DIALOGUE
a journal of mormon thought

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

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CONTENTS

LETTERS

George Smith Responds — *George D. Smith* — v

Unapproachable Nature — *Emily Parker Updegraff* — vii

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Salvation through a Tabernacle: Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and Early Mormon Theologies of Embodiment — *Benjamin E. Park* — 1

Mormon Women in the History of Second-Wave Feminism — *Laurel Thatcher Ulrich* — 45

Joseph Smith as a Creative Interpreter of the Bible — *Heikki Räisänen* — 64

Joseph Smith in Hermeneutical Crisis — *Christopher C. Smith* — 86

INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS

Divine Darwinism, Comprehensible Christianity, and the Atheist's Wager: Richard Rorty on Mormonism—an Interview with Mary V. Rorty and Patricia Rorty — *Stephen T. Cranney* — 109

Hermeneutic Adventures in Home Teaching: Mary and Richard Rorty — *Scott Abbott* — 131

PERSONAL VOICES

Dreams of Summer — *Lauri Gobel Leslie* — 136

POETRY

the god of small things — *Reed Richards* — 147

Sheets — *Russell Moorehead* — 148

Untitled — *Russell Moorehead* — 149

From Outside the Settlement — *Darren M. Edwards* — 150

Contingency #4: White Out — *James Best* — 152

Our First Home Has Forgotten Us — *James Best* — 153

FICTION AND CREATIVE NONFICTION

Hurt or Make Afraid — *Samuel Brown* — 154

Ten Fictions about My Father — *Nathan Robison* — 168

REVIEWS

Legacy of a Lesser-Known Apostle

Edward Leo Lyman. *Amasa Mason Lyman, Mormon Apostle and Apostate: A Study in Dedication* — *Blair Dee Hodges* — 178

Loving Truthfully

Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate* — *Jeremiah John* — 189

Twilight and Dawn: Turn-of-the-Century Mormonism

Lu Ann Faylor Snyder and Phillip A. Snyder, eds. *Post-Manifesto Polygamy: The 1899–1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff* — *Stephen C. Taysom* — 197

Mormon Pulp with a Reading Group Guide

David Ebershoff. *The 19th Wife: A Novel* — *Mark Decker* — 201

FROM THE PULPIT

A Gentile Recommends the Book of Mormon — *Peter A. Huff* — 206

CONTRIBUTORS — 213

WRITING AWARDS FOR 2009 — 215

ABOUT THE ARTIST — 216

Letters

George D. Smith Responds

I appreciate the enthusiastic response to *Nauvoo Polygamy*: *". . . but we called it celestial marriage"* reviewed in *Dialogue* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2009), by Todd M. Compton, "The Beginnings of Latter-day Plurality," (235–40) and Brian C. Hales "*Nauvoo Polygamy*: The Latest Word" (213–35). Compton noted how central polygamy was to Joseph Smith's theology and commented that Richard Lyman Bushman omitted important marriage history in his biography, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), not even naming Joseph's singular fourteen-year-old wife, Helen Mar Kimball. Bushman's contribution, however, was to confirm for a broad LDS audience the reality of this sometimes-doubted dimension of Joseph's life.

My intent in *Nauvoo Polygamy* was to document a practice once buried in coded language. As Emily Partridge explained, "Spiritual wives, as we were then termed, were not very numerous in those days and a spiritual baby was a rarity indeed" (533). Another wife, Zina Huntington (Mrs. Henry Jacobs), reflected on the "principle" as something "we hardly dared speak of . . . the very walls had ears. We spoke of it only in whispers" (78). This was the climate in which Joseph married thirty-seven plural wives, a total for which Compton agrees a "strong case" can be made.

But as the Prophet alerted an inner circle of friends to their "privileges" of more wives, his adversarial surroundings, including his own watchful wife, Emma, and stalking sheriffs, may have made it awkward to conceive babies. Joseph warned Sarah Ann Whitney, his wife of three weeks, to visit him but cautiously—watching out for Emma because, when she was present, "you cannot be safe, but when she is not here, there is the most perfect saf[e]ty: only be careful to escape observation." Joseph pleaded for "comfort" at "my lonely retreat" in the back room of Carlos Granger's farmhouse. Telling his new wife "my feelings are so strong for you since what has pas[s]ed lately between us," he appealed to Sarah Ann to "come and see me" (along with her parents whom Joseph would seal in eternal marriage three days later) because "now is the time to afford me succour" (143). Sarah Ann's father would marry seven plural wives of his own over the next four years (631).

One of Joseph's wives, Melissa Lott, confirmed that she had "roomed with him" and was "a wife in all that word implies," but acknowledged that they had no children. She explained their absence as due to "no fault of either of us, [but] lack of proper conditions on my part probably." She noted that they had little time together before Joseph was

"martyred nine months after our marriage" (216). Melissa's experience is mirrored by Lucy Walker Smith's comments on the difficulty of the "hazardous life [Joseph] lived;" he was "in constant fear of being betrayed," suggesting for that reason that he found it hard to father children by his plural wives (228).

However, Joseph's plural wife Sylvia Sessions confided to her daughter Josephine Rosetta Lyon (named after Joseph) that the Prophet had fathered her in 1844, six years after Sylvia married the man accepted as Josephine's father, Windsor Lyon, in 1838. Sylvia continued to live with Windsor and bore his children for four more years (through 1848).[1] Joseph's child Josephine was clearly born during Windsor's marriage to Sylvia and within their nine-year span of childbearing.

While Brian Hales's hypothesis that Joseph did not have sex with women who were already married to other men is interesting, I found it a rather unpersuasive prooftext. Hales posits Joseph as a "ceremonial husband" and hypothesizes a period when Sylvia was "unmarried" from her legal husband Windsor during the time when she bore Josephine. Hales's decision to dismiss sexual relationships with married women ignores the only purpose Smith ever presented for engaging in plural marriages in the first place—which was, in Book of Mormon terms—to "raise up seed"[2] as his millennialist community approached the expected end of the world. Each of Joseph's marriages was, by definition, predicated upon the expectation that the couple would produce righteous children to be among the predicted "144,000" who would be saved from the earth's destruction (Rev. 7:3–8; 14:1, 3–5). In 1835 Joseph predicted that "fifty-six years should wind up the scene" (535).

Besides Emily Partridge, Zina Jacobs, Melissa Lott, and Sylvia Sessions, there is further testimony that Joseph was intimate with, or had children with, his plural wives. Joseph's sixth known plural wife, Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, the fourth wife who was already married, told an audience at Brigham Young University in 1905 that she "knew" that Joseph had "three children" by his plural wives. "They told me," she said. "I think two of them are living today, [but] they are not known as his children as they go by other names" (96).

Most of Joseph's marriages occurred within a little over a year, from winter 1842 through spring 1843—even though he interrupted his weddings during the last half of 1842 after John C. Bennett exposed polygamy to the press. Joseph resumed marrying in 1843 and then issued a revelation that sanctioned the practice. His last known wife, Fanny Young Murray, married him in autumn 1843. Had Joseph wed plural wives over an uninterrupted several-year period, more children might have been born.

As we review Nauvoo Temple records, affidavits, court depositions, eyewitness letters, diaries, and journals, we hear testimony that Joseph was intimate with his wives and had

children by them. It makes sense that there would have been children from at least some of these marriages. However, even if there were no offspring, we could not conclude that there was no intimacy.

Joseph led an inner circle of Nauvoo polygamists in the 1840s, thirty-three men, who by June 1844 had married 124 women, and whose numbers would eventually include 346 women, or 10.5 wives for each man. Although this Nauvoo practice has long been omitted from official Church history, as Compton concludes, this study enhances "our understanding of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young." These thirty-three Nauvoo men were the pioneers of Mormon polygamy, possibly Joseph's most important contribution to Mormon culture.

Notes

1. Sylvia gave birth to six children by Windsor between 1839 and 1848; while still Lyon's wife, she accepted a sealing to Joseph Smith in 1842 and had his child (Josephine) in February 1844; furthermore, she was resealed to Smith for eternity in September 1844 (like many other of Joseph's wives), a ceremony resolemnized for a third time in the Nauvoo Temple in January 1846, with Heber Kimball acting as Smith's proxy. Sylvia's last two children were born in Iowa City in 1847 and 1848 after the main body of Mormons had migrated to Utah.

2. The Book of Mormon, which introduced polygamy to the Saints as a conditional prohibition (which would soon change) (Jacob 2:24–30) was said to be inscribed in "reformed Egyptian." Hales misreads the Napoleon connection by stating: Smith "also links Nauvoo polygamy's genesis to the widespread cultural influence of Egypt, drawing an explicit comparison between Joseph and Napoleon," (*Dialogue,* 218) who wrote "ardent love letter[s]" to *his* Josephine. I do not attribute Joseph Smith's polygamy to Napoleon. Joseph was born into a world fascinated with the Egyptian hieroglyphics and artifacts that Napoleon brought back to Europe from his campaign in Egypt at the turn of the nineteenth century. Joseph built his community on the Mississippi, upriver from Cairo, Illinois (founded in 1837), Memphis, Tennessee (founded in 1819), and nearby other Egyptian-named towns. Moreover, Joseph translated two scriptural documents from Egyptian writing, a language to which the western world was awakened as a result of the Napoleonic campaigns. Joseph's actual revelatory explanation for plural marriage (D&C 132) is phrased less directly than the Book of Mormon but has the same message. The righteous are commanded to "do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved" (v. 32); and Abraham's "works," which allowed the Lord to bring him the promised blessing of "seed . . . as innumerable as the stars; or, . . . the sand upon the seashore" (v. 30) was to take additional wives.

George D. Smith
San Francisco

Unapproachable Nature

Mark Nielsen's brilliant article, "'That Which Surpasses All Understanding': The Limitations of Human Thought" (42, no. 3 [Fall 2009]: 1–20), reveals the mathematical uni-

verse to be a very strange place, with the numbers in our mathematical vocabulary being a small bucket-dip out of the ocean of real numbers. This idea was new to me, and very arresting.

The same evening that I encountered it, I also read the chapters on the Big Bang and dark matter in *The Whole Shebang, a State-of-the-Universe(s) Report* by Timothy Ferris (New York: Touchstone, 1997). After describing the remarkable way in which the Big Bang theory was conceived of and empirically substantiated, Ferris explains one of its most interesting implications. When matter was created in the moments after the Big Bang, the vast majority of it was in the form of what astrophysicists call dark matter. This dark matter, which is totally undetectable to us, comprises between 90 and 99 percent of the matter in the universe.

So in one evening I learned that most of the matter and most of the numbers in the universe are unknown or *unknowable*. What a startling and humbling realization!

It is a remarkable achievement to be able to prove that numbers which mathematicians have never "seen" actually exist, but even more remarkable are Gödel's theorems establishing, as Nielsen explains, that "we can never discover all correct mathematical facts" nor can we ever be "certain that the mathematics we are doing is free of contradictions" (13). Given the scientific advances made in the past hundred years, I think it is easy for us to become quite impressed with ourselves and to begin to believe that, given enough time and funding, we can make the universe give up all of its secrets.

But the Big Bang is a lesson in humility. Its existence begs the question of what came before it, and this is a question that science has no tools to explore. As Francis Collins writes in *The Language of God* (New York: Free Press, 2006): "[This realization] has caused a few agnostic scientists to sound downright theological" (66). Collins quotes the astrophysicist Robert Jastrow: "At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries" (66).

The theologians didn't arrive there by reason. They came by faith. I took great pleasure in Nielsen's idea that the laws of mathematics point to a universe in which much truth is beyond reason, because, like Nielsen, I have sensed that there is more to the universe than meets the eye. My faith gives me hope that knowledge will come in due course and that one day I will see the truths I seek "face to face."

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Salvation through a Tabernacle: Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and Early Mormon Theologies of Embodiment

Benjamin E. Park

In his Socratic dialogue *Phaedo*, Plato offered a multi-layered argument for the immortality of the soul, claiming that the human spirit belonged with the Forms—that is, the highest and most fundamental kind of reality as opposed to the "shadows" that humankind dealt with in the temporal world. Plato implied that the soul existed before entering the body and that, if it properly purified itself from all attachment to bodily things, it would then return to the intelligible world of Forms after death.[1] The body in early Platonism, therefore, served as a temporary prison for the immortal soul and, according to *Phaedrus*, came as a result of an undisciplined mistake and corresponding fall in humankind's previous existence.[2] While Aristotle challenged and nuanced his teacher's demeaning of the world and human bodies, Western thought largely engaged Plato's belief for the following two millennia.

More than two thousand years after Socrates's death, Mormon apostle Parley Parker Pratt used the Greek sage as a strawman against which he presented a radically material afterlife. In an essay written early in 1844 titled "The Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," Pratt invoked the classic philosopher as among those professing a temporary—and therefore, insufficient—view of the physical tabernacle and who therefore epitomized those who held the hope "of escaping with nothing but

their spirits, to some immaterial world." In Pratt's theology, the redemption of the spirit is only half of the eternal battle that Mormons believed in: "One of the principal objects of our blessed Redeemer," he claimed, "was the redemption of our material bodies, and the restoration of the whole physical world from the dominion of sin, death, and the curse." Pratt went on to postulate the future potentialities of human bodies: a physical, supernatural resurrection of their bodily form, accompanied by celestial glory added not only upon the immortal soul, but the immortal tabernacle. "What kind of salvation then do we need?" he asked. "I reply, we need salvation from death and the grave, as well as from our sins . . . a salvation not only of our spirits, but of our body and parts, of our flesh and bones, of our hands, and feet and head, with every organ, limb and joint."[3]

The vast differences between the Platonic approach and Pratt's are readily apparent. The former viewed the body as a temporary prison while absent from the intelligible world of Forms, the latter as a vehicle to the salvation of a domestic heaven. Indeed, these positions occupy opposite poles of a long-debated spectrum, offering the extremes of how to religiously approach corporality: Pratt's radical materialism acts as a foil to the more traditional duality of spirit and matter. While positioning Pratt among later Christian writers collapses the contrast, LDS embodiment still stands unique. Placing early Mormon theology of the body within the larger Christian—and more importantly, antebellum Protestant—context provides a unique vantage point from which we can more fully understand its origins and implications. This paper analyzes pre-Utah Mormonism's views of embodiment, both to better understand the development of early LDS thought and also to place Mormon theology within its larger culture.

Bodily Religions

In the last few decades, scholars of religion have given more attention to the place of the body in religious thought. Indeed, as religious critic William LaFleur notes, the academy has "moved from recognizing that religion involves the body to acknowledging" that it plays a major role in religion, even to the point that studies that do *not* involve the body in some way "now seem

out-of-date."[4] Similarly, British religious studies scholar Richard H. Roberts writes that "the body is . . . a core concern in world religious traditions, and the body as locus of experience, object of desire, source of metaphor, and icon of self representation is a pervasive preoccupation of Western . . . culture."[5]

The body is an especially apt lens through which to view theology because it so penetrates religious thought, practice, and symbology that its significance often goes overlooked. Not only do many religious analogies employ the body for understanding, but the body itself serves as a metaphor for an entire religious construction. As religious anthropologist Mary Douglas noted three decades ago, "Just as it is true that everything symbolizes the body, so it is equally true that the body symbolizes everything else."[6] Historians and religious scholars "cannot take 'the body' for granted as a natural, fixed and historically universal datum of human societies," wisely notes anthropologist Bryan Turner, because it "has many meanings within human practice, and can be conceptualized within a variety of dimensions and frameworks." Instead, he continues, we must treat human conceptions of corporality as another tool in understanding religious traditions and their attempts to understand themselves and the world around them. "The body, rather than being a naturally given datum, is a socially constructed artifact rather like other cultural products. The body (its image, its bearing, and representation) is the effect of innumerable practices, behaviours, and discourses which construct and produce the body as a culturally recognizable feature of social relations."[7]

Embodiment theology presents, then, a unique perspective on the development of religious thought. It serves as the center of religious practice, especially for Christian religions and their emphasis on the suffering and crucified body of Christ as well as the Eucharist designed as a physical reminder of something divine becoming corporeal. Divine healings, a common practice among antebellum American religionists, implied a specific bond between the spirit and its tabernacle. The elements that make up the body, the purpose for the body, and the future of the body were all issues religious thinkers had to deal with throughout Christian history, and especially after the Protestant Reformation.

It is traditionally held that early and even medieval Christian-

ity held highly disparaging views of the body. Noted religious studies scholar Marie Griffith acknowledged that it is "a truism to note that devout Christians of earlier eras displayed profound ambivalence about the flesh" and that they "felt the body to be a burden that must be suffered resignedly during earthly life while yet remaining the crucial material out of which devotional practice and spiritual progress were forged."[8] Thus, many Christians acquiesced reluctantly to the necessity of embodiment but still yearned for an eventual transcendence of their temporal form that could be achieved only through resurrection. However, recent scholarship has argued that this view can be overstated. These "generalizations," Sarah Coakley—editor of Cambridge University Press's anthology on *Religion and the Body*—has written, probably cannot "stand the test of a *nuanced* reading of the complex different strands of thought about 'bodiliness' and meanings in Jewish and Christian traditions of the pre-Enlightenment era." Indeed, Coakley argues, even the distinction between the terms "positive" and "negative" when used in terms of bodily theologies rely on generalizations that cannot withstand careful readings, and scholars need to acknowledge that the history of embodiment is much more ambivalent.[9]

However, while this "nuanced" approach deserves attention when relating to rituals, religious reception, or even divine healings, Christianity was often rhetorically pessimistic when speaking of the body and its limitations, largely following New Testament counsel to avoid the temptation of the "flesh" (e.g., Rom. 7:5, 8:1; Gal. 4:14, 5:16; Eph. 2:3). Further, at the heart of Christianity's rhetorical hesitation toward embodiment was the belief in classic Cartesian dualism, in which, borrowing from the Platonic tradition, Christianity gave priority to things spiritual over things physical.

Similar sentiments carried over into America. The Puritan foundations of the nation, especially the Christian belief in the fallen state of humankind, led to frequent associations of the body with depraved human nature.[10] Jonathan Edwards, the nation's most prominent eighteenth-century theologian, testified that mortals were weighed down by "a heavy moulded body, a lump of flesh and blood which is not fitted to be an organ for a soul inflamed with high exercises of divine love. . . . Fain would

they fly, but they are held down, as with a dead weight at their feet."[11] Several generations later, influential minister Lorenzo Dow famously observed in classic Platonic fashion that the mortal body "is a clog to my soul, and frequently tends to weigh down my mind, which infirmity I don't expect to get rid of till my Spirit returns to God."[12] To American religionists, the body was the locus of sin, the target of temptation, and the bondage of the soul. As one writer noted, death began to be seen to some as a welcome relief, "an end to the 'pilgrimage' through . . . bodily hostility."[13]

While a more optimistic view of the human soul began to develop during the antebellum period with the increase in Arminian theology, this theological progression was more often directed at the spirit than the body; American religious thinkers yearned for inward potential while still regretting the limitations of the flesh. Their views of embodiment continued to be ambiguous, acknowledging the human tabernacle as necessary for religious experience but remaining rhetorically hesitant toward granting it much virtue.[14] The body was still seen as a result of humankind's fallen status and a symbol for human sin, and it was still strongly asserted that redemption of the soul was possible only through overcoming all bodily temptations and escaping earth's carnal existence.

Early LDS Views of the Body

For almost the first decade of the Mormon Church's existence, its adherents seemed to hold the same opinions of the body as their contemporaries. Joseph Smith's early scriptures and revelations—particularly the Book of Mormon—presented the "natural man" as an "enemy to God," and posited that only through rejecting their "carnal nature" could human beings be saved.[15] This scriptural rhetoric described the body as the encapsulation of temptation and sin, always associating humankind's fallen state with the earthly tabernacle. One Book of Mormon passage specifically decried the depraved nature of "flesh": A dying father instructed his sons to "not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate."[16] While early Mormon teachings and revelations rejected Calvinism and offered a more optimistic and Arminian interpretation of the soul, they mirrored

contemporary Protestants in their ambiguity toward the body and its potential.[17]

Several early texts and practices, however, laid the groundwork for a later theological transition. In a revelation received in the winter of 1832–33, Joseph Smith recorded that it required both "the spirit *and* the body" to compose the human "soul."[18] Traditional Christianity often separated the soul from its corporeal body, believing that the former signified the immaterial human spirit while the latter served as a temporary (and sometimes limited) shelter requiring a divine overhaul at the resurrection. Charles Buck's influential nineteenth-century *Theological Dictionary* defined "soul" as "that vital, immaterial, active substance, or principle in man, whereby he perceives, remembers, reasons and wills"—clearly something outside of and separate to the material body.[19] Joseph Smith's revelation—implying that it was only through the combination of the spirit and body that the soul could be complete—held promising possibilities for a theology of embodiment. A divine communication received several months later repeated this idea, claiming that, when the spirit and the body are separated, "man cannot receive a fulness of joy."[20] However, like many other theological seeds found in Joseph Smith's revelations, this idea lay fallow, and most early Mormon writings retained the traditional Cartesian dualism.[21]

Part of Joseph Smith's religious quest for perfection—his "Zion" project—included a focus on things temporal as much as things spiritual. He understood his prophethood to grant him authority to regulate matters concerning everyday life and living, including controversial and ecclesiastically risky economic ventures.[22] His revelations also began to explicitly address bodily matters, from practical guidance on when to retire to bed to sanitary counsel in preparation for temple participation.[23] A divine commandment concerning the priesthood promised diligent Saints that they would be "sanctifyed by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies," while another revelation promised them that their tabernacles would be "filled with light."[24] The most important revelation regarding the body in the early Church, however, occurred during the School of the Prophets in the winter of 1833–34.

Perhaps influenced by his wife Emma who, tradition holds,

was disgusted by the stains that resulted from the school's tobacco use, the Mormon prophet recorded a revelation specifically devoted to the refinement of the body. Titled the "Word of Wisdom," it countermanded the use of tobacco, liquor, and other harmful substances while recommending vegetables, fruits, and healthful grains. Following this divine counsel, the text promised, would result not only in "health in the navel and marrow in the bones" but also "wisdom and great treasures of knowledge."[25] In short, spiritual growth must be accompanied by bodily ministration. Though obedience to this counsel ebbed and flowed for almost a century, that a revelation focused on the treatment of the body was found in Mormonism's canon implied special attention to the tabernacle for the spirit.

The revelation itself did not eliminate the classical body/spirit dualism; indeed, it still presented the body as something that required refinement for the spirit to be edified. However, the text did present the human tabernacle as a necessary tool in a spirit's progression: The body was not to be overcome in order to reach spiritual fulfillment, but perfected. The earlier revelation that called for a combination of the body and spirit also designated a "natural body" as the apex of human development and the culminating reward for the soul's purification. Other movements, both religious and secular, participated in various "temperance" movements, yet few grounded it in the divine and innately spiritual framework that Mormonism did.[26]

Early Mormonism also paid attention to the body in the context of healing. Following the New Testament injunction about the necessity of spiritual gifts, Mormon apostles and missionaries saw divine healing as a necessary part of their message and authority.[27] This practice assumed an intimate connection between body and spirit, implying that bodily elements would respond to ecclesiastical authority and religious faith. It also assumed that religion and spirituality dealt with corporality as much as metaphysics, leading to what one scholar has labeled a "collapse of the sacred" and an expansion of what is classified as religious.[28] Beyond just the possibility of divine healings of the body, however, Smith saw control over embodiment as crucial to the Mormon message of authority. When Lydia Carter, wife of early missionary Jared Carter, fell sick, the Prophet promised her that "she need

not have any more pain" because the Mormon priesthood possessed power to overcome it.[29] Indeed, early Mormonism's charismatic claims revolved around the extension of spiritual power into the physical realm, placing bodily healings at the center of what they understood to be biblical evidences and blessings.

Further, the developing Mormon temple rites in Kirtland also involved the body. In preparation, the Saints mixed bodily cleanliness and anointing with spiritual refinement. William Wine Phelps wrote his wife, Sally, in January 1836: "Our meeting[s] will grow more and more solemn, and will continue till the great solemn assembly when the house is finished! We are preparing to make ourselves clean, by first cleansing our hearts, forsaking our sins, forgiving every body; putting on clean decent clothes, by anointing our heads and by keeping all the commandments."[30] This mingling of the physical with the spiritual hints at the attention paid to their bodies. The Kirtland Temple experience, an antecedent to the later Nauvoo rites, involved bodily purification as much as mental and spiritual preparation. In the meeting where Joseph Smith claimed a vision of the celestial kingdom, the participants "washed [their] bodies with pure water before the Lord," after which they were "perfumed with a sweet smelling oderous wash."[31] After the dedication of the temple, the culmination of the Kirtland rituals was the ordinance of the washing of feet, first performed by the leading councils, and then by the entire priesthood body in the area.[32] This ritual, echoing the New Testament pattern, reveals the close connection between body and spirit, attaching corporeal cleanliness to unity, purification, and sacred authority. This ritual also followed Old Testament patterns, echoing the explicitly physical nature of early Judaism.[33]

A final aspect to consider when engaging 1830s Mormonism is the conferral of the priesthood itself. Priesthood power, Mormons believed, was physically transferred by the officiator's hands laid on the recipient's head. It was not acquired merely through metaphysical belief or knowledge. As Joseph Smith spoke of his priesthood ordinations by angels, he described tangible beings with resurrected bodies who ordained him with physical touch.[34] There was something about fleshy tabernacles, this reasoning implied, that made it impossible for ordination to be done any other way. Similarly, the gift of the Holy Ghost was be-

stowed by physical confirmation, following what Mormons interpreted as scriptural precedent.[35] This thinking found its climax several decades later when Parley and Orson Pratt, brothers and apostles, wrote that these physical ordinations literally transferred a materialistic spirit, similar to the "laws and operations of electricity. . . . It is imparted by the contact of two bodies, through the channel of the nerves."[36]

Many of these theological developments, however, were not significantly different from the tenets of other contemporaneous religious movements. Indeed, none of these specific beliefs or practices placed the early Church far outside the boundaries of antebellum Protestantism, even if they pulled Mormons toward the more optimistic side of the spectrum of belief about corporality. However, this paradigm would be severely challenged (if not shattered) in the next decade, as an expanded and ultimately radical new theology developed in Nauvoo, centered primarily on a daring and, to many, heretical, ontological framework, all of which led to a redefinition of embodiment. It took a combination of these early beliefs about the body and their later theological developments to lead Mormons out of mainstream belief.

Mormonism's later theology of the body came as a result of the appearance of several corresponding theological ideas, each contributing to its redefinition of human corporality. First was the belief that material elements were eternal—a progressive rejection of traditional dualism that had placed spirit above matter—that led the early Saints to a radical materialist view. Another was Mormonism's belief in the preexistence and the accompanying need and power that came with the reception of an earthly body. And third—the culmination of the previous two doctrinal innovations—was the embodiment of God himself with a physical tabernacle of flesh and bones, thereby setting a precedent for what embodied humankind may achieve. Further, these theological developments led to a redefinition of natural affections and bodily impulses, positing the "natural man" as pure and capable of cultivation. And finally, these ideas were solidified and reinforced by the introduction of Nauvoo Temple ceremonies, leading to a domestic heaven based on materiality, domesticity, and embodiment.

When approaching the topic of embodiment in the 1840s,

two figures take center stage. Obviously, Joseph Smith must always be engaged because of his position as prophet and the reverence his colleagues gave to his revelations and teachings. However, Smith's eclectic style and early death left many of his ideas and theological innovations fragmented, unfulfilled, and inchoate.[37] Thus, it was left to others, most notably Parley P. Pratt, to systematize, expand, and publish these doctrines. This is especially the case in embodiment theologies, as Parley Pratt wrote more on "material salvation" than anyone else in the late-Nauvoo period and immediately afterward. It was the ideas presented by both men—introduction by Joseph Smith and refinement by Parley Pratt—by which, as one scholar put it, "Mormonism established the human body as the key religious and ritual focus of life in a much more accentuated way than any other western form of Christianity."[38]

Eternalizing Matter and Materializing Spirit

Mormonism's redefinition of matter as an eternal element, coupled with its rejection of any difference between material and spiritual, completely revised LDS theology, and was the center of its developed belief in embodiment.[39] The timeline of this doctrinal development is difficult to determine, and several significant and related events in 1835–36 that played an important role are chronologically problematic. First was Joseph Smith's exposure to an Egyptian text that he identified as the book of Abraham. This text presented a significant shift in the Genesis story, claiming that God "organized" the world out of already existent elements as opposed to a creation out of nothing. This text, however, was not published until 1842, and I argue that Smith probably did not produce the new creation account until Nauvoo.[40]

Another development was Smith's participation in learning Hebrew during the winter of 1835–36.[41] Tutored by Jewish scholar Joshua Seixas, the Mormon prophet delved into a deeper study of ancient Biblical texts. Using Seixas's manual on *Hebrew Grammar*, Smith was exposed to alternative interpretations of the Bible, interpretations that influenced his later teachings, including a divine council of Gods.[42] Part of the textbook's "exercises in translating" involved the creation account in Genesis 1.[43] This exposure is important, for Smith's later defense of matter's eternal

nature depended on his reinterpretation of the Hebrew text of Genesis.[44] While his later use of Hebrew, made famous in his April 1844 King Follett Discourse, may have been more influenced by Alexander Neibaur in Nauvoo, his dedication to working from the original Hebrew began in Kirtland, and this influence may have led to his rewriting of the creation account that introduced the concept of matter as eternal.[45]

A more concrete influence that can be traced in regard to materialism was the Saints' exposure to the Scottish lay philosopher Thomas Dick. Dick was an amateur astronomer who made it his mission to reconcile science and religion.[46] His *Philosophy of a Future State*, first published in 1829, made only a moderate splash in Britain but was quickly embraced by antebellum America. This text argued that matter could not be created or destroyed[47]—the same anti-annihilation argument that later writers, most notably Joseph Smith and Parley Pratt, would employ.[48] Dick's work was twice quoted in the Mormon periodical *Messenger and Advocate*, thus demonstrating considerable familiarity with the text.[49] While these excerpts were quoted as support for the Saints' belief in the immortality of the human spirit, the sections also argued that matter could never be destroyed or annihilated. Determining intellectual influence is always a risky venture, yet at the very least it could be argued that familiarity with Dick's writing could have strengthened, expanded, or even provided a respectable framework and defense for Mormonism's developing materialism.[50]

The earliest published writing on the eternal nature of matter came from Parley Pratt in an 1839 essay, "The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter." While Pratt was not yet teaching that there was no difference between spirit and matter, he argued that both elements were of eternal duration. "Matter and Spirit are the two great principles of all existence," he explained, and "every thing animate and inanimate is composed of one or the other, or both of these eternal principles." Pratt's pamphlet also rejected the idea that God had created the world out of nothing, reasoning that it is as "impossible for a mechanic to make any thing whatever without materials [as] it is equally impossible for God to bring forth matter from nonentity, or to originate element from nothing, because this would contradict the law of truth, and destroy himself." Thus, all physical elements cannot be created or de-

stroyed but will be redeemed and purified through the salvation of Christ—a redemption of the entire physical world.[51]

This redemption also included human corporality, he reasoned, for "the body and spirit will be reunited; the whole will become immortal, no more to be separated, or to undergo dissolution," language clearly relying on Joseph Smith's earlier revelations and the epistles of Paul. Then, turning to the example of Jesus Christ, Pratt explained that his resurrected body was "the same flesh, the same bones, the same joints," and all other characteristics of the "physical features" that composed his earthly tabernacle, only quickened from its mortal state to an immortal condition. The only difference, he reasoned, was the presence of "spirit" in his veins rather than blood. Indeed, Pratt argued that human embodiment—including the forthcoming redemption and resurrection—was the fundamental reason for the earth's existence and must be experienced by all those wishing to take part in God's glory and receive their heavenly inheritance.[52]

While not completely destroying the concept of Cartesian dualism, placing spirit and matter on an equal level was an important step toward a corporeal deity. The Puritan theologian Stephen Charnock argued that God must be immaterial because he could not be infinite if "he should be a massy, heavy body, and have eyes and ears, feet and hands, as we have." Since matter is not eternal, Charnock reasoned, materiality would limit God's omnipotence.[53] At the heart of the spirit/matter dualism was the platonic implication that spirit was of a higher order than matter—that the "physical" was merely a temporary status that does not exist before or after the soul or spirit. Therefore, traditional Christianity argued, physical "matter" was to be contrasted with spiritual elements, the latter of which was the only principle considered eternal. However, if matter were to be eternal in scope, as Pratt was arguing, then a body could not be dismissed as being a barrier to divinity.

Joseph Smith went even further than Pratt in closing the distance between the spiritual and material. By 1841, the Mormon prophet also rejected creation *ex nihilo*, arguing that "this earth was organized or formed out of other planets which were broke up and remodelled and made into the one on which we live." Using an analogy of a ring, he described matter as eternal: "That

which has a beginning will surely have an end."[54] An editorial published in April 1842 under his name claimed: "The spirit, by many, is thought to be immaterial, without substance. With this latter statement we should beg leave to differ, and state the spirit is a substance; that it is material, but that it is more pure, elastic and refined matter than the body."[55] A year later, the Mormon prophet famously asserted that "all spirit is matter but is more fine or pure and can only be discerned by purer eyes,"[56] officially dismissing any difference between the two elements. Once this distinction was gone, Parley Pratt boldly proclaimed that all theologies based on traditional dualism were "mere relics of mysticism and superstition, riveted upon the mind by ignorance and tradition." He went so far as to say that "all persons except materialists must be infidels, so far at least [as] belief in the scriptures is concerned."[57] Parley's brother Orson later claimed that believing in an immaterial God was nothing more than "religious atheism," feigning a belief in God yet refusing Him any substance.[58]

This development toward materialism was crucial to Mormonism's redefinition of embodiment. Mormons could not believe in the supremacy of spirit over matter, because there was no longer any significant difference; the body and the spirit were made up of the same elements and had to be enmeshed. It also meant that the next life would also be based on materiality because there was no other kind of existence. In short, monism, or the belief that everything was made out of one substance, unlocked the body from being seen as occupying an inferior and temporary status, instead redefining it as just one form of the single, universal element expanding throughout the entire cosmos.

Viewing the body as an eternal element also provided a conceptual framework for conquering death.[59] Like many of his contemporaries, Smith worried about what would happen to both his physical tabernacle and his personal relationships after this life. "More painful to me [are] the thoughts of anhilitation [annihilation] than death," he exclaimed in an 1843 discourse. "If I had no expectation of seeing my mother, brother[s], and Sisters and friends again my heart would burst in a moment and I should go down to my grave." However, if this separation could be overcome by the resurrection of a physical body, then death has lost its sting: "The expectation of seeing my friends in the morning of

the resurrection cheers my soul," Smith mused, "and make[s] me bear up against the evils of life."[60] His vision of Christ's second coming was as much about the physicality of renewed relationships as it was about glorifying God:

> In the morn of the resurrection [the Saints] may come forth in a body. & come right up out of their graves, & strike hands immediately in eternal glory & felicity rather than to be scattered thousands of miles apart. There is something good & sacred to me. in this thing . . . I will tell you what I want, if to morrow I shall to lay in yonder tomb. in the morning of the resurrection, let me strike hands with my father, & cry, my father, & he will say my son, my son,—as soon as the rock rends. & before we come out of our graves.[61]

Indeed, the eternalizing of matter was not only a step toward divine embodiment but also a step toward Mormonism's domestic heaven, both of which revolved around the physicality of their growing theology and the growing importance of embodiment.

The Preexistence and the Embodiment of Power

One of the slow-developing yet highly potent beliefs of early Mormonism was the preexistence, or the idea that the soul had a life before its earthly sojourn.[62] An 1833 revelation boldly proclaimed that the human spirit "was in the beginning with the Father" and that "intelligence . . . was not created or made, neither indeed can be."[63] When Joseph Smith was working on the Egyptian papyri, arguably as late as the Nauvoo period, he translated portions that clearly spoke of premortal counsels and preordained appointments. While this doctrine was not emphasized early on, several Saints believed and taught it. For instance, W. W. Phelps editorialized in the *Messenger and Advocate* in 1835 that among the "new light . . . occasionally bursting into our minds" was that "we were with God in another world, before the foundation of the world, and had our agency."[64] Similarly, Parley Pratt wrote a poem on his birthday in 1839:

> This is the day that gave me birth
> In eighteen hundred seven;
> From worlds unseen I came to earth,
> Far from my native heaven.[65]

Beyond these few intimations, however, the idea of preexistence was quiet throughout the first decade of the Church.

It would not stay silent for long, however. In 1842, Presbyterian minister J. B. Turner felt that this doctrine was at the center of Mormonism's theology but that the Church was hiding it from the public. "Their sublime faith teaches them," he explained, "that their action and destiny here are the result, and can be explained only upon admission, of their existence and action before they inhabited their present bodies. This notion, however, does not distinctly appear in their published revelations. It was at one time promulgated, but from its unpopularity, their leaders suppressed the full development of their peculiar scheme of preexistence until faith on the earth should increase."[66] This public silence soon ended as Joseph Smith began preaching increasingly radical doctrines in Nauvoo. He repeatedly taught the eternal nature of the spirit, often emphasizing its independent nature: "The Spirit of Man is not a created being; it existed from Eternity & will exist to eternity," he announced in 1839.[67] "The spirit or the inteligence [sic] of men are self Existant principles," he proclaimed less than two years later.[68] Indeed, Joseph Smith's theology laid out an origin for human souls that described them as co-eternal with God, differing only in progress along an eternal spectrum rather than making humans a separate ontological species.

The idea of a premortal existence, however, was a platonic conception in itself and not foreign to many Christian thinkers.[69] It required a specific reformulation and unique framework of premortality to set a foundation for Mormonism's embodiment and revised ontology. Once Smith granted human souls a new eternal origin, he provided a divine reason—and accompanying power—for their reception of earthly tabernacles. Starting in 1841, Smith depicted a council of Gods that had decided on human embodiment as a way to receive glory and power: "Joseph said that before [the] foundation of the Earth in the Grand Counsel," recorded one of his listeners, "that the Spirits of all Men ware subject to opression & the express purpose of God in Giving it a tabernicle was to arm it against the power of Darkness."[70] The reception of a body, in Joseph Smith's theology, was not a "prison" or even a temporary vehicle for spiritual progression, but rather a

symbol and receptacle of power intricately involved in human progression. In a work of speculative fiction, Phelps wrote that preexistent spirits "agreed to take upon them bodies of flesh, and work out a more exceeding and eternal crown of glory."[71] In his description of spirits, Parley Pratt defined them as "men in embrio—Intelligences waiting to come into the natural world and take upon them flesh and bones, that through birth, death, and the resurection [sic] they may also be perfected in the material organization."[72] Even the Holy Ghost, Smith reasoned, would be required at some point to possess a physical tabernacle.[73]

Smith later expounded on this concept and clarified how a spirit's possession of a body was a tool of empowerment against others. In the premortal realm, he explained, "God saw that those intelegences had Not power to Defend themselves against those that had a tabernicle therefore the Lord Calls them together in Counsel & agrees to form them tabernicles so that he might [en]Gender the Spirit & the tabernicle together so as to create sympathy for their fellowman—for it is a Natureal thing with those spirits that has the most power to bore down on those of Lesser power."[74] Indeed, the expanding role of a premortal council solidified the importance of the earthly tabernacle. The body was not merely an accompanying aspect of humankind's telestial experience, but was the reason for that experience. Embodiment was a prearranged circumstance that God had designed as a way for His surrounding and inferior intelligences to gain similar glory, power, and dominion. In the eternal quest to overcome evil and fallen spirits, embodiment was the necessary step in the progress toward supremacy over other spirits. Smith claimed that it was "the design of God before the foundation of the world . . . that we should take tabernacles that through faithfulness we should overcome," because this was the sole way to "obtain glory honor power and dominion." It was only by gaining a tabernacle that one could bring "other Spirits in Subjection unto them," for "He who rules in the heavens" is He who has bodily power and authority over the lesser beings.[75] In the Prophet's great chain of existence and dynastic view of heaven, the only difference between classes are the nature and state of their embodiment.[76]

Smith's teachings presented embodiment as a way to combat and control the devil and his dominions. In this battle between

good and evil spirits, he taught, "all beings who have bodies have power over those who have not." Part of the devil's punishment was that he would forever remain unembodied and therefore "has no power over us" because we have a decisive bodily advantage.[77] Because of this, the devil and his minions often sought to take possession of human tabernacles as an attempt to displace human power and build their own:

> The greatness of [the devil's] punishment is that he shall not have a tabernacle this is his punishment[.] So the devil thinking to thwart the decree of God by going up & down in the earth seeking whome he may destroy any person that he can find that will yield to him he will bind him & take possession of the body & reign there glorying in it mightily not thinking that he had got a stolen tabernacle & by & by some one of Authority will come along & cast him out & restore the tabernacle to his rightful owner but the devil steals a tabernacle because he has not one of his own but if he steals one he is liable to be turned out of doors[.][78]

The possession of a body was thus not only seen as an advantage for the spirits who obeyed God in the primordial realm but as a point of jealousy for those who did not. In contrast to the Platonic view of the body as a prison or Lorenzo Dow's position that it is an anchor, dragging down the soul, Smith posited it as a reward for obedience, a receptacle of power, and the only vehicle for eternal exaltation. Thus, evil spirits acknowledged it as such and plotted to capture what they otherwise could not possess. The body was the only advantage humans had against these fallen nemeses, and it was their job to cultivate and improve it. "The great principle of happiness consists in having a body," Smith argued, emphasizing humankind's superiority over the devil.[79]

At the center of this optimistic perspective on embodiment was a highly biblical and literalist *imitatio Christi*. Mormons felt that the reason they had to take on a body was because Christ had done the same thing. In his King Follett Discourse, the Mormon prophet reasoned that just as Christ and the Father had received a body, laid it down, and then raised it from the dead, so human beings lay down their bodies in order to "take them up again," imitating their now-embodied God.[80] When Parley Pratt wrote of the path that all human beings must take in possessing and resurrecting a body, he turned to Christ as juxtaposition against what he

understood to be the "spiritualizing" theologies of his contemporaries, particularly Swedenborg and the Methodists. After quoting the passage in Luke describing Christ's resurrected body, he exulted: "Here was an end of mysticism; here was a *material salvation*; here was flesh and bones, immortal, and celestial, prepared for eternal bloom in the mansions of glory; and this demonstrated by the sense of seeing, feeling, and hearing."[81] All human beings must follow this divinely instituted pattern, and possess the same material body Christ did after the resurrection.

Divine Embodiment

Intertwined with this increasingly literalistic *imitatio Christi* was the Mormon belief in a corporeal deity. For the first decade of the Church's existence, most Mormons shared a belief in a God the Father who was a personage of spirit.[82] The *Lectures on Faith*, which Smith endorsed even if he didn't write, described God the Father as "a personage of spirit, glory, and power," demonstrating the Church's Kirtland period position of a spiritually, not physically, embodied God. In an 1840 pamphlet outlining Mormon beliefs, future apostle Erastus Snow quoted this passage and explicated the difference between a "natural body" of flesh and bones, and the "spiritual body" that God also possessed but which was based more in "form" than in materiality.[83] As Mormon historian Grant Underwood has persuasively shown, early Mormonism took part in "communities of discourse," largely with other anti-Trinitarian writers, and used terms like "personage" and "body" according to their contemporary definitions; in this case, Snow used "body" in a spiritual sense, not yet attributing flesh and bones to God.[84]

In Parley Pratt's 1838 polemical book *Mormonism Unveiled*, he wrote that Mormons "worship a God who has both body and parts: who has eyes, mouth, and ears"[85]—a statement that appears to support a view of God as possessing a body of flesh, yet such descriptions were fairly common among contemporary anti-Trinitarians who still believed in a spiritual God. One defender of traditional Trinitarianism wrote that many modern "Arians" preached about a God with a literal body, including one who taught that "God has a body, eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c., just as we have."[86] Indeed, while on his mission in England in 1840, Pratt published a

pamphlet denying the accusation that Mormonism believed in a God with flesh and bones and clearly explained the difference between a physical body (which humans have) and a spiritual body (which God has): "Whoever reads our books, or hears us preach, knows that we believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as one God. That the Son has flesh and bones, and that the Father is a spirit. . . . [A] personage of spirit has its organized formation, its body and parts, its individual identity, its eyes, mouth, ears, &c., and . . . is in the image or likeness of the temporal body, although not composed of such gross materials as flesh and bones."[87]

But once again, Joseph Smith began expounding new theology during the Nauvoo period. "There is no other God in heaven but that God who has flesh and bones," the Mormon prophet boldly proclaimed in January 1841.[88] Making tangible what Mormons up until this point were holding as spiritual, divine corporality was the culmination of Smith's literal reading of the Bible, developing materialist thought, and the disintegrating distinction between human beings and God.[89] Laid out most clearly in his King Follett Discourse, the Mormon prophet exegetically used Christ's New Testament statement that "the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do" (John 5:19) to prove that the Father must have a physical, resurrected body exactly like Christ's.[90] The God of Mormonism was not an ontologically foreign phenomenon; He was an intelligence co-eternal with humankind but merely further advanced along an infinite spectrum. This divine anthropomorphism of God came to be viewed as the defining feature of Mormon theology and stands in deep contrast to the views of many contemporary religious thinkers.

Throughout religious history, as one critic has written, it has been natural for people to "represent objects and events in our environments anthropomorphically, i.e. in terms of human features and attributes."[91] According to religious historian Michael McClymond, Jonathan Edwards anthropomorphized God by portraying him with humanlike desires and characteristics,[92] yet not all American religionists were willing to ascribe to Deity even that much similarity to humanity. In responding to the Transcendentalist preacher Theodore Parker's humanizing of Christ, Orestes Brownson, a Transcendentalist turned Catholic, claimed that "to anthropomorphize the Deity is not to ascribe to him personality;

but the limitations of our personality."[93] Indeed, Brownson's concern over his fellow Transcendentalists' habit of making God more human was one factor that led him out of the movement and into Catholicism.[94]

Even those who were comfortable with ascribing human attributes to God had a growing fear of confining God to a human form. Anti-Trinitarians especially feared that traditional Christianity, and particularly doctrines of the Trinity, limited the power of God the Father. William Ellery Channing, a proto-Unitarian preacher and important early figure for liberal Christianity, feared that the Trinity "entangled God in a material body," a "fatal flaw" for a paradigm set on spirit/matter dualism.[95] Many antebellum anti-Trinitarians reasoned that separating God the Father from the Trinity and thus distancing him from Christ's resurrected body was the only way to imagine a God with the omnipotence described in the Bible.

