which participants were promised "the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," one leading Mormon fundamentalist asked, "[I]f it is not expected that the contracting parties shall live the law by which Abraham received his promise of countless and eternal increase, why promise them the blessings of Abraham?"[59]

To counter this narrative, church leaders, exercising the prerogatives of prophets, seers, and revelators, set out to redefine the connection between plural marriage and celestial marriage, and the relationship between the Abrahamic covenant, eternal increase, and polygamy. As late

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February 22, 1911, at 10 am, at which were present: President Francis M. Lyman, Heber J. Grant, Hyrum M. Smith, Charles W. Penrose, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, David O. Mckay, Anthony W. Ivins, and Joseph F. Smith, Jr. Original in LDS Archives.

58. "Revelation given to John Taylor, September 27, 1886, copied from the original manuscript by Joseph F. Smith, Jr., August 3, 1909," John Taylor Papers, LDS Archives, copy in author's possession.

59. B. Harvey Allred, *A Leaf in Review* (Caldwell, Ind: Caxton Publishers, 1933), 187.

as 1898, church leaders were teaching that Mormons "believed in and practiced plurality of wives—more properly celestial marriage."[60] However, the first hint of a change in the definition of celestial marriage came just one year later. In 1899, Dr. James Talmage, a leading Mormon intellectual and future apostle, published a "series of lectures on the principle doctrines" of the LDS church. Collectively entitled *The Articles of Faith,* this book became (and remains) a profoundly influential expression of LDS belief. In it Talmage defined celestial marriage as "the system of holy matrimony, involving covenants as to time and eternity," which represents "the order of marriage that exists in the celestial worlds."[61] He skillfully avoided mentioning plural marriage, emphasizing instead the eternity of the marriage covenant. In October 1901, Talmage further revised LDS ideas about celestial marriage when he wrote in an official LDS publication that in celestial marriage "plurality of wives was an incident [sic]—never an essential."[62] Talmage—the first Mormon to earn a Ph.D.—was also one of the first influential Mormon thinkers to remain a monogamist.[63] Faced with the clear scriptural statement that in order to enter the "celestial glory" one must enter into "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" and coming of age in an era when polygamy was forbidden, Talmage saw the necessity to alter the old definition.[64] This new definition began to appear more frequently. Six years after the publication of Talmage's article, a brief sketch of Joseph Smith's prophetic career appeared in which the author explained that "in connection with the ordinances performed in the temple is another very important principle—the eternity of the marriage covenant—commonly referred to as 'celestial marriage.'"[65]

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60. B. H. Roberts, "Comment on Dr. Reiser's Letter," *Improvement Era* 1 (May 1898): 7.

61. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1899), 458. This book has remained in print and relatively unchanged for more than one hundred years, and is not likely to go out of print soon. It is one of only a handful of books, along with Talmage's biography of Christ, *Jesus the Christ,* which LDS missionaries are permitted to read while on their missions.

62. James E. Talmage, "The Story of Mormonism," *Improvement Era* 4 (October 1901): 12.

63. Talmage received a Ph.D. from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1896. He married his first and only wife in 1888. In 1926, another Apostle, John Widtsoe, edited a volume of the *Discourses of Brigham Young,* which contained no references to plural marriage. Widtsoe and Talmage were used by the church to shape and implement the new public memory partly because both were brilliant and eloquent spokesmen and first-generation European converts to Mormonism who had no personal or sentimental ties to plural marriage. This background made them unusual in LDS leadership circles at this time and unusually well qualified to dismantle the historical consciousness of an earlier age. Unfortunately, these two men and their contributions to LDS history have gone largely unstudied.

64. D&C 131:2.

65. William Halls, "The Mission of Joseph Smith," *Improvement Era* 6 (December 1907): 2.

That this concept was new and needed reinforcing is evidenced by the fact that any mention of celestial marriage in official LDS publications between 1901 and the early 1950s included the new definition. For example, Charles W. Penrose of the church's first presidency wrote in 1920 of "the heavenly order of celestial marriage; that is, matrimony for time and all eternity."[66] Similarly, J. M. Sjodahl wrote in 1927 that the "revelation of celestial marriage" dealt solely with the "eternal duration of the marriage relation."[67]

With this new definition in wide use, LDS leaders decided to make an official statement on the subject. In 1933 President Heber J. Grant declared, "[C]elestial marriage—that is, marriage for time and eternity—and polygamous marriage are not synonymous terms. . . .Monogamous marriages solemnized in our temples are celestial marriages."[68] Unlike nineteenth-century sermons on the plurality of wives, Joseph Smith's name was infrequently mentioned in this statement. From the time the First Presidency made this statement, it quickly became a central pillar of the twentieth-century Mormon historical consciousness. In 1948 a book of quotes from LDS leaders on a variety of topics reprinted Grant's 1933 statement under the heading, "The Nature of a Celestial Marriage."[69]

After the 1950s, no explanatory notes accompanied the term "celestial marriage" in LDS publications; it simply had come to be understood as an eternal union between a man and a woman solemnized in an LDS temple.[70] This redefinition required a change in Mormon exegesis of the revelation on plural marriage (section 132). In an official book of commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants published in the 1920s, this new interpretation emerged for the first time. In nineteenth-century context, section 132 had been known as the "revelation on plural marriage."[71] It is not surprising that early interpreters reached this conclusion, especially

66. Charles W. Penrose, "The Edict of a Century," *Improvement Era* 23 (April 1920): 6.

67. J. M. Sjodahl, "Temple Marriage an Antidote Against Divorce," *Improvement Era* 30 (October 1927): 12.

68. "Official Statement From the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," reprinted in the *Deseret News*, Church section, June 17, 1933.

69. Daniel H. Ludlow, *Latter-day Prophets Speak* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1948), 301.

70. For examples of the new definition of celestial marriage, see the following: Ernest Anderson, "What a Chance You Take," *Improvement Era* 53 (July 1950): 7; A. C. Lambert, "The Book of Doctrine and Covenants," *Improvement Era* 54 (October 1951): 10; Hugh B. Brown, "The LDS Concept of Marriage," *Ensign* (January 1972): 60; Spencer W. Kimball, "The Importance of Celestial Marriage," *Ensign* (October 1979): 3; N. Eldon Tanner, "Celestial Marriages and Eternal Families," *Ensign* (May 1980): 15; Dean L. Larsen, "Marriage and the Patriarchal Order," *Ensign* (September 1982): 6; Robert L. Millet, "The Ancient Covenant Restored," *Ensign* (March 1998): 36.

71. For evidence of this association between section 132 and polygamy, see *Journal of Discourses* 6:362, 13:194, 16:166, 17:360-61, 21:10-11, 22:127, 25:309, 26:122, 26:340.

considering the context: It was written down in order to convince Emma Smith of the divine origin of the doctrine of polygamy. This new commentary divided the revelation up, noting that the first half of the revelation "deals with celestial marriage—marriage for eternity. . . .[I]n the sections following, plural marriage is the subject."[72] Notice again that at this early stage in the creation of the new public memory, each mention of "celestial marriage" was accompanied by a new definition—"marriage for eternity"—indicating that the writers were keenly aware of lingering vestiges of the old public memory. This commentary also offers no explanation of the context of the revelation, which would obviously tie the revelation, and Joseph Smith, closely to plural marriage. At about the same time church historian (and later president) Joseph Fielding Smith, son of Joseph F. Smith, published a textbook on LDS history for use in church schools. *Essentials in Church History* remained in print for the next fifty years and exerted tremendous influence on countless Mormon readers. As in the exegetical work noted above, Smith dealt with the revelation in sections. The primary point of the revelation, according to Smith, was to teach that marriage between a man and a woman can be eternal, and that people may become like God in every way. In a separate section, Smith notes that "this revelation also contains the doctrine of plural wives."[73] Smith makes very little mention of Joseph Smith's involvement with plural wives, and no mention is made of Emma Smith.

In 1930, B. H. Roberts, a church leader and historian, published his six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*[74] This massive work added further support to the new public memory. Roberts himself had expressed tremendous shock and confusion over the manifesto, but had since accepted it and worked to help other Mormons do the same. Roberts took pains in his history to point out that what nineteenth-century leaders had referred to as the revelation on plural marriage had as its "primary principle. . .*the eternity of the marriage covenant,*" which had been "obscured by the discussion of and the popular clamor concerning the plurality feature of the new marriage system" (emphasis in original).[75] Roberts argued that plural marriage was a conditional, temporary, and relatively minor aspect of "celestial marriage" which he defined—in step with the statement that would be

72. Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants With Historical and Exegetical Notes* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book Company, 1921, 1978), 831.

73. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1921), 341.

74. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Six Volumes* (Salt Lake: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930).

75. Ibid., 2:95.

issued three years later—as "the marriage system that obtains in the celestial worlds."[76] He held that plural marriages may fit under this rubric, but they are secondary to monogamous marriages performed by proper authority in LDS temples.

During this early period of the second phase of Mormon public memory, many Mormons still living were the offspring of polygamous unions and had been raised to believe firmly in the older public memory. However, as time passed, fewer and fewer Mormons came to identify personally with polygamy. By the 1950s Mormons had become thoroughly Americanized and tended to display a split opinion about polygamy. On one hand, they were immensely proud of the sacrifices made by their pioneer ancestors, but as modern Americans and the very model of American family values, they were also uncomfortable with their heritage of socio-sexual experimentation. Raised on *Essentials in Church History* and similar volumes and never hearing of Joseph Smith's own plural relationships in general conferences or in other official publications, the new public memory began to take root.

Public Memory Phase 2(b), 1933-present: Joseph as Monogamist and the Redemption of Emma Smith

Although fundamentalist groups continued to thrive on a small scale, their ability to convert mainstream Mormons to their cause eventually diminished, and the church's emphasis on debunking the 1886 revelation likewise stopped. With the fundamentalist threat minimized, Mormons were now competing with the public memory created by their own spiritual ancestors in the nineteenth century. Historians became the new target of church suspicions when they began to unearth the Young-era public memory, particularly the close link publicized by the earlier Mormons between Joseph Smith and plural marriage as well as Young's vilifications of Emma. As the first part of this second phase took hold—and with it a new interpretation of section 132 and the nature of celestial marriage—the emplotment of the new Mormon public memory took another turn.

Interpretations of section 132 tended to repeat the exegesis laid out by Smith and Sjodahl in the 1920s. The official 1981 commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants (which is still in wide use) quotes Smith and Sjodahl verbatim regarding the division of the revelatory text, adding that the main portion deals with "the everlasting covenant of marriage," with a small aside covering "plural marriage within the new and everlasting covenant."[77] In this publication the new and everlasting covenant

76. Ibid., 93.

77. *The Doctrine and Covenants: Student Manual* (Salt Lake: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 327

is clearly not the same as plural marriage, and because polygamy is identified as a smaller part of the larger system, monogamous eternal marriages are viewed as normative. A BYU professor of LDS history and doctrine reiterated this view in a recent volume of commentary: "The plurality of wives is an appendage to the greater principle of eternal marriage."[78] This represents a clear departure from Young's interpretation equating plural marriage and the "new and everlasting covenant of marriage."

The context of the revelation was also revised during this period. In a teacher's manual on the Doctrine and Covenants and church history published in 1984, it is suggested that Joseph Smith had many questions when he read in the Bible about "the life of Abraham, not only regarding Abraham's having more than one wife, but also on the very nature of the marriage relationship."[79] Little evidence exists to suggest that Smith had anything on his mind except the plurality issue, but if section 132 is read in a way to emphasize monogamy, it may be reasonable (perhaps even necessary) to conclude that marriage in general was a concern. During this same time, attempts were made to write histories minimizing the importance of polygamy to nineteenth-century Mormons. One example of this trend should suffice. In 1950 a widely distributed book appeared in which apostle LeGrand Richards claimed that "only a few of the members of the Church ever lived the principle of plural marriage—never over three percent."[80] Although subsequent research has proven this a gross underestimation, this book has remained continuously in print for more than fifty years and is required reading for many LDS missionaries.

In addition to the issues relating to section 132, a newly refurbished portrait of Emma Smith began to emerge. Until the 1970s, Emma Smith's name had fallen out of Mormon history. While she was no longer the villain of the early public memory, she had also ceased to play any other role. Joseph Smith's family life was rarely mentioned during this period. This began to change in the 1970s, when the LDS church staged a massive campaign to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment. Part of their desire to do this stemmed from the fear that the liberal forces at work in the movement would unduly influence Mormon women.[81]

Soon, official church publications carried stories about Emma's life,

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78. Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Revelations of the Restoration: A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 2000), 1058.

79. *The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History: Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Supplement* (Salt Lake: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), 159.

80. LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 1950), 401.

81. For an account of church opposition to the ERA, see D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1997), 373-406, passim.

always emphasizing her loyalty to Joseph. No longer the "most wicked woman on earth," she was now referred to as the "elect lady." In the late twentieth century, references to Emma Smith have almost always used this title in official and popular LDS literature. This phrase originally appeared in a revelation recorded by Joseph Smith in the summer of 1830, in which Emma was told that her "sins are forgiven thee and thou art an elect lady."[82] This occurred more than a decade before the troubles at Nauvoo over polygamy, yet it is the image to which the architects of the new Mormon public memory gravitate. They overlook a later and much harsher treatment that is found, not surprisingly, in section 132. In a seldom-quoted reference, Emma is told to "receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph. . .to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph and to none else." This instruction came with the ominous warning that "if she abide not this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord. . . .I will destroy her if she abide not in my law." The definition of "my law" is made clear earlier in the document where Joseph Smith is instructed in the principle of plural marriage and commanded to "receive ye therefore my law."[83] Brigham Young clearly drew from this threat when measuring the character of Emma Smith. Emma obviously did not obey the law of plural marriage, yet no mention of this is made in the more recent, official church commentaries on this revelation.

Thus, Emma once again became part of the Mormon public memory, but mainly as a character witness for her husband and as a model for proper womanly behavior. No recent mention has been made of Emma's refusal to accept polygamy or the tension it caused between her and Joseph. In a 1979 article in the church's official magazine, the *Ensign*, only this cryptic evaluation of the conflict is offered: "[T]he tumultuous events of the last few months before Joseph's death put additional strains on Emma and Joseph" followed immediately by the ameliorating assurance that, as ever, "love and consideration are evident."[84] In 1976, the church's historical division published a one-volume history of the church designed to replace *Essentials in Church History*. *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* makes no mention of Emma's reaction to polygamy, and the only post-1839 references to her include her position as head of the women's auxiliary, her attempt to hide the body of her dead husband after his death in order to discourage relic seekers, and her decision to stay in Nauvoo rather than head west with Young.[85] None of these ac-

82. D&C 25:3.

83. D&C 132:24, 52-54.

84. Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, "The Elect Lady: Emma Hale Smith," *Ensign* (September 1979): 65.

85. James Allen and Glen Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 1975; 2nd rev. ed., 1992).

counts mention Emma throwing pregnant plural wives down stairs or attempting to poison her husband in retaliation for his marriages to other women—all stock stories from the nineteenth-century public memory. Instead a story of loyalty despite hardship has emerged. In a recent address to Mormon women, the leader of the female auxiliary said, "[I]n a very literal way, Emma Smith's influence [for good] continues to ripple through generations."[86] In order to fully redeem Emma, her story usually ends around 1839, much like the RLDS public memory, while she was still the "elect lady" and before God had threatened her with destruction.

With Emma back at his side, Joseph has taken on a new role as well, which is one of the main reasons for Emma's reappearance in the public memory. Joseph is now, as always, portrayed as an exemplification of Mormon virtues except that that now consists of living with one wife and devoting his life to her. Part of this involved a further diminution of the importance of polygamy in interpretations of section 132 and of Smith's connection with the practice. In 1994 a chronology appeared in the church's official magazine listing "key events in the life and ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith."[87] Included on the timeline are Joseph's reception of "the revelation on celestial marriage" and his "sealing to Emma Smith for time and eternity." Section 132 is referred to, naturally, by its twentieth-century name—the revelation on celestial, rather than plural marriage. Furthermore, plural marriage is never mentioned, nor are any of Joseph's other marriages listed although his sealing to Emma is featured prominently.

More in-depth pieces revealed the same public memory. In 1989, the church published an article celebrating the most important doctrinal contributions made by Joseph Smith. Included are "priesthood, the word of God, and temples." The discussion of temples in this article centers on "the eternal sealing of families," including the sealing of husband and *wife*. The authors point out that "Joseph and Emma Smith were sealed for time and eternity on 28 May 1843," but make no mention of Smith's other eternal sealings or of polygamy in general.[88] Two years later another article appeared in the *Ensign*, stating that "the Prophet had seen in vision that marriage should be for eternity. It is no wonder that he so vigorously taught the Saints to love their spouses fully, to be tender and faithful. His own love for Emma and the children illustrated his firm

86. Virginia U. Jensen, "Ripples," *Ensign* (November 2000): 78.

87. "Highlights in the Life of the Prophet," *Ensign* (June 1994): 24.

88. Donald Q. Cannon, Larry Dahl, and John Welch, "The Restoration of Major Doctrines Through Joseph Smith: Priesthood, the Word of God and the Temple," *Ensign* (February 1989): 7.

conviction that families can be forever." Adding that Smith often exhorted his followers to treat their families with kindness, the author writes, "Joseph certainly practiced what he preached. He knew the importance of a loving marriage that would endure eternity. His concern for Emma was revealed in the vigils he kept over his wife when she was sick, attending to her needs and praying for her health."[89] It is significant that Emma is painted in both accounts as a sympathetic character in order to illustrate Joseph's devotion and concern for her. Like the first article, the second piece makes no mention of plural marriage. It would have been unthinkable for an architect of nineteenth-century Mormon public memory to ignore plural marriage and celebrate Joseph's marriage to Emma, yet such is the very core of the new public memory.

In an interesting twist, the church decided in the late 1990s to publish a volume of teachings from church presidents to be used in church classes. Inexplicably, they skipped Joseph Smith and went directly to Brigham Young. In the chronology of Young's life, the manual lists his first marriage, but no others. Several of the selections in the manual have been altered from "wives" to "wife" in an effort to remove references to polygamy. The manual for the following year, on the teachings of Joseph F. Smith, displays marks of the same editorial techniques. One could read either of these books in their entirety and never know these men were polygamists. Similarly, there has been little mention of Joseph Smith's plural marriages in official church publications since at least the 1950s.

This new public memory is also evident in Mormon popular culture. In the 1990s a Mormon artist, Liz Lemon Swindle, became famous for her paintings of figures from church history. One of her favorite subjects is Emma Smith. In a number of paintings, she portrays Emma and Joseph together, enjoying an obviously close, loving relationship. There is no evidence of other wives or of tensions between Joseph and "the wickedest woman that ever lived" as Brigham Young dubbed her. Using Swindle's art on the cover, a number of books emerged furthering this picture of monogamous wedded bliss. Written by Gracia N. Jones, the books were titled *Joseph and Emma: Their Divine Mission* and *Priceless Gifts: Celebrating the Holidays with Joseph and Emma*. Of Emma Smith, the author writes, "[T]here is no doubt that Emma put her whole soul into the effort of helping to lay the foundation of the kingdom of God. Her faith in the truthfulness of (Joseph's) mission caused Emma to turn her back on parents, social position, security and all things a girl holds dear, to share a beggar's life with her prophet husband, whose entire energy was

89. Brent L. Top, "I Was with My Family: Joseph Smith—Devoted Husband, Father, Son and Brother," *Ensign* (August 1991): 22.

directed toward fulfilling God's commandment to take the message of the Restoration to the whole world."[90] Along with these paintings and books, a number of statues, medallions, and decorative plates depicting Emma Smith are available, all of which are extremely popular among Mormons.

In this same period, Mormon seminary teacher Gerald Lund began publishing what would become the most popular fiction series in LDS publishing history. *The Work and the Glory* follows the fictional Steed family from their conversion to Mormonism in the early 1830s through their emigration to the Salt Lake Valley under the direction of Brigham Young. In the process, the characters rub shoulders with Joseph Smith and other church leaders and witness the most dramatic events in church history. Throughout, the narrator provides helpful interpretive explanations for "difficult" areas of church history (meaning points that do not comport with Mormon public memory). Polygamy is mentioned, and it is tied to Joseph Smith, but again in the broader context of monogamous marriage and the importance of temple rites. Joseph's relationship with Emma is likewise portrayed sympathetically, even sentimentally, especially in the volume covering the period in Nauvoo. Emma's conflicts with other plural wives are never discussed. In fact, the author takes tremendous liberties with the historical record, and occasionally disregards facts altogether. For example, Lund describes a scene in which Joseph Smith organizes the female Mormon auxiliary, the Relief Society. Emma Smith is placed at the head of the organization and her assistants are announced. One of them is Eliza R. Snow. Lund, in the voice of one of the main characters, notes that "Eliza. . .was not married. . . .[T]his would tell the sisters that this was an organization of sisters, not just of wives."[91] Eliza Snow actually became a plural wife to Joseph Smith, a fact which Lund never mentions.

The Work and the Glory books have reached a tremendous number of Mormons, and the books are frequently mentioned in LDS meetings. Typical responses to the books indicate that the reader's faith has been strengthened; they also often claim to have gained new insights into LDS history. For example, readers responding on Amazon.com noted, "Brother Lund has made church history come alive for me. I've read many different church history books. These I can relate to. It's like I'm there living it as it happens" and "my Sunday school teacher read us part of this one. It included the martyrdom [of Joseph Smith]. It was extremely sad. If you want a kid to really understand the concept of hatred

90. Gracia N. Jones, *Joseph and Emma: Their Divine Mission* (Alpine, Utah: Covenant Communications, 1999).

91. Gerald N. Lund, *The Work and the Glory*, vol. 6 (Salt Lake: Bookcraft, 2001) 289-90.

and how truly evil the mob was, this is the book to read. It hit me over the head like a club just what the Saints went through."[92] Many similar responses are recorded, all of which support the notion that these books work effectively to support the Mormon public memory regarding plural marriage. The entire series of nine volumes has been reprinted in paperback, an extremely rare occurrence in the field of Mormon fiction.

Conclusion

At the outset of this paper, I listed six basic elements in the theory of public memory. The first element held that a discourse develops in which certain emplotment points are dropped and others emphasized. This has clearly been the case with Mormon perspectives on plural marriage. The second element of the theory was that members of the community do not literally forget their collective past, they simply agree upon an official memory. Most Mormons know that polygamy played a central role in the lives of their predecessors in the church. They certainly know that Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other leaders had multiple wives, yet the church still publishes material which blots out these facts, and the church membership largely accepts this public memory without comment.

The third point of my theory of public memory held that institutional sanctions are placed on individuals who seek to undermine the public memory while rewarding those who help build it. In September 1993, six Mormon scholars were excommunicated from the church for publishing material the church deemed "faith destroying." Among these scholars was historian D. Michael Quinn, whose work on LDS leaders and post-manifesto polygamy presented an open challenge to the new Mormon public memory. On the other hand, Gerald Lund, author of *The Work and the Glory Series*, was sustained as a General Authority of the church at the April 2002 LDS general conference. In his first speech in this position, Lund referred specifically to his research on the life of Joseph Smith for the books, commenting that "it was my privilege to spend about 10 years in an intensive and extensive study of his life, of his writings, of his teachings, and of those who knew and loved him, and I came to know that here is a prophet of prophets."[93] Clearly he viewed his task as helping to build the public memory of Joseph Smith, rather than to simply explore his life in an "academic" fashion—and the church has rewarded his efforts.

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92. These responses can be found at http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0884949990/ref=pd_sim_books/102-4672136-5584904. Although these reader responses are far from definitive, they accurately reflect those I have personally witnessed in LDS meetings on dozens of occasions.

93. Gerald Lund, "The Opportunity to Serve," LDS General Conference Report, April 2, 2002.

The fourth element of the theory held that public memory was functional and presentist. Clearly, the key elements of the church's public memory—which events are to emplotted and which are not—have been determined based upon the needs of the church at the time the memory narrative is constructed. This was true in the case of Brigham Young's response to the RLDS challenge, in Joseph F. Smith's effort to recast the public memory after the manifesto, and in the church's current attempts to emphasize the "family values" platform in the life of Joseph Smith.

Fifth, the emplotment points left out of public memory narratives often turn up in counter-narratives produced by competing communities. This has been most clearly illustrated in the cases of the fundamentalist counter-narrative that emerged in the second decade of the twentieth century and in the academic counter-narrative currently emerging. In both cases, elements of the story which tend to disrupt the mainstream LDS public memory are discarded, and in some cases hidden, but these bits play central roles in the counter-narratives.

The final element of public memory, as I defined it, held that individuals may be members of many discourse communities and as such they may take part in varying, even competing, public memory systems. Any attempt to harmonize these systems often leads to institutional punishments. In early 1981, a member of the faculty at church-owned Brigham Young University attempted to explain why some statements from church leaders in the nineteenth century conflicted with statements made by current leaders. In a pointed response to these efforts, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, leading Mormon theologian and son-in-law/protégé of Joseph Fielding Smith, warned the professor that "there is no need to attempt to harmonize conflicting views," suggesting instead that he "echo what I say or remain silent." McConkie also reminded the professor, "I hold over you the scepter of judgment," strongly suggesting the consequences of further attempts to harmonize conflicting public memories.[94] In the same year, Apostle Boyd K. Packer delivered an address to Mormon educators. In this speech, Packer castigated historians for telling the whole truth about their past, noting that "some things that are true are not very useful."[95] This philosophy is evident in the various phases of Mormon public memory. Packer made the case that historians should write "faithful history," which essentially consists of emplotting only those events from the historical record that mesh with the current public memory. Packer's speech was in direct response to Mormon

94. Bruce R. McConkie to Eugene England, 19 February 1981, copy in author's possession.

95. Boyd K. Packer, "The Mantle is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 259-78.

scholars who sought to harmonize their academic research and the public memory of their religious community.

Historical consciousness has clearly been an important element in the history of the LDS church. It remains to be seen just where the next constructed historical consciousness will take the church, but several things are clear. The historical consciousness of the LDS church will change as the institution's interests and needs shift. The architects of historical consciousness will continue to re-emplot historical events and reinterpret historical texts according to current imperatives. Jan Shipps, the most prominent non-Mormon student of LDS history, has argued that those narratives which I call historical consciousness narratives represent denominational, confessional, or apologetic histories. According to Shipps, the authors of these narratives have considerable latitude to emplot events as long as they use "what amounts to a canonized body of evidence composed of the testimony believers have left behind."[96] Shipps suggests that as long as the evidence comes from "faithful" Mormons, it will fit comfortably into devotional narratives. I have attempted to demonstrate in this essay that some of the evidence most potentially damaging to the historical consciousness actually comes from "faithful" Mormon sources. Material clearly coming from an anti-Mormon source is much more easily explained than are dissonant statements from the likes of Brigham Young.

On June 27, 2002—the anniversary of the murder of Joseph Smith—the LDS church dedicated a temple in Nauvoo, Illinois. Some 300,000 Mormons and interested non-Mormons toured the building between May and June, and the dedication services were broadcast live via satellite to meeting houses all over the world. The original temple in Nauvoo was burned by a mob in 1846. The new temple is a replica of the old one, and the church and its members celebrated their return to Joseph Smith's "city beautiful." It was also a celebration of the triumph of historical consciousness; in all of the festivities, no one mentioned plural marriage or the close relationship nineteenth-century Mormons saw between polygamy and temple rituals. Clearly, history may be emplotted and told in such a way that it eclipses the "real" past with a constructed history which is much more useful. For groups anchoring their present authority to an epic past, such constructions are not only useful, but necessary.

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96. Jan Shipps "Remembering, Recovering and Inventing What Being a People of God Means: Reflections of Method in the Scholarly Writing of Religious History," in *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years Among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 184.

Form Criticism of Joseph Smith's 1823 Vision of the Angel Moroni

Mark D. Thomas

> *Review of well-conducted studies of the past three decades shows that about one-half to eighty percent of bereaved people studied feel this intuitive, sometimes overwhelming "presence" or "spirit" of the lost person. . . .These perceptions happen most often in the first few months following death but sometimes persist more than a year, with significantly more women than men reporting these events. . . .The American Psychiatric Association, author of* The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—IV, *considers these phenomena (when "one hears the voice of, or transiently sees the image of, the deceased person") as non-pathological. They are viewed as common characteristics of uncomplicated grief, and not attributed to mental disorder. . . .During this process, accurate recording and telling of the dead person's life is of utmost importance to the bereaved.)*
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> *Hopes and fears, dreams and apparitions are not the same as delusions and hallucinations. . . .It is part of reality to know which is which. . . .Trance and ecstasy, vision and apparition are perfectly normal and natural phenomena. Altered states of consciousness, such as dreams and visions, are something common to our humanity, something hardwired into our brains, something as normal as language itself.*[1]

THIS PAPER WILL EXAMINE the vision or purported vision of the angel Moroni to Joseph Smith on the night of 21-22 September 1823, announcing the location of the gold plates containing the Book of Mormon. The 1839 history of Joseph Smith[2] contains by far the most detailed description of

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1. John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998), xvi-xviii, 3-6. Crossan took the first paragraph of the quote from a paper delivered at the 1985 Jesus Seminar by Stacy Davids.

2. For the source of the Joseph Smith 1838-39 history, I use here Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996).

the vision, but there are details in this account which could not have occurred prior to 1834. The process used here (as in New Testament "form criticism"[3]) will be to distinguish the original historic core of the visionary narrative and experience from later anachronistic redactions. Finally, if Joseph Smith did see what he claimed to see on that night, what does that represent—a dream, a representation of a being actually in his room, an altered state of sight, etc.?

Form Criticism of the 1823 Vision

The first task of form criticism is to identify the literary form and then find is historical setting. The form of the story differs from version to version. Any particular version could contain elements from the typical evangelical vision that offers the forgiveness of sin by an angel (Joseph Smith 1832 history), a guardian spirit in treasure digging lore (as reported by Emma Smith's brothers), or it could be both religious and treasure digging (Willard Chase). Several persons who heard the story in the 1820s stated that it changed each time it was told. Of course that is the case with performance variations in any oral story. But this is more likely in the case of the 1823 vision because the story seems to combine forms, and the audience may have reported the story differently, depending on their perception of the story form. It is likely that Joseph Smith emphasized the treasure digging, evangelical, or ancient religious book elements, depending on his audience and on what he wanted to get across. But all of the forms came from early versions of the story that circulated in the 1820s. It is unlikely, for instance, that the story changed forms from an exclusively treasure hunting story to a purely hidden religious book story in as much as religion seems to have been part of all the stories Joseph Smith related to his family for years prior to obtaining the plates. In short, the literary form seems to be a mixed one, whose elements were emphasized more or less depending on the audience. The combination of forms is highly unusual. But all the major forms place the original story in an 1820s historical setting. So the first thing that we can say about the original story is that it was in a variable form with a setting in the early 1820s, as Joseph Smith stated. This, however, does not assure us that the story was always told in the same way.

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3. New Testament form criticism originated in the works of Martin Debelius (1883-1947) and Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1974), who sought to reconstruct the earliest oral and written traditions which were the sources of the gospels. One of the purposes of form criticism was to determine which forms originated with the historical Jesus and which were a product of the early Christian church. For an introduction to New Testament form criticism, see Edgar V. McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

The first critical issue to be addressed here regards the evolution of a vision narrative. Since the Joseph Smith vision has been told with these many variations over the years, the question becomes: Is it a single story with mere performance variations, or are the variations in the story due to mis-remembrances? Has the telling of one version been affected by other versions? Or do we have an evolutionary tale which starts in the 1820s as one thing and ends up as something quite different by the end of the prophet's life? I will attempt to answer these questions by testing the hypothesis proposed by Michael Marquardt and Wesley Walters, which suggests that the variations in the 1823 narratives reflect a fundamental evolution of the narrative over time.[4]

To test this hypothesis, I will examine one detail of the vision as related by Joseph Smith in his 1838-39 history and in the Pearl of Great Price, namely, the citation of Malachi 3 and 4 by the angel Moroni:

> [The angel] first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus, "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud <yea> and all that do wick-edly shall burn as stubble, for <they day> that cometh shall burn them saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." And again he quoted the fifth verse thus, "Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." He also quoted the next verse differently [p. 5]. "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers, if it were not so the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."[5]

This citation of scripture provides our best means to test the hypothesis of Marquardt and Walters that the variations in the 1823 narratives evolved over time. Malachi 3 and 4 were cited frequently in early Mormon scriptures and publications, and those citations show an evolving understanding of the passage over time. Thus, if the 1838-39 history reflects an 1820s Mormon understanding of Malachi, this would tend to discredit the Marquardt-Walters thesis. If, on the other hand, the understanding of Malachi matches an 1838-39 historical setting, the Marquardt-Walters thesis would be substantiated.

Let us begin with general Protestant interpretations of the Malachi passages. Nineteenth century Protestant views of Malachi 3-4 were quite

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4. H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 105-106.

5. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:64-65. The "y" in "they day" has been crossed out in the original text.

varied. Several interpreters believed that the burning of the wicked by fire was figurative, a symbol of God's anger against sin or his burning sin out of sinners.[6] Others, such as Adam Clarke, understood the fire to be a literal destruction by God. Clarke wrote in his 1827 commentary that these last chapters of Malachi (the coming of Elijah and fire burning the wicked) refer to the coming of John the Baptist to prepare for Jesus Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.[7] This is a representative view among biblical commentaries of the time; commentaries by Lowth, Scott, Gill, Henry, and others have very similar views.[8] Thomas Scott's commentary was published more times in early nineteenth-century America than all other commentaries combined, and he echoes Clarke's statement above. Scott adds that the destruction of the wicked mentioned in Malachi also points to the second coming of Christ, but he makes no mention of a second coming of Elijah other than the original coming of John the Baptist. In addition, Clarke believed that the coming of John the Baptist in "the spirit and authority of Elijah" ushered in a new dispensation of the gospel at the time of Christ.

More radical prophetic movements such as the Robert Matthews group and the Shakers acknowledged that this scripture in Malachi referred to John the Baptist but also believed this coming of Elijah was a prototype of the coming of a particular person within their own movements to prepare the way, i.e., Ann Lee or Robert Matthews. Apparently, prophetic movements tended to see this passage through eschatological eyes. This demonstrates the distinction between the commentaries and prophets of the nineteenth century: While the commentaries tended to be more historical and exegetical, the prophets tended to see biblical prophecy fulfilled by events occurring in their own time and religious movement.

Likewise, Mormons have always understood this passage in an eschatological sense as a reference to events before or at the coming of Christ when the earth will be burned by fire. Such a view dates back to the early Christian fathers.[9] The earliest Mormon citation of Malachi 3-4

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6. For symbolic interpretations of Malachi, see Ethan Smith, *A Key to the Figurative Language Found in the Sacred Scriptures, in the Form of Questions and Answers* (Vt.: Smith and Shute, 1825), 32-33, and Zenas, *An Affectionate Address of a Son to His Father on the Doctrine of Universalism* (New York: 1819), 8.

7. *The Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 10: 342 argued against interpretations such as Clarke's.

8. For two representative samples of this view of Malachi 4, see Mr. Reverend Ostervald, *The Bible, the Old and New Testaments with. . .Observations Illustrating Each Chapter* (New York: Sage and Clough, 1803), and Thomas Scott, *Holy Bible. Containing Old and New Testaments with Original Notes and Practical Observations* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1818).

9. Gill attempts to refute this interpretation of Malachi 4 in John Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, (Philadelphia: William Woodward, 1817).

is found within the Book of Mormon itself. Here Malachi is quoted, alluded to, and interpreted in the Nephite record nearly identically to the KJV, and it is interpreted literally ("according to the flesh") by Nephi to refer to the destruction of the wicked in the last days before the second coming of Christ.[10]

Joseph Smith's inspired version of the Bible followed the publication of the Book of Mormon. On July 2, 1833, Joseph Smith had the word "correct" written above the Book of Malachi to indicate that he agreed, as did the Book of Mormon, with the biblical text of Malachi. We also see references to Malachi 3-4 in the Book of Commandments 29:9-11 (D&C 29:9-11) from 1830; 65:30-34 (D&C 64:23-24) from 1831; in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants 100:1, 6-7 (D&C 133:1-2, 57-64) from 1831; and D&C 98:16-17 (August 6, 1833).[11] In 1832, an editorial in *The Evening and the Morning Star* interpreted the Malachi 4 prophecy of the turning of the hearts of the children by Elijah as being fulfilled by the future restoration of the tribes of Jacob.[12] A similar statement can be found in D&C 98:16-17 (1833 revelation; 1835 text):

> [T]herefore renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of their children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children. And again the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets; and the prophets unto the Jews, lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me.

This passage represents the earliest period in the Mormon interpretation of Malachi. It interprets the coming of Elijah and the turning of the hearts as the restoration of the gospel—in particular, the return of the Jews to their ancient religion; a restoration which would bring a degree of righteousness, thus avoiding total destruction prior to the second coming.

This interpretation has apparently changed by 1834 when the coming of Elijah is also understood as entailing a restoration of "keys" or "priesthood." In October 1834, Oliver Cowdery stated that John the Baptist ordained him and Joseph Smith to the priesthood, "which shall remain upon the earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!"[13] This quote from Malachi 3 hints that Cowdery—in line with the standard Protestant view—understood the coming

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10. Nephi 22:1-31. See also the other major allusions to Malachi 3-4 in the Book of Mormon, in 2 Nephi 25:13, Ether 9:22, 3 Nephi 24:1-25:6, 2 Nephi 26:1-9. The last citation employs wording from Malachi to describe the destruction of the Nephites, which destruction serves as a prototype for the destruction of the wicked in the last days.

11. I am indebted to Michael Marquardt for his help in locating these citations.

12. "The Ten Tribes," *The Evening and the Morning Star*, vol. 1, no. 5 (October 1832): 34.

13. *The Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 1 (October 1834): 14-16.

of the messenger and Elijah in Malachi 3-4 as the coming of John the Baptist. However, Cowdery further believed that the 1829 appearance of the Baptist specifically to restore priesthood also fulfilled Malachi's prophecy. This is the beginning of the second interpretive period in which the coming of Elijah was understood as the restoration of authority.

Chapter 28 of the Book of Commandments was expanded in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (50:2) to include a statement regarding Elijah as a messenger separate from John the Baptist, who restored the Aaronic priesthood. This is the Elijah "unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse." This statement further corroborates the second stage, with Elijah restoring priesthood keys. In April 3, 1836, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received a vision in the Kirtland temple in which Elijah restored keys of the dispensation (an interpretation reminiscent of Adam Clarke). Here is clearly an establishment of religious authority by a literal visit of Elijah the prophet.

The third stage in the Mormon interpretation of Malachi began September 6, 1842, when the prophet declared that the coming of Elijah referred to the restoration of baptism for the dead (D&C 128:17-18). Thus, the three interpretive stages in Mormonism are: (1) the pre-1834 understanding of the coming of Elijah as a general restoration of the gospel (in particular to the Jews) prior to the coming of Christ; (2) the 1834-42 stage when the coming of Elijah began to be understood as a restoration of keys and authority; and (3) the post-1842 stage when Malachi was used to refer to baptism for the dead. Thus, the interpretive trend went from general to increasingly specific. Present-day Mormons have further taken the mission of Elijah from the 1842 understanding specifying baptism for the dead to an extended understanding entailing all temple work for the dead.[14]

Now we must return to our original question: In which interpretive setting does the 1839 quote of Moroni fit? If it fits an 1820s setting, the Marquardt-Walters thesis would be suspect. If it fits an 1838-39 setting, the Marquardt-Walters thesis would be substantiated. In the 1838-39 Pearl of Great Price, the angel first quotes Malachi 4:1: "[A]ll that do wick-edly shall burn as stubble, for<they day> that cometh shall burn them saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." This wording is different from the KJV, in that humans become the means of destroying the wicked in the last days. Various Mormon articles from the 1830s used this scripture in reference to the destruction of

14. See as an example James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963), 156.

the enemies of Mormonism,[15] so it could fit an 1830s setting when Mormons were seeking revenge against their persecutors. However, this scripture could also fit an 1820s setting. The Book of Mormon speaks of the Native Americans ("Lamanites") destroying the Gentiles if they do not repent. So, the revision of this portion of the Malachi text could match either an 1820s or 1830s setting. This verse does not give us a certainty as to its historical setting, but the next citation by the angel does:

> "Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Joseph Smith also quoted the next verse differently:

> "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers, if it were not so the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."

Joseph Smith claimed in 1838-39 that these were the words of the angel in 1823. Here the angel tells the prophet that Elijah will restore the priesthood, but this is not possible since the wording reflects an understanding that appeared only in the second period (post-1834), in which the coming of Elijah was understood in Mormon literature and scripture as a restoration of priesthood. It is highly improbable—inconceivable in my mind—that Joseph Smith's quote of Moroni in his 1838-39 history and the Pearl of Great Price could have been uttered before 1834. The words of the angel in Joseph Smith's 1838-39 history—and, therefore, in the Pearl of Great Price—are anachronistic. In other words, in 1838-39 Joseph Smith placed new words in the mouth of the angel—not to relate history, but to address the theological concerns of Mormonism in 1838. The wording of Moroni seems to be a message to the 1838 audience that God would avenge the wrongs done to them in Missouri and that God was on their side because he had revealed the power of Elijah (perhaps as a priesthood power to seal the heavens against Mormonism's enemies, as the prophecy foretold).

This evidence of anachronism supports the thesis of Walters and Marquardt that the details of the 1823 vision evolved based on changing theological concerns.[16] There are other anachronistic details in the 1838-39 narrative of the 1823 vision, but this is the strongest evidence and in itself reveals the evolutionary nature of the story.

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15. *The Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 3 (December 1835): 232-33; also 2, no. 7 (April 1836): 294-95; *Oration Delivered by Mr. S Rigdon on the 4th of July, 1838 at Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri* (Far West, Missouri: 1838; available on Signature Books *New Mormon Studies* CD-ROM database).

16. This evidence also demonstrates that one of the primary functions of the angelic

The Historical Core

The question immediately arises: "If the narrative evolved, what was the original core of the tale relating events of the night of 21-22 September 1823?" Here we must be careful. Is it inappropriate to speak of the original story, since story telling, like musical performance, often contains variations of the same story? There were, however, certainly multiple and very different versions of the story consisting of more than just performance variations. For example, the money-digging versions could refer to the spirit as a bleeding ghost whose throat was slit, while other accounts refer to pure white raiment without seams on a radiant angel. These two versions of the supernatural visitor's clothing seem to have stepped well beyond mere performance variations. Again, the details seem to have evolved with the telling for theological reasons. And there may have been misremembered details by the audiences.

I will use the criterion of multiple attestation to arrive at the core of the story. Multiple attestation tends to weed out religious bias and errors in memory. (However, since the genealogy of the stories has not been carefully worked out and different versions may have influenced each other, we must be cautious about claiming multiple attestation; what appear to be two independent versions may actually have influenced each other.) Even though the long work of determining the relationship of each story has not begun in earnest, we can still arrive at a method.

The place to begin is to determine which narratives are truly independent. These are almost certainly those stories which speak of the 1823 vision in the vocabulary of money digging, versus those with a more religious sound. This distinction constitutes the great dividing line. These two traditions are the least likely to have influenced each other, and both claim origins in the 1820s. Thus, if one finds a particular portion of the story in both the money digging versions and in the religious versions, one can claim on the grounds of multiple attestation that we are dealing with a core element in the original narrative. With this criterion of multiple attestation, we can determine that the minimum historical core of the story is as follows:

> *Joseph Smith claimed that on the night of 21-22 September 1823, a spirit or angel appeared to him three times in a dream or vision; the being told him the location of an ancient record buried in a box in a hill near his father's farm. Joseph Smith was*

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visitations in early Mormonism was to establish the primacy of Mormon religious claims. Visions serve the building of social and theological power. Both the first vision and the 1823 vision seem to have originated in the search for religious forgiveness. In the 1823 vision there was some initial motive on Joseph Smith's part to use the story for financial gain, but in the end, the vision narratives establish theological authority.

given a vision of the hill (a vision within a vision). He was told that this ancient, buried record contained an important message for the world.

This is the historical core of the story ascertained by using the criterion of multiple attestation. We will add to this historical core once we have examined the historical setting in greater detail. The historical setting of 1823 also confirms that this is the core narrative because the core narrative reflects four separate historical traditions preceding the purported 1823 vision:

1) magic/money digging—in the magic/money digging tradition, there is buried treasure controlled by guardian spirits which must be obeyed or appeased;
2) nineteenth-century visionaries—in nineteenth-century tradition, visions were associated with evangelical religion, radical prophets, and visions of the next world by those near death (for example, Hyrum Smith told Solomon Chamberlin that the whole Smith family was a visionary family; so such a vision would not be unexpected from one of the Smiths[17]);
3) evangelical religion—Joseph Smith claimed that he prayed on the night of 21-22 September, seeking forgiveness of sins. This was a common experience of those under the state of "conviction" due to the influence of the preachers of the Second Great Awakening;

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17. In an 1858 sketch of his life, Solomon Chamberlin, an early Mormon convert, describes his own visions in a pamphlet published prior to meeting Joseph Smith. An angel or spirit appeared to him in 1816, told him that "there was no people on the earth that was right and that faith was gone from the earth excepting a few and that all churches were corrupt. I further saw in the vision, that he would soon raise up a church, that would be after the Apostolic Order, that there would be in it the same powers, and gifts that were in the days of Christ, and that I would live to see the day, and that there would [be] a book come forth, like unto the Bible, and the people would be guided by it, as well as the Bible." Chamberlin was persecuted and called "deluded" for his beliefs. On a visit to Palmyra, New York, he met Hyrum Smith and promptly asked, "Is there anyone here that believes in visions or revelations? He said Yes, we are a visionary house, I said then I will give you one of my pamphlets, which was visionary." Chamberlin uses the word "visionary" much as Channing did—referring to the experience of sense data vs. a metaphorical description. Channing and others used the term as a derogatory reference to those who received doctrinal visions. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines "visionary" in several ways, including one who has "impractical schemes," a "disturbed person," and, as an adjective, "existing in imagination only; not real." The last definition coincides with Laman's and Lemuel's charge that Lehi was full of "foolish imaginations" (1 Nephi 2:11; 17:20). Since the negative connotation is the only one found in the dictionary, I assume the term was generally understood negatively by readers in the 1830s, even though Lehi, Chamberlin, and nineteenth-century visionaries themselves continued to claim and employ the term positively. (Solomon Chamberlin, "A Short Sketch of the Life of Solomon Chamberlin," quoted in Letter to "Brother Carrington," 11 July 1858, Beaver City, Utah, holograph; LDS Historical Department Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

4) a tradition of buried books—various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors claimed to translate a buried ancient text. The sources of these buried books were much the same: The texts were supposed ancient records buried in the ground, which prophets or others found and then translated their divine mandates, warnings, and answers.[18] Besides the more familiar Solomon Spaulding, an example of such a book is *A Copy of a Letter Written by Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and Found under a Stone Sixty-Five Years after His Crucifiction* (Boston: Nathaniel Coverly, 1815). This letter was printed a second time in 1815 in Charleston by the printer P. W. Johnston and was published a total of six times between 1800 and 1820. There are numerous other examples.

The core narrative of the purported 1823 vision reflects all these same elements. This is further evidence that the core narrative which we reached using the criterion of multiple attestation fits into the historical setting of 1823 and is, in fact, the minimum historical core of the narrative; in other words, the core narrative has no historical anachronisms and its historicity is supported by both multiple attestation and by historical setting.

Was There A Vision?

We have thus far peeled away the redactions to the core historical narrative of Joseph Smith's vision. What I wish to examine now is the historical evidence supporting or refuting the claim that the original core narrative represents sense data experienced by Joseph Smith. In other words, did Joseph Smith actually see a vision?

Visions have often been viewed as personal experiences outside the realm of historical investigation since they are not subject to verification, but all perception is personal—inside the head and indirect. We cannot directly perceive reality except through the lens of a long series of neurological and chemical reactions. There is a perceptual box inside our heads from which we can never escape. We all know that our internal perceptions are only an incomplete and filtered reflection of the outside

18. For examples, see the excursus following chapters 2 and 5 in my book *Digging in Cumorah: Recovering Book of Mormon Narratives* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000). See also Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 23-28, 162. E. D. Howe, one of Mormonism's severest critics, mistakenly claimed that one such document, purportedly found in the ground under a large, flat stone and translated from Latin by Solomon Spalding, was the source of the Book of Mormon. For a summary of this claim, see Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 126-27.

world. Hence, visions operate with the same internal perceptual mechanism as normal perception: In both mundane perception and in visions, sense data appear inside the consciousness.

Thus, in theory, visions should be subject to verification in the same manner as any other private sense data—with, if nothing else, a lie detector. "Mr. Joseph Smith, did you on the night of 21-22 September see a seamless patch of brilliant white in your visual field with the appearance of a robe? Did you see skin-colored sense data in your mental visual field resembling a head extending from the robe-like sense data?" So the questions might go if we had Joseph Smith in front of us, hooked up to a lie detector, to determine the "reality" of his vision. (By "reality" I do not mean the external referents, the supernatural visitors, but rather the internal phenomena of perception.) There are other, more mundane ways of verifying the presence of such a vision. Was the prophet in his room on that night or was he, say, all night at a friend's drinking? If he'd been at his friend's home, his friend could witness to us that Joseph Smith could not possibly have seen the sense data he claimed he saw when he claimed he saw them. In this case, however, as in the former one, the answer would be either yes or no—Joseph Smith either did or did not see sensory data of a patch of white in his visual field on the night of 21-22 September 1823.

In theory, this is not too terribly different from my claiming to see the Queen of England in my private garden with no other witnesses nearby. In both cases, we are questioning a private perception for which there were no witnesses. Historians would have no problem addressing the historical claims of a private visit of the queen. Certainly circumstantial evidence could be researched to determine the plausibility of such a visit.

In summary, I believe that the sense data we call "a vision" constitute an historical event (in some sense of the word "historical") and, therefore, are subject to some limited degree of critical historical analysis, however difficult that analysis might be. The pertinent evidence may be somewhat circumstantial, as in the case of a private visit to my garden of the Queen, but so, in fact, is most historical evidence. That should not stop us *a priori* from the attempt at historical analysis. History is making sense of the small, last remaining sliver carried on the arc of the past.

Let us begin with the night of 21-22 September 1823. Dan Vogel has recently suggested that the story of Laban in the Book of Mormon holds a key to understanding what really happened that night. Vogel suggests that the prophet was playing the role of Nephi on 21-22 September. Joseph did not wrestle with an angel. He wrestled with himself all night and reached the conclusion that he should deceive people by claiming he had seen an angel who directed him to uncover the gold plates. According to Vogel, it was all a fabrication. Like Nephi, Joseph Smith "sinned"

to accomplish a greater good. It is better that one man lie than that a whole nation should perish in unbelief. This is Vogel's thesis. It is based on the broad thesis that Joseph Smith lied for a divine cause in which he profoundly believed. This is important and provocative as a general thesis concerning Joseph Smith's motives. It is an important contribution that must be taken seriously, but as a general discussion of Joseph Smith's motives, it cannot tell us much about concrete historical events. Vogel's suggestions about what happened on the night of the 1823 vision are historically possible but quite speculative. Assuming Joseph Smith had a motive to lie for God, that still does not give us many clues as to *when or if* Joseph Smith actually lied. So let us look closer at the evidence to support the thesis that Joseph Smith may have experienced some kind of sense data in 1823 similar to his vision narratives.

I believe there are two pieces of evidence supporting the plausibility of the prophet's claim. First, I have already summarized the evidence that no historical anachronisms exist in the original core narratives: The setting consisted of money digging, the nineteenth-century visionary tradition and evangelical religion, in both of which his family participated, and the tradition of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors who claimed to translate a buried ancient text. This historical setting actually provides evidence that the prophet probably did see a vision: Joseph Smith is reflecting the visionary experience in his family and in the broader social setting, something we would expect to happen if he claimed it happened. There were dozens of such visions in Joseph Smith's time and place. No historian I know of seriously questions them. I see no reason to exclude Joseph Smith from this visionary tradition.

However, one additional argument provides still stronger evidence that Joseph Smith experienced the sense data described in the historical core of the narrative. I call this the argument from psychological setting. This evidence is found in Joseph's statement that he prayed in his room seeking forgiveness of sin and that his vision followed this prayer.[19] Conviction was a common evangelical expression for the heightened awareness of one's sinful state which often resulted from evangelical sermons. Dozens, if not hundreds, of visions accompanied this state of conviction in the early nineteenth century.

This historical commonplace, in fact, provides the strongest evidence yet that Joseph Smith actually had a vision. Let me explain why. In the quotes at the beginning of this paper, the American Psychiatric Association, Stacy Davids, and John Dominic Crossan all argue that visions are

19. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:9, 29, 41-42, 43-44, 63, 163, 204. For texts, see also Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Books, 1983).

common during the stress over the death of a loved one. There were dozens (maybe even hundreds) of tales in the early nineteenth century of dying Christians, of those under social strain, or of those under conviction of sin in the Second Great Awakening who saw visions. As Crossan argues, and the early nineteenth century demonstrates, religious visions seem to come as a response to the existential limits of life—as a response to death, guilt, and meaninglessness. With that in mind, note that Joseph Smith's vision came as a response to his conviction of sin, the common setting for evangelical visions. Joseph Smith mentions this conviction as a matter of fact with no particular theological or apologetic significance; it's a simple, throw-away detail of the story. Yet this innocent detail is a most convincing piece of evidence that the historical core of Joseph Smith's narrative reflects sense data in his mind because Joseph Smith was on the existential border, the very psychological setting in the early nineteenth century in which one would expect to find a vision.

On these two pieces of historical evidence (the historical and pschycological settings of 1823 New York), I base my rational case that Joseph Smith very likely had an actual vision on the night of 21-22 September 1823.

A Rose By Any Other Name

Having reached the conclusion that Joseph Smith probably did not lie, but rather actually experienced the vision described in the core historical narrative, our final question is to ask what it meant in the early nineteenth century to have a vision. What is the phenomenology of a vision for Joseph Smith? In practice, mundane vision, visionary vision, imaginary vision, and metaphorical vision are each present and tend to blend together in early Mormonism.[20] Joseph Smith himself stated in his 1832 history that, at least once, he had difficulty distinguishing dreams from "real" perception:

> [T]hus he appeared to me three times in one night and once on the next day and then I immediately went to the place and found where the plates was deposited as the angel of the Lord had commanded me and staightway made three attempts to get them and then being exceedingly frightened I supposed it had been a dream of Vision but when I considered I knew that it was not. . . .[21]

The point I wish to make is that in Joseph Smith's own writing we find formulaic visionary language at his disposal, evoking a nineteenth-

20. For a detailed catalog and argument see my *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 48-62.

21. Cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:29.

century understanding of visions as a kind of second sight, sometimes expansionary, sometimes physical, sometimes mental, and sometimes purely symbolic. (By symbolic, I refer to those instances where one "sees" God in nature or the Bible.) Yet it is often not clear, even in Joseph Smith's own mind, what a visionary experience consisted of.

In opposition to those who believed in visions, there were those in the early nineteenth-century who for various reasons denounced visions. A common belief was that visions were confined to the biblical age and that the Bible was the only revelation of God's word. The Book of Mormon prophesied that many of the people among whom it would appear would hold this belief "and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance. . . .And they say. . .the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and hath given his power unto men" (2 Ne. 28:45-6). In a very similar vein, Freeborn Garrettson, another nineteenth-century visionary, relates a vision and then defends it against such disbelievers: "Some suppose that we ought not to put any dependence in dreams and visions. We should lay the same stress on them in this our day, as wise and good men have done in all ages."[22]

Many of the opponents of visions were also evangelicals. For example, Benjamin Abbott's acquaintances expressed skepticism about his vision. Some thought he was mad. One minister said his vision was of the devil.[23] Joseph Smith received a similar reception when he related his first vision to acquaintances and to a minister.[24] Liberal Protestants also rejected the extreme emotionalism of the entire evangelical movement, including visions, stressing instead a rational religion. William Ellery Channing, a famous Unitarian leader, saw reason as essential to religion. In a widely distributed 1819 sermon, Channing contrasted his view of religion with the visionary view:

> The timid and dejected discover [in the Bible] a gloomy system and the mystical and fanatical a visionary theology. . . .We lay no stress on such excitements. We esteem him and him only, a pious man, who practically conforms to God's moral perfections and government. In all things else men may deceive themselves. Disordered nerves may give them strange sights, and sounds, and impressions. Texts of Scripture may come to them from Heaven. Their whole soul may be moved, and their confidence in God's favor be undoubting. But in all this there is no religion.[25]

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22. Nathan Bangs, *The Life of Freeborn Garrettson* (New York: J. Emory & B. Waugh, 1829), 123, 129.

23. Abbott, *Experince* [sic] *and Gospel Labours of the Rev. Benjamin Abbott* (Philadelphia: D. S. Neal, 1825), 16-17.

24. JSH 1:21-22; also in Dean Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 6.

25. William Ellery Channing, *The Complete Works of William Ellery Channing* (London, 1884), 280, 286-87.

Channing's 1819 statement reveals that visionaries often cited scripture, and his statement is substantiated by the visionary texts themselves, which often quoted the Bible and recited new scripture. This is important to our understanding of the 1823 vision. Joseph Smith claimed that the angel visited him on 21-22 September and quoted scripture. I have recently been skeptical of that claim because it does not appear in the earliest versions of the story, and the scriptural quotations appear to justify theological concerns of the late 1830s. However, Channing's statement reminds us that the citation of scripture by angelic messengers fits an 1820s setting.

So we must ask the question: Is it possible that the original story and vision had no scriptural citations? Are all the citations anachronistic and later additions? We have nothing prior to Oliver Cowdery's statement in the *Messenger and Advocate* and the Robert Matthews interview (both in 1835) that Malachi was quoted in the vision. Early accounts do not mention the scripture, but they also do not give much detail. So we are justified in questioning whether the original tale contained citation of scripture or the citation of Malachi, more specifically.

I believe there may indeed have been a historical core of scriptural citation. The tale was always eschatological and literal, and Malachi was a favorite eschatological passage from the beginning of Mormonism. The treasure hunting elements in the early core must also be seen as eschatological. (Slippery treasures in the Book of Mormon were also a sign of the end of a wicked civilization.) All the other scriptures supposedly quoted by the angel/spirit are eschatological. The Book of Mormon is eschatological. Thus, the citation of eschatological scripture fits an 1823 setting. Furthermore, we have Channing's 1819 quote that visions typically contained citations of scripture. This fact can be verified by citing numerous examples of early nineteenth century visionaries. It is therefore possible (I am not prepared to say probable) that there were scriptural citations in the original vision and story.

There are several ways to account for the historical inaccuracies in the latter versions of Joseph Smith's accounts of the vision. One can simply state that Joseph Smith lied and was loose with the facts to get across new theological points in a later historical setting, as Vogel postulates. However, I believe there is a more plausible explanation. Recent research on memory has indicated that memory is more metaphorical reproduction than a storehouse of facts. Memory can therefore blend separate events and conclusions, and lead to misremembering details, combining memories, or remembering events which did not occur.[26] I believe Joseph

26. David G. Payne and Jason M. Blackwell, "Truth in Memory: Caveat Emptor," in Steven Jay Lynn and Kevin M. McConkey, *Truth in Memory* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), 32-61. Thanks to Mary Beth Raynes for this reference.

Smith had rethought the biblical passages—supposedly cited by the angel—so many times, and the actual vision had been so long ago, that he simply mixed up his own meditations on scripture with his previous vision. Whether Joseph Smith was dishonest to himself and others in his erroneous recitations of the details of his vision is a matter I cannot determine, but it strikes me as too simplistic a conclusion in this case.

Conclusion

We are now prepared to combine this evidence from form criticism to pull back the husk of historical anachronisms and recover the core of the narrative and the phenomenology of the original 1823 vision of Joseph Smith, which is as follows:

> *On the night of 21-22 September 1823, Joseph Smith saw what he described as a spirit or angel three times in a dream or vision; the being told him the location of an ancient record buried in a box in a hill near his father's farm. Joseph Smith was given a vision of the hill (a vision within a vision). He was told that this buried record contained an important message for the world. This 1823 vision was understood as eschatological—part of God's plan to save a corrupt world prior to the coming of his Son. The angel or spirit may have cited scripture, but the wording of the citations cannot be recovered. The exact nature of the sense data in the vision cannot be historically ascertained; it could have been a dream, an "eyes of faith" or imaginary image, representation of a physical being in the room, etc.*

From historical analysis, this (or something very much like it) is all we can know. It is enough.

Critique of a Limited Geography for Book of Mormon Events

Earl M. Wunderli

DURING THE PAST FEW DECADES, a number of LDS scholars have developed various "limited geography" models of where the events of the Book of Mormon occurred. These models contrast with the traditional western hemisphere model, which is still the most familiar to Book of Mormon readers.

Of the various models, the only one to have gained a following is that of John Sorenson, now emeritus professor of anthropology at Brigham Young University. His model puts all the events of the Book of Mormon essentially into southern Mexico and southern Guatemala with the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the "narrow neck" described in the LDS scripture.[1] Under this model, the Jaredites and Nephites/Lamanites were relatively small colonies living concurrently with other peoples inhabiting the rest of the hemisphere.

Scholars have challenged Sorenson's model based on archaeological and other external evidence, but lay people like me are caught in the crossfire between the experts.[2] We, however, can examine Sorenson's model based on what the Book of Mormon itself says. One advantage of

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1. John L. Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, September 1984, 26-37; October 1984, 12-23, reprinted by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS); *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, and Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1985); *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1990); "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Record," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 391-521.

2. See, e.g., Deanne G. Matheny, "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 269-328. Matheny, who holds a Ph.D. in anthropology, criticizes Sorenson's model for skewing directionality (essentially, west is north) and ignoring the Yucatan peninsula, and she examines the

this approach is that this internal evidence is fixed, readily available, and easily verifiable, unlike external evidence, which is always subject to change and is not always easily accessible for verification. My own conclusion is that the internal evidence not only favors a western hemisphere model, but challenges *any* limited geography model.

The Traditional Western Hemisphere Model

Sorenson notes that the Book of Mormon's most obvious geographical requirement is that of a "narrow neck of land" or isthmus separating "a 'land northward' from a 'land southward,' in the general shape of an hourglass."[3] This narrow neck of land has traditionally been considered Panama (the Isthmus of Darien), which separates Central and North America (the land northward) from South America (the land southward).[4]

Under this hemispheric model, Lehi landed on the western coast of South America;[5] the Book of Mormon events took place in South America with the Nephites occupying the northern portion of South America by the narrow neck and the Lamanites occupying the land to their south; the Nephites eventually expanded into North America as well; and the final war occurred in what is now New York State where Moroni deposited the plates in the Hill Cumorah.[6]

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lack of evidence for metallurgy, tents, old world plants, named animals, and the advanced Jaredite culture as well as problems with correlations between archaeological and Book of Mormon sites. Sorenson vigorously defends his model and challenges Matheny's scholarship and logic in John L. Sorenson, "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!" in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6, no. 1, ed. Daniel C. Peterson (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1994): 297-361

3. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 6.

4. James E. Smith, "How Many Nephites? The Book of Mormon at the Bar of Demography," *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 260.

5. The Reverend M.T. Lamb, *The Golden Bible; or, The Book of Mormon, Is It From God?* (New York: Ward & Drummond, 1887), 100 (photomechanical reprint of the original edition by Modern Microfilm Co., Salt Lake City), cites a revelation to Joseph Smith that Lehi landed 30 degrees south latitude in Chili. But Kenneth Godfrey, "What is the Significance of Zelph in the Study of Book of Mormon Geography?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 2 (1999): 76, writes that B.H. Roberts came to doubt the validity of the "landed in Chile" statement attributed to Joseph Smith. Much later Frederick Williams III showed that the statement did not originate with Joseph Smith. And even if it could be attributed to the Prophet, then he must have altered his views on the subject because in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842 he said that Lehi's party landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien," which is two thousand miles from Chile. Even this change still puts the landing site in South America whereas Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 178, puts the landing site near the Guatemala-El Salvador border, which is north of the Isthmus of Darien.

6. James E. Smith, "Nephi's Descendants? Historical Demography and the Book of Mormon," in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, 6, no.1, ed. Daniel C. Peterson (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1994): 264-65.

According to LDS scholar Melvin Thorne, "Joseph Smith himself seems to have believed, at least in the early years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, that the events recorded in the Nephite account covered all of North and South America."[7] This accords with Joseph Smith's account of Moroni's first visitation, in which Moroni "said there was a book deposited written upon gold plates, giving an account of *the* former inhabitants of this *continent* and the source from which they sprang."[8]

Sorenson agrees that the early Mormons believed in the hemispheric model:

> But a tradition did originate among Smith's first followers and has endured persistently in popular Mormon thinking. There is every reason to suppose the originators of this tradition were following Smith's lead in the matter of geography, as they were in just about everything else in the new religion. The essence of this popular view of where the Nephites were located was that the entire Western Hemisphere was populated by Nephites and Lamanites, and that their wars and travels encompassed the whole of it.[9]

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7. Melvin J. Thorne, "Complexity, Consistency, Ignorance, and Probabilities," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 182-83.

Joseph Smith's belief in the western hemisphere model seems to have persisted, however. In Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 213-20, is a letter Joseph Smith wrote on 1 March 1842 to John Wentworth, a twenty-six-year-old Chicago editor, who had requested a "sketch of the rise, progress, persecution and faith of the Latter-day Saints." In it, Joseph Smith wrote:

> In this important and interesting book [of Mormon] the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement by a colony that came from the tower of Babel, at the confusion of languages to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. We are informed by these records that America in ancient times has been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites and came directly from the tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country (Ibid., 215).