This point was where Joseph Smith parted company with anti-Trinitarians. He argued that the only possible God must be a corporeal one. "That which is without body or parts is nothing," Smith reasoned.[96] His theology required materiality for existence and thus required God to take up physical space in the material universe. God was not outside time and space but had a tangible, glorified body, differentiated from an earthly body only in that spirit replaced blood. "Blood," he explained, "is the part of the body that causes corruption." Once the body is glorified, the blood "vanish[es] away" and "the Spirit of god [is] flowing in the vains in Sted of the blood," thereby making a tabernacle worthy of exaltation.[97] By identifying blood as the only "corrupting" factor associated with an earthly body, Smith set a precedent for perfection in a materialistic world.

And with that precedent, the Prophet set a path for humankind to follow. Building on a sacred mimesis of Christ, the removal of the body as a barrier for exaltation opened the way for human deification. Smith audaciously counseled the Saints to "make yourselves Gods in order to save yourselves . . . the same as all Gods have done."[98] Lorenzo Snow later summarized the teaching in his famous couplet: "As man now is, God once was / As God now is, man may become."[99] Thus, receiving a physical body had become one of several important markers along an infinite jour-

ney. Indeed, the body was of such importance to exaltation, Smith taught, that children were governing worlds "with not one cubit added to their stature," implying that mere possession of an undeveloped tabernacle was enough for future exaltation.[100]

Parley Pratt quickly adopted these new theological developments after he returned from his British mission in 1843 and, within a year, argued that belief in a non-corporeal deity was "one of the foundational errors of modern times." Furthermore, a God without a physical body could never be "an object of veneration, fear, or love."[101] The belief also bridged the gap between Pratt's earlier "Doctrine of Equality"—in which redeemed humankind shared in God's knowledge and glory—and the doctrine of exaltation that human beings would become all-powerful Gods like the one they presently worshipped.[102] Pratt closed his essay on the immortality of the body by claiming that man, once redeemed, will no longer "be confined, or limited in his sphere of actions to his small planet" but rather "will wing his way, *like the risen Saviour*, from world to world, with all the ease of communication." And in the final act of sublime imitation—or perhaps, divine transfusion—"immortal man" will have placed upon him the very same "prediction" that was placed upon the Jehovah of the Old Testament: "OF THE INCREASE OF HIS KINGDOM AND GOVERNMENT THERE SHALL BE NO END."[103]

Later, in his theological magnum opus, *The Key to the Science of Theology*, Pratt formulated these ideas into one grand synthesis. The Father was "a God not only possessing body and parts, but flesh and bones, and sinews, and all the attributes, organs, senses, and affections of a perfect man." Logically, he argued, "beings which have no passions, have no soul." The way to fully understand God was to picture humankind glorified, recognizing that "facts in our *own* existence" are also "true, in a higher sense, in relation to the Godhead." Reading the Bible literally depicts the resurrected body, passions, and actions of Christ as representative of everyone else, including His Father. "Every man who is eventually made perfect," he concluded, "will become like [Christ and his Father] in every respect, physically, and in intellect, attributes or powers."[104]

Solidified during the last year of Joseph Smith's life, the doctrine of divine embodiment and its accompanying theosis were

the capstones of his prophetic career. A combination of staunch materialism, biblical literalism, and yearning for a familiarity in heaven led to an anthropomorphized God beyond what any other contemporary had urged. By believing in a corporeal God and human beings' infinite potential, Smith demolished the distance between the human and the divine; the only difference was one of progress, not of being. A body was not only worthy of celestial glory but essential for it. This divine anthropology was the theological climax of LDS embodiment, placing corporality at the center of the Mormon cosmos.

The Cultivation and Exaltation of Human Affections

With this radical exaltation of the body came the need to redefine bodily affections and impulses. Following the New Testament injunction that "the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17), Christianity, with notable exceptions, often rhetorically held that bodily desires and spiritual promptings were always at odds.[105] Indeed, as "nuanced" as Western thought has been toward the body, bodily desires have often been dismissed as temptations and distractions during the human sojourn and even as the antithesis of the spirit and spiritual impulses. "The notions of both mind and body," writes English moral philosopher Mary Midgley, "have . . . been shaped, from the start, by their roles as opponents" in the drama of life.[106] The body, while it could serve as the vehicle by which to experience religion, had its downside by introducing carnal desires that could tempt the soul to detour from its religious path. Even in vastly diverging embodiment theologies, this theme seemed to remain constant, according to Bryan Turner: "At least in the West (during the classical and Christian eras) the body has been seen to be a threatening and dangerous phenomenon, if not adequately controlled and regulated by cultural process. The body has been regarded as the vehicle or vessel of unruly, ungovernable, and irrational passions, desires, and emotions. The necessity to control the body (its locations, its excretions, and its reproduction) is an enduring theme within Western philosophy, religion, and art."[107]

Such defamation of bodily passions led to many examples of reactionary extremes, most famously the myth of Origen's self-castration or the celibacy seen as required for priests in the Cath-

olic Church. While Martin Luther would change this extremist course for the Protestant movement he founded, he still placed the body as third in importance behind the mental and the spiritual. According to Luther critic David Tripp, Luther believed that, as "bodily beings," humans are enslaved to their surroundings, but as "spiritual beings" they are free and have dominion over all things.[108] In America, most religionists accepted, as one writer put it, "the always vulnerable Christian body" where human senses were the "weak points," always a danger of distraction from the inner spiritual light.[109] "But blessed is that man," wrote Thomas à Kempis in his highly influential *Imitation of Christ*, who "violently resisteth nature, and through fervour of spirit crucifieth the lusts of the flesh" in order to be purified and "admitted into the angelical choirs."[110] Even Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Transcendentalist who spent his life fighting against orthodoxy and tradition, wrote that "our senses barbarize us" and that it is "the savage [who] surrenders to his senses; he is subject to paroxysms of joy and fear; he is lewd and a drunkard."[111] While traditional Christianity did not advocate completely rejecting the senses, it was held that they must be controlled and were only desirable when redeemed.

These concepts faced challenges during the Early Republic. Especially concerning sexuality, the "spirit and disruptive impact of the American Revolution" led to a revolt against America's heretofore sexually restrictive climate.[112] Rebelling against the strict boundaries set for bodily desires established by early Puritans—even if those boundaries were more embracing than Puritanism's Victorian descendents—Americans reappraised traditional morals. Coupled with the increasing Romantic tensions of the argument that humanity was innately good, early Americans wanted freedom from traditional cultural mores.[113] These liberating beliefs, however, remained at the folk level and were often denounced by the clergy. Even if an increasing number of people yearned in private to follow their bodily impulses, public discourse continued to emphasize control and restraint.

Parley Pratt, however, took these private beliefs and attempted to make a theological defense of them. In his 1844 pamphlet "Intelligence and Affection," Pratt argued that natural bodily im-

pulses were to be cultivated and amplified, not restricted or evaded. He taught that persons who view "our natural affections" as "the results of a fallen and corrupt nature," and are "carnal, sensual, and devilish" and therefore ought to be "resisted, subdued, or overcome as so many evils which prevent our perfection, or progress in the spiritual life . . . have mistaken the source and fountain of happiness altogether." Instead, the apostle claimed that any attempts to repress natural inclinations "are expressly and entirely opposed to the spirit, and objects of true religion."[114]

Central to Pratt's claims was differentiating between "natural" and "unnatural" desires, demonstrating the classification required when conceptualizing a framework in which to present the body. When Pratt spoke of "unnatural" desires, he meant lust, abuse, and perversion, which resulted either from a restriction on good passions or "the unlawful indulgence of that which is otherwise good." The "natural affections," on the other hand, centered on the physical and emotional love between a man and woman. According to Pratt, God planted in people's bosoms "those affections which are calculated to promote their happiness and union." From these affections, "spring" all other natural desires that validate the human experience.

By creating these categories of "natural" and "unnatural" desires, Pratt was better equipped to portray corporality as a positive element of humanity, in contrast to his depiction of what the rest of Christendom believed. These natural affections, he argued, were rooted in human nature for all eternity. The "unnatural affections" to be avoided were only those introduced by corrupt desires and the wickedness of modern Christianity. The true duty of humankind when it came to bodily affections was to learn to discern the natural and the unnatural: "Learn to act in unison with thy true character, nature and attributes; and thus improve and cultivate the resources within and around thee." The goal of life was not to suppress impulses rooted in the flesh, but to amplify them: "Instead of seeking unto God for a mysterious change to be wrought, or for your affections and attributes to be taken away and subdued . . . pray to him that every affection, and tribute, power and energy of your body and mind may be cultivated, increased, enlarged, perfected and exercised for his glory and for

the glory and happiness of yourself, and of all those whose good fortune it may be to associate with you."[115]

When Pratt wrote his *Key to the Science of Theology* a decade later, he returned to this theme in relation to the process of exaltation: "The very germs of these Godlike attributes, being engendered in man, the offspring of Deity," he reasoned, "only need cultivating, improving, developing, and advancing by means of a series of progressive changes, in order to arrive at the fountain '*Head*,' the standard, the climax of Divine Humanity."[116] Thus, when our bodies are redeemed and exalted, our natural affections and affinities are perfected with us, while all unnatural desires are purged. Natural bodily impulses are not carnal temptations of the flesh designed to test obedience or self-mastery but rather are "germs" of "Godlike attributes" that are part of eternal identity and, eventually, felicity.

This exaltation of human affection is unique among Mormonism's contemporaries.[117] Pratt took Joseph Smith's teachings concerning the importance of embodiment to unprecedented heights, claiming that in the physical body was not just power, but the seed for eternal felicity and glory. When Pratt wrote his autobiography a decade later, this principle was preeminent among the doctrines he expanded from Smith: "It is from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love . . . that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity."[118] He pushed the theology one step further and in a slightly different direction from his religious mentor. For the Mormon prophet, marriage, sealings, and physical connections were focused on nobility, kinship, and dynasty; for the Mormon apostle, they were about the literal physicality of love, affections, and even intimacy.[119]

The Temple and Domestic Heaven

Most likely a major influence on Pratt's redefinition of bodily impulses was his initiation into Joseph Smith's Nauvoo Temple rites.[120] Indeed, the temple served as a coronation of the body, a holy ceremony in which the patrons reenacted all aspects of embodiment: the plan propounded in the premortal council, the ac-

quisition of a tabernacle on earth, and the eventual exaltation of human corporality. In these rituals, the body was not overcome, but hallowed; the apotheosis attained was an imminent exaltation of both the individual soul and its physical structure. Joseph Smith's temple cultus revolved around physicality; only three days before he first introduced the endowment, Smith claimed that "there are signs in heaven, earth, and hell. The Elders must know them all to be endowed with power, to finish their work and prevent imposition. . . . No one can truly say he knows God until he has handled something, and this can only be in the Holiest of Holies."[121]

Christian rituals had always involved the body, especially in connection with or in preparation for death. Most of these rites functioned to cleanse the tabernacle from its bodily sins and temptations, emphasizing that it was made of "dust and ashes" and that it required a glorious resurrection to make it worthy for the eternal soul.[122] One common example of this ideology was the Catholic rite of "extreme unction," during which the dying is anointed "with a little oil [on] the chief seat of the five senses," meant to represent forgiveness of all carnal desires throughout life.[123] These liturgies pointed to the forthcoming resurrection at the expense of earthly flesh, and demonstrated that the body would have to be completely transformed to inherit a heavenly glory. While baptism and the Lord's Supper were important in terms of a progressive sanctification of the body, these sacraments were still primarily understood as preparatory for the later resurrection, which was when the body could be purified.

Juxtaposed to this view was Mormonism's Nauvoo Temple ritual where the exact same senses were anointed, not in repentance for their bodily functions or impulses, but rather as an act of sanctification and enlargement. For instance, the second anointing that Brigham Young received under the hands of Heber C. Kimball focused on, among other things, a literal blessing of bodily organs. After being pronounced a "King and a Priest of the Most High God," Kimball blessed Young's individual body parts: "I anoint thy head, that thy brain may be healthy and active and quick to think and to understand and to direct thy whole body and I anoint thy eyes that they may see and perceive . . . and that thy sight may never fail thee: and I anoint thy ears that they may

be quick to hear and communicate to thy understanding . . . and I anoint thy nose that thou may scent, and relish the fragrance of good things of the earth: and I anoint thy mouth that thou mayest be enabled to speak the great things of God."[124] These blessings did not point to a future bodily transformation, but rather to a continuation of their present functions. The second anointing was meant to close the gap between a telestial and a celestial body, demonstrating that, except for "spirit" replacing blood, a heavenly tabernacle worked much the same way as an earthly one, with physical organs amplified rather than transcended.

The temple was also a venue in which Latter-day Saints performed salvific rituals for the dead, adding another layer to the importance of embodiment. That it was necessary for these ordinances to be performed by people possessing a physical tabernacle suggests the crucial nature of corporality. Temple rituals, Smith taught, were necessary to cleanse individuals from deeds done in the body.[125] Thus, those who died outside the faith lacked these essential ordinances. Baptisms for the dead bridged this divide, providing disembodied spirits with a way to obtain these bodily covenants. "This Doctrine," Smith exulted, "presented in a clear light, the wisdom and mercy of God, in preparing an ordinance for the salvation of the dead, being baptized by proxy, their names recorded in heaven, and they judged according to the deeds done in the body."[126] Just as human beings would be judged and punished for bodily actions, so must they be cleansed by bodily rituals.[127] Even the unpardonable sin, the only sin that prevents an individual's salvation, could be performed only while in an earthly tabernacle.[128]

Smith later expanded the idea of proxy work in 1844, utilizing an obscure passage from Obadiah to emphasize the importance of these bodily temple ordinances. "Those who are baptised for their dead are the Saviours on mount Zion," he proclaimed, because the dead "must receave their washings and their anointings for their dead the same as for themselves." It required a joint work between angels who "preach to the [deceased] Spirits" and living saints who "minister for them in the flesh" to perform salvific work for the dead and create the eternal familial chain necessary for joint redemption.[129] Salvation for the dead, an important aspect of Smith's novel heavenly society, revolved around embodi-

ment, for these ordinances had to be performed by one possessing an earthly tabernacle. Mormon theology held that embodiment was not only instrumental for spiritual progression, or even for power over unembodied spirits but was the only occasion on which individuals could make binding covenants that had eternal implications. Those who missed that opportunity before death were dependent on proxy ordinances performed by those who still had corporeal bodies.

Building on these new temple rituals, Parley Pratt and others developed an extremely literal domestic heaven. Even during Joseph Smith's life, Mormonism predated similar theological developments by rejecting the largely theocentric view of antebellum America.[130] Exalted human beings would not be limited to praising God at the expense of their own glory but would be progressing from glory to glory while adding kingdoms, thrones, and dominions.[131] Further, Mormonism's later teachings concerning exaltation were closely linked with marital relations and bodily reproduction, and in Nauvoo Smith made marriage a necessary sacrament for one's salvation; not entering this celestial covenant meant a literal end to progenitive increase,[132] and that continuation was what Smith saw as the acme of exaltation.[133] Indeed, polygamy, especially when viewed from an eternal perspective, dramatically multiplied the body's potential for affection and reproduction, offering a domestic heaven based on familial and tangible connections.[134]

Parley Pratt adopted and then expanded this domestic heaven, viewing the next life as a continuation of the present. When writing about the future state of human beings and the nature of the celestial kingdom, Pratt wrote of a physical heaven, whose literalness was unique for its time. His vision of resurrected persons was based on materiality and many things often considered intimately connected to a body:

> In the resurrection, and the life to come, men that are prepared will actually possess a material inheritance on the earth. They will possess houses, and cities, and villages, and gold and silver, and precious stones, and food, and raiment, and they will eat, drink, converse, think, walk, taste, smell and enjoy. They will also sing and preach, and teach, and learn, and investigate; and play on musical instruments, and enjoy all the pure delights of affection, love, and do-

> mestic felicity. While each, like the risen Jesus can take his friend by the hand and say: "Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."[135]

Others had taught of a physical resurrection, yet few taught about a heaven so firmly based on physicality and corporality as Parley Pratt.

Pratt later presented a similar cosmos where all beings were merely a universal group of intelligences differentiated only in progression along an infinite spectrum, all of which centered around and pointed to an earthly embodiment. Indeed, he argued that the contemporary understanding of Christ as being both fully God and fully man was "an error by reason of not knowing ourselves," because all beings—Gods, angels, and men—are of "one species, one race, [and] one great family." The only "great distinguishing difference between one portion of this race and another" was the nature and state of their current embodiment. Thus, not only was the possession of a body central to all aspects of this eternal spectrum, but it served as a form of identity to differentiate among beings of varying status: God and other exalted beings had glorified bodies of flesh and bones, angels possessed bodies with "a lesser degree of glory," and humans merely held "mortal tabernacle[s]."[136] Embodiment, then, played a central role in Pratt's domestic heaven, serving as the hallmark of and only distinctions among an eternally expanding celestial race. Progress was centered on the body. Each intelligence's graduation from one stage to another involved a modified, redeemed, and eventually exalted tabernacle, modeled after that of their all-powerful God.

Conclusion

As this article began with the Mormon apostle Parley Pratt engaging the Greek philosopher Socrates, it ends the same way. A decade after first citing Socrates, Pratt once again invoked the founder of Western thought—but this time used his philosophy as half of an eternal formulation based on Joseph Smith's 1832 revelation:

> The Greek Philosopher's immortal mind,
> Again with flesh and bone and nerve combined;

> Immortal brain and heart—immortal whole,
> Will make, as at the first, a living soul.

It was through this combination—and only through this combination—of the immortal soul and immortal body that humankind's purpose could be fulfilled; the celestial kingdom was to be one of physical pleasures as well as spiritual fulfillment. "Man, thus adapted to all the enjoyments of life and love," Pratt continued, "will possess the means of gratifying his organs of sight, hearing, taste, &c., and will possess, improve and enjoy [all] the riches of the eternal elements."[137] This physicality epitomized not only Parley Pratt's theological vision (and, for that matter, Joseph Smith's), but was also the apex and culmination of the possibilities provided by early Mormon theologies of embodiment.

Notes

1. Plato, *Phaedo,* 57a–84c.

2. Plato, *Phaedrus,* 244a–257b.

3. Parley P. Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," in *An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York: Letter to Queen Victoria (Reprinted from the Tenth European Edition), The Fountain of Knowledge; Immortality of the Body, and Intelligence and Affection* (Nauvoo, Ill.: John Taylor, Printer, 1840), 27–29. Pratt's later references to Plato and Socrates become more laudatory, especially when praising them for their emphasis on the eternal nature of the soul. Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology: Designed as an Introduction to the First Principles of Spiritual Philosophy; Religion; Law and Government; As Delivered by the Ancients, and as Restored in This Age, for the Final Development of Universal Peace, Truth, and Knowledge* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855), 61.

4. William Lafleur, "Body," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies,* edited by Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 36.

5. Richard H. Roberts, "Body," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion,* edited by Robert A. Segal (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publications, 2006), 213.

6. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 122.

7. Bryan S. Turner, "The Body in Western Society: Social Theory and Its Perspectives," in *Religion and the Body,* edited by Sarah Coakley (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 17, 19.

8. Marie R. Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 23.

9. Coakley, "Religion and the Body," in *Religion and the Body,* 5. For a more nuanced view of early Christianity's views of the body, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

10. Some progressions toward a more optimistic approach to embodiment, however, appear in the Puritan attitude toward marital sex. See Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). These favorable tendencies toward sexuality eventually led to later sexual and bodily experiments.

11. Jonathan Edwards, "Heaven Is a World of Love," quoted in George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 191.

12. Lorenzo Dow, *The Opinion of Dow; or, Lorenzo's Thoughts, on Different Religious Subjects, in an Address to the People of New England* (Windham, Vt.: J. Byrne, 1804), 96.

13. Lewis O. Saum, *The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 103.

14. For an excellent treatment of the growing American impulse to "experience" religion, see Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

15. See *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon, upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi,* translated by Joseph Smith (Palmyra: Printed by E. B. Grandin, for the Author, 1830), 82, 161, 188–89, 309//current (1981) LDS edition 2 Ne. 9:39; Mosiah 3:19, 16:2–5; Alma 30:53.

16. 1830 Book of Mormon, 65//2 Ne. 2:28–29.

17. The best work on early Mormonism's ambiguity toward the body (focusing primarily on the Book of Mormon and early revelations) is R. Todd Welker, "The Locus of Sin? Joseph Smith and Nineteenth-Century Doctrines of the Body," in *Archive of Restoration Culture: Summer Fellows' Papers, 2000–2002,* edited by Richard Lyman Bushman (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2005), 107–12. Welker's article focuses on the ambiguity of early Mormonism's views toward the body, while my paper picks up the topic later on as the Mormons developed a more "positive" view of human corporality.

18. Joseph Smith, Revelation, December 27–28, 1832; January 3, 1833, in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books,*

Vol. 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of the *Joseph Smith Papers,* edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 293//1981 LDS edition: D&C 88:15; emphasis mine, "and" is "&" in original. Responding to La Roy Sunderland, who singled this passage out as "nonsense and blasphemy," Pratt argued that the very same teaching is found in the Bible, though he does not in any way explain its implications. Parley P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled: Zion's Watchman Unmasked, and Its Editor, Mr. L. R. Sunderland, Exposed: Truth Vindicated: The Devil Mad, and Priestcraft in Danger!,* 3rd ed. (New York: O. Pratt & E. Fordham, 1838), 26–27.

19. Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary: Containing All Religious Terms; A Comprehensive View of Every Article in the System of Divinity; An Impartial Account of All the Principal Denominations Which Have Subsisted in the Religious World from the Birth of Christ to the Present Day: Together with an Accurate Statement of the Most Remarkable Transactions and Events Recorded in Ecclesiastical History* (Philadelphia: Joseph J. Woodward, 1831), 425. It should be noted that Buck (and antebellum Protestants, for that matter) believed in a physical resurrection but did not view the earthly body as a necessary ingredient for the soul. On the importance of Buck's *Dictionary* in antebellum America, see Matthew Bowman and Samuel Brown, "The Reverend Buck's *Theological Dictionary* and the Struggle to Define American Evangelicalism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Fall 2009): 441–73.

20. Joseph Smith, Revelation, May 6, 1833, in Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1,* 335//1981 D&C 93:34.

21. See Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5, no. 4 (July–August 1980): 24–33.

22. See Joseph Smith, Revelation, February 9, 23, 1831, in Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1,* 95–105, 107//1981 D&C 42.

23. See Joseph Smith, Revelation, December 27–28, 1832; January 3, 1833, in Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1,* 301, 309//1981 D&C 88:74, 124.

24. Joseph Smith, Revelations, September 22–23, 1832, December 27–28, 1832, and January 3, 1833, in Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1*, 279, 299–300//1981 D&C 84:33, 88:67.

25. Joseph Smith, Revelation, February 27, 1833, in ibid., 311–13//1981 D&C 89.

26. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 212–13. Other "temperance" reformers with devoutly spiritual agendas include Sylvester Graham and Phebe Temperance Sutliff. Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815–1860*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), esp. 21–38.

27. The best treatment on early Mormon ritual healing is Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "The Forms of Power: The Development of Mormon Ritual Healing to 1847," *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 42–87. For the larger context, see Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

28. Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37–52.

29. Jared Carter, Journal, quoted in Stapley and Wright, "The Forms of Power," 56.

30. William Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, January 1836, in Bruce A. Van Orden, ed., "Writing to Zion: The William W. Phelps Kirtland Letters (1835–1836)," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 3 (1993): 574.

31. Oliver Cowdery, Sketch Book (1836), in Steven C. Harper, "'A Pentecost and Endowment Indeed': Six Eyewitness Accounts of the Kirtland Temple Experience," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, edited by John W. Welch with Erick B. Carlson (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press/Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 337. See also Joseph Smith, Journal, January 21, 1836, in Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, Vol. 1 of the Journals series of the *Joseph Smith Papers*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 166–67. The resulting revelation is now Doctrine and Covenants 137.

32. Joseph Smith, Journal, March 29–30, 1836, in Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals, Volume 1*, 212–13. For this ordinance as the "culmination" of the Kirtland rituals, see Gregory A. Prince, *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 172–73. Several months earlier, Smith stated that the washing of feet was "calculated to unite our hearts, that we may be one in feeling and sentiment and that our faith may be strong, so that satan cannot over throw us, nor have any power over us." Joseph Smith, Journal, November 12, 1835, in Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals, Volume 1*, 98. For the context of this religious ritual, see Matthew J. Grow,

"'Clean from the Blood of This Generation': The Washing of Feet and the Latter-day Saints," in *Archive of Restoration Culture*, 131–38.

33. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, chap. 3.

34. For a discussion on the growing importance of angels in early Mormonism's priesthood, see Benjamin E. Park, "'A Uniformity So Complete': Early Mormon Angelology," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 1, no. 2 (March 2010); also Samuel Brown and Matthew Bowman, "Joseph Smith and Charles Buck: Heresy and the Living Witness of History," Paper presented at the Mormon History Association, May 2008, Sacramento, California.

35. For a discussion on Mormonism's "selective literalism" of the Bible, see Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 32–36, 65.

36. Parley Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, 96–97; Orson Pratt, "Spiritual Gifts," in O. Pratt, *Tracts by Orson Pratt* (Liverpool and London: F. D. Richards, 1857), 65.

37. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, xxi, rightly notes that Smith "never presented his ideas systematically in clear, logical order." Rather they "came in flashes and bursts." Therefore, "assembling a coherent picture out of many bits and pieces leaves room for misinterpretations and forced logic."

38. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace, and Glory* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2000), 122.

39. Writing in 1845, Parley Pratt presented Mormonism's unique ontology as "the riches . . . held out by the system of materialism." Parley P. Pratt, "Materiality," *The Prophet* 1, no. 52 (May 24, 1845): not paginated. Mormon materialism plays a significant role in the development of LDS theology. While the theological collapse between matter and spirit led to a form of materialism and, I argue, paved the way to their redefined ontology, it was still distinctly different from contemporary monism. Early Mormon thinkers still held to varying degrees of physical elements, even if all "substance" related closely to each other, and they refused to believe that materialism led to mechanism (the idea that all thoughts and emotions result from the brain's organization and natural functioning). Mormon materialism was its own unique blend of monism and dualism, holding that everything was made of the same substance, even if varying in refinement. For an early Mormon defense against comparisons to other materialists, see Orson Pratt, *Absurdities of Immaterialism, or, A Reply to T. W. P. Taylder's Pamphlet, entitled, "The Materialism of the Mormons or Latter-Day Saints, Examined and Exposed"* (Liverpool: R. James, 1849).

For the philosophical differences between Mormonism and materialist thought, see Max Nolan, "Materialism and the Mormon Faith," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 62–75.

40. "The Book of Abraham," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 719–22. The LDS Church has three extant Kirtland-era copies of the book of Abraham, none of which goes beyond what is currently chapter 2 verse 18. The verses concerning the creation appear in chapter 4; and while it is possible that they were written in Kirtland, they fit better theologically among Nauvoo doctrinal developments. I appreciate Robin Jensen, an editor for the Joseph Smith Papers Project, for his advice on these documents. See also Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 286.

41. For an overview of Joseph Smith's experience in the Hebrew school, see Louis C. Zucker, "Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 41–55.

42. Michael T. Walton, "Professor Seixas, the Hebrew Bible, and the Book of Abraham," *Sunstone* 6 (March/April 1981): 41–43.

43. Joshua Seixas, *Manual Hebrew Grammar, for the Use of Beginners*, 2d ed., enl. and improved (Andover, Mass.: Gould and Newman, 1834), 85–86.

44. Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1978): 9; Kevin L. Barney, "Joseph Smith's Emendation of Hebrew Genesis 1:1," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 103–35.

45. An entry in Joseph's journal on February 17, 1836, reveals his dedication to interpreting the Bible based on its earliest manuscripts: "My soul delights in reading the word of the Lord in the original." Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals, Volume 1*, 186. See also February 4, 1836, 180. For an excellent discussion on Joseph Smith's uses of language to unlock truth, see Samuel Brown, "Joseph (Smith) in Egypt: Babel, Hieroglyphs, and the Pure Language of Eden," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 78, no. 1 (March 2009): 26–65.

46. The only scholarly work on Dick thus far is William J. Astore, *Observing God: Thomas Dick, Evangelicalism, and Popular Science in Victorian Britain and America* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2001).

47. Thomas Dick, *The Philosophy of a Future State* (Philadelphia: Edward C. Biddle, 1836), 88.

48. See, for example, Joseph Smith, Sermon, April 7, 1844, in 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), 466; Parley Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," 23.

49. "Extracts from Dick's Philosophy," *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 3 (December 1836): 423–25; "The Philosophy of Religion (Concluded from Our Last)," *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 6 (March 1837): 468–69. In the latter excerpt, Dick's phrase "economy of the universe" is similar to the "economy of God" that Joseph Smith's scribes used when describing the revelation that came to be known as "The Vision" (1981 LDS D&C 76). Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 2:935.

50. For the view that Dick was an important influence on Smith, see Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Knopf, 1945), 171–72; John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 205–7. For an extensive, if flawed, comparative analysis between the theologies of Dick and the Mormon prophet in the attempt to show no influence, see Edward T. Jones, "The Theology of Thomas Dick and Its Possible Relationship to That of Joseph Smith" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969). Both of these viewpoints overlook the *modus operandi* of early Mormonism's vision: Joseph Smith seldom accepted or rejected theological ideas wholesale; rather, he incorporated bits and pieces while ignoring others in his attempt to gather "fragments" of truth to buttress his religious vision.

51. Parley P. Pratt, "The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter," in Parley P. Pratt, *The Millennium, and Other Poems: To Which Is Annexed, A Treatise on the Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter* (New York: W. Molineux, 1840), 105, 110.

52. Ibid., 124–26, 131–32, 134–35.

53. Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1845), 108.

54. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 60.

55. Joseph Smith, "Try the Spirits," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 11 (April 1, 1842): 745. While this editorial was printed under Joseph Smith's name, it was most likely composed collaboratively with either William W. Phelps or John Taylor.

56. Joseph Smith, Sermon, May 17, 1843, in George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in Association with Smith Research Associates, 1995),

103–4. Here is an acute example of Mormonism diverging from other materialists.

57. Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Body," 21. It could be argued that Pratt believed in the materiality of spirit as early as 1839 when he referred to "spirit" as an "eternal principle"—"principle" traditionally being used as a term referring to something material. However, considering his British pamphlets that were published in the early 1840s, I argue that Pratt did not shift until 1843, though this shift was not as big a philosophical leap because of his previous eternalization of matter.

58. Orson Pratt, *Absurdities of Immaterialism*, 11.

59. I was introduced to this idea through conversations with Samuel Brown, whose book in progress, working title "In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Conquest of Death," will undoubtedly be the best work on the topic.

60. Joseph Smith, Sermon, April 16, 1843, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 196.

61. Ibid., 194–95.

62. Charles R. Harrell, "The Development of the Doctrine of Preexistence, 1830–1844," *BYU Studies* 28 (Winter 1989): 75–96; Blake T. Ostler, "The Idea of Pre-existence in the Development of Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Spring 1982): 59–78. A better examination will be Brown, "In Heaven as It Is on Earth," chap. 9. For the larger context of this idea, see Terryl L. Givens, *When Souls Had Wings: Pre-Mortal Existence in Western Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

63. Joseph Smith, Revelation, May 6, 1833, in Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1*, 335//1981 D&C 93:29. There has been some debate about what "intelligence" means, but it seems clear that most early Mormons, especially Joseph Smith, interpreted it as referring to the human spirit and not some uncreated element from which spirits were organized. See Harrell, "Development of the Doctrine of Preexistence," 82–84.

64. W. W. Phelps, "Letter No. 8," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 9 (June 1835): 130.

65. Parley P. Pratt, "Birthday in Prison," in his *The Millennium, and Other Poems*, 70.

66. J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages: or the Rise, Progress, and Causes of Mormonism; with the Biography of Its Author and Founder, Joseph Smith, Junior* (New York: Platt and Peters, 1842), 242.

67. Joseph Smith, Sermon, ca. August 8, 1839, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 9.

68. Joseph Smith, Sermon, March 28, 1841, in ibid., 68.

69. Givens, *When Souls Had Wings*.

70. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 19, 1841, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 62.

71. Phelps, quoted in Samuel Brown, "William Phelps's Paracletes, an Early Witness to Joseph Smith's Divine Anthropology," *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2 (Spring 2009): 80, http://www.ijmsonline.org/index.php/IJMS/article/view/42/110 (accessed September 2009).

72. Parley Pratt, "Materiality," not paginated.

73. Joseph Smith, Sermon, June 16, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 382.

74. Joseph Smith, Sermon, March 28, 1841, in ibid., 68.

75. Joseph Smith, Sermon, May 21, 1843, in ibid., 207.

76. For Mormonism's unique chain of being, see Brown, "In Heaven as It Is on Earth," chap. 9; Park, "A Uniformity So Complete."

77. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 60.

78. Joseph Smith, Sermon, May 14, 1843, in ibid., 201. On May 21, just a week later, Smith preached: "The mortification of satan consists in his not being permitted to take a body. He sometimes gets possession of a body but when the proven authorities turn him out of Doors he finds it was not his but a stole one." Ibid., 208.

79. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 516.

80. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 8–9.

81. Parley Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," 27–28; emphasis mine.

82. The development of early Mormonism's understanding of the Godhead has been much debated, including how early Smith understood God the Father to be embodied. For the interpretation that Smith progressed from the view of an immaterial to an eventually material God, see Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine"; Grant Underwood, "The New England Origins of Mormonism Revisited," *Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989): 16–17; Dan Vogel, "The Earliest Mormon Concept of God," in *Line upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine*, edited by Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 17–33. For the view that Joseph Smith much earlier understood God as embodied, see David L. Paulsen, "The Doctrine of Divine Embodiment: Restoration, Judeo-Christian, and Philosophical Perspectives," *BYU Studies* 25, no. 4 (1995–96): 7–39; Ari D. Bruening and David L. Paulsen,

"The Development of the Mormon Understanding of God: Early Mormon Modalism and Other Myths," *FARMS Review of Books* 13 (2001): 109–39.

83. Erastus E. Snow, *Snow's Reply to a Self-Styled Philanthropist, of Chester County* (1840), quoted in Grant Underwood, "A 'Communities of Discourse' Approach to Early LDS Thought," in *Discourses of Mormon Theology: Philosophical and Theological Possibilities*, edited by James M. McLaughlan and Loyd Ericson (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 31.

84. Underwood, "A 'Communities of Discourse' Approach," 27–38.

85. Parley Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 29.

86. Reverend H. Mattison, *A Scriptural Defense of the Doctrine of the Trinity, or a Check to Modern Arianism, as Taught by Unitarians, Campbellites, Hicksites, New Lights, Universalists and Mormons; and Especially by a Sect Calling Themselves "Christians"* (New York: Lewis Colby & Co., 1848), 44. Several other Mormons around the same time as Parley's *Mormonism Unveiled* made similar statements about God. Warren Cowdery, "Comments on John 14:6," *Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 5 (February 5, 1836): 265, accused other religions of "worshiping a God of imagination without body or parts." Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Asahel H[art], Scarborough, Maine, August 25, 1838, quoted in Robert H. Slover, "A Newly Discovered 1838 Wilford Woodruff Letter," *BYU Studies* 15 (Spring 1975): 357, wrote, "Their [sic] is a whole generation worshiping they know not what, whether a God without mouth, eyes, ears, body parts or passions as he does not reveal himself to them, but their [sic] is not deception with the Saints in any age of the world who worships the living and true God of revelation."

87. Parley P. Pratt, *An Answer to Mr. William Hewitt's Tract against the Latter-day Saints* (Manchester, England: W. B. Thomas, 1840), 9. Like the ministers Pratt and Snow were combatting, Truman Coe, a Presbyterian minister living near the Saints in Kirtland, also misinterpreted early LDS teachings of the Godhead. The Mormons, he claimed, "contend that the God worshipped by the Presbyterians and all other sectarians is no better than a wooden god. They believe that the true God is a material being, composed of body and parts; and that when the Creator formed Adam in his own image, he made him about the size and shape of God himself." Truman Coe, Letter to the *Ohio Observer*, August 11, 1836, in Milton V. Backman Jr., "Truman Coe's 1836 Description of Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 17 (Spring 1977): 347, 350, 354. It is likely that Coe misinterpreted the Warren Cowdery statement quoted above.

88. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 515.

89. For a discussion on theological developments leading up to the King Follett Discourse, see Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 209–55.

90. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 8.

91. Luther H. Martin, "Religion and Cognition," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, edited by John R. Hinnell (New York: Routledge, 2005), 478.

92. Michael James McClymond, *Encounters with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 59.

93. Orestes Brownson, "Theodore Parker's Discourse," *Boston Quarterly Review* 5 (October 14, 1842): 433.

94. Patrick W. Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson: American Religious Weathervane* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 117.

95. E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 205.

96. Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 515.

97. Joseph Smith, Sermon, May 12, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 370–71.

98. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 8–9.

99. Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884), 46.

100. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 15. Smith's successors retreated from this teaching, instead reasoning that children's bodies will be allowed to grow before their exaltation.

101. Parley Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," 25.

102. For Pratt's doctrine of equality, see Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 27. This early conception of theosis vaguely differs from other perfectionist teachings of contemporary religions.

103. Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," 35; emphasis mine; capitalization Pratt's.

104. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, 27–32. A decade earlier, Pratt had written in "Intelligence and Affection," 37, that God had all power because He had perfected his affections, most especially love.

105. Exceptions include Christian mystics who, among others, described their religious experiences in terms of love and even lust.

106. Mary Midgley, "The Soul's Successors: Philosophy and the Body," in *Religion and the Body*, 55.

107. Turner, "The Body in Western Society," 20.

108. David Tripp, "The Image of the Body in Protestant Reformation," in *Religion and the Body*, 134.

109. Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 50.

110. Thomas à Kempis, *The Christian's Pattern; or, a Treatise on the Imitation of Christ*, abridged by John Wesley (Halifax, England: William Milner, 1845), 115.

111. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Senses and the Soul," *The Dial* 2 (January 1842): 378.

112. Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 229.

113. This cry for bodily freedom led to such experiments as the Moravians' divinized sexual practices, the Shakers' celibacy, the Oneidans' complex marriage system, and even Mormonism's polygamous relationships. See Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Jesus Is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), esp. 73–104; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

114. Parley P. Pratt, "Intelligence and Affection," in Pratt, *An Appeal*, 37–38. Pratt's apparent neglect of the Book of Mormon's teachings on the "natural man" demonstrates either early Mormonism's neglect of the Book of Mormon in developing their theology or that the Church had moved beyond the rhetoric of the Nephite scripture.

115. Pratt, "Intelligence and Affection," 38–39. The timing of this essay is especially notable: Most of the apostles and other Church leaders had just been introduced to the practice of polygamy, and Parley's introduction was especially difficult. He was originally sealed to his second wife, Mary Ann Frost (his first wife, Thankful Halsey, had died), by Hyrum Smith, but Joseph Smith later cancelled that sealing and took Mary as his own plural wife. Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Crisis" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), 66–71; George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy: "... but we called it celestial marriage"* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008), 207–9.

116. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, 32.

117. A noted exception is Emmanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish theologian. For his deification of the senses, see Schmidt, *Hearing Things*, 211–21.

118. Pratt, *Autobiography*, 329. I say that Pratt "expanded" this principle from Joseph Smith because we have no teachings from the Mormon prophet documenting that he held this view of the eternal cultivation of sympathies, though he did speak about the eternal importance of friendship. Benjamin E. Park, "'Build, Therefore, Your Own World': Ralph Waldo Emerson, Joseph Smith, and American Antebellum Thought," *Journal of Mormon History* 36 (Winter 2010): 41–72. Rather, it appears that Parley is reading back into Smith the theological innovations that he himself induced from the Prophet's teachings. It is also noteworthy that Mary Ann, the wife to whom Parley apparently refers in this passage (that is, during his 1840 trip to Philadelphia), had left him over the principle of celestial marriage by the time he was writing this segment of the autobiography.

119. For Joseph Smith's "dynastic" view of sealing and, especially, plural marriage, see Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), chap. 1; Brooke, *Refiner's Fire*, 255–58. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 445, writes that Smith's "marriage covenant prepared the Saints less for wedded bliss than for heavenly rule." This focus on creating a religious dynasty led to the theological development of attaching every family to a hierarchical figure. Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 3 (1974): 291–314; Brown, "In Heaven as It Is on Earth," chap. 8. It should be noted that Parley Pratt was sufficiently hesitant about this practice that he did not participate in adoptions performed prior to the trek west. I appreciate Jonathan Stapley for sharing his statistics on Nauvoo adoptions.

120. Pratt participated in the endowment for the first time on December 2, 1843, and received his second anointing on January 21, 1844. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 429, 442. Pratt, *Autobiography*, 367, later dated the composition of "Intelligence and Affection" as early 1844.

121. "Book of the Law of the Lord," May 1, 1842, in Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, comps. and eds., *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in Association with Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2005), 1.

122. Rev. F. G. Lee, *Dictionary of Ritual and Other Ecclesiastical Terms* (London: James Hogg & Son, 1871), Pt. 1, 46.

123. Joseph Faa Di Bruno, *Catholic Belief: or A Short and Simple Exposition of Catholic Doctrine* (London: Burns and Oates, 1878), 96.

124. "Book of Anointings—Wives to Husbands," January 11, 1846, in Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, comps. and eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in Association with Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2005), 397. For the importance of this form of blessing, 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.

125. Joseph Smith, Sermon, February 5, 1840, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 33, preached that, at the final judgment, human beings will "be punished for deeds done in the body."

126. Joseph Smith, Sermon, "Minutes of a Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Held in Nauvoo, Ill., Commencing Oct. 1st, 1841," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 24 (October 15, 1841): 578.

127. These ordinances were originally performed in the river, but on April 6, 1842, Smith announced that they "must be in a font" in the temple. "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 12 (April 15, 1842): 763; Alexander L. Baugh, "'For This Ordinance Belongeth to My House': The Practice of Baptism for the Dead outside the Nauvoo Temple," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 47–58.

128. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 14.

129. Joseph Smith, Sermon, May 12, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 370. "Saviours . . . on mount Zion" is in Obad. 1:21.

130. For the evolution from a theocentric to a domestic heaven, see Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988), chap. 7.

131. Smith uses this language concerning plural/eternal marriage. The earliest published version is "Revelation Given to Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, July 12th, 1843," *Deseret News Extra*, September 14, 1852, 26–27 (1981 D&C 132:19).

132. Joseph Smith's revelation on plural marriage announced that those who do not enter a celestial union, no matter how righteous they are, "cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition." "Revelation Given to Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, July 12th, 1843," 26.//D&C 132:17.

133. William Clayton recorded on May 16, 1843, that Joseph Smith explained: "Those who are married by the power and authority of the

priesthood in this life and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory." George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 101.

134. Mormonism's domestic heaven was an extension from Joseph Smith's teachings and, excluding Parley Pratt's 1844 writings, largely appearing after Smith's death. For an extended argument that Joseph Smith's heaven was not centered on domesticity, see Brown, "In Heaven as It Is on Earth," chaps. 8–9.

135. Pratt, "Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body," 30.

136. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, 33–34.

137. Ibid., 136.

Mormon Women in the History of Second-Wave Feminism

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

As a historian of early America, I seldom pay much attention to the history of the twentieth century. I have often joked that, since I lived through most of it, it seems too much like autobiography. That sensation was even more pronounced in the summer of 2004 when I confronted a stack of books on the emergence of second-wave feminism. I relived my own life as I read accounts of feminist awakenings in Chapel Hill, Seattle, or Chicago and learned about the struggles of Jewish, African American, and Chicana women caught between feminism and loyalty to their people.

Unlike textbook histories of second-wave feminism which typically focus on visible public events like the founding of the National Organization of Women in 1966 or the picketing of the Miss American pageant in 1968, newer scholarship focuses on grass-roots organizing and on the personal stories of leaders at various levels.[1] Reading these books in relation to my own life taught me something I should already have known. Mormon women weren't passive recipients of the new feminism. We helped to create it.

Constructing a timeline of key events reinforced the point. In 1972, the year Rosemary Radford Ruether introduced feminist theology at the Harvard Divinity School, Mormon feminists were teaching women's history at the LDS Institute of Religion in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1974, the year more than a thousand women attended the Berkshire Conference on Women's History at Radcliffe, those same Mormon feminists launched *Exponent II*. Similar things were happening elsewhere. At the time Black Feminists were organizing in New York, Carol Lynn Pearson was pub-

Table
Mormon Women in the History of Second-Wave Feminism

1963 Betty Friedan publishes *The Feminine Mystique*.

1963 Esther Peterson promotes State Commissions on the Status of Women.

1966 The National Organization of Women is founded.

1966 Boston-area Mormon women publish *A Beginner's Boston*.

1968 New York Radical Women demonstrate at the Miss America pageant.

1970 The *Utah Historical Quarterly* publishes a special issue on women.

1970 Boston feminists publish the pamphlet that becomes *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

1971 Boston-area Mormon women edit a women's issue of *Dialogue*.

1972 *Ms* magazine is founded.

1972 Mormon feminists teach women's history at the LDS Institute of Religion in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

1972 Rosemary Ruether teaches feminist theology at Harvard Divinity School.

1973 Carol Lynn Pearson publishes *Daughters of Light*.

1973 National Black Feminists organize.

1974 *Exponent II* begins publication.

1974 The Berkshire Conference on Women's History is held at Radcliffe.

1975 Elouise Bell delivers a forum address at Brigham Young University on feminism.

1975 Catholic women hold the first Women's Ordination Conference in Detroit.

1976 Boston women publish *Mormon Sisters*, edited by Claudia L. Bushman.

1976 Maxine Hong Kingston publishes *The Woman Warrior*.

1977 Sonia Johnson leads Mormons for ERA.

1977 The National Women's Studies Association is formed.

1977 Utah holds its state International Women's Year conference in Salt Lake City.

1977 In Houston, Bella Abzug presides over the First National Women's Conference.

Table (cont.)
Mormon Women in the History of Second-Wave Feminism

1978 The Alice Louise Reynolds Club is organized in Provo, Utah.
1978 100,000 demonstrators march in Washington, D.C., to support the Equal Rights Amendment.
1978 Marilyn Warenski publishes *Patriarchs and Politics*.
1980 Evangelical feminists publish *Daughters of Sarah*.
1980 Peggy Fletcher becomes editor of *Sunstone*.
1981 Jewish feminists found B'not Esh.
1981 Sonia Johnson publishes her autobiography, *From Housewife to Heretic*.
1982 The ERA fails of ratification.
1982 Mormon women make a "Pilgrimage" to Nauvoo, Illinois.
1982 Alice Walker publishes *The Color Purple*.
1982 Mary Lythgoe Bradford publishes *Mormon Women Speak*.
1983 Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza publishes *In Memory of Her*.
1984 Margaret Merrill Toscano speaks on women's priesthood at the Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium.
1984 Emily's List is founded to encourage women political candidates.
1984 Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery publish *Mormon Enigma*, the biography of Emma Hale Smith.
1985 14,000 women attend the Third International Conference held in Kenya.
1985 The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints (now Community of Christ) ordains women.
1985 Wilma Mankiller becomes the head of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma.
1986 Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson publish *Sisters in Spirit*.
1987 Congress declares March National Women's History month.
1988 The Mormon Women's Forum is founded.
1988 Barbara Harris becomes the first female bishop in the Episcopal Church.

lishing *Daughters of Light* (Provo, Utah: Trilogy Arts, 1973). While Catholic women were gathering for their first conference on ordination in 1975, Elouise Bell, a professor of English at Brigham Young University, was lecturing on the implications of the new feminism. On different streets and within radically different traditions, women were exploring the implications of the new movement. It may seem merely a curiosity that Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* appeared the same year (1976) as Claudia Bushman's edited collection on Mormon pioneer women, but in both cases women steeped in the folklore of their people were rewriting history.