8. Jessee, *The Personal Writings*, 203 (emphasis added). The statement is included in the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Book of Mormon following the testimonies of the three and eight witnesses. Moroni visited Joseph Smith again in short order, relating "the very same things which he had done at his first visit, without the least variation"; returned again to "rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before"; and finally returned for a fourth visit the next day, relating "unto me all that he had related to me the previous night," so it seems unlikely that Joseph Smith got it wrong.

In his Wentworth letter, Joseph Smith elaborates on what the angel Moroni told him:

> I was also informed concerning *the* aboriginal inhabitants of *this country*, and shown who they were, and from whence they came; a brief sketch of their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments, of their righteousness and iniquity, and the blessings of God being finally withdrawn from them as a people was made known unto me (Ibid., 214, emphasis added).

9. Sorenson, "Mesoamerican Record," 393. Sorenson notes, "It is plausible that Smith

Sorenson notes that "while the statements that exist from early Saints about geography fail to spell out this model transparently, all that is said is consistent with the idea that this is what they believed."[10]

As for the position of the church, LDS scholar James Smith notes that Orson Pratt's traditional hemispheric views on Book of Mormon geography were "incorporated into his footnotes for the 1879 LDS edition of the Book of Mormon," and "although the historical footnotes were not an official Church interpretation of the book, they represented and reinforced what had become the prevalent hemispheric view of Book of Mormon history." Smith relates that "after the 1879 edition was published, there were lively discussions about Book of Mormon geography, but the Church did not offer any official interpretation" and has not done so to date, so that "when the new edition of the Book of Mormon was published in 1920, it omitted historical and geographical footnotes—a practice that has continued since," although "the hemispheric interpretation seems to remain the most commonly held view among the general readership of the book."[11]

The Limited Geography Model

Sorenson has identified 70 models of Book of Mormon geography, more than half of them developed within the past five decades although,

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and his associates *assumed* this interpretation of the geography from their first reading of the Nephite account and for years failed to imagine there could be an alternative" (ibid., 394, emphasis added). Sorenson can more easily challenge Joseph Smith if Smith simply assumed a hemispheric geography rather than learning of it by revelation, as he arguably did from the angel Moroni.

Also, Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 9, cites four revelations to Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants and notes that nothing in them gave the early Saints "reason to question their *assumptions* of Lamanite/Indian homogeneity and hemispheric unity" (emphasis added). In fact, it is arguable that the revelations actually confirm their "assumptions." At D&C 28:8, the Lord tells Oliver Cowdery to "go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them"; and at D&C 32:2, the Lord tells Parley P. Pratt to "go with my servants, Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, Jun., into the wilderness among the Lamanites." In these revelations, God does not distinguish the Lamanites from other Native Americans, arguably because all Indians were Lamanites. At D&C 54:8, the Lord tells Newell Knight to go "into the regions westward, unto the land of Missouri, unto the borders of the Lamanites." Here God is more specific about the location: Missouri borders the Lamanites; apparently the Indians west of Missouri were Lamanites. The fourth revelation cited by Sorenson, at D&C 49:24, says simply that "before the great day of the Lord shall come. . .the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose." Again no differentiation is made, as if all Indians were Lamanites.

10. Sorenson, "Mesoamerican Record," 393-94.

11. Smith's "How Many Nephites?" 261-62. Writing in 1984, George Smith, "Is There Any Way to Escape," 95, noted that the traditional hemispheric view "is still widely held; within the last few months, the *Church News* identified the estimated 177 million Indians of North and South America and Polynesians as Lamanites." Even today, the introduction to the Book of Mormon describes it as "a record of God's dealings with *the* ancient inhabitants of *the Americas*" (emphasis added). It also states that the Lamanites are "the principal ancestors of the American Indians."

as Sorenson notes, some of them are probably sufficiently close that they could be lumped into "families-with-variants."[12] Even before 1938 there were attempts to limit the geography of the Book of Mormon since in that year, according to LDS scholar Noel Reynolds,

> Joseph Fielding Smith spoke out against those who argued for a Book of Mormon geography that limited its people to small regions in the New World, and open discussion of such matters became more difficult. The efforts of Jakeman, Ferguson, and Franklin S. Harris Jr., to open the question of locating the Nephite Hill Cumorah outside of New York were greeted with suspicion and hostility.[13]

This seems to have changed in 1984, however, since in that year, as Reynolds reports,

> a noteworthy event reopened and expanded discussion on the subject. The *Ensign* published a cautious, two-part précis of John L. Sorenson's *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, published in full in 1985. To the present day, the Church maintains a hands-off policy on the scientific or scholarly elements of these unofficial studies and publications. While Sorenson's limited Book of Mormon geography has attracted broad support among students of these questions, including many General Authorities, no official view of Book of Mormon geography has been adopted by the Church.[14]

Sorenson may have been motivated by nothing more than a scholar's desire to develop the best model possible based on the data since he is critical of some of the "scholarly study of Book of Mormon archaeology" by "zealous believers in the Book of Mormon"[15] and notes that "no solution stands out as sufficiently persuasive to rally consensus behind it."[16] He thus starts over with the basics by identifying every statement in the

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12. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 3, 38-41. Of the 70 models, nine are internal only, and 11 are RLDS originated.

13. Noel B. Reynolds, "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon in the Twentieth Century," *Brigham Young University Studies* 38:2 (1999): 33. Sorenson notes, *A Source Book*, 23, that "since nothing had been published on this matter for some time, we can suppose that it was unpublished work in progress which triggered his statement."

14. Reynolds, "Coming Forth," 33-34.

15. John L. Sorenson, "Instant Expertise on Book of Mormon Archaeology," *Brigham Young University Studies* 16, no. 5 (Spring 1976): 429-32.

16. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 3. After reviewing the history of attempts to locate the geography of Book of Mormon events and all seventy models, Sorenson, ibid., 209, notes that "everything done so far in studying the geography of Book of Mormon events has been inadequate by reason of incompleteness, if not of real errors. . . .[E]xamination reveals that every single model has failed to deal successfully with certain geographical data in the scripture."

Book of Mormon that bears on its geography[17] and proceeds to construct a geography that meets all the requirements of the Book of Mormon. But certainly his limited geography answers some of the questions that have been raised about the hemispheric model.[18] For example, critic Robert Anderson mentions the "careful naturalistic examinations of the Book of Mormon which began in 1887" with Lamb's *The Golden Bible*:

> 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.[19]

Anderson thus identifies three of the problems with the traditional hemispheric model recognized by LDS scholars themselves. First, the geographical clues in the Book of Mormon do not match a hemispheric geography. For example, Sorenson notes that "the promised land was quite surely located in the tropics since no indication of cold or snow is given in the text, while heat is."[20] Second, the distances inferred from the travel times mentioned in the Book of Mormon imply a limited geography. For example, Thomas Ferguson, one of the early proponents of the limited Mesoamerican model, concluded that "since a group including women and children (mentioned in Mosiah 23-24) traveled from one place to the other in only twenty-one days, the distance from Nephi to Zarahemla

17. Sorenson, *A Source Book*.

18. David Wright in "Historical Criticism: A Necessary Element in the Search for Religious Truth," *Sunstone* 16 (September 1992): 38n59, opines that Sorenson's attempt to "reduce the geography of the Book of Mormon peoples" is "a partially critical attempt to make sense of the Book of Mormon's lack of concord with general ethnological, linguistic, and other cultural evidence from ancient America." William Hamblin insists, however, in "Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/3 (1993): 182-83, reprinted by FARMS, that "the driving force behind these developments [of a limited geography] was by no means an attempt to 'remove these inherent improbabilities and protect the credibility of the Book of Mormon as authentic history' as [critic Luke P.] Wilson asserts [in "The Scientific Search for Nephite Remains," *Heart and Mind: The Newsletter of Gospel Truths Ministries* (Fall 1992): 3a] (again without any evidence), but because a careful reading of the internal geographical data in the Book of Mormon requires such an interpretation."

19. Robert D. Anderson, "The Dilemma of the Mormon Rationalist," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 83n49. With respect to Lamb's influence, Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 19, has "found no evidence that any students of the geography topic before or after [Brigham H.] Roberts' single mention of Lamb in 1909 paid any attention to what that critic had had to say."

20. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 49.

was most likely only 200 to 300 miles."[21] Third, the large explicit and implied population sizes in the Book of Mormon suggest that other peoples were already in the western hemisphere and mixed with the immigrant Israelites.

One hundred years later and with the benefit of new knowledge, critic George Smith identified two additional problems:

> Sorenson's articles attempt to solve the most obvious archeological problem of the Book of Mormon—its contradiction with overwhelming evidence that the Indians were descended from nomads who began to migrate from Asia across the Bering Strait more that 20,000 years ago. Considering that there were up to 1,500 Indian languages at the time of Columbus, Sorenson observes that it would be "impossible to suppose that all those languages could have derived from the Hebrew presumed to be the speech of the Nephites and Lamanites." To resolve these conflicts between scientific evidence and religious doctrine, Sorenson sees the Book of Mormon peoples as a small Hebrew culture confined to a limited geographical region in Central America, isolated from widespread Indian populations to the north and south of them.[22]

Thus, two additional problems with the hemispheric geography addressed by LDS scholars are, first, the evidence that the Indians are descended from nomads who crossed the Bering Strait from Asia to North America thousands of years before the Jaredites arrived and, second, the 1,500 Indian languages that could not all have derived from Lehi's Hebrew in only 1,000 years.[23]

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21. Stan Larson, "The Odyssey of Thomas Stuart Ferguson," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 59.

22. Letter to the editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 5-6. Smith's letter was challenged by later letters in *Dialogue* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 8-10, and *Dialogue* 19, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 11-12.

23. LDS scholars as well as critics recognize these problems with a hemispheric geography. For example, Sorenson in "Digging into the Book of Mormon," 29, notes that

> For a long time, few people seemed to see any difficulty in setting the Book of Mormon in *all* of North and South America. The geography seemed so obvious—a continent northward and a continent southward, joined by a narrow isthmus. Eventually, however, accepting that view of the Book of Mormon lands became difficult in light of new information. For example, by the early twentieth-century, research had found that as many as 1,500 languages had been in use in the New World at the time of European discovery. And new knowledge about the process of language stability and change made it impossible to suppose that all those languages could have derived from the Hebrew presumed to be the speech of the Nephites and Lamanites. Archaeology also began revealing a bewildering diversity of cultures, reinforcing the idea that many groups had lived in the Americas.

Sorenson here describes what no one, including Joseph Smith, knew in 1830. The next year in *An Ancient American Setting*, 74, he elaborated on the number of languages:

One way to handle these and other problems inherent in a hemispheric model is to do as Fletcher Hammond did early on. As a lawyer who spent more than a decade studying the geography of the Book of Mormon, he frankly notes that "no part of South America, as presently constituted, fits in with Book of Mormon geography" and asserts that there is not a country in Central America "that well resembles the countries, the cities, the hills and the places mentioned in the Book of Mormon." He believes this is because "the entire face of the land of Central America has been changed since the destruction of the Nephites about 400 years after the crucifixion of Christ." He further believes that the reason "the Lord has changed the Book of Mormon lands since the extinction of the Nephites" is that if the narrow neck of land, the river Sidon, the hill Cumorah, and other geographical landmarks "could be ascertained with certainty, knowledge of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon would come without faith."[24] Thus, "it is next to impossible to make the geography of the Book of Mormon fit modern maps," and accordingly he thinks it "proper to avoid speculation on Book of Mormon geography, and confine our geography of that book to the book itself."[25]

Hammond's way has not been the way of most other LDS scholars, however. They have addressed the problems with a hemispheric geography by proposing a limited, Mesoamerican model that accommodates other peoples in the Western Hemisphere, predating the Jaredites and accounting for the large populations and variety of languages. Sorenson notes that "by the sixties the increasing number of people working with the geography question had settled on Mesoamerica as the only plausible candidate area in the New World," and that

> certain basic issues appeared to be settled for those who had paid close attention: (1) the area in which the story took place was far smaller than a continent, (2) the hill in New York could not be the scene of the final battle be-

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About 200 languages were spoken in Mesoamerica alone, and at least ten times that many were used throughout the Americas at the time the European discoverers reached America. Some of the languages were as distinct from each other as Chinese and English. The Hebrew and Egyptian tongues were not found among them.

He observes, ibid., 81. Clearly the hundreds of languages in Mesoamerica are only slightly, if at all, linked with western Asiatic tongues that Book of Mormon migrating groups might have brought. The large majority of the languages and the peoples speaking them simply have to be accounted for in another way.

24. Fletcher B. Hammond, *Geography of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1959), 18, 122, 125.

25. Fletcher B. Hammond, "Where is the Hill Cumorah?" Address delivered on March 25, 1964, to the Campus Chapter of the University Archaeological Society, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 7.

cause of statements in the text itself, and (3) only some place within the high civilization area called Mesoamerica could qualify.[26]

Sorenson wrote a forceful brief for the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the "narrow neck of land." He identifies the "land northward" with southern Mexico, including the states of Oaxaca and southern Veracruz; the "land southward" with southern Guatemala and the Mexican states of Chiapas and Tabasco; the Sidon river with the Grijalva river; the hill Cumorah with Cerro El Vigia in the Tuxtlas Mountains in southern Veracruz; and many Nephite and Jaredite cities, lakes, and other geographic features with ancient counterparts.[27] According to Sorenson, "the events in America about which [the Book of Mormon] tells directly were confined to a space perhaps 600 miles long and 200 wide."[28] His particular model seems to be the only one to have gained a following.[29]

One question arises immediately with a Mesoamerican geography. If all Book of Mormon events took place in Central America, how did the plates get buried in a hill in New York State? Sorenson suggests that Moroni may have taken them to New York to get away from the Lamanite-controlled war zone in southern Mexico:

> The Book of Mormon never tells us where, nor when, the plates of Nephi were buried by Moroni. Strong arguments can be adduced to suggest that he did not place them in the hill Cumorah of the final battle. (He would have had to hang around in the midst of the Lamanite-controlled hill territory for at least 35 years to do that, something most unlikely.) Hence that Joseph Smith obtained the plates from the hill in New York tells us nothing, either way, about where the battleground was.[30]

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26. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 28.

27. Ibid., 178.

28. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 49.

29. William Hamblin in "Methodological Problems," 171n34, considers the "four most important recent" LDS works on Book of Mormon geography to be Sorenson's *An Ancient American Setting* and *A Source Book*; John E. Clark, "A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1 (1989): 20-70; and David Palmer, *In Search of Cumorah* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1981).

30. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 352-53. The limited geography theorists all seem to agree that Moroni carried the plates from Mesoamerica to New York. David Palmer in "Why Search for Cumorah?" FARMS reprint of Chapter 1 from *In Search of Cumorah: New Evidences for the Book of Mormon from Ancient Mexico* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1992), 20, speculates that he transported them possibly even hundreds of years later as a resurrected being. Sorenson agrees with this possibility in "Digging into the Book of Mormon," 30. Hammond in his *Geography*, 89, suggests that Moroni carried them to New York as a convenience to Joseph Smith. He believes that Moroni had read in First Nephi about Columbus and the Gentiles who came to the land of promise and somehow "knew that Joseph Smith would be among these Gentiles who would live on the Atlantic seaboard"; that Moroni saw "it would be almost next to impossible, at least in a physical sense, to require Joseph to

A powerful aspect of the limited geography model is its accommodation of other, pre-existing peoples in the Western Hemisphere. This major weakness in the hemispheric model is noted by Brigham Madsen, who writes that with the widely-accepted evidence of the first peopling of the Americas over eleven thousand years ago, one wonders how LDS church members today reconcile the Book of Mormon narrative of New World settlement by the Nephites around 600 B.C.E. as being the means by which the New World was occupied by the ancestors of the American Indians.[31]

Sorenson recognizes that "abundant evidence from archaeological and linguistic studies assures us that such people were indeed present," but solves the problem with his limited geography model.[32] The presence of native populations would also "explain the presence of 200 Mesoamerican languages" that "it is impossible to explain. . .on the basis of Book of Mormon groups alone."[33]

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travel from New York to Central America once a year for three years to view the plates and on the fourth visit to obtain them"; and that Moroni concluded "it would be much better if he should, himself, go to what is now New York and there deposit the plates, so as to make access to them easy for Joseph."

Hamblin even describes the possible transportation means and route in "Methodological Problems," 178 (citations omitted):

> An examination of a map of North America shows that it is possible to sail along the coast of Mexico, up the Mississippi River, and then up the Ohio River to within less than one hundred miles of the New York hill where the plates were buried. Trails and waterways along these major rivers have existed for several thousand years. Sorenson provides a sixteenth-century example of someone walking a similar route in less than a year; Moroni had thirty-five years between the final battles of the Nephites and when he buried the plates. Thus, the plates could have been transported by canoe to New York, along well-used waterways of the Hopewell Indians (who flourished c. 200 B.C. to A.D. 400).

31. Brigham D. Madsen, "Reflections on LDS Disbelief in the Book of Mormon as History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 92. There were four responses to Madsen's article in the Summer 1998 edition of *Dialogue*, vi-xv, at least three of which argue that the Book of Mormon peoples occupied only a limited geography in Central America and that other populations were already here.

32. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 146-47. Sorenson's position is reflected in Frank Johnson's letter to the editor of *Sunstone* 14 (December 1990): 5, which responds to John Kunich's study of population sizes in the Book of Mormon, "Multiply Exceedingly: Book of Mormon Population Sizes," *Sunstone* 14 (June 1990): 27-44:

> Among modern Book of Mormon scholars, no one that I am aware of maintains that the new world was empty when Lehi arrived, or that the Nephites and Lamanites multiplied in "splendid isolation." Certainly that is not an official LDS church position.

33. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 86. William Hamblin in "Methodological Problems," 179-80, agrees that a limited geography which accommodates indigenous peoples solves all these problems:

> Indeed, a careful reading of the Book of Mormon text indicates that there must have been other, non-Book of Mormon peoples in the land [citing John L. Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1992): 1-34].

Finally, Sorenson agrees with Hugh Nibley that some of the people encountered by the Nephites were surviving Jaredites:

> Considerable indirect evidence exists within the Book of Mormon that survivors from the time of the Jaredites lived on down into Nephite times and strongly influenced the latter group. Hugh Nibley has drawn attention to some of the evidence [in *Lehi in the Desert*, 238-42].[34]

Sorenson notes that when Mosiah found "the people of Zarahemla," or Mulekites, they "could well have been a mixed bunch, including many descendants of Jaredite-period ancestors," and that Nibley had detected, on philological grounds, "Jaredite influence reaching the Nephites through Mulekite channels."[35] Thus a native population of surviving Jaredites would account for the apparent Jaredite influence on the Nephite culture, as reflected, for example, in their common names (Aaron, Coriantumr, Gilgal, Morianton, Nehor, Noah, and either Shiblom or Shiblon [there are both a Shiblom and a Shiblon in the Nephite history but only a single person with both names in the Jaredite history]).

In summary, the traditional view of Lehi's party coming to the western shores of South America soon after 600 B.C.E., spreading over the entire and otherwise empty western hemisphere during the next 1000 years, and giving rise to all Native Americans with their variety of languages is rejected by LDS and non-LDS scholars alike. LDS scholars do not see this as a weakness in the Nephite record but in our understanding of it, so that

> by the mid-twentieth century, most authors believed Book of Mormon history took place primarily within the more limited confines of Central America. Today almost all writers on Book of Mormon geography agree that Lehi's landing place, the narrow neck of land, the lands northward and southward, and Mormon's Hill Cumorah were situated somewhere in Central America.[36]

This limited geography accommodates native populations, which solves at least four problems. First, it accepts that people migrated across the Bering Strait land bridge thousands of years before the Jaredites. Sorenson believes that the Nephites fit "biologically into the picture we

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Thus, the alleged problems of population levels, genetics, and languages of modern Native Americans are largely irrelevant, since the Book of Mormon allows for, and in many ways insists upon, the existence of other inhabitants of the Americas.

34. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 84.
35. Ibid., 86.
36. Smith's "How Many Nephites?" 263-64.

now have of Mesoamerican populations" if "we see them as a relatively small group living among surrounding peoples who ultimately mixed with and absorbed their descendants."[37] Second, native peoples who mixed with the immigrant Israelites explain the large implied populations of Nephites and Lamanites that could hardly have descended from Lehi's small party alone. Third, native peoples account for the variety of languages among Native Americans that could not have evolved from Lehi's Hebrew language alone within such a short time. And fourth, surviving Jaredites explain the common names among the Jaredite and Nephite peoples and other cultural similarities between them.

Critique of the Limited Geography Model

The Book of Mormon itself challenges two major aspects of the limited geography model: first, the validity of any model smaller than a hemispheric model; and second, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the narrow neck of land. The internal evidence also challenges the survival of Jaredites and the presence of other peoples to mix with the Nephites and Jaredites. This casts further doubt on the limited geography model but is beyond the scope of this paper.

Hemispheric Geography: There is no identification in the Book of Mormon of a city, a sea, or any other place with a counterpart on a modern map. There is no prophecy, for example, that the Sidon river would be known in the latter days as the Grijalva. Nor are there, apparently, any names of places in the Book of Mormon surviving in the archaeological record to date.[38] We are limited to whatever geographical clues we can find in the Book of Mormon, and Sorenson has found many. Not only are

37. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 89.

38. William Hamblin in "Methodological Problems," 170 (bracketed material added), identifies many problems with trying to identify Book of Mormon geography from Mesoamerican toponyms (place names). He concludes:

> Taken together, all of these problems mean that we will most likely never be able to learn the Pre-Classic [before A.D. 300] names for most ancient Mesoamerican sites. Barring further discoveries, we will therefore never learn from inscriptional evidence how the names of Mesoamerican cities were pronounced in Book of Mormon times.

The reconstruction of Book of Mormon geography thus faces several difficulties not found in biblical geography. In Mesoamerica there is a discontinuity of toponyms, whereas there is strong continuity in Palestine; inscriptional evidence from Mesoamerica uses symbolic glyphs for cities rather than phonetic transcriptions of the names, whereas inscriptional evidence in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Palestine usually contains a phonetic component; and finally, there is no Pre-Classic onomasticon (place-name list) for Mesoamerica, whereas Palestine has Eusebius's detailed *Onomasticon*, as well as those of later pilgrims. These items allow historians to create a map grid based both on names and distances between sites for key biblical toponyms. As noted above, a more accurate comparison to Book

there rivers, lakes, seas and seashores, cities, mountains, wildernesses, a "narrow neck of land," and such, but geographical directions like north and south; topological indications like up, down, and over; distances implied in days of travel; and other clues such as climate and animals. Using these clues, Sorenson has rejected a hemispheric model and superimposed all Jaredite and Nephite events on a Mesoamerican location.

Since the Book of Mormon provides no distances whatever, they must be calculated by how long it took to travel from one place to another. Sorenson's firmest calculation is the distance between the Nephite city of Zarahemla and the Lamanite city of Nephi. While a number of days' travel time between these two places occurs twice, the distance between no other two places is defined by a specific number of days' travel time except for the one or one and a half days' journey across the narrow neck (Alma 22:32; Hel. 4:7; see *The Narrow Neck of Land* below), and the meaningless distance of three days' travel time between Melek and Ammonihah (Alma 8:6). With these two exceptions, all other distances of any appreciable length that are specified in days of travel in both the Nephite and Jaredite records in the New World are measured by "many days" of travel (2 Ne. 5:7 (twice); Mosiah 8:8; 9:4; 22:13; 23:30-31; Alma 17:9; Ether 9:3).

Ammon and his search party of 15 other strong men left Zarahemla and wandered in the wilderness for 40 days before finding a hill near Nephi (Mosiah 7:1-5). Coming the other way, Alma and his followers escaped from the waters of Mormon, which was an unknown distance from Nephi (Mosiah 18:4-8), to Helam, traveling eight days in the wilderness (Mosiah 23:3), and then from Helam to Zarahemla, traveling first one day (Mosiah 24:18, 20, 22) and then twelve days (Mosiah 24:25), for a total of 21 days.

Sorenson finds Alma's journey "more helpful" than Ammon's journey in calculating the distance between Nephi and Zarahemla. Based on other travel accounts, he assumes Alma's party traveled about 11 miles per day, or 231 miles. Because of other factors, he thinks the "actual trail or road mileage between Zarahemla and Nephi" was "on the order of 250 miles," but "the distance as the crow flies would be more like 180."[39]

Sorenson uses this distance and other clues to calculate, with increasing speculation, how far it was between other places such as Zarahemla and the northern limit of the land southward at the narrow neck (another

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of Mormon geography is that of Bronze Age western Anatolia, where similar problems of reconstruction exist. Thus, while [critic] Wilson's point that biblical geography is better documented than Book of Mormon geography is readily conceded, that point by no means proves that the Book of Mormon is ahistorical, as Wilson concludes.

39. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 8-10.

180 miles), beyond which lay the land northward. Significantly, he relies on one journey of "many days" to locate the final battlefield at Cumorah near the narrow neck. Two generations before Ammon's journey to Nephi, Zeniff had taken a group of Nephites from Zarahemla to reclaim the land of Nephi. His grandson Limhi was the third and last king of the Nephites in the land of Nephi, and they were in bondage to the Lamanites. Limhi sent a search party to find Zarahemla to ask for help, but, as described by Sorenson,

> unfortunately, their route somehow bypassed Zarahemla, took them through the "narrow neck of land" without their even realizing it, and brought them to the final battleground of the earlier people, the Jaredites. There they found ruins and a set of 24 gold plates left by the last Jaredite prophet, Ether (Ether 15:33; Mosiah 21:25-27). Sorrowfully, the explorers returned to their home in Nephi to report to Limhi, mistakenly, that the remains they had found must have been those of Zarahemla destroyed.[40]

We then come to Sorenson's calculation of the distance to Cumorah:

> The exploring party would have known approximately how long it had taken their fathers to travel from Zarahemla to Nephi only two generations earlier, so by the time they had gone, say, twice as far as the normal distance to Zarahemla, they must have wondered about their position and probably would not have gone much farther.
>
> From Nephi to Zarahemla, on a direct line, was about 180 miles. Twice that distance would have taken them to the "line". . .separating Bountiful from Desolation, the beginning of the land northward. At such a distance from home they would have thought of turning back. Surely diligent men such as the king would have sent on this mission would not have pressed on much farther. So it is unreasonable that the battleground of the Jaredites where Limhi's explorers ended up would have been more than 100 miles into the land northward from the "line" at the neck.
>
> The hill Ramah, where the Jaredites destroyed themselves, was the same hill as Nephite Cumorah (Ether 15:11). This whole affair tells us, then, that the total distance from the city of Nephi to the last battlefield at Ramah or Cumorah is unlikely to have been more that 450, or perhaps 500, miles. . . .any increase in the dimensions would make the story of Limhi's explorers more difficult to handle. The hill Ramah/Cumorah seems, then, to have been within 100 miles of the narrow neck of land, and this is consistent with the Nephites' naming the *southern*-most portion of the land northward "Desolation," which included the last battlefield, strewn with bones and rusting weapons (Alma 22:30-31).[41]

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40. Ibid., 14.
41. Ibid., 14-15.

This is how Sorenson places Cumorah near the narrow neck and not in New York State.

Sorenson's calculations are not unreasonable, but they do not at all preclude a hemispheric geography. Most of the Nephite history does indeed take place within a relatively confined area south of the narrow neck where missionaries can preach and armies can skirmish from city to city. Indeed, the Nephites have little to do with the land northward except for their eventual expansion into it and their final battle at Cumorah. The issue is whether the land northward is the entire North American continent standing empty and available for the Nephite expansion and final battle or whether, as Sorenson insists, the land northward was limited to southern Mexico with indigenous peoples living beyond that area. Sorenson is right, of course, that indigenous peoples were living throughout the western hemisphere, but whether the internal evidence accommodates other peoples will not be explored in this paper. The matter to be explored here is the extent of the land northward.

The extent of only the land northward is the issue because the southern extent of the Lamanite land of Nephi is completely undefined, and there is nothing to preclude equating the land southward with the whole of South America. As for the land northward, Nephi and Lehi, as well as the Jaredites, include North America as part of their promised land. To paraphrase Sorenson, while they may fail to spell this out transparently, everything in the Book of Mormon is consistent with North America being the land northward.

To begin with, the Jaredites would have been the first people in the western hemisphere under the literal, biblical account of history, which is embraced by the Book of Mormon. God leads the Jaredites from the tower of Babel to the New World, "into a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth" (Ether 1:42). God promises to bless them in this "land which is choice above all the lands of the earth" and to make of them "a great nation," indeed, the greatest nation on earth (Ether 1:43). This hardly describes the Jaredites as a colony in southern Mexico. Spread throughout North America, however, "as numerous as the hosts of Israel" (Mosiah 8:8), they were arguably the greatest nation on earth, although isolated from and unknown to the rest of the world.

That North America rather than Oaxaca and southern Veracruz was their promised land is further suggested by repeated descriptions of this land as "choice above all other lands," the same language used by Nephi and Lehi in more specifically describing North America (see below). In his abridgment of the Jaredite account, Moroni calls this land of promise "choice above all other lands" and declares that whatever nation possesses it "shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven" if they serve God (Ether 2:8-12, 15; 10:28).

Even Sorenson recognizes that something other than Mesoamerica is meant. Discussing Ether 13:2-4, 6, 8, Sorenson observes that

> were "this land" taken in a narrow ("literal") sense as that where the Nephites and Jaredites of the record lived, the New Jerusalem would have to be near the narrow neck of land, but there is no LDS expectation of anything like that. The alternative is that Moroni, or Ether, is here speaking in general terms of the whole continent, which accommodates the prophecies in the Doctrine and Covenants.[42]

In short, after the biblical flood, the Jaredites were the first people to arrive in the western hemisphere. They occupied the choicest land on earth, on which the New Jerusalem would someday be built. They were to become the greatest nation on earth. This is all consistent with a continental geography but hardly descriptive of a colony in southern Mexico surrounded by earlier arrivals.

Once the Jaredites are destroyed, the Israelites appear and the real history begins. Their promised land is even more clearly North America although, once Mesoamerica is transcended, the entire western hemisphere follows easily. The Lord tells Nephi while he is still in the Old World that if he keeps the Lord's commandments, he will be led to a "land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands" (1 Ne. 2:20). Presumably this is the same "land which is choice above all other lands" that the Jaredites were given, even though the Jaredites lived in the land northward and the Nephites, for most of their history, in the land southward. The promised land is, thus, more than either of their immediate lands.

Nephi later describes more specifically this "land which is choice above all other lands." While Nephi is en route to the promised land, he beholds in a vision a "man among the Gentiles" [Columbus] who "went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren [Native Americans], who were in the promised land" (1 Ne. 13:12). He foresees other Gentiles going "forth out of captivity, upon the many waters

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42. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 312. There are other Book of Mormon references to the "New Jerusalem" that are consistent with "this land" being North America rather than Mesoamerica. Following his crucifixion, Jesus, in Bountiful between the lands northward and southward, said to the multitude that "this people will I establish in *this land*, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a New Jerusalem" (3 Ne. 20:22, emphasis added). And Jesus later told the same multitude that if the Gentiles "repent and hearken unto my words. . .they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given *this land* for their inheritance; and they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem" (3 Ne. 21:22-23, emphasis added).

[pilgrims]" and "many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise," who "scattered" and smote the Lamanites (1 Ne. 13:13-14; cf. 15, 17, 19).[43] The angel tells Nephi that after the Book of Mormon comes forth, if the Gentiles "harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God. . . they shall be a blessed people upon the promised land forever" (1 Ne. 14:2; cf. 22:7-8). These passages all clearly, if not explicitly, identify the promised land with North America.

At the conclusion of his voyage, Nephi relates: "And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the

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43. Sorenson believes, *An Ancient American Setting*, 97, that "the Spanish conquistadores (were) the earliest 'Gentiles' from across the ocean whom Nephi had seen in vision (1 Nephi 13:13-15)." This view is hardly credible. Nephi's vision at 1 Ne. 13:12-19 describes popular American history as Joseph Smith would have known it. More specifically:

At 1 Ne. 13:12, Nephi sees "a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters," and who, being "wrought upon" by the Spirit of God "went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land." In popular history, Columbus but hardly Cortes, the conqueror of the Aztecs with his conquistadores, was "wrought upon" by the Spirit of God.

Also, if 1 Ne. 13:12 describes Columbus rather than Cortes, as it seems to do, Columbus never made it to the seed of Nephi's brothers in southern Mexico or Guatemala. According to The World Book Encyclopedia 4 (1970): 690-97, he made it to many islands in the West Indies, including Hispaniola, Cuba, and Jamaica, set foot in Venezuela, and explored the coast along Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. Since according to the Book of Mormon, Columbus came to the seed of Nephi's brothers in the promised land, the promised land would have to extend beyond the site of Sorenson's Book of Mormon geography to include some if not all of the places visited by him.