Histories of second-wave feminism sometimes tell the story of Sonia Johnson, a Mormon housewife from Virginia, who stood up to Orrin Hatch, a powerful senator from Utah, during hearings on the ERA in 1977, but they do not situate Sonia's story within the larger history of Mormon feminism. The reasons are not hard to find. As Ann Braude has observed:

> On both the right and the left, pundits portray religion and feminism as inherently incompatible, as opposing forces in American culture. On one hand, some feminists assume that religious women are brainwashed apologists for patriarchy suffering from false consciousness. They believe allegiance to religious communities or organizations renders women incapable of authentic advocacy on women's behalf. On the other hand, religious hierarchies often discourage or prohibit women's pubic leadership. Some leaders assume that those who work to enhance women's status lack authentic faith. Many accounts of second-wave feminism reinforce these views by mentioning religion only when it is a source of opposition.[2]

This essay is an effort to connect selected themes in the history of second-wave feminism with what I know of Mormon feminism. In that sense, it is both autobiography and history. I will emphasize three areas where I found significant convergence—in accounts about the emergence of grass-roots organizing, in narratives about the discovery of women's history, and in explorations of the double-bind of identity politics. Mormon women have a place in the history of second-wave feminism, though we have not yet claimed it.

The Emergence of Feminist Groups

Histories of second-wave feminism often begin in 1963, the

year Betty Friedan diagnosed the mysterious angst of suburban housewives who seemingly had it all, yet felt empty and unfulfilled. Grateful readers turned *The Feminine Mystique* into a best seller and its title into a household word. "My secret scream as I stir the oatmeal, iron the blue jeans, and sell pop at the Little League baseball games is 'Stop the World, I want to get on before it's too late!" a thirty-seven-year-old Wyoming mother wrote.[3] Friedan's influence was not confined to the suburbs. In Canada, Lois Miriam Wilson, ministerial candidate and mother of four, devoured the book. Her oldest daughter, who was thirteen at the time, remembers that as her mother read, she would periodically cry out, "That's right!"[4] In Manhattan, Susan Brownmiller, single and a freelance writer, found herself on every page. "*The Feminine Mystique* changed my life," she recalls.[5]

I heard about the book from the organist in my LDS ward in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and it changed my life, too. Like others, I was moved by Friedan's insistence that women should not have to choose between motherhood and meaningful work, though at the time the best I could do was dedicate my children's nap times to serious reading. Significantly, my first real opportunity to claim a life as a writer came from a Church calling. When the elders' quorum presidency panned a fund-raising idea suggested by the ward bishop, the Relief Society took it up. My work editing *A Beginner's Boston* (Cambridge, Mass.: Privately published, 1966), taught me that I could use small bits of time to accomplish something useful. It also taught the women of Cambridge Ward that we could do more than sell crafts at our annual bazaar. The step from conventional fund-raising to writing and publishing was a big one.

In June of 1970, flush with the success of a second edition of *A Beginner's Boston*, a group of us began meeting to talk about the new feminism. By the end of summer, we had volunteered to produce a special issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Our "Ladies Home Dialogue," as we jokingly called it, appeared in the summer of 1971 with a bright pink cover that we thought must have been a sardonic joke by our male publishers. In the introduction, Claudia Bushman described our group as a dozen or so women in their thirties who gathered frequently to talk about their lives. "We have no officers, no rules and no set meeting time," she explained, adding, "Although we sometimes refer to

ourselves as the L.D.S. cell of Women's Lib, we claim no affiliation with any of those militant bodies and some of us are so straight as to be shocked by their antics." But she admitted that we "read their literature with interest."[6]

So we did. Judy Dushku, then a graduate student at Tufts University, had been invited to join a consciousness-raising group based in Cambridge. With them, she was the token conservative. With us, she was the resident radical. We argued over the implications of the mimeographed manifestoes she brought to our meetings. Spunky illustrations by local artist Carolyn Durham Peters (later Carolyn Person) captured our wrenching discussions better than any of the essays in the volume. On one page, under the banner "The Women's Movement: Liberation or Deception?" Carolyn drew a blonde Eve standing beside the tree of knowledge in an imagined Eden. Instead of a fig leaf, Carolyn's blonde Eve covered her nakedness with a giant disc labeled "All American Womanhood: Mormon Division." To her left hung an apple, unpicked and unbitten. Beyond that a sign marked the exit into a "lone and dreary world" promising independence, power, identity, autonomy, self-esteem, career, and freedom. Eve, like us, had not yet made her decision. In the context of Mormon theology, this little allegory was filled with irony. Unlike mainstream Christians, Mormons revere "Mother Eve" who chose the hard path of mortality over the security of Eden. Still, general conference talks at the time reinforced the division of labor established in Eden.[7]

In the most confident essay in the volume, Christine Meaders Durham (now chief justice of the Utah Supreme Court and a nationally known jurist) explained how she and her husband were sharing the care of their two (eventually four) young children while she finished law school and he medical school. Why were women's ambitions less worthy than men's? she asked. Why shouldn't fathers as well as mothers experience the joy of parenting?[8] I was the only one willing to take on the then-controversial topic of birth control. I handled it, obliquely, through satire. The last page of my essay featured Carolyn's drawing of a raised fist above a defiant "SISTERS UNITE."[9] I remember being wary of the drawing when I first saw it; but in the end, I relished its double meaning. Within the Mormon community, "brother" and "sister" were conventional forms of address. Our group knew the power

of sisterhood firsthand through multiple service and fund-raising projects. We were confident in our ability to shape the new feminism to our own needs.

We were not alone in that confidence. Brushfires of feminism were erupting all over the United States. Two anecdotes from other grass-roots feminists illustrate the spirit of the times. Bev Mitchell, an early leader in Iowa, recalls that she was spending a weekend in Chicago when she stumbled onto a women's liberation rally in Grant Park. "It was just about the most exciting thing I had ever been to," she recalls. Back home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, she rallied women to lobby for changes in the state's civil rights code. She jokes that the group included "scary, hippie women . . . dripping with beads" as well as the wife of a major industrialist. The men on the Civil Rights Commission "were scared to death that between their wives, who were capable of incredible fury, and these hippies, God knows what would happen. So protection for women was put in the code." The women celebrated at a summer encampment for women and children. Every morning they "raised a bra on an improvised flagpole while a member . . . played 'God Bless America' on her kazoo."[10]

Mormon feminists will recognize the iconoclastic humor in Mitchell's account as well as her celebration of diversity. They will also recognize the spiritual awakening experienced by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, a Cuban refugee who had served as a Catholic missionary in Peru. She was working in a Sears store in Rochester, New York, when a friend invited her to attend a conference on women's ordination. When a speaker at one of the meetings invited those who felt called to ordination to stand, she turned to a Dominican friend next to her and said, "Mary, I do not want to stand. I am tired of battles." But she found herself on her feet, sustained by the "cloud of witnesses" around her. When she sat down, she thought, "I have been born, baptized, and confirmed in this new life all at once!"[11]

The new feminism was nourished by meetings, rallies, and retreats, and by accidental encounters that spread the enthusiasm from one community to another. Thirty years later, feminists everywhere look back on those years with nostalgia. In the words of New York activist Rosalyn Baxandall: "What I'd like to convey—what I think has been neglected in the books and articles

about the women's liberation movement—is the joy we felt. We were, we believed, poised on the trembling edge of a transformation."[12] That description isn't much different from Claudia Bushman's recollections of those early gatherings of Mormon women in Boston: "Here we all were, working together, engaged in frontline enterprises, researching, thinking and writing for ourselves. We were publishing to an audience interested in reading what we had to say. We were making public presentations to people who came to hear us. This was more empowering than any successful woman today will ever be able to imagine. We felt invincible."[13]

Like Eve, we reached out to grasp the fruit, little knowing what lay ahead.

The Discovery of History

Returning from the first meeting of the National Black Feminist Organization held in New York in 1973, a young novelist named Alice Walker stood staring at a picture of Frederick Douglass hanging on her wall. She asked herself why she didn't also have a picture of Harriet Tubman or Sojourner Truth on that wall. Reporting on this experience in a letter to *Ms* magazine, she wrote, "And I thought that if black women would only start asking questions like that, they'd soon—all of them—have to begin reclaiming their mothers and grandmothers—and what an enrichment that would be!" Walker's now famous essay "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" epitomizes a cultural and intellectual movement launched by the new feminism.[14] Those of us educated in the 1950s were happy to have escaped our mothers' gardens (and the weeding, flower-arranging, and home canning that went with them). For us, education meant mastery of Great Works produced by men who were too elevated to be imagined as our grandfathers.

Even in the 1960s, women's stories were virtually absent from formal history as it was taught in the United States. Female historians were largely absent as well. The few who wrote about women were outside the academy; those who had managed to land positions in colleges or universities knew better than to write about anything related to women. Jo Freeman, who entered Berkeley in 1961 as a precocious fifteen-year-old, looks back in astonishment

at the male-centered education she received: "During my four years in one of the largest institutions of higher education in the world—and one with a progressive reputation—I not only never had a woman professor, I never even saw one. Worse yet, I didn't notice."[15]

The "didn't notice" part rings true to me. When I was a senior at the University of Utah in 1960, an assistant dean named Shauna Adix invited a group of student leaders to lunch. She and another female administrator lightly raised some questions about discrimination against women. I didn't know what she was talking about. Ignorance of women's issues was not confined to the early sixties or to state universities. Sara Evans remembers only one class at Duke "in which women were acknowledged to have some historical agency." The professor was Anne Firor Scott, who "drew on her research on southern white women to tell us about the importance of women in Progressive Era politics."[16] But Evans, preoccupied with other issues, was unprepared to listen. A brief encounter with a women's liberation group in Chicago in 1968 changed her mind. When she entered graduate school at the University of North Carolina in 1969, she was hungry for more. Since there were no courses in women's history at UNC, she and other women students had to teach themselves. "Little did we know that we were part of a cohort of several thousand across the country, collectively inventing women's history as a major field of historical inquiry and women's studies as a discipline."[17]

Gerda Lerner believes that, in 1970, there were only five specialists in U.S. history who identified themselves primarily as historians of women. Lerner, a refugee from Nazi-controlled Austria, came to academics after raising a family and working with women in left-wing political groups and in the PTA in her New York neighborhood. "I knew in my bones that women build communities," she recalls. "My commitment to women's history came out of my life, not out of my head."[18] Together, she and others began to transform the historical profession in the United States.

Looking back, women who lived through those years describe their own amazement at discovering that women, including minority women, had a history. Beverly Guy-Sheftall had read plenty of black literature, but she was unprepared for the discovery she made in the Emory University library one day when she stumbled

on Anna Julia Cooper's *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*. "I was literally awestruck when I read Cooper's insightful and original pronouncement, which she wrote in 1892 long before there was any mention of Black feminism: 'The colored woman of to-day occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country. . . . She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both." For Guy-Sheftall, that passage shifted the earth in a new direction.[19]

For Mormon feminists, the earth shifted again and again. For Boston-area women, the transformation began in 1970 when we were scrambling to find material to fill that pink issue of *Dialogue*. Sometime that fall or early winter, I walked in late to a meeting just in time to hear Claudia Bushman read from an essay submitted by Leonard J. Arrington, one of the "founding fathers" of professional Mormon history. His essay included long excerpts from the diary of Ellis Reynolds Shipp, a polygamist mother who, in response to concern about the high mortality rates for childbearing women in early Utah, went to Philadelphia in the 1870s to study obstetrics, leaving her young children behind in the care of a sister-wife. When Shipp returned to Utah for the summer and became pregnant, her husband reluctantly gave her permission to return to medical school. But on the morning she was to leave, he changed his mind. As her diary described it: "Suddenly, he grasped my hands and said, 'I cannot give my sanction to such a momentous thing—under such circumstances to undertake what really is impossible, the unwise thing to do.' At once I jumped to my feet and spoke to my husband as I ne'er had spoken to him before! 'yesterday you said that I should go. I am going, going now!'"[20] When Claudia finished reading Shipp's words, the whole room erupted in cheers. Although most of us had been Mormons all our lives, we had never heard such a story. Our encounter with the little-known history of nineteenth-century Mormon feminism led to the series of lectures on women's history which we taught at the LDS Institute of Religion in 1972 and eventually to the discovery in the stacks of Harvard's Widener Library of a nineteenth-century feminist periodical called the *Woman's Exponent* published in Utah from 1872 to 1912. Its forthright feminism gave us confidence in our own. In 1974, we launched *Exponent II* on the "twin

platforms of feminism and Mormonism." That was, of course, the year that an overflow crowd at the Second Berkshire Conference on Women's History prompted a male reporter for the *New York Times* to exclaim that women's history was "exploding in the academic skies like a supernova."[21]

The light from that supernova had already been seen in Utah. In fact, some date the beginnings of second-wave Mormon history to 1970, when the *Utah Historical Quarterly* published a special issue on women. Fledgling historians were fortunate to have a champion in Leonard Arrington, the founding father of the New Mormon History. (Arrington published an economic history of Mormon women in *Western Humanities Review* in 1955, even before completing his pathbreaking *Great Basin Kingdom*.[22]) In 1972, he left an academic position at Utah State University to become LDS Church Historian. From the first, he included women as part of the research staff, nurturing the careers of Jill Mulvay Derr, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and Susan Staker and reaching out beyond his staff to encourage other founding mothers of Mormon feminism. Throughout the 1970s and early '80s, amateurs and academics in and out of the Church searched the rich sources of nineteenth-century Mormon history for new insights into the women's suffrage movement, polygamy, pioneer midwifery, and the structure of early women's organizations. Some of this work was published in Church periodicals, others in independent journals like *Dialogue* or *Sunstone*. Very little of it, unfortunately, appeared in mainstream historical publications. In part that was because there was such a thriving internal market for Mormon history.[23]

In Mormonism, history merges into theology. Joseph Smith's story, narratives about the gathering of Zion in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Utah, and explorations into the long struggle between the Latter-day Saints and the federal government frame our scriptures as well as our self-images as Latter-day Saints. It is hardly surprising, then, that Mormon feminists would face spiritual as well as intellectual issues as they came face to face with the past. To their astonishment, researchers uncovered references to Eliza R. Snow, the second president of the women's Relief Society, as a "priestess" and "prophetess." They found references to women healing the sick and exercising other gifts, and they found in the

holograph minutes of the first Relief Society statements by Joseph Smith that appeared to promise women the priesthood. The first public exposure of the claim to women's priesthood may have been Margaret Merrill Toscano's speech at the 1984 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City: "The Missing Rib: The Forgotten Place of Queens and Priestesses in the Establishment of Zion." By this time, however, much of the story was familiar to historians. The first minutes of the Relief Society were very much a topic of discussion when feminists met at Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1982. For many that "Pilgrimage" was a healing journey. Sharing a moment of revelation on the banks of the Mississippi, we felt the tensions between our faith and our feminism dissolve.[24]

The Double-Bind of Identity Politics

Stories like these make it all sound easy. In fact, feminists everywhere were often stigmatized as "man-haters" or "crazies." For minority feminists, there was often intense, often wounding, opposition. African American and Asian activists pilloried Maxine Hong Kingston or Alice Walker for identifying with white feminism. Little-known activists faced similar problems. At Long Beach State University in California in 1969, Ana Nieto-Gómez and her friends named their consciousness-raising group *Las Hija de Cuauhtémoc* after an early women's organization that operated on both sides of the Mexican-U.S. border in the early twentieth century. They were inspired by the feistiness of older women they knew. "In my mind, I was acting like my mom, like my aunts, like the Chicanas from San Bernadino," Nieto-Gómez remembers. But when she won an election for president, male leaders who were threatened by her victory hanged her in effigy, then staged a mock mass and burial.[25] After Irene Blea organized a conference on Chicana feminism at the University of Colorado in 1977, name-calling escalated into vandalism. "There's nothing worse in a Colorado winter than having somebody egg your car and then 't.p.' it and then have it freeze," she remembers.[26]

Like members of other minority groups, Mormon feminists were sometimes caught in the double-bind of identity politics, finding themselves stigmatized within their own group when they advocated for change and dismissed by other feminists when they defended their heritage. Many will identify with the experience of

former black nationalist and feminist activist Barbara Omolade: "Sometimes I have felt like an envoy and ambassador shuttling between two alien nations. Sometimes as avenging warrior, I have defended each one's causes to the other. At other times I have sought refuge in one side, after being disgruntled and fed up with the failures and weaknesses of the other."[27]

For Latter-day Saints, the most wounding battles were fought in public over the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Although the ERA passed Congress in 1971 with little discussion and virtually no opposition, by 1977 it was the target of conservative leaders like Phyllis Schlafley, whose flagship organization, Stop ERA, had forged a powerful alliance of women, clergy, and politicians. The conflict intensified when President Jimmy Carter appointed Bella Abzug to head the commission charged with planning the International Women's Year conference to be held in Houston, Texas, in November 1977. Since delegates were to be chosen by conferences held in each of the fifty states, pro-ERA and anti-ERA groups attempted to dominate the conventions. In Utah, conservatives outmaneuvered moderates who hoped for a respectful and open dialogue on the issues. Rallying Latter-day Saint women through their local Relief Societies, right-wing leaders dominated the convention.[28]

Later that summer, Eleanor Ricks Colton, president of the Washington DC Stake Relief Society, got a call from her former stake president suggesting she attend a meeting designed to bring conservative groups together with feminist organizers of the IWY. He suggested that, "if given the opportunity, I should explain the Church's stand against the ERA. 'Brother Ladd,' I said. 'I am not sure I understand that myself.' He chuckled in his good-natured way. 'Well, you have three days to find out.'" Colton called friends in Utah, rallied her best friend, and sat up long hours reading everything she could find. By 11:00 P.M. the night before the meeting, she was exhausted, wondering whether she had anything to contribute. When the phone rang, she heard the voice of her daughter, a student at BYU. As they talked, her daughter urged her to read Doctrine and Covenants 100:5: "Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men." She went to sleep ready for whatever would

come. But when she arrived at the meeting the next day she found that the leaders had cancelled it "on the grounds that it would be 'counterproductive' to meet with us and other anti-ERA groups." She was astonished. The IWY was tax-supported. Surely, the organizers ought to be willing to listen to everyone.[29]

As Congress debated extending the ratification deadline for the ERA, Colton decided to attend the hearings. Someone told her she should wear a button indicating her stand. "Pro ERA people wore green buttons; those opposed to the extension wore red buttons. I felt somewhat shy about this because of my natural repugnance to the steam-roller tactics employed by leaders of both groups. To assert my independence I made my own button from a red paper plate with the carefully printed words, 'Stop ERA Extension.' When I timidly stepped on the elevator to the House Chambers, I was taken aback to hear a woman say to a group of green button wearers, 'We don't need to ride with her,' and they stepped aside to wait for the next elevator."

This was the beginning of her education in polarized politics. As the debate heated up, supporters of the ERA took to wearing white to make them more easily visible to members of Congress:

> On voting day a friend and I stood in a crowded lobby by one of the doors to the Senate chambers when a huffy woman behind me said, "If these two Judases in front would move over, there would be room for more of us!" I turned, and said as kindly as I could, "Remember that in a political contest all wisdom and good motives [of] all good people are seldom found on only one side. If we're going to have to stand here all morning, let's at least be kind to each other." A man dressed in white who stood beside her seemed relieved as he struck up a conversation with me.[30]

Sonia Johnson's story has been used by historians to exemplify the opposition of Mormonism to feminism. Colton's story helps us to see the hostility of feminism to Mormonism.

Colton admits that she was dismayed to hear "a wholesome-looking, tart-tongued Mormon woman [Johnson] belittling the leaders of her church," but she was also disturbed by the Church's reaction. The excommunication of Sonia Johnson "poured gasoline on the fires of misunderstanding." News of the excommunication hit the media the weekend before Colton was scheduled to chair a preparatory meeting in her county for a White House Con-

ference on Families. "I have never before or since witnessed such rude behavior among women," she recalled. "It was apparent from the beginning that I had been branded a red-eyed Mormon, unfit to represent liberal Montgomery County."[31]

When Sonia Johnson criticized Church authorities in her testimony before Congress, she exposed the raw edges of a culture that simultaneously encouraged female autonomy and allowed patriarchal dominion. She didn't rise to national prominence because she was an oppressed housewife, but because she was a feisty Mormon with speaking and organizational skills nourished through long Church service. Because she, like Colton, believed in personal revelation, she wasn't afraid to stand up to power. Sadly, the community that nourished her also dismissed her. She had committed the cardinal sin—creating adverse publicity for a Church that had worked hard to overcome its nineteenth-century reputation as one of the "twin relics of barbarism." In Mormon terms, she had betrayed her people.

News of Church involvement in national politics appalled Latter-day Saints who supported the ERA. Hoping to assert their right to disagree, a group of women in Provo, Utah, organized the Alice Louise Reynolds Club as a forum for discussing social issues. It met in the library of Brigham Young University, in a room named for Reynolds, which they themselves had funded and furnished, from 1978 to 1981 when university officials forced them to move.[32] The 1980s brought new organizational efforts (such as the founding of the Mormon Women's Forum in 1988) and new forms of opposition. But that story belongs in another article.

Mormon women did not become feminists because they read *The Feminine Mystique* or subscribed to *Ms* magazine. They became feminists as new ideas, filtered through a wide range of personal associations, helped them make sense of their lives. Discovering history, they also discovered themselves. But like members of other minority groups, they were sometimes caught in the double-bind of identity politics, finding themselves stigmatized within their own group when they touched tender issues and dismissed by other feminists when they defended their heritage. Their story reminds us that second-wave feminism was not one thing but many. It was not a self-consistent ideology but a *move-*

ment—a tremor in the earth, a lift in the wind, a swelling tide. Although there were many groups, there was no unified platform, no single set of texts. Instead there was an exhilarating sense of discovery, a utopian hope that women might change the world.

For some of us, that hope remains today.

Notes

1. Stephanie Gilmore, "The Dynamics of Second-Wave Feminist Activism in Memphis, 1971–1982: Rethinking the Liberal/Radical Divide," *NWSA Journal* 15 (2003): 94–117 is an example of how a focus on local groups can complicate categories. Ann Braude, ed., *Transforming the Faiths of Our Fathers: Women Who Changed American Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) was especially important for this paper. It includes personal narratives from sixteen women who participated in a conference on feminism and religion held at Harvard Divinity School November 1–3, 2002. Margaret Toscano, co-founder of the Mormon Women's Forum, was the only Mormon speaker.

2. Braude, "Introduction," *Transforming the Faith of Our Fathers,* 2.

3. Quoted in Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000), 6–7; Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of* The Feminine Mystique (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 2–5. For excellent historical treatments, see Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002); and Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000).

4. "Lois Miriam Wilson," in Braude, *Transforming the Faiths of Our Fathers,* 13–14.

5. Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (New York: Delta, 1999), 3.

6. Claudia Lauper Bushman, "Women in *Dialogue:* An Introduction," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (Summer 1971): 5. Claudia and I were co-editors of the issue. I reflected on its creation in "The Pink Dialogue and Beyond," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 28–39.

7. Carolyn Person, "The Women's Movement: Liberation or Deception?" (illustration), *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1971): 4. On Latter-day Saint ideas about Eve, see Jolene Edmunds Rockwood, "The Redemption of Eve," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mor-*

mon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 3–36.

8. Christine Meaders Durham, "Having One's Cake and Eating it Too," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1971): 38.

9. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "And Woe Unto Them That Are with Child in Those Days," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1971): 45. For a retrospective account of this period, see Ulrich "The Pink Dialogue and Beyond," 28–39.

10. Bev Mitchell, quoted in Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 42–43. For other personal accounts, see Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Mary King, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: William Morrow, 1987).

11. "Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz," in Braude, *Transforming the Faith of Our Fathers,* 87.

12. Rosalyn Fraad Baxandall, "Catching the Fire," in *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation,* edited by Rachel Blau DePlessis and Ann Snitow (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998), 210.

13. Claudia L. Bushman, "My Short Happy Life with *Exponent II,*" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 186.

14. "A Letter to the Editor of *Ms*" and "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens," in Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (San Diego, Calif.: 1983), 273–75, 231–43. On the Organization of Black Feminists, see Evans, *Tidal Wave,* 77–78.

15. Jo Freeman, "On the Origins of the Women's Liberation Movement from a Strictly Personal Perspective," in *Feminist Memoir Project,* 170–71.

16. See Ann Firor Scott, "The Southern Lady Revisited," Afterword to *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830–1930* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995).

17. Evans, *Tidal Wave,* 14.

18. Gerda Lerner, "Women among the Professors of History: The Story of a Process of Transformation," in *Voices of Women Historians: The Personal, the Political, the Professional,* edited by Eileen Boris and Nupur Chaudhuri (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1. Gerda Lerner has also written about her life in *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); *Why History Matters: Life and Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and *Fireweed: A Political Autobiography* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

19. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, "Sisters in Struggle: A Belated Response," in *Feminist Memoir Project,* 487.

20. Ellis Reynolds Shipp, quoted in Leonard J. Arrington, "Blessed Damozels: Women in Mormon History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6, no. 2 (1971): 27–30.

21. Alden Whitman, "The Woman in History Becomes Explosive Issue in the Present," *New York Times,* November 2, 1974, 34.

22. Leonard J. Arrington, "The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women," *Western Humanities Review* 9 (1955): 145–64; and his pathbreaking *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958).

23. Carol Cornwall Madsen and Jill Mulvay Derr, "A Historiographical Approach to Mormon Women's History, 1960–2000." I thank Carol and Jill for providing a copy of this unpublished essay, which traces the evolution of Mormon women's history to the present.

24. In a recent account of her own spiritual journey, Margaret Toscano says that, while she was reading deeply in Mormon history in the 1970s, she had little connection with organized feminism until 1988 when she helped to found the Mormon Women's Forum. See her essay in Braude, *Transforming the Faith of Our Fathers,* 157–72. Discussions at Pilgrimage previewed some of the material later published in Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804–1879* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), and Beecher and Anderson, *Sisters in Spirit.*

25. Ana Nieto-Gómez, quoted in Benita Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave.* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165, 139–41, 152–53.

26. Irene Blea, quoted in ibid., 158.

27. Barbara Omolade, "Sisterhood in Black and White," in *The Feminist Memoir Project,* 377.

28. For an overview of the International Women's Year, see Evans, *Tidal Wave*, 139–42. For an account of the Utah conference, see Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," *Journal of Mormon History* 21 (1995): 105–67 and her *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority, and Equal Rights* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith-Pettit Foundation); and D. Michael Quinn, "The LDS Church's Campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment," *Journal of Mormon History* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 85–155.

29. Eleanor Ricks Colton, "My Personal Rubicon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 10–12.

30. Ibid., 103.

31. Ibid., 104–5.

32. Amy L. Bentley, "Comforting the Motherless Children: The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 39–61. Also see Lavina Fielding Anderson, "A Strenuous Business: The Achievement of Helen Candland Stark," in the same issue of *Dialogue,* 12–33.

Joseph Smith as a Creative Interpreter of the Bible

Heikki Räisänen

My involvement in biblical studies has also awakened in me an interest in other holy books. In the 1970s, I had the opportunity to do some work on the Qur'an, a fascinating combination of things familiar and unfamiliar for a biblical scholar. I had a vague hunch that, in a somewhat similar way, the Book of Mormon might make exciting reading, but a contact with that book and its study came about quite accidentally. During a sabbatical in Tübingen, Germany, in the early 1980s, I came across a review of *Reflections on Mormonism: Judeo-Christian Parallels* (1978), edited by Truman G. Madsen.[1] I got hold of the book in the wonderful University of Tübingen library, started reading, and after a while found myself engaged in a modest investigation of my own of Joseph Smith's legacy.[2] In this article, I shall try to explain what it is that fascinates me in this legacy as a biblical scholar and as an outsider both to Mormonism and to the study of Mormonism.

Reflections on Mormonism consists of papers given by top theologians of mainstream churches at a conference held at Brigham Young University. From an exegetical point of view, I found most fascinating the contribution of Krister Stendahl, a leading New Testament scholar who passed away in April 2008. In an article that anyone interested in our topic should read, he compares Jesus's Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew with its counterpart in the Book of Mormon.[3] In 3 Nephi the risen Jesus preaches to the Nephites in America a sermon which is largely similar to Matthew 5–7. Stendahl applies to the 3 Nephi sermon the redaction-critical method developed in biblical studies: He compares it with the Sermon on the Mount in the King James Version (KJV)[4]—the translation of the Bible known to Joseph Smith

and his associates—and points out new emphases found in the Book of Mormon account.

Matthew and 3 Nephi

The Sermon on the Mount opens with a series of "beatitudes": blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, etc. The 3 Nephi sermon does so, too, but it starts with "extra" beatitudes not found in Matthew. In them, the significance of faith (and baptism) is stressed: "Blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized . . . more blessed are they who believe in your words" (3 Ne. 12:1–2). In Matthew's sermon, Jesus does not urge his listeners to have faith in Him and in His words.

Another characteristic enlargement is the addition to Matthew 5:6 (3 Ne. 12:6). The Gospel of Matthew reads: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." 3 Nephi adds: "they shall be filled *with the Holy Ghost*" (emphasis mine).

Stendahl points out that amplifications of this kind are well known from the early history of the Bible. They are similar in form to changes made to the biblical texts in the Targums, the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible. They are also comparable to the recasting of biblical material in what is called pseudepigraphic literature—works later written in the name of biblical characters but which did not become part of the Bible itself. An example is the books of Enoch. Stendahl writes: "The targumic tendencies are those of clarifying and actualizing translations, usually by expansion and more specific application to the need and situation of the community. The pseudepigraphic . . . tend to fill out the gaps in our knowledge. . . . [T]he Book of Mormon stands within both of these traditions if considered as a phenomenon of religious texts."[5]

In terms of content, the additions to the Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi could be labelled Christianising or spiritualising. To be more precise, the 3 Nephi sermon with its tendency to centre upon faith in Jesus gives Matthew's sermon a Johannine stamp. On the whole, in Matthew Jesus presents a religio-ethical message about the kingdom of heaven which includes a reinterpretation of the Jewish Torah, whereas in the Gospel of John He Himself stands at the centre of his own message. Elsewhere in 3 Nephi, too, the im-

age of Jesus "is that of a Revealer, stressing faith 'in me' rather than what is right according to God's will," Stendahl notes.[6] Indeed the sermon in question is followed in 3 Nephi by speeches which take up themes known from the Gospel of John (3 Ne. 15–16).[7]

A redaction-critical analysis of the Book of Mormon thus produces a major surprise to a conventional mainstream-Christian mind: It reveals that 3 Nephi is at central points "more Christian" than the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew—more Christian, that is, if the conventional doctrinal theology of the mainstream churches is taken as a criterion of what is "Christian." Both in standard Christian proclamation and in the 3 Nephi sermon, the *person* of Jesus acquires a salvific significance that it lacks in Matthew's sermon—and largely in the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, where the main function of Jesus seems to be "to make possible a life in obedience to God."[8] From a mainstream Christian point of view, there is nothing peculiar in the fact that the Sermon on the Mount is viewed through Johannine spectacles. On the contrary, the Book of Mormon is quite conventional at this point, for it has been typical of doctrinal Christian thought at large to interpret the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) from a Johannine (or Pauline) point of view. But whereas others have been content to *explain* the Sermon on the Mount from a christological viewpoint extraneous to the sermon itself, the Book of Mormon *includes* the explanations within the sermon.

As already mentioned, precedents for this way of handling biblical texts are found in the Targums and in the Pseudepigrapha—but not only there. We should go further and note that the alteration of earlier texts, often for theological reasons, is a common phenomenon even in the processes which led to the birth of biblical books themselves. Stendahl referred in passing to the retelling of the historical accounts of the books of Samuel and Kings in the books of Chronicles as "a kind of parallel to what is going on in the Book of Mormon."[9] The stories are retold in what may be called a more pious key. One could also point to the astonishing freedom with which Paul interferes with the wording of his Bible (our "Old Testament") when he quotes it; in more than half of the cases, he makes changes that make the text better suit his argument.[10]

The spiritualising of Matthew 5:6 in the Book of Mormon ac-

tually continues a development which started within the New Testament itself. For it seems that the Gospel of Luke has preserved an earlier form of the saying, presumably from a lost collection of Jesus's sayings which scholars call the Sayings Source or "Q." Luke writes in his Sermon on the Plain, his counterpart to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled" (Luke 6:21). Luke's version of the saying speaks of actual hunger of the stomach; however, Matthew's version includes a religious-ethical content since he speaks of hungering and thirsting "after righteousness." (In Matthew, "righteousness" refers to humans doing God's will.) The Book of Mormon moves even further in a "spiritual" direction by promising: "ye shall be filled with the Holy Ghost" (3 Ne. 12:6). Stendahl commented that "there is nothing wrong in that; it is our common Christian tradition and experience to widen and deepen the meaning of holy words."[11]

Joseph's Starting Point

Conventional Christian theology has blamed Joseph Smith for falsifying Jesus's words to fit his own theology. This criticism is patently biased, for biblical writers themselves proceed in just the same way when using each other's works, even in reinterpreting Jesus's words. This process is at work in the synoptic Gospels where, as we saw, Matthew spiritualised a saying found in a different form in Luke; it happens on a much larger scale in the Gospel of John, where Jesus speaks in a manner quite different from His statements in the synoptics (both in terms of form and of content). But the reinterpretation of sacred tradition in new situations by biblical authors took place at a stage when the texts had not yet been canonised. The New Testament authors did not know that they were writing books or letters that would one day be part of a holy scripture comparable to and even superior to their Bible (our "Old Testament") in authority. When the writings of Matthew, Luke, or Paul had reached that status, they could, in principle, no longer be altered. The adjustment to new situations and sensibilities had to take place by way of interpreting the texts, in many cases by twisting their "natural" meaning.

I say "in principle," for before the inventing of the printing press, when the texts were manually copied by scribes, the prac-

tice was different. It often happened that "where the scribe found the sacred text saying something unworthy of deity, he knew it was wrong and proceeded to correct it as well as he could."[12] A mediating position, as it were, between preserving the text and changing it, is taken by annotated Bibles such as the Geneva Bible[13] from the sixteenth century or the *Scofield Reference Bible*[14] from the early twentieth century; these translations are accompanied by a wealth of marginal notes that guide the reader and easily come to share the authority of the text proper in his or her mind. Joseph Smith stands in this tradition, but he treats the sacred texts in a more radical manner.

In his fascinating book *Mormons and the Bible*, Philip Barlow describes the "Bible-impregnated atmosphere" in which Mormonism was born: "Joseph Smith grew up in a Bible-drenched society, and he showed it. . . . He shared his era's assumptions about the literality, historicity and inspiration of the Bible." But "he differed from his evangelical contemporaries in that he found the unaided Bible an inadequate religious compass." Instead of turning to scholarly or ecclesiastical authority to address this lack, he "produced more scripture—scripture that at once challenged yet reinforced biblical authority, and that echoed biblical themes, interpreted biblical passages, shared biblical content, corrected biblical errors, filled biblical gaps . . ."[15] One may call him a Bible-believer who wanted to improve the Bible.[16]

The Bible had been praised in the Protestant churches as the sole norm for Christian faith and life. In practice, this approach did not work too well. Many a reader could not help noting that the Bible was sometimes self-contradictory and could lend support to mutually exclusive practices and doctrines, and indeed the Protestant decision to give the Bible into the hands of lay readers in their own language soon caused split after split even within Protestantism itself. Moreover, the Bible contained some features that were theologically or ethically problematic. Joseph Smith stood up to defend the biblical message and the biblical God, perhaps against deist critics like Tom Paine, but probably just as much to silence the doubts arising in the minds of devout Bible-readers like himself. In good Protestant fashion, Joseph Smith thought that, in the Bible, God had provided humans with His infallible word. Since, however, there are undoubtedly mistakes and shortcomings

in our Bible, Joseph inferred that at some point the book must have been corrupted in the hands of its transmitters. In its original form, therefore, the Bible must have been blameless.

In a similar way Muslims have claimed that Jews and Christians have corrupted the text of the books which they had received through their prophets and messengers, with the result that the Bible no longer fully conforms to the original message now restored by the Qur'an; some early Christians had blamed Jewish scribes for cutting out prophecies about Jesus from their Bible. Interestingly, a related idea occasionally surfaces even in modern evangelical fundamentalism. When no other way to eliminate a problem seems to exist, it is reluctantly admitted that the extant copies of the Bible do contain an error, but then the original manuscript (which is, of course, no longer available) must have been different.[17]

Some scholars describe discussion of the original "autographs" as commonplace in religious literature in Smith's time.[18] But Joseph Smith made the necessary textual changes openly. What the Bible ought to look like, according to him, is shown by the Book of Mormon, which repeats more or less freely large parts of the Bible, as well as Smith's subsequent "translation" of the Bible, called the "Inspired Version" in the Community of Christ tradition and the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) in the LDS tradition.[19]

Joseph Smith's "Translation" of the Bible

The relatively little-known JST is a most interesting document from the point of view of a biblical scholar. Smith was probably aware that others were trying to improve the Bible by modernising its language, paraphrasing it, and paying attention to alternative readings in ancient manuscripts.[20] He set out to do the same—but through revelation, or prophetic insight, not by way of meticulous study. In this project, he worked closely with Sidney Rigdon, a former Baptist minister, who was far better versed in the Bible and is assumed to have influenced him a great deal.[21]

Although the JST has not replaced the KJV in the LDS Church, it is lavishly quoted in notes to the canonical text with a substantial appendix, "Excerpts Too Lengthy for Inclusion in Footnotes" (pp. 797–813) in the current (1979) LDS edition. It is certainly an important and interesting source for someone who

wants to get a picture of Joseph Smith as a "biblical critic." His changes show how much there was in the Bible that caused difficulties for a simple believer. His point of departure is the inerrancy of God's word: Revelation cannot be contradictory, not even in small details. Thus, when Joseph Smith notes contradictions, he eliminates them. Many of his actual devices are familiar from the arsenal of today's evangelicalism.[22] The difference is that, where evangelical commentators resort to harmonizing exegesis or other kinds of expository acrobatics, the JST alters the text itself.

I should perhaps mention at this point that my way of speaking of the JST as a work reflecting the thought of Joseph Smith conforms to the language used by Philip Barlow, a Mormon scholar. His approach differs strikingly from that of some earlier studies which try to describe, resorting to rather complicated hermeneutics, the JST as a real translation.[23] By contrast, Barlow interprets the JST in redaction-critical terms as a product of Smith's creative interpretation, based on his prophetic consciousness. Barlow rightly finds a close analogy to Smith's "prophetic license" in the work of biblical writers.[24]

Examples

Robert J. Matthews presents a wealth of examples of Joseph Smith's innovations in his magisterial study of the JST.[25] I repeat some of his observations but discuss them from a somewhat different perspective; I also add examples not adduced by Matthews.

How did Judas Iscariot die? The statement "he hanged himself" (Matt. 27:5) is expanded in the JST (Matt. 27:6): ". . . hanged himself on a tree. And straightway he fell down, and his bowels gushed out, and he died." Thus the account is brought (more or less) into harmony with Acts 1:18 which says nothing about a suicide through hanging but states that Judas "purchased a field . . . and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." The same explanation is found in evangelical commentaries even today, as, for instance: "If he hanged himself from a tree located on a high cliff, above a valley, and if then the rope broke and the traitor fell on rocky ground, the result could very well have been as pictured in the book of Acts."[26]

The JST assures that the number of angels at Jesus's tomb is

the same in all Gospels by introducing the second angel (Luke 24:4; John 20:12) into Mark 16:3 and Matthew 28:2.[27] However, Smith has more devices at his disposal than a modern evangelical expositor. The latter must show that no extant version is wrong; when numbers differ, he must choose the highest one. When Matthew 8:28 mentions two healed demoniacs and Mark 5:2 just one, Mark, too, must be thinking of two, though he does not care to mention both.[28] By contrast, the JST simply removes the second demoniac from Matthew 8:29–35; both Matthew and Mark now speak of one healed person. In a similar way, Smith has removed the ass from Matthew 21:2, 7 (Matt. 21:2, 5 JST) so that Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on only one animal, the colt, as in Mark 11:2, 7. This solution resolves the problem in the Greek text of Matthew 21 in which He makes His entry riding both on an ass and on a colt.[29]

The synoptic gospels mention that two thieves were crucified along with Jesus. But while Mark 15:32 and Matthew 27:44 tell us that both joined those who mocked Jesus for not being able to help himself, Luke 23:40–43 gives a different account. One joined the mockers, but the other rebuked him, proclaimed Jesus's innocence, and asked Jesus to remember him when coming into His kingdom. Joseph Smith introduces the penitent thief from Luke into Matthew's account (Matt. 27:47–48 JST) and harmonises Mark's narrative with that of Luke by stating that "*one* of them who was crucified with him, reviled him" (Mark 15:37 JST; emphasis mine). Problems of this sort—and many of the solutions suggested—were well known to the Church fathers of the third and fourth centuries who were bothered by them since they threatened the faith of some. To remove the slightest chance of contradiction, Origen even suggested the possibility that there may have been *four* thieves crucified with Jesus, two mentioned by Matthew and Mark and the other two by Luke.[30]

The statement in Matt. 23:2—"all therefore whatsoever they [the scribes and the Pharisees, v. 1] bid you observe, that observe and do"—seems to contradict a number of other Gospel passages. Why should Jesus's followers obey the ordinances of the often-chastised Pharisees? Joseph Smith makes an insertion that removes the problem: "all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, *they will make you* observe and do" (emphasis mine).

A more serious and notorious exegetical and theological problem is posed by the different statements on sinning Christians in 1 John. 1 John 2:1 states: "These things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate." Yet 1 John 3:9 claims that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin." So can a Christian sin or not? Joseph Smith removes the contradiction. JST 1 John 2:1 reads: "if any man sin *and repent* . . ." And rather than claiming that a Christian cannot sin, JST 1 John 3:9 states that "whosoever is born of God doth not *continue in* sin; for the Spirit of God remaineth in him" (emphasis in both passages mine). The picture is now coherent and conforms to the traditional picture of Christian life.

There is an intriguing difference between the Old Testament and the Gospel of John. John 1:19 claims that "no man hath seen God at any time." But in the Old Testament, Moses is allowed to see God's "back parts" (Ex. 33:23), and several other biblical persons reportedly saw God as well.[31] The JST takes the Exodus account seriously and perhaps Joseph's own vision of God and Jesus[32] and enlarges the sentence in John's Gospel: "no man hath seen God at any time *except he hath borne record of the Son*" (emphasis mine).[33]

The use of the divine names in the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) was one of the reasons that once led historical critics to formulate a famous source theory. In the Pentateuch, different narratives, which deal differently with God's names, are woven together into a single story. As the story stands, the name Yahweh is first revealed in Exodus 6:3: God has appeared to the patriarchs "by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." Nevertheless, the many narratives of Genesis, which precedes Exodus, show humans using JEHOVAH/Yahweh. The JST cleverly solves the problem through a slight change in wording that turns the end of the verse into a rhetorical question: "I am the Lord God Almighty; the Lord JEHOVAH. And *was not* my name known unto them?" (emphasis mine).[34]

The imminent expectation of the end by the early Christians and even by Jesus himself has always been a problem for conservative exegesis. Here, too, Smith presents an interpretation which, in its intentions, agrees with evangelical exegesis. Once again the

difference is that he does not resort to expository acrobatics but simply alters the difficult texts. In JST 1 Thessalonians 4:15, Paul does not claim that "we" are still alive when the Lord comes, but that "they who are alive at the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [i.e., precede] them who remain unto the coming of the Lord." KJV 1 Corinthians 7:29 announces that "the time is short," a chronological difficulty that the JST smooths over with: "the time that remaineth is but short, *that ye shall be sent forth unto the ministry*" (emphasis mine). Hebrews 9:26 does not claim that Jesus had appeared "in the end of the world" (KJV) but "in the meridian of time" (JST). The KJV prophecy that "this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34) is expanded as follows: "This generation *in which these things shall be shown forth*, shall not pass away, until all I have told you shall be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:35 JST; emphasis mine). Correspondingly, it is not "ye" (the disciples listening to Jesus, v. 33 KJV) who shall "see all these things," but "mine elect" (v. 42 JST). This revision thus clarifies that Jesus knew the disciples would no longer be alive when the last things began to happen.[35]

Alterations are also made where the implication about God's nature seems offensive. As the deists had made clear, God does not repent; if He did, He would hardly be God. But the flood story begins with the announcement: "It repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth" (Gen. 6:6–7 KJV). JST Genesis 8:13, by contrast, has *Noah* repenting that the Lord had created man. The statement "it repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king" (1 Sam. 15:11 KJV) is replaced in the JST with: "I have set up Saul to be a king and *he repenteth not*" (emphasis mine).

Nor does God do bad things. KJV 1 Samuel 16:14 claims that "an evil spirit from the LORD" troubled Saul; in the JST, however, Saul is troubled by "an evil spirit which was *not* of the Lord." In the JST God never hardens Pharaoh's heart either; it is always the Pharaoh himself who hardens his own heart (Ex. 10:1, 20, 27). In the KJV it is now God,[36] now the Pharaoh,[37] who is the subject of the hardening. In KJV Acts 13:48 states that, as a result of Paul's preaching, "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The JST changes the order of the verbs ("as many as believed were ordained unto eternal life"), thus sidestepping the embarrassing notion that a human being's destiny may be foreordained. The pe-

tition in the KJV Lord's Prayer, "lead us not into temptation," is changed to "suffer us not to be led into temptation" (Matt. 6:13 JST). Interestingly, the wording of the prayer here differs from that given in the earlier 3 Nephi, which is the same as the KJV, indicating that an interpretative process had continued in Joseph Smith's mind.[38]

Thus far I have indicated parallels to Joseph Smith's treatment of the Bible in the works of the Church fathers and those of conservative evangelicals of today. But parallels can be found in other camps, too—for instance, in new translations which try to avoid the offence caused by the patriarchal worldview of the Bible. In a recent translation of the New Testament, published by the Oxford University Press, for instance the saying "No one knows the Son except the Father" (Matt. 11:25) is rendered as follows: "No one knows the Child except the Father-Mother."[39] Or take the *Contemporary English Version* of 1995. Its translators wanted to produce a Bible that could not be exploited for anti-Jewish purposes; they therefore decided not to use the word "Jew" at all in the exclusive sense as the enemy of Jesus in the New Testament.[40] In more conventional translations, the Gospel of John speaks of "the Jews" about seventy times in a highly disparaging way and even seems to drive a wedge between Jesus and His disciples on one hand and "the Jews" on the other (see, e.g., John 13:33), as if Jesus and his circle were not Jews at all.[41] As a Bible-believer who improves the Bible, Joseph Smith begins to look rather less idiosyncratic than he may have seemed at first glance.

Yet perhaps the most striking of Joseph Smith's innovations is a feature which is already prominent in his earlier book of Moses. According to him, humans are from the very beginning aware of Messiah Jesus's future mission. Even before his entrance into mortality, they can enjoy the salvation He offers. The JST clearly teaches that "the ancient prophets, from Adam to Abraham . . . taught and practised the gospel; they knew Christ and worshipped the Father in his name."[42] A number of additions and expansions to the KJV in the JST make this knowledge clear.

God instructed Adam's descendants to repent, promising: "And as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should be saved" (Gen. 5:1–2 JST). So the gospel was preached from the very beginning (Gen. 5:44–45), even before the flood. In

one of the JST's numerous additions to Genesis, Enoch summarizes God's instructions to Adam: "If thou wilt, turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Gen. 6:53 JST).

Enoch's long speech is summarized in the following words: "This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time" (JST Gen. 6:65). Furthermore, JST Genesis 6:67 makes it explicit that Adam actually was baptized.

For all of the problems that Joseph Smith's solutions may involve, he certainly has acutely sensed a problem in the Bible, touching a sensitive point in the conceptualization of salvation-history. The New Testament, too, hints at God's eternal plan of salvation. But what is one to think of this plan, if Christ actually opened a new way of salvation which was unknown to the ancients, as many New Testament writings, especially Galatians, seem to suggest? Did God Himself lead the Israelites astray by giving them a law which promised them life (e.g., Lev. 18:5)—but which, in fact, it was unable to provide, according to Paul (e.g., Gal. 3:21)—and which in no way suggested that it was just a provisional arrangement? Or is this interpretation a misapprehension and the way to salvation was indeed open to ancient generations, too, if they repented of their sins and accepted God's law? But in that case, if the people of our Old Testament could achieve salvation, then what was Christ really needed for? Had God's first plan failed, so that He now came up with a better idea? This view would make Christ an emergency measure on God's part.

Either way, we are caught in a dilemma. One has to relativise either the immutability of God's plan (the conviction that God does not change His mind) or the crucial significance of Christ. The problem surfaces in 1 Clement, an early writing which did not quite make it into the final New Testament. Clement of Rome confirms in New Testament terminology that God has from eternity always justified everyone in the same way: through faith (1 Clem. 32:4). God "gave those who wanted to turn to him, from

generation to generation, opportunity for repentance" (1 Clem. 7:5). This doctrine implies that the difference between Christians and the pious men and women of the Old Testament disappears. Clement maintains the immutability of God's plan; but as a result, the role of Christ becomes vague. In fact, Paul had already faced the same problem (though he seemed unaware of it) when he introduced the figure of Abraham as the first Christian (as it were) in Galatians 3 and Romans 4. If Abraham was justified by faith, and if faith without works is the road to fellowship with God, was a possibility thus open to humankind more than a millennium before Christ? And if so, why then was it necessary for God at all to send Christ?

Like Clement of Rome, Joseph Smith definitely holds, as Robert Hullinger puts it, that "God had always related to man on the basis of his faith, and any other terms would, indeed, make God mutable."[43] But unlike Clement, Smith does not let Christ's role become vague; he projects the Christian soteriology in its totality into Paradise. Obviously he has sensed the artificiality of the standard christological reading of the Old Testament as it stands. If the Old Testament really is a testimony to Christ (as Christians of all times have asserted), then should it not actually speak of Jesus in straightforward terms?

Smith does not appreciate the idea of development in the biblical thought-world, which is self-evident in modern historical study; but in purely logical terms, his solution is admirable. Nor is he quite alone in his absolutely christocentric exposition of the primeval stories. A Christian addition (perhaps from the second or third century) to the Jewish pseudepigraphon, the "Testament of Adam," shows Adam teaching his son, Seth, as follows:[44]

> You have heard, my son, that God[45] is going to come into the world after a long time, (he will be) conceived of a virgin . . . he will perform signs and wonders on the earth, will walk on the waves of the sea. He will rebuke the winds and they will be silenced. He will motion to the waves and they will stand still. He will open the eyes of the blind and cleanse the lepers. He will cause the deaf to hear, and the mute to speak. He will straighten the hunchbacked, strengthen the paralyzed, find the lost, drive out evil spirits, and cast out demons. He spoke to me about this in Paradise.[46]

Actually it can happen in the midst of mainstream Christian-

ity today that the biblical text is supplemented in a similar vein. *The Children's Bible* by Anne de Vries provides an example. This Christian bestseller, which was originally published in Dutch, has sold millions of copies. It appends several mentions of Jesus to Old Testament stories when paraphrasing them for children. The story of the Fall ends with the promise that one day a child would be born who would be stronger than Satan. "Who would this child be? The Lord Jesus. When Jesus would come, God would no longer be angry. . . . When they [Adam and Eve] thought of that they became again a bit glad." To Abraham the promise is given: "Your children will live in the land, and later Lord Jesus will be born there." It is also said that Abraham yearned for this remote day.[47]

In the JST, the law does not become a problem in the way it does in standard Christian theology, for Adam had learned soon after being ejected from the Garden of Eden that animal sacrifices are "a similitude of the sacrifice of the only begotten of the Father" (Gen. 4:7 JST). The typological theology of the cultic law presented in the epistle to the Hebrews is projected into the beginnings of salvation history. Christ has brought the law to an end, for it was fulfilled in him (3 Ne. 9:17, 29:4) who, being identical with the God of Israel, was also the giver of the law (3 Ne. 29:5). He actually *is* the law and the light (3 Ne. 29:9). Except for the identification of Father and Son, the Book of Mormon agrees in these statements with classical solutions presented by the early Church fathers.[48]

In presenting the story of Israel basically as a Christian story and the Hebrew Bible as a thoroughly Christian book, Joseph Smith brings to its highest possible expression, a tendency which is present, though somewhat muted, in mainstream versions of Christian doctrine as well. I think it is worth keeping in mind that, throughout Christian history, this Christian reading of the Hebrew Bible has been one of the sources of anti-Jewish sentiments. It is all the more striking that Mormonism has apparently never succumbed to this temptation. It would have been easy to argue as follows: If salvation in Jesus and baptism in his name were the point of biblical religion all the time, then surely the Jews who do not recognise this must be utterly blind or ill-willed? And if all this Christian talk about salvation-history was once part of the Old Testament but later disappeared and had to be restored by the

JST, then the Bible must have been viciously amputated by Jewish scholars. (Who else?)

Early Church fathers made just such inferences from the fact that most Jews did not recognise a christological reading of the Hebrew Bible; how much easier would such an inference have been on the basis of the JST? There Jesus need not be sought between the lines, for His coming glory shines openly on so many pages.[49] But neither Joseph Smith nor his followers, very much to their credit, drew such conclusions. Their strong identification with biblical Israel seems rather to have led to a friendly attitude and to a respectful dialogue with Judaism. No doubt it has been an asset that the actual "parting of the ways" between Judaism and Christianity, which was such a sore problem during the early centuries, was no longer an issue when Mormonism was born.

Back to the New Testament! One further problem connected with the continuity of salvation history in the New Testament is Paul's talk of the law as the *cause* of sin or of its function of *increasing* sin (Gal. 3:19; Rom. 5:13, 7:5, 7:7–11; 1 Cor. 15:56).[50] Joseph Smith weakens many such statements. But then many Church fathers, in opposing the radicalism of Marcion who rejected the Old Testament altogether, took steps to render the apostle "harmless" on such points.[51] How could God's law be a burden or even a curse (Gal. 3:10, 13) connected with sin? Surely it would be normal to think that the function of the law is to prevent sin or to fight against it? But Paul goes in unexpected ways and actually parts company with almost all other early Christians on this point.

Thus, Paul speaks in Romans 7:5 of the "motions of sins" in our members "which were by the law" and worked "to bring forth fruit unto death." The JST, however, lets the apostle speak of the "motions of sins, which were *not* according to the law" (emphasis mine). Later in the same passage, Paul, according to the KJV, describes the fatal role of the law in bringing about death: "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" (Rom. 7:9–10). The JST avoids this blackening of the law in the following manner: "For once I was alive without *transgression* of the law, but when the commandment of *Christ* came, sin revived, and I died. And when I *believed not* the commandment of Christ which came, which was ordained to life, I found it *condemned*

me unto death" (emphasis mine). Even the claim of verse 7:11 that sin was able to use the law as its springboard ("sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me") is toned down in the JST: "For sin, taking occasion, *denied* the commandment and deceived me."

The close connection which Paul here establishes between law and sin is flatly denied by Joseph Smith. Many modern interpreters will assess this action as a dilution of Paul's allegedly profoundly dialectical view of the law. Others, including myself, find that Paul's view is beset with difficulties.[52] Smith exhibits common sense in regarding only the transgression of the divine law as a negative matter, not the law itself. As stated above, most Church fathers were of the same opinion. John Chrysostom observed that, if the effect of the "commandment" of the law is to engender sin, then logically even the precepts given by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament would have had the same effect: "This particular charge could never be directed against the Old Testament law without involving the New Testament also."[53] Therefore, he inferred that Paul must have meant something else, and indeed Chrysostom watered down Paul's assertions in Romans 7:8 and 7:11 in his exposition of the verses. Once more Joseph Smith finds himself in good company.

Finally, I wish to call attention to a passage where Joseph Smith's interpretation proves amazingly modern. In Roman 7:14–25 Paul speaks of the misery of a wretched "I" who is not able to do the good he wishes to do—in fact, no good at all. The passage is often taken as a description of Paul's (and anyone else's) Christian life. This reading, however, would contradict Paul's general picture of life in the Spirit, not least in the chapter that immediately follows (Rom. 8) and the one that immediately precedes it (Rom. 6).[54] This is why a great number of modern biblical critics think that Paul must really mean non-Christian existence "under the law"; the use of the "I"-form is understood as a rhetorical device.[55]

Sensing the problem, the JST anticipates these critics and thoroughly alters the KJV text (while still assuming that the "I" denotes Paul himself): "I am carnal, sold under sin" becomes in the JST: "when I was under the law, I was yet carnal, sold under sin" (Rom 7:14). Then a stark contrast to "I was carnal" is created with

the aid of an insertion: "But now I am spiritual." The sequel "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not . . ." (Rom. 7:15 KJV) is replaced with: "for that which I am commanded to do, I do; and that which I am commanded not to allow, I allow not" (JST). A number of other changes in the same vein follow.[56] The JST consistently transforms the apparent tension between flesh and spirit in the speaker's heart into a contrast between two succeeding stages in his life. The modern alternative—that the "I-form" is rhetorical and that Paul is speaking of the non-Christian under the law—has, understandably, not occurred to Joseph Smith.

The JST even omits the last clause "with the flesh [I serve] the law of sin" (7:25 KJV) which some modern scholars have ascribed to a post-Pauline interpreter.[57] Both these scholars and the JST let Paul close the chapter with the statement: "With the mind I myself serve the law of God" (7:27 JST). If the modern mainstream interpretation is on the right track, then Joseph Smith's interpretation of the passage seems to be closer to Paul's intentions than was, for example, the influential interpretation of Martin Luther, who saw Paul as describing Christian life from the point of view of an Augustinian monk conscientiously scrutinising his inmost thoughts and always finding them wanting.[58]

Conclusion

There is much to be learnt from Joseph Smith's implicit criticism of the Bible. He belongs to the large number of serious and sincere readers who wrestle with the problems that the Bible poses to them, since it is *not* exactly the kind of book it is mostly postulated to be. The parallels to mainstream conservatism of today are very interesting. Even more intriguing, perhaps, are the parallels to the apologetics of the early Church fathers. And yet it is not just the conservative camp that provides points of comparison. Champions of egalitarianism and tolerance have resorted to far-reaching "improvements" of the biblical language in modern translations that try to avoid patriarchalism and prejudice. In Smith's work one can, as with a magnifying glass, study the mechanisms operative in much apologetic interpretation of the Bible. Most important of all, his alterations point to real problems. Some are minor, problems only for those who insist on an infalli-

ble Bible. Others, however, are major issues for any interpreter, such as the continuity or discontinuity of the "salvation history." Joseph Smith asks genuine questions and perceives genuine problems. Even those who do not accept all his answers would profit from taking his questions seriously.

Notes

1. Truman G. Madsen, ed., *Reflections on Mormonism: Judeo-Christian Parallels* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1978).

2. Heikki Räisänen, "Joseph Smith und die Bibel: Die Leistung des mormonischen Propheten in neuer Beleuchtung," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 109 (1984): 81–92, and Heikki Räisänen, "A Bible-Believer Improves the Bible: Joseph Smith's Contribution to Exegesis" in my *Marcion, Muhammad and the Mahatma: Exegetical Perspectives on the Encounter of Cultures and Faiths* (London: SCM Press, 1997), 153–69.

3. Krister Stendahl, "The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi," in Madsen, *Reflections on Mormonism,* 139–54; rpt. in Krister Stendahl, *Meanings: The Bible as Document and as Guide* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 99–113.

4. Biblical passages are quoted from the KJV unless otherwise noted.

5. Stendahl, "The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi," 152.

6. Ibid., 151.

7. David J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 47.

8. Petri Luomanen, *Entering the Kingdom of Heaven: A Study on the Structure of Matthew's View of Salvation,* Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, second series, No. 101 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 285.

9. Stendahl, "The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi," 145.

10. Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus,* Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 69 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 186–90.

11. Stendahl, "The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi," 154.

12. Ernest Cadman Colwell, *The Study of the Bible,* rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 55.

13. See Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 56–63.

14. James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 191.

15. Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 11–12; see also Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf/Vintage Books, 2007), 84–108.

16. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 191: "Apparently Joseph was not speaking entirely tongue in cheek when he wrote, in response to the question 'wherein do you differ from other sects?', that 'we believe the Bible.'"

17. Barr, *Fundamentalism,* 279–84.

18. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible,* 54 note 29.

19. The work was so named in 1936 by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints who had first published it in 1867. Robert J. Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A History and a Commentary,* 3rd ed. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), esp. 168–70.

20. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible,* 47.

21. Davies, *Introduction to Mormonism,* 43.

22. I have not investigated the matter but can imagine that many of them may also have been known to and used by American preachers of the early nineteenth century. Had Joseph heard preachers explain away contradictions between the Gospels as he later did in the JST? Did Sidney Rigdon perhaps call his attention to such problems and their current solutions?

23. See especially Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 233–53.

24. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible,* 57–61, esp. 60f. The reader will have noticed that I deal with the Book of Mormon in similar terms. I thereby side with those "particularly liberal Latter Day Saints" referred to by Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism,* 64. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 174–84, is critical of such "innovative attempts." See also Räisänen, *Marcion, Muhammad, and the Mahatma,* 167–69.

25. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 285–389. An invaluable tool for purposes of comparison is Joseph Smith's *"New Translation" of the Bible, with Introduction by F. Henry Edwards* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1970), which offers "a complete parallel column comparison of the Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures and the King James Authorized Version."

26. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 949–50; compare Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 304.

27. See also Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 305–6. By contrast, Jo-

seph Smith does not attempt to resolve the problem of the divergent accounts of the various women at the tomb which caused such perplexity to the Church fathers. Helmut Merkel, *Die Widersprüche zwischen den Evangelien: Ihre polemische und apologetische Behandlung in der Alten Kirche bis zu Augustin* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 13 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 108, 141.

28. Ibid., 102–3; Origen had already proposed this solution.

29. This oddity is obviously a result of Matthew's misunderstanding of Zechariah 9:9, which he quotes in 21:5 (21:4, JST). Zechariah states that the king of "daughter Sion" will come "sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." Undoubtedly the original text of Zechariah has only one animal in view; the mention of the "colt," in addition to the "ass," is a typical feature of Hebrew poetry (*parallelismus membrorum*). Matthew has taken the "doubling" of the ass literally; to make the fulfillment correspond completely to the prediction, he lets Jesus use both animals—however one may visualise this. It seems that Joseph Smith has understood the nature of the poetic parallelism, for he lets the mention of both animals stand in the quotation (Matt 21:4 JST) while removing the ass from the narrative.

30. Merkel, *Widersprüche,* 107–8.

31. These include patriarchs and the seventy elders of Israel in Moses's time. For a list, see Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 302.

32. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible,* 52.

33. Joseph Smith is very alert on this issue, for he has made similar corrections to 1 John 4:12 and 1 Timothy 6:15–16 as well. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 302.

34. Ibid., 309–10.

35. Ibid., 347.

36. E.g., in the Exodus passages just mentioned.

37. E.g., Ex. 7:14, 9:34. The discrepancy is often taken as an indication of the use of different sources by the final composer(s) of the Pentateuch.

38. See Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible,* 51.

39. Victor R. Gold, ed., *New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

40. Barclay M. Newman, ed., *Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1995).

41. This is, in my view, an unfortunate feature of the original and not due to any incompetence of earlier translators. Incidentally, it is a feature that the JST has not changed. For example, John 5:18 reads: "The

Jews sought the more to kill him, because he . . . said . . . that God was his father."

42. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 328. In the Book of Mormon, too, prophets and preachers repeatedly proclaim the future coming of Jesus Christ and describe it in detail. For some passages, see Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon,* 199.

43. Robert N. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism: Why Joseph Smith Wrote the Book of Mormon* (St Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1980), 122. Ironically, Joseph Smith himself set forth in his later revelations that God actually made progress in his own development. See also ibid., 135 note 4.

44. James H. Charlesworth adduced the passage as a parallel by "Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha and the Book of Mormon," in Madsen, *Reflections on Mormonism,* 120–21.

45. According to another reading: "the Messiah."

46. S. E. Robinson, trans., "Testament of Adam," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments,* The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 994.

47. The quotations are my translation into English from a German translation of Anne de Vries, *Die Kinderbibel* (Constance, Germany: Friedrich Bahn Verlag, 1981), 14, 21.

48. On Christ as the giver of the Old Testament law in patristic writings, see Martin Werner, *Die Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas* (Bern, Switzerland: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1941), 209–11. For example, the "mediator" of the law in Galatians 3:19 is identified with the preexistent Christ.

49. Similar questions are, of course, to be addressed relative to de Vries's *Children's Bible.*

50. Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law,* 2d ed., *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament,* 29 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 140–50.

51. See Maurice F. Wiles, *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 52; Werner, *Die Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas,* 233. Both are commenting on Origen, who denied that Paul spoke so negatively of the Torah—which would have been to fall into the heresy of Marcion. According to Origen, what he meant was "the law in our members."

52. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law,* 149–50.

53. John Chrysostom, paraphrased in Wiles, *Divine Apostle,* 57.

54. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 358–59, sharing the view that

Paul is speaking of himself, notes that these are strange statements coming from a man like Paul so many years after he had experienced the cleansing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is even contradictory for Paul to say these things about himself when in many other instances he declared that Christ had made him free, and that through the power of Christ he was able to walk no longer after the flesh but after the spirit. "(This is the substance of what he says in Romans 8, of the King James Version . . .)."

55. See, e.g., John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans,* TPI New Testament Commentaries (London: SCM Press, 1989), 189–95.

56. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation,* 359–60 offers a clear comparison by printing the two texts in adjacent columns and typographically indicating the differences.

57. Ziesler, *Romans,* 199.

58. Paul Althaus, *Paulus und Luther über den Menschen: Ein Vergleich,* 4th ed. (Gütersloh, Germany: Chr. Kaiser, 1963).

Joseph Smith in Hermeneutical Crisis

Christopher C. Smith

Marvin Hill argued in 1989 that the fundamental problem early Mormonism was designed to address was the problem of pluralism. Pluralism, according to Hill, caused a situation of social disintegration and insecurity to which Mormons hoped to bring stability and uniformity.[1] Hill's analysis is insightful in its attention to the institutional and political issues but does not fully engage the religious dimensions of the problem.[2] This omission is serious, especially since many of the political and institutional divisions in the early Republic were themselves deeply rooted in religious divisions. These religious divisions, in turn, arose largely from divergent readings of the Bible.

Although Joseph Smith did endeavor to create political and institutional unity, his more fundamental project was to create religious unity. Most American Protestants of Smith's day believed the Bible was "perspicuous," or clear and self-interpreting. Religious divisions were blamed on the interference of creeds and authorities with the common sense reading of the Bible. Many believed that, if interpretation could be democratized, Christian unity would be the natural result. Actually, however, in the highly democratic environment of the early nineteenth century, interpretations of the Bible only multiplied, and new denominations only proliferated. The religious foundation of Protestant America turned out to be so much shifting sand, and the viability of the nation itself seemed threatened. Joseph Smith's project can be understood, in part, as an effort to shore up this foundation and to satisfy his frustrated longing for religious unity in his family and nation.

Put another way, early nineteenth-century Protestant America was a nation in hermeneutical crisis. The bewildering diversity of

the nation's religious marketplace meant that interpreters approached the Bible with vastly different presuppositions and therefore interpreted it in vastly different ways. More frightening still was the challenge posed by rationalism, which threatened to do away with biblical authority altogether. Joseph Smith addressed such concerns by an appeal to special revelation, by which he authoritatively clarified and interpreted the Bible for a nineteenth-century audience, with special attention to resolving contradictions and to creating continuity in salvation history. He sought, in short, to restore the Bible's perspicuity and to place its interpretation within the reach of common sense.

The Smiths Confront the Crisis

When Joseph Smith was born in Sharon, Vermont, on December 23, 1805, it was not to a virgin; there were no portents in the stars to let the world know that a prophet had been born. But if the fates did not move the heavens for the infant prophet, it may be because they were too busy moving the earth. Fawn Brodie, one of Joseph's biographers, has said of the early nineteenth century, "These pentecostal years . . . were the most fertile in history for the sprouting of prophets."[3] This was an age of remarkable religious ferment: the Second Great Awakening was in full swing, and many Americans were abandoning mainline religious denominations to join upstart sects that promised, among other things, a more democratic, charismatic, and biblical faith.[4]

For Joseph Smith religious dissent was not merely a cultural phenomenon; both sides of his family had long made it a way of life.[5] His paternal grandfather Asael Smith was a Universalist. His maternal grandfather, Solomon Mack, had spent most of his life as an atheist. Mack's wife raised their children, including Joseph Smith's mother Lucy, without formal church affiliation. Joseph's father, Joseph Sr., was also incubated largely apart from organized religion.[6] A Universalist like Asael, he showed greater interest in folk religious practices like divination than in the activities of local evangelical churches.[7]

But if the Prophet's parents were not regular church attenders, neither were they irreligious; they simply believed that no true church existed on the earth. For Joseph Sr., this belief manifested itself in several prophetic dreams,[8] at least one of which would later

show up in modified form in the Book of Mormon.[9] His wife, Lucy, yearned for religious communion[10] and had a dramatic conversion experience in 1803, but, upon searching for a church, found them all spiritually destitute. She was associated with the Methodists for a time in Vermont but, in the words of Richard Bushman, was both "attracted and repelled at the same time."[11]

The Smiths' religiosity was sufficiently deep, in fact, to be a cause of significant conflict and tension within the family. Lucy was disturbed by her husband's aversion to evangelical religion and was deeply concerned for his and their children's souls. The religious rift in the family widened when their eldest son, Alvin, died in 1823. At the funeral, the Presbyterian minister Benjamin Stockton "intimated very strongly that [Alvin] had gone to hell, for [he] was not a church member."[12] Joseph Sr. was extremely angry but Lucy reacted with fear and anguish. She actually began attending Reverend Stockton's Presbyterian church and took most of the children with her, but the two Josephs remained aloof.[13] This religious divide has led biographer Dan Vogel to characterize Joseph Smith Jr.'s young life primarily in terms of "family conflict."[14] Although Vogel somewhat exaggerates this theme, he is probably right that the reconciliation of his family members' contradictory spiritual convictions was a major motivation for Joseph Smith in undertaking his prophetic career.[15] Smith eventually succeeded in this goal; even his Universalist grandfather Asael accepted the Book of Mormon before his death in 1830.

The Crisis and Common Sense

The Smith family's spiritual crisis was mirrored in the broader society. What one preacher described as a "sea of sectarian rivalries,"[16] historian Nathan O. Hatch has called "a period of religious ferment, chaos, and originality unmatched in American religious history."[17] The fragmentation of what had been a relatively stable religious environment prior to the American Revolution was extremely disconcerting to religious seekers. Joseph Smith described a Palmyra, New York, revival as "a scene of great confusion and bad feeling . . . priest contending against priest, and convert against convert so that all their good feelings for one another (if ever they had any) were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions."[18] Lucy Smith lamented: "If I re-

main a member of no church all religious people will say I am of the world; and, if I join some one of the different denominations, all the rest will say I am in error. No church will admit that I am right, except the one with which I am associated. This makes them witnesses against each other; and how can I decide in such a case as this, seeing they are all unlike the church of Christ, as it existed in former days!"[19]

The confusion generated by Palmyra's pluralistic religious marketplace is perhaps best epitomized in one of Joseph Smith Sr.'s dreams, in which the various denominations are represented by "all manner of beasts, horned cattle, and roaring animals" behaving in "the most threatening manner possible."[20]

Hatch has described America's religious fragmentation as a "crisis of religious authority."[21] The American revolutionary ethos encouraged widespread distrust of traditional sources of authority; early nineteenth-century Americans preferred to "exalt the conscience of the individual" and "called for a populist hermeneutics premised on the inalienable right of every person to understand the New Testament for him- or herself."[22] The Smiths certainly were not immune to the cultural mantra of "no creed but the Bible," which Hatch calls "the distinctive feature of American religion."[23] When Lucy joined the Presbyterian church, young Joseph told his mother, "I will take my Bible and go out into the woods and learn more in two hours than you could if you were to go to meeting two years."[24] Lucy herself, for "a number of years" prior to Alvin's death, had remained aloof from church membership and "determined to examine my Bible . . . taking Jesus and his disciples for my guide, to endeavour to obtain from God that which man could neither give nor take away."[25]

The confidence Joseph and Lucy initially expressed in their ability to interpret the Bible for themselves was fairly typical of the period. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the dominant American epistemology was what historians have termed Scottish Common Sense Realism.[26] Common Sense interpreters of the Bible placed its propositions in the same category as the empirical facts of nature. According to this perspective, the facts of scripture must be inductively observed, collected, and studied according to the same rules that scientists of the time employed in studying the natural world.[27] Common Sense was also, however, a

deeply populist philosophy. It emphasized that the senses provide direct and uncomplicated knowledge of the real world and that virtually anyone is capable of apprehending and understanding the facts of the Bible and nature.

One important Common Sense interpreter was the restorationist preacher Alexander Campbell. Campbell's program, like Smith's, was to resolve the crisis of pluralism and to restore Christian unity. He believed that the plurality of interpretations resulted from a lack of objectivity. Instead of relying on common sense and scientific principles, people were reading the Bible through the lenses of creeds, systems, and authorities. The way to restore Christian unity was to discard all such lenses and to make biblical interpretation a free, democratic, and scientific affair.[28] Said Campbell, "Were all students of the Bible taught to apply the same rules of interpretation to its pages, there would be a greater uniformity in opinion and sentiment than ever resulted from the simple adoption of a written creed."[29]

To Campbell's credit, he understood at least some of the complexities of interpretation. His "rules of interpretation" took into account the need for literary and historical context, as well as philological study.[30] But ultimately his Common Sense epistemology overrode these scientific principles, for he argued that when one approaches the Bible with humility, ardent desire, and "soundness of [spiritual] vision," one is enabled to perceive "the *things* represented by those words . . . themselves." Thus, for the sincere but uneducated interpreter, "there is an assurance of understanding, a certainty of knowledge" that is unavailable to the "mere critic."[31] The words of the Bible provide direct access to God and the spiritual world, just as the senses provide direct access to the natural world.

Unfortunately, Campbell's expectations proved naive; it was not long before his own movement fractured over differences of interpretation.[32] This fragmentation resulted partly from the inadequacies of the Common Sense epistemology itself. True objectivity proved unattainable, scriptural "facts" proved elusive, and the mechanics of perception and memory proved more complicated and problematic than Common Sense thinkers allowed.[33] But the fractures also resulted partly from Campbell's overestimation of the abilities and resources of his followers. Historical and

philological criticism were out of reach for the vast majority of nineteenth-century Americans, and their spiritual vision was not so sound as to overcome this deficiency.

The lesson that took the Campbellites decades to learn Joseph Smith learned as a teenager. Amid the chaos of a Palmyra revival, Smith consulted the Bible and concluded, as had his parents before him, that there was no true church on the earth.[34] But he also expressed dissatisfaction with the principle that individuals are capable of correctly interpreting the Bible in the absence of external religious authority. He later lamented, "How to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as <to> destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible."[35] The predictions of Common Sense philosophy simply were not borne out in the real world.

The Quest for Hermeneutical Privilege

In James 1:5 Joseph thought he detected the solution to his dilemma: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Joseph took these instructions to mean that the revelation of the Holy Spirit could tell him which of the many competing interpretations was true. He obediently knelt in the woods and, after an exhausting struggle against a demonic power that assaulted him, saw a vision "above the brightness of the sun"—a vision that confirmed his suspicion that there was no true church on the earth and that instructed him to join none of them.[36]

The notion that the Bible can be properly understood only with the help of the Holy Spirit actually was not at all new or shocking. The Presbyterian Westminster Confession, for example, acknowledged "the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word."[37] Even scientific interpreters of the Common Sense school acknowledged that the Holy Spirit and the affections of the heart played a role in interpretation.[38] Where the Mormon prophet differed from the historic Protestant tradition was in making the Holy Spirit's intervention external and propositional. The very Westminster Confession that acknowledged the

role of inner illumination in interpreting the Word also insisted that God's former, propositional ways of revealing Himself had now "ceased."[39]

In the early Republic, however, even this cessationist consensus had largely broken down. As visions, prophecies, and other miraculous experiences proliferated, a vigorous national debate erupted between proponents of the revivals and their establishment anti-revivalist critics. This war was waged in both Calvinist and Arminian circles with equal vehemence.[40] As a resident of the Burned-Over District and a sometime attender of camp revival meetings, Joseph Smith was probably more familiar with the revival tradition than the anti-revival tradition. He apparently did not consider his vision, which in the earliest accounts sounds like a fairly typical conversion experience of that period, to be unprecedented or out of keeping with the religious climate of his day.[41] Thus, he was surprised when he related his experience to a Methodist minister to find that the minister was a cessationist: "I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them."[42]

Part of the problem, probably, was that religious dissidents across the country were claiming dreams and visions in support of views that were substantially out of step with the Protestant clerical establishment. Radical prophets like Ann Lee, theological liberals like the Universalist Caleb Rich, and even illiterate blacks whose names are lost to history all claimed to have received by special revelation the true interpretation of the scriptures.[43] Anti-revivalist preachers believed that the "enthusiasm" of these credulous people was largely to blame for the theological chaos that afflicted the frontier. They denounced dreams and visions with the same vehemence that the visionaries directed against the creeds. Perhaps without intending to, Joseph Smith had become a combatant in one of the most bitter theological conflicts of his day.

The side of this conflict that the young Prophet had chosen, however, was a clamor of competing voices. All of them agreed in their critique of the establishment's rational hermeneutic, but each of them offered dramatically differing visions of what the Bi-

ble truly meant. Joseph Smith needed to find a way to privilege his own revealed knowledge over that of the other competitors. He initially accomplished this goal by grounding it in concrete objects: specifically, seer stones and golden plates.

Joseph Smith Jr., his father, and his older brother Alvin were all involved in money-digging during the 1820s using hazel divining rods, seer stones, magic circles, and a variety of other folk religious practices. None of them ever succeeded in obtaining any treasures, despite many expeditions. Failures were attributed to the intervention of treasure guardian spirits which, if not properly appeased, would cause the treasure to slip through the earth away from the money diggers' eager shovels. Joseph nevertheless proved exceptionally talented at demonstrating his scrying abilities to neighbors by describing distant locations that he had seen in his stone and by finding lost objects.[44]

As a scryer, Smith referred to his magical stones as "keys" to special knowledge. His mother reported that it was because Joseph "possessed certain keys by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye" that money digger Josiah Stowell hired him to help locate a Spanish mine in Chenango County.[45] When Smith received from an angel a pair of large stone spectacles that functioned in much the same way as his seer stones, he referred to these also as a "key" and claimed that by them he could "ascertain, at any time, the approach of danger, either to himself or the Record [i.e. the Book of Mormon plates]."[46] Smith's Palmyra neighbor William Stafford reported that Smith believed the hills were full of such keys, and periodically divined their locations.[47] With such objects, Joseph reportedly "could see everything—past, present, and future."[48]

There could have been no more effective way for Joseph Smith to reach his most immediate audience, his family and neighbors, than to link his hermeneutical views to his well-established credentials as a scryer. The Smiths' distinctive blend of religion and folk-magic led them to view their scrying abilities as a gift from God. At the 1826 trial of Joseph Jr. for "glass-looking" and disorderly conduct, Joseph Sr. testified that "both he and his son were mortified that this wonderful power which God had so miraculously given him should be used only in search of filthy lucre." He further added that "his constant prayer to his Heavenly

Father was to manifest His will concerning this marvelous power."[49] Similarly, an 1829 revelation addressed to Oliver Cowdery stated that Oliver had "the gift of working with the rod" and that this "rod of nature" could be an instrument of revelation, since it worked by the power of God.[50]

In using divinatory instruments to receive revelation, Joseph felt he was doing only what the biblical patriarchs had done. In 1835 he altered his 1829 revelation to Oliver, replacing references to the "rod of nature" with the more ambiguous phrase "gift of Aaron," which suggests that he took Aaron's miraculous rod as a biblical precedent.[51] Joseph had already identified himself with Moses (and Oliver Cowdery with Aaron) five years earlier, and a reference in the Book of Mormon to Moses being given "power in a rod" (2 Ne. 3:17) suggests that, probably by this time, he was already taking biblical rods as a precedent for his own activities.[52] The same Book of Mormon passage identifies Smith closely with Joseph of Egypt, who used a silver cup in divination (Gen. 44:5). Similarly, Smith apparently took the biblical Urim and Thummim as a precedent for the seer stones that his father and neighbors used. Joseph Sr.'s mortification that his son's scrying ability should be used only for "filthy lucre" also suggests biblical influence. If the family really believed that Joseph Jr. could see things in his stone, then biblical denunciations of the pursuit of "filthy lucre" (1 Tim. 3:3, 8; Tit 1:7, 11; 1 Pet. 5:2) may have persuaded them that Providence had some greater purpose in mind for his gift than mere money-digging.

Whatever other knowledge Joseph could obtain through his keys, the function upon which he soon fixated was the translation and interpretation of ancient records. The Book of Mormon tellingly referred to Smith's stone spectacles as "interpreters" and told of ancient seers who used them in translation (Mosiah 8:11–19). Since Smith believed that the Bible had not been entirely "translated correctly" (Eighth Article of Faith), it is significant that he armed himself with the tools to correct the problem. He was equally determined to correct problems of transmission and interpretation (1 Ne. 13:26, 40; Alma 41:1). Many other writers of Smith's day had claimed to be able to provide the "keys" to the sticky problem of biblical interpretation, but Smith's keys were uniquely tangible.[53]

Smith continued to claim the keys to authoritatively interpret the Bible until the end of his life. Significantly, however, the claim underwent a subtle transformation over time. As Smith matured, the physical instruments of revelation became unnecessary, and the terminology of "keys" was transferred to an intangible priesthood.[54] Smith's scriptures referred to the Melchizedek Priesthood as the "key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God" (D&C 84:19). Like his stones, the priesthood empowered him to know "things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come" (D&C 93:24). The motivation for this change from tangible to intangible keys seems partly that, as his audience broadened beyond the folk religious circles of his youth, his involvement in magic became a public relations liability. Partly, however, it is because he no longer needed concrete objects to ground his hermeneutical privilege. His vigorous personal charisma as a prophet had eclipsed the props of seership.

Closing the Distance

The plurality of biblical readings that had so bewildered the young Joseph Smith largely resulted from the psychic distance between the readers and authors of the biblical text. Most nineteenth-century interpreters took for granted that the goal of reading a text is to understand the meaning its author intended. Friedrich Schleiermacher, a German theologian who lived and wrote contemporaneously with Joseph Smith, dreamed of understanding biblical texts "even better than" their authors.[55] A major obstacle to such understanding, however, was that readers' assumptions can never be fully in harmony with those of authors, so that readers and authors often understand the same words and phrases in dramatically different ways. The greater the cultural and linguistic distance between readers and authors, the more difficult interpretation becomes. For nineteenth-century interpreters of the Bible, the distance was vast.

Schleiermacher, like Campbell, was aware of this problem and hoped to close the psychic distance between readers and authors by means of careful historical and philological work.[56] But such tools were unavailable to most nineteenth-century interpreters of the Bible, and even Schleiermacher understood that they were not a panacea. Unlike Campbell, he did not trust in "common

sense" or direct spiritual perception to make up the difference. He argued that only by painstakingly reading and rereading the biblical texts can interpreters hope to gradually and imperfectly bring their pre-understandings into agreement with those of the authors.[57] He somewhat pessimistically referred to this process as "divination." Divination for Schleiermacher was not a supernatural activity, but rather consisted of intuitively imagining what was in the mind of the author by extrapolating from one's own human experience.

Joseph Smith, too, had found in divination a remedy for his distance from the biblical authors. Although his divination was ostensibly more literal than Schleiermacher's, some textual and historical evidence suggests that it actually functioned in much the same way. He acquired and employed historical-critical and linguistic tools in his biblical interpretation, such as the writings of Josephus and a knowledge of ancient Hebrew.[58] And he also engaged in the same reading and rereading of biblical passages that Schleiermacher advocated, with each reading correcting his prior understandings in light of new knowledge and insight. He produced three different versions of the Genesis creation narrative, for example, each departing from its predecessor in subtle but very significant ways.[59]

However Smith's divination functioned, he consistently used it to facilitate biblical interpretation for his followers by reinforcing biblical authority, recontextualizing biblical passages, revising biblical language, and reliving biblical narratives. All of these strategies were designed to close the psychic distance between the Bible's authors and its nineteenth-century readers, by transporting either the former into the present or the latter into the past.

The first plank in Smith's response to his culture's hermeneutical crisis was the Book of Mormon. To a large degree the Book of Mormon can be read as a witness and support for the Bible. It has a strongly biblical flavor; it is couched, in fact, in the Jacobean idiom of the King James Bible.[60] It is no coincidence that many of its detractors referred to it as the "Gold Bible."[61] One of the initial motivations behind its publication appears to have been to fulfill the Hebraic legal requirement for "two or three witnesses" to establish a matter (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1).[62] It is an American record that complements and supports the message of the "re-

cord of the Jews" (the Bible) (1 Ne. 13:23–34, 39; Mormon 7:8).[63] Doctrine and Covenants 27:5, one of Joseph Smith's early revelations, in fact, calls the Book of Mormon "the stick of Ephraim," which is joined with the "stick of Judah" (the Bible) in fulfillment of Ezekiel 37:19.[64] Biblical allusions and quotations are scattered throughout the Book of Mormon's pages, sometimes in the sort of haphazard and almost accidental way in which they also appear in Joseph Smith's personal writings.[65]

If one of the purposes of the Book of Mormon was to prove that the message of the Bible was true, another was to clarify that message for a modern audience. That Joseph Smith rejected the Protestant doctrine of the sufficiency of the Bible is evident from the prophet Nephi's mockery of latter-day "Gentiles" who say, "A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible" (2 Ne. 29:3, 6).[66] The Book of Mormon quotes lengthy Bible passages, including several chapters from Isaiah, Malachi, and Matthew. The prophetic passages, especially, are recontextualized and reinterpreted in light of latter-day events. Isaiah's "isles of the sea" are identified with America, and the gathering of Israel is expected to occur on this continent as well as in Jerusalem.[67] Joseph depicts the gathering and cataclysmic judgment predicted by the biblical prophets as imminent events. Indeed, on April 21, 1834, Joseph Smith reportedly said, "Take away the book of Mormon . . . and where is our religion? We have none; for . . . [despite] our former professions and our great love for the bible, we must fall, we cannot stand, we cannot be saved; for God will gather out his saints from the gentiles and then comes desolation or destruction and none can escape except the pure in heart who are gathered, &c."[68]

Other biblical passages quoted in the Book of Mormon are set in contexts designed to clarify their import for nineteenth-century political and theological debates over such issues as infant baptism, unconditional election, freemasonry, universalism, and missionary efforts to Native Americans. Alexander Campbell famously criticized the Book of Mormon as addressing "almost every error and almost every truth discussed in New York in the last ten years."[69] Mormon elder W. W. Phelps said more approvingly that the Book of Mormon "explains the Bible."[70] If the hermeneutical process requires common ground between reader and text, the Book of Mormon makes the process easier by providing

unambiguous points of contact between the Bible and the Mormons' nineteenth-century worldview.

Joseph framed his concerns about the difficulty of biblical interpretation in terms of *translation*. The eighth LDS Article of Faith affirms the Bible only "as far as it is translated correctly." The problem was not merely the presence of errors in the King James translation but also its lack of plainness. "Because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you," the prophet Nephi explained in the Book of Mormon, "I proceed with mine own prophecy, according to my plainness; in the which I know that no man can err" (2 Ne. 25:4, 7). Thus the Book of Mormon at once challenged and rescued the notion that Common Sense can enable anyone to easily understand the Bible. The Bible was difficult to understand in its present form, but the Book of Mormon would translate its message into plain, nineteenth-century language. "My soul delighteth in plainness," Nephi said in good Common Sense fashion, "for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding" (2 Ne. 31:3). Later in his career, Smith actually produced his own inspired translation of the Bible in cooperation with Sidney Rigdon.[71]

Smith did not stop at recontextualization and retranslation; the Bible was also in need of revision. Smith agreed with the pervasive Protestant belief in a medieval "great apostasy" but went further than most in suggesting that the Catholic Church had modified the Bible, removing "many plain and precious parts" (1 Ne. 13:26, 32, 34). Smith was not the first to make this accusation. Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, which Joseph Smith's father and grandfather had both apparently read and been influenced by,[72] wondered whether designing persons had "added, altered, abridged, or dressed . . . up" the books of the Bible. Paine also asserted that the Bible was created by a majority vote and that it was only on this authority that several books were rejected.[73] Thomas Jefferson, though he blamed the gospel writers rather than the Catholics, readily modified the biblical text in order to extract the core of the gospel from the "rubbish" that framed it.[74]

The Prophet Joseph addressed these difficulties by extensively revising a number of biblical passages. About half of the verses

quoted in the Book of Mormon from Isaiah follow the King James Version word for word, but in the other half are hundreds of apparently deliberate revisions.[75] The same phenomenon occurs in the lengthy sections quoted from the Sermon on the Mount and from Malachi. The Prophet's later undertakings, like his "Inspired Version" of the Bible and his books of Moses and Abraham, extend this effort. Many of the changes stem from Joseph's suspicion of the King James translation, in that they omit or alter words that the King James Version (sometimes unnecessarily) italicizes.[76] Others are more substantive. Some, for example, are concerned to fill theological or narrative gaps. Joseph restored the lost Book of Enoch referred to in Jude and inserted it into his book of Moses, now part of the LDS canon.[77] Other revisions alter difficult passages and/or harmonize apparent contradictions in the text. For example, Joseph addressed the discrepancies between Genesis 1 and 2, by making Genesis 1 a spiritual pre-creation event, while Genesis 2 referred to the physical creation.[78] And finally, in some cases, the Prophet showed a concern to harmonize the biblical text with his own experience of revealed truth.[79]

Joseph Smith's most intriguing revision of biblical salvation history is his Christianization of the Old Testament. H. Michael Marquardt has identified 200 New Testament quotations in the portion of the Book of Mormon that was supposedly written in the pre-Christian era.[80] The Book of Mormon's pre-Christian Saints worship Christ by name and baptize people for the remission of sins. Philip Barlow has suggested that this phenomenon was an expression of the Enlightenment assumption that truth is unchanging.[81] It is interesting to see Joseph Smith associated with this assumption, since it was a central conviction of the Common Sense philosophy that he and so many others had found wanting.[82] In many respects, Joseph Smith appears to have rejected this static view of truth. He held to a very flexible ethic,[83] introduced new scriptures and doctrines, and eventually taught a doctrine of eternal progression. He also held, like many Protestants of his day, that history could be understood as a series of progressive dispensations.

Yet Barlow is correct that all of Smith's innovations and novelties were actually designed to demonstrate that there *were* no innovations and novelties—that, in fact, progression itself was as ancient

as the universe. Though there have been many dispensations, the same core truths have been taught in all of them, and the same symbols and events have recurred over and over again. Just as John the Baptist had been a forerunner of Jesus, the Campbellite preacher Sidney Rigdon was a forerunner of Joseph Smith (D&C 35:4). Just as Elijah appeared to Jesus at the Transfiguration, so Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.[84] Just as Moses had Aaron as his spokesman, Joseph Smith had Oliver Cowdery (2 Ne. 3:17–18).[85] Just as the Israelites had priesthoods, temples, polygamy, and animal sacrifice, so the new dispensation included them.[86] When Joseph introduced the new doctrine of the plurality of gods, he pointedly insisted not only that he had taught it from the very beginning of his ministry, but also that it had been the teaching of Jesus and Moses.[87] Joseph thus united the two great competing myths of his day: the immutability of truth and the inevitable march of progress.