1 Ne. 13:13 then describes "other Gentiles" who were "wrought upon" by the Spirit of God and who "went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters." This would seem to describe the pilgrims seeking religious freedom in popular history, rather than the conquistadores seeking gold.

1 Ne. 13:14 describes "many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise" and the "wrath of God" upon the seed of Nephi's brothers, who were "scattered before the Gentiles and were smitten." This could arguably describe either the conquistadores or the pilgrims, although "many multitudes" sounds more like the waves of pilgrims than the small invading party of Cortes. Also, if 1 Ne. 13:13 describes the pilgrims, then mentioning the conquistadores in 1 Ne. 13:14 would be recounting history backwards, since the conquistadores preceded the pilgrims by about one hundred years.

1 Ne. 13:15 describes the "Spirit of the Lord" upon the Gentiles, who were white, fair, and beautiful, and prospered and obtained the land for their inheritance. In context, Nephi's vision does not describe two sets of Gentiles, the conquistadores who conquered Mexico, and the pilgrims who came to North America, but one set, the white English pilgrims who were guided by God to the promised land, and who scattered and slew the dark, unbelieving savages who were the seed of Nephi's brothers.

1 Ne. 13:16-19 describes the Gentiles who humbled themselves before the Lord, whose power was with them; their "mother Gentiles" who gathered upon the waters and the land to battle against them; the power of God with the Gentiles and the wrath of God upon those who were against them; and the victory of the Gentiles. This clearly is the Revolutionary War.

promised land; and we went forth upon the land, and did pitch our tents, and we did call it the promised land" (1 Ne. 18:23). The Lord himself had lead them to the "promised land" and told them that after they had arrived at the "promised land," they would know he was God (1 Ne. 17:13-14), so Lehi's people were not deluding themselves that they had arrived at the promised land, even though they landed south of the narrow neck. Clearly their promised land was not limited to Mesoamerica.

Lehi reinforces this point when he speaks to his sons "concerning the land of promise, which they had obtained" (2 Ne. 1:3). Again, they were south of the narrow neck but were in the promised land, which was at least the North American continent. With respect to this land of promise, Lehi says,

> we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands;[44] a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a

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44. Here again the land of promise is "choice above all other lands." If the Book of Mormon reflects Joseph Smith's thinking as an author, he was obviously enthusiastic about his country. His enthusiasm as well as his piousness may also be reflected in Lehi's statement that "this [promised] land" is consecrated to them whom the Lord brings, and if they serve the Lord, "it shall be a land of liberty unto them" (2 Ne. 1:7). This choice land of promise was promised by the Lord to Lehi and his children and everyone who is led out of other countries by the Lord. Indeed, Lehi writes that *only* those brought by the hand of the Lord shall come to "this land" (2 Ne. 1:6), which could reflect Joseph Smith's naive belief that the pilgrims and all subsequent immigrants were led to this country by God.

The reasons for his enthusiasm for this choice land of promise where gentiles would prosper (1 Ne. 13:14, 20, 30) seem obvious. He lived in the second generation after the Declaration of Independence, which declared as a self-evident truth that all men are created equal, and that they have unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Revolutionary War, which threw off the yoke of a foreign monarchy, was recent enough that both his paternal grandfather, Asael Smith, and maternal grandfather, Solomon Mack, were veterans of it. The Constitutional Convention following the war drafted a constitution that provided for elections and checks and balances. Its Bill of Rights guaranteed the freedoms of religion, speech, and assembly.

All these civil rights and the novel political experiment in representational democracy were the culmination of a long history of humankind's hunger for personal freedom. They reflect the ideas of the great thinkers and writers of the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century, from whom Jefferson, himself an enlightenment thinker, and the other founding fathers borrowed liberally. Those were apparently heady times. LDS scholar Richard Bushman notes in "The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution" in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1982): 191-92, Joseph Smith's probable exposure to politics:

> There is little reason to doubt that however the book originated, Joseph Smith must have absorbed the ordinary political sentiments of his time. The air was thick with politics. The Revolution, by then a half-century old, still loomed as the great turning point in American and world history. Americans annually celebrated the nation's birthday with oratory, editorials, and rounds of toasts. In 1824 and 1825, Lafayette, who had been absent from the United States for thirty-eight years, toured all twenty-four states with his son George Washington Lafayette. The following year, 1826,

> land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord (2 Nephi 1:5).

Thus, Lehi's seed will inherit at least the North American continent, which would equate the Lamanites with the American Indians.

Lehi continues with respect to his own times, that "it is wisdom that this [promised] land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations" or other nations would overrun it (2 Ne. 1:8); the Lord promises that if those whom he "shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves" (2 Ne. 1:9); but "when the time cometh that they shall dwindle in unbelief," the Lord "will bring other nations unto them, and he shall give unto them power, and he will take away from them the lands of their possessions, and he will cause them to be scattered and smitten" (2 Ne. 1:10–11). This surely sounds like North American history from a Euro-American perspective, in which the Lamanites (Indians) lived by themselves but because of their unbelief, other nations came and took the land and "scattered" and "smote" them.

In short, while Lehi and Nephi are in the land southward, they are still in the promised land, which includes North America. There is no differentiation between where they are and the promised land they describe; it is all one. No one writes of living in one small part of a vast continent. Their thinking is continental, if not hemispheric.[45]

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was the jubilee anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and Fourth of July orators exerted themselves as never before. A few days after the celebration, news spread that on the very day when the nation was commemorating its fiftieth birthday, two of the most illustrious heroes of the Revolution, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, had died within six hours of one another. A new round of patriotic rhetoric poured forth to remind the nation of its history and the glories of republicanism. All this was reported in the *Wayne Sentinel*, Palmyra's weekly, along with coverage of yearly electoral campaigns and debates on current political issues. Joseph Smith could not easily have avoided a rudimentary education in the principles of American government and the meaning of the American Revolution before he began work on the Book of Mormon in 1827.

Even though Joseph Smith was little-educated, he apparently absorbed the enlightened political ideas of his time, many of which are found in the Book of Mormon, including the appointment of leaders by the voice of the people; the rule of law; a system of checks and balances for dealing with errant judges; majority rule; a land of liberty and equality; men possessed of rights (Mosiah 29:25-32); and religious freedom (Mosiah 27:2-3; Alma 1:17; 30:7).

45. There are other, scattered references later in the book that confirm this hemispheric perspective. Jacob speaks, while in the land southward, of the Gentiles being blessed upon "this land," which "shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles" with no kings, a "choice land. . .above all other lands" (2 Ne. 10:10-11, 19). Alma tells Helaman that the ball, or director, brought their fathers to the promised land (Alma 37:38, 44-45), even though they arrived south of the narrow neck. And in Helaman's account, in about 46 B.C.,

All other references to the land northward are consistent with its being North America. For example, Bountiful "bordered upon the land which they called Desolation, it being *so far northward* that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken" (Alma 22:30, emphasis added); "so far northward" seems to describe the distance to Cumorah in New York at least as well as Sorenson's calculated one hundred miles to Cumorah in southern Mexico. Sorenson's calculation is based on Limhi's story that his search party was "lost in the wilderness for the space of many days" and "traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel" (Mosiah 8:8). A journey from Panama to New York seems no more problematical than Limhi's story on which Sorenson relies. In this story, it is not clear why the 43 men in the search party never did find Zarahemla, either going or coming; nor why they apparently came across no one else during their many days of wandering (which suggests there was no one else around); nor why they did not follow the Sidon river up or down to Zarahemla if, indeed, they came to the Sidon; nor why they did not apparently run into the sea, since the land southward was nearly surrounded by it, unless they somehow hit the narrow neck precisely both going and coming; nor why they thought Cumorah was Zarahemla with the Sidon river nowhere around.

There are a few other references to the land northward in the Nephite history. For example, in the first century B.C., 5400 men, with their wives and children, "departed out of the land of Zarahemla into the land which was northward" (Alma 63:4), and thus the Nephite expansion into the land northward began. At about the same time, Hagoth built "an exceedingly large ship" and "launched it forth into

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the people "did multiply and spread, and did go forth from the land southward to the land northward, and did spread insomuch that they began to cover the face of the whole earth, from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east" (Hel. 3:8). This describes the hemisphere well but does not fit Mesoamerica, which has a sea on either side but not on either end.

Even Jesus seems to confirm the hemispheric geography. He tells the survivors of the great destruction at the time of his crucifixion: "And the Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you this land, for your inheritance" (3 Ne. 20:14). From what follows, "this land" seems to be more than Mesoamerica, because he says that the Gentiles "shall be a scourge unto the people of this land. Nevertheless, when *they* shall have received the fulness of my gospel. . . ." (3 Ne. 20:28, emphasis added). "They" are the Gentiles receiving the Book of Mormon, and they will scourge the natives of "this land," i.e., North America, where "they" are.

the west sea, by the narrow neck" with many Nephites, and they sailed northward (Alma 63:5-6). The next year "many people went forth into the land northward" (Alma 63:9). Just a few years later, "there were an exceeding great many who departed out of the land of Zarahemla, and went forth into the land northward to inherit the land"; "they did travel to *an exceeding great distance*, insomuch that they came to large bodies of water and many rivers"; "they did spread forth into all parts of the land"; and "they did multiply and spread, and did go forth from the land southward to the land northward, and did spread insomuch that they began to cover the face of the whole earth, from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east" (Hel. 3:3-8 emphasis added). [46]

This describes North America far better than southern Mexico. And at the very end, Mormon wrote to the Lamanite king requesting that "we might gather together our people unto the land of Cumorah, by a hill which was called Cumorah, and there we could give them battle"; and when the Lamanite king agreed, "we did march forth to the land of Cumorah, . . .and it was in a land of many waters, rivers, and fountains" (Morm. 6:2-4). This and previous references to waters and rivers certainly describe the Palmyra area, with the finger lakes and the Great Lakes nearby, as well as the Ohio, St. Lawrence, Susquehanna, and Hudson rivers and their tributaries.

Sorenson does not take into account in his construction of a limited geography either the Book of Mormon's reflection of biblical early world

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46. In evaluating and preferring Sorenson's limited geography over Hauck's, John Clark in "A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies," 64, notes that the reference to the north and south seas in Helaman "may have been meant in a metaphorical rather than a literal way":

> I am convinced that the reference to a north sea and a south sea is devoid of any concrete geographical content. All specific references or allusions to Book of Mormon seas are only to the east and west seas. Any geography that tries to accommodate a north and south sea, I think, is doomed to fail.

William Hamblin agrees in "Methodological Problems," 189.

B.H. Roberts, on the other hand, *B.H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brigham D. Madsen (Urbana and Chicago University of Illinois Press, 1985), 204, notes that Mr. Orson Pratt in his marginal footnotes on this verse [Hel. 3:8] interprets "the land southward," to mean "South America"; "the land northward," to mean "North America." "The sea south," he interprets to mean the "Atlantic, south of Cape Horn"; and the "sea north" is the "Arctic, north of North America"; the "sea west" and the "sea east" are the "Pacific" and the "Atlantic," respectively. . . .His interpretation has been, and doubtless is, the general understanding of the Mormon people.

Roberts, of course, subscribed to a hemispheric geography, whereas Clark subscribes to Sorenson's limited geography and must therefore explain this reference to north and south seas.

history as context or Nephi's and Lehi's descriptions of the promised land.[47] Since Sorenson's construction of a limited geography based on the clues he uses is not unreasonable, it might appear that Nephi's and Lehi's grand continental or hemispheric perspective conflicts with Mormon's more particular clues appearing in the stories of wars and missionary travel. This, however, is not the conflict; the bulk of Nephite history did not take place throughout the hemisphere but within a much smaller area below the narrow neck as described by Sorenson. The conflict is between the *availability* of an empty hemisphere for eventual expansion by the Nephites and Lamanites, on the one hand, and, on the other, Sorenson's insistence that "the maximum distance of Nephite penetration" into the land northward was "on the order of a couple of hundred miles,"[48] with the rest of the hemisphere being inhabited by indigenous peoples speaking a great variety of languages. If it were not for the need to accommodate the scientific facts of Asian peoples long antedating the Jaredites in the western hemisphere as well as the lack of archaeological support for anything like the Nephite civilization just below Panama,[49] Sorenson may well have left the Nephites in South America.

He begins with the conviction that the Book of Mormon is actual history.[50] Based on his conviction, he believes that all the geographical clues are internally consistent[51] and mines the text to support his posi-

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47. One of Sorenson's few references to the "promised land" occurs in his comment on Ether 6:12 in *A Source Book*, 307:

> Moroni here considers the Jaredite landing point, which has to have been in the land northward, part of the same promised land considered "promised" by the Nephites. The same phrase occurs in v. 16 and 7:27.

In disregarding Nephi's and Lehi's perspective on the promised land as well as the biblical history context, Sorenson would seem to act contrary to his own sound scholarly advice, ibid., 210 (emphasis his), that "we must use the *entire* scripture, without exception. Selectivity should be avoided like the plague. We must understand, interpret and deal successfully with *every* statement in the text, not just what is convenient or interesting to us. That can only be done, I believe, by doing our level best to approach the words of the Book of Mormon having to do with geography without preconceptions."

48. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 347.

49. Sorenson writes, "Mesoamerican Record," 397: "When all the options within the Americas are matched against the text, it turns out that only one place qualifies as Nephite territory—Mesoamerica, or some part of it. Only that region fits the geographical conditions specified or implied in Mormon's record."

50. He writes in *An Ancient American Setting*, xv, that neither through his early college courses in the sciences or later "did I have to ask, 'Is this volume true?' I never asked external support for the private confirmation I already enjoyed."

51. Sorenson notes in "Mesoamerican Record," 396, that "the hundreds of statements and allusions about geography demonstrate that the volume's chief author, Mormon, held

tion.[52] In making everything fit—and as we have seen with his calculated distances, there is much freedom to make everything fit—he ends up, as other LDS scholars do, finding complexity where none necessarily exists. As for apparent inconsistencies, anachronisms, anomalies, and other difficulties, he fashions answers that are "plausible," or calls for further study, which he does time and again in *An Ancient American Setting*.

If, as it appears, the Book of Mormon embraces the traditional geographic model of a hemisphere empty before the Jaredites arrived and later to be filled by surviving Israelites, LDS scholars, including Sorenson, have not only challenged this model, but created an alternative model unsupported by the internal evidence, creating a real dilemma for believers.

The Narrow Neck of Land: In trying to identify the "narrow neck of land" on a map of the western hemisphere, Sorenson notes that

> few possible "narrow necks" are worth considering. The oldest view supposed Panama to be the narrow neck of the Book of Mormon, with South America, or some portion of it, the land southward. The dimensions of Book of Mormon lands alone rule out the whole continent, while any attempt to consider just a part of South America as the land southward runs afoul of a number of points in the text (for example, Alma 22:32, "nearly surrounded by water").[53]

The much cited Alma 22:32 in geographical inquiries provides:

> And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the Land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly

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a mental map of Nephite lands that was consistent throughout, but its scale was limited to hundreds, not thousands, of miles." Nevertheless, Sorenson does recognize some apparent inconsistencies. Three short examples in *A Source Book*, 268, 291; 273; 299, among several: First, he recognizes that the city of Gid seems to be south of the city of Mulek in Alma 51:26 but reversed in Hel. 5:15. To resolve this, he supposes "Mulek to have been seaward and Gid inland" even though Alma 51:26 states they were both "on the east borders by the seashore." Second, he recognizes that Moroni's recapturing the city of Mulek "in the land of Nephi" is "an evident error (mental slip) by the original scribe or Mormon," since Mulek was in the land of Zarahemla. Third, he recognizes that at 4 Nephi 46, the Gadianton robbers were "spread over all the face of the land," but at Morm. 1:18, the robbers "were among the Lamanites," and states that it is unclear what Mormon means by "among the Lamanites."

52. "Where we must begin," he writes in *A Source Book*, 210, "is with the words of Mormon and his associates who kept the original records. From their words we must derive every scrap of meaning; I assume that their knowledge of geography was so integral and holistic that meanings are tucked into their records at a level below intention. We must sift for these."

53. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 29.

> surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward.

Both the Lamanite land of Nephi and the Nephite land of Zarahemla were in the land southward. The land of Zarahemla was in the northern part of the land southward just below the narrow neck, and the land of Nephi may have comprised all the rest of the land southward although most of the Nephite/Lamanite history took place within a few hundred miles of the narrow neck. If South America was the land southward, it meets the requirements of Alma 22:32 precisely. It is surrounded by water except where Panama, a narrow country, links South America to Costa Rica and the rest of Central and North America. Thus, South America is "*nearly* surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward," which alone prevents it from being *completely* surrounded by water. It is as if Joseph Smith all but named South America as the land southward.

What is puzzling is why Sorenson believes southern Guatemala and southern Mexico meet these requirements at all. Both have the Pacific Ocean on one side; southern Mexico has the Gulf of Mexico (more specifically, the Gulf of Campeche) on the other side, and southern Guatemala the Caribbean Sea, although it is not clear that Sorenson extends the land of Nephi in southern Guatemala all the way to the sea. In any case, neither individually nor together are they "nearly surrounded by water."[54]

Sorenson rules out, however, all attempts by others to locate the Book of Mormon events elsewhere, whether in North or South America or elsewhere in Central America, and he essentially ignores even the Yucatan peninsula.[55] He concludes that "the only 'narrow neck' potentially acceptable in terms of the Book of Mormon requirements is the Isthmus

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54. Sorenson himself describes his Book of Mormon geography in "Mesoamerican Record," 396 (emphasis added), as "just a few hundred miles in length and width, *bounded on two sides by oceans*." In his summary of criteria in *A Source Book*, 329, he recognizes that the land southward must be "nearly surrounded by water" without explaining how his Mesoamerican location meets this criterion.

55. Bruce Warren, in his review in *Brigham Young University Studies* 30:3 (Summer 1990): 134, of both Richard Hauck's and John Sorenson's books on Book of Mormon geography, notes that the Yucatan Peninsula remains a "sore thumb" for both Sorenson and Hauck and all other students of Book of Mormon research. The base of the peninsula has two of the biggest archaeological sites in Mesoamerica dating to the latter part of Book of Mormon history, El Mirador, Guatemala, and Calakmul, Mexico. Sorenson considers this region to be part of the "east wilderness full of Lamanites," and Hauck ignores the region.

Sorenson writes in *An Ancient American Setting*, 35-36, that "We must also ignore the Yucatan Peninsula and adjacent lowlands, for we noted earlier that the Nephite-controlled portion of the coast along the east sea was short and that the entire area eastward from the city of Nephi is undescribed in the scripture."

On his map, ibid., 37, Sorenson labels the Yucatan Peninsula the "east or south wilderness."

of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico."[56] But the Gulf of Tehuantepec hardly pinches the southern coast of Mexico enough to form what anyone would describe as a neck, let alone a "small" or "narrow" neck either absolutely or relative to the lands on either side of it (its total width is "120 miles on a straight line"[57]). It has no length at all, as necks do. It seems doubtful that what can hardly be described as a "neck" on a map would be considered a "neck" by the Nephites, let alone a "narrow" neck when it is 120 miles wide.

Sorenson defends 120 miles as "narrow" by calculating that it was a day and a half's travel for "a (presumably lone) Nephite" across the narrow neck of land which they fortified; up to five miles per hour, that is, up to 180 miles [36 x 5 = 180], on the basis of rate alone. [But on the additional basis of use of the word "narrow," a figure approaching 180 miles is absurd; 100 seems not absurd.][58]

Sorenson further defends his 120-mile-wide "narrow neck of land" as the distance a Nephite, or perhaps a messenger relay, could travel in a day and a half, not necessarily from sea to sea but from garrison to garrison some miles inland:

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56. Ibid., 29.

57. Ibid., 32. It is not clear whether a Nephite would traverse the isthmus in a straight line or whether the actual route of travel would be somewhat more than 120 miles. Sorenson notes, ibid., 36, that "the 120-mile-wide Isthmus of Tehuantepec is just within the range of plausibility we established for the width of the 'narrow neck,'" so if a Nephite could not traverse it in a straight line, the 120-mile-width would seem to be outside Sorenson's range of plausibility.

58. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 397 (bracketed material his). It would seem that Sorenson's 120-mile-wide "narrow" isthmus conflicts with his calculation that Cumorah was about 100 miles from the narrow neck. Alma 22:32 states that it was "*only* the distance of a day and a half's journey" across the isthmus. Just two verses earlier, Mormon describes Desolation (or Bountiful, which Sorenson, ibid., 245, believes "it" in Alma 22:30 refers to) as being "*so far northward* that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken" (Alma 22:30). It seems incongruous for Mormon to describe the 120-mile distance across the Isthmus as "only" a day and a half's journey while describing the 100-mile distance to Sorenson's Ramah/Cumorah, where the Jaredite bones were found, as "so far northward." On the other hand, these verses well describe narrow Panama and a great distance northward into New York.

Sorenson's 120-mile wide "narrow" isthmus may also conflict with Helaman 3:3-4, in which many Nephites left Zarahemla for the land northward, traveling "to an *exceeding great distance*, insomuch that they came to large bodies of water and many rivers." Sorenson, ibid., 289, calls the italicized phrase a "vague, relative expression," which of course it is. But for him, ibid., 348, the "land covered with large bodies of water" was "sufficiently near the land Bountiful that it could have combined politically with it." More specifically, although "absolute distances cannot be inferred," it probably included "the lands of waters, rivers and fountains around Cumorah, which would place it on the order of a hundred miles from the narrow neck." It thus seems incongruous for Mormon to refer to the 100-mile distance to the land covered with large bodies of water as an "exceeding great distance" but to the 120-mile wide isthmus as "only" a day and a half's journey.

> This language [Alma 22:32] is unclear; opinions among Latter-day Saint readers of this text have differed widely. "From the east to the west sea" seems to me probably the equivalent of "from the east *sea* to the west sea," particularly when we pay attention to the end of the sentence: "*thus* the [greater] land of Nephi and the [greater] land of Zarahemla [together constituting the land southward] were nearly surrounded by water." The day and a half's "journey for a Nephite" then likely was effectively all the way across (although it would be silly to demand that it mean from salt-water to salt water; perhaps from garrison coastal settlement to a similar defense point on the other, which could be a number of miles from actual shore). However, without more information, such as explanation of "a journey for a Nephite," we cannot specify the distance with confidence. [But logic allows us to bracket the distance. When we know on the one hand that Limhi's exploring party passed through the isthmus without even realizing it[59] (Mosiah 8:7-9; 21:25-26), we see that it was of substantial width. On the other hand, that the neck was *relatively* narrow was clear to knowledgeable Nephites.] A width as low as 50 miles seems too small; a more likely minimum is 75, while "a day and a half's journey" could range up to 125 miles, depending on who traveled how (e.g., a messenger relay?).[60]

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59. Sorenson's argument is that if the search party sent by King Limhi had recognized it was going across a narrow neck of land, it would have recognized that the destroyed civilization was not Zarahemla, which was in the land southward and not northward. Therefore, the narrow neck must have been wide enough not to be recognized as a narrow neck. But it is not clear that the neck had to be more than 40 miles wide for the search party to go through it without recognizing it was going through a narrow neck, especially one like Sorenson's with no length. After all, this is the search party that could not find Zarahemla either going or coming.

60. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 247-48 (bracketed material his). In the earlier *An Ancient American Setting*, 17, Sorenson simply noted that

> Of course we don't know how long the "day's travel" might have been. . . .Possibly "*the* distance of a day and a half's journey" was a standard length. The Nephites may have understood that a "day and a half's journey" meant so many miles. . . .Or the phrase "*a* Nephite" might imply that a special messenger was the one doing the traveling, for the statement occurs in the context of military defense. And what means of transportation might have been employed?

In this same book, in another context, Sorenson seems to define a day and a half's journey as about 40 air miles, and this "under pressure." At ibid., 175-76, he puts "the waters of Mormon 'in the borders of the land' of Nephi" at Lake Atitlan, so that "Nephi at Kaminaljuyu [Guatemala City] would be approximately 40 air miles from Lake Atitlan," which is "approximately two days of routine travel, or one and a half under pressure." Should we assume from this that the "narrow neck of land" should be about 40 miles wide at most, which is about the width of Panama, rather than 120 or 125? In the later *A Source Book*, Sorenson conjectures in several instances on the likely distance traveled in a short time. None of his conjectures approaches 120 miles in a day and a half. He refers to a distance of "more than one but less than three days normal travel, say between 20 and 40 miles afoot or two-thirds that on a straight line," Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 224; "at a distance of two hard days pursuit. . .perhaps forty miles," Ibid., 226; "eight days' journey at a speedy pace ('fled') but with flocks limiting the pace through broken country. . .(Airline distance of perhaps 65 miles?)," Ibid., 226-27; "three days journey to the north brought Alma to Ammonihah, perhaps 35-40 miles," Ibid., 234; "the maximum plausible distance they could

In interpreting Alma 22:32, Sorenson does not mention that it was "*only* the distance of a day and a half's journey" across the neck. This is the only distance in the Book of Mormon modified by "only," and seems to emphasize that the neck was indeed "narrow."[61]

Such a narrow neck of "substantial width" raises another problem, which Sorenson himself raises:

> Another geographical question that keeps coming up as one reads the Book of Mormon is the nature and location of the "narrow passage" referred to in Alma 50:34 and 52:9 and Mormon 2:29 and 3:5. It's apparent from these verses that the pass is not the same as the narrow neck itself. Rather, it is some kind of specific feature *within* that neck area. Alma 50 tells how Teancum intercepted Morianton's fleeing group just as they arrived at a very spe-

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travel in one day under hot, fatiguing conditions (v. 31 and 51:33) would be about 20 miles," ibid., 272; "the more than two days full-tilt flight must have been more or less along the mountain crest," and "the headlong flight/pursuit northward into the wilderness would have gone on the order of thirty or forty miles," ibid., 277; "the journeying in the wilderness had to have taken from, say, mid-morning to dark (v. 14ff) at full speed, on a curving path, so the distance traveled must have been at least 20 miles," ibid. 279. He has at least one reference, ibid., 409, to "many days": "Incidentally, the 'many days' is about 75 miles, through jungle."

61. There is an account in Helaman 4 that arguably reduces the travel time to "a day's journey for a Nephite." In the account, the Lamanites capture "the land of Zarahemla; yea, and also all the lands, even unto the land which was near the land Bountiful" (Hel. 4:5). The Nephites are "driven even into the land of Bountiful" (Hel. 4:6). There they "fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day's journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified" (Hel. 4:7).

Bountiful was the northern terminus of the land southward and abutted Desolation, which stretched far into the land northward (Alma 32:29-30). The line between Bountiful and Desolation extended "from the east to the west sea" and took a Nephite a day and a half to travel (Alma 22:32). The Nephites "inhabited the land Bountiful, even from the east unto the west sea," thus hemming in the Lamanites in the land southward so they could not get into the land northward, thereby giving the Nephites "a country whither they might flee" (Alma 22:33-34).

It would be easy to consider the line the Nephites fortified in the Helaman 4 account the same line between Bountiful and Desolation, and thus the distance of a day or a day and a half's journey for a Nephite. After all, the fortified line stretched "from the west sea, even unto the east" (Hel. 4:7), just as the line between Bountiful and Desolation went "from the east to the west sea" (Alma 22:32). It is not clear that the two lines are the same, however, because neither the narrow neck nor Desolation is mentioned.

Sorenson argues that they are not the same, possibly in part because he would not want the narrow neck to be traversed in one day, which would narrow its width and thus challenge his isthmus of Tehuantepec as the narrow neck. The fortified line at Hel. 4:7, he writes in *A Source Book*, 290-91 (bracketed material his), was from the west sea "even unto the east. [Not the same as to the east *sea*. Likely the line was more or less in the same sector centuries later called the land of Joshua—Mormon 2:6. Cf. Alma 22:32, where a line from the east sea is mentioned. The difference in times indicated between these two—day vs. day and a half—shows that they are not the same.]"

His reasons are not persuasive. First, "from the west sea, even unto the east" at Hel. 4:7 hardly differs from "from the east to the west sea" at Alma 22:32. In neither is the east

cific point, "the narrow pass which led by the sea into the land northward, yea, by the sea, on the west and on the east."[62]

Thus, the problem is that the Nephites had to defend the narrow neck against an incursion into the land northward, but if the narrow neck is too wide, this is difficult to do. Sorenson's solution is to require the Nephites

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sea "mentioned," contrary to what Sorenson states, although he thinks it is *implied* in Alma 22:32, ibid., 247. In commenting on Alma 22:32, he notes, ibid., that "'from the east to the west sea' seems to me probably the equivalent of 'from the east *sea* to the west sea,'" thus having to interpret this language because the east *sea* is not "mentioned." If Sorenson believes Alma 22:32 means "from the east *sea* to the west sea," it would seem that Hel. 4:7 should also mean "from the west sea, even unto the east *sea*." Elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, this same abbreviated form is used at Alma 50:8 ("the land of Nephi did run in a straight course from the east sea to the west"). Here the west *sea* is clearly implied, since the land of Nephi extended from the sea east to the sea west (Alma 22:27).

Second, Sorenson would apparently have the fortified line of the Nephites extend to the indefinite east rather than to the east *sea*. But this would hardly "defend their north country" (Hel. 4:7); the Lamanites would simply skirt the line farther east.

Third, Sorenson would put the line "in the same sector centuries later called the land of Joshua." But Sorenson puts the land of Joshua in the land southward "in the borders west by the seashore" (Morm. 2:6). It is doubtful that the fortified line was in the land southward, since "the Lamanites had obtained all the possession of the Nephites which was in the land southward" (Hel. 4:8), so there would have been no place in the land southward for the fortified line.

Finally, it does not necessarily follow that "the difference in times indicated between these two—day vs. day and a half—shows that they are not the same." Traveling could have been easier along a fortified line, or Joseph Smith could have forgotten that more than one hundred pages earlier, he had dictated "a day and a half's journey" rather than "a day's journey."

Sorenson's "neck" without any length creates another problem. Because the neck has no length, he must put the land of Bountiful in the land southward adjoining the land of Desolation in the land northward. They meet at the narrow neck. The Book of Mormon is not clear on whether the land of Bountiful is in the land southward, but since the Nephites were "driven even into the land of Bountiful" (Hel. 4:6) and the Lamanites had "obtained all the possession of the Nephites which was in the land southward" (Hel. 4:8), it seems to follow that the land of Bountiful is not in the land southward. But the land of Bountiful could hardly be in the land northward, because its boundary with the land of Desolation is at the narrow neck which divides the land southward from the land northward.

One solution to this problem is that of Fletcher Hammond. In his *Geography*, map opposite page 72, he puts the land of Bountiful in the narrow neck, which has length. He also has two lines across the narrow neck, one at each end with the shorter one of one day's journey on the south end of the neck, and the longer one of one and a half day's journey on the north end of the neck. But he also confusingly puts the land of Desolation in the narrow neck with the land of Bountiful to begin the land northward.

The fact is that the geography at the narrow neck and elsewhere is confusing. Sorenson, however, regards the Book of Mormon as wonderfully complex, possibly in part because it is so difficult to make sense of it, but which he does to his satisfaction. If the book is simply poorly written, however, the perceived complexity may lie in the difficulty of fitting all the pieces together.

62. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 42-43.

to defend only a narrow pass within the narrow neck. The fact that the narrow pass within the narrow neck had to lead by the sea on both the west and the east is apparently met by the topography in the area:

> An irregular sandstone and gravel formation appears as a ridge averaging a couple of miles wide and rising 150 to 200 feet above the surrounding country running west from the lower Coatzacoalcos River. It provides the only reliable year-round route from the isthmian/east coast area "northward" into central Veracruz. A great deal of the land on either side of this ridge is flooded periodically, as much as 12 feet deep in the rainy season. At times during that season the ridge pass would indeed lead "by the sea, on the west and on the east" (Alma 50:34), for the water in the flooded basins would be on both sides of the ridge and would have barred travel as effectively as the sea, with which the floodwaters were continuous.[63]

It is not "apparent" that the narrow pass is different from the narrow neck. None of the passages Sorenson cites, nor anything else in the Book of Mormon, suggests that the narrow pass differs from the narrow neck. They seem to be used interchangeably, with "narrow pass" generally being used when the story is about passing across it from the land southward to the land northward or vice versa, and "narrow neck" when describing the geography. Nowhere are they differentiated from each other or referred to together, let alone as one within the other.[64] If the narrow pass and the narrow neck are the same, then the problem that Sorenson identified remains: the Nephites would have a much harder time defending the 120-mile-wide Isthmus of Tehuantepec than they would the much narrower Panama, which argues against the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the narrow neck.