This union of stasis and progress was also a union of ancient and modern. Mormon restorationism, with its radical reenactment of biblical narratives and its appropriation of biblical polity, sought the identification of readers and authors to a degree that Protestant interpreters like Campbell and Schleiermacher never conceived. Joseph radically thrust together the worlds of the biblical patriarchs and his own nineteenth-century American followers. It was perhaps the most thoroughgoing and successful of his several strategies to close the psychic distance and to facilitate interpretation for his followers.

Conclusion

Joseph Smith witnessed in his culture and family the divisive effects of a crisis of authority that sprang from the inadequacy of Common Sense hermeneutical assumptions. Rather than try to alter these deeply rooted cultural assumptions, he used his own complement of prophetic tools to reshape biblical history and to craft it into the kind of consistent, coherent, and easily understandable narrative that the Common Sense philosophy predicted. By these means he hoped to restore unity in the face of theological and social disintegration.

Whether Joseph Smith's project actually enabled anyone to more accurately understand the intent of the biblical authors is

debatable. At the very least, however, he did succeed in making biblical interpretation *seem* simple and straightforward to his followers. Thus, despite his initial skepticism about the adequacy of Common Sense, he rescued it in the end. He rendered the Bible sufficiently clear to his nineteenth-century followers that they could proclaim in the *Times and Seasons*, "The prophetical and doctrinal writings contained in the Bible are mostly adapted to the capacities of the simple and unlearned—to the common sense of the people."[88]

Notes

1. Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), xi.

2. Grant Underwood has leveled a similar criticism against those who see Mormon millenarianism as a reaction to economic and political deprivation. Underwood sees Mormonism as a protest against a fundamentally spiritual kind of deprivation: "Here was deprivation as keenly felt as any lack of physical sustenance." Grant Underwood, "Early Mormon Millenarianism: Another Look," *Church History* 54, no. 2 (June 1985): 224–25; Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 97.

3. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith,* 2d ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 15.

4. Ibid., 11–15; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 3–1, 179–83.

5. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 3, actually forgoes "an all-encompassing social or cultural analysis" on the basis that "young Joseph's culture was predominantly family culture."

6. Ibid., 5.

7. Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 35–52.

8. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 38–39.

9. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 58. Several Latter-day Saint authors have objected to the suggestion that the Book of Mormon is dependent on Joseph Sr.'s dream, preferring to find precedents in ancient sources. See, for example, C. Wilfred Griggs, "The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Book," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 259 note 4; John W. Welch, "The Narrative of Zosimus and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 311–32.

10. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 18.

11. Ibid., 38.

12. J. W. Peterson, "Wm. B. Smith's Last Statement," *Zion's Ensign* 5, no. 3 (January 13, 1894): 6, in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 1:512–13.

13. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 39; Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, 58.

14. Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, xx–xxi.

15. Ibid., 42, 44–45, 50–51.

16. Julian M. Sturtevant Jr., ed., *Julian M. Sturtevant: An Autobiography* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1896), 160–61.

17. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 64.

18. Joseph Smith, Manuscript History of the Church, Book A–1, LDS Church History Library, CR 100 102, 2, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:59.

19. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 37.

20. Ibid., 57.

21. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 114.

22. Ibid., 70–73. See also Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 7–10.

23. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 81. Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 23, notes that the Bible served as a sort of Christian Constitution. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 9, goes further still: "In America the Bible had been recanonized . . . as a symbol of the 'Redeemer Nation.' To denigrate the Bible was to denigrate the country."

24. Lucy Mack Smith, Preliminary Manuscript, LDS Church History Library, 50, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:307.

25. Lucy nevertheless continued to "hear all that could be said, as well as read much that was written, on the subject of religion" and found a priest who would baptize her without making any denominational commitments. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 47. Her rejection of human religious authorities clearly was not as thoroughgoing as her husband's and son's.

26. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 14–16.

27. C. Leonard Allen, "Baconianism and the Bible in the Disciples of Christ: James S. Lamar and 'the Organon of Scripture,'" *Church History* 55, no. 1 (March 1986): 67–71.

28. Alexander Campbell, "Reply," *Christian Baptist* 3, no. 9 (April 3, 1826): 229. See also Nathan O. Hatch, "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People," *Journal of American History* 67, no. 3 (December 1980): 559–60.

29. Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptism: With Its Antecedents and Consequents* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Co., 1853), 49–50.

30. Alexander Campbell, "Tracts for the People—No. III: The Bible—Principles of Interpretation," *Millennial Harbinger* 3, no. 1 (January 1846): 23.

31. Ibid., 24; emphasis his.

32. Allen, "Baconianism and the Bible," 77–79.

33. Some sophisticated thinkers were aware of these problems even at the time of the Common Sense philosophy's initial promulgation. See Joseph Priestley, *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*, 2d ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1775).

34. "A History of the Life of Joseph Smith Jr," 1832, 2, in Joseph Smith Letter Book 1, LDS Church History Library, MS 155, Box 2, fd. 1, in *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 1:20.

35. Smith, Manuscript History, 1–2, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:60. Smith's contemporary John W. Nevin made a similar observation: John W. Nevin, "Antichrist and the Sect System," in *The Mercersberg Theology*, edited by James Hastings Nichols (New York: Library of Protestant Thought, 1966), 97–99.

36. Smith, Manuscript History, 3, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:60–61.

37. Westminster Confession of Faith, 1647, 1:6 in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), 3:603–4.

38. George M. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter? The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, edited by Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 84–85.

39. Westminster Confession, 1647, 1:1, in Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 600.

40. Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 117–37; James D. Bratt, *Antirevivalism in Antebellum America: A Collection of Religious Voices* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

41. On the First Vision as a conversion narrative, see Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 6.

42. Smith, Manuscript History, 3, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:61. Methodists of the 1820s were generally open to supernatural experiences and anti-denominational iconoclasm and, in fact, were the primary engineers of the interdenominational frontier camp meeting revivals. Anti-revival sentiment had begun to take root in some Methodist circles, however, and within a few decades would claim a large proportion of their clergy. See, for example, "Wesleyan Methodist" John F. Watson's Tract, *Methodist Error; or Friendly Christian Advice, to Those Methodists, Who Indulge in Extravagant Religious Emotions and Bodily Exercises* (Trenton, N.J.: D. & E. Fenton, 1819).

43. Caleb Rich, "A Narrative of Elder Caleb Rich," *Candid Examiner* 2, no. 23 (May 14, 1827): 185–87; George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 41 vols. (Nashville, Tenn.: Fisk University Social Science Institute, 1945), 19:209.

44. Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, 39–40.

45. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 92.

46. Ibid., 106.

47. Testimony of William Stafford, December 8, 1833, in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed: Or, a Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: Telegraph Press, 1834), 237.

48. Fayette Lapham, "Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, Forty Years Ago. His Account of Finding the Sacred Plates," *Historical Magazine*, 2d series, 7 (May 1870): 307, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:463.

49. William D. Purple, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism," *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33 (May 2, 1877), 3.

50. *A Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ, Organized According to Law, on the 6th of April, 1830* (Zion: W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), 7:3, in Wilford C. Wood, ed., *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Wilford C. Wood, 1958–62), 2:19.

51. *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams and Co., 1835), 34:3, in Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*,

2:161–62. The motive for the change appears to have been to disassociate himself from his early magical practices, which proved embarrassing as early as the late 1820s and which were used to publicly discredit his religious activities by 1830. See Obadiah Dogberry, "The Book of Pukei—Chap. 1," *The Reflector* 3, no. 5 (June 12, 1830): 36–37, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents,* 2:231–234; Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, 92–93; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 68–69; Clay L. Chandler, "Scrying for the Lord: Magic, Mysticism, and the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 78.

52. Mark Ashurst-McGee, "A Pathway to Prophethood: Joseph Smith Junior as Rodsman, Village Seer, and Judeo-Christian Prophet" (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 2000), 142; Richard P. Howard, "Latter Day Saint Scriptures and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation," in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 1–18; Susan Staker, "Secret Things, Hidden Things: The Seer Story in the Imaginative Economy of Joseph Smith," in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, edited by Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 235–74. Joseph Smith Sr.'s brother Jesse wrote a derogatory letter in 1829 that referred to Joseph Sr.'s implement as "a wand or rod like Jannes & Jambres," the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses (Ex. 7:11–12; 2 Tim. 3:8). Jesse Smith, Letter to Hyrum Smith, June 17, 1829, in Joseph Smith Letter Book 2, LDS Church History Library, MS 155, Box 2, fd. 2, 59–61, in *Selected Collections*, 1:20. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 38, notes that it was not unusual for a dowser to refer to his or her implement as a "Rod of Aaron" or "Mosaical Rod."

53. See, for example, Robert Gray and Thomas Percy, *A Key to the Holy Bible, Giving an Account of the Several Books, Their Contents, Their Authors, and of the Times, Places, and Occasions on Which They Were Respectively Written*, 2d ed. (London: C. and J. Rivington, 1825).

54. Orson Pratt, "Two Days' Meeting at Brigham City, June 27 and 28, 1874," *Millennial Star* 36, no. 32 (August 11, 1874): 498–99, http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u?/MStar,13925 (accessed January 7, 2010).

55. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, edited by Heinz Kimmerle, translated by James Duke and Jack Forstman, Vol. 1 of the AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION TEXTS AND TRANSLATION SERIES, edited by Robert Ellwood Jr. (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 112–13.

56. Anthony C. Thistleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory*

and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997), 222–23.

57. The term "pre-understanding" actually derives from Schleiermacher's popularizer Wilhelm Dilthey, but it communicates well Schleiermacher's meaning. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, 56, 59, 150–51. For a wonderful summary of how Dilthey's formulation follows from Schleiermacher's slightly more complicated one, see Martin E. Marty, "Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," in *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, edited by George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 182.

58. Louis C. Zucker, "Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 41–55.

59. Anthony A. Hutchinson, "A Mormon Midrash? LDS Creation Narratives Reconsidered," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 11–74.

60. Joseph's imitation of King James idiom is imperfect; he occasionally misuses personal pronouns and sometimes even lapses back into regular nineteenth-century speech patterns. Wesley P. Walters, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon" (M.A. thesis, Covenant Theological Seminary, 1981), 163; Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 27. He also tends to exaggerate the use of certain forms—for example, the emphatic construction "I did go up unto," as opposed to "I went up unto." My own computer study reveals that most biblical books use the word "did" very infrequently—only Habakkuk uses it more than three times per thousand words. The Book of Mormon, by contrast, exhibits extraordinarily high rates of occurrence per thousand words in four books: 4 Nephi (23.64), Ether (12.26), Mormon (11.87), and Helaman (11.86). Only 2 Nephi (1.29), Jacob (2.08), and Moroni (2.61) use "did" fewer than five times per thousand words.

61. Abner Cole, "Gold Bible," *The Reflector* 1, no. 15 (December 9, 1829): 57, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents,* 2:228.

62. Don Bradley, "Making Witnesses: The Book of Mormon's Secular Strength," Paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 2007, recording available from https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/shop/products/?product_id=2803&category=3.

63. Craig J. Hazen, "The Apologetic Impulse in Early Mormonism: The Historical Roots of the New Mormon Challenge," in *The New Mormon Challenge*, edited by Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 49–51; A. Bruce Lindgren, "Sign or Scripture: Approaches to the Book of Mormon," in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake

City: Signature Books, 1990), 55–62; Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 62–88; Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 26, 27.

64. Ezekiel 37:19 reads, "Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand" (KJV italics removed). Smith also very early came to see the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as a direct fulfillment of Isaiah 29:1–4, 10–12. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 20.

65. Ibid., 14, 25. See also Joseph Smith, Letter to the Colesville Saints, August 28, 1830, in Newel Knight, Journal, ca. 1846 (in private possession), 59–61, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:11–15.

66. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 39, 40.

67. Walters, "The Use of the Old Testament," 167–68. This was fairly typical fare for the early Republic. Mark Noll, "The Image of the United States as a Biblical Nation, 1776–1865," in Hatch and Noll, *The Bible in America*, 40–45.

68. Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 2002), 37.

69. Alexander Campbell, "The Mormonites," *Millennial Harbinger* 2, no. 2 (February 1831): 93. See also Clyde D. Ford, "Lehi on the Great Issues: Book of Mormon Theology in Early Nineteenth-Century Perspective," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 75–96.

70. W. W. Phelps, Letter to William Smith, December 25, 1844, *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 24 (January 1, 1845): 757, http://www.centerplace.org/history/ts/v5n24.htm (accessed January 6, 2010).

71. Alexander Campbell and Noah Webster also both produced new translations of the Bible; Mormons were aware of Webster's translation at least as early as 1833. Philip L. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible: Fraudulent, Pathologic, or Prophetic?" *Harvard Theological Review* 83, no. 1 (January 1990): 52.

72. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and Beginnings of Mormonism*, 38.

73. Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (New York: G. N. Devries, 1827 [1794–1807]), 15.

74. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), 191–92.

75. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 30.

76. The King James Version italicizes words supplied by the transla-

tors. The italicization, however, is inconsistent and does not follow any clear methodology. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision," 56; David P. Wright, "Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: Or Joseph Smith in Isaiah," in *American Apocrypha*, edited by Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 157–234.

77. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible," 52.

78. Ibid.; Hutchinson, "A Mormon Midrash?" 36.

79. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision," 56.

80. H. Michael Marquardt, "The Use of the Bible in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 2, no. 2 (1978): 118–32.

81. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 38.

82. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter?" 81.

83. Joseph Smith, Letter to Nancy Rigdon, ca. 1842, in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 537.

84. Rand H. Packer, "Dispensation of the Fulness of Times," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 1:387–88; Samuel Brown, "The Prophet Elias Puzzle," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 1–17.

85. This prophecy seems to have initially referred to Oliver Cowdery, but Sidney Rigdon soon displaced him in the role of "spokesman," and Cowdery's role was revised as "scribe" (D&C 100:9, 11). Oliver Cowdery, Introduction to blessings, September 1835, Patriarchal Blessing Book, LDS Church History Library, 1:8–9, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:451–54.

86. That Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young were planning to reinstitute animal sacrifice is fairly clear. What is not clear is whether they ever actually did so. Wandle Mace and John C. Bennett both report that Joseph Smith did. Wandle Mace, Autobiography of Wandle Mace, 1809–46, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, 39; John C. Bennett, "Further Mormon Developments!! 2d Letter from Gen. Bennett," *Sangamo Journal* 10, no. 47 (July 15, 1842), http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/IL/sang1842.htm (accessed January 6, 2010).

87. Joseph Smith, Sermon, June 16, 1844, in Lyndon W. Cook and Andrew F. Ehat, eds., *Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1996), 378–79.

88. Elias Higbee and Parley P. Pratt, "An Address," *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 5 (March 1840): 68, http://www.centerplace.org/history/ts/v1n05.htm (accessed January 6, 2010).

Divine Darwinism, Comprehensible Christianity, and the Atheist's Wager:

Richard Rorty on Mormonism— an Interview with Mary V. Rorty and Patricia Rorty

Stephen T. Cranney

Note: Richard McKay Rorty was one of the preeminent social philosophers of the twentieth century. His works, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature *(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978) and* Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity *(Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), helped shape the current discourse in political and moral philosophy, calling into question the presumptions of the analytic philosophy that preceded it. A prolific writer, he touched upon religious themes many times in his work. He died of pancreatic cancer on June 8, 2007. Stephen Cranney conducted this interview with his widow, Mary Rorty, a member of the LDS Church, on August 18, 2009, at her home in Palo Alto, California. Partway through the interview, we moved to a restaurant where their daughter, Patricia Rorty, joined us and participated in the interview. Our focus was Richard's experiences with and feelings about the Church.*

Cranney: Richard mentions in *Philosophy and Social Hope* the dangers of fundamentalist religions and the extent of their political influence. Where did Mormonism fit on the fundamentalist continuum?

Mary Rorty: That's a very interesting question because that's something that has changed a great deal in my lifetime. The thought that Mormonism now considers itself in part an ally of the Evangelical Protestant movement is a surprise to many people, and that's certainly not the side of Mormonism to which Richard had been exposed.

Cranney: Were there any specific instances . . . Of course, he died before Proposition 8 in California.

Mary Rorty: Not really, but there was Proposition 22 soon after we came to Stanford in 1997. The Church put considerable pressure on its members to do precinct walks, put up lawn signs, collect signatures, and contribute money, sometimes in "suggested" amounts to designated organizations. And of course, we shouldn't forget that when the Equal Rights Amendment came up, the Church, though more surreptitiously, got involved in defeating it, starting in 1978. We were married at that point, but it was a much less politicized issue, at least in the Princeton Ward. You didn't have to sign on to any political party's agenda to get involved in that particular discussion.

Cranney: So to the extent that the LDS Church got involved in these political issues, did Richard view that activity as a minor nuisance, or as part of a greater problem of religious involvement in politics, and as possibly structurally threatening to democracy?

Mary Rorty: That's a hard one. There's a lot of stuff in Rorty's work about the public/private distinction. On the anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom—the document that set out the foundational notion of separation of church and state in America—Richard wrote about it. It harmonized very closely with Richard's attitude toward religion and politics: that they were different spheres of life, and that people could be fundamentalist or whatever, but that religious beliefs were their own business. Religion was not a matter for political manipulation.

I think he was quite daunted by, discouraged by—even mortified by—the extent to which, for instance, the George W. Bush administration began using religious questions as the basis for policy rather than considerations of what was good for the people. He saw this trend as reversing progress that had been made over the previous sixty years. He saw it as really a matter of cultural

transformation—one he regretted. That is something that would have become problematic about the Church for him—when the Church starts making an issue out of public policy.

But as far as the Church doing what churches are supposed to do—providing a sense of community, providing support, providing a realm of discourse for people with interests in common—he had no problem at all with that. He wasn't personally interested in that function of Mormonism, but he was not antagonistic. We had absolutely no problems about my raising our two children, Kevin and Patricia, as Mormon. He was, with very few exceptions, completely okay with that. His notion of what to do Sunday morning was to sit around reading the *New York Times* and take bird walks. We moved to the University of Virginia in 1992; and by that time, the kids were old enough to be involved in Sunday School. So one Sunday we'd go to church, and the next Sunday we'd bird watch. He was extremely fond of my Mormon mother, Vivian Varney; and when she was in town, he'd accompany us to church. When we came out to visit my brother, Joel Varney, in Mountain View, California, he would go to church with Mother. He was extremely fond of Mormon hymns. I think his favorite was "O My Father." Can you guess why?

Cranney: The verse about Heavenly Mother?

Mary Rorty: Yeah. He thought that was just a hoot. He thought the theology it represented was novel and fun.

Cranney: Did you ever feel that he possibly viewed the privatization of religion as part of a project to eclipse it, choke it off, and do away with it?

Mary Rorty: No, I don't think so.

Cranney: So his attitude was more "live and let live"?

Mary Rorty: Yeah, he felt that religion was not everybody's thing. But when it was, it was certainly everybody's personal business, everybody's privilege, and everybody's possibility. He'd had a moment when it played an important role in his life in terms of his own intellectual, emotional, and moral development. He grew up in a Troskyite household but explored other religions growing up, so, of course, he was not wont to begrudge others their own religious experiences. Does it make any sense to say some people are congenitally, by temperament, believers, and some people are

not? He was not, by temperament, a believer, but lots of people are, and he accepted that.

Cranney: Did he see the religious element in your life and in the lives of your associates in the Church as a beautiful thing in some ways? To have what he never really obtained—that single worldview of truth?

Mary Rorty: I don't think so. I think that he admired somebody like Desmond Tutu, who on the basis of religion—by means of religion, something that he strongly believed—had been able to advance human freedom. Immense admiration—but envy? No. He didn't think that religious energy was the only way to advance human freedom. He didn't think it was necessarily a better way to advance human freedom than the ways he felt he was finding to achieve the same goal. No envy there. Just admiration.

Cranney: Was he troubled by the absence in his life of any kind of—what would I call it?—spiritual comfort, answers to questions that other people had through their religion that he didn't have because he was not, by temperament, a believer?

Mary Rorty: No. And he was very critical of, skeptical of, alert to, the dangers of peddling that kind of comfort for either political or economic advantage. We were in Thailand, which has some of the most gorgeous Buddhist temples on the face of the earth. We visited one that had an incredible number—perhaps two hundred—gold Buddhas. I thought it was gorgeous, but it made Richard angry. "The gold could have fed the people!" He wasn't dead to aesthetic issues at all, although they were never very important to him compared to the political, but he was offended—offended by the money taken from the poor to build that beautiful temple. He thought that that was mean and bad. I'm very happy with a description of his attitude as being anticlerical rather than being atheistic. The existence or nonexistence of God wasn't the heart of his objection.

Cranney: He talks about *Das Kapital* and the New Testament and how both books are useful because they inculcate values in children that help them empathize with the poor. Did he ever read the LDS canon?

Mary Rorty: Absolutely. Certainly the Book of Mormon.

Cranney: What was his perspective on Mormon scripture? Did he find it as enjoyable as a work of literature?

Mary Rorty: There are lots of things that you can say about any of those things. Richard was very familiar with both the Old and New Testament, as a man who reads voraciously would be, and as a man who started reading voraciously early on would be. He didn't think that the prose style of the Book of Mormon was quite up to snuff, compared to the elegant Shakespearean language of the King James Bible. On the other hand, he had read *Roughing It* before he read the Book of Mormon. You remember Mark Twain's opinion about the prose style of the Book of Mormon?

Cranney: I remember two things in particular. One of them was: "It is chloroform in print. If Joseph Smith composed this book, the act was a miracle—keeping awake while he did it was, at any rate." And the other thing was: "'And it came to pass' was his pet. If he had left that out, his Bible would have been only a pamphlet."[1] Is that what you were thinking of?

Mary Rorty (laughs): That's right. I don't know if Richard read the Pearl of Great Price or the Doctrine and Covenants. I know that he read the Book of Mormon. Of course, the scriptures were lying around the house; and if we were in a Marriott Hotel and he had run out of murder mysteries, he would pick up the Book of Mormon again.

Richard and Harold Bloom were good friends, and both had a great admiration for the capacity of human beings to do things—for their imagination, novelty, ambition, including in the religious realm. Rorty rather admired Mormon theology; he thought that it was a great improvement over Catholicism. We had Sterling McMurrin's *Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (1965) in the house, so Richard's view of Mormon theology was McMurrin's—not necessarily what the Correlation Committee has come out with. If you're a humanist—which he was—he thought that many of the ways in which Mormonism differed from Protestant religions are important. Mormonism is anti-Calvinist and anti-traditional Catholic. He thought that many of those differences were very positive.

One of his disappointments, I think, was when the Church itself became politicized, as it has over the gay-rights issue, because he thought the Church could do better than that. You don't need to grind your rather neat religion down to the lowest common denominator of Elmer Gantry; that's kind of a waste.

Cranney: So he thought of it in terms of: It's a pity, because Mormons have so much potential?

Mary Rorty: Yes. As religions go, it could have done a lot better.

Cranney: So, you said that there were different theological aspects that he felt were an improvement over some traditional religions. Which did you have in mind?

Mary Rorty: On any list of books that he admired, you'd have to include Darwin as well as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. "As man is, God once was, as God is, man may become," and some of the speculative theology that emerges from that doctrine—he thought that that was really cool, because of the notion of progression. He thought that the idea of eternal progression was just great. He liked the idea of a religion that builds into its expectations for its members a kind of progression on their part. He liked its evolutionary aspect. If you're a humanist, you can see that concept as a profoundly humanist ideal.

There's a kind of possible narrowing barrier-use of monotheism that says, in essence, "There's one God, and He's the only source of anything, and you're a bug in comparison to Him; and if you're not nice to Him, or don't believe in Him, you are damned." He saw Mormonism, in terms of this evolutionary theme, presenting God as an aspiration for human development, not something in comparison to which human beings are devalued. "As God is, man may become." He saw in that doctrine a barrier against some of the more invidious aspects of Christian denominations. It makes it harder to use Christianity in the ways that Nietzsche warned us against.

He wondered if Joseph Smith had read Milton's *Paradise Lost*. And that's a good question. I don't know if anybody knows the answer. Richard liked the idea of the three degrees of glory. He thought that was cool. It avoids the dichotomy of "you're either saved by grace or damned forever." He thought the Mormon concept of salvation was a humane improvement on much of the Christian tradition as institutionalized. He particularly liked the idea that the lowest grade of heaven is like this earth now. That's just fine. If that's as bad as it gets, then that's good enough.

Cranney: Did he ever read much about Joseph Smith? Or have any particular opinions on him?

Mary Rorty: Oh, absolutely. Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My*

History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), for instance, sits in our library. He was charmed and delighted by the brilliance of Brigham Young. The man was a genius. It was the people that he spent some time reading about in the Church, not so much Joseph Smith as Brigham Young, and not so much their theology as the history or sociology. He thought that the history of the early Church was interesting. And the United Order, the kind of social engineering that was done in the early Church, was impressive to him.

Cranney: So does that outweigh the possible negative sentiments he might have had about the theocratic elements of Brigham Young's tenure?

Mary Rorty (laughs): I'm laughing because I very recently went back to *Roughing It* because of some other arcane things that I got involved in, and I was thinking about Mark Twain on polygamy. Richard thought that it would be personally very difficult—for the men. There's other stuff on polygamy that talks about it in terms of the social problems it was designed to solve, how effectively it did that, and the effect on the people who were actually involved in it. If you have six wives and one of them is taking a medical degree and another one is an accountant for your business, the one who still has little kids is running the daycare and another is teaching school, you've got possibilities for a division of labor that are super. He was interested in social engineering and the human ingenuity it could represent.

Cranney: Was his association with the LDS community his primary interaction with orthodox religionists?

Mary Rorty: Not completely. He was, for instance, invited to speak at Bob Jones University, and he taught one semester at Catholic University. He got involved with a sweet Italian man, Gianni Vattimo, and wrote a book with him called *The Future of Religion*. Columbia University Press published the translation in 2005. Of course, as the kind of child who's spending his spare time checking out all of the churches in his neighborhood, he was not unfamiliar with Catholicism. He went to the Methodist Sunday School, for a while. And religion was very much a part of the literary culture of the West.

He had a contrarian streak. I read the talk that he was going down to Bob Jones University to deliver. I remember asking,

"Rorty, you know, these are people who take religion quite seriously. Why are you taking this tone in exactly this context?" And he said, "If they wanted somebody to be nice about it, they wouldn't have invited me."

So I suspect that, apart from his own various encounters in his professional life, my raising the kids Mormon was probably his longest, ongoing exposure. Of course, that has to include my Mormon family, of whom he was very fond. My angelic Mormon mother spent four months a year with us from the time our kids were born. She'd come out to Princeton or Virginia or Australia or Germany, two months in the spring and two months in the autumn. And for quite a few years, we'd come out to Mountain View in the summers and hang around my brother's house. That was Richard's biggest exposure to institutionalized religion, and he got it in a very benign form. . . . (Chuckles). With one exception, nobody ever came up to him and said, "God wants you to do this."

Princeton was the high point in his encounter with my religion. We had some very, very, excellent home teachers there—very devout, intellectually lively, and interesting people. One of our home teachers, Scott Abbott, was writing his dissertation on German intellectual history. [See Scott Abbott's personal essay, which follows.] He and Richard were both interested in his topic, so the two had an intellectual relationship independent of the home teacher context in which they explored things of common interest.

Cranney: Did he view the LDS system as intellectually coherent in all its parts?

Mary Rorty: The kind of thing that we were just talking about, in terms of what, theologically, has made Mormons "a peculiar people," as we say with pride—this was all fairly intellectually coherent. I don't know how much Thomas Aquinas you've read?

Cranney: Just what I've picked up in an introductory course.

Mary Rorty: If you've spent your life wrestling with issues of a triune God or transubstantiation, you know the Mormons are a lot more intellectually coherent, frankly, than much of Christianity during its two-thousand-year history. There's something very admirable in that, something that Richard was very able to observe with a kind of distant amusement. Any institution gives you problems of hierarchy, gives you power differentials, gives you politics, gives you schisms—and I'm probably more inclined than

Richard to say you can't have one without the other; but all I can say about Richard's view is that there are aspects of many religions, any religion, all religions, that speak to human aspirations, that further them, that provide a context for them, and he could approve of that aspect of them. You know, for somebody like Rorty, for whom the important thing was language, language, language, you don't know what you think unless you can say it. Words are the tools of thought. You can get some words from religion in which to express what you understand and what you desire; and if you could have had that without the institutionalization, he would have been very pleased.

The other extreme of things—religion without intellectual content—is going to be what we call these days "spirituality." Did Richard have any interest in spirituality? If he had skepticism about institutionalized religion, did he think that spirituality might be an alternative route into the same territory? Many children of atheist parents describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. But in practice, that just means that you don't have a language to talk about it. You don't have a ritual to either interpret or react against. As far as Richard was concerned, that was just touchy-feelie crap. He had no interest in that.

Cranney: Did he have any particular reaction to, say, the September Six? What did he think about academic freedom with LDS intellectuals? Did he have any responses for that as far as you can remember?

Mary Rorty: Unless I brought an incident to his attention, he was not particularly informed about such crackdowns or other times when Mormonism hit the news. He had heard me talk about the early work of Michael Quinn, and we had his *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), but I don't know if Richard had read it. I was somewhat familiar with Sonia Johnson's work and her excommunication over her support of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1979. One of our good feminist friends was excommunicated *in absentia* from her Santa Cruz Ward in about 1982, and notified of the fact by mail. Richard and I both viewed these acts as signs that the Church was gradually retreating from what I had always described to him as its positive attitude toward education and intellectualism.

That academic freedom is very important for any academic in-

stitution is obvious; and Brigham Young University, where my brother, his wife, and his two children were educated, was a very obvious place for us to keep an eye on. We knew people who became faculty members there from our time in Princeton and from contacts elsewhere. Some academic freedom issues there hit the *AAUP Bulletin* when tenure was at stake. Richard was a lifelong member of the AAUP. So we worried when we saw things like that. But some intellectuals for whom he had a great deal of respect seemed to be able to get along okay at BYU. He spoke at the Y once or twice. Mark Wrathall, a Heidegger scholar, was at the Y at one point and organized an academic conference up at Sundance for which Rorty was the keynote speaker. So he had no reason to think of the Y as necessarily a hostile intellectual environment.

He had a wide acquaintance at other denominational academic institutions that he could compare with the Y in terms of their support of academic freedom. He had taught at Catholic University for a quarter, for instance, and had a very good Jesuit friend at Notre Dame, Ernan McMullin, with whom he had done some collaborative work. So he was aware of possible conflict between religious doctrine and intellectual content, and he had various standards of comparison to see how well my denomination handled that issue in its academic flagship. We didn't always excel. But he thought of it as a really good university, nonetheless; you can get a good education there, if you are careful.

Cranney: Did Richard have any particular perspective on the sociological side of Mormonism?

Mary Rorty: Any religion is a number of things. It's a theological vehicle, it's a social institution, it's a cultural artifact, it's a recipient of and transmitter of culture, it's a generator of culture, and it's a focus of belief. And Richard had different attitudes toward Mormonism depending on which aspect you consider. As a focus of belief, he had no interest in it at all—as I've already mentioned, because he wasn't, by temperament, a believer in religion. On the whole, he thought belief or faith was a pretty frail source of intellectual content.

He thought that Mormonism had an interesting, arcane, and novel history. He thought that it had a great deal of sociological genius. He really admired the way the Church was put together

and, indeed, in the way it still operates. He thought of it as one that kept a less sharp division between the hierarchy and the members than practically any church he knew; he was very impressed with the extent to which it is in fact run by lay people; and the more that it is run by those lay people and is in fact responsive to the membership, the more he approved of it. The more hierarchical it gets, with recommendations coming down through the hierarchy as to how you should vote or what your attitude should be toward things like gay marriage, the less he was in favor of it and the more it impinged on the things that made him skeptical of religion in general.

As a theological vehicle, he found Mormonism complex and interesting, and he was rather positive about it. And as an instance of the long tradition associated in the West around religion, he thought that it was a very young religion, devoid of many of the virtues as well as free of some of the vices of older traditions—like Catholicism, for instance—that had a long history and had accrued more, had assimilated more cultural baggage, had incorporated a wider range of the arts, had more rituals. As a young religion, Mormonism is fairly spare. As a generator of culture, he was fairly impressed by it. He thought that it was a very vital and, again sociologically speaking, a very—what's the word?—a very contagious religion.

Cranney: I have a quotation from *Philosophy and Social Hope*: "Christ did not return. Those who claim that he will do so, and that it would be prudent to become a member of a particular sect or denomination in order to prepare for his coming, are rightfully viewed with suspicion."[2] So, taking this statement as a transition, did he view LDS proselytizing efforts as arrogant?

Mary Rorty: Sociologically he saw them as extremely effective. But I'm not saying that he thought it was proper to proselytize. His suspicion of people who said that Christ was about to return is that he really drew a line between what was knowable and what was not knowable. You can't know that Christ is going to return, although you can believe it. So if you're an epistemologist, which he was, you have very clear notions and canons of justification of belief; and according to those canons, you cannot "know" that Christ is about to return, although you may believe it.

Cranney: Okay, so on this question; it's just a matter of certitude . . .

Mary Rorty: Yes and no. It's not just a matter of how psychologically certain you are of it. It's a question of the basis of that certainty, on what it is that your conviction rests. What is knowable in this way or that? What are the criteria by which you can say a claim is or is not justified? What counts as rational *grounds* for certainty?

Cranney: So it's not necessarily that he thinks that we should view with suspicion the people who believe that it's going to come. It's the ones who say, "It's imminent. We need to change things—to prepare—because I know this."

Mary Rorty: Yes. "I know this, and you ought to believe me when I say it." It sounds silly to say that he would view more kindly somebody who said, "I believe that Christ is coming tomorrow" than somebody who says, "I know that He's coming tomorrow." But that kind of thing does matter. More important, probably, for him is the whole business of proselytizing on the basis of fears or hopes that have nothing to do with improving the human condition. That's a distraction from what you *can* do. For what purpose should I believe what you say about Christ's coming tomorrow? Who profits, in power or money, if I do?

Cranney: So it's not just what he would consider the unsavory epistemological assumption of knowing . . .

Mary Rorty: Well, that's certainly a part of it, but, no. Proselytizing—I would say that he was probably not in favor of proselytizing as a component of a religion. I think that someone's religious belief is probably not something that he'd consider anyone else's business.

I wonder what he would have said if I had told him that Kevin was going to go on a mission. Would he have forbidden it? No. What he might have said is, "If you want to send him on a mission you can." (And I could have done that; my mother had established missionary funds for all of her grandkids.) So, Kevin would have had the ability to go on a mission without requiring his father's support, and that was completely consistent with the independence that Richard was willing to maintain about religion. But I suspect he would have tried to argue for a service mission, instead of a proselytizing one, if that's an option for nineteen-year-olds. I

know he greatly admired my mother's eighteen months as a health missionary in El Paso.

Cranney: So, maybe institutionally he had some misgivings, but it seems from what you've told me that Richard would seem to be okay with a mission if that was Kevin's personal choice.

Mary Rorty: Yeah, I don't know. It didn't come up with Jay, our oldest kid from his first marriage. Jay's mother is Jewish, and Jay was eleven or twelve when Richard and I married. But I don't think that there was ever any question about whether she wanted to raise Jay Jewish or not. It just didn't come up. But I'm not sure how Richard felt about that.

Cranney: So, from Richard's perspective, you mentioned earlier that he thought the quickest way to truth was in a democratically elected society where there's freedom of expression and where information is free flowing. So, he did believe in truth, but he believed that it was entirely historically contingent and that there was no way of looking at it and gauging it from outside the system. Correct?

Mary Rorty: I want to qualify that description with Richard's notion of historicity, of progress, as well. There are facts in the world, right? So consider our knowledge about heliocentrism versus geocentrism. The confirmed fact is that the earth does go around the sun, and not vice versa, and that is true. Unqualifiedly true. And we have a greater approximation of "truth" in some aspects of culture—math, or science, whatever—than we might have had before, at an earlier stage of human history. There's no doubt that, according to the best analytic philosophy canons of what it means to say that something is red, there is no doubt on earth that the sentence, "This is red," is true of some objects.

Cranney: So in what ways is he not a relativist?

Mary Rorty: We know that the sun doesn't revolve around the earth. We know that if you stick your hand in the fire it will burn. We know that if you make certain decisions about how you behave, there will be certain consequences. We know that. I'm moving away from chemistry into various behavioral, increasingly psychologically complicated things, but we know things on that level.

Cranney: But in terms of morality?

Mary Rorty: In terms of morality, I know that if I punch Joe in the face, he's going to punch me back. I know that.

Cranney: Is that morality or psychology?

Mary Rorty: Well, or is it politics? I know that if I bomb a village, the people there aren't going to like me. Or at least, I should know that, if I'm rational.

Cranney: I mentioned the possibility earlier that there are some lingering foundationalist tendencies. If I harm a child, that's wrong. So how do you think that Richard would justify holding these perspectives on truth, saying this or that is wrong. In one of his books he mentions what he would say to a Nazi commandant, for example. So, how does he justify . . .

Mary Rorty: What are you asking for when you speak of "foundations"? What is there other than how you react in situations that demand choosing? Is there a sense of right and wrong other than the following: This is what I choose, and I accept the consequences—to others, and to the kind of person my action makes me? How much beyond that do you have to go?

I think that Rorty might argue that what "true" means when you talk about matters of possible fact has to do with how any given claim fits into the context of associated factual claims. And what you might have in mind if you say something like "harming a child is wrong" is a different kind of claim. It might be something more like Luther's: "Here I stand, and I can do no other." Or something like: "A person who could do that is not a person with whom I wish to identify myself, not a person who acts according to my notion of how people should aspire to act . . . " If you want a "foundation" for that kind of claim, what are you asking for? Isn't there a difference between a fact and a choice? If not, what's a doctrine of free will worth? Is a "foundation" something that you look for that will remove from you the necessity of actually choosing—that will remove from you the onus of your responsibility for your choices?

On the subject of belief: I think you know Pascal's wager?

Cranney: Yes. He asks: Why would you not believe in God? "What harm will befall you in taking this side? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, generous, a sincere friend, truthful. Certainly you will not have those poisonous pleasures, glory and luxury; but will you not have others? I will tell you that you will thereby gain in this life, and that, at each step you take on this road, you will see so great certainty of gain, so much nothingness

in what you risk, that you will at last recognize that you have wagered for something certain and infinite, for which you have given nothing."[3] The quick-and-dirty version is: "Since we can't *know* whether God exists—should we believe in Him, or not? If He exists, He will reward us for our belief; and if He does not exist, we lose nothing for having believed." Where Pascal (in my version) and Rorty (in my version) disagree is in the relation between belief and responsibility: Pascal evidently (as seen by your more extensive quote) thinks that belief is essential for right action. Rorty thinks it is neither necessary nor (alas!) sufficient.

Mary Rorty: Right. What's Rorty's wager?

Cranney: You should just be nice, because . . .

Mary Rorty: Rorty's wager is: "If there is a God and if He is good, He will not judge me on the basis of whether I believed in Him or not. He will judge me on the basis of my life, my choices, my decisions, and the responsibility that I've accepted for them. And if He does not, I don't regret not having believed in Him."

Cranney: Doesn't that still presuppose a moral system?

Mary Rorty: Yes, it does, but when you inextricably attach your moral system to God's will or God's word, to anything that transcends your choices and your responsibility for them, your humanity, then free will is unnecessary. But how *does* one become worthy of the celestial kingdom? As a minimum: by becoming a grown-up. And that means taking responsibility for choices. Maybe it doesn't *presuppose* a moral system. Maybe it *is* a moral system.

Cranney: But is that not what you're basing your moral system on then? As opposed to our individual circumstances?

Mary Rorty: What makes us human is our ability to remember the past (which we all don't necessarily do), and to anticipate the future, and to determine our behavior, our choices, on the basis of our imagination, our capacity to anticipate the future and what we want it to be, and our ability to choose between alternatives on how to deal with our circumstances. That's what makes us human. That's the basis of morality. Choices. Responsibility. Consequences. Accepting, thinking about it, choosing, taking responsibility for the results. Is it essential, à la Kant, to make a logical deduction about whether lying is self-contradictory or not? Is the claim that God tells you not to lie any better? No. Morality is so extraordinarily, centrally, based in human consciousness and agency, our

ability to act in the world, that any other foundation is pretty irrelevant.

Cranney: So, a large part of Richard's system was based in what distinguishes us as humans? And then he worked off that?

Mary Rorty: [Nods]

Cranney: I think that's about it. Do you have any other salient points that you think I possibly missed?

Mary Rorty: Well, I could tell you some funny stories. When my kids were in high school in rural Virginia, the bishop, a very well-intended man, but not very sophisticated, asked me if I would teach seminary. I thought that was an absolutely fabulous idea. As I told you, I'm a theology freak, right? I have lots of books; I minored in religion. So that would make it very interesting for me to teach Old Testament, New Testament, or Church history. It would have been an absolute hoot. "Yes!" I said. "Great," said the bishop. "I'll come talk to your husband." "What?" "I'll come talk to your husband." I said, "Wait, you don't want to do that. I'm the Mormon. You want me to do something for the Church, and this is a calling I would enjoy a great deal, I'll be glad to do it, so what's the problem?" He said "I'm sorry, but we need to have your husband's permission." I said, "Okay, come talk to him, but you'll be sorry."

So this sweet man gets in a suit, and he comes out and sits at my dining room table, asks me to leave the room, and then asks Richard if he would be willing to have me accept this calling. Richard looked at him in amazement and said, "You mean I can say no?" And the poor bishop said "Yes."

"NO!" Richard hollered, with a maniacal gleam in his eye. I hadn't asked him if I could do it, or given him the option of saying no, and none of the more sophisticated bishops that we had been dealing with earlier had made that kind of mistake. But he figured that if they were going to be fool enough to ask him whether he wanted me to get up at 6:00 every morning and teach seminary, he'd tell them what he thought. That seems to me absolutely hilarious and very typical of his attitude toward me and our church. Was he a feminist? Well, he sure as hell wasn't a patriarch.

Cranney: So was that because he resented the fact that the bishop felt that he had to get his permission?

Mary Rorty: Right. He felt that it was offensive to me—that the bishop would have to ask him whether I could do something. He

was quite offended on my behalf. I wasn't offended particularly. I just thought it was a bit short-sighted of the bishop, if he really wanted me to do it, and I told him so; but Richard was very offended.

Another family story—it's actually Patricia's story. When we were in Berlin, the only people who spoke English were the Mormons in the ward. Patricia was about ten or eleven and had a period of intense religious fervor. She decided at some point that she was going to try to convert her father. Something similar had happened with my mother when she got back from her mission. I had probably been married five years by then, but it was long enough that Mother had gotten acquainted with Richard's radical views. She wrote and asked how I would feel about her trying to convert him. I asked him how he would feel about it, and he said, "She's welcome to try." I ended up writing her a letter that said the best method of trying to convert him would be by example—to be who she was—which she did. He loved her dearly and admired her a great deal. Probably his respect for her determined whatever amount of respect he had for the Church. But he never converted.

[At this point, the interview moved to a restaurant where Patricia Rorty joined us.]

Cranney: We talked earlier about how Richard had a complicated relationship with religion—how in some respects he really recognized the good that it did, but that he had a decided anticlericalism where the institution was concerned. What do you think he thought of the institution of Mormonism?

Patricia Rorty: I don't know. All that I can really think about is Prop 22 and Prop 8. I don't know how he felt about the institution before that. Maybe there's a larger arc to those implications.

Mary Rorty: Insofar as I'm a casual, inside/outside observer of the Church, it seems to me that it has become more conservative and more politicized in the last fifteen years. It was thirty-five or forty years ago that Richard first met the Church in my own sweet person, and he was less conscious than I of that kind of retrenchment, but he did become aware of it, especially when it erupted into the public sphere. I've been aware that the media is much more alert to the Church's involvement in political issues in the

past few years, so it's more likely to get publicity when it takes a political stand, even if it calls it a "moral" issue.

Patricia Rorty: I think that Richard was pretty clear that the Church did great things for his kids and he was for it in that context; but in terms of his relationship with the institution and whether it promoted or prevented cruelty, I think that it failed to meet his test. In his writings, he talks about the importance of tolerance, of not discriminating against gays and lesbians, and I think he would have seen the Church as going wonky somewhere on that issue.

Mary Rorty: He was fine in terms of 10 percent to charity. He thought the Mormon rule of tithing was fine, and he tried very hard to approximate that in terms of his own contributions to Oxfam, Amnesty International, the ACLU, César Chávez and the United Farm Workers. He thought that was extremely important. I don't know—is it any different to contribute 10 percent to César Chávez than it is to contribute 10 percent to the Mormon Church? Both of them are special constituencies.

Patricia Rorty: Sure, and if they both give it to the people who need it, there's no difference. Everybody operates on identity politics.

Cranney: Patricia, it seems to me that in Richard's writings he's very adamant that we should be involved in working against injustice. He's very ardent about taking that position, but there are elements of that position that are antagonistic toward organized religion. So what was the interplay between anticlericalism and the fact that you have an LDS mother?

Patricia Rorty: He's not a pulpit thumper, right? He's not the guy who says, "It's my way or the highway" in his personal life. My mother's Mormonism was just fine with him, and so was ours.

Cranney: Your mother said I should ask you about your attempt to convert Richard to Mormonism when the family was living in Germany.

Patricia Rorty (laughing): I was the pulpit thumper then. Eleven years old, trying to convince him of the rightness of The Way, wearing my little CTR ring in Berlin, praying all the time, and reading the Book of Mormon really ostentatiously in the middle of the room. And I feel that he tolerated whatever Bible-thumping I was doing.

Mary Rorty: Did you have conversations about that with him?

Patricia Rorty: I remember throwing away all the alcohol in the house once we got back to the States.

Cranney to Mary Rorty: With your permission?

Patricia Rorty (laughing): Oh, heavens, no. What I remember is that he tolerated my antagonism, rather than generating any antagonism of his own toward the Church.

Cranney: So he modeled tolerance for you?

Patricia Rorty: Absolutely. I think that the Church was good for him, in a way, because it made structure and systems for his kids. I can't speak for Kevin, but it was very helpful for me that wards are basically the same in every country in the world, and that the buildings look the same, and that there's basketball every Wednesday no matter what language we're speaking. So I don't think that Dad had any sort of ideological position about the Church not being good. The Church is good.

Cranney: I asked your mother if Richard ever read the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Do you know?

Patricia Rorty: I presume so. How could he not read it? You can't bring a topic to his hand and then expect him to ignore it. He wasn't ignorant on any point to my knowledge. If he heard about it, he'd find out about it. I'm sure that he was familiar with the text.