There is still another problem with the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the narrow neck: the orientation of the "land northward" and the "land southward" on either side of it is more west and east than north and south. Sorenson recognizes this "major anomaly,"[65] and argues that what

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63. Ibid., 43. Sorenson's narrow pass averaging a couple of miles wide within the narrow neck as the only reliable passage year round does not help his argument that Limhi's search party passed through the narrow neck without knowing it because it was so wide. Sorenson could argue, however, that the search party passed through the narrow neck and back again during the dry season and by another route, from which they could not see the sea on either side of them, whereas the Morianton affair occurred during the rainy season when he was limited to one route through the narrow neck. But if there were other routes through the narrow neck, the Lamanites had only to wait for the dry season to attack at the narrow neck to reach the land northward. Also, nothing is said in the Book of Mormon about a dry or rainy season.

64. There are seven references to either the "neck" or the "pass": Alma 22:32; 50:34; 52:9; 63:5; Mormon 2:29; 3:5; and Ether 10:20.

65. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 36.

the Nephites called north and south was more west and east by our compass directions, thereby accommodating the nearly west-east orientation of his Mesoamerican setting to the Book of Mormon's north-south orientation.

"We realize with a little thought," he notes,

> that direction terminology in the text is not perfectly clear-cut. . . .At the least we must realize that in the Nephite record "northward" is not the same concept as "north." The Book of Mormon English edition refers to "land north" five times but to "land northward" thirty-one ("land south" five and "land southward" fourteen). So, I must suppose that there is significant ambiguity in many of the translated directional terms.[66]

There is little in the Book of Mormon from which to determine what the directional model is. Like a hemispheric geography, however, the directional system may not be transparent, but everything in the text is consistent with "north" meaning our north. First, the "land northward" and the "land southward" match North and South America so well, as do the east and west seas the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, that readers assumed a hemispheric geography from the beginning.

Second, Lehi's party seems to have used our directional system when it left Jerusalem. When Lehi's party broke camp near the Red Sea (1 Ne. 2:5-6), it traveled in "nearly a south-southeast direction" near the Red Sea (1 Ne. 16:13-14), which matches the orientation of the Red Sea under our directional system. Thence it traveled "nearly eastward" (1 Ne. 17:1), which LDS scholars have consistently taken to mean our eastward.

Third, the Lamanite kingdom in the land of Nephi, which Sorenson puts in the highlands of southern Guatemala, stretched from the east sea to the west sea.[67] Under Sorenson's skewed directions, where Nephite east is our north, there is no east sea for the land of Nephi. Nephite east (our north) of southern Guatemala is northern Guatemala, then the Yucatan Peninsula, and then water. Sorenson identifies the Bay of Campeche as the sea east, but it is Nephite northeast of the land of Nephi and should be called the sea eastward. No such terminology, however, is used for the sea east in the Book of Mormon. As applied to a hemispheric geography, however, seas east and west apply nicely to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

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66. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 216. Sorenson's count is correct except for "land southward," which occurs 15 rather than 14 times; he may have missed one because it occurs twice at Morm. 2:29. In addition, "land which was northward" occurs three times, at Alma 50:29 (twice) and 63:4; and "land which was northward of the land Bountiful" occurs once, at Alma 50:11.

67. Sorenson, *An Ancient American* Setting, 227-28; A *Source Book*, 178; Alma 22:27.

Fourth, the Jaredites and the Nephites seemed to have had the same directional system. Like the Nephites with reference to the same lands, the Jaredites referred to the "land northward" (Ether 10:21) and the "land southward" (Ether 9:31, 32; 10:19, 21), implying that "north" was the same for both peoples.[68] To have the same directional system, they would probably have used the sun or the stars rather than some terrestrial landmark for orientation, as Sorenson argues below. Thus their east (rising sun) or north (Polaris) would be the same as ours.

Finally, in the Jaredite history, Omer "came over and passed by the hill of Shim, and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed, and from thence eastward, and came to a place which was called Ablom, by the seashore, and there he pitched his tent" (Ether 9:3). "The place where the Nephites were destroyed" was at the hill Cumorah. If the hill Cumorah was in New York State, Omer could clearly have traveled from there eastward to a place called Ablom on the Atlantic coast. Sorenson, however, identifies Cumorah as Cerro El Vigia in the Tuxtlas Mountains of southern Veracruz.[69] On his study maps, Sorenson shows these mountains right on the shore of the Bay of Campeche.[70] Traveling Nephite east (our north) from the Tuxtlas Mountains would put Omer in the water.[71]

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68. Like the Nephites, whose history was predominantly in the "land southward" but referred to the "land northward" three times as often, the Jaredites, whose history was predominantly in the "land northward," referred to the "land southward" four times as often.

It is possible that Moroni, in abridging the Jaredite record, used the Nephite directional system. For example, if the Jaredite north was our north and therefore skewed up to ninety degrees from Sorenson's Nephite north, and the Jaredites were in the Sorenson Mesoamerican setting, Ether may have written "land eastward" as we would rather than "land southward" as Sorenson believes the Nephites did. Moroni may then have imposed the Nephite directional system on the text and recorded "land southward" rather than "land eastward." Moroni was somehow able to correlate Jaredite geography with Nephite geography. He wrote at Ether 7:6 that "the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called Desolation by the Nephites"; at Ether 9:3, that Omer "passed by the hill of Shim [a Nephite place, see Morm. 1:3; 4:23], and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed"; at Ether 9:31, that the Jaredite flocks "began to flee. . .towards the land southward, which was called by the Nephites Zarahemla"; and at Ether 15:11, that "the army of Coriantumr did pitch their tents by the hill Ramah; and it was that same hill where my father Mormon did hide up the records unto the Lord."

69. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 178.

70. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, initial map of Mesoamerica; Map 2, p. 11; Map 3, p. 20; Map 4, p. 24; Map 5, p. 37.

71. If this were indeed the geographical layout, Ether would presumably have written "from thence down to the shore to a place called Ablom" rather than "from thence eastward" and "came to a place," which suggest at least some distance. But Sorenson notes in *A Source Book*, 310, simply that "the hill was in the easterly part of the land northward, so the distance to Ablom, on the coast, should not have been very great, and the wording here [in Ether 9:3] does not disagree." Sorenson's position is not implausible if his hill Cumorah is

The Nephite directional system is not transparent, but what there is is consistent with our directional system. Sorenson's sole argument based on Book of Mormon text is the predominance of the suffix *ward* to refer to the "land northward," which he considers an important "semantic point," noting that it signifies "tending or leading toward."[72] This argument, however, could work against Sorenson's position as much as for it. If Nephite north was our west northwest, they should have used "land north" more often than "land northward," since it is oriented to their north, or our west northwest.

Sorenson seems to have our north in mind when he concludes:

> If all this business sounds a little complicated, we can still be grateful for one thing. Mormon and Joseph Smith, who gave us the text of the Book of Mormon, could have made things worse by being "literal." Imagine reading over and over of the "land northwest by west," or perhaps the "sea which is southwest of Zarahemla but southeast of part of the land northwest"! That would have been literally accurate in our terms, but impossibly awkward.[73]

Sorenson's gratefulness that the directions are not literally accurate is a red herring; if Nephite north were our north, Sorenson's Mesoamerican setting would require no such impossible awkwardness. The "land northward" would be the "land westward," the "land southward" would be the "land eastward," the "sea east" would be the "sea north," and the "sea west" would be the "sea south." The descriptions used in the Book of Mormon fit a hemispheric geography nicely.

With nothing in the Book of Mormon text to support his need to skew the directions nearly 90 degrees, Sorenson notes that

> Labeling directions has always presented linguistic and cultural challenges to the world's peoples. Like other customs the whole business is actually quite arbitrary rather than logical, as modern people would like to think. We in the European tradition say that "east" is "where the sun comes up"; but in the arctic, the sun unconcernedly rises in the south. Even in middle latitudes sunrise is precisely to the east only two days of the year. A knowledge of our own and other cultures can help disabuse us of the notion of one single or "right" or "obvious" way to label directions.[74]

Sorenson then reviews the practices in a number of cultures, including that of the Israelites in Palestine:

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actually back a little way from the seashore, but this is not what his study maps indicate. In any case, it is not clear who was there before Omer to name the place Ablom.

72. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 41-42.

73. Ibid., 42.

74. Ibid., 38.

> The Israelites of Palestine, in their most common mental framework, derived directions as though standing with backs to the sea, facing the desert. *Yam* ("sea") then meant "west," for the Mediterranean lay in that direction, while *qedem* ("fore") stood for "east." Then *yamin* ("right hand") meant "south," while *semol* ("left hand") denoted "north." In Palestine, this model coincided nicely with nature (the coast runs nearly north-south) and also proved neatly translatable to our European uses of the terms east, west, north, and south. (This was not the only model of directions in use among the Israelites, but it was the most fundamental, being deeply embedded in the language.)[75]

He argues that Lehi's party, upon arriving on the Pacific coast of

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75. Ibid., 38-39. It is not at all clear that the model Sorenson describes was "the most fundamental." According to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 204:II, "most Semitic peoples used the rising of the sun for the primary direction and bearing." It elaborates:

> Orientation is the means by which persons determine direction. From earliest antiquity, there seem to have been the 4 cardinal directions: north, south, east, and west (N, S, E, and W). This is true of Hebrew, Akkadian, and Sumerian culture. . . .Often astronomical or terrestrial features served as the basis for orientation. Astronomical features would make use primarily of the sun for one's point of reference; secondarily, specific stars or constellations might play a role in getting bearings. The rising and setting of the sun served as primary indicators of E and W in Mesopotamia and in Syria/Palestine.

Thus, both the Jaredites in Mesopotamia and the "Lehites" in Palestine would probably have used the rising and setting sun for orientation and brought that model with them to the western hemisphere.

This is not the end of it, however, since, as the *Dictionary* notes and Sorenson would agree, "terrestrial features such as mountains and seas served as indicators of direction." The Hebrew word for "sea," referring to the Mediterranean, was one indicator of "west," just as the Akkadian word for "mountain" was an indicator for "east." But in other instances, once the primary bearing was determined, the individual faced that direction and used the body as a simple compass to locate other directions (when one faces N, the right hand is to the E, and the left to the W, south is behind). Since the development of the magnetic compass, N has been the primary direction. Yet the very words *orientation* and *orient* point to the E, probably using the rising sun, as the primary reference point. From the OT itself, there are numerous indicators that E served as the primary direction for bearings.

Still according to the *Dictionary*, in biblical Hebrew there is a related word group that literally meant "in front, before," although it appeared most frequently for "east." "Thus E was the direction in front of one, the direction by which one gained one's orientation and bearings." Similarly, a Hebrew word group for "west" literally meant "back" or "behind," and was used with "sea" to refer to the western or Mediterranean sea. Hebrew also used "the left hand" to indicate north and "the right hand" to indicate south.

Finally, not all cultures "used the same pattern of orientation as the Hebrews":

> The Egyptians, for example, had S as their primary reference point, probably because it was the direction of the source of the Nile, their lifeblood. Although they also used the body as a compass, different directions resulted from a different orientation.

Thus, facing south, the right hand indicated west and the left hand indicated east.

Sorenson would agree, *A Source Book*, 405-6, that the Jewish directional system included a solar orientation, but he seems to emphasize the terrestrial or environmental indicators used for orientation:

Central America, which runs west-northwest/east-southeast, "in the absence of a conscious group decision to shift the sense of their Hebrew direction terms by 45 degrees or more. . .would have fallen into a new directional language pattern as their Semitic-language model encountered the new setting."[76] Thus, the sea behind the newly arrived Israelites on the Pacific coast of Central America would be "west," or our south-southwest; inland would be "east" or our north-northeast; and their left hand would be "north," or our west-northwest. It is not clear, however, that the Nephites would long have oriented themselves to the seashore as they moved inland into mountainous terrain and could not see the shoreline or even the Pacific Ocean.[77] Nor would this explain why the Jaredites somehow had the same directional system.

Sorenson includes an entire appendix on directions and hopes that someday, "diligent, inspired students may bring order and rationality to our understanding of how Israelite, Nephite, and American terminological systems for directions were articulated and are represented in our present text," and he warns "against the trap of ethnocentric naiveté or

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> The Egyptian notion that the direction a person faces is key in a directional model is also found among virtually all speakers of Semitic languages. In Hebrew the terminology had one facing east, which was then called "fore" or "rising," while west was signified by words meaning "sea," "behind," or "setting." South was "right" or "desert" or the purely directional expression *darom*. North was signified by words meaning "mountains," "lefthand," or the directional word *sapon*. . . .
>
> It should also be pointed out that while the Hebrew terms for "rising" or "fore" are glossed in English as "east," that probably obscures the precise meaning. . . .There is a good chance that Hebrew "rising," concerning the sun, refers to the sunrise point on the horizon at new year's day. . .but that would not have been cardinal east.
>
> The use of several overlaid conceptual schemes. . .seems indicated by the multiple terms employed in Hebrew. For instance, the terms "desert," "mountains," and "sea" suggest a very old environmentally-derived scheme of thought, while the words "rising" and "setting" are clearly solar.

Sorenson prefers the environmental model over the astronomical (solar) model presumably because it enables the Nephites to skew east to the north by orienting themselves with their backs to the sea (see text).

76. Ibid., 39.

77. Sorenson believes, *An Ancient American Setting*, 138-39 (bracketed material added for clarification), that the first Nephite settlement in the wilderness was not far from the sea:

> When Nephi's party fled. . .["the place of their fathers' first inheritance" near the seashore] in fear of his elder brothers, they traveled "many days," ending up at a site where they named their settlement for their leader, Nephi. They were still not far from the coast (2 Nephi 5:7-8). That suggests that the city Nephi was not directly inland from the first landing spot (had they traveled "many days" straight inland they would have ended up far from the sea; so I infer they must have moved northward along the coastal strip and then went inland).

It is not clear why Sorenson thinks the Nephite settlement was "not far from the coast." His citation of 2 Ne. 5:7-8 says nothing about being close to the coast, and indeed, says they traveled "in the wilderness" for many days, not along the coastal strip.

inadequate scholarship manifest when someone insists that 'north must mean where the north star lies' or that 'rotating the Nephite directions' is something that interpreters now do in violation of the text."[78] "The Book

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78. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 414-15. Sorenson warns, Ibid., 353, against uninformed interpretations of the Book of Mormon text:

> The text we have of the Book of Mormon being a translation from a drastically different language and culture, we must not [sic] suppose that our current ethnocentric readings of the English terms having geographical significance can misleadingly control our interpretation. We need to discover, if possible, what the original terms meant to the writers (e.g., "elephant," "great city," "north," "dragons"), realizing that the author's meanings are not be obvious [sic] from the English as we naively construe it. Thus models must not depend critically on culturally uninformed interpretations of terms in the text.

David Palmer may be the kind of student Sorenson encourages. In his review of Joseph Allen's *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Orem, Utah: S.A. Publishers, 1989), in *Brigham Young University Studies* 30, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 136, Palmer notes that Allen's "discussion of the ancient Nephite directional system is inadequate and leads to questionable conclusions, particularly those regarding the location of the city Bountiful." Palmer, a senior researcher at Amoco Chemical Co. and past leader of two expeditions to Mexico, writes, ibid., 138, that Allen, "not a professional archaeologist," has "learned a great deal from archaeologists such as John L. Sorenson" and others and places all Book of Mormon events within Mesoamerica, essentially agreeing with Sorenson and others, except "for Moroni's trip to the Palmyra, New York, area." Allen's placement of some specific locations, "assuming that Nephite north was true north," disagrees with Sorenson's, and Palmer believes that "the main argument against Allen's view" is that it "requires a shift in the Nephite coordinate system." Palmer elaborates, essentially agreeing with Sorenson's view of Nephite north:

> The question of directional systems in the Book of Mormon is vital to a correct understanding of Nephite geography, for the difference in directional systems is the distinguishing difference between truly different geographies. Was Nephite north aligned with the North Pole or not? If not, where was it? Was it a specific direction? Allen proposes that Nephite north is true north. This position requires that the cities designed to defend the entrance to the land northward be placed in Belize. But is that site reasonable?
>
> My own study of the directional systems employed during the Nephite time period suggests that use of true north for orientation was rare. Because of the twenty-five millennia precession of the axis of the earth (it wobbles like a top), Polaris was not a pole star in Lehi's time. Instead, it described a circle of about twenty-four degrees in the night sky. In the absence of a visible pole star, directions would have been difficult to determine from just the sun's rising and setting, which vary by fifty degrees over the course of a year. Serious investigation of Mesoamerican ruins built before the time of Christ suggests that the inhabitants based their directions on the solstice readings, the extremes of the sun's travel on 21/22 June and 21/22 December. That solstitial direction is sixty-five degrees west of true north and was probably used as "Nephite north."

Palmer goes on to defend his thesis, ibid., 139, based on the orientation of "many of the important preclassic sites in Mesoamerica," which were "deliberately placed so that the solstice could be measured when the sun passed over nearby peaks. Basically. . . many, but not all, sites in Guatemala and Mexico are aligned sixty-five degrees west of north." And Palmer concludes, thus, that "we cannot assume that Nephite north was true north as we know it today."

William Hamblin also agrees with Sorenson on cultural differences in directional systems in "Basic Methodological Problems," 188:

of Mormon," he says, "is the authority on the Book of Mormon. Our problem is to discover what it is saying to us."[79] I agree.

And in fact, on the basis of what the Book of Mormon itself says together with a map of the western hemisphere, Sorensen's Isthmus of Tehuantepec theory fares poorly. It is hardly a "neck" at all; it is hardly "narrow"; it does not connect a land northward with a land southward "nearly surrounded by water"; there does not appear to be a separate "narrow pass" through the "narrow neck" to make it narrow enough to defend; and it is oriented askew. Panama, on the other hand, satisfies the criteria of the Book of Mormon perfectly.

The fundamental question involved here is that the Limited Geography Model requires that the directions "northward" and "southward" be considered slightly different from "true" north as recognized by today's geographers. As Sorenson and Hamblin have demonstrated, ancient peoples conceived of north and south based on orientations and landmarks which frequently do not coincide with modern geographical concepts. Since geographical orientation and terminology is a relative cultural matter, not a universal absolute, it is perfectly reasonable for ancient peoples to conceptualize their geography much differently from ours.

In Sorenson's appendix, *A Source Book*, 405, Hamblin suggests another directional scheme. He notes, ibid., 413-14, that Nephi uses "the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Ne. 1:2). "The Egyptian model for naming directions was based on a person facing upstream toward the head of the Nile, south in our terms." That direction was "face," our north was "back," and our east and west were "left" and "right" respectively. According to Hamblin, "the Hebrews, like most Semitic peoples, oriented themselves by facing east, toward the rising sun." The Hebrew east was "front," south was "right," north was "left," and west was "behind." Hamblin notes that "if you adjust the Hebrew way of thinking to match the Egyptian. . . , you find in fact that Hebrew west (behind) has basically the same semantic meaning as Egyptian north (back of the head); Hebrew east (front) equals Egyptian south (face); Hebrew north (left) matches Egyptian east (left); with Hebrew south (right) being Egyptian west (right)." Under this scheme, directions are skewed essentially 90 degrees in the Book of Mormon, so that "if Nephi used the Egyptian terms with Hebrew meanings in mind, and if Joseph Smith translated these terms literally, you end up with a remarkable coincidence. . . .[Y]ou find the conceptual geography of the Hebrew universe must be 'distorted' in relation to the Egyptian vocabulary in precisely the same way that Nephite geography is 'distorted' in relation to Mesoamerica." Hamblin seems to suggest that the Nephites oriented themselves, like other Semitic people, by facing east toward the rising sun but used the Egyptian terminology or language, which would be south rather than east, thus skewing directions by ninety degrees.

These are interesting theories but raise some questions. If both theories are correct, do we then add Hamblin's ninety degree skewing because of the Egyptian language to Palmer's sixty-five degree skewing because of the twenty-five millennia precession of the axis of the earth and end up with directions skewed 155 degrees so that north becomes south/southwest? If either theory is correct, why did Nephi use our directional system when he wrote that Lehi's party traveled in "nearly a south-southeast direction" near the Red Sea, and thence "nearly eastward"? And neither theory explains why the Jaredites apparently used the same directional system as the Nephites.

79. Sorenson, *A Source Book*, 415.

Summary and Conclusions

A limited geography model could solve other problems raised by the Book of Mormon text, including, as mentioned at the outset, the presence of large populations of other peoples that cannot be explained by reproduction rates of the Book of Mormon peoples alone. It relieves the Nephite text of dealing with Asian migrations across the Bering land mass long before the Jaredites arrived thousands of years later. These migrations in turn explain the 1500 or so Indian languages that could not all have derived from Lehi's Hebrew in a mere thousand years. These earlier settlers become the pre-existing peoples that the Nephites and Lamanites encounter and incorporate (but without scriptural mention) thereby accounting for the large implied populations in the Book of Mormon. A limited geography located in Mesoamerica also satisfies the clues in the book about distances, climate, terrain, directions, and other geographical factors. Indeed, LDS scholars can even correlate archaeological findings with cities, rivers, mountains and other geographical features mentioned in the Book of Mormon. These issues have certainly never been reconciled with the traditional understanding of hemispheric scope.

Critics of the Book of Mormon have challenged the limited geography model on various grounds, but so far as I know, no one has challenged it based just on what the Book of Mormon itself says. And, in fact, what the book says seems to have been largely disregarded or misconstrued by the limited geography theorists. The Book of Mormon seems directly to assert that the entire Western Hemisphere, and most especially North America, was the promised land given to Lehi and his descendants. It describes a narrow neck of land connecting a land northward with a land southward that fits Panama and North and South America, but not the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and southern Mexico and southern Guatemala

Sorenson and other LDS scholars have recognized that the traditional hemispheric model no longer works, but their solution of a limited geography model does not work either. Sorenson's model requires contorting terminology and text to make a case riven by esoteric complication. His model wanders far afield from what the Book of Mormon straightforwardly describes. It solves many problems with the hemispheric model but only at great cost to the Book of Mormon's internal reliability as scripture, as a book that presumably means what it says.

Sestina of the Martyrdom

Mark Bennion

On the long tether of a day in June
Beyond the Zion swamps, the prisoned palms
Of four men opened toward a promised land.
And yet, below the shadows of limestone
Joseph thought again, *I am going*
Like a lamb to the slaughter.

There was time to think of slaughter
As the sun poured down its muggy June
And their voices rose in the glare, going
Out to the hungry mob. Their prophetic palms,
Sweaty with the dust of limestone,
Wore the memories of open land

From Kirtland to the Far West landing
From visions of Armageddon slaughter
To Daniel's thick and growing stone.
They wondered if they'd live past June.
They sang a final hymn. John raised his palms
To the ceiling soot. His voice went out,

Passing the mob's yell; it went out
Like a string to salt's vast land.
Willard watched Joseph's palms
Shake—white brink before the slaughter.
Bullet wind rushed the starchy June,
Cracked the slabs of limestone,

Scattered red shards of stone
Across the withered floor. Hyrum went
To the jail door, buckled in his June
Sweat. *I am a dead man.* The land
Choked beneath the cry of thieves. Slaughter's
Phlegm gnashed in their teeth. Their palms

Stroked rifle bellies. Their tar-smearing palms
Left prints on the hot limestone.
They circled again toward slaughter.
Smith's taken here, he's not leaving
For home again. The rocky land
Rose in Joseph's eyes, swallowed June

Undergrowth. His palms closed as he went
Through the stone ledge window, falling to the land
On a June afternoon like a lamb to the slaughter.

My "Affair" with Fawn McKay Brodie: Motives, Pain, and Pleasure

Newell G. Bringhurst

OVER THE COURSE OF SOME THIRTEEN YEARS I was involved in an intense "affair" with a woman other than my wife. My long term affair with Fawn McKay Brodie, literary in nature, involved the research and writing of a book-length biography on this much misunderstood woman, best known among Latter-day Saints for her controversial Joseph Smith biography, *No Man Knows My History*.

In what turned out to be an obsessive affair, three questions are of particular relevance: (1) What motivated me to undertake a biography of Fawn McKay Brodie? (2) What problems and obstacles did I confront in researching and writing the biography, provoking both short and long-term pain? and (3) what were the pleasures, that is, rewards and benefits I derived from this venture?

First, my motives for researching and writing the life of Fawn Brodie were complex and multifaceted. On a basic level, I can recall the precise time and place that I decided to do a biography. The time was October 1985 and the place Sacramento, California, during the annual Western History Association meeting. Here I met and chatted with Roy Webb, an archivist with the Marriott Library at the University of Utah. During our conversation Webb informed me that his library had just finished processing Fawn Brodie's personal and private papers, recently deposited in their Special Collections. At that moment, I knew that I wanted to investigate Fawn Brodie's life and career.

I was already well-aware of Fawn Brodie and her work. Coming from a Mormon background and growing up in Utah, I knew of her writings, especially her controversial *No Man Knows My History*. My earliest recollections of Brodie are rooted in vague childhood memories. Certain devout Latter-day Saints in the small Utah town where I grew up became

upset with the director of our local library, Ruth Vine Tyler, for acquiring *No Man Knows My History* and making it available to patrons. Also I recall the presence in my childhood neighborhood of two individuals personally acquainted with Brodie. One was my next door neighbor, Artis Poulson Soulier, whose father M. Wilford Poulson, a one-time BYU Psychology Professor, had been particularly close to Brodie. Poulson, in fact, aided and encouraged Brodie in her research on Joseph Smith. I did not realize this, however, until much later. At the time I simply knew Wilford Poulson as the white-haired grandfather who frequently visited the next door neighbors.

The second neighbor acquainted with Brodie was Everett Cooley, who lived down the street from me. Cooley, then-director of the Utah Historical Society and later director of the University of Utah Special Collections Library, became close to Brodie during the author's later years. As a result, Cooley was able to persuade Brodie to donate her various papers to the University of Utah rather than UCLA—where she had served as a member of the history department.

As for myself, I did not actually get around to reading *No Man Knows My History* until much later. But I became aware of the intense controversy surrounding the biography after entering the University of Utah. Here I encountered scholars of Mormon studies deeply divided concerning the pros and cons of this work. My history graduate advisor, A. Russell Mortensen, was outspoken in his praise for both the author and her book. I vividly recall one occasion during which Mortensen became quite emotional, in fact breaking down in tears, in referring both to Brodie's courage as an author and her willingness to speak out on controversial issues.

On the other side was A. William Lund, one-time Assistant LDS Church Historian. I remember a 1966 conversation that I had with Lund, whom I encountered in securing access to the Mormon church archives for research that I was doing in completing my Master's thesis. Lund, in the process of a careful, somewhat intimidating interview before allowing me into the church's highly-restricted archives (then located in the old church headquarters at 47 East South Temple), solemnly told me that the church had to be very careful to whom it allowed access. The church's highly restrictive policy, he told me, was due to the critical mistake made years earlier, in allowing that "awful Brodie woman" to use the archives. This had resulted in her "scurrilous account" of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Lund further explained that Brodie had deliberately deceived church officials concerning the type of biography she intended to write. Worse still, according to Lund, Brodie had taken advantage of her McKay family connections.

All of this sound and fury notwithstanding, I did not actually read the Joseph Smith biography until after completing my master's thesis and leaving Utah. My delay was due to the fact that my master's degree,

while focusing on Utah history, did not deal directly with the Mormon church nor its early history. I chose to write on George H. Dern, a non-Mormon mining entrepreneur-turned-politician who became Utah's governor in the 1920s and later Secretary of War under Franklin Roosevelt.[1] I selected Dern primarily because he was a prominent Utahan who was *not* a Latter-day Saint! I sought to avoid Mormon history altogether, motivated by personal considerations. I was also influenced by peer pressure at the University of Utah—an institution where the entire field of Mormon history tended to be dismissed by many of my fellow graduate students and certain faculty members as narrow and parochial. Such negative attitudes toward things Mormon had been noted by none other than Fawn Brodie herself in the wake of her own attendance at the University of Utah some thirty years earlier, wherein she dubbed that institution "the seat of anticlericalism in Utah."[2]

Not until after leaving Utah and entering the University of California at Davis to pursue studies for a Ph.D. in history, did I finally get around to reading *No Man Knows My History*. This came in 1970 after I had completed the preliminary examinations for my doctorate and been advanced to candidacy. My specific interest in Brodie, at this point, was motivated by the subject that I had chosen for my doctoral dissertation. I took on this subject, which ultimately resulted in my first book, *Saints, Slaves and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism*, most reluctantly after rejecting a number of other non-Mormon topics, which I'd found either not viable and/or not appealing.[3] At this point I was finally drawn to Brodie's writings, not initially her Joseph Smith biography, but rather to a speech that she had given in October 1970 to a standing-room-only audience of 500 in the Lafayette Ballroom at the old Hotel Utah—now known, ironically, as the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. Brodie's entire speech was published shortly thereafter as a pamphlet under the title *Can We Manipulate the Past?* In this work, Brodie discussed various historical issues and problems relative to African-Americans and their place in the church, speculating as to the historical origins of the now defunct practice of Mormon black priesthood denial.[4]

After reading Brodie's pamphlet, I turned to *No Man Knows My History*, carefully reading it, finding Brodie's well-written narrative of

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1. Newell G. Bringhurt, "The Mining Career of George Henry Dern," (Master's Thesis, University of Utah, 1967).

2. Shirley E. Stephenson, "Biography of Fawn McKay Brodie." Based on an interview, 30 November 1975. Oral History Collection, Fullerton State University, Fullerton. California.

3. Newell G. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: the Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1981).

4. Fawn McKay Brodie, *Can We Manipulate the Past?* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1970).

Joseph Smith's life and career most compelling, provocative, and absorbing. This in turn stimulated my ideas and thinking in new directions relevant to my dissertation topic. I carefully examined her discussion of the specific issues of race, slavery, and African-Americans as they involved Joseph Smith and the early church, finding some useful information and "leads" aiding me in my ongoing research. However, I found the specialized works on the Mormon-black issue written by other scholars of greater value. This included the path-breaking studies of Armand Mauss, Dennis L. Lythgoe, Stephen G. Taggart, Jan Shipps, and Lester E. Bush, Jr.

After completing my dissertation and graduating from the University of California, Davis, in 1975, I moved on to Boise State University where I assumed a one-year temporary sabbatical replacement position. In January 1976, I wrote Fawn Brodie, seeking her advice concerning the publication potential for my just-completed dissertation. My decision to approach Brodie came out of the blue, on complete impulse. As a young scholar, I was desperate to get my work published to aid me in securing a permanent academic position.[5]

Writing Fawn Brodie was rather presumptuous on my part. Brodie, by this time, had achieved prominence as a nationally recognized biographer. Her recently-published *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* had appeared on the New York Times "Best Seller List" for a total of thirteen weeks in 1974. Thus, I was both surprised and flattered when Brodie actually responded to my letter, doing so promptly, within two weeks after I'd written her. Even more startling was her generous offer to read my dissertation and especially her promise: "If I think it's really good, I'd be happy to recommend it for publication."[6] After reading my dissertation, Brodie wrote me once more, encouraging me to revise my work and describing it as "worthy of publication as a book" while offering suggestions for improvement.

On the one hand, she praised my effort as "written up with care and excellence" admitting that she had "learned much from it."[7] But at the same time she was disarmingly honest in pointing out various deficiencies. Brodie suggested ways in which I could revise my work to make it suitable for publication. She encouraged me in my efforts over the subsequent three year period from 1976 to 1979. In a critique of my manuscript, Brodie noted, "I do think you were a little evasive in the beginning in han-

5. Newell G. Bringhurst to Fawn M. Brodie, 21 January 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

6. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 1 February 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

7. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 5 April 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

dling Joseph Smith. You were much more forthright about Brigham Young."[8] On another occasion Brodie was even more frank. She criticized what she saw as "a non-professional quality" in my writing, stating that

> you continue to write as a jack-Mormon who is afraid of offending devout Mormons. There is a kind of disembodied quality about [it]. You write about the Book of Mormon as if Joseph Smith were nowhere in the neighborhood. It is he, not the book, who reflected the racism of his time, in regard to the Indians as well as blacks. It is the writer, not the book itself, whom we do not see. This chapter fails to come to life because there are no people in it.[9]

At the same time, Brodie encouraged me to push ahead with revisions, urging me to seek the input of other scholars. In addition, she approached and/or wrote letters on my behalf to the editors of three different university presses promoting my manuscript. In one instance, when I informed her that Utah State University Press was considering publication of my work, she volunteered, without being asked, to write a letter to the editor on my behalf. If I desired such a letter, I was to let her know as soon as possible. But she also left me the option to decline her generous offer. Well-aware of the controversy she still generated within Utah, Brodie carefully warned me: "Some people in Utah are turned off rather than on by a letter from me, and I don't want to do you a disadvantage by writing a letter praising you."[10] I was most grateful for all of Fawn Brodie's help and encouragement as I struggled to secure publication of my manuscript. This, in turn, made me want to get to know both the woman and her work better.

Also motivating me to write on Fawn Brodie was my own long-standing interest in the craft and challenges of biography. I had, of course, done a biographical study of George H. Dern as a master's thesis in the late 1960s. A decade later, in late 1978, I was approached by Mary Lythgoe Bradford and Lester E. Bush, Jr., then-co-editors of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, to write an essay on Elijah Abel, an early black Mormon priesthood holder ordained by Joseph Smith. They wanted an article on Abel for a special issue of *Dialogue* prompted by the recent lifting of the ban on Mormon black priesthood ordination in June 1978. My *Dialogue* essay was published in the summer of 1979 under the title "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism."

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8. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 26 May 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

9. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 11 April 1979 (copy of original in author's possession).

10. Fawn M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 11 May 1976 (copy of original in author's possession).

After the 1981 publication of my *Saints Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism*, I signed a contract with Little, Brown & Co. to write a short book-length biography on Brigham Young for their "Library of American Biography" series under the general editorship of eminent Harvard historian, Oscar Handlin. My modest effort was published in 1986 under the title *Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier*. Unfortunately, it appeared in the immediate aftermath of Leonard J. Arrington's *magnam opus, American Moses: The Life of Brigham Young*, and as a consequence was largely ignored and overlooked by scholars and lay persons alike, particularly within the Mormon community. Despite this major disappointment, I was ready to be challenged by a new biographical subject.

I was also attracted to Fawn Brodie by the simple fact that I personally identified with certain aspects of her life and career, just as Brodie clearly identified with particular aspects of the lives of the five biographical subjects on which she focused her own research and writing, specifically: Joseph Smith, Thaddeus Stevens, Richard F. Burton, Thomas Jefferson, and finally Richard M. Nixon.

As Brodie herself stated, "there is always a deep personal commitment in the writing of a biography," including "compelling inner reasons." "The subject chosen," she continued, "can also tell us a lot about [the] biographer."[11] Similar observations have been made by two other writers familiar with the art of biographical writing. Leon Edel, a noted biographer who spent twenty years writing his five volume life of Henry James, stated that "biographers are invariably drawn to the writing of biography out of some deep personal motive."[12] James Atlas went one step further, suggesting that "the biographer's subject enacts the main themes of the biographer's own life."[13]

There are, indeed, clear parallels between my own life and that of Fawn Brodie. She was born of stalwart Mormon pioneer stock, her ancestors having migrated to Utah during the mid-nineteenth century. Similarly, my own Mormon ancestors migrated west under Brigham Young's direction. Also like Fawn, who grew up in Huntsville, a rural Mormon hamlet ten miles east of Ogden, I was reared in a small Utah town twelve miles south of Salt Lake City. As teenagers both Fawn McKay and I questioned basic Mormon beliefs. Both of us married outside the Mormon faith. We both became alienated from the church as a result of careful

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11. Fawn M. Brodie as quoted by Digby Diehl, "Woman of the Year: Humanizer of History," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 March 1975.

12. Leon Edel as quoted by Robert Dallack in "My Search for Lyndon Johnson," *American Heritage* 42 (September 1991): 84.

13. James Atlas, "Choosing a Life," *New York Time Book Review*, 13 January 1991.

research into certain disturbing aspects of Mormonism's historical past. In Brodie's case, this involved her meticulous research over a period of some seven years into the life of Joseph Smith, which caused her to conclude that Mormonism's founder was a "conscious imposter."[14] In my own case, the process involved careful research into the origins and evolution of Mormon practices relative to black people. I developed a sense of moral outrage at what I saw as the contradictions and tortured reasoning used to justify Mormonism's now-defunct practice of denying blacks the priesthood.

As I became more deeply involved in research for the Brodie biography, I detected one other important element of identification. I was hauntingly reminded of my own late mother in examining certain aspects of Brodie's personality and behavior. My mother and Fawn were contemporaries, part of what Tom Brokaw has characterized as "The Greatest Generation," those individuals born during the 1910s to the late 1920s who came of age during the Great Depression and endured the anxieties and sacrifices of World War II. Like my mother, moreover, Fawn was a caring, empathic individual who considered the welfare and needs of her immediate family first, despite her active quest for knowledge and strong desire to express herself through writing. In putting her husband and children first, as expected of all married women in post World War II America, Fawn, like my own mother, deferred a career in teaching and full-time research/writing until her three children (the same number as in my own birth family) were fully grown. Both Fawn and my mother enjoyed people, eagerly interacting with a wide variety of individuals. Also both women graduated from the University of Utah with degrees in English and both with honors. Both were teachers who related well with their students. Finally both died while relatively young; Fawn was sixty-five and my own mother was just forty-nine.

Turning to the second issue of pain—what obstacles and challenges did I confront in researching and writing my Fawn Brodie biography? The obstacles were numerous, given that it took me some thirteen years to complete the biography. When I commenced research in early 1986, I never conceived that it would take me that long. My just-completed *Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier* had taken me less than four years to complete. Thus, I hoped and expected Fawn Brodie to take me five to six years, maximum. I was wrong! An important obstacle was my academic position as a full-time community college instructor, compelling me to teach five classes or fifteen unit hours per semester. Off-setting this impediment, somewhat, was the fact that I secured two

14. Stephenson, "Biography of Fawn McKay Brodie," 10.

one year sabbaticals. The first, granted in 1988-89, allowed me to complete the bulk of my research in various libraries located both in Utah and California and to interview some 60-70 individuals who knew and interacted with Brodie throughout the course of her life. The second, in 1996-7, allowed me time to complete a first draft of my manuscript.

But even before I actually commenced with research, I was confronted with a second significant challenge. That involved dealing with both fact and rumor that other individuals were researching Brodie's life and career. I harbored strong anxieties that all my efforts might be preempted and, thus, rendered useless. In fact, two scholars before me had done preliminary work on Brodie. The first was one of Brodie's former UCLA graduate students, Judith Anderson, who gave a paper on the recently-deceased psychobiographer at the August 1982 Pacific Coast Branch meeting of the American Historical Association in Palo Alto, California. The second individual working on Brodie was Shirley Stephenson, one-time assistant director of the oral history program at California State University, Fullerton. Stephenson had become acquainted with Brodie while the author was doing research for her last biography, *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character*. Stephenson interviewed Brodie in November, 1975, producing a most revealing, thorough interview—a document from which I ultimately drew a great deal of useful information for my own study.[15]

In fact, Stephenson, upon learning of my interest in Brodie, approached me about working together on a book-length Brodie biography. I initially consented to this. But alas, our collaborative effort proved an utter failure for reasons controversial and complex. In the end, neither Anderson nor Stephenson followed through on their intentions to do a book-length biography. Neither did two other scholars in the field of Mormon studies who had also expressed preliminary interest in doing a Brodie biography, namely Klaus Hansen, a professor at Queens College in Kingston, Ontario, best known from his classic study, *Quest For Empire: The Council of the Fifty*; nor Will Bagley, a free-lance writer and author of *Blood of the Prophets*, a very recently published, highly controversial account of the Mountain Meadows massacre.[16]

A third major set of obstacles involved problems with Fawn Brodie's family. At various points in time, all three of Brodie's children expressed reservations concerning what I was doing. Initially, however, Fawn's oldest son, Richard Brodie, appeared most enthusiastic about my project, allowing me to interview him in July 1987. The result was a revealing,

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15. Ibid.

16. Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

frank interview concerning his mother and her activities. Richard also seemed anxious to help me in other ways. In particular, he claimed to have in his possession a collection of "intimate letters" written by his mother to his father during times when they were apart. He offered to share these materials with me.

By contrast, Fawn's younger son, Bruce Brodie, a clinical psychologist, was much more reticent, at least in the beginning. Bruce did grant me an interview as did his wife Janet, which took me to the Brodie's beautiful Pacific Palisades home where Fawn herself had lived for the last thirty years of her life. But Bruce was much more guarded than his older brother in discussing varied aspects of his mother's life as well as his relationship with her. Bruce, moreover, expressed reservations about my efforts to chronicle Fawn's life and activities. In writing me, Bruce conceded that his mother "would have been highly honored at the idea." Yet, he continued, "she was an intensely private person and would not want her personal life publicly broadcast." Still, Bruce continued: "If you do choose to go ahead, she would have demanded that the [biography] be thorough and honest. Anything less, she would have despised."[17] Fawn's daughter, Pamela, expressed similar reservations, at least initially.

Ultimately, a strange reversal of attitudes took place among the Brodie children. By early 1989, Richard Brodie, for reasons that are not completely clear, became very antagonistic, and, in fact, downright hostile. He went so far as to threaten me with legal action if I used any of the material that he had provided in the interview I had conducted with him a year and a half earlier, informing me of his intent in a nasty, threatening letter sent me via certified mail.[18] Equally frustrating was Richard's unwillingness to share Fawn's so-called "intimate letters" exchanged between his parents, which he claimed to have in his possession. He, in fact, discounted their significance, causing me to question their actual existence.

By contrast, Bruce Brodie and his wife Janet—herself a professor of history at Claremont College—along with Pamela Brodie became increasingly cooperative and helpful as I continued to push ahead with the biography. Bruce, as executor of Fawn Brodie's estate, signed various letters of consent allowing me access to certain letters and documents written by his mother and deposited in private collections and/or special archives and, thus, unavailable. Also as I neared completion the biography, Bruce's wife Janet provided a number of photographs which ap-

17. Bruce R. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 7 March 1986 (original in author's possession).

18. Richard M. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 15 January 1989 (original in author's possession).

peared in the published book, including the striking, never-before-published late 1940's photograph of Fawn Brodie in a boat on some unnamed bucolic New England lake. This particular photo was used on the published biography's dust jacket. Particularly heartening was Bruce Brodie's reaction to the finished biography. He wrote to me, thanking me for a copy of the biography sent to him.

> As I was reading, I could not help but wonder what my mother would have thought if she were alive to read it. I doubt that she would have been very pleased at having her childhood masturbation fantasies made quite so public, but she, of course, spent so much time delving into the sex lives of other people that this is one of her own petards that [she] could not object to being hoisted on.
>
> All in all, I'm pretty certain that she would have liked it. She of course would have been enormously flattered to have a biography written about her at all. But I also think she would have appreciated your book in particular. You clearly like and respected her, and you bent over backwards to be fair to her through all of the controversies of her life, up until the very end. My family and I are especially grateful for your fairness.[19]

Meanwhile, Pamela Brodie had taken time to carefully read a complete first draft of my manuscript in the spring of 1998, doing this despite her own busy schedule, having moved to Alaska where she was working as an environmental activist with the Sierra Club. Pamela's lengthy critique was particularly helpful in pointing out errors of fact and in clarifying certain points of confusion. I was also hearted by Pamela's generally positive response to what I had written about her mother. She commented at the beginning of her letter to me: "First, let me congratulate you. You have done an excellent job of scholarship, and have produced a well written, largely accurate book. I am pleased with it and, quite frankly, relieved."[20] Most important, Pamela provided a number of incisive insights concerning her mother. In particular the following observation seemed to capture who her mother was and what had motivated her during the course of her life:

> To me, what distinguished my mother most from other people I have known was not her intelligence, but her enormous discipline and dedication to her work—a dedication that was unrelated to working with others, or to any need or expectation of financial reward. Other than the dinner parties and an annual trip to Utah to visit family, she rarely participated in any form of recreation. When she did, (such as other travel), it was always motivated by

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19. Bruce R. Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 20 March 2000 (original in author's possession).

20. Pamela Brodie to Newell G. Bringhurst, 22 January 1998 (original in author's possession).

> my father. Her focus was to make as much time as possible available for her research and writing. Despite all the recognition she got as a child—or perhaps because of the nature of this recognition—she remained a fundamentally insecure person. As a child she was valued not (as most girls are) for her disposition, obedience, charm, or looks—but for (as boys often are) her accomplishments, to be of value as a person. It wasn't until she sent off the Nixon manuscript and lay dying that she learned to just value life for the living, instead of for the working. It was rather late.[21]

Besides problems with some of Fawn Brodie's own family, I encountered yet another set of obstacles. This involved a less-than-enthusiastic response from certain members of my own family. Most significantly, my wife Mary Ann never warmed up to my Fawn Brodie biography. My wife, while a voracious reader of all kinds of literature, including biography, felt that Fawn Brodie's life and career were not sufficiently eventful nor exciting to merit a biography—certainly not one produced by her own husband. But Mary Ann, while not at all interested in Brodie or my related efforts, supported me through the many years that it took, being sensitive to what the biography meant to me.

Certain members of my extended family in Utah were even more negative. This was the case with my younger brother, a devout, practicing Latter-day Saint, and his wife. My sister-in-law was particularly hostile. An unpleasant confrontation occurred when I described a less-than-heroic incident involving Fawn's uncle, David O. McKay. She blew up at me, accusing me of maliciously attacking "her church," as she put it, and its leaders. Less confrontational but equally negative was the reaction of another relative, an elderly aunt, who, upon hearing that I was writing about Fawn Brodie, asked me through her brother (my father): "Why would anyone be interested in the life of that awful woman?" Needless to say, I learned to avoid discussing the topic of my research with these and certain other family members.

But at the same time another aunt, my late mother's younger sister, herself a devout practicing Latter-day Saint, was extremely supportive. She enthusiastically encouraged me in my ongoing research, sharing with me the excitement of discovering a significant new document or revealing anecdote gleaned from an oral interview. My aunt, moreover, carefully read and critiqued various drafts of my written text as the manuscript slowly took form. Likewise, my father, also an active Latter-day Saint, encouraged and supported me throughout the entire enterprise, manifesting fatherly pride in what I was doing.

All such obstacles notwithstanding, the ultimate payoff question is: What rewards and benefits did I derive from my long-standing literary

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21. Ibid.

affair with Fawn Brodie? Or what were the pleasures? On a strictly monetary level, the rewards have been minimal. Long before its publication, I was well aware that *Fawn Brodie: A Biographer's Life* would never make the *New York Times* "Best Seller" list as had Brodie's own *Thomas Jefferson* twenty-five years earlier. The best that I can claim is an advance of $3000 from my publisher, University of Oklahoma Press.

Other rewards were less tangible. Through the oral interviews that I conducted, I had the privilege of meeting and interacting with some 60 to 70 interesting, articulate individuals acquainted with Brodie during the course of her busy, eventful life. These included childhood acquaintances, whom I interviewed mainly in Utah, especially in Ogden and in the author's bucolic childhood home of Huntsville. Through interviews I met and got to know members of Brodie's birth family, including her three sisters and one brother—all four intelligent, well-read individuals in their own right. Also I interviewed a number of Fawn's cousins. Particularly noteworthy were the Huntsville McKays who lived next door to Fawn during her childhood years, specifically former U. S. Congressman Gunn McKay and his younger brother Monroe McKay, a United States District Court judge.

In California I had the opportunity to interview Fawn's three children and daughter-in-law. I also gained information from Brodie's neighbors in Pacific Palisades, most notably Emmy Award winning director and close friend Lamont Johnson. Also providing oral recollections were various professional acquaintances whom Fawn and Bernard Brodie knew and interacted with at UCLA, RAND, and within the Los Angeles psychoanalytic community.

But I was rewarded in a much more significant way. I had the opportunity to become personally acquainted with Fawn McKay Brodie herself, albeit in a vicarious way. I deeply regret I never had the opportunity to meet the subject of my biography face to face, despite our correspondence. Nevertheless, I developed a keen awareness of the life and times of a most remarkable woman. I found Brodie to be an individual who practiced academic and intellectual honesty in her own writing as well as through her teaching. Such knowledge, in turn, influenced and affected my own attitudes concerning family, friends, professional colleagues, and my own Mormon heritage. Indeed, as Frank Vandiver, himself a biographer, has stated, "Biographers lucky to live for some time in the company of a character sense a change in their own lives."[22] Such was the case during the course of my own long-term literary affair with Fawn McKay Brodie.

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22. Frank E. Vandiver, "Biography as an Agent of Humanism," in ed. Stephen B. Oates, *Biography as High Adventure* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 60.

Would Joseph Smith Attend the New York Stake Arts Festival?

Richard Lyman Bushman

RECENTLY, LATTER-DAY SAINT ARTISTS and writers in New York City have been searching for ways to recognize one another. I don't mean recognize in the sense of honoring, but recognize as in encountering one another's work. A volume of new essays and original etchings prepared by members of the Mormon Artists Group in New York City is one product of this urge[1]; the annual New York Stake Arts Festival, a day-long program of panels, performances, and exhibitions in the stake center, is another. Besides displaying work to the public and facilitating exchange, these events have raised questions, one of them being how art by Latter-day Saints relates to religion. Are religion and art wholly divergent? Are they inextricably enmeshed? Is art the Lord's work like preaching or helping the poor? We have difficulty puzzling out answers, but one way of putting the question is to ask what Joseph Smith would say. Would he have enjoyed the Stake Arts Festival?

We are inclined to believe that Joseph Smith would have been delighted by the paintings and photographs, the music and the dance, the talk about writing, and everything else at the Festival. Does not the thirteenth article of faith say that "if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things"? We assume that the fine arts, especially the arts of believing Latter-day Saints, must fall into the category of lovely and praiseworthy. What better example of the thirteenth article in action than an arts festival in our own meeting house? There is, of course, not the slightest reference to art in the article. And the words "virtuous" and "praiseworthy" could refer to the Red Cross as easily as to painting. Nonetheless, our prejudice in favor of the arts leads us almost automatically to an aesthetic reading of the thirteenth article.

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1. This essay first appeared as the introduction to *Silent Notes Taken* (New York: Mormon Artists Group, 2002), a collection of fifteen essays interspersed with original etchings.

To support our equation of "lovely" with artistic beauty, we locate the Arts Festival in a long tradition of Mormon aesthetics. According to our lore, pioneer families carried barrels of china to Utah as tokens of their culture. If Mormon yearning for artistic refinement was irrepressible in the Utah desert, must it not blossom as the rose in twenty-first-century New York? I know the stories of pioneer refinement are true in the case of my own family. My grandmother Hildegarde Sophia Schoenfeld Lyman made "the finer things" part of her religion, and she was as saintly a woman as I ever knew. Her father Edward Schoenfeld was teaching art alongside Karl Maeser in a Dresden *Gymnasium* when they were converted to Mormonism. Some of Edward's precise pencil sketches from his German years hang on my apartment wall. After he came to Utah, Schoenfeld, unable to support himself as a teacher, became a shoe salesman. He was unwilling to endure the privation that Karl Maeser suffered when he refused to give up his profession. Edward's daughter Hildegarde, my grandmother, was working in the ZCMI overall factory when she met my grandfather Willard Lyman, a poor shoe salesman from Scipio. They bought a small house on L Street in the avenues where her pent-up desire for beauty and refinement manifested itself. Hildegarde turned that little cottage into a palace—at least it looked like one to me as a child. She painted and refinished the furniture, ripped out walls, made hangings, purchased little pieces of Dresden for the mantle. She had few resources beyond her will and taste, but her natural grace and beauty made art of everything she touched.

We assume that her passion, and the devotion of other pioneers like her, owed some of its fervor to the gospel and Joseph Smith. Today refinement and spirituality seem like natural companions. Love of the beautiful is embedded in our belief along with hard work and frugality. Perhaps perversely for a grandson of Hildegarde Schoenfeld Lyman, I am not sure about this assumption. Despite all the evidence for Mormon aesthetics, I am a little skeptical that Joseph Smith was a lover of the arts.

We must remember that the love of art is only partially innate. Most modern historians would deny the existence of any natural aesthetic instincts. Aesthetic impulses are more the product of nurture than of nature. They seem natural because middle-class culture instills an obligation to admire art, but this sense of obligation is not universally shared. Middle-class people are exceptional in not only enjoying art, but in thinking they ought to enjoy it. For people like us, appreciation of art is a sign of worthiness. We feel pride in admitting to our friends that we

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Texts and images comprise a sampling of contemporary urban Mormon life in this limited edition of fifty copies, ten of which were accompanied by a portfolio with an extra suite of etchings. A paperback edition is available from Nauvoo Books.

have gone to the Metropolitan—either the Museum or the Opera—a pride that going to a movie at the multiplex doesn't give us. Working-class people will admit they find an opera boring; middle-class people feel an obligation to try to appreciate it. My middle-class parents, who never went to an art exhibit or an opera to my knowledge, still felt strongly that it was the right thing to do.

The obligatory admiration of art was not part of Joseph Smith's culture. He was brought up in rural New England before gentility had made many inroads into his level of society. His mother Lucy was developing embryonic genteel sensibilities, but she was the only one. She bankrupted the family by insisting they replace their log house with a frame house–the one we visit in Manchester today. No one else in the family had much sense of genteel ways. By his own admission, Joseph, while not rude, was rough. He never promoted genteel virtues like taste or polite manners. He went for hardier traits like loyalty and honesty. Genteel people who visited said he was coarse in his manner. After meeting Joseph in Nauvoo in 1844, Josiah Quincy reported that he "wore striped pantaloons, a linen jacket, which had not lately seen the washtub, and a beard of some three days' growth."[2] Joseph quickly changed into a suit to escort his distinguished visitors around the city, but he did not, it is clear, clean up every day.

These small indications of his personal culture suggest that Joseph would not have been prejudiced in favor of art. He would not have gone to museums out of a sense of obligation nor felt automatically that art must be good. His culture did not predispose him to admire art, as my grandfather Schoenfeld's German education did. Any attraction to beauty would be personal and perhaps idiosyncratic rather than dutiful and obligatory.

If Joseph had looked deeper into theories of art of his time, he might have had reason to be suspicious as well as neglectful. These were the years when belief in the Bible and revelation was fading among the educated classes, and art was replacing religion as the source of spiritual insight. Emerson quit his Unitarian pulpit because he could not bear to administer the sacrament. With the loss of belief, skeptical intellectuals like Emerson looked for substitute religions infused with revelation but not confined to a single text like the Bible. Emerson berated the Harvard Divinity School students for contenting themselves with ancient revelation when new revelation was needed. "Men have come to speak of the revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead." But he did not desire a single fixed truth from God. He believed all revela-

2. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, new edition (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1926 [orig. pub. 1883]), 320.

tion had its moment of glory and then was replaced by the next wave. Now something new and fresh was required.[3] In this atmosphere of half-doubt, half-belief, the artist emerged as the most likely spokesman for the transcendent. Whitman who thought of himself as preeminently qualified for the role said, "the priest departs, the divine literatus comes."[4] The artist was the one to carry people to greater heights and deeper insights. In a way, the artist replaced the prophet as the person to speak for God.

From that day to this, religion and art have bordered on and rivaled one another. Art fans speak about art in the way religious people speak of religion, using terms like "spiritual" or "mystery" or "inspiration." Artists are said to speak the truth, or see into our souls, or descry the future. Art is supposed to lead to the hidden dimensions of life and help us experience it more deeply.

Would Joseph have accepted art as a substitute religion? Whether or not he admired art, it seems unlikely that a person who actually heard from God, who looked into heaven and saw angels, would say that a poet's writings could equal actual revelation. He probably would not have even understood the question. How could one possibly equal the other? If he had been aware of the pretensions of art in our time, he might have held back and wanted to know more. But how could he endorse an art that undermined revelation or substituted a man-made product for the real thing?

If Joseph Smith was not bred to appreciate art for its own sake, and if he would have doubted artistic claims to prophethood, what grounds are there to think he would have come to the Stake Arts Festival? Why would he not have seen art as trivial or antagonistic? On the side of art, I think he might have seen our New York creations as standing in a long tradition of worship through art. In time, he might have come to appreciate the goodness of artistic reverence. Works like Handel's *Messiah* are all the more convincing because we have reason to think the composer was believing as well as ambitious. Handel wanted to glorify God with his music. He wrote the *Messiah* in an amazing rush because it came from his heart as well as his brain. The same, I think, must be true of Bach. How could he have turned out such a vast quantity of church music week after week if faith in God had not been part of his being? My wife Claudia and I visited Istanbul over the holidays and were overwhelmed by the architecture of the Hagia Sophia with its huge vaulted, interlocking domes. Though the building was a political statement as well as an act of devotion, it still offers an eloquent tribute to God's power and wisdom in its great arches.

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3. Quotes from Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 51-52.

4. Quoted in Delbanco. *The Real American Dream*, 52.

In Joseph's own day, the Hudson River painters were men of acknowledged belief who struggled to capture divinity in their paintings. They pointed toward God, for example, by not bringing the perspective lines together in their landscapes, but by focusing on a bright point that leads through the picture into infinite space beyond. The sincerity of this art is surely a recommendation for art in the service of religion. Would not Joseph Smith have reacted favorably to these efforts and added them to his own faith?

Joseph was eclectic by nature. He spoke repeatedly against having a creed that set bounds to religion. He wanted his religion to be open to every form of truth, to be accepting and seeking. That is the spirit of the thirteenth article of faith. The statement supports art not because the word "lovely" appears there, but because the entire article implies a search for the worthy, an openness to all forms of goodness. True religious art falls into that category.

We would have more theological support for art if Joseph Smith had derived his doctrine from Jonathan Edwards. Edwards, the greatest American theologian, put beauty at the center of faith. He argued that a sense of God's beauty was the essence of grace. In Calvinist theology, grace was a divine influence that enabled a person to see God in all his magnificent beauty. In Edwards's interpretation of grace, a person learned to love God by loving his beauty to the point of sacrificing all to the divine magnificence. A divine and supernatural light helped a person to extinguish pride and egotism by revealing the beauty of what Edwards called "Being in General." He hypothesized a deeply aesthetic human nature that could not resist beauty and a God so aesthetic that he communicated with humanity through the beauty of the universe. Beauty is how he told people about himself, and beauty was how they came to love Him.[5]

For Joseph Smith, the key word was not "beauty" but "glory." Moses chooses God over Satan in the first book of Moses because God is glorious and Satan is not. "Where is thy glory," he asks Satan in the confrontation, "that I should worship thee?" Satan is darkness; God is glory. God's works, Moses is told when he first sees God, reveal his glory. "No man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory."[6] The word exercises its powerful influence through all of Mormon scripture. We strive for the kingdom with the highest degree of glory. At the zenith of our hope, God promises us we may partake of his glory. In the ideal life, we are to have an eye single to God's glory. His glory rather than his

5. Roland A. DeLattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

6. Moses 1:5, 13.

beauty attracts us. Joseph's theology does not aestheticize God as Edwards's does. If anything, Joseph intellectualizes divinity. "The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words light and truth."[7] Truth precedes beauty in Joseph's scriptures. Glory implies something beyond beauty—and art.

On the other hand, the word "beauty" does figure in Mormon scriptures. The tree which awed Lehi and Nephi in their common vision was notable for its beauty. "The beauty thereof was far beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty."[8] "Beauty," the word for emphasizing the preciousness of the tree and its fruit, is closely connected with the love of God. We certainly do not think of holy things as ugly. Quite the contrary, we often describe godly things as beautiful. Zion itself, we are told, must put on its beautiful garments, and even more directly we hear that "Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness."[9] The scriptures say that glory and holiness have an aesthetic. Zion must be made beautiful, and artists will be the ones to create that beauty.

The beauty principle stands out in Joseph's vision of the city of Kirtland. According to Wilford Woodruff,

> Joseph presented us in some degree the plot of the city of Kirtland. . .as it was given him by vision. It was great, marvelous and glorious. The city extended to the east, west, north, and south. Steam boats will come puffing into the city. Our goods will be conveyed upon railroads from Kirtland to many places and probably to Zion. Houses of worship would be reared unto the most high. Beautiful streets are to be made for the saints to walk in, Kings of the earth would come to behold the glory thereof, and many glorious things not now to be named would be bestowed upon the Saints.[10]

The same was true of all Joseph's cities. They were beautiful as well as glorious. Nauvoo, after all, signified "beautiful place." In a sense, cities were Joseph Smith's art form. Using them to embody God's plans for life on earth, he wanted them to be beautiful.

Sidney Rigdon, who did have genteel aspirations to refinement, expanded this idea in the *Messenger and Advocate.* In an article called "The Saints and the World," published in 1836, he outlined the work of building Zion and posed a question: "Now let me ask the saints of the last days, what kind of people must you be, in order that you may accomplish so great a work?" How was Zion, he asked, "to become the joy and

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7. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.
8. 1 Nephi 11:8.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 82:14.
10. Scott Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal: 1833-1898 Typescript* (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), 134.

the praise of the whole earth, so that kings shall come to the brightness of her rising?" The people of Zion had to shine. "Surely, it will be by her becoming more wise, more learned, more refined, and more noble, than the cities of the world, so that she becomes the admiration of the great ones of the earth." Zion will attract attention "by the superiority of her literary institutions, and by a general effort of all the saints to patronize literature in our midst, so that the manners of the saints may be properly cultivated, and their habits correctly formed." Besides the people themselves, "her buildings will have to be more elegant, her palaces more splendid, and her public houses more magnificent." "Neither are we to leave out of the question," Rigdon went on, "the dress of the saints, for this supplies a place also in effecting this great object; the beauty and neatness of their dress is characteristic of the degree of refinement, and decency of a society."[11]

I came across another example of early church aesthetics while reading Joseph Smith's description of the Kirtland Temple dedication. A singing school was started in January 1836, three months before the dedication, to prepare a choir. They were still struggling eleven days before the dedication. Joseph noted after a rehearsal that they "performed admirably, considering the advantages they have had." On the eve of the dedication, he could say with fewer reservations, "called at the Schoolroom to hear the choir of Singers perform, which they did admirably." At the dedication, the choir was placed in the four corners of the hall so music would fill the room.[12]

What impressed me most was the source of the hymns. Four were written by the LDS composers William Phelps and Parley P. Pratt. Quite a number of hymns might have fit into the services; one by Isaac Watts was included.[13] But four were written by our own poets. That signifies one of two things. Either the church wished to encourage its own poets, or the people planning the service felt that the message of the occasion could be best expressed by our own writers. Either one of those possibilities satisfies me. We would be happy for the church to sponsor art and just as pleased if Latter-day Saint artists were considered best qualified to present our beliefs.

So I conclude that Joseph Smith would have attended the Arts Festival and would have been interested in the art being hung in our temporary gallery. The question is would we want him to be here? Would we want the Prophet of the Lord to be scrutinizing each painting and sculp-

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11. *Messenger and Advocate* (Dec. 1836), 421.

12. Dean Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992), 2:129, 189, 191.

13. Ibid., 2: 193, 194, 195, 202.

ture? Artists may dream of a prophet whose visions of the heavens so liberated him that he rose above narrow conceptions of art and conventional standards. But was Joseph this kind of prophet? Perhaps the message of the Gospel weighed so heavily on his soul that only promotional art would please him? Would it have to bear an explicit gospel message to win him over? I don't know the answer to these questions. I think it is possible that Joseph Smith would not applaud everything we do in the name of art these days. He might find it unintelligible, rude, perhaps distracting. The question must hang unanswered in the space between our time and his.

The question of what to do about art, however, cannot be postponed until we meet Joseph. What are we to do with the art we make, that we look at and hear, that we buy? Should we work to create and appreciate poems and paintings that illustrate, inculcate, and promote the Gospel and its standards? Should our art have a manifest Gospel purpose? Probably many of our artists would love to join just such a program and paint for the temples and write poems for hymns. Others feel that an artist cannot make powerful, affective, and true art by conforming to some preconceived program. Art does not do its work by being self-consciously orthodox, created according to a preformed purpose. These artists believe art must come from a deeper place where we are not fully in control of the outcome. Art is not calculation but expression. We want to be true to the Gospel in our art work, but we have to be true to ourselves as we make art.

I know no easy way out of this dilemma. Some years ago, I addressed the same question in an essay on "Faithful History." How do you write history that conforms to God's plan for the world? Do you deduce it from scripture by figuring out the implications of the gospel for history and then look for evidence in support of these implications? One might try, for example, to prove that wickedness leads to the downfall of civilizations by illustrating that point over and over in history. Or one could search for remnants of the original Adamic religion in all the religions of the world.

In my essay, I concluded that I could not write history that way. I had to begin with the evidence as I was able to understand it. I had to converse with the documents and artifacts and report what I learned rather than work from some predetermined idea. Only the truth that I found in the evidence seemed like real truth. If the results were not satisfactory from a Gospel perspective, I decided, the answer was not to force myself into an orthodox program of history-writing. I had to change myself until I could see the world as God sees it. To write godly history, I had to be more godly. The answer to faulty art, in other words, is repentance. As I put it then:

> The trouble with wishing to write history as a Mormon is that you cannot improve as an historian without improving as a person. The enlargement of moral insight, spiritual commitment, and critical intelligence are all bound together. We gain knowledge no faster than we are saved.[14]

I think the same holds true for Mormon artists. Art originates in the place where our spirit resides. If that spirit seeks to know God in all his holiness, to stand in his presence and be filled with his glory, then our art will show it.

That is far from a complete answer to our inquiry, but it points to a way of striving. Perhaps we are not ready to make glorious art yet, but surely Joseph Smith would delight in a room—or a city—filled with such creations.

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14. Richard L. Bushman, "Faithful History," *Dialogue* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 25.

Why I Can't Write My Joseph Smith Play

Gary Stewart

In April of 2001 I directed ten of my students in an hour-and-fifteen-minute workshop production of the rough beginnings of a play I'd written. I'd been immersed in research and writing for eight months, planning for over twenty years, and it had been strong on my mind for half a century. I called it *The Joseph Smith Project*.