Mary Rorty: I asked him at one point how much of Mormonism Harold Bloom got right in his book on American religions.[4] Bloom takes Baptists and Mormons as his case studies. It's a really smart book, and explains a lot about why an American pragmatist would appreciate some things about Mormonism. And I got a fairly sophisticated and detailed answer: He's good on this, he's not good on that . . . Richard probably wouldn't do anything like a textual comparison of the creation accounts in Genesis with the Pearl of Great Price, though. It didn't interest him that much.

Patricia Rorty: I never had a discussion with him about the specific content in the Doctrine and Covenants or the Pearl of Great Price; but I have to say that the only way he *wouldn't* have read them was if he took some sort of obstinate, reactionary position—which he never took about books. Ever. Any book. Ever. He'd read anything to find out what's going on. So I think you're

safe in saying that he read them, but I have no idea what they meant to him.

Mary Rorty: He knew very well where Christ was supposed to have spent those few days when he was in the tomb.

Patricia Rorty: Remind me. Was it Missouri?

Mary Rorty: Now, woman, am I going to have to send you off to a Gospel Doctrine class? (laughing) When I talk about these things, the role of religion for him was secondary. What was primary was whether a religion served the poor and defended the downtrodden. He admired a religion when it expressed a social gospel or liberation theology.

Patricia Rorty: Religion is a tool, like philosophy or literature.

Mary Rorty: That's an explanation about why it's so easy, when you talk about him and religion, to separate out questions of faith and to separate the religion from the institution, and to separate clericalism from the theology. He didn't appraise it as a monolithic whole. He appraised it as it acted in the service of the things that he valued most. Does that sound fair?

Patricia Rorty: Yeah. It was really good when it was really good to his kids, and then it started hurting his kids' feelings when political stuff started coming up, and then it was bad.

Cranney: It seems as if, with his Christian ancestor Walter Rauschenbusch, founder of the Social Gospel, that his own position could have been a trans-generational attempt to secularize Christian values.

Patricia Rorty: I don't know about that.

Cranney: Okay, your grandfather's a Baptist theologian, your parents are Trotskyites, and you're a secular theologian. Did you ever get that sense that—

Mary Rorty: —they were progressing away from God—

Cranney: —while still retaining the core elements of Christianity?

Patricia Rorty: Maybe I'm a black and white extremist, but I think that what he had perfected was the skill of swinging away from your parents.

Mary Rorty: Action-reaction, with him as the synthesis?

Patricia Rorty: More Hegel than not.

Mary Rorty: My impression of Winifred (his mother) was that she was reacting against Walter (his grandfather), so Richard was

like, "To hell with both your churchy and your anti-churchy reactions," and he went off into a different corner. I think his understanding of religion was neither belief nor denial but a kind of indifference. No, I don't *think* that. I *know* that, for myself . . . Do you know Dan Savage?

Cranney: No.

Patricia Rorty: Dan Savage writes a newspaper column. He is a gay man with a husband and an adopted child, and he talks about when Cheney's daughter came out as a lesbian. He said, in essence, "Maybe some of you people on the Cheney side of this country think that we gays are rejoicing. We gays are not rejoicing. We have a child, and the terror for me and my husband is that our child will become a reactionary, radical, pulpit-pounding, Christian rightist who does terrible things, from our perspective." The concluding line of this article is: "The only thing that you can count on for sure, no matter what you vote or how you live, is that your kids will break your heart." I love that article.

So, I think that Dad's belief, his hope, was that he would protect us from becoming reactionary fundamentalist Christians by being exposed to, inoculated by, a fairly benign church experience. We did have a positive church experience. We left it, but we left it with some good memories. I'd say that we avoided the swing back. We didn't react by taking a position in opposition to whatever Dad's position was. We had a kind of dad/mom split, so we could take a position against this, then take a position against that, and we can come to a middle ground. But I do think that kids will break your heart.

Cranney: Did you get any secular influence from your father?

Patricia Rorty: Do you remember when Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* came out?

Mary Rorty: Yeah . . .

Patricia Rorty: So, I was reading something in *Newsweek* and said something like, "Well, he was asking for it." Oh, my word, was Dad ever mad at me! He just snapped, "No, he wasn't!" So I knew what I did was wrong in terms of taking a fundamentalist position. But you know, Dad wasn't a pundit, not a guy who explained a lot, or talked endlessly about his "views."

Mary Rorty: Which is so crazy, when you think about it, be-

cause there was nothing that he ever thought that he didn't write down and publish. How can we say that he's not a pundit?

Patricia Rorty: I used to sidle up to him and say, "Daddy, why don't you tell me everything you think and feel?" And he'd say, "I wrote it down." But he wasn't going to tell me anything. It was written down. There wasn't any preaching in our relationship.

Mary Rorty: He certainly wrote, and wanted people to read it, and that's why he wrote it; so it's not that he lacked conviction. No, and it's not that he had "secret doctrines" that he was unwilling to share. But he would not have—I don't know. Would he have fought with me for the souls of our children? I don't know.

Patricia Rorty: That's a losing proposition!

Notes

1. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (1872; rpt., New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961 printing), 83.

2. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 201.

3. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, note 233, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pascal%27s_wager (accessed January 14, 2010).

4. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993).

Hermeneutic Adventures in Home Teaching: Mary and Richard Rorty

Scott Abbott

When philosopher Alastair MacIntyre came striding into my Vanderbilt University office brandishing the *New York Times* in October of 1985, I knew something was up. "Congratulations," he said, "your church has just entered its Renaissance period." I was used to seeing him walk into Furman Hall on Ash Wednesdays with a gray streak on his forehead, and we had talked about Mormonism, but I had no clue what he was talking about. He showed me the front page of the paper. It was the Mark Hofmann bombings—murders to cover up Hofmann's forgeries. "It only took you 150 years," Alastair noted. "It took us a millennium and a half."

I've told this story a dozen times, maybe two dozen. For just the right audience, Mormons who know that Alastair is one of the world's foremost ethicists, it works beautifully. I never hesitate to tell it, although I'm always a little uneasy knowing that I'm name-dropping. If name-dropping is all that's involved in telling stories about "philosophers I have known," then this will be a short essay. But if I can convince myself that there's more to it than that, that stories about intersections between philosophers and the religious tradition I grew up in might be interesting to others (in ways my story about sitting behind Marie Osmond in the Nashville Third Ward while she chewed off her fingernails and deposited them in her husband's coat pocket is not), then perhaps there's a purpose to writing about my role as home teacher to America's most famous pragmatic philosopher after John Dewey. Well, not technically a home teacher to Richard Rorty, but rather to his wife, Mary Varney Rorty, a philosopher in her own right.

About thirty years ago in a middle-school cafeteria in Hights-

town, not far from Princeton University where I was studying German literature, I watched a gray-haired man hold his baby in a circle of priesthood holders while the bishop of the Princeton Ward gave the child a name and blessing. "That's Richard Rorty," someone said. The name didn't mean a thing to me at the time. It did soon enough.

Mary had grown up Mormon in Idaho and had acquired a Ph.D. in ancient Greek philosophy. Richard had grown up the orchid-loving son of Trotskyite parents. True to his pragmatic philosophy (or was he simply deferring to Mary?), Richard figured that it might be good for their new son (or was it their daughter?) to grow up within some tradition, and perhaps Mormonism was as good as any other.

When the bishop of Princeton Ward asked me to be the Rortys' home teacher, I hesitated. Do they want a home teacher? The bishop assured me they did. I told him I would ask Mary; and if she agreed, I would do it. She agreed, although I noticed her eyebrows rising when she said yes. I sealed the agreement by promising I wouldn't be intrusive and that I would report monthly visits on the basis of whatever contact we happened to have. Mary's eyebrows relaxed.

And so I became their home teacher. Over the course of a year or two, I visited them at their home three or four times, usually bringing my seven-year-old son Joseph as my companion. When we rang the doorbell, there was always a scurry inside. We could hear Richard shouting, "The home teachers! the home teachers!" while rushing up the stairs to the second floor. When Mary opened the door, she was always laughing at Richard's antics, theater performed for the children.

Our other visits, not exactly *home* teaching but duly reported to the bishop, were memorable to me. The only one that occasioned tension of any sort was the morning I delivered Joseph to his class at the elementary school and found Mary there, too, talking with some other parents. When she saw me, she slid her cup of coffee to one side. I sat down next to her and said I would resign as her home teacher if she ever felt uncomfortable about me again. "Okay," she promised.

Sometime in 1979, Mary asked if I would babysit Kevin and Patricia while she and Richard celebrated the publication of his

book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. When I arrived, Richard handed me the first copy of the book, handsome in its green, yellow, and black jacket.

"The children are asleep," Mary said, "Take a look at the book if you want."

I wanted.

It was a magical evening. Starting with the Wittgenstein epigraph pointing out that, when we think of the future, we suppose it will be a direct extension of the present as opposed to an extension of the present over a curved or changed line, I fell into a reading reverie broken only by the nagging hope that they would make a long evening of it. Richard was arguing that "pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements . . . determine most of our philosophical traditions" and that the image of the mind as a mirror that correctly or incorrectly represents what we experience has held philosophy captive for millennia. Instead, he thought, we might better be engaged in a kind of hermeneutics developed by Hans Georg Gadamer, a turn from attempts to find truth to work that focuses on romantic ideas of self creation. Truth isn't something we find, but something we make.[1] Mary and Richard finally came home; and because it's a long book, I had to buy my own copy the next day.

Not long after that visit, Gadamer came to town. His lecture drew hundreds of listeners; and although the eighty-year-old German didn't use a single English preposition correctly, he charmed us all. After the lecture, Richard found me and invited me to come to their home for a reception. "You're working on Rilke and Heidegger, aren't you? Come talk with Hans about it."

Hans!

I arrived at the small reception, mostly Richard's graduate students, and Richard asked what I wanted to drink. When I hesitated, he took me into the kitchen, found an almost empty bottle of 7-Up, and poured it into a wine glass. "It's old and flat," he said. "I wish we had something else. Come meet Hans." He told Gadamer I was working on Rilke's "Duino Elegies." Gadamer asked what my angle was; and when I told him about the "standing" metaphor I was tracing through the poems, the poet's attempt to counteract physical and cultural entropy through standing figures, stanzas and *Gestalten*, letters and figures, he nodded

vigorously. "It's all there," he said. "I knew it was remarkable when I first read it, just after it was published, and I knew Martin needed to see it."

Martin!

"I gave a copy to Heidegger," he said, "and Heidegger liked it as much as I did."

And I was grateful for the hermeneutics of home teaching.

On another memorable evening, the Rortys' friend Harold Bloom was in town to lecture. I sat next to Mary in the crowded auditorium and listened to the big man with the photographic memory talk at great length about some fascinating topic. And although I've forgotten what Bloom's lecture was about, I have a clear memory of Mary, next to me, knitting at a steady pace, her knits and purls matching Bloom's ideas.

Mary is not just a knitter. She also spins words. One late afternoon, with the setting sun slanting through the tall side window of the Princeton Chapel (our sod-laying and funnelcake sales had finally resulted in our being able to build the unusual chapel), Mary gave a carefully written sermon. The warm light playing sensuously on the high wall behind her, she spoke about various kinds of love. Had I given the sermon, it would have sounded like C. S. Lewis's *The Four Loves*. But Mary had done more than read Lewis; she knew ancient Greek philosophy through its original texts, and she knitted and purled a complicated and beautiful story. The quality of the sermon was unexpected in our ward; we were, for the most part, people with the skills to pull the electrical wire in the building, or to set the open rafters, and even if our skills lay in the academic sphere, we weren't likely to write our sacrament meeting talks with an eye to beauty. Turning to erotic love, Mary described how the curve of a lover's arched foot was as meaningful as anything in the world. I sat there dumbfounded.

Fifteen years later, I spent five afternoons in Provo Canyon with Richard, looking for a lazuli bunting. He was a passionate birder and had accepted a summer speaking engagement at BYU on the off chance that he might spot one of the beautiful little birds. He was also thinking (or was it Mary who was wondering?) about BYU as a possible place for Kevin and Patricia to go to college (although BYU quickly fell off the map of possible universities, for reasons Mary would have to elaborate). Near Stewart Falls

above Sundance, I saw a flash of blue and pointed at it. Richard raised his big binoculars and found the bird. While focused tightly on the little beauty, he held out his bird book so I could see the lazuli bunting on the cover. Richard looked and looked and looked. Finally he handed me the binoculars. I glanced quickly at the amazing flash of blue on the back of a striking red, white, and black body and quickly handed the glasses back. That night we had dinner in Sundance's Tree Room. I feigned horror when Richard ordered quail. After that initial sighting, I emailed Richard every spring on the day I spotted the first lazuli bunting in Utah Valley. In 2007, the year he died, it was May 2.

On Richard's last morning at BYU, lecturing about pragmatic philosophy and its connections with postmodernism, he recited a "double dactyl" he had composed, a strict form that announces its playfulness with the opening "Higgledy-Piggledy" and requires that a single word comprise the double dactyl of the sixth line. I'll remember Richard with a double dactyl of my own, borrowing the sixth line from his:

Higgledy-Piggledy,
Rorty the pragmatist,
Trotskyite parenting,
"Richard McKay";
Challenge philosophy's
Phallogocentrism,
Mirror of nature too,
And those who prey.

Note

1. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 12.

Dreams of Summer

Lauri Gobel Leslie

Even when we are asleep, our minds are active. Scientists surmise that our brains process and sort the events of the day at this time. Spiritual people believe God sometimes uses these moments to communicate with us through dreams, delivering messages to guide and prepare us for the future. I think they are both right. But I sleep too soundly to remember most of my dreams.

* * *

A clicking noise awakens me from a deep sleep. With my eyes still closed, I pull my mind from the dense fog, remember where I am and why. I am lying on a hard sofa in a hospital room. The sound is Daniel, my twenty-four-year-old son, clicking his tongue to get my attention.

"I'm awake," I assure him so the annoying clicks will stop. The only sound now is the rhythmic whoosh of the machine forcing air into his lungs.

I pull a blanket around my shoulders and put on my glasses as I step to his bedside. Daniel is flat on his back. Tubes snake from both sides of the bed—an IV tube, a gastric tube, a catheter tube, and a ventilator tube connected to a man-made hole in the hollow of his throat.

He can't move his head, so I lean over the bed. Now Daniel can see me, and I can see to read his lips. His brow is furrowed, and his eyes are wide open, searching for mine.

"Dream," he mouths silently, not moving on to the next word until he is sure I understand. His mouth moves again. "Scared."

When I ask him what happened in his dream, he strings together a whole thought. "Dreamed people treated me differently."

What am I supposed to say?

Two weeks ago, he was the classic LDS young adult, a returned missionary attending BYU. He scheduled his classes around

snowboarding in the winter and trips to the lake in the summer—always on the go, the life of the party.

Then he dove into a pool. One small bone jumped the track and bruised the sensitive spinal cord, interrupting the messages between the brain and the body, leaving Daniel instantly paralyzed and unable to feel below his shoulders.

"Daniel, maybe some people will treat you differently. I don't know. But your friends will see beyond this. They'll still see *you*."

Once he has calmed down, I return to the sofa, processing the conversation. Considering that he can't move or breathe or make a sound, the many friends who have come up from Provo to Salt Lake in these weeks act amazingly normal when they visit with him, as if they don't notice that machines are breathing for him, feeding him, keeping him alive.

Medical miracles have become routine. The appendectomies, caesarean deliveries, gall bladder removals, and blood transfusions that members of my family have received were just brief interruptions in our lives, giving us a few anxious hours. Our deaf can hear, our blind can see. Surely our lame will walk.

Daniel has received too many blessings to count and in all of them he is promised a full healing. Everyone seems to think this paralysis is just temporary.

I have faith; but from the very first phone call, I knew that this would be one of those events that divide life into "before" and "after." Neither one of us will say it, but somehow Daniel and I anticipate a future unlike the past, one where Daniel will be a different person. I can't allow myself to think about how much he has lost, how totally dependent he is.

I feel as if I am standing alone at the edge of a bottomless crevasse with the ground crumbling under my feet. If I try to turn back, the ground will just crumble faster. No matter what I do, I am going over the edge.

But I must hold on for now.

My husband had to go back to work in Colorado, so I'm a single parent. Every night Ted calls, and we have family prayer over the phone after we visit. The distance makes it both harder and easier for him. I know he wants to be here for us; but from 500 miles away, he can imagine that Daniel is getting better. He is con-

vinced that Daniel will be healed. I don't have the luxury of avoiding reality.

My eighteen-year-old daughter, Tricia, has stayed to help. We share the duty of monitoring the alarm on the ventilator around the clock. I wonder if she comprehends how grave Daniel's injury is.

Each day it seems that Daniel's condition is getting worse. He develops pneumonia and multiple urinary-tract infections. His fevers persist in spite of all the antibiotics he is on. Ironically, he can't feel his body but is in excruciating pain. His brain is registering false messages, like phantom pain from a lost limb. His nervous system is hypersensitive to light and sound. So the shades are drawn, the lights are off, and we tiptoe around the room and whisper if we must communicate. The dark quiet drags on interminably.

One day Daniel becomes agitated and complains about hurting and being hot. We call the nurse who administers the maximum pain medication and puts ice packs around his body, then leaves to check on another patient. His pain grows unbearable as Tricia and I fan him and try to calm him. I sense Daniel slipping away into a dark, frightening place.

He looks up at me as if I should know what to do and then mouths, "So dry."

Because he can't swallow, all I can do is swab his mouth with the sponges the hospital provides, the same kind we used when my grandmother was dying.

Then he mouths, "Bounce."

Tricia and I, positioned on opposite sides of the bed, push back and forth, rocking the mattress—his boat on the sea of despair.

His face contorts and his mouth moves. Maybe a mute moaning. In response, we rock the mattress more aggressively.

As he continues to move his mouth, I think he is saying, "Kick me."

Confused by the request, I say, "Daniel, I'm not going to kick you."

He looks deep into my eyes and tries again. "No, kill me . . . kill me."

I am reliving a nightmare I had almost twenty years ago. In my

dream, Daniel was in what appeared to be a crib, although he had been out of the crib for a few years. The bed was engulfed in flames. I ran to pick him up, felt the heat as he asked, "Why am I so dry?"

When I awakened in the panic that follows a nightmare, the dream seemed important, so I wrote it down and self-consciously shared it with my husband the next morning. As I wrote, I felt impressed that Satan would try to physically destroy Daniel at some point in his life. A reassurance came that he would be preserved with the help of Heavenly Father and our support.

I put the single sheet of lined notebook paper into Daniel's baby book. In the intervening years, I read the dream occasionally, feeling a bit silly for holding on to it.

The dream echoes in my head now—the crib-like hospital bed, the heat radiating from his body, Daniel's words. I had no idea what the dream meant at the time, or even if it meant anything. I never imagined that the dream was a literal premonition of the future.

Remembering the dream, I can name the overwhelming evil of this darkness.

My heart pounds as I fiercely attack the mattress in my alarm. I pray silently for the help I had been assured would be there. In walks Daniel's friend, Adrian. He doesn't even have a chance to speak before I say, "Daniel needs a blessing and you need to rebuke the evil when you bless him."

Adrian and Daniel have been close friends for years, enjoying wakeboarding, intellectual pursuits, and spiritual conversations. He has been our most frequent visitor and has given Daniel several blessings.

Taking in the anguish on his friend's face and the panic on mine, this faithful young man does not question my peculiar request. He just reaches for the consecrated oil, places his hands on Daniel's head, and proceeds to bless his friend.

The words are gentle yet powerful in dispelling the darkness. While Adrian continues with assurances of divine help, Daniel's face relaxes as he gains control over the pain and fever.

Once the blessing is over, I mutter something about a dream. Adrian and Tricia probably think I have lost my mind. But I feel lu-

cid for the first time since this all began. We are going to survive this hell.

* * *

Just as I have been prepared for this trial, so has Daniel. When Daniel was first placed on the ventilator, the breathing tube went through his mouth, leaving him unable to move anything but his eyes. Using an alphabet chart provided by a therapist, Daniel painstakingly blinked out a request for me to read Isaiah 53 to him.

As I read, Daniel closed his eyes and mouthed each word. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . " He seemed to know those compelling, familiar words perfectly. I was amazed. Later I share the incident with Tricia, and she says he did the same thing with her.

Once Daniel's breathing tube is transferred from his mouth to the hollow of his throat and communication is easier, we ask him about it. Shortly before his accident, he had felt prompted to memorize the entire chapter.

Every day Daniel insists I read the scriptures to him. The first thing he wants me to read is all the accounts of the last few days of the Savior's life found in the four Gospels.

Then one morning he wakes up and mouths again, "I had a dream." He is adamant that I write it down exactly as he tells it.

In his dream, Daniel is in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before the Savior's crucifixion. After the Savior finishes His prayer, Daniel approaches and offers to help. The Savior declines and says everything will be all right.

Daniel patiently struggles to make us understand his words. His eyes have a faraway gaze, as if he is still watching a distant, compelling scene.

While Daniel gains strength from the accounts of the final hours of the Savior's mortal ministry, I find myself drawn to the stories of healing. I never noticed how many people were healed of "a palsy," the Biblical term for paralysis.

As I reread one of the stories, I distinctly remember being five years old, walking into my Sunday School class at the Methodist Church I grew up in. A big washing-machine box sits in the mid-

dle of the room. Someone has cut holes for a door and a window, and made cardboard steps on the outside. We take turns going in and out. Then the teacher lets us use big brushes to paint the box white.

When we finish, we sit on the floor in front of our house. The teacher tells us that this is the kind of house people lived in in Jesus's time. The people climbed the steps to go on the roof of the house, as if it were another room.

Then the teacher tells us a story about a man who couldn't move. He was paralyzed. His friends carried him on some blankets so he could go see Jesus. But Jesus was inside a house, and there were so many people that they couldn't get close to him. His friends decided to climb up on the roof and make a hole so they could lower him right to where Jesus was. When Jesus saw him, He told the man to pick up his blankets and walk home.

Now, sitting beside Daniel and rereading that familiar story, I feel the tears well when I think of the actions of the four friends. I imagine they are all young and strong, grieving for their companion's injury. I know the young people who have visited Daniel would do that for him.

Searching for inspiration, I stop at the Savior's words, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:5). After the Savior perceives that the scribes think He is committing blasphemy, He tells the man to take up his bed and walk. The whole point of the healing was that Jesus could forgive sin. He could spiritually heal the man.

As a child, the only thing I could understand was the physical healing. I want Daniel to be healed physically. I ache for it. But maybe the only healing we are going to get is the spiritual kind. Am I capable of understanding more now? Do I have the faith to accept whatever healing the Lord grants Daniel?

* * *

Daniel spends one month at the University of Utah Medical Center and is then transferred to Craig Hospital, near our home in the Denver area. After three-and-a-half months of rehab, he is strong enough to breathe on his own, swallow, speak, and sit in a wheelchair all day. He has learned to drive a sip-and-puff wheelchair, and use a mouth-stick to operate a computer and turn the

pages of a book, if the book will cooperate. I have learned to do everything else for his unresponsive body.

He begins to order me around like his personal slave, and the nurses smile and say, "That's good. He's learning to direct his care."

When his new wheelchair arrives, the occupational therapist has us put him in it so she can adjust the fit. I don't even think about charging the battery at night—it's brand new, after all. So the next day when Daniel fusses at me because the battery is low, I am confused.

"I didn't know I needed to plug it in, Daniel," I say in self-defense.

"New batteries always have to be charged," he barks, with his newly regained voice. "Why didn't you do it last night? Just put me in my old chair."

I can tell he is adamant about getting back in his old chair, so I start to position the old chair closer to the electric ceiling lift. As I reach for the sling, he orders, "Just use the slide board."

"It's too hard for me to do it by myself. Why don't I just use the lift?"

"No," he interrupts. "I know you can do it. It's not that hard." He's starting to get upset.

"If I do a slide board transfer, I have to take the arms off the chairs. It's so much trouble. I'm not going to do it. I'll use the lift."

"No." His voice is quiet, but the intensity is unmistakable.

"Okay then, I'll plug the chair in while I go get your lunch."

"No. You know these batteries need to be plugged in over night."

"No, I didn't know that. Can't we just get a partial charge to make it through the day? I could plug the chair in and . . ."

"No. You will not leave me plugged in." His face contorts with rage. "How would you like it if someone tied you up in a chair and left you in a room with the door closed? That's what it's like. You wouldn't like that."

"I'll leave the door open," I say, trying to reason with him.

Just as my husband walks in, Daniel really starts to flip. "No. I decide how it's going to be. I decide what's going to happen to my body. I have my Social Security money and I decide. This is my space. Get out."

"Okay." I pause, then walk over and pick up my purse, tears welling up in my eyes. "He hasn't had lunch yet," I tell Ted as I walk out of the room.

When I return a few hours later, Daniel is distant and pointedly asks Ted to help him when he needs something.

Fine by me.

The psychologist has told us that patients need to feel they are in charge of their own lives. I don't think Daniel has the right to order me around, but he does have the right to make his own decisions.

* * *

On the first anniversary of his accident, Daniel and I are in Provo, living in married student housing, ready for the start of summer classes. He is taking only one class so he can figure out how to do his assignments with a computer and a mouth-stick.

A home health aide gets Daniel up in the morning and puts him to bed every night. Medicaid programs should provide enough care for Daniel to manage on his own with help from friends and Tricia, if I can just get everything arranged.

At first, Daniel is glad to be back at school and appreciative of the fact that I am helping. As progress drags and his surroundings remind him of his previous life, he becomes impatient with me. Except for the one hour he is in class Monday through Thursday, we spend almost every waking moment together.

I feed him his meals, spilling food on him with great regularity. Fastidious Daniel finds that annoying.

I have a hard time eating while I'm feeding him, so I usually eat after he is finished, making chewing sounds as I eat. Observant Daniel finds that annoying.

My breath stinks, I talk too near his ear, I don't scratch his head the right way, I breathe too loudly. Sensitive Daniel finds all of this annoying.

Whenever I unintentionally do one of the many things that bother Daniel, I am certain he is rolling his eyes and huffing. Before he even has time to react, I am offering disingenuous apologies, fully equipped with the same attitude I am sure he is about to give me.

He also never thanks me for anything I do. When I call this to

his attention, he replies with typical Daniel logic, "All the courtesy words are just a waste of time. Most of the time people don't mean it anyway. When people say 'please' or 'thank you' or 'you're welcome,' it doesn't make any difference to me. I shouldn't have to say anything. You should already know I appreciate what you do."

"Well, not everybody feels the same way you do. Even a dog likes to hear, 'Good dog.' And I like to be told 'thank you.'"

After two months in the tiny apartment, just before I strangle Daniel and just before he rolls over me with his 525-pound wheelchair, I announce I will be leaving for the weekend. His buddies are always around on the weekends, so they can make sure he's fed. I will return Monday morning. In the event of an emergency, he may call my cell phone. I feel angry enough that I contemplate driving all the way home to Colorado and not coming back, but I decide to just spend the weekend at my sister's house, half an hour away.

By the time I return Monday morning, I have a fresh store of patience, and Daniel has decided other people are even more annoying than his mother. When I do one of the endless small things I do every day for him, he offers me a self-conscious, "Thanks." It's as sincere as an apology two squabbling siblings are required to make, but at least he is trying.

I want him to know I noticed his effort, but he hates it if I gush, so I quietly say, "You're welcome."

* * *

Sixteen months after the accident, I drive back to Colorado, leaving Daniel in Provo. For the first time since the accident, I am more than a short drive away. With the help of the home health agency, his roommates, his classmates, his ward, and Tricia, Daniel is anxious to see if he can manage without me.

As the semester progresses, Daniel becomes more comfortable and excels in his classes. The frequency of phone calls becomes my barometer to determine when he needs me to come. A week or two at the beginning of each semester coupled with a brief visit every six weeks or so proves to be all the additional support he needs from me.

By the end of the winter session, he is placed on a Medicaid program that allows him to hire people to do his laundry, house-

keeping, and meals. My visits are less frequent and less work. Daniel is happy because he likes being independent, not the ward service project. Independence for a quadriplegic means you don't have to rely on family and friends for your care—you have staff you are able to manage by yourself.

During his fourth semester back at school, Daniel loses his emergency support system when Tricia leaves for an internship in D.C. Ted and I listen to one of Daniel's frequent calls on the speaker phone.

When Ted asks how everything is going, Daniel says, "It's like death by a thousand cuts. I'm having weird electrical problems on the van, and no one can figure it out. I can't get my last textbook in the correct format, so I'm behind in my assignments. One of the guys on my team isn't doing his part. My wireless network went down. One of my roommates is weird, and I have a urinary tract infection. It's just too frustrating. I can handle everything; I just can't handle everything at once."

This is as close as he will come to telling us he needs help. Before the accident, we would have said, "I'm sure you can handle it."

Now my eyes meet Ted's, and he nods when I say, "I'll be there the day after tomorrow."

I drive over and take the van to the auto electric place, pick up the parts to fix the wireless connection, make multiple trips to the disability office to get his textbook, feed him some favorite dinners, bake cookies. While reporting all of the things I have accomplished, I massage his neck and scratch his head. He very sincerely says, "Thanks, Mom."

"You're welcome." I don't know how he figured it out, but he knows how to do it now.

I notice he now regularly says, "Thanks, buddy," when his friends and attendants help him. Thanking his friends is not surprising, but thanking his attendants is huge. His old philosophy was that it was their job to help him, so why should he thank them for doing what they are paid to do? The money should be thanks enough.

He is accomplishing so much and changing in ways that are imperceptible to everyone except immediate family. I don't know how he does it.

* * *

This morning I dreamed about Daniel. In my dream, the old Daniel drives up in a car. As he gets out, he stoops a little, moves his head from side to side, reaches up to massage his neck. No words are spoken, but I have a vague recollection of some incident years ago when he hurt his neck. He wants me to go inside and get one of his shirts for him. That's the whole dream.

I awaken after the dream and lie in bed relishing what I have seen—the ghost of the old Daniel. Unlike when he is seated in his chair, I had to look up into his face. And he moved in that old familiar way.

I wonder if the ghost will visit me again. As years pass, will he age?

I've been right there as the new Daniel has evolved. I like who he has become, but I still miss who he was. I suppose most parents struggle with letting go of those times when their children were happy and successful. Clinging to babyhood when a toddler becomes a terrible two. Clinging to childhood when they enter their teens. Selectively remembering simpler times when trials come.

A part of me wants to make life easier, remove any negative consequences from my children's paths—capture perfect happiness and hand it to them. A snapshot would be the best I could do, for the perfect moment lasts only a moment. But even professionals must retouch photos marred by less-than-perfect lighting, a few crazy hairs, a stain on a shirt, a patch of brown grass. I don't need to airbrush the look of love as siblings hug each other or reject the gleeful faces obscured by the fast-falling snow on the mountain. Maybe the secret is to look past the flaws to see possibilities and happiness.

* * *

Almost four years after his accident, Daniel is the first person to cross the stage at graduation, receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees in accountancy. He now attends law school at Duke.

The only people who treat Daniel differently are strangers, usually the clerks and waiters who look to the nearest able-bodied person for answers to their questions. When they ask me a question they should be asking him, I just turn to Daniel and wait for him to talk.

the god of small things

Reed Richards

He is, perhaps, the same god as the God of Big Things,
but not meant to be worshipped or to run your life,
only to annoy you or not annoy you,
whichever the script calls for.
Take baseball, for instance, and the way
some boys play as if their life depended on it.
It's the god of small things
who sends the ball through the neighbor's window,
and the red-faced neighbor to your parents' front door,
and you to bed with a red bottom.
But consider baseball, still, and the way
some other boys play it
as if everything had wings,
even the dust that flies up from their glove
when they make a spectacular catch
in a batter-up game in the pasture next to the mink sheds.
Those boys play as if their life
depended on it beyond the dying of sunlight
and the moon cresting the eastern mountains like a birth.
Their lives depend on it.
And the God of Big Things is running their lives
and sending them to bed with dreams
that the moon is a baseball, a long fly ball
that they have hit clean across the sky
over the bleachers in the west.

Sheets

Russell Moorehead

As my head rests
on your sleeping back
I begin to question
certain laws of nature
and the actual shape
of the Earth.

There is a need now
for renaming a few
stars in our sky,
we could use numerology
or Esperanto.

If book burnings
will make room for
the two of us
then I'm all for them.

I tuck the sheets around you.
Entire religions have been
based on less.

Untitled

My next poem
will have gunfire

bank tellers and
fortune tellers
will all "pack heat"

My next poem
will have seeing-eye dogs
that can translate Español

also a lunch break
a guitar solo
a conversation with God
and Her husband

My next poem will probably
not be published either

But it will have
an anti-hero
stuntmen
stuntwomen
a laugh track
good sex
and a dramatic pause

In my next poem
the Boy Scouts will
sack the city at night
using hatchets and pocket knives
when they need to

From Outside the Settlement

Darren M. Edwards

but here Death is already chalking the doors with crosses,
and calling the ravens, and the ravens are flying in.
–Anna Akhmatova, translated by Stanley Kunitz

It's hard to balance
the pads of your feet on a railing.
He hadn't thought of that
until just now,
with the sound of water
skirting below him.
He'd thought of his people,
of belonging,
the way smiles are like sign posts
marking the miles home
but the mileage always reads
the same,
marked in zeros
as big as their eyes.
And he'd thought of the men
up north that would soon
be circling in preparation
like ravens.

Just south, his people
would be setting out dinner now.
He knew there would be
potatoes, carrots,
and venison.
He knew the children
would play games
beneath the table,
little fingers tracing pictures

they found in the patterns of the floor.
There would be words of prayer
and the low vibrating hum of hymns.
He knew this.
He knew that after the evening sermon,
after parents let go of children
to hold onto each other
beneath blankets
stitched in a history
of always hoping
the future might contain
the light their god had promised them—
instead of clouds and ash,
tar, torn flesh,
and shallow hurried graves—
there would be dreams
of fields and sky
and harvests without retreat.

He also knew he'd grown too weary,
knew he held no more space inside himself
for prophecies or light,
ghosts or grace,
gods or the doleful smiles
of this people.
He knew
behind the clouds
there was no light,
just the flap and crack
of wings
and the ravens flying in.

Contingency #4: White Out

James Best

If you get snowed in, locked into your home
so long the food runs out,
I suggest peeling the walls to find the mice,
or scouring the attics for nests, for beehives.
And when those are gone, even the cold bodies
of ants which taste like raw tabouli,
and you've dug through the crevices, the cushions,
maybe even boiled your leather jacket,
turn next to the wood.
Try the well traveled.
Sauté the banisters, rich with the proteins
of years of hands and arms.
It will taste like strangers and parts of you.
It will warm like comfort food.
After the walkways, after the desks and brooms,
save the dining table for last.
Scrape at its surface softly, like a butter dish—
years of meals shared sunk into its lumber,
waiting for you like a switchboard of memories.

Our First Home Has Forgotten Us

All our dinner smells have long since mixed with the wind.
Our voices echoed down these halls receding
by halves with every reverb
till even now, if our ears were small enough,
we might hear them tumble back to us
softer than dandelion fur.

This place is the sum of our forgottens.
But the windows don't wink to see us back.
These trees are no longer our parents; the ground no more our bed.
Firsts and lasts were leaves burned the hour we left.

The Earth and all its cousins
fall slowly through the dark
toward some center,
revisiting nothing.

How can we not wonder if our old dreams don't drip into theirs?
A girl weeping for a doll she didn't own.
A mother finds mirrors full of old faces.
A father, watching his kids in the backyard,
calls the wrong name, even your name,
and hears the house creak like a sigh.

Hurt or Make Afraid

Samuel Brown

We'll find the place which God for us prepared,
In His house full of light,
Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;
There the saints will shine bright.
–William Clayton, 1846

I'm cold. We've been walking for a week now, and my feet are long past feeling, but knowing that they're dying inside my numb skin makes it hard to continue walking. The wheels on the wagon keep wickety-wicking with a lurch when they hit a patch of ruts filled with ice. My sister Cordelia doesn't seem to notice, but she is the practical one. Head straight on her shoulders.

"Diana Pratt," she says, "You mustn't drag your feet."

I answer, "I'm not dragging my feet. I am pondering."

She says, "It's not a time for thinking, Diana, it is a time for great actions. God is taking us whither He commands. When we reach the Rocky Mountains, we'll be safe; but until then, we have to keep walking. And you can't walk if you wear your feet to the bone. You have pondered overmuch of late."

We don't go far on any given day—or even any week. The oxen mostly shiver and stumble. I watch the yoke bite into their skin, and they tense their withers, but that doesn't help because the wood bar keeps chewing on their hides. I tell Brother Andrew to fix it, but his smile is false, and he is in no spirit to deal with an ox. His wife is sick in the back of their wagon. Her face is green with disease, and her belly is full with child. I suppose it's his. The child won't live long out here. It's so cold my eyes hurt when I try to close them.

We were happy two years ago. The Prophet Joseph, his eyes as blue as the sky, was still alive. We felt his presence in all Nauvoo. He always said good things to me, to all of us. Very good things. He understood me better than my own father.

That was before they murdered him, an innocent lamb at the

slaughter. While he was calling out to God for their salvation in the jail they locked him in. The same men with their Herods and their Pilates who crucified Jesus.

Joseph liked the way that I knit. I made a blanket for his baby, the little one with the red hair and the curl on his upper lip that Brother Joseph said was where Jesus kissed him in heaven where we lived before we were born. With God by our side. He let me touch the baby when I gave him the blanket, and I rubbed my finger across that lip. His lip was the way my baby's skin will be, soft and not sticky.

I feel him inside me like a sack of potatoes, always moving about. Sometimes he pinches me and I feel it burning down my legs. Once in a while, when I cry from the pain, Brother Andrew lets me ride with his wife, but the stench of sickness is too much, and so I walk and bite my tongue. We two and our large burthens do not fit in the back of a single wagon. I want sometimes to stretch out on the back of the oxen and have angels bear me up, but Brother Andrew glares at me when I get too close to the animals, as if he can see my heart. For I can see his, and there is darkness inside him.

I put my hand on the flank of his ox. Its flesh is warm underneath the hide, and I can feel the muscles move, like I feel my baby move through the thin skin of my belly. Both of them are soothing, and I walk easier.

Sister Patty, the healer for our camp, says the baby is coming soon, that my travails will soon be over. It's almost ten months since I had my last blood: I've counted every full moon. Sometimes the almanac doesn't say all, and we need to wait for the moon to tell us where time is passing to. The moon who pursues me by day is so white that it blinds me at night. Right now time is passing to the West.

I can't sleep at night anymore; the baby pushes and squirms so. I feel as if there is something else inside me, and it frightens me. Who is he? Does he belong to me? Will he remember his father? I wish that he were still here, but he's gone, and there's nothing I can do about it. There is talk that you can find a new husband among the priesthood if you're willing to be a spiritual wife who lives the new and everlasting covenant. Brother Andrew could never save his first wife, let alone an extra. If he were to ask,

I would never accept him unless the apostles commanded me. Brother Andrew's wife could never be spiritual, alone or with company. I don't think that her baby moves as much as Joseph does in my womb. My son shall be called Joseph, in honor of our martyred Prophet. I can feel his power inside me, and it is the spirit of a prophet.

I can feel the fallen Lamanites—Pawnee here—just beyond our vision, hiding in the tall grass. Their evil spirits send cursings to our camp like a pestilence of flies and worms and clouds of smoke. I tell our captain, Brother Benjamin, "The Lord is revealing the thoughts of our enemies to me. I have had a vision and must make a prophecy to you."

He smiles at me and rises up in his coat, as if he is trying to fill it with the Lord's counsel. "What is the word of prophecy for us, Sister Diana? I have attempted to receive a revelation for our camp, but the Spirit has been quiet to me."

I tell him, because I trust him, everything that the Lord has shown me. "They plan to attack tonight. They know that we will not be prepared, and they wish to steal our food and break up our wagons so that we will not continue in their land. The Lord of Hosts desires us to know so that we may defend ourselves."

He is more frightened than he should be when the Lord has spoken, and he steps back from me. I wait for him to speak as he considers my prophecy slowly, too slowly. "Sister Diana, I bless you in the name of the Lord for your revelation. We will make a wagon circle early, and all the brothers will take up their weapons. The Lord will protect us against our enemies according to the measure of our faith." He pats my shoulder to tell me that he has heard, and I agree.

As the sun disappears, we pull the wagons into our circle. I can see the white prairies through the spokes of the wheel, pie pieces of the dark world outside that you would never want to eat, no matter how much your baby shakes when your stomach rumbles. We gather our bedding in the middle of the camp, and we sisters hold together in the center of it. I feel Cordelia's warmth, and I am glad. Her spirit is comforting and close; I know that, while she is with me, I will be safe. The brothers have their backs to us and are facing out, looking into the night. One of them doesn't move

at all—he's so intent on catching sight of a Lamanite. The Spirit does not leave me as they watch. I know that the revelation is true and that the Lord will bless us for heeding his words. Baby Joseph inside me feels the Spirit too, and he squeezes my womb. The Spirit stings, and I have to gasp, but I know that it is true.

A gun fires, and all the women moan in fear. Except me. I cannot moan because the Spirit is so strong in my womb that it is making my loins' fruit the heir of the Lord's revelation. The men's backs are angry, I can see, and they are whispering our fate to each other. I want to hear what they are saying, but I cannot listen because of my pains.

Two more shots fire into the night, and my sister touches my shoulder. I whisper to her, "I think it's my time. The Lord wants me to present his child to the world and protect it within the holy circle of our camp."

She seems more frightened than she ought. "Sister Diana, how are the pains? Are they coming fast apart, or do you rest between them?"

I'm having a pain so I can't answer her, can't talk, can't say anything but the pain. When I'm ready to answer, a pain has started again, and Cordelia understands what I would have said if I could. She has always been able to know me. She crouches and moves to the other side of the women to summon Sister Patty. They crawl back over the pile of us like wolves, and I see their breath in clouds from their mouths. She reaches out to me, and I enjoy the touch of her warm skin on my belly. When she touches me, I feel a whooshing and the quilt I'm on is wet and warm for a moment. She strokes my belly, and her gentle hand warms my insides.

"Sister Diana, your waters have broke, and you're laboring even as we lie here. I won't let you alone, but I need you not to make a noise. There are Indians and bandits out, and they are vexing the brethren."

I smile at her, "The Spirit revealed that to me, and I am at peace. The Lord will stay my voice from crying."

She has respect in her eyes. "Sister Diana, you are a woman of God."

I like her. I say, "Thank you, Sister Patty. It is God's blessing that we have a healer like you to keep the Spirit with us during our labors." I'm surprised at how warm her hands are despite the

cold. She places one inside me, and it's only prayers and God's grace that keep me from crying out. The pain of her hand is near the worst of my life. Even warm, it's too much to bear, and against my will and judgment, I push her hips with my feet. She falls back into the cold ground, rolling over her bottom onto her back. She knows that I didn't mean it; I can see it clear as day in her face, and I try to tell her with words, but another pain is upon me. By the time it's over, she is at my ear. "We're not ready to push yet, Sister Diana. Just let the Lord prepare you for delivering, and then we'll push all you can figure out to do."

We lie together, her arm across the top of my chest. I do not like to be touched right now, but Sister Patty is so kind that I force myself not to notice. Each time I think it's beyond my power to endure, I have another pain, and I can't feel her touching.

The brothers fire again, and between pains I hear them gathering near the center of the camp. Cordelia leaves to see what's happening with the Lamanites. Several pains pass, and she's back to tell the rest of us, "No one is hurt, but Brother Andrew is sure he saw one of the Pawnee warriors hiding in the grass just beyond the reach of his eyesight. He thinks he might have wounded him, so the brethren are preparing for an attack of vengeance."

I see so clearly that I'm able to talk even though I have a pain. My Joseph has strengthened the gift of prophecy from within my womb. "It is as the Lord has revealed to us. If we will obey his revelation, we shall not suffer."

Sister Patty knows I am right. She tells all of us, "Sister Diana has the spirit of prophecy. It is the Lord speaking through her."

I start to feel a pressure, like someone has placed a wagon wheel inside my private parts, and I want to remove it out of my body more than anything I have ever wanted in my life. My desire is stronger than hunger, and I have to strain to get it out of my body. I push so hard I cannot breathe. Sister Patty doesn't try to put a hand back in me, she just sees me pushing and tries to help. She rubs my back and puts her hand against my feet until I feel that I am a hen on her back with all her feathers plucked out.

My hips start to crack as if my private parts are a tree breaking under the weight of a storm. Still I push. I can't not push. Sister Patty is between my legs, hunched over, studying my womanly

parts. I think she is touching me, but the feeling is too spread out. If her hand holds little Joseph, I cannot say.

Then there is peace. Quiet like the prairie at dawn. I have not even grunted: the Spirit stayed my complaints, and I pushed with it. Sister Patty's rubbing Joseph with a fur blanket, and he cries for vengeance against our enemies. One of the brethren shoots again, and I feel in my heart that the ball has buried itself in the chest of a Pawnee that hungers for our death. I feel another pain, and my afterbirth comes free. They leave it on the frosted ground, a bloody heap of dead slugs and worms. I want to hold Baby Joseph tight and adore him. His nostrils are wide open as he cries, and they are as the archangel's trumpets to me. I see his father's face in his and know that he lives on in our son.

Sister Patty stays by my waist, and Cordelia is at my side. She breathes in my ear, her voice full of pride, "The Lord has blessed us with a daughter for our family. She is my first niece, and she is beautiful, as pure as the driven snow."

I push Joseph away and look at his privacy, where I cannot find his manly member. I am angry at Sister Patty for circumcising him against my will, and that frightens her. "Where is his boyhood, Sister Patty? Where have you put his manhood?"

She tries to explain, tries to hide what she has done. "I have done nothing, Sister Diana. The Lord has blessed you with a daughter, and who are we to doubt the hand of God?"

Cordelia has thus given a name to her sin. She has not only doubted God's hand, but she has stolen his finger from Joseph's loins. I can do no honor to our beloved Prophet if I have no son, and Sister Patty has taken him from me. I push the baby into her arms. "Put him back together. Make him whole again, Sister Patty. In the name of the Lord." She holds him tight, and I roll over with my hands between my legs until my shoulder is under the blankets. A shiver starts in my belly but hasn't the power to reach my arms or legs. I can feel them staring at me, plotting against me, trying to steal the little Joseph that God gave me. Cordelia is touching the shoulder I have placed in the air, but I realize that she helped Sister Patty do what she has done. I push her away, away to see after her wounded nephew.

Not having him on my chest makes me colder, and I hear them holding him tightly against theirs. The Lord reveals to me that they

will never confess their sin, and I can only make them angry if I do not agree, so I will call him Josephine when others are watching and in my heart of hearts I'll always know that he is my Joseph.

There is fear in my sister's eyes, and I know that her mind is on the Pawnee around about us. There has been no gunshot since the one that marked Joseph's birth, and I think the men are growing tired. I feel around me the light that means the dawn will soon bring warmth back to the air, and I thank God that we have survived the night. Through Baby Joseph, we have kept the Pawnee away, no matter the false and fruitless courage of Brother Andrew and his musket.

The milk soaks through the cloths I put against my breasts, and it freezes to the front of my dress. I feel it slippery and cold when I draw my hand up to bring Joseph to the drink that falls from my nipple. I have to rub the icy bosom of my dress to make the milk melt again, and the rubbing makes more milk trickle out, as if I have stepped into a swamp. I believe the scriptures are in error about the land of milk and honey. There is no paradise in the milk that floods my bosom. But Baby Joseph is hungry, and there is nothing he can eat but me.

I lie awake with him at night, as he watches me with big eyes and his father's fine nose. I know that his hair will be full and blond, though now it is brown and thin. We are safe when he rests in the center of my bosom.

On Joseph's fourth night, I receive another vision. In it, I hear the Lamanites murmuring, and they are jealous of us. They laugh that the Illinois mobocrats attacked us to our ruination. They only wish they had been there to shoot our beloved Prophets through the chest with their poisoned arrows. They wanted their death for themselves, and the only way they will rest is to have our blood. They would come inside our camp and destroy us.

I tuck Baby Joseph under Cordelia's sleeping arm and trust that she will keep him safe. She stirs but still sleeps, and I point downward, "Watch him while I meet with Brother Benjamin."

He is still awake. I think sometimes that Brother Benjamin never sleeps, the weight of our suffering is so heavy upon him. I wish that there was something more I could do, but all the Lord

has seen fit for me is to warn him when the enemies of the Lord are upon us.

I tell him the plans of the Lamanites. He knows that they are a slippery people, to be feared, not trusted. By the morning after Joseph's birth, they had scattered without a trace, leaving no footprints in the hard ground. I see that this time they will escape us again, but I know that we must pursue them. The Lord has revealed to me that the Pawnee are our Jericho. If we shall destroy them, we must blow the horns of Jesus's strength until they crumble. I tell Brother Benjamin, "You are our Joshua to lead us to the Promised Land."

He sends Brother Andrew and two other brothers into the night in secret with a gun and a prayer. He blesses them—both hands on their heads—that they will find the enemy, and our camp will be safe again. I watch Brother Andrew disappear into the night, his head disappearing before the rest of his body, and I peek into the back of his wagon, where his green wife lies. He will not find the Lamanites. He has squandered his soul on a wife who listens more to the discouragement of the Devil than the revelations of the Lord.

At breakfast I hear whispers among the camp that the brethren found nothing on their mission and that the Spirit wasn't in it, but Brother Andrew refuses to speak to me. He leans up against the back of his wagon when we stop and looks in at his wife. She's not green anymore, but the color of rotting leaves. Her skin is not healthy, and I suspect that she'll soon be too sick to continue our trail of sadness. I see that she is jealous of my Joseph. She looks at him with longing smeared across her face. I can see the way it makes her eyes slippery. Sometimes I think the only thing she beholds is the jealousy she feels for my sweet Joseph. Her babe will never be born; the Lord has made that known to me.

Brother Andrew's wife has died, and the whole camp is mourning. They say that another of the faithful servants of the Lord has fallen by the wayside as we make our journey to our New Zion in the Rocky Mountains. I say she would have died even if we stayed in Illinois and didn't keep moving on. Going west would not have saved her. Brother Andrew has some brethren help him, and they bury her in an unmarked grave so that the Lamanites won't dig her

up. I don't say anything, but I know that they are right. The Devil is all about and would vex both the living and the dead.

Her death means a grave for two, the tiny one still inside her. When they could see she was dying, there wasn't a soul didn't think about whether they needed to pull the baby out of the inside just like they say Julius Caesar escaped the womb, but there wasn't a brother bold enough to do it, and Sister Patty would not act without the priesthood.

I was the first to find her. Brother Andrew was sleeping with his arm over her side. I could see she wasn't breathing, and her face looked no warmer than the inside of the wagon she rides in. I told no one. My Joseph doesn't mind. He sensed from the start that her new child was no one he needed to be reared with.

We're moving again. Now that Brother Andrew's wife is gone, there's room for me in his wagon, and I'm grateful for the chance to rest. I could tell that he would rather have the wagon empty than suffer me to ride in it, but I saw the way that Brother Benjamin talked to him, and now I can ride all that I need, whatever Brother Andrew's malice toward me. My feet feel much better now. The red wet furrows on the soles of my feet have started to heal.

Joseph rides with me in the wagon, and we dream dreams. His body contains the pure intelligence from before he was born; and when I look in his face, I can see the works of God. After a week of our new routine, Brother Benjamin invites me to his wagon, and I am proud to move to the front of the train.

Baby Joseph tells me that there is a mob of Missourians and men from Carthage coming; and while he speaks, I see the Prophet Joseph in vision, standing above him. He is as fair and strong as the day he died: strong shoulders, the twitch of his nose, his perfect blond hair. He is grateful for baby Joseph. He says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth, and blessed art thou, Sister Diana, for thou hast done honor to the least of these my brethren by the sacred name of Joseph the Seer."

He holds out a hand to my cheek, and I take it in both hands, so that I can rub the back of it across the chapped skin on my face. There are no rings on his fingers, and his hands are filled with en-

ergy. My whole body is warm, and I can feel that Baby Joseph is warming through me as he rests between my legs.

He continues to teach me: "Sister Diana, I have a message for you, and for you alone. You have been blessed with a special sight, and you are the vessel to whom the Lord reveals that there are apostates among you, men who have sold their souls to the Devil and are conspiring with the Indians and Missourians."

"I know who they are, Brother Joseph," I tell him.

He smiles at me as he did when he was alive, full of pride and full of love. "Sister Diana, you are right. The Spirit has shown me that they envy and fear you. They have tried to hide their true natures from you, but they shall not succeed, for the Adversary can never prevail against the Saints of God unless they are fallen, and there are fallen men in this camp." He starts to weep, the big drops of sorrow that he cried when Brother Patten died. I want to embrace him, but he steps away from me. I have to pick up Baby Joseph off the ground because he has slipped from my lap, but he doesn't mind. He is watching the Prophet with both of his tiny eyes.

"Only Brother Brigham remains true. I know his heart, and his heart does not waver. But, lo, even the heads of companies, captains of fifties and hundreds are seduced by the wiles of the Adversary." He walks closer, his tears dried, I think, by the heat from his white chest.

He disappears, and I am left with Baby Joseph asleep in my lap. His tiny wrinkles match the larger ones in my skirts. We both of us could hide something if we had to. The camp is still asleep, and no one bothers me when I make my way from Brother Benjamin's wagon to Brother Andrew's. The brethren have fallen deaf to the Lord's warnings.

Brother Andrew sleeps with his son Thomas now that I have left their wagon. Young Thomas rests in peace. This boy of ten years does not miss his mother, and he has no need to. I look at Baby Joseph and wonder whether he will miss me when I'm gone. He loves to drink from me, and he melts into my flesh when he sleeps, but that cannot last forever. I see Thomas curled up beside his father, and I want to believe that he loves him, but just one week ago, the son was under the mother's belly, and now he looks no different. As if his parents are one and the same. I want to be-

lieve that Joseph is not like Thomas, but I do not feel an assurance from the Lord.

Thomas doesn't move when I slip him away from his father, just a gentle push of my hand between his back and his father's stomach. I don't want them together when the Lord decrees his wrath. Brother Andrew wears his knife at his waist; but when he sleeps, he pushes it around to his back. I've watched him do it as he prepares to sleep, when he thinks no one is watching. It's not hard to remove it from the sheath he carries it in. The night is still and dark, and there is no reflection from the blade.

I know that the Devil can be stopped in his tracks sooner if I can get to his neck, but I'm afraid that he will awaken. I know that he's stronger than me. Even if by Nature he is a slight man, the spirit of the Devil has made him mighty. But the first shall be last and the last shall be first.

I know that my grandfather died a week after an angry bull pushed its horns through his stomach, so even if it doesn't happen right away, I can stop his horrible design to bring our company to ruin by placing the knife in his belly. Even in sleep, his body wears the mark of the Devil.

I have the knife in my hand, which is under the blanket that covers them, and Joseph slips from my other hand. He cries out startled as I catch him with my knee, but I slip, and the blanket rises, and then I see Brother Andrew rearing up like the many-headed dragon. I have to push out blindly to protect myself. There is warm, sticky blood on my hand, and then I feel his arms behind my neck, holding me firm. One hand holds my arm, covering it with blood while he squeezes until it hurts too much to hold the knife, and I let it drop. Baby Joseph has fallen to the ground and cries his fear to the entire camp. Tears cover my eyes, as I realize that I have failed the Lord and his Prophet, that my frailty has made the Lord's plan come to naught. My only hope is that Baby Joseph will be safe and that Brother Benjamin will know the language of prophecy. But my revelation makes me doubt that he will understand the messenger of light.

I see in blurred vision that Thomas has taken Baby Joseph and is comforting him. He has not been touched by the evil in his father, who drags me like a lamb to the slaughter toward Brother Benjamin's wagon. By now, the camp burns with activity, forgetting

the Indians who will see us. Lanterns are ablaze, and several of the brethren are prowling with guns. But it's all unclear to me because Brother Andrew is hurting me, and I am fighting with all the power that the Lord has given me. Two more brothers come to help, and I hear their low voices laughing, mocking me in their fear.

Brother Benjamin bears anger in his face, and I know that the spirit of darkness has taken possession of him also. Seeing him, I remember that the Prophet said as much when he gave me the vision.

The brethren pray together, asking what to do, and I prophesy in tongues to overcome the cries they are making to Satan, their Master. I'm not sure whether it is with my spiritual eyes, but I see Cordelia holding Baby Joseph, and I sense that, no matter what happens to me, he will be safe, and we will be safe through him. He shall be mighty unto the Lord. The tongues I speak are the pure language, and I know that the Lord and Father Adam can hear my cries. There is no one to interpret my tongues, but I know what they mean, and they are a prayer for mercy and deliverance.

The brethren wrap me tight in a quilt, like swaddling clothes, and young Thomas sits on my legs because I am kicking. Brother Benjamin puts his hands on my head and says, "By the Priesthood of Melchizedek and Abraham, and in the name of Jesus, I command the evil spirit to be gone from Sister Diana Pratt. You are not welcome in her body, and I command you to leave. I rebuke you." His voice is filled with devilish power.

His words become so large inside my head that I want to cry, but I know that it's the Devil wearing sheep's clothing, and inside he is the wolf he's always been, waiting for the next full moon to consume us upon his lusts. I focus, and the sounds slowly stop pounding inside my skull. I am quiet, and I watch the brethren. They have not let go of me; they keep digging their fingers like talons into my sinews. I stop moving entirely, and I feel them loosening their grip. I know that if I make a move they will kill me. I can see the Devil's anger filling their eyes like a cauldron of hate boiling over and scalding their faces.

"Sister Diana, are you free from the evil spirit?" asks Brother Benjamin, pretending that he is concerned. I can see that he knows in his eyes the lie he is making just so the others who have not yet succumbed will not suspect. I look around to see if the

Spirit will reach someone through my eyes, but their faces are all hollow. Brother Andrew limps, holding his deep red thigh, and he glares at me.

My voice is hoarse from holding in a scream, so I have to whisper. I try to pretend that I have calmed, but it's only by concentrating on my fingertips that I'm able to still the trembling. "Brother Benjamin, praise the Lord for his mercy, and may all of us forever stand true to the Lord Jesus Christ and Brother Joseph the Seer." I have the advantage over them because I am on the Lord's side and I can take His name and not in vain, and He will protect me.

I pretend that I'm rubbing my neck so that I can see who is around me, and there is a small hole in the mob. I cannot see Baby Joseph anywhere; and though it frightens me, I know I must seek out help from another camp of the Saints. Only they can free our camp from the evil that has possessed it. If I move forward, they will try to capture me, but if I go backwards, to the next camp, the camp that must be only two days behind us, I will not be pursued. People look more at ease after I praise the Lord and his Prophet.

I ask someone for water to drink; and while they cast about looking for something, I am already running. I feel the Spirit of the Lord inside every member of my body, and I run with the strength from my stomach pouring into my legs. My feet are burning with the Lord, and they push strong off the cold, hard ground. Brother Andrew's gritty voice calls out, "Let the Devil run," and I know there can be no prophet in his own country. In less than a moment, I am beyond the wagons, and though I hear pursuers I do not turn back. My bones are grinding as I push harder, faster, and the tears in my eyes are freezing to my stung cheeks. My breathing burns like I'm tasting fire, and I gasp, but the Lord is my protector, and the angel of mercy lifts me up on his wings, and I am running. The panting pounding of the evil men becomes invisible to me, and still I do not stop running.

It is dark now; and if it weren't the plains, I would not be able to run so fast. The stiff limbs of grass push hard against my shins, but I continue on. Before I'm aware it has happened, I'm on the ground, my toes screaming that I have caught them on one of the few rocks. My bones are not broken, and I spin myself around, as low as the grass against the cold earth. All is shadow, and I gulp as quietly as I can, so that they won't hear me.

I wait and wait. I feel the warmth draining from me into the ground. My breathing is quieter now, and I can hear that no one is bending the grass. I am free.

I stand up and start walking away from the light that is fading in the distance, though I'm not sure where the road lies. I know that I must find the road, or I will freeze unto death. When daylight comes I will find the road again, but now I must rest. I close my eyes, and I see Joseph's perfect face.

Ten Fictions about My Father

Nathan Robison

1

First he went down to Pappy's pasture. The pasture was a strip of marshy land down the hill from our house, sandwiched by the interstate and train tracks where Pappy kept his cows. My father shot some birds there: a male red-winged blackbird, a female red-winged blackbird, and a starling. Then he stuffed the birds. He didn't stuff them properly with the styrofoam molds Uncle Bart used. He slit the birds open with a pocket knife and took out the guts and packed them with sawdust. He closed them shut with safety pins and put them in Nana's freezer until he needed them for a class at school—you could do things like that for school back then.

He spent a lot of time at the pasture, watching cattails until he knew where one bird's territory ended and another's began. He took those frozen birds back with him and stuck them one at a time on the cattail tips. He stuck the female up. Female blackbirds are brown. A male blackbird perched next to her, singing and beating his wings. Next Dad perched the male. The live bird flew at it and knocked it to the ground and pecked it. The bird dove at the starling too, and my father. It dove at anything that came near.

I know because he caught it on 8 mm. One Monday night, he tacked a sheet to the wall for a screen and brought a projector home from the library. Monday nights were family night. My mother and I arranged the kitchen chairs in the living room like a theater. Dad cut the lights, and the white square on the wall became birds and reeds. Everything was a shade of yellow and silent but the projector puttered. Birds flew across our wall.

2

I bathed for Sunday on Saturday night. Sitting on the toilet seat, wrapped in a towel, I watched my father undress. He stepped into the bathwater my mother had drawn for me. The room was pleasantly hot with steam. The mirror had gone opaque. I stayed

in the bathroom after my bath because it was warm and my father was there. He covered himself with a pink washcloth and leaned back in the hot water.

"At work," he said, "they showed me a room stacked full of gold bars." My father worked for Kennecott that summer. It was the world's largest open-pit mine.

"Was it a big room?" I asked.

"Not very," he said. "Like the kitchen but taller."

I bathed only on Saturdays, but my father took a bath every night. He came home black as a chimney sweep, streaked on his face where the sweat had dripped. We didn't have a shower, and my father didn't shower with the other men at the mine.

"You have to walk into the mine naked," he said. "And out. They have locker rooms."

"Why?"

"They make you take off all your clothes and walk past guards," he said. "So no one tries to steal the gold."

I would have liked to see the room full of gold, but I didn't want anyone to see me naked.

"At the mine they make you strip coming and going," he said. "They make you wear company jumpsuits."

His breathing became even and slow. I thought maybe he was sleeping.

"What's a pinup?" I asked him.

"Where did you hear that?" he said.

I had overheard him tell my mother the night before about the pinups in the locker room. He had told her he pulled them down and flushed them when he was alone. I shrugged.

"It's a picture of a naked woman," he said.

"And they have them at the mine?"

"Yes," he said.

"Why do you take them down?"

"Because they're dirty," my father said.

My father was uncircumcised. His body was brown where the sun had touched it: the forearms, the face, the back of the neck. He'd worked only a few months at the mine. Otherwise he was ivory white and spotted by moles like constellations across his back. He scrubbed the dirt off his skin with the pink washcloth. He cleaned himself.

I thought everyone in the world must be cleaning themselves for Sunday. Nana and Pappy. My cousin Lee. And Jamie who wore skirts to class every day. You could see up to her panties when we all sat on the rug. They had little pink flowers on them or sometimes strawberries. I told Lee about it when I stayed over the weekend before.

"Sometimes you can see all the way up," I had said.

He laughed hysterically, but I hadn't meant it as a joke. He ran to tell his parents.

"You know what Marcus just said?" I came out to pull him back. "He said you could look at girls' panties when they sit down in dresses!" My Aunt Samantha's face reddened. I had taken Lee by the shirt and pulled him back to his room.

My father and I said nothing more. I watched him rub the smut from his arms and face. He scrubbed at his neck and hands. The color of charcoal came off his skin and stained the washcloth black. He wrung the cloth out and the bath water darkened until I could see nothing more of his body beneath the water. When he was finished scrubbing, my father pulled the plug and the tub began to drain. The dark water lapped at the hair stretching up his navel. It lapped his tanned arms and milk-white legs. It lapped at the sides of the tub and left behind a ring of gray scum.

But my father was clean.

3

I dreamed my father took me to look at the harpies. We walk down the lane in boots, snow up to my shins. The binoculars Pappy brought back from the army, from his time in Germany, hang around his neck.

"Take a look, son," he says. "There, roosting in the tops of those cottonwoods there."

I can see them already, without the glasses, their dark, heavy eagle bodies.

"Those talons would tear you to ribbons," he says.

I put the glasses to my eyes. The harpies are bare headed and bare breasted and I can see the thick vapor of their breathing. One has the head and hair of my mother's mother. I see my mother, too, and each of my aunts perched in the top of a line of

naked trees where they follow a brook bed through an empty field. I take a step toward them.

"That's far enough," he says. "That's close enough for now."

He takes the glasses for one last look, and then we turn for home.

4

I asked for a story to help me sleep, the one with the bear.

"Aren't you too old for stories?" my father asked.

"No," I said. I'd been telling myself stories as I fell asleep for years, on the nights he wasn't home. I continue to tell myself stories.

"On my mission—," he began. My father had been a Mormon missionary in Arkansas.

"Where were you?"

"You know I was a missionary in Arkansas."

"I know," I said. "I just like you to say it all."

"Okay. When I was on my mission in Arkansas, my companion and I got lost. We were trying to find the home of someone in our records, someone who had been baptized years before but no one had ever seen in church. We wandered into this little town in the Ozark Mountains that was having a fair. There were cows and goats in corrals and food on tables outside the little general store.

"At this fair there was a man with a bear. The bear was chained to a peg pounded into the ground. He wore a muzzle. That's a cage they put on an animal's mouth so he can't bite. They had filed his claws off. The man scratched a circle around the bear and told people they could pay some money to fight it. If they could fight the bear and not fall down by the time the man counted to ten they'd win some money."

"Did anyone fight the bear?" I asked.

"Yeah," he said. "Lots of people. Big guys, little guys. Almost everyone in the crowd. They'd been drinking a lot of moonshine."

"What's that?"

"Homemade whiskey," he said. "So, the first guy goes in. The bear looks small at first, like a scared cub, but when it stands up on its hind legs you can see he's bigger and stronger than a man. That old bear swings his paw and almost takes his whole head off. The bear man tugs on the chain so his bear will stop attacking. The next guy, same thing. Walks in, the bear swings his paw and

almost takes off his head. This guy stays awake, spits his teeth into the dust. Everyone who steps into the ring goes down. Bloody noses, bloody mouths, bloody ears. And then, one last guy steps up. He's big as a tree and bald. He takes off his shirt and enters the ring running, punching the bear in the chest. It surprises the bear, and it falls back a bit. And then, through the muzzle comes a low growl. The bear pulls on the muzzle and the straps break. It locks the guy in a bear hug, biting into his shoulder and neck, wrapping its arms around him and squeezing. It wasn't pretty."

"Did you fight the bear, Dad?"

"Of course not, son."

"Why not?"

"It would have killed me."

"Did the guy die?"

"No. I don't think so. Now go to sleep. Good night."

I said good night and closed my eyes. Dad left and closed the door behind him. In the dark I retold the story. I pictured Dad in a tie and a clean white shirt like the photos of missionaries they showed us in Primary every Sunday. He helps the other men pull their dead friends or brothers out of the ring. Some are missing arms. The bear chews a leg like it's a drumstick. There's blood everywhere but it doesn't matter, and Dad doesn't get any on him. He steps up and gives the bear man a coin. He walks over that line in the dust and puts his dukes up, too.

5

I loved Uncle Manny because Uncle Manny was the only Mormon I knew who drank beer;

Because according to family lore Uncle Manny disappeared at fourteen and surfaced three months later at Woodstock;

Because it's a long way from Utah to Woodstock;

Because Uncle Manny lived in a ramshackle Victorian with a screened-in porch beneath the I–15 viaduct;

Because Uncle Manny rigged a system of ropes and pulleys to keep his screen door closed in the wind and weighted it with a porcelain doll's head the size of a fishbowl;

Because Uncle Manny sported a Brigham Young beard but braided his hair like an Indian;

Because Navajo jewelry, dull silver and turquoise, hung at Un-

cle Manny's neck in a bolo noose and wrapped around his wrist like a handcuff;

Because there's a picture on Nana's wall of Uncle Manny in a tiger pit, and because the tigers are tiny with whiskers stiff like little brushes and the pit is in the Amsterdam zoo;

Because Uncle Manny saw tiger kittens in the Amsterdam zoo and dropped into the pit to pet them;

Because Uncle Manny gave me a cousin I could not defeat in Stratego;

Because Uncle Manny called us collect at night and lisped;

Because Uncle Manny nailed a cow pie to his wall;

Because Uncle Manny coined the word "doobie";

Because Manny was short for Helaman;

Because Uncle Manny modeled nude for art students in Salt Lake on the weekends;

Because my mother said Uncle Manny in his prime was better looking than my father in his prime;

Because Robert Redford resembled Uncle Manny and not the other way around;

Because Uncle Manny cut a cat out of carpet and threw it in his living room like a roadkill rug;

Because Uncle Manny could survive for weeks eating nothing but the fringe off his buckskin jacket;

Because Uncle Manny wore a three-inch scar named Henry on the base of his neck;

Because it was rumored that Henry was born in a saloon in Elko, Nevada;

Because Manny told Nana he would rather spend eternity stuffed like one of Bart's coyotes in a moldy old museum than up in heaven with us;

Because my father had all the same reasons to hate him.

6

I found Bobcat drooling in the shed out back. It was the first I'd seen of him all week. He was sprawled in the wagon and lifted his head when I came in, looked up at me, then laid his head back down.

"Dad," I said. "I found Bob. He didn't run away after all. He's out in the shed."

"Show me, son," he said.

I took him out back. Bob didn't look up this time. Viscous ropes of saliva hung from his mouth. They looked like icicles, and his breathing was slow and thick.

"Distemper," Dad said.

"What's that?"

"Stay here," he said.

I petted Bob between the ears as I waited. I traced the stripes on his head and face, stroked his white boots and took up each paw and squeezed to bring out the claws. I played with the end of his tail, found the one crooked bone there. I put my hand on his chest and let him move it up and down slowly. My father stepped back into the shed and picked the cat up by his middle.

"Go inside now," my father said; and I did, though I watched him from the front window as he crossed the street and took the path down the hill. Off the hill was thick with scrub oak and brush. Upstairs I found my mother dusting the room she shared with my father. The contents of each shelf of the bookcase were removed and set on the bed. An old dishrag made from a worn-out blouse hung from her back pocket as she transferred the items: the framed photos of me and my father, the shells she collected, a plaster bust of Beethoven. They all left shadows behind in the dust of the bookcase. She wiped down each shelf with the rag, and the shadows disappeared.

My father entered the room alone. He took a revolver from behind his back, the one Pappy had given him. He wrapped it in an old towel and placed it high on a shelf on his side of the closet.

"What did you need that for?" I asked.

7

Nana kept a shovel in the trunk so she could bury road kill. I had seen her stop once before going into the supermarket and take the shovel to the edge of the parking lot to scoop up a dead muskrat. She buried them if she could. If not she'd place them in a more natural setting, a setting she thought was more dignified, like down in a ditch or covered by tall grass. It was the way things were done. And if things got so bad there was only one way out, if an animal was alive and suffering, if a gull was found with a broken wing for example, you knew what you had to do.

My mother usually told the story. My father saw the red of tail-

lights stopped against the steep canyon wall. He pulled onto the shoulder in front of a crippled Chevy Nova. There was nearly always some calamity traveling through the dark of the canyon on the way home from Grandma's.

"You all right?" my father said. "Everything okay here?"

"No, everything is not okay," a man said. "Take a look around, mister."

The man cradled the head of a doe mule deer in his lap. A woman and two little girls sobbed in the back seat of the Nova. The deer moved only its eyes; blood bubbled in its nose and the blood that came out its mouth was thick and shiny like chocolate pudding.

"What's there to do?" the man said.

My father shook his head.

"I tell you what," the man said. "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to put this deer in my trunk and take her into town for a vet. Help me lift her."

My father didn't move. He turned occasionally at the passing of a car.

"That's crazy," he said. "She's gone. And besides, if you do that and get pulled over they'll fine you big time. That's a game animal."

"What difference does that make?" the man said. Spittle came out when he spoke; he couldn't disguise a shuddering sob. "Then what do you suggest?" He put a hand on the deer's belly. It looked bigger than normal. He felt it move. Or perhaps I'm confusing my father's story with another one. According to my mother, my father turned and opened the trunk of his car and returned with a tire iron. He let it hang at his side as he walked back to the man, like it weighed as much as the deer.

"Well?" the man said. "Well?"

8

9

His car was discovered on a pullout of the dirt road that ran along the top of the dike, out on the shore of the lake.

"Come and pick it up," the voice on the line said. "We have all the cars we want down here."

"How long can you give me?" I asked.

"If it's still here in two weeks," the voice said, "we scrap it."

"Okay," I said, and two weeks later I was pedaling my ten-speed up the viaduct that made a hump over the train tracks. The impound yard was bound by chain link and razor wire. I read the hand-painted sign on the gate. *Beware of dog,* it said, but it was noon and I didn't believe it. So I entered.

In the office, I said, "I'm here for that Caravan you have." The office was paneled with that cheap, dark-stained wood you see in basements of my neighborhood. It smelled of motor oil and smoky men.

"About time," the man said. He was balding in a way that made me think he'd lose everything. "Here are the keys. You old enough to drive?"

"Of course I am," I said.

"It's out there somewhere in back."

In the yard, a repository of lost souls the shape and color of cars, I walked the bike, glancing down the rows for the light gray minivan. I found it in a corner, unlocked the sliding door, and sat.

These are the contents of my father's abandoned car:

A scatter of library books on the back seat. *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, Pale Fire*, *The Garden of Forking Paths*. They were my books, and overdue. My father read only the scriptures. There was also a book of poems by Stafford. It was splayed open on the passenger seat. I didn't know my father liked poetry.

On the dash, a pressure gauge.

Behind the last seat, the flat-end scoop shovel.

There was a tire iron in back, too; and I found an empty fountain pen beneath the driver's seat.

Also beneath the seat, the .22 revolver in the leather gun belt, coiled like a snake. I took it out, popped open the cylinder. One hollow-point cartridge.

One hollow-point cartridge but no empty shells.

The ashtray was missing, usually filled with spare change.

Candy wrappers.

His wingtip shoes, stuffed with argyle socks.

A pair of slacks.

His blazer.

A blue oxford.

In the console cup-holder rested a paper cup with a lid, the

kind you get from a drive-through restaurant. Someone had pushed the *diet* tab in.

In the glove box, the final item: a note written in my father's clumsy hand. I will not tell you what it said. But if I ever left a note, it would say *We who burrow in filth every day may be forgiven perhaps the one sin that ends all sins*. It's from *Pale Fire*. Had he read it, I'm sure my father would have agreed.

The laughing call of a bird made me look up from the notecard in my hands. Through the windshield, perched in the reeds of the marsh beyond the yard, a red-winged blackbird sang a rusty dirge.

I put the books in a plastic sack and hung them from the tine of the ram's-horn handlebars. I slung the six gun over my shoulder like a *bandito*. I shut and locked the van. I threw the keys over the razor wire, into a slow green ditch on the edge of the reeds. The blackbird flew up. And then I flew, running alongside the ten-speed, a foot on the pedal, a bounce onto the seat, out the gate and over the viaduct into town. I looked back once on the way to the library.

10

I would like to say that my father is Odysseus, barefoot on Ogygia in his linen suit and a bronze sword slung over his shoulder.

I would write that he rounded Cape Bojador in a rickety caravel, traversed the Mountains of the Moon, and dipped himself seven times in the source of the Nile.

I would tell you my father keeps ground unicorn horn; he possesses a vial of ivory beach sand from the isle of Hy-Brasil. My father has seen the Mysterious or Inconstant Island, and he is building a summer home in Ultima Thule.

And so this is how I choose to remember him. He puts the pistol away and undresses on the pullout of the dike road and scrambles down the rough concrete sides of the dike and into the reeds. When he gets to the water, he is so graceful he doesn't startle the egrets. He enters the water high-stepping like a heron, barely rippling the water. In the arms of the dying lake, he swims. I watch until I can no longer see his body. I know he has crossed safely.

Not gone, but exploring.

Legacy of a Lesser-Known Apostle

Edward Leo Lyman. *Amasa Mason Lyman, Mormon Apostle and Apostate: A Study in Dedication*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009. 646 pp.; photographs, notes, bibliography, appendices, index. Cloth: $39.95; ISBN 13: 978–0–874809–4–04

Reviewed by Blair Dee Hodges

Amasa Mason Lyman (pronounced "AM-uh-see," according to phonetically spelled family documents) made many important contributions to the early Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Until now, however, the apostle-turned-apostate has remained a peripheral figure in much of Mormon historical literature. This new biography aims to provide a definitive treatment of Amasa's life. The slightly dry, chronological narrative weaves through aspects of Church history from its inception through the 1870s, describing early Mormon missionary efforts, the development of priesthood offices and Church administration, Zion's Camp, the Missouri persecutions, the development of the Nauvoo Temple endowment, the pioneer exodus, western colonization, the aftermath of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and dissent in the Church's highest quorums. B. H. Roberts considered Amasa, in his prime, as "doubtless the most persuasive and forceful speaker in the church" (230).[1] The biography's author, Edward Leo Lyman, a direct descendant, believes Amasa's contributions to building the kingdom had "more influence than has usually been recognized" by contemporary members and historians of the LDS Church (74). Amasa's legacy includes three apostolic descendants: Francis M. Lyman, his grandson, Richard R. Lyman, and his great-great-grandson, James E. Faust. Amasa's legacy also includes the results of a life dedicated to the pursuit of truth and goodness. By chronicling Amasa's valuable Church service and honorable life, Lyman intends to "redress a century and a half of diminished attention" (297). His "objective and complete treatment" makes no "pretense of seeking to veil" his admiration for Amasa (xvi).

To rehabilitate Amasa's impressive life and contributions, Lyman needs a strong explanation to account for his ancestor's

departure from the Church to which he selflessly devoted so many years of his life. He finds the reason largely in the person of Brigham Young, Joseph Smith's successor as prophet-president. Lyman believes Young made use of Amasa's oratorical talents but apparently never fully trusted him, suspecting him as a potential rival for influence among Church members. Lyman believes Young's personal pettiness and hunger for control played a critical role in Amasa's ultimate alienation from the Church. "In a very real sense," Amasa had to break ranks with the apostles "because he could no longer tolerate what he considered the misled dominance of the church membership by Brigham Young" (xii).

At times the biography reads like a morality play in which the wise, compassionate, and free-thinking Amasa confronts the cold, power-hungry Young whose "regime" (a term first used on p. xii and repeated often) is controlling, hyper-critical, and closeminded. Lyman employs a host of negative adjectives that color Young's actions negatively while Amasa receives the benefit of the doubt: "Amasa's collegial style of leadership was in marked contrast to the sometimes arbitrary and unilateral decisions of President Brigham Young" (213). According to Lyman, the apostle's "fully reciprocated" antagonism toward Young "looms as the primary factor leading to his ecclesiastical demise" (xi). Young's dislike for Amasa may have "stemmed from the church leader's resentments—or perhaps jealousies—over his fellow apostle's earlier relationship with Joseph Smith" (xi).

To Lyman, Amasa's growing popularity as a speaker and community-builder in San Bernardino fueled Young's ire. The apparent success of that community "may have loomed as an embarrassing contrast to some aspects of Brigham Young's Utah regime" (244). Further, Lyman argues, the two men diverged on their general understanding of the religion restored by Joseph Smith: "Lyman had embraced that expansiveness [of eternal progression] as Smith's ardent disciple and rejected what he saw as Brigham Young's mistaken attempt to focus on hierarchy, obedience, and practical concerns" (488).

Lyman fails to fully flesh out the "Joseph Smith" to whom both men looked for direction. Absent is the kingdom-building Joseph, who displayed characteristics closer to Young's—directing the construction of a hotel, mustering local militiamen, founding banking

institutions, and planning cities.[2] Amasa evidently missed the collapse of the temporal into the spiritual that pervaded the thought of Joseph Smith—something Brigham Young found so attractive and motivating. "When I saw Joseph Smith," Young explained, "he took heaven, figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth and brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God; and that is the beauty of his mission."[3]

Lyman fails to recognize that many of Joseph Smith's teachings and the structure of the Church he organized strongly impacted Young's vision of the Church's direction. Lyman does not provide a good summary of what Young was trying to accomplish or how Young understood his role as prophet/president. In other words, Young is an incomplete foil. At one point Lyman goes as far as uncritically implicating Young in unspecified deaths of Church dissidents: "Virtually no one had ever stood so firmly against Brigham's version of Mormon doctrine and practices and survived," Lyman cryptically writes (411).[4]

Perhaps Lyman's largest complaint against Young involves his dissatisfaction over San Bernardino, California. Lyman notes that even before writing his biography he had "asserted that Young's aloofness during the preparation period [of settling San Bernardino] calls into question his reputation as 'the great colonizer.' There has been no reason presented since then to alter that conclusion" (190). Lyman believes the "large size of the group" Amasa led to California resulted in Young's lasting resentment, even though "no record exists that the church leader had ever specified or even suggested a maximum size" (190). On the contrary, Young's journal, which Lyman does not quote, notes that he had envisioned a group of about twenty colonists: "Elders Amasa M. Lyman and C. C. Rich, with some twenty others, having received my approbation in going to Southern California, were instructed by letter to select a site for a city or station."[5]

Lyman also sees Young's decision to call back the Mormon settlers at the beginning of the Utah War as "a destructive policy that resulted in killing what might have been the Mormon Church's most flourishing regional center outside of Utah" (244). But Lyman's focus on San Bernardino excludes the rest of Young's stewardship. Young was presiding over thousands of scattered

Saints in Europe as well as Mormon outposts in Iowa and Nebraska. Missionaries were serving throughout the United States, India, Australia, and the Sandwich Islands. Converts were emigrating over land and sea. San Bernardino was one settlement among many, and Young was keenly concerned for Mormon safety. He did not arbitrarily command the San Bernardino Saints to return. There is a pleading tone in his letter: "We feel to write you confidentially to make your arrangements as fast as possible to gather up to these Vallies for we feel that you are or soon will be in danger. . . . Let all the faithful therefore take warning and be preparing suitable teams wagons &c necessary to transport themselves and families to a place of safety."[6] San Bernardino was not singled out, although that is the impression Lyman's narrative gives.

A further point of disagreement between Young and Amasa was the heavy mortgage attached to San Bernardino, the reasons for which Lyman explicates. True, Young had specifically instructed Amasa and his fellow apostle Charles C. Rich to avoid "the bondage of debt" should they find a suitable site for a Mormon colony in California (194), but Young seems not to have appreciated the fact that free land was simply not available in southern California as it had been in the Salt Lake Valley.

Lyman correctly notes that "lesser Latter-day Saint leaders often deserved much more credit for the success of many of the Mormon colonies" than "the great colonizer" (244). Why stop at the "leaders"? More credit is due to the individual Saints who lived and worked alongside those leaders. Focusing exclusively on Young's interactions with San Bernardino does not adequately represent the scope of all the projects Young was overseeing and their mixed success. Leonard Arrington discussed problematic decisions Young made about Church-sponsored or -encouraged industries.[7] Comparing Amasa's best efforts in San Bernardino with Young's retrospectively worst does a disservice to both men.

The same point could also be made where their temperaments are concerned. Young could be petty or mean at times, short and brash, hyperbolic and insensitive. But he could also be compassionate, quietly kind, and highly concerned with (and sensitive to) the needs of those he felt called by God to oversee. These qualities are missing from Lyman's narrative. Mormon historians

have noted the tendency to fall into "interpretive extremes of Young as saint and Young as devil."[8] Painting a portrait of Young as the inverse of previous hagiography is an ineffective corrective.

Lyman's narrative provides good insights about early Mormon family life, including the dynamics of plural marriage. Amasa's concern and affection for his eight wives and thirty-eight children are apparent in his personal correspondence quoted throughout the book. These relationships were strained by the financial and emotional difficulties of living "the principle" and by the apostle's constant missions which took him away from his family for long stretches. Amasa's letters contain beautifully poetic (only occasionally over-the-top) prose describing his labors, apologies for absences, and constant urging for family unity. In 1855, he compared his wives and children to "flowers whose blushing beauties are the budding prospects of future happiness and glory." If granted a vision of their future eternal activities, he would feel "a satisfaction equaled only by that of the assurance that I am doing that which is requisite to the promotion of our mutual interests." He recognized that his prolonged absences made it difficult for his children to know him but hoped that "by the attention of the mother and of the fond recollections impressed upon their infant minds they may learn of things they have not seen and respect him whom they have not seen" (229). A useful appendix traces the maze of Lyman familial relationships (495–501), though it is easy to become confused as wives and children increase and settle in different locations. Perhaps a visual family tree would have been helpful.

Lyman's examination of Amasa's involvement with the Council of Fifty is hampered by the unavailability of its recorded minutes. Nevertheless, Lyman uses the available sources to describe Amasa's prominence in the group's early activities. On August 20, 1842, Brigham Young and two other apostles, acting under Joseph Smith's direction, ordained Amasa to the apostleship to replace Orson Pratt, who was struggling with the practice of plural marriage. One day later, "Joseph Smith recorded that Orson Pratt had experienced a change of heart" (65). By the next January, Pratt was officially restored to his position in the quorum in a meeting to which Amasa was not invited (66). Smith reasoned that the three apostles had authority to ordain Amasa to the apostleship but not to make him an actual member of the Twelve.

Smith suggested that Amasa be made a member of the First Presidency but "Lyman was never publicly sustained to that position" despite several conference opportunities to do so (67).

In October 1842, Joseph ordained Lyman as second counselor in the First Presidency of the newly formed Quorum of the Anointed (75). This confusing shift from the Quorum of the Twelve to the presidency of the Council of Fifty demonstrates the flexible nature and nebulous responsibilities of these early priesthood offices. Amasa played a significant role in preparing for and officiating in the Nauvoo Temple endowments (107). Lyman skillfully navigates that sensitive topic and avoids disclosing sacred or confidential information (99–103). At the same time he adds enough detail to demonstrate the temple's "crucial place in Mormon theology" (92) and give readers a sense of what the early endowments meant to the Saints.

After Smith's death, Amasa vouched for the authority of the Quorum of the Twelve during the succession crisis, an important gesture that helped Brigham Young and the quorum gain more adherents than other splinter groups (83–88). Lyman continued to take part in the Council of Fifty after the Saints had moved west and was present during the first "constitutional convention" and other political activities prior to the Territorial establishment of Utah (160–61).

Lyman argues that Amasa's loyalty to Joseph Smith was a prominent feature of both his faith in the Church and, interestingly enough, of his involvement in spiritualism beginning in the mid-to-late 1850s. Spiritualism had recently grown to prominence beginning in the Burned-Over District of New York (392). Amasa held several hundred séances before his death, including many before his excommunication (460). In one early séance Amasa believed that Hyrum Smith instructed him to "heed the communication if it was good and reject it if not" (206). In 1870 Amasa believed he had received "some words purporting to have come from Joseph Smith" (443). Regrettably, Lyman does not describe in detail how an actual séance was conducted.

Lyman acknowledges that "if such a thing as an official attitude existed about spiritualism at church headquarters, it was definitely negative" (207). Spirit rapping and other such phenomena were denounced by Heber C. Kimball, Jedediah M. Grant, and

Orson Hyde in the 1852–54 period during which Amasa apparently became interested in spiritualism.[9] Lyman sees Amasa's "encounters with spiritualism" as "consistent with his lifelong search for new truths" (207) and hypothesizes that it stemmed from Joseph Smith's encouragement to "receive truth, let it come from whence it may" (208). However, there is good reason to believe that Amasa misunderstood Smith, if in fact he even considered what Joseph Smith might have thought of such things. As early as 1842, Joseph Smith revealed signs for detecting false spirits (D&C 129).[10] Amasa had received his endowment from Joseph Smith before the completion of the Nauvoo Temple and delivered a temple preparation-like sermon to the Saints in May 1842 regarding "certain signs and words" that would soon be revealed to them (102). Lyman concludes that Amasa "would have been aware of collegial suspicion about spiritualism and would naturally have refrained from announcing his current investigations" (207). Amasa's foray into spiritualism moved him further from the main current of thought among the apostles.

Another serious divergence was Amasa's developing views on the Atonement. In 1862, he delivered a sermon in Dundee, Scotland, in which he depicted Jesus as humankind's great teacher and exemplar. "But was it decreed then," Amasa reasoned, "that Jesus should die to save men who were thus pure and holy? No it did not form any part of the purpose of God that He should die. He was ordained to be a Savior through preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God" (328). Much of the sermon would fit comfortably within Mormon thought—then and now. But as Lyman explains: "To [Amasa], Christ's primary mission was to emancipate the soul from ignorance and outline how individuals could abandon sin and apply gospel principles. . . . Where he went too far was in explicitly discounting the need for Christ's blood" (397).[11]

It is unclear why the sermon did not catch the immediate attention of Brigham Young or the other apostles, but apparently it did not. Sometime between 1863 and 1867, Amasa preached to a congregation in Beaver that "the shedding of the blood of Jesus was not [a] necessary part of the plan of salvation" (349). This description is from George Q. Cannon's notes of April 1867, reporting on one of Amasa's earlier, undated sermons. Brigham Young and sev-

eral other apostles traveled to Parowan where Young delivered a sermon on the Atonement, presumably to correct Amasa's views. When he finished, he turned to Amasa, who was seated with the other authorities on the stand, and "asked him if this was not what he believed and intended to teach. Bro. Lyman replied that it was" (349). The matter was dropped, but either Amasa had not been entirely truthful or perhaps, as Lyman argues, "he may not yet have recognized how vastly his views on the matter had actually diverged from commonly held orthodoxy, including Young's" (349).

Lyman contextualizes the seriousness of Amasa's doctrinal deviance by pointing to other apostles who had also preached doctrines Brigham found heretical—for instance, Orson Pratt's views on the nature of God or Orson Hyde's ideas regarding "baby resurrection" (371, 386–88). They had "submitted" to Young by publishing "categorical retractions and apologies" for their speculations (387). Because these apostles were not dropped from the quorum, Lyman posits that Young "appears to have harbored a longer-term grudge" for Amasa because of his "refusal to render the expected deferential homage" to the president (387). In fact, in 1865 the First Presidency had restricted leaders from publishing anything as official doctrine "without first submitting [the text] for examination and approval of the First Presidency and the Twelve" (371).

Regardless, Amasa delivered other atonement-themed sermons in southern Utah. Reports of his views on the Atonement warranted further investigation, including the Dundee sermon (372). On December 26, 1866, Wilford Woodruff recorded a quorum discussion in his journal in which Young said it was "grievous to me to have the apostles teach false doctrin [sic]. Now if the Twelve will sit down quietly & not contradict such doctrin are they justified? No they are not" (372). Amasa was apparently absent, although the existing records do not clarify either way.

The Twelve questioned Amasa on January 21, 1867, and he "admitted teaching that the blood of Christ was not absolutely necessary for human salvation" (373). He published a statement in the *Deseret News* recanting his views (374) but apparently chafed under the restriction and recanted his recantation. According to a member of his stake presidency in Fillmore where the Lyman family had lived since 1863, Amasa had told a congregation in April

1867 that "the Blood of Jesus Christ was no more efficacious for the remission of sins than the blood of a bullock" (377). Amasa's bishop, Philo T. Farnsworth, wrote to Young reporting Amasa's "defiant demeanor" in reportedly denouncing his accusers of being "narrow brained, ignorant, miserable objects" who weren't smart enough to understand his doctrines (377–78). On May 6, 1867, Amasa was "disfellowshipped, forbidden to exercise his priesthood in performing any church ordinances, and most expressly forbidden to preach; but he was still a member of the church" (382).

In November 1868 Amasa began attending Mormon services in Fillmore again and appeared to be moving back toward full Church membership. By April 1869 Brigham Young "personally provided him with a ticket (or recommend) to attend the Fillmore School of the Prophets" (409). But Amasa soon began meeting with William S. Godbe, a prosperous merchant from England who, with a small group of other influential Saints, opposed "Brigham Young's economic and religious policies" in favor of "laissez-faire individualism" (410–11). Amasa eventually united with the Godbeite movement, becoming a highly visible promulgator of their views.[12] Lyman depicts Amasa "as an intellectual forerunner and perhaps exemplar for the Godbeite revolt." As a result, Amasa was excommunicated for apostasy on May 12, 1870, by the Salt Lake Stake high council (429).

The Godbeite movement faded away and so, in a way, did Amasa. Lyman traces Amasa's sporadic church attendance, continuing interest in spiritualism and seances, and declining health—including the possibility that Amasa had battled depression for several years, a hypothesis he finds unconvincing (357–58). Amasa apparently did not reconsider his stand, caricaturing Mormon preaching as the "idle twaddle of the propagandists of a creedal faith" that epitomized the "blindness of the dupes of religious fanaticism" (483). He was never rebaptized and requested to be buried in a black suit instead of white temple clothing.