I wasn't happy with it. Not at all. My good Mormon friends were troubled. They asked why I didn't emphasize the spiritual side of the prophet. My academic friends wondered if I'd lost all perspective: You still take this backwoods conjurer seriously? A couple of hard-core Southern Baptist students were delighted by it because it suggested to them that Joseph Smith might indeed be the antichrist. My theater colleagues declared the play fragmented and uneven, just a big mess. And they were right.

Usually with my writing I've at least pleased myself—maybe a few loved ones, sometimes even an audience of other people. But this Joseph Smith thing. . .I'd almost totally failed. I sure didn't please myself or my loved ones. And audiences were bewildered or upset or just bored. So why couldn't I get a bead on this guy? This prophet who'd haunted my dreams since I remember dreams? Still, I knew that, if I kept trying, I'd drive myself nuts.

My fallback position? I'm not really a playwright, after all. I'm a director who likes to write plays to pass the time. I'll just go do another production of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Except that the upwards of seventy plays I've directed in my career feels about enough.

So I pondered. What went wrong? And I began to figure a couple of things out. First of all, you can't write a successful play unless you have a pretty clear idea of who your audience is. They certainly aren't going to produce my stuff in the new LDS Conference Center. Nor do I want to play to audiences who see demons when Joseph Smith's image pops up. There's my good and faithful and indulgent Indiana audience, who've

supported me in all my theatrical wanderings through Mormonism, but even they didn't get it. (And they've suffered enough.) Finally, there are those college kids I've taught for decades—but many had seriously given themselves to either Buddha or Jesus, and most appeared not to give much of a damn about religion of any kind. What about those really smart off-Broadway patrons for whom I might like to write? Wallace Shawn's audience, Neil LaBute's audience—I just don't have enough of a grasp on a theme that would interest them.

So I had to hope that as I wrote my audience would come into view. I'd just focus on the primary task a playwright has before him: to create coherent, believable, and compelling characters. I've had good experiences over the years with just letting characters talk to me, have dialogue with me, and writing down their words. I'd try that. I'd just let Joseph talk to me. . .except Joseph has been talking to me all my life. And I've heard his voice so long I'm really not sure whether it's his voice or my voice. It's kind of like talking to myself. Maybe if I started with other characters in the play: with Martin and Oliver, Emma and Lucy Mack and Joseph, Sr. But I had problems with them too. They'd always been only sort of whispering attendants to my lifelong dialogues with Joseph.

I had to remind myself that I see the world differently than I did forty years ago. I'd come on a long and tortured journey. Until I was thirty, I pretty much defined my world and my understanding of Joseph Smith from an orthodox perspective. I trusted what others said about him. I trusted the matrix in which they were saying what they said. When I got into theater, which was kind of an accident, I figured I'd keep thinking about my life and my religion and Joseph Smith from that same perspective. My theater would be a highly attractive way to make a living. I'd teach and direct good and proper plays I kind of liked, maybe even at BYU—plays like *All My Sons*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Lady Not for Burning*, *Romeo and Juliet*.

But something happened. I started developing another way of seeing the world, another matrix. What I was teaching and doing—reading and directing plays—began to have an effect on me. I was developing what I came to call a theatrical way of seeing the world. I started getting more interested in the *is's* than the *oughts*, being more interested in what people do and why they do what they do, than what they *ought* to do. And I started being attracted to these really complex and puzzling and often decadent plays: Jacobean plays like *The Changeling* and *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*; plays like *Woyzek* and *Uncle Vanya* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; playwrights like Sam Shepard and Caryl Churchill and Samuel Beckett. And for a great many years, my psyche was a kind of boiling cauldron. I became fascinated by the strange and anomalous choices people make, choices that are never quite clear no matter how you view them—bizarre choices, choices that often lead to despair and

self-annihilation. This began leaking into my ideas about Joseph Smith. I wanted to know everything that made him an extraordinary prophet and at the same time a flawed and fascinating and opaque human being who almost seemed to have a death wish. I began spending more time reading Shakespeare than John Henry Evans, more Eugene O'Neill than B. H. Roberts, more energy-absorbing Samuel Beckett than The Book of Matthew. They were telling me truths I hadn't contemplated before.

Then about twenty-five years ago, I started writing. I started with a western just to see if I could do it, if I could write anything. I wrote a genre western with a Mormon twist that I called *The Avenging Angel*. It was a finalist in the Bantam Western Writing Contest, and it rested at the bottom of a dusty drawer for fifteen years until a Hollywood friend of mine who liked my work called to say Ted Turner was looking for westerns and had I written any? I almost said no. But it did get turned into a movie, partly because they got Charlton Heston to play Brigham Young. The movie wasn't all that bad, either, for what it was. But I'd long ago tired of good guys and bad guys and shootouts and horses.

After that I became fascinated by Dashiel Hammet and Ramond Chandler and their visions of the dark sides of the societies they inhabited. I wrote a trilogy of mysteries set in Salt Lake. Saint Martins Press even published a couple: *The Tenth Virgin* and *The Zarahemla Vision*. But I hadn't much of gift for narrative detail, nor the committed cynic's eye, and I tired of those, too.

Finally I sat down one day and started a play. It came pretty fast. I directed it as part of the season for the professional summer theater that I produce. I also did a student production. Audiences seemed to really like it, even most of the Mormons. I called it *Daddy's Gone Home to Mother in Heaven*. It was produced in other places, and it did seem genuinely funny in 1985. But when the Salt Lake Acting Company did a reading in 1995, it sounded forced and dated, and I didn't like it much anymore.

My second play, *The Whitehead Family Reunion*, about a clan of contrary Southern Utah polygamists, got significant attention. Actors Theater of Louisville did a reading, and Berkeley Rep staged it. I directed some fine professional actors in a production. But I have mixed feelings now: too derivative, too much in Sam Shepard's backdraft.

Then fifteen years ago I started reading the Bible again—reading it fresh with grown up eyes—and I realized the greatest of the kings and prophets and apostles were complex and often damaged characters, and damn interesting dramatically. And there was God, blessing them in all their strange and dark complexity. I went back to parts of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants and to Joseph's amazing final sermons, and I began to discover the biblical power and scope there. I was off on something I could claim more as my own.

The next play I wrote was called *Downwinder Dance.* It's about the awful effects of the nuclear tests on the people of southwestern Utah, about a third of whom are my blood relatives. The central character is a young man who's called by an angel to be a prophet and has to figure out just what he's supposed to do. I'd begun to find a voice. Others responded, too. It played at The Kennedy Center. I also directed a professional production with Hollywood actors, and the play was published by Samuel French. I still like that play.

For my next play, *Mary and Joe,* I went to Shakespeare and Beckett and the J Text of the Bible, and I mixed them up with my own neurotic obsessions. The play's kind of perplexing to audiences, but they seem to like it. I like it more than anything I've ever written. I felt I'd almost become a writer I could put up with.

Then this past year, I decided to jump in and grapple with Joseph Smith himself though not at first with a play in mind. I'd been working on a series of monologues and performance pieces—I read one at Sunstone in 2000 about my mission in Great Britain—and I read and reread everything I could about Joseph Smith. For half a year I did that. After three or four months I decided maybe I should try it as a play, so off I went: a plunge into serious rapids.

I figured early on I couldn't put all of Joseph Smith into a single play. Not yet. So I decided to focus on his early years, the "New York" Joseph Smith. One thing that became clear in my readings was that Joseph was, from the beginning, on a serious religious quest. He saw angels and he saw God and he read the Bible in ways nobody else ever did. He squeezed his own exalted mission out of the scriptures and out of the heavenly and human beings he encountered. Another thing that became clear was Joseph had a sharp sense of humor—certainly a sense of fun, mischief, at least a keen sense of irony. And sure, he used magic stones to dig for treasure, and he did tend to mix up his search for God and his search for ancient treasure. And the *Book of Mormon* was a remarkable coming together of these impulses. But it also became clear to me that he felt he had transgressed in serious enough ways to ask God personally for forgiveness. Most of his guilt apparently had to do with his passions, with the company he kept, and with what he described as his light and trifling mind.

All right, I'd made a couple of decisions, so I forged ahead. The first thing was to figure out how to organize the play. What plot would tie all this stuff together? I decided on the fairly obvious and (I thought) rather simple method of writing a series of scenes pairing Joseph with the essential people in his early life, the obvious ones being his mother, his father, Martin, Oliver, David, the Angel, and of course, Emma. As I trolled through early documents, several not-so-obvious figures also interested me: Reverend Lane, Sally Chase, Obediah Dogberry, Luman Walters. I

finished a way too long and seriously overwritten draft in rather a short time, but I cut more than two-thirds of it after I first heard it out loud.

At auditions I found it fairly easy to cast the secondary characters. Each had a clear place in Joseph's life, each had an agenda, a primary objective. But casting Joseph was another matter. At auditions I didn't have anyone who was even close to being able to play Joseph. A character I call "The Actor" explains this dilemma to the audience:

The Actor

> For the most part each character in the play will be played by one actor. Except for Joseph Smith. In one scene or another Joseph Smith will be played by all the men. The writer is insisting on this because he indicated he wants to capture as many aspects of Joseph Smith as possible. What he really means is that none of us appears to him to have the chops for the role. What about the women? we asked. He says he wants at least one woman as well as the men to play Joseph Smith. . . .When pushed, the writer admits the only actor he knows who could play Joseph Smith adequately is currently in an asylum for the criminally insane somewhere in Pennsylvania.

So I had a second draft of the play, a cast of competent actors, and plenty of rehearsal time, but what I still didn't have was a plot. And I never even got close. What I finally ended up doing was adding material for several narrators, including "The Actor," each of whom embodies one of many possible points of view about Joseph Smith. My favorite is a twelve-year-old girl who approaches Joseph from a rather naïve perspective. Since only Joseph's early life is covered, she gives a rather brief biography of the prophet in the form of a book report:

The Girl

> Joseph Smith was born December 23, 1805 in Sharon Windsor County Vermont. His mother was Lucy Mack Smith and his father was Joseph Smith, Sr. The Smith family was very poor and they moved around a lot and the mother Lucy Mack Smith worked very hard to support them. As did the six sons and a daughter. And Joseph, Sr., did too, when he was able. Joseph Smith published the Book of Mormon in 1830. He translated it from golden plates an angel gave him. He started the church in 1830 and he moved his family and the church to Kirtland, Ohio in 1831 and had many revelations from God which he had people write down. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints grew very fast and gathered all kinds of followers. And there were many miracles and visitations by heavenly beings. And Joseph Smith got interested in many things, including creating a bank, rewriting the Bible, and lead-

ing a military invasion of Missouri. After Joseph Smith did hard time in a Missouri prison, he escaped and led his followers to Nauvoo, Illinois, where they built a great city and became politically very powerful. Joseph Smith continued to receive many revelations from God, which told him, among other things, to be mayor of his city, to be general to his army, to build a temple for ancient ceremonies, to run for president, to crown himself king of God's earthly kingdom, to marry at least ten virgins and lots of other women, and to begin immediate preparations to become a god. He was killed at the age of 38 by people who took exception to most of what God told him to do. There are now pretty statues of Joseph Smith all over Nauvoo and Salt lake City, Utah, where the Mormons went after Joseph Smith was killed. There are currently over eleven million members of Joseph Smith's church, almost all of whom think he was the most important man who ever lived. With the exception, of course, of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you.

There's also a daffy academic I call "The Psychologist" who utters hopeless nonsense and begins thusly:

The Psychologist

In order to fully account for Joseph Smith, one must apply the precise and methodical tools of science. My carefully researched clinical diagnostic conclusion is that Joseph Smith had an acute disease known as severe vainglorious personality disorder.

Then he utters a mouthful of nonsensical jargon, to which The Girl adds:

The Girl

Joseph Smith has also been characterized by out-of-joint twentieth century psychologists as an hallucinating epileptic, a delusional paranoid, a manic depressive wacko, a narcissistic fanatic. . .and as just a plain nut case. Thank you.

Then there's the Christian evangelist:

The Evangelist

Joseph Smith was a classical humanist atheist. He rejected the one true God of the Bible and in His place proposed an infinite and ever-increasing number of self-made gods who had each once been a man. . . .Now brothers and sisters this is doctrine direct from the anti-Christ. And unless you accept the true and evangelically sanc-

tioned Jesus Christ into your hearts, you'll be left in your shoes looking up in pain when the rapture comes.

I developed Joseph Smith's first newspaper critic into the character "Dogberry." After Joseph's encounter with Reverend Lane, he says:

Dogberry

You never quite know when this Joe Smith's pullin' your leg.

And there's deeper mischief there. . . .A kind of other-world-juggler-struck-by-God mischief Reverend Lane can't fathom. Hell, I can't figure it. . . .The fellow's got things up his sleeve.

Dogberry further comments after a scene between Joseph and his father:

They're a pair, those two. . . .Wily. Dark. Pokin' fun at things. Slippery like water creatures. And they want your valuables. You see the old man comin', hold on to your watch. You see the son. . .hold on to your faith.

I'm particularly fond of "Blossom," who offers enthusiastic and extravagant encomiums to Joseph Smith.

Blossom

I find that most people are quite limited in their assessment of Joseph Smith. Reductionist. They're really working out their own inadequacies. Their resentments. Yes. Resentments. That captures it. Pretty much everyone who attempts to assess Joseph Smith really comes to resent him. He's too much for them. How could he dare such things? How could anybody dare such things? . . .I think Joseph Smith was an authentic religious genius. A man of stature like Moses or Zoroaster or Mohammed or Jesus. An authentic American genius. I'd go so far as to place him alongside Emerson and Whitman as one of three seminal nineteenth century American geniuses.

"Fielding" is fiercely protective of the church's proprietary right to Joseph Smith and particularly annoyed at Blossom:

Fielding

It's just nonsense. And it gets my blood boiling. People like you just don't have any right. Joseph Smith is *our* prophet. He belongs to *us*. To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Not to disgruntled psychologists or out of whack Christian evangelicals or Mormon intellectuals or literary critics turned religious dilettantes.

However, a potpourri of narrative riffraff do not a play make. I knew I had a problem when I found the narrators more interesting than the dramatic characters, but I went on anyway, focusing on the supporting characters. I kind of liked Oliver, who's a bit overwhelmed by it all, and Martin Harris, who sees amazing off-the-wall visions. I also wrote a confrontation with Reverend Lane, and I wrote Joseph apprenticing to a flashy Luman Walters. There's also a scene with Sally Chase, who had a white seerstone, and whom I imagined as a source for some of Joseph's guilt about his overheated passions. And I think I captured some important aspects of Emma's early attraction to Joseph:

Emma

My father doesn't care for Joseph. Not at all. In fact Joseph makes him very angry. "All that boy does is poke around in the dirt, trying to find some damn Indian treasure." I don't say much. I just nod. You never get far arguing with my father. "And that rock he carries around with him. What's he expect to find with a goddamn rock?" I just smile, occasionally say something impertinent. Which he doesn't care for. He calls me high spirited, my father. And not in a complimentary way. . . .

(Pause)

And he knows I was interested in Joseph from the first. I guess you could say I was. . .feeling things. Despite what people think when they first regard me, I am a woman of some passion. Yes I had my doubts. He didn't seem much of a prospect. He was unschooled. Had appalling grammar. Didn't keep himself clean. Just finishes one dream, he's on to the next. There were all sorts of warning signs.

(Pause)

But when he talks. . .well. . .you just have to listen. You're part of whatever world he's sculpting with his words.

(Pause)

And when he looks at you. . .dear God, that look. . .You're just transfixed by that look. . . .

(Pause)

And. . .and his face. . .it's never the same. That face. Another thought, another look. . . .You couldn't paint that face.

I did make some headway toward my own dramatic understanding of Joseph Smith in some of the scenes I wrote. I think I also began to get a defensible take on Joseph's relationship with his mother.

To explain this, I have to go back the summer of 2001 when I drove to Ohio to spend a weekend with my good friend Don Nigro. Don Nigro is the most important unknown playwright in the United States. There are

Nigro cults all around the world. One clue to his importance is that if you look in the Samuel French play catalog, Don Nigro has more plays currently in print than any other playwright, living or dead. Some people think he's a genius. He's certainly the smartest person I've ever met and one of the best writers. Don and I wrote a draft of a Joseph Smith play twenty years ago. I wanted to call it, *God is My Right Hand Man.* (Most of you know the inference.) Don said that sounded too much like a bad World War II movie, like Dane Clark and Dennis Morgan in *God is My Co-Pilot.* So we never got around to titling it. In fact, we didn't get past a first draft, but during this recent visit, Don and I talked about the play. And near the end of our talk he agreed I really didn't have a Joseph Smith play, but what I might have was a play about his mother, a Lucy Mack Smith play. I don't know. I somehow doubt it. But I did write a Lucy Mack Smith monologue for *The Joseph Smith Project,* which includes a version of her dream—her amazing dream. I played around some with the original, but included much of her wonderful language:

The Mother

The first thing you have to know about all this is it's a family matter. It's not about one special emissary being visited by an angel and all by himself bringing the true gospel to a chaotic and unenlightened world. No. This is a visionary family. My father saw lights bright as a fire on a dark night, and in those lights he saw Jesus Christ.

(Pause)

And there's my dream. Where I was carried off to a magnificent meadow to this tree that shone like burnished gold and stood beside a pure clear stream of water. And the tree bent gracefully before the wind, and its branches waved over the stream with happiness and joy. Lively as the dancing of a sunbeam. And I saw the tree was my husband. And he was pliant and flexible and ready to swell gently and recede with the breath of heaven. And it was right after that he began having visions. My husband. Seven God-inspired dreams that led him to the edge of salvation.

(Pause)

But his search just went on and on. And he closed himself up more and more. And I had to conclude he wasn't worthy. . . .So it fell to one of my sons. My fine big sons. . . .You figure, of course, the mantle's gonna fall to the oldest. Alvin, who was building his mother a nice house. But the Lord saw fit to carry Alvin away. Then there was Hyrum. Good, gentle Hyrum. But Hyrum. . .wasn't really up to it. So I accepted it had to be Joseph. Now I love all my sons. But Joseph just isn't quite. . .I don't know. Not sober like Alvin or

Hyrum. Always chasing this fancy or that. Off telling stories when there's work to be done. Making no account people laugh. Digging about in the dirt. Getting whiskey for his father. Oh, I enjoy Joseph. I love his stories. He's real entertaining. Joseph. But the family prophet?

In the end, she accepts Joseph and writes lucidly about him. I wrote what I saw as her discovery in the play:

The Mother

I have to say he did make me believe. Joseph. It's like he pulled me to my feet and shouted at me to believe. "Ma, I saw this angel. And this angel led me to these golden plates." Golden plates? Well this was something his father couldn't a done. Heavy, real, bright-as-a-sunbeam golden plates. When he told me about the gold plates, I knew he was my son.

The relationship I became particularly interested in was the one between Joseph and his father. I'd never thought much about Joseph Smith, Sr., but I found myself looking everywhere for clues to his character, getting more fascinated with each new discovery. Who was this shadowy figure moving with Joseph through his life? How did he affect his son? Influence him? Seldom is anyone more important than a father in shaping a son's life. I think Joseph and his father were very close. I think there wasn't anyone Joseph was closer to. And the three scenes I wrote with Joseph and his father have a ring of truth, at least to me. In the first, Joseph comes upon Joseph, Sr., in the woods. After some banter he tells his father what he was up to the night before:

Joseph

I got us a sheep.

The Father

Ya did?

Joseph

I'm over at Will Stafford's place. And I put my stone in my hat. "Will, I'm seein' treasure. And this treasure's not five hundred yards from your front door." And he gets this look in his eye. Like he sees I'm seein' things. "A treasure?" "And we'll get that treasure this very night." "We will?" "God as my witness." "Son of a gun, Joe." "Now what we need, Will, is one a yer black sheep." And he don't quite get

it. "Black sheep?" "It's part a the holy ritual, Will." "And what does that do, Joe?" "What that does is prime the treasure. So it's ready to pop out of the ground." "Well, damn!" So Will gets me this prime black sheep and we cut its throat and while it's still struggling we make us a blood circle. And I plant a hazel stick in the center and I put the shovel in his hands and I say, "I know ya got a big night ahead of you here, Will. Better start diggin'." And when he gets all caught up diggin', I take that sheep and slip into the woods. . .and right now ma's dressin' it for dinner.

Now this might not be the way in which Joseph's light and trifling mind worked, but something I haven't yet seen explored is the possible levels on which Joseph saw his use of a seer stone—and maybe much of what he did. His father might not be one of the dubious friends he begged forgiveness for, but it's an interesting possibility. Early in the scene with his father, Joseph brings up serious issues:

Joseph

You think there's this fire and brimstone God's got ready for us? This anguish and pain and burning hell for ever and ever?

The Father

The burning hell that counts is right here. God knows that's awful enough. Dark.

Joseph

I have yearnings, you know.

The Father

Course ya do. We all have yearnings.

Joseph

Real strong sometimes.

The Father

God put us here to be happy. To have joy. That's part a havin' joy. Now yer mother. . .

(Pause)

Yer mother's always had a burning. I don't find I mind that.

Then Joseph, Sr., has something for his son:

The Father

I had another one.

He means he had another dream. While trying to figure out the young Joseph, I found myself going repeatedly back to Joseph, Sr.'s dreams. I can't help but think they were enormously influential in creating the central images through which Joseph understood and created his world. Whatever you believe about how the Book of Mormon came about, the parallels between Lehi's great dream and one of Joseph, Sr.'s dreams is remarkable. And something else about those dreams struck me. In the scene, The Father tells Joseph of a new dream that's not unlike his earlier dreams or visions:

The Father

I'm travelin' on and on in this barren and desolate field. And I'm sore and lame and heavy of heart. And I tell the spirit. . .the spirit's there with me again. . . "Hold on, spirit, I just have to sit down and rest." "No, ya gotta keep goin'." So I keep walkin'. And there's this rope I'm supposed to hang on to find the way. And then I'm in the middle of this garden. And there's this wondrous building. And there's a man at the door and I ask if I can go in and he says I can. And inside's this big luxurious room. And in the middle of this room's this altar. And on top of the altar's . . .this box. . .this beautiful chest. And I approach it and this miraculous feeling comes over me. And I reach to open it. And I touch the lid. . . .

(Pause)

And I wake up.

Joseph is so moved that after a long silence between the two characters, he has to change the subject:

Joseph

I told Reverend Lane about the toad.

The Father

(amused)

He believe the toad?

Joseph

He don't seem real comfortable with magic toads.

The Father

He thinks we're these crazy conjurers.

Joseph

I told him maybe it was the angel.

The Father

That must have stumped him.

Joseph

He told me I was an evil boy. And I saw so many versions of the truth God's gonna damn me.

The Father

Ain't any way they'll figure us out.

There's another long silence, then Joseph gets back to the dream.

Joseph

I dream your dreams.

The Father

I know you do.

Joseph

I won't give up till I taste what's inside that box you dream about. . .

The Father

I did taste it. . .once. What was inside.

Joseph

Was it sweet?

The Father

Sweetest thing I ever. . .tasted.

Joseph

(Pause)
I have to taste it.
(Long pause)

The Father

And the awfulist. It was the awfulist thing I ever tasted. And I was filled with terror and I woke up in cold sweats.

Joseph keeps looking for that box, and a while later he asks the angel if the box buried in the hill is his father's box. The angel says, "I think it's more *your* box."

Toward the end of the first scene between Joseph and Emma, Joseph brings up something I found extremely interesting, something he seemed to be obsessed with from his earliest writings. It's perhaps the closest thing I could find to what Joseph's character's super objective might be—his intention, his motive, his life mission, the constant that kept him pushing ahead against incomprehensibly impossible odds. He tells Emma:

Joseph

When I'm right with God. With people I love. I see the most amazing things. It's like I'm carried past this veil into a world nobody else sees. And it's a marvelous world. Endless in its space. It just goes on and on. And I can wander through lush meadows and vibrant gardens, past immense mysterious trees and into great shining cities. . . .And lately I've been seeing people. People from the beginning of time. People from the end of time. People yearning from all time. . .and. . .and they want to speak to me. . . .They want. . .they want me to do something for them. . . .

The brother of Jared saw these same multitudes. Lehi saw these same multitudes. Joseph, Sr., saw multitudes. Joseph, Jr., saw multitudes, and he had to do something about it. He had to try to tie all these multitudes together in a great universal vision of salvation. . . .But that's the great play somebody else will write.

As I said earlier, one of the things that stopped me cold on this play is the confusion between Joseph Smith, the dramatic character, and all the personal baggage I brought from my sixty-year dialogue with Joseph. Also, I worry about my qualifications. I think almost everybody who's written about Joseph Smith has somehow or other reduced him,

sometimes into a pretty much flawless Godlike icon, sometimes into a conscious or unconscious charlatan. Or they equate him with twentieth-century church leaders. Or they try to put him into some conceptual box.

That leads me to the real reason I've had to put the play away, to put it down like my father put sick animals down. I frankly enjoy being unsure about Joseph Smith. I don't want to understand his motives, the reasons he did things. Not really. I like the mystery. I like changing my mind about him every few months. I like hearing his voice layered with levels of wit and irony and pain I can't prove and can't adequately write. I just like too much the constant surprise every time I read something he wrote or consider something he did. I like to keep pondering the weird and the shadowy sides of Joseph. Ponder them without giving them form. He's just too interesting to me in his inky mystery. I also want to keep pondering Harold Bloom's odd characterization of Joseph as "a robust American humorist."

Here's a pertinent analogy: I've come to dislike with some passion those critics who attempt to describe Hamlet's dramatic action, to define his major motive, to nail his objective. It's just too reductive. It dumbs down a wondrous and mysterious and enigmatic play.

Like Hamlet, Joseph was a player. He challenged others to see him in different roles. What about all the ways he insisted people see him? What about all those roles he played? All those masks? Look at those masks. Look at that horrifying and compelling final mask: his death mask. What a remarkable character, remarkable in all his complexity and luminosity and holiness and contrariety and strangeness. What an amazing thing someone might someday do, to capture all this in a brilliant theatrical conceit.

Wars of Preemption, Wars of Revenge

Jeffrey R. Johansen

AMERICANS MAY BE ON THE EVE of a preemptive attack on a foreign country, ostensibly to protect ourselves from potential future attacks. Our nemesis, Saddam Hussein, is known to be evil, having gassed his own countrymen in the past. If he develops weapons of mass destruction, so the rationale goes, he may decide to unleash them upon us or unscrupulously supply such weapons to terrorists who will do so. Congress has authorized the president to use force if he deems this necessary. Many Mormons, being politically conservative, may well support this impending preemptive war. The members of both houses of Congress who are Mormon are squarely behind this dramatic turn in policy. It surprises me that I have heard so little said among Latter-day Saints about two very clear and very relevant stories in the Book of Mormon. I think it is well to contemplate the meaning of these stories and to evaluate our present situation in light of the book which Joseph Smith taught is "the most correct book on earth."

The first story is that of the young prophet and general Mormon who led the Nephites in battle against the Lamanites in the last days of the Nephite nation. After he had headed the Nephite army for 34 years, an ominous turning point arose for the Nephites. The Lamanites wrote to Mormon, warning him they were coming down to destroy the Nephite people. However, in a battle outside of the city of Desolation, the Nephites managed to win a major victory and drove the Lamanites out of their lands. Two years later the Lamanites "did come down again to battle, and we did beat them again, and did slay a great number of them, and their dead were cast into the sea (Mormon 3: 5-8).

Unfortunately, according to scripture, the Nephites did not thank the Lord for this victory. Rather, they took a different course:

> And now, because of this great thing which my people, the Nephites, had done, they began to boast in their own strength, and began to swear before

> the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies. And they did swear by the heavens, and also by the throne of God, that they would go up to battle against their enemies, and would cut them off from the face of the land.
>
> And it came to pass that I, Mormon, did utterly refuse from this time forth to be a commander and a leader of this people, because of their wickedness and abomination. Behold, I had led them, notwithstanding their wickedness I had led them many times to battle, and had loved them, according to the love of God which was in me, with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all day long for them; nevertheless, it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts.
>
> And thrice have I delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, and they have repented not of their sins. And when they had sworn by all that had been forbidden them by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that they would go up unto their enemies to battle, and avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren, behold the voice of the Lord came unto me saying: Vengeance is mine, and I will repay; because this people repented not after I had delivered them, behold, they shall be cut off from the face of the earth (Mormon 3: 19-15).

After leading his people, who were far from righteous, for 36 years, what was the straw that broke the camel's back for Mormon? His people decided to take the war to the Lamanites, for purposes of revenge.

The second story is even more to the point for our time. Sixteen years before the coming of Christ, the Nephites were under continual harassment by the Gadianton Robbers. The chief of these robbers, Giddianhi, sent a letter to the governor of the Nephites at that time, Lachoneus. The letter is offensive, in an entertaining way, and so I share it with you:

> Lachoneus, most noble and chief governor of the land, behold, I write this epistle unto you, and do give unto you exceeding great praise because of your firmness, and also the firmness of your people, in maintaining that which you suppose to be your right and liberty; yea, ye do stand well, as if ye were supported by the hand of a god, in the defense of your liberty, and your property, and your country, or that which ye do call so. And it seemeth a pity unto me, most noble Lachoneus, that ye should be so foolish and vain as to suppose that ye can stand against so many brave men who are at my command, who do now at this time stand in their arms, and do await with great anxiety for the word—Go down upon the Nephites and destroy them. And I, knowing of their unconquerable spirit, having proved them in the field of battle, and knowing of their everlasting hatred towards you because of the many wrongs which ye have done unto them, therefore if they should come down against you they would visit you with utter destruction. Therefore I have written this epistle, sealing it with my own hand, feeling for your welfare, because of your firmness in that which ye believe to be right, and your noble spirit in the field of battle.

> Therefore I write unto you, desiring that ye would yield up unto this my people, your cities, your lands, and your possessions, rather than that they should visit you with the sword and that destruction should come upon you. Or in other words, yield yourselves up unto us, and unite with us and become acquainted with our secret works, and become our brethren that ye may be like unto us—not our slaves, but our brethren and partners in all of our substance. And behold, I swear unto you, if ye will do this, with an oath, that ye shall not be destroyed; but if ye will not do this, I swear unto you with an oath, that on the morrow month I will command that my armies shall come down against you, and they shall not stay their hand, and shall let fall the sword upon you even until ye shall become extinct (3 Nephi 3: 2-8).

And with a few more such pleasantries, he closes his letter. The message is pretty clear: give up all you own, and you will live; resist, and you will be destroyed.

Lachoneus, being a "just man," told his people to call on the Lord and prepare for a siege. Being a prophet as well, he called them to repentance. They got busy preparing their defenses (3 Nephi 3:12-16). We are not told if they repented. The chief of the army at that time was the seldom-quoted prophet Gidgiddoni:

> Now it was the custom among the Nephites to appoint for their chief captains, (save it were in times of wickedness) some one that had the spirit of revelation and also prophecy; therefore, this Gidgiddoni was a great prophet among them, as also was the chief judge (3 Nephi 3:19).

> Now the people said unto Gidgiddoni: Pray unto the Lord, and let us go up into the mountains and into the wilderness, that we may fall upon the robbers and destroy them in their own lands. But Gidgiddoni saith unto them: The Lord forbid; for if we should go up against them the Lord would deliver us into their hands; therefore we will prepare ourselves in the center of our lands, and we will gather all of our armies together, and we will not go against them, but we will wait until they shall come against us; therefore, as the Lord liveth, if we do this he will deliver them into our hands (3 Nephi 3: 20-21).

From these stories it is clear that Mormons have unambiguous guidance for precisely these times. Two Book of Mormon prophets refused to take the war to their enemies, even when faced with direct and unambiguous threats from very evil men backed by armies of wicked thieves and killers. The Lord expressly prohibits wars of preemption and wars of revenge. Of course, no one confuses our political leaders with prophets or the American populace with the righteous Nephites of Gidgiddoni's day. We might, in fact, feel more connected to the Nephites of Mormon's day. They did take war to the threatening, bellicose Lamanites. But then again, we all know how well that particular preemptive campaign turned out.

Friendly History

Glen M. Leonard. *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2002). xxiv, 828 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index.

Reviewed by Gary James Bergera, managing director, the Smith-Pettit Foundation, Salt Lake City, Utah.

GLEN LEONARD'S LONG-AWAITED HISTORY OF NAUVOO is friendly history at its finest. It gently questions some deeply held beliefs about the Saints' tumultuous sojourn at the fringes of western Illinois. The writing is readable and engaging, the meaning clear. The tone is respectful, the analysis charitable, especially of some of the city's more notorious residents. It should be required reading for all inquisitive students of Latter-day Saint history.

I was fascinated by Leonard's discussion of Nauvoo's growth as a city, including its economic make-up and demographic profile, as well as by his discussion of the city's problematic involvement in municipal, county, and statewide politics and elections. His treatment of the induction of a large portion of the city's adult male population into Masonry answers many questions about this unlikely alliance. (His admission of Masonry's "mythic" ancient origins is particularly welcome [315].) His description of the temple endowment, and mention of the fullness of the priesthood ordinance, is equally illuminating (257-61). His analysis of the Council of Fifty and its narrow role in the church is noteworthy (and makes a convincing case for the release of this not-so-secret body's minutes). His discussion of Joseph Smith and plural, or celestial, marriage is at once sensitive and frank.

I was captivated by his narrative of Joseph's decision in mid-June 1844 to return to Nauvoo rather than to escape to the west (a recital that does not blame his wife, Emma), and eventual removal to Carthage Jail; his downplaying of some of the myths surrounding Joseph's martyrdom; his treatment of the stand-off between Brigham Young and Sidney Rigdon for control of the church (and his conclusion that Hyrum Smith had been Joseph's designated successor); his portrayal of Nauvoo after Joseph; his recounting of the church's preparations prior to its departure into the wilderness (and the fact that its leaders did not know precisely where they were going until less than two months before leaving); and his description of the exodus from Nauvoo, the Desolate City (618).

While my own knowledge of Nauvoo is limited, I did note several relatively minor errors. Jane Law was married to William, not Wilson, Law (145). Missouri ex-governor Lilburn W. Boggs was wounded in 1842, not 1843 (320). Theodore Turley was not the second polygamist in Nauvoo (346). (Evi-

dence now demonstrates that Turley married his first plural wife in March 1844.) Eliza and Emily Partridge are called orphans, but in fact only their father had passed away when they moved into Joseph and Emma Smith's house; their mother, Lydia, did not die until 1878 in Utah (348). Again on page 348, the best evidence now suggests that both John E. Page and Lyman Wight contracted plural marriages prior to Joseph Smith's death. Francis M. Higbee brought suit against Joseph Smith in May 1844, claiming that Joseph had slandered him, not that Joseph had attempted to seduce Nancy Rigdon (361). (Joseph's proposals to Nancy in 1842, and their fallout, did remain for Francis a wound that never healed). Finally, it was Hyrum Smith, not his brother William, who read Joseph's revelation on celestial marriage to the Nauvoo High Council in August 1843 (363).

The best history is always heuristic; and Leonard's is especially stimulating. For example, he concludes that Joseph Smith did not translate the Kinderhook Plates (212). Yet William Clayton, writing in his diary, doesn't seem to leave much room for doubt when he recorded on 1 May 1843: "Prest J[oseph]. [Smith] has translated a portion and says they contain the history of the person with whom they were found & he was a descendant of Ham through the loins of Pharoah king of Egypt, and that he received his kingdom from the ruler of heaven & earth."[1] On the other hand, Leonard refers to Joseph's Book of Abraham project, not as a translation, but as a revelation, explaining, "Joseph Smith's biblical studies relied more upon supernatural knowledge than earth-bound book learning" (211).

Leonard rejects Todd Compton's conclusions regarding the total number of plural wives Joseph married during his lifetime (345). He favors not thirty-three wives, but twenty-eight, relying on the research of Danel Bachman and more recently of Scott Faulring and Richard Anderson. Curiously, Leonard does not cite Compton in this context (though he does list Compton's book in the bibliography); Leonard does cite Faulring and Anderson, whose work appeared as a review of Compton's book. Compton has responded to Faulring and Anderson, and I believe that Compton's arguments are the more persuasive.[2]

Leonard is commendably balanced in his treatment of John C. Bennett, the traitor Mormons love to hate. However, he asserts without question that Bennett was excommunicated (248). Bennett always insisted that he first withdrew with Joseph's blessing but that later the historical record was altered to read that he had been formally expelled. My own guess is that Bennett was allowed to withdraw but that the record was changed to read that the church had formally acted to expel him. Leonard also seems to imply that Bennett was alone in using Joseph Smith's name to introduce women to his counterfeit of the prophet's teachings. In fact, Joseph's own younger brother William told at least two women that the prophet privately sanctioned such relationships.

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1. Quoted in George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991, 1995), p. 100.

2. See www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/7207/rev.html.

Leonard also, in my opinion, simplifies the situation regarding Bennett and Orson and Sarah Pratt (352). He accepts the claim that Bennett attempted to seduce Sarah. Yet Sarah blamed her own and Orson's temporary withdrawal from church participation on Joseph's overtures, not Bennett's. Sarah's biographer, Richard Van Wagoner (whom Leonard does not reference), concluded sixteen years ago that Sarah's name was not associated with Bennett until after Orson had confronted the prophet. I think the evidence better accommodates the conclusion that Joseph did in fact invite Sarah to become his plural wife during Orson's absence to England but perhaps (and this is a big "perhaps") only to "test" her virtue.

Leonard's treatment of the succession of Brigham Young as *de facto* president of the church is thorough and reasonable. As already mentioned, he believes that Joseph appointed Hyrum as his successor. Leonard also believes that the Quorum of the Twelve was Joseph's next choice, that the possibility of alternative options may have been viable at specific moments in church history, but that by 1844 Joseph had arrived at certain conclusions about his successor. Leonard may be correct. Still, it is not as apparent to me that Joseph had managed sufficiently to foresee the need for a successor. I wonder if Joseph actually believed that he would die a young man. I think the evidence is compelling that he fully expected he would live to lead his church into Texas or the Pacific Northwest. The Twelve may have been, in retrospect, the most logical or prepared choice to succeed Joseph, but I'm not entirely convinced that's what Joseph actually had in mind.

Finally, a concluding thought on Leonard's use of sources. While his notes and bibliography seem comprehensive, they in fact omit reference to some works that, to my mind, are conspicuous by their absence. I realize that Leonard may not have had sufficient time to review all relevant works, or may have felt their contents were not germane, or perhaps he or his publisher did not want to draw the attention of his target audience to some works, for whatever reason. I have already noted his partial omission of Compton's *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*. Other omissions include: M. Guy Bishop's articles "'What Has Become of Our Fathers?' Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo" and "Eternal Marriage in Early Mormon Marital Beliefs"; Martha Sontag Bradley's *Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier*; David John Buerger's *Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (or his two *Dialogue* articles on the same topics); Andrew F. Ehat's BYU master's thesis, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question"; Scott Faulring's *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (though Leonard does cite Dean Jessee's editions of Joseph's diaries); Michael Homer on "Mormonism and Masonry"; Myrtle Hyde's *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel*; D. Michael Quinn's *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (though Leonard does reference three of Quinn's published articles); and Richard Van Wagoner's *Mormon Polygamy: A History* and his *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess*. (Reference to the latter would have greatly bolstered Leonard's discussion of Rigdon's "mood swings" [447].)

Leonard's sympathy for the Saints may be his greatest strength as well as, for more critically minded readers, his

greatest weakness. Indeed, after reading *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise,* it is difficult to think of a more persecuted, more misunderstood, but ultimately more honest and well-meaning people in all of American history than the city's Mormon population. Of course, this is debatable, and I believe Leonard would be the first to admit that most nontraditional religions would describe themselves using similar terms. I realize that Leonard's interpretations occasionally differ from mine, even when we're both reading the same sources. What I most appreciate is his ability to make the hopes and aspirations of Nauvoo's Saints comprehensible. Leonard has helped me to feel what it was like to have walked the same muddy streets as Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Brigham Young, John C. Bennett, William Law, and Wilson Law, Emma Smith, Eliza R. Snow, and Lucy Mack Smith. And I am grateful for the experience.

Book of Mormon Stories

Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives, by Mark D. Thomas (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 236 pp.

By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion, by Terryl L. Givens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 320 pp.

Reviewed by Jana Riess, Ph.D., Religion Book Review Editor for *Publishers Weekly.*

AFTER DECADES OF NEGLECT BY SCHOLARS, theologians, and even rank-and-file Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon may be finally getting its due. Recently, several books have underscored the importance of this controversial work of scripture, including a flawed but potentially pioneering study by Mark Thomas and a graceful synthesis by *Viper on the Hearth* author Terryl Givens.

If there is a central thesis in Givens's *apologia,* it is that "the message of the Book of Mormon was and continues to be inseparable from the story of its origins—a story involving angels, seer stones, and golden plates" (37). What follows is a sort of rescue operation, an erudite argument for the intellectual respectability of faith in the Book of Mormon as an ancient and divinely inspired text. If, as Givens claims, the Book of Mormon's message is in fact "its manner of origin" (84), then the burden lies with Latter-day Saints to demonstrate that its origins are credible.

Givens opens with several fine chapters that set the stage for understanding the Book of Mormon, its significance, and its organization and content. He addresses what we know about the translation of the plates and argues that there is evidence that the Book of Mormon was indeed dictated orally and not copied from written sources. He also shadow-boxes with Dan Vogel and others who claim that declarations about the Book of Mormon's divine origins can be dismissed because the three witnesses may have been victims of group hallucination. Givens points out that "Dream-visions may be in the mind of the beholder, but gold plates are not subject to such

greatest weakness. Indeed, after reading *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise,* it is difficult to think of a more persecuted, more misunderstood, but ultimately more honest and well-meaning people in all of American history than the city's Mormon population. Of course, this is debatable, and I believe Leonard would be the first to admit that most nontraditional religions would describe themselves using similar terms. I realize that Leonard's interpretations occasionally differ from mine, even when we're both reading the same sources. What I most appreciate is his ability to make the hopes and aspirations of Nauvoo's Saints comprehensible. Leonard has helped me to feel what it was like to have walked the same muddy streets as Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Brigham Young, John C. Bennett, William Law, and Wilson Law, Emma Smith, Eliza R. Snow, and Lucy Mack Smith. And I am grateful for the experience.

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facile psychologizing. They were, in the angel's words, buried in a nearby hillside, not in Joseph's psyche or religious unconscious, and they chronicle a history of *this* hemisphere, not a heavenly city to come" (42). Score one for Givens.

One of the most curious aspects of the Book of Mormon's history is its relative neglect by Latter-day Saints until very recently. Givens writes, "looking at the Book of Mormon in terms of its early uses and reception, it becomes clear that this American scripture has exerted influence within the church and reaction outside the church not primarily by virtue of its substance, but rather its manner of appearing, not on the merits of what it *says*, but what it *enacts*" (63-64). It was "an ensign to the nations," but was not often quoted in sacrament meetings or conferences. Its appearance was a sign of the fulfillment of prophecy, yet Latter-day Saints composed few hymns about its message and stories and seem to have ignored it in their private devotions. Reference to the Book of Mormon in the nineteenth century was "surprisingly uncommon," suggests Givens; when Saints did invoke the book it was to trumpet "the doctrine of gathering and an imminent second coming" (67). Jan Shipps has shown, for example, that in six years of the journals of missionary apostle William McLellin, that "avid record-keeper" cited the Book of Mormon only three times as a subject of sermons (70).

The body of Givens's book presents, in prose that is both elegant and eloquent, a balanced and gentle apologia for the Book of Mormon as an ancient document. In chapters four and five, he addresses "the search for a Mesoamerican Troy" (89), revisiting archaeological debates about the Book of Mormon. He nimbly explains that the Book of Mormon spoke of Native Americans as having "highly developed civilizations with 'mighty cities'" several years before the 1833 discovery of ancient temple ruins in Central America (97-8). Joseph Smith, he says, moved from a position of wanting to corroborate the text with external evidence to one of presenting the Book of Mormon "as *itself* the evidence the scholars needed to solve *their* mysteries" (103).

This chapter also offers a very sensitive treatment of B. H. Roberts's complicated role as an apologist for the Book of Mormon. Some paint him as a stalwart whose faith in the Book of Mormon was never so much as tested by the difficulties he encountered in the text while others portray him as a charlatan who maintained a public façade as an apostle although he had privately dismissed the Book of Mormon as a fallacy. Neither extreme is accurate, and Givens's nuanced treatment goes a long way toward helping readers understand Roberts as a person of strong faith tempered by real doubt. (In contrast, Givens expends considerable ink discussing the leadership that Thomas Ferguson showed in pioneering attempts at Book of Mormon archaeology in the mid-twentieth century, but then glosses over Ferguson's subsequent exodus from the faith in just one sentence on p. 147.)

Chapter five draws heavily upon the apologetic works of Hugh Nibley, John Sorenson, and the teams of researchers at FARMS to demonstrate "the search for a rational belief" (117) in the Book of Mormon. One surprise that emerges from this chapter is that the "limited geography" theory is hardly new: a 1938 church study guide clarified that "the Book of Mormon deals only with the history and expansion of three small colonies which came to America" (127). In this chap-

ter, Givens takes on the Smithsonian Institution's infamous 1979 statement challenging the historical claims of the Book of Mormon. On the subject of ancient metallurgy, for example, Givens says that the Smithsonian "has chosen to disregard both linguistic and archaeological evidence that would support the Book of Mormon's plausible use of terms such as "bow of steel" (131). In this chapter Givens also argues persuasively for the existence of complex chiastic structures in the Book of Mormon, as in the Bible, but then inadequately addresses legitimate questions about the exceptionally rapid growth of the Nephite population as recounted in the Book of Mormon. (Such growth "would only require that the people of the Book of Mormon were as exceptional in their fecundity as the Mormon people are today in their longevity!" he writes on p. 139. The humor is much appreciated, but this is not a persuasive, specific solution to the problem.)

Toward the end of the book, Givens offers a powerful chapter on the Book of Mormon's oft-ambiguous relation to the Bible, which it simultaneously confirms and impugns (189). This chapter is the most reflective and theological of the book, and also, potentially, its most innovative. Givens shows the mark of a complex theologian as he considers questions of agency and justice, trinitarian and unitarian ideals, canon and the role of revelation. The next chapter picks up on the revelatory theme as he considers "dialogic revelation," which he says is one of the Book of Mormon's most distinctive features. The scripture issues a "radical challenge" to traditional Christianity (218) because it heralds the notion that personal, not just prophetic or national revelation, is possible and desirable.

It's difficult to convey here how well and engagingly Givens can write; he leads the reader through a careful yet absorbing study that is both evocative and provocative. The chapters are fluidly organized and seem to move from strength to strength. Scattered throughout are the welcome reminders of Givens's "day job" as a professor of English: an epigraph from G. K. Chesterton, a reference to Homer, a discussion of the "Miltonic" fall of humanity, a vision of Dante's hell. Such allusions are a welcome invigoration of a Mormon literature that is too often insular and fraught with internecine trivialities.

Givens's thesis about the Book of Mormon's foundation in historical fact becomes more strident as the book wears on and is reiterated in various ways on pp. 80, 103, and 176. On p. 182 it reaches a fever pitch when Givens goes so far as to say that "naturalizing the origins of the Book of Mormon *is* to emasculate its efficacy as Mormon scripture." Besides that remark's rather troubling gender connotations, it makes it very clear how Givens feels about the other book assigned here for review. Enter Mark Thomas and his revisionist work *Digging in Cumorah*, which by Givens's assessment must be the steel blade that performs the "emasculation" of Mormonism's key sacred text. Givens and Thomas are agreed on one essential point: that the Book of Mormon has been overlooked for far too long. From that brief vision of shared purpose—the recovery of the Book of Mormon as a text to be taken seriously—the authors' paths diverge sharply.

In the end, it may be Thomas who breaks new ground, however unevenly. In Thomas's case, the "groundbreaking" takes the form of an earthquake ranking at least a seven on the

Richter scale: most Latter-day Saints will be at least temporarily shaken, even dislodged, by it. It is discomfiting; it is hard-hitting; it can be above all surprising—much like the Book of Mormon itself.

Readers will know it's going to be a rigorous examination from Thomas's opening line, which at first glance seems innocuous enough. "The Book of Mormon has been, by almost any measure, one of the most influential books of scripture to appear since the revelations of Muhammad produced Islam nearly 1,400 years ago," he commences (vii). Ah, what a difference a preposition makes. By calling Islam the product of the revelations *of* Muhammad rather than the revelations *to* Muhammad, as any orthodox Muslim would, Thomas is subtly casting doubt on the integrity of prophetic revelation.

Thomas's book succeeds best as a long-overdue exegesis of the Book of Mormon. He offers interesting arguments on the text's repetition of threes, for example, and draws from the discipline of Ritual Studies to explore the Book of Mormon's use of "signs" versus "symbols." Thomas knows the Book of Mormon intimately, and can often provide comparisons with relevant biblical texts or parallels within the Book of Mormon itself.

He approaches the Book of Mormon with a keen interpreter's eye, teasing out thematic unity and asking some profound theological questions. He offers especially compelling thoughts on how the book simultaneously presents itself as incomplete and possessing all of the fullness of the gospel. "It is this mythic tension between completed and emerging worlds that is one of the major shaping forces in the Book of Mormon narratives, in the Mormon view of revelation, and in the theological outlook of Mormons," he explains (28-29). Topping out the book's strengths is its wise, beautiful, and mature discussion of race and skin color in the Book of Mormon (e.g., 84).

Despite these considerable assets, Thomas's work suffers from both minor and major flaws. The small quibbles relate to the writing style, which can be pedestrian ("This chapter will examine. . ."), and the distressing prevalence of small factual errors throughout the book. The Cane Ridge revival is spelled "Cain Ridge" (52); the scholars of the Jesus Seminar are falsely labeled as being "atheists" (62); the book of 2 Esdras is mistakenly credited as being "in the Bible" instead of in the Apocrypha (101); and the Radical Reformers are supposed to have "rejected the classical Protestant position of salvation by grace alone" (50). (If anything, the radical reformers clung more tenaciously to this doctrine than Luther or even Calvin did. Also, it's certainly worth asking just how "classical" the Protestant position could have been to the Radical Reformers of the mid-sixteenth century, since the Reformation only began in 1517.)

More troubling than these small errata, however, is the overarching tenor of Thomas's agenda. His study begins so boldly, so prophetically, with an introduction that is nothing short of intrepid. He calls for "a new tradition in Book of Mormon studies" and puts his own work forward as that tradition's foundation (ix). He notes that "almost all serious Mormon scholarship on the book attempts to reconstruct its historical origins, making little or no effort at interpretation" (viii). Moreover, Thomas suggests that both critics and apologists "must find a way of talking about what the book actually says" and engaging it as a nar-

rative (3). Such a promise is welcome indeed.

But before we break out the sparkling cider at this refreshing turn of events and celebrate a new era in Book of Mormon studies—a Golden Age in which the book will actually be *studied* and not simply heralded (unread) by followers or dismissed (unread) by skeptics—it's important to note that Thomas doesn't meet his own expectations. He sets out to create a book that brackets out questions of the Book of Mormon's authorship and historical authenticity, but he doesn't deliver that. Instead, he assumes throughout that the book is Joseph Smith's own creation and doggedly seeks every opportunity to demonstrate its nineteenth-century character. How very tired. Thomas goes to great lengths to show that Joseph Smith borrowed from early nineteenth-century evangelical jargon about conversion (136), righteous deaths (165), and "wilderness" experiences or spiritually desolate times (93). What is perhaps new in Thomas's assessment is that he posits an astonishingly well-read Joseph Smith, who by Thomas's reckoning must have been familiar with the works of historians Edward Gibbon (190) and Josephus (203), as well as contemporary evangelical preachers such as Lorenzo Dow.

Such reductionism is disappointing in a book that begins so iconoclastically, even brilliantly. The reader is promised a new debate and is instead given a retread of the same question that has dominated Book of Mormon scholarship since 1830: Who wrote the book? Thomas is more sophisticated an interpreter of the text than most, however. If readers will persevere, there are many golden nuggets of exegesis to keep them going, not the least of which is his fine treatment of the problem of "secret combinations" in the last chapter. But after readers finish his book, they should return to the introduction and evaluate whether Thomas has indeed changed the focus of debate about the Book of Mormon as promised. This reviewer answers that question with a disappointed "no," but hopes that other scholars will feel moved to take up the discussion according to Thomas's original terms.

Lucy's Own Voice

Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir, edited by Lavina Fielding Anderson, with an introduction by Irene M. Bates (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 968 pp.

Reviewed by Susan Sessions Rugh, Associate Professor of History, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

IN THE WINTER AFTER THE MARTYRDOM OF HER SONS, Joseph and Hyrum, Lucy Mack Smith dictated a history of her family to Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, a sympathetic schoolteacher in Nauvoo. Two copies were made of the manuscript: one was published as *Biographical Sketches* by Apostle Orson Pratt in 1853 in the *Millennial Star*, and the other went to Utah where Brigham Young suppressed it in 1865. Ostensibly he quashed it because Mother Smith's memory was faulty, but more likely it was because Lucy argued that

rative (3). Such a promise is welcome indeed.

But before we break out the sparkling cider at this refreshing turn of events and celebrate a new era in Book of Mormon studies—a Golden Age in which the book will actually be *studied* and not simply heralded (unread) by followers or dismissed (unread) by skeptics—it's important to note that Thomas doesn't meet his own expectations. He sets out to create a book that brackets out questions of the Book of Mormon's authorship and historical authenticity, but he doesn't deliver that. Instead, he assumes throughout that the book is Joseph Smith's own creation and doggedly seeks every opportunity to demonstrate its nineteenth-century character. How very tired. Thomas goes to great lengths to show that Joseph Smith borrowed from early nineteenth-century evangelical jargon about conversion (136), righteous deaths (165), and "wilderness" experiences or spiritually desolate times (93). What is perhaps new in Thomas's assessment is that he posits an astonishingly well-read Joseph Smith, who by Thomas's reckoning must have been familiar with the works of historians Edward Gibbon (190) and Josephus (203), as well as contemporary evangelical preachers such as Lorenzo Dow.

Such reductionism is disappointing in a book that begins so iconoclastically, even brilliantly. The reader is promised a new debate and is instead given a retread of the same question that has dominated Book of Mormon scholarship since 1830: Who wrote the book? Thomas is more sophisticated an interpreter of the text than most, however. If readers will persevere, there are many golden nuggets of exegesis to keep them going, not the least of which is his fine treatment of the problem of "secret combinations" in the last chapter. But after readers finish his book, they should return to the introduction and evaluate whether Thomas has indeed changed the focus of debate about the Book of Mormon as promised. This reviewer answers that question with a disappointed "no," but hopes that other scholars will feel moved to take up the discussion according to Thomas's original terms.

Lucy's Own Voice

Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir, edited by Lavina Fielding Anderson, with an introduction by Irene M. Bates (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 968 pp.

Reviewed by Susan Sessions Rugh, Associate Professor of History, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

IN THE WINTER AFTER THE MARTYRDOM OF HER SONS, Joseph and Hyrum, Lucy Mack Smith dictated a history of her family to Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, a sympathetic schoolteacher in Nauvoo. Two copies were made of the manuscript: one was published as *Biographical Sketches* by Apostle Orson Pratt in 1853 in the *Millennial Star*, and the other went to Utah where Brigham Young suppressed it in 1865. Ostensibly he quashed it because Mother Smith's memory was faulty, but more likely it was because Lucy argued that

prophetic succession was through the Smith family line. In the next decades George A. Smith and Elias Smith edited and revised the text to reflect the preferences of the LDS hierarchy. Not until 1901, when the RLDS threat was no longer serious, did the church allow the publication of the serialized document in the *Improvement Era*. The 1901 version is the one with which most Mormons are familiar, compiled and edited in 1945 by Preston Nibley, and still in print. More recent attempts to restore the original text have been incomplete: Dan Vogel published a portion of the narrative in *Early Mormon Documents*, and Scott Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor edited *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother* (Bookcraft 1996), excising some material and standardizing spelling and punctuation.

With all these versions available, why the need for *Lucy's Book*? Jan Shipps, who has praised Lucy Smith's history as "a rare and valuable first-hand account provided by an observer closely connected to the primary participants in the early development of the Mormon movement," argues that the reliability of the 1853 edition rests upon its concordance with the original 1845 Coray manuscript.[1] *Lucy's Book* "is the first one-volume history to arrange the earliest known manuscript source of the text Lucy dictated in 1844-45 with the version printed in England in 1853 by Apostle Orson Pratt" (16). The two documents are arranged in parallel columns, augmented by notes based upon a "fair copy" of the manuscript by Howard Coray (although Anderson states that the number of corrections is "surprisingly small" [16]). Before turning to the document, shrewd readers will study the chart on page 218, which lays out the genealogy of the manuscript. Lucy's narrative is divided into six parts, generally corresponding to the locales of the story; it begins with Smith and Mack family genealogies and ends with the assassination of Lucy's sons, Hyrum and Joseph. A fine introductory essay by Irene Bates sketches the life of Lucy Smith in her historical context. Miscellaneous letters and poems are gathered into a short appendix, followed by a brief epilogue and biographical summaries.

The complicated history of Lucy's text raises central questions about who controls the past and about the interplay between history and memory. One would be foolish to read Lucy's text transparently—each edition bears the imprint of its editor, this one included. *Lucy's Book* is an apt title because Anderson's clearly stated goal is to find "Lucy's own voice behind the layers of words that have accumulated since its writing" (66). In a compelling introductory essay, Anderson agrees with Shipps that the *History* is essentially a family memoir, but Anderson breaks new ground by presenting Lucy Smith as a "model of domestic spirituality" (17). Though brief, Anderson's interpretive framework is useful in understanding Mother Smith in her own right, not only as mother of the prophet and mother of the church.

More to the point is Anderson's extensive essay on the history of the text, accompanied by a detailed chronology extending from 1732 to 2001. She concludes that while the Young-directed revisions of the text

1. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 92.

were not maliciously made, she finds it "unpleasant to see him sneer at a faithful mother of twelve who donated her time and sacrificed her economic well-being, dismissing her as a sensation-seeking would-be novelist" (132). Clearly, this editor's sympathies lie with Lucy Smith, not Brigham Young. Using Howard Coray's "fair copy," Anderson argues that the revised manuscript differs materially from Lucy's writings: the Pratt publication omitted about 10 percent of the rough draft, and 28 percent of the words in the 1853 publication were not present in Lucy's draft. She cites relevant passages of the text to demonstrate the vitality and richness of Lucy's narration and, thus, makes a strong case for returning to Lucy's draft in this impeccably detailed version.

This volume is a summary achievement, recognized by the Best Book Award from the John Whitmer Historical Association and the Best Documentary Book Award from the Mormon History Association. Only someone like Anderson possesses the editorial skills and attention to detail to present the document fairly in its complicated versions. But *Lucy's Book* does much more than faithfully reproduce "Mormonism's first female autobiography" (11); it supplies us with an interpretation that enhances our understanding of a woman, a family, and a religious movement in its formative years. By foregrounding Lucy and paying attention to the meanings of gender, this book makes a contribution not only to Mormon history, but to the history of American religion. Now that we have a text we can trust, the way is open for reliable scholarly treatments of issues like female spirituality, motherhood, and women in early American religion.

In sum, mass market versions of the *History* simply cannot measure up to the reliability of *Lucy's Book*. Scholars and serious Mormon history aficionados will want this version on their shelves. Finally, it is time to let Lucy speak for herself.

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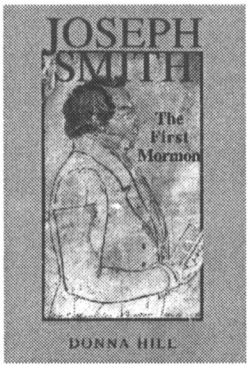

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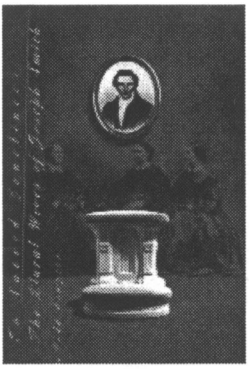

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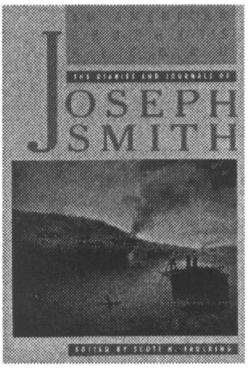

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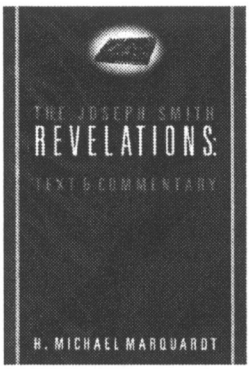

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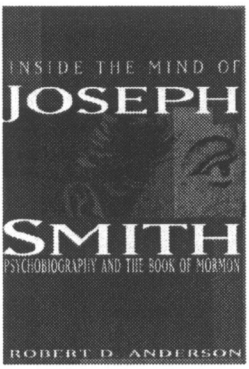

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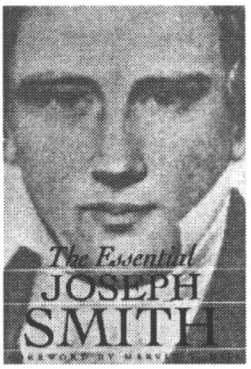

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"Joseph Smith taught the
doctrine that the infant child
that was laid away in death
would come up in the
resurrection as a child; and,
pointing to the mother of a
lifeless child, he said to her:
'You will have the joy,
the pleasure, and satisfaction
of nurturing this child, after its
resurrection, until it reaches
the full stature of its spirit.'
There is restitution, there
is growth, there is development,
after the resurrection
from death. I love this truth.
It speaks volumes of happiness,
of joy and gratitude to my soul.
Thank the lord he has
revealed these principles to us."

Joseph F. Smith

(Joseph F. Smith,
Gospel Doctrine, p. 455-56)

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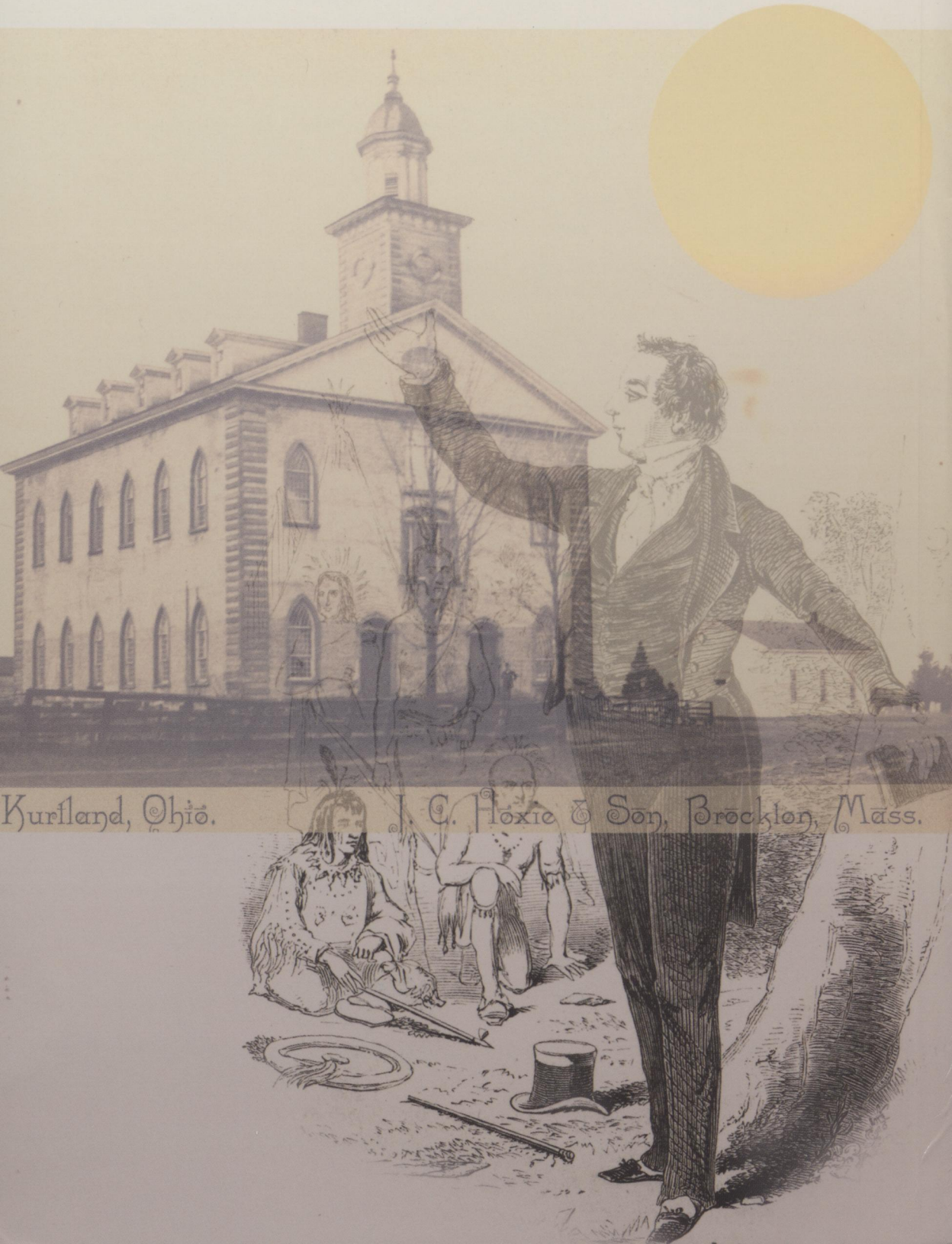
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