The efforts of several relatives to get Amasa's membership and blessings restored posthumously comprise a touching conclusion to the book. Apostle Francis Marion Lyman repeatedly made such requests (493). In 1908 Amasa's daughter Martha told Francis that Amasa had appeared to her in a dream and asked her to

appeal for his reinstatement. According to Martha, Amasa was "weary and tired of his black clothes and . . . did so want to be with his family, his wives and his children whom he loved and longed for" (494). Following the funeral of Amasa's wife Caroline in May 1908, Francis related Martha's dream to President Joseph F. Smith who responded, "Well Marion, it looks like your father has suffered long enough. We will see what can be done for him" (494). On January 12, 1909, Amasa's son Francis was baptized in his father's behalf in the Salt Lake Temple. President Joseph F. Smith, who had replaced Amasa in the Quorum of the Twelve in 1867, performed the confirmation to restore all former priesthood ordinances and marriage sealings (494).

Lyman's book is likely to remain the most complete source on Amasa for years to come. It sheds substantial light on Amasa's contributions, sacrifices, and interesting life. Lyman wants readers to know that Amasa was one of the most important Mormons of the early days of the Church and has spent an impressive amount of time, energy, and research to that end. The book might have been more powerful with a more skillfully crafted narrative or if Lyman had allowed Amasa's deeds to make the case without repeated reminders that Amasa has been overlooked in historical studies. After all, Amasa's best self appeared reluctant to proclaim his own accomplishments. Regardless of the interpretive disagreements I have with the book, Lyman includes enough material to engage anyone interested in studying the early development of the Church through the experiences of Amasa Mason Lyman, an enigmatic and fascinating apostle. Amasa's struggles illustrate the interplay among religious individuality, community, and authority, moving from devotion, to defection, to apostasy—and ultimately, restoration.

Notes

1. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century 1* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1930), 5:83.

2. Robert B. Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), vi, went as far as asserting that Joseph Smith's "Kingdom on the Mississippi" set the pattern for Brigham Young's "Great Basin kingdom." Joseph Smith was less of a prophet and more of a "man of affairs." As a "planner, promoter, architect, entrepre-

neur, executive, politician, [and] filibuster," Smith set the precedent for the direction of the Church in Utah. Flanders shines light on an aspect of Joseph Smith that remains unexplored in Lyman's book but which could provide a corrective to Amasa's admiration for the Prophet.

3. Brigham Young, October 7, 1857, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool and London: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 5:332.

4. Lyman footnotes David Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847–1896* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 208–17, which Lyman says describes "a substantial group of dissenters in Utah, the Morrisites, who did not all survive" (587 note 171). It is difficult to refute such innuendo but the reference makes an irresponsible and inaccurate assessment of the Morrisite schism that turned violent in 1862.

5. Quoted without a citation in Eugene E. Campbell, *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West, 1847–1869* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 82. B. H. Roberts quotes this journal in *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1930; rpt. Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1965 printing), 3:349, which cites "History of Brigham Young," Ms., March 23, 1851, 13–14.

6. Brigham Young, Letter to William Crosby and William I. Cox, August 4, 1857, Brigham Young Papers, quoted in Ardis E. Parshall's "Sealing the Borders: The Mormon Return to Utah at the Beginning of the Utah War," paper for the Mormon History Association, Sacramento, California, May 24, 2008. Parshall quotes other Young letters that express similar concerns.

7. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 129: "Brigham Young and his appointed lay leaders were outstanding colonizers, and there can be no doubt that they were dedicated to the Kingdom, but the more the specialists depended on them for leadership, the more the specialized industries were apt to suffer from inexpert direction. . . . It is quite possible that the sugar, iron, and lead enterprises, and perhaps others, would have been more successful if knowledgeable private interests had been allowed a freer hand in the day-to-day direction, and a stronger voice in the making of basic decisions."

8. Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, *Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 126. They overview biographies of Brigham Young on pp. 124–26.

9. Heber C. Kimball, July 11, 1852, *Journal of Discourses* 1:34–37; Jedediah M. Grant, February 19, 1854, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:10–16; Orson Hyde, "Discourse . . . October 8th, 1854," *Deseret News*, November

9, 1854, 2. Lyman lists other examples of negative views of spiritualism including *Deseret News* editorials (207).

10. For the context, see Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 21.

11. Lyman's discussion of the Atonement in LDS thought (chap. 8 and an appendix, pp. 505–7) is cautious and reasonable. Nevertheless, a full historical exploration of LDS Christology is still needed.

12. An excellent treatment is Ronald W. Walker, *Wayward Saints: The Godbeites and Brigham Young* (1998; rpt., Provo, Utah: *BYU Studies*/Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009).

Loving Truthfully

Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth). July 7, 2009. (Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2009). http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html (accessed November 1, 2009).

Reviewed by Jeremiah John

Caritas in Veritate, Pope Benedict XVI's third encyclical letter, is a striking beginning for his papal contribution to Catholic social teaching. In a sense, the encyclical confirms one piece of conventional wisdom about his papacy—that it is a work of consolidating the monumental legacy of John Paul II and, less directly, the ecclesiastical and theological developments of the whole post-Vatican II period. References to the teaching of Paul VI and John Paul II appear throughout *Caritas in Veritate*, and the letter should result in a renewed interest in their social encyclicals. But *Caritas in Veritate* also puts Benedict's powerful and unique stamp on Catholic social thought. The letter draws together the varied strands of the past four decades of papal thought on the problems of the modern world and applies their core principles to contemporary issues. But it also grounds those principles in fundamental concepts of the Christian religion: charity and truth. Like no other authoritative, modern Catholic document of which I am aware,

Benedict's *Caritas in Veritate* is a painstakingly *theological* exploration of the basic tenets of Catholic social teaching.

Mormons who have recently been pondering the political implications of our own official social teaching (specifically on the family) should take an interest in *Caritas in Veritate*, not only as the institutional statement of an influential Christian church, but also as an expression of one of the most important theological figures in contemporary Christianity.

Charity, Benedict writes, is the "heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law" (§2). We should notice that against those thinkers who have rejected a politics of love (for example, Hannah Arendt, who argues that compassion is politically irrelevant[1]), Benedict proclaims that charity is "the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, family, or within small groups), but also of macro-relationships (social, economic, and political ones)." Quoting his own *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love), Benedict asserts that "everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it" (§2).

So much of Catholic social teaching since Leo XIII's monumental 1891 *Rerum Novarum* (New Things) has had the centrist feel of a project that has always tried to steer a faithful middle course between Marxist socialism and unrestrained capitalism. Its principles have provided much of the basic framework for European center-right Christian Democratic parties and some inspiration for the continental idea of the social market economy. But in *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict traces that teaching to its radical theological roots in the concept of charity. Christian social ethics is not merely a bringing together of opposed parties, a reconciling of the rights of property and commerce with rights of workers and the "preferential option for the poor." Charity "never lacks justice," for it also "transcends" and "completes" justice, in "the logic of giving and forgiving" (§6). Charity fulfills the minimum measure of justice and then moves to embrace even richer relationships of "mercy and communion" (§6). Against the interpretation of Catholic social teaching as a warm mush of European

centrism, Benedict reminds us of the distinctive underpinnings of Christian ethics.

As forcefully as Benedict argues for a politics of love, he is no less careful, however, to warn against love which "degenerates into sentimentality" and which therefore remains limited by subjective emotions and opinions, because it neglects *truth*—because it fails to comprehend charity in its full meaning in the light of gospel teaching (§4). This danger is especially acute in a culture where the need for social concern and human solidarity is recognized, but in which truth itself—and the truth of the Christian gospel in particular—are under attack from relativism. In steering us away from charity without truth, Benedict is continuing a theme that can be traced through his whole theological career, in his critiques of a concept of the communion which emphasizes the unity of believers at the expense of communion in Christ. It can also be seen in the long history of Catholic critiques of Marxist (and other secular) views of solidarity and human fellowship. For the Christian tradition, Benedict argues, there is no true and authentic "horizontal" fellowship and fraternity among human beings without a "vertical" communion with God in Christ.[2] A true humanism which aims for the good of the whole human race is established only in connection with what transcends the merely human.

There are, as I read the text, two specific ways in which Benedict understands the call to "charity *in* truth." The first has been at the heart of all modern Catholic social teaching, the claim that the social concern of the Church is not limited to its private charitable activities but must affect the whole range of human relationships and institutions: political, social, familial, economic, and international. Far from abandoning the civil or political realm, charity must address the whole scope of political and economic issues comprehended by the common good and human fellowship. Charity in truth—charity in its richest, truest, Christian sense—extends to all the "joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age."[3] It is concerned with the precarious status of workers in a globalized economy, with environmental degradation, with selfishness and materialism, with war and political violence, and with the failure to protect vulnerable life at all its stages (§28). Moreover, charity in truth moves beyond mere anxiety for

the welfare of the human race, but provides solutions as well, endorsing "democratic regimes capable of ensuring freedom and peace" (§21); denouncing profit as the "exclusive goal" of commerce and calling for a "profoundly new way of understanding business enterprise" (40); and calling us to a "social sensitivity towards the acceptance of new life" (§28).

Second, charity in truth is charity understood in the light of the Christian gospel, i.e., of the relationship between God and humankind. Human beings are "objects of God's love" and "subjects of charity . . . called to make themselves instruments of grace" (§5). This spiritual, godly way of seeing things presents life and human experience as an "astonishing experience" full of gifts and gratuitousness (§36). The perspectives of consumerism and materialism view economic life as mere exchange, without any moral or spiritual dimension, and cause gifts and grace to go unnoticed. But in truth human beings are not self-sufficient, and their ultimate purpose extends beyond this world. Human flourishing relies on the grace of God, and by grace people are "called . . . to pour God's charity and to weave networks of charity" (§5).

Charity in truth also reveals the correct understanding of human fellowship and solidarity. Contrary to secular ideologies which promise a type of human fellowship that has liberated itself from God, charity in truth understands that it is the hope of eternal life that gives human beings "the courage to be at the service of higher goods" (§34). Human progress is primarily a calling, a "vocation" that requires God, since without God we fail to recognize the "divine image in the other" (§11). Many secular views of the human condition deprive human history of Christian hope, since they teach that people must establish cooperation and fellowship with their own weak resources and cannot anticipate outside help (§34). It is only with God—with His grace and in the light of His truth—that charity shines forth in all its depth and strength.

One of the most ambitious goals of modern Catholic social teaching has been to take a critical but constructive view of the most important moral concepts of the contemporary world, attacking their false aspects while attempting to preserve and refashion, indeed to "Christianize," them.[4] Perhaps the most notable example is with solidarity, a concept with socialist connotations and a clear Marxist pedigree, but which has over time been

connected with the Christian doctrine of human fraternity and was eventually established as a central concept of the social doctrine of the modern Church—most importantly through John Paul II's 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern). In *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict claims "progress" and "human development" on behalf of charity in truth, against secular and materialistic development, understood as mere technological progress or economic growth. This elaboration of the true Christian meaning of human development emerges from a renewed examination of Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (On Human Development), which comprises the whole first chapter of *Caritas in Veritate*.

Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* has an interesting place in modern Catholic social teaching. It came out just over a year after Vatican II, which included the eloquent, far-reaching, pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope). *Gaudium et Spes* is a gracefully composed, theologically rigorous, and politically astute statement of Catholic social ethics that places the social teaching in the context of a proper understanding of the individual person, human fellowship, and the Church.

In contrast, *Populorum Progressio* has received poorer reviews; some readers have called it stylistically weak, overly soft in its critique of Marxism, and undeveloped or even ill-considered in its recommendations.[5] The encyclical—explicitly addressing the question of human development in all its dimensions—decries the deprivation and misery found in the developing world and makes reference to the inadequacies of economic liberalism and free trade, offering up economic planning and development aid as principal solutions to the problems of underdevelopment. "The superfluous good of wealthier nations," writes Pope Paul, "ought to be placed at the disposal of poorer nations. . . . Studies must be made, goals must be defined, methods and means must be chosen, and the work of select men must be coordinated" on behalf of the project of development (§49, 50). While American theologian John Courtney Murray called *Populorum Progressio* the "definitive answer to Marxism,"[6] some conservative reviewers complained that it echoed standard left-wing slogans about the exploitation of the developing world. More recently, Catholic philosopher James V. Schall

remarked that he had long viewed *Populorum Progressio* as the "most nearly ideological of all papal social encyclicals."[7]

Benedict XVI cuts sharply against this negative grain, proclaiming in Chapter 1 of *Caritas in Veritate* that *Populorum Progressio* is the "*Rerum Novarum* of the present age"—the founding document of Catholic social teaching for the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, just as *Rerum Novarum* was the founding of the Church's social teaching for the early and mid-twentieth century. If the nearly eighty years from the publication of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* and Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* were dominated by the "social question" (the conflict between capital and labor, the rights of property versus the rights of workers), the forty-plus years since Paul VI's letter have been dominated by the question of human development and progress: the relationship between the developed and developing world, and the perennial question of the proper goals of progress and prosperity. Benedict points out that it was *Populorum Progressio* that took up the question of progress as an occasion to articulate a "vision of development" that comprehended an integral understanding of human development and a sound basis for fellowship between poor and rich nations.

The Church's efforts to promote true human development are nothing new, Benedict argues, inasmuch as it has always taught that human beings are destined for an end that transcends mere earthly existence, that people are "constitutionally oriented toward 'being more'" (§14). It is the teaching of the Church which defends true progress against those advocates of progress who understand progress in narrowly technological terms and against those pessimistic enemies of development (for example, in radical environmentalism) who see development only as radically dehumanizing and tyrannical.

Reflecting upon charity in truth reveals a model of human development and progress which calls attention to the continuing underdevelopment among the poor of the world, no less than it decries the distorted "superdevelopment" among the prosperous, where materialism and frivolous consumerism go hand in hand with spiritual poverty (§22). The true Christian view of the fraternity of the human race, moreover, can lay the groundwork for a defensible model for globalization, where people are not merely

brought into contact by economic and technological forces, but are also led toward unity in the recognition that "*the human race is a single family* working together in true communion"(§53; emphasis Benedict's). This way of looking at fraternity and development helps dispel the despair felt by those who see globalization and technological change as a fated movement toward disaster. Furthermore, it also provides a "new vision and . . . new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism" (§78).

For Mormons, political and social reflection will likely take different forms than Catholic social teaching, and there is no reason to believe that faithful LDS people will necessarily arrive at all of the same conclusions as the Catholic tradition, although we may learn much from it. But the call to a kind of social and political engagement that practices charity in truth is compelling to all faithful Christians, for whom the practice of charity holds a central place in a disciple's life. It is certainly true that this kind of reflection is not appropriate or useful in all contexts—much of our political participation consists of more secular discussions with non-Mormons about questions of effectiveness, strategic action, legal validity, and procedural justice. Moreover, it may not be clear how we can fruitfully strike up some kinds of theological conversation with fellow citizens who do not grasp, let alone accept, the basis of our arguments. The paradox is that our eager participation in good faith in the public sphere may lead us away from a serious reflection on the proper means and ultimate ends of that participation. And yet each of us remains an undivided moral agent, answerable to God and to our fellow human beings for all our actions, whether they take place in the secular public sphere or not. Religious seriousness demands some kind of reflection upon practice, especially on those social and political questions where the best course for the Saints is anything but settled.

What, then, does Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* teach us about this reflection? For one thing it can serve as an example of a faithful theological reflection that sacrifices nothing in thoughtfulness or broad-minded social engagement. We have our own examples, to be sure—Elder Dallin H. Oaks's October 2009 address on religious freedom stands out as a recent one.[8] But *Caritas in Veritate* is an exceptional moment in a continuous practice and a

tradition of applying diligent, faithful study to questions of the deep moral importance, an example showing that the vital message of love found in the New Testament is the seed of more answers to these questions than we realize.

Notes

1. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963; rpt., London: Penguin Books, 1990), 66–88, esp. 86.

2. John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne, eds., "At the Root of the Crisis" (a 1985 interview with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger), *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI* (New York: Harper Collins 2007): 63–68; and "Eucharist, Communion and Solidarity" (a lecture at the Eucharistic Congress of the Archdiocese of the Benevento, Italy, June 2, 2002), ibid., 73–76. See also Avery Cardinal Dulles, "From Ratzinger to Benedict," *First Things*, February 2006, http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/08/from-ratzinger-to-benedict-17 (accessed November 1, 2009).

3. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), §1.

4. Joseph Ratzinger, "Eucharist, Communion, and Solidarity," 75: "The understanding of the concept of solidarity . . . has been slowly transformed and Christianized, so that now we can justly place it next to the two key Christian words *Eucharist* and *Communion*. Solidarity in this context signifies people who feel responsible for one another, the healthy for the sick, the rich for the poor, the countries of the North for those of the South."

5. See, for example, Robert Royal's criticism of *Populorum Progressio* on stylistic, moral, and economic grounds in *A Century of Catholic Social Thought* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991): 115–30. Mary E. Hobgood, *Catholic Social Teaching and Economic Theory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991): 147–54, takes a more sympathetic view but sees Paul VI backing away, in later writings, from some of the more leftist claims of *Populorum Progressio*.

6. John Courtney Murray quoted in Royal, *A Century of Catholic Social Thought*, 116.

7. Michael Novak, Father James V. Schall, S.J., and Robert Royal, "Caritas in Veritate: A Symposium," *The Catholic Thing*, July 8, 2009, http://www.thecatholicthing.org/content/view/1871/2/ (accessed November 1, 2009).

8. Dallin H. Oaks, "Religious Freedom," speech delivered at BYU-Idaho, October 13, 2009, http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom /eng /news-releases-stories/religious-freedom (accessed November 1, 2009).

Twilight and Dawn: Turn-of-the-Century Mormonism

Lu Ann Faylor Snyder and Phillip A. Snyder, eds. *Post-Manifesto Polygamy: The 1899–1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009. 196 pp. Notes, illustrations, index. Hardback: $34.95; ISBN: 0–874–217–393

Reviewed by Stephen C. Taysom

HBO's popular *Big Love* series and David Ebershoff's bestselling novel *The 19th Wife* (New York: Random House, 2008), stand as evidence that polygamy remains a perennial topic of interest for Mormons and non-Mormons alike. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that scholarly presses with heavily Mormon-themed catalogues continue to publish serious work on the subject. Utah State University Press's excellent LIFE WRITINGS OF FRONTIER WOMEN series has once again offered a sterling piece of documentary history with the publication of *Post-Manifesto Polygamy: The 1899–1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff*, edited by Lu Ann Faylor Snyder and Phillip A. Snyder. Historians of Mormonism such as D. Michael Quinn and B. Carmon Hardy have been documenting high-level Church involvement in post-Manifesto polygamy for decades, but this volume is a unique glimpse into the intimate workings of one such relationship.

Owen Woodruff, the youngest son of LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff and Woodruff's third wife, Emma Smith Woodruff, became an apostle in 1897, at age twenty-four. In January of 1901, nearly eleven years after Owen's father had issued the Manifesto withdrawing official support for new plural marriages, twenty-eight-year-old Owen married eighteen-year-old Eliza Avery Clark as a plural wife. Owen and his first wife, Helen May Winters, died in Mexico of smallpox in 1904 after refusing to be vaccinated. *Post-Manifesto Polygamy* contains the correspondence between Owen and Avery as well as that between Owen and Helen. Supplementing these eighty-five letters are several short autobiographical excerpts

written by Avery and other brief journal entries written by people closely connected to the Woodruffs.

Although the volume is slim, its material opens a window into a strikingly wide variety of issues important to the study of turn-of-the-century Mormonism. The issue of plural marriage, while representing the main subject with which the materials are concerned, is far from the only topic of interest. Scholars working in the study of religion broadly construed, as well as those interested in the dynamics of gender and family relationships, and social hierarchies in the American West will find this book enlightening. Sharpening the contemporary appeal of the collection is the persistent subtext regarding the proper role of the government in public health issues—specifically the question of vaccination.

Before exploring the letters themselves, a word or two about the introduction and annotation is in order. The introduction to the collection is generally strong and admirably performs the tasks of describing and contextualizing the primary materials while resisting the temptation to burden the reader with heavy-handed interpretations that would be more appropriate for a monograph. The editors' judicious use of excerpts from Owen's journals to fill gaps in the correspondence lends particular strength to the introduction. At fifty pages, however, the introduction could probably have been shortened without blunting its impact.

Similarly, the annotation is generally well executed, with ample descriptions of persons and events that appear in the letters and journals. Only once or twice was I left wishing for more explanation than the notes provided. USU Press, no doubt due to the high cost of providing footnotes on the same page as the main text, has chosen to place the notes at the end of the book. For documentary collections such as this in which the reader will likely need to refer frequently to the annotations, the arrangement is inconvenient.

The documentary section of the book opens with an account of the "courtship" of Owen and Avery. According to Avery's reminiscence late in life, she was struck by Owen's charisma when he visited a Church conference in Wyoming where she was living with her family. As the apostle assigned to oversee settlement in the Big Horn Basin, Owen's presence in 1899 was not unusual. However, before this particular trip, Owen, according to his journal, received

permission from Joseph F. Smith, then second counselor in the First Presidency, to find a plural wife. Following a tradition dating back to the time of Joseph Smith, Owen first broached the issue with Avery's father who expressed shock at this "new polygamy." According to Avery's later reminiscence, her father questioned Owen about the legitimacy of such unions in the eyes of the Church. Owen responded by pointing out that "several of the brethren in high positions had been advised to take plural wives" (50). Satisfied that Owen's request was not a rogue maneuver, Avery's father presented the proposal to his young daughter. Avery reported feeling "frightened and puzzled" but decided to "keep on praying" to determine "what is right" (51). Avery's decision to accept Owen's offer of marriage followed in short order.

From the time of Owen's and Avery's engagement until the end of Owen's life in 1904, a concern with secrecy wove itself throughout their correspondence. Owen counseled Avery before the marriage to "be careful" and "true as steel" (52). On another occasion, Avery reported to Owen that she would "keep all secrets," "guard my words and actions," and that she had "burned all letters and will continue to do so, although it seems like destroying valuable literature" (61). Owen and Avery referred to one another by code names in their letters and employed a code system for the names of places that Owen visited. Third parties mentioned in the letters also came in for the code-name treatment. Joseph F. Smith, for example, is referred to in several letters as "President Roosevelt." Although the need for discretion on the subject of plural marriage had long been the case when dealing with the prying eyes of government officials, post-Manifesto unions required that secrets be kept from other Mormons. A letter to Owen from his first wife, Helen, indicates the difficulty of keeping plural marriages secret, especially when the subject remained a popular topic of conversation among Latter-day Saints. Helen wrote that, while she was resolved to "not speak about" plural marriage in the months leading up to Owen's marriage to Avery, "invariably someone starts it up." She also reported somewhat nervously that Owen's mother "surmises something" but "doesn't ask any questions" (56). In 1901, Avery proudly reported to Owen that she was able to avoid detection as a plural wife in a particular situation because "few questions were asked me and all stories

connected very well"(73). The flavor of post-Manifesto polygamy that one takes away from exchanges such as this is reminiscent of the circumstances surrounding the introduction of plural marriage in Nauvoo in the 1840s.

The correspondence also highlights the tensions inherent in polygamous relationships, and the materials are replete with references, at least from Avery and Helen, to the sanctifying nature of self-sacrifice, the need to subdue individual desires, and pride in the service of what they clearly believed to be a heavenly ideal. As one might expect, the two women relate to their shared husband in very different ways. Helen frequently teases Owen and occasionally chastises him for his failure to write with greater frequency. Avery, by contrast, is writing to a man ten years her senior—a man she barely knows—and her letters are predictably deferential and self-deprecating. In this respect, Owen's family life is very similar to polygamous relationships throughout the nineteenth century. The need for secrecy, however, placed additional strains on the family. Avery, in particular, faced a difficult task. She never lived with Owen for any significant period of time, saw him only on rare occasions, and in his absence had to keep up the illusion of her status as a single woman.

As useful as the book is in providing a fine-grained look at the experiential dimension of plural marriages in the ambiguous years after the Manifesto, it is important to note, even if only briefly, the many areas in which the book ranges beyond the issue of plural marriage. The Mormonism that dominated the lives of Owen, Helen, and Avery was a peculiar mix of what we would now recognize as "early" Mormonism and "modern" Mormonism. For example, Avery wrote that she "enjoyed going through the Temple and will go again if I can." Mormons today will immediately identify with such a sentiment, but the idea of repeatedly visiting the temple for spiritual contemplation was a relatively new concept in the early 1900s. At other times, the correspondence bears witness to the final glimpses of some early practices. Helen joyfully recorded the fact that she had received from Zina D. H. Young and Bathsheba Smith a "lovely blessing [in which] they made me some beautiful promises" (55). Women performing blessings through the laying on of hands, like the communal chalice from which Avery drank her sacramental water and the polyg-

amous unions that defined the lives of the Woodruff family, would soon disappear completely from Mormon practice and nearly completely from Mormon consciousness.

Few documentary collections have captured the essence of the lived religious experience of turn-of-the-century Mormonism as deftly and adroitly as *Post-Manifesto Polygamy*. The richness and texture of this ambiguous and understudied period in Mormon history shine through on every page of this collection. Phillip A. Snyder and the late Lu Ann Faylor Snyder have done a commendable job of shepherding this important assembly of documents onto library shelves and into the hands of many interested readers.

Mormon Pulp with a Reading Group Guide

David Ebershoff. *The 19th Wife: A Novel*. New York: Random House, 2008. 523 pp. Paperback: $15.00; ISBN: 978–0–81297–415–7

Reviewed by Mark Decker

Polygamy and blood atonement, whatever their real-world drawbacks, can make for profitable novels. If Zane Grey were still alive, he might be plotting another sequel to *Riders of the Purple Sage* in hopes of riding the titillation wave created by *Big Love*, Warren Jeffs, and the Yearning for Zion fiasco. Yet shifts in readership that have accompanied the media innovations of the last century have led the descendants of Grey's initial audience to spend much more time looking at flickering screens than at badly printed pages, greatly reducing the market for the kind of pulpy tales Grey wrote. It is not hard to imagine, however, that real money could be made today by writing fiction about polygamists that would interest book discussion groups. In general, people who join book discussion groups like a good story as much as anybody else, but they don't enjoy overly broad characterization, credulity-straining plot twists, or minstrel-show-derogatory portrayals of maligned or poorly understood ethnic and racial groups. Straight pulp won't do.

David Ebershoff attempts to capture the attention of this lucrative reading demographic in *The 19th Wife* by combining

well-rendered historical fiction with the kind of pulp that has always sold novels about polygamists. Employing the same scholarly sensitivity found in his first novel, *The Danish Girl* (New York: Penguin, 2001), a fictionalization of Danish painter Einar Webener's 1931 gender reassignment surgery, Ebershoff juxtaposes a credible re-creation of the memoir of Ann Eliza Webb, who advertised herself as Brigham Young's nineteenth wife (she was actually his fifty-third)[1] with the pulpy story of Jordan Scott, a contemporary "lost boy" evicted from a fundamentalist Mormon compound at fourteen. The adult Jordan is a gay, hip Los Angelino who finds himself back in rural Utah trying to clear his mother—who also thinks she is a nineteenth wife—of murdering his father, a fundamentalist Mormon apostle. It should not be surprising that *The 19th Wife* landed on the *New York Times* bestseller list in 2008 or that the paperback version of the novel—complete with reading group guide—held a respectable amazon.com sales rank of 1,069 in midsummer of 2009. Because the connection between the two stories is only implied at the very end of *The 19th Wife*, however, and because of the cleverly jolting juxtaposition between straightforward and thoughtful historical fiction and pulp detective novel, I will discuss each narrative separately.

Considering both the author's relative inexperience with Mormon studies and the national audience he is writing for, Ebershoff creates an even-handed and believable portrait of Ann Eliza Webb Young and her milieu. The author even includes an extensive bibliography of sources consulted when writing *The 19th Wife*. For readers of *Dialogue*, it is generally a list of the usual suspects—Leonard J. Arrington, Fawn Brodie, Todd Compton, Terryl L. Givens, Hugh Nibley, and Richard S. Van Wagoner (but not Brian Hales). It is gratifying to see this novel in serious conversation with several serious historical treatments of the era. Of course, this is a fictionalized account that, as Ebershoff notes, "follows Ann Eliza's basic biographical arc as she describes it," although the author admits that he often fills in "where she skips" and skips "where she digresses" (510). While it would be interesting to track all of the fills and skips in the novel, Ann Eliza's narrative is a responsible work of historical fiction that would give a book discussion group a way to talk about the Mormon migration

from Kirtland on, pre-Manifesto Utah, and the issues surrounding polygamy.

People familiar with Mormon studies—especially people who have some personal connection with Mormonism—will find Ebershoff's novel downright utopian. Of course, there is much criticism of the Church's stance on homosexuality, but Jordan eventually begins a tentative relationship with an excommunicated BYU dropout who is nevertheless still culturally Mormon in many ways and who takes Jordan to a gay-friendly church in Las Vegas that, though clearly not a Mormon ward, incorporates the Book of Mormon into its theology. But more importantly, Ebershoff's thematic approach suggests that truth—often truth arrived at through scholarly endeavor—can overcome fanaticism and make positive changes in previously repressive religions.

While this assertion rests in part on the historically debatable claim that Ann Eliza Young "changed the lives of thousands of women by fighting to end polygamy, nearly bringing down the Mormon Church in doing so" (131), it also rests on Ebershoff's delightful characterization of Kelly Dee, a twentysomething returned missionary and candidate for an as-yet-unfortunately-fictional master's degree in women's studies at BYU. Kelly, whose honors senior seminar paper and proposal for her master's thesis are reproduced in full in *The 19th Wife*, is descended from a son Ann Eliza had with her first husband, James Dee. She seems to be motivated both by a recognizably Mormon desire to understand one's ancestors and a scholarly ethos that insists thinking Mormons "must look at" polygamy "rigorously, understand it honestly, and place it correctly in our heritage" (129). This commitment to honestly study polygamy will lead Kelly, by the novel's end, to help Jordan Scott tell the world about his experiences in twenty-first-century polygamy, carrying on by proxy her foremother's fight.

Yet for all the delight Mormon intellectuals might take in seeing such a character in a novel written for a national audience, Ebershoff ultimately will disappoint them because he is not familiar enough with the culture he is describing to avoid sounding tone deaf. Kelly's scholarly optimism, for example, makes her seem more like one of the founding mothers of *Dialogue*, sensing the new spirit that would lead to the opening of the Church's ar-

chives in the 1970s—a period entirely omitted in Ebershoff's multiple references to research on polygamy—than a contemporary graduate student at BYU. Ebershoff also attempts to show that the Church is cooperating with and encouraging Kelly, yet his efforts often demonstrate his unfamiliarity with the way the LDS bureaucracy operates. For example, in a letter to President Gordon B. Hinckley, a Church archivist urges that Kelly be given access to the archives and directs the prophet to "encourage your colleagues throughout the Church to further assist Kelly with her scholarly requests" (228).

Ultimately, Ebershoff's inability to nail down the nuances of Mormon culture is part of a larger weakness. For all Ebershoff gets right, it's still pulp, and it shouldn't surprise anyone that Ebershoff invokes the Hardy Boys (151) to describe Jordan's efforts to solve his father's murder. Ebershoff's contemporary narrative arc relies too much on the semiotic shorthand of stock characters and commonplace assumptions for him to be able to say anything genuinely profound about the relationship between contemporary Mormons—fundamentalist or mainstream—and their collective past. Jordan Scott's narrative contains many elements of popular detective fiction: a gory murder, prostitution, a defense attorney who may or may not be on his client's side, corrupt police officers, and an abrupt surprise ending.

But it is characterization, not genre, that ultimately signals the primacy of entertainment over depth in *The 19th Wife*. The best evidence of this assertion comes in the portrayal of Jordan's California love interest, Roland. Ebershoff, whose *Danish Girl* won the Lambda Literary Award—sponsored by a foundation that advocates for GLBT writers and readers—has Roland speak in a dialect that is best paraphrased as "Oh honey subject verb object," bringing the flaming queen into a narrative populated with abusive polygamist patriarchs, dewy-eyed idealists, and children who look "like every kid in Utah: blondish, blue, a splash of freckles" (93).

To be fair, *The 19th Wife* should be evaluated for what it is: an attempt to create commercially viable fiction about polygamy, Mormon history, and Mormon culture that offers a balanced and historically engaged portrayal of a minority group with which its intended audience won't be familiar. On these grounds, Ebershoff's novel is an unqualified success. Ann Eliza Young's narrative

is good historical fiction that could indirectly allow real scholars to influence public opinion. Jordan Scott's narrative is gripping and fun to read, and should guarantee a long print run.

Dialogue readers are a curious subset of the demographic Ebershoff aims for. Sophisticated readers who just might be members of book groups, they are also certain to be more familiar with the culture Ebershoff attempts to describe, and they will readily see the flaws in his narrative. But reading pulp fiction brings pleasure, largely because readers genuinely like, say, Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op since they identify with the Op and picture themselves fighting crime as effectively as the Op. It would be a shame if this review deterred anyone from the joy of seeing a character like Kelly Dee unabashedly inhabiting fiction that is intended for a national, instead of a Mormon, audience and imagining, just for a moment, that scholarly endeavor really could make a church less reactionary.

Note

1. Jeffery Ogden Johnson, "Determining and Defining 'Wife': The Brigham Young Households," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Fall 1987): 70; confirmed by email from Jeff, September 22, 2009.

A Gentile Recommends the Book of Mormon

Peter A. Huff

God . . . at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets . . ." (Heb. 1:1, KJV)

One of the most rewarding aspects of interfaith dialogue is open and honest engagement with the scriptures of traditions other than our own. Many of us will testify to the fact that drinking from other peoples' wells can be a dramatically life-changing and life-enhancing experience. As a lifelong Bible reader, I would now consider my life profoundly incomplete without the wisdom and beauty of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Dhammapada, the Qur'an, the Tao Te Ching, and the other classics that form our world's vast spiritual library.

For just about a century and a half, the comparative and respectful study of humanity's sacred literature has become a commonplace of American higher education and a standard feature of parish religious education. Emerson's generation had to depend on the dynamics of nineteenth-century maritime commerce and the vagaries of British imperial ambition to make the holy books of "non-Christian" Asia available to readers west of Boston Harbor's India Wharf. Today, thanks to the mass market paperback and the internet, virtually the entire world bible is at our fingertips, ready to expand and enrich our worldview and, as Thoreau once suggested, challenge our "puny and trivial" modern minds.[1]

One text from the global sacred canon, however, tends to be ignored in this enterprise of inter-scriptural exchange, and liberals and conservatives seem to be about equally guilty of the oversight. It's fairly easy to find college courses on the sacred writings of the

East and church study groups investigating the "lost books" of the Bible. Dig up a copy of Hinduism's Rig Veda, Buddhism's Lotus Sutra, the writings of Baha'u'llah, or the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and you're bound to come across an interest group not too far away, primed for spirited, and perhaps spiritual, discussion.

Of course, no one in these circles will demand strict endorsement of the claims found in the text or formal affiliation with the institution tied to the text as a condition for appreciation of the text. We know how to read disputable history as moving myth and putative prophecy as inspiring, if not inspired, poetry. We value these works precisely because they're classics, masterpieces that bear an uncontrollably universal significance transcending creed, cult, culture, and century.

What seems to be missing from all of these admittedly commendable venues, however, is a sacred text known by name and reputation (and even by sight and probably even by touch) to almost every literate American. Ask any one of these otherwise educated and tolerant students of world scriptures why he or she has overlooked this particular volume and you'll be met with either the blank stare of ignorance or the curled lip of impenitent bias: "Why would I want to read that?"

I'm well acquainted with this response, because I, too, resisted reading this book for a number of years. Even after my doctoral training in theology, I had somehow convinced myself that I could serve my profession without actually reading this holy text in a serious and comprehensive way. For the last ten years or so, I've tried to make up for this indefensible attitude by incorporating this piece of sacred literature not only into my routine of critical study but even into my private practice of spiritual reading. I'm happy to report that my evolving experience with this text has been effectively the same as my on-going experiences with other great works from the world's treasury of spiritual wisdom.

The scripture I have in mind, of course, is the Book of Mormon. What follows is a Gentile's appreciation—even recommendation—of this well-known but largely unread example of world-class scripture.

* * *

Before I go further, I should make it clear that I am not now,

nor have I ever been, a Mormon. I'm not affiliated with the 13-million-strong, Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—popularly known simply as the Mormon or LDS Church. Nor do I belong to the smaller Missouri-based Community of Christ (formerly Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) or any of the scores of sects that have branched off from the original Mormon movement.

I'm what Latter-day Saints call a Gentile: a non-Mormon. As a Gentile, though, I should also dissociate myself from what amounts to a community of anti-Mormons in our society. Many Americans pick up a strain of anti-Mormonism in the same way that some of our fellow citizens catch a bit of anti-Semitism or Islamophobia. Some anti-Mormons publish books and tracts, internet screeds and YouTube propaganda, warning all who care to read or view of the grave errors in Mormon doctrine and the near-criminal nature of Mormon practice. Some anti-Mormons even go "pro," taking their message—complete with costumes and props—to the centers of Mormon population and pilgrimage. In my visits to Mormon sacred sites across the country, I've had direct contact with more than a few of these zealots.

Anti-Mormon bigotry is by no means limited to the uneducated and misguided. Before JFK, anti-Catholicism was described as the anti-Semitism of the liberal elite. Today, anti-Mormonism plays a comparable role. Recent political events have demonstrated that anti-Mormonism is alive and well in our republic. It's largely unspoken and usually well behaved, but its presence can be felt—especially if you have the right kind of theological or sociological radar. In the academic world, specialization in Mormon studies can wreck a promising career. Suggest that the LDS worldview deserves serious philosophical consideration and may actually correspond to at least a portion of reality, and you could easily find yourself classed with Holocaust deniers and flat-earth kooks. Anti-Mormonism seems to be one of our nation's last acceptable prejudices.

* * *

As neither Mormon nor anti-Mormon, I find myself strategically—maybe even providentially—positioned to recommend a reading of the Book of Mormon that is free and candid, yet empa-

thetic. Intellectually responsible believers and skeptics can profit especially from a multi-faceted approach to the Book of Mormon that views the text through a variety of lenses. We can consider the Book of Mormon as literature, as ancient history, as divine revelation, and as universal wisdom.

Whatever else it might be, the Book of Mormon is an extraordinary piece of literature. A queer one, too. Ever since it was first published in 1830, it has sparked intense controversy—a remarkable achievement for a book that has attracted so few diligent readers. Critics have mocked its imitation of King James Bible English, its preposterous proper nouns, its apparent anachronisms, its convoluted plot lines. One wag claimed it would be nearly half its size if a single oft-repeated phrase were systematically deleted: "And it came to pass." Doomed to enter American letters in the age of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, the Book of Mormon was dismissed by Mark Twain as "chloroform in print."[2]

Twain was funny but not completely right. (No religious group, by the way, reveres *Life on the Mississippi* as holy writ.) Approached on its own terms, the Book of Mormon can, in fact, be riveting reading. Its fifteen documents, named supposedly after ancient American prophets and kings, introduce us to a fascinating cast of characters: the patriarch-writer Nephi, the prophet-martyr Abinadi, the stripling warriors of Helaman, the war-renouncing tribe of Anti-Nephi-Lehies, and a memorable class of villains, including bad King Ammoron, the "bold Lamanite." The documents also rehearse unforgettable accounts of adventure on the high seas, the rise and fall of civilizations, the agony of collective heroic sacrifice, and the ecstasy of individual moral transformation. (Romance, it seems, is the only major theme without a significant presence in the book—curious, given Joseph Smith's folk status as over-sexed charlatan.) The dramatic climax of the Book of Mormon, unmatched in all literature sacred and profane, is the New World appearance of the resurrected Christ.

Reject claims of supernatural origin, and we're still stuck with homespun creativity that defies comprehension. Call Smith a plagiarist, and the prodigious nature of his backwoods intellectual theft registers higher on the miraculous scale than his own tales of angelic visitation. At the very least, the Book of Mormon deserves a special place in the American canon, on a par with *Moby-Dick*, *The*

Wonderful Wizard of Oz, *Roots*, and, yes, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. What's more, I think we can make a case for ranking it among near-sacred texts of the Western heritage such as *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, *Narnia*, and *Lord of the Rings*.

* * *

Latter-day Saints, of course, see the Book of Mormon as far more than a neglected literary classic. For them, it is nothing less than sacred scripture. They also accept it as an accurate, but not infallible, record of at least a portion of ancient American history.

Here's where we come face to face with the audacity of Mormon belief. Some religions speak of heavenly messengers sent to earth. Some speak of divine books delivered supernaturally to select human agents. Some speak of living prophets loaded with divine mandate. Some speak of holy objects handled by the chosen few during a golden age of faith. Some speak of lost empires.

Mormonism does it all. The real scandal of the Mormon worldview for the outsider may be its metaphysical greediness. It believes too much!

Regarding what some would call the outlandish historical claim embedded in the Book of Mormon narrative, let me just say this. Imagine that we were somehow convinced that the *Mayflower* expedition truly represented Europe's first contact with the Americas. If that were the case, we would greet the idea of a Spain-sponsored fifteenth-century trans-Atlantic voyage with profound skepticism. As a matter of fact, ancient Egyptians, Minoans, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Greeks all performed tremendous feats of oceanic exploration—often without navigational instruments or anchors. The only reason to reject the hypothesis of a Jewish journey across the Pacific around the time of the Babylonian Exile is credible historical evidence to the contrary—not dogmatic attachment to an Italian mariner or a Viking pirate or anybody else as the true "discoverer" of America.

For Latter-day Saints, this set of historical claims can never be separated from the supernatural aura surrounding the Book of Mormon itself. When Muhammad's detractors asked why he didn't perform any miracles, he consistently pointed to the Qur'an as the real miracle for his generation. Joseph Smith and his followers have similarly envisioned the Book of Mormon as a miracle in print.

Any missionary can tell you the miraculous story. The teenaged Joseph Smith has a vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ and is instructed to avoid all existing churches. A second vision—this time of an angel named Moroni—informs him of an ancient record engraved on golden plates buried in a hill not far from his home. A few years later, Smith uncovers the record and begins to translate a portion of it—through supernatural means—from "reformed Egyptian" into English. While still completing the manuscript of what will become the Book of Mormon, he receives additional heavenly visitations and revelations, all of which direct him to restore the rites and doctrines of the authentic church of Christ and reestablish the "ancient order of things." All before his thirtieth birthday!

Given the highly charged character of this narrative, you might say that no one but a true believer could acknowledge the Book of Mormon as scripture. It's easy to get paralyzed in an insider/outsider dichotomy when it comes to Mormonism and its unapologetic supernaturalism. Iron Rod Mormons warn against any kind of middle position. I think, though, that we can argue for a legitimate third option—an option available to anyone even tentatively open to what William James called "'piecemeal' supernaturalism."[3] Such a demythologized approach invites us to transpose the symphony of Mormon wisdom into a key more accessible to Gentile ears.

Today, signs of that emerging third option can be seen in the academy. A few non-Mormon scholars are beginning to enroll Joseph Smith into the communion of the world's "great souls." That storied fellowship of spiritual pioneers who have witnessed the "sundry times" and "divers manners" of divine penetration into human experience will never be complete without the founder of America's premier world religion. This thawing of prejudice is long overdue. For many years, I've embraced Smith as a type of vernacular visionary, who in another time and place would have simply been accorded the title of mystic.

Honoring Smith as an interfaith saint, ironically, may be just another attempt to tame an original and unruly spirit. We've seen it happen to Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi, King, and too many others. The book Joseph produced, however, defies domestication. It calls into question virtually every assumption that undergirds our

overly secular lives. Thoreau had this experience when he read the newly translated Hindu and Chinese scriptures during his excursions on the Concord and the Merrimack and his sojourn at Walden Pond. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, Confucius, and Mencius forced him to confess just how "puny and trivial" his modern mind really was. "I would give all the wealth of the world," he said, "and all the deeds of the heroes, for one true vision. But how can I communicate with the gods, who am a pencil-maker on the earth, and not be insane?"[4]

The Book of Mormon fuels this desperately modern drive for a single true vision. Like all great sacred classics, it confronts us with the truth about ourselves and our ultimate purpose on this planet. Excavated from the bedrock of upstate New York or harvested from the fertile soil of a farm boy's frontier imagination, it reminds us that the ground upon which we stand is enchanted and that the age of miracles is nowhere near its final chapter. The so-called "burning in the bosom," well known to missionaries and Mormon-phobes alike, may, after all, be a remarkably accurate way to describe the book's uncanny effect on the heart of the earnest reader—even latter-day Gentiles like me.

The New Testament book of Hebrews concludes with sage advice: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2). Today, this apostolic counsel is a basic axiom of the interfaith imperative. I encourage you to apply it to the least-read volume in the world's family of bibles. If we listen to the strange voice of this New World scripture, we may begin to hear again the long-forgotten tongues of angels.

Notes

1. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 346.

2. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 127.

3. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* edited by Martin E. Marty (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 520.

4. Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers,* edited by Carl F. Hovde (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 140.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Michael Slade

Michael Slade has been photographing all over the world for the past twenty years. A Cache Valley native, Slade received his B.A. degree in photography from Utah State University (1994) and is currently an MFA candidate, with an emphasis in photography.

He comments, "My work is often less about the photography and more about the experience, which I try to share with the viewer. Not all of the experiences are earth-shattering or spiritual, but images that are broad, wide, simple, and not distracting are most often those where I have a head-clearing experience."

He seeks landscapes that make him "reset some kind of cog in the machine that is me" and works predominantly in black and white." Avoiding "the seduction of color" makes him "more concerned with content."

He describes himself as "interested in telling stories," particularly those that "are not obvious and that take some time to discover. The stories I look for are patiently waiting for someone to tell them. I enjoy the hunt, the research of the story, the fleshing out of the details, and the ultimate image making."

Slade's recent work has focused on extended visual stories, the largest being "The Great Salt Lake Photographic Survey," a ten-year project that he admits may never be finished. Additional long-term photographic essays deal with topics as diverse as North Korean refugees living in South Korea and Utah locations of personal interactions with Bigfoot.

"Emotion ultimately is a large portion of an image's content," he adds. "If an image is devoid of emotion or a feel of place, the image does not succeed. It is my job as an image-maker to find ways to instill emotion in my images. It is also my constant challenge to do so without being heavy-handed. Staying out of the way of the story is always on my mind. Finding the stories that need to be told and being presented the opportunity to do so is a privilege. I feel fortunate when I am in a position to do so."

He, his wife, Polla, and their two children live in Riverton, Utah. Other Slade photographs appear on www.gslps.org.