

# Journal of Mormon History

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# JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

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*Front cover illustration:* Duncan J. McMillan, superintendent of Presbyterian mission schools in Utah, established one at Mt. Pleasant in 1875 that evolved into the present Wasatch Academy. Photo courtesy of Giovale Library, Westminster College, Salt Lake City.

*Back cover illustration:* Laura B. Work was a Presbyterian mission teacher at Pleasant Grove, Springville, and Ephraim and, later, a government teacher among Native Americans in southern Utah. Photo courtesy of Wasatch Academy, Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

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# MORMONISM'S ADOPTION THEOLOGY

## AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

*Samuel M. Brown and Jonathan A. Stapley*

ALTHOUGH EARLY MORMONISM has been the subject of scholarly scrutiny for almost two centuries, important elements of the early Mormon worldview remain relatively unknown. A set of teachings, rituals, and lived experiences grouped under the rubric of adoption represent one such facet of early Mormonism. The practice and theology of ritual adoption began with Joseph Smith—in basic contours—as a reinterpretation of an old and prevalent Christian concept with strong ties to the rite of baptism for the dead and a priesthood system Smith called patriarchal. Brigham Young and the other apostles amplified, redirected, and codified ritual adoption in the period immediately after Smith's death, integrating it into temple liturgy and employing it in part as a response to the contrary claims of Smith's biological family. The various stages of early adoption contain the themes, paradoxes, and tensions surrounding Joseph Smith's afterlife vision of a vast, sacerdotal family.

Though Gordon Irving correctly situated adoption ritual within the Mormon salvation family and generated several hypotheses in the early 1970s, subsequent work on the topic has been largely limited to recitations of his treatment.<sup>1</sup> In the intervening decades, however, our understanding of the social and religious context for sacred adoption, the broader valences of practice and belief, and

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830–1900," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 291–314. Rex Eugene Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*:

the nature of its cessation have progressed considerably, necessitating a new treatment.

In the accompanying pair of essays, we treat what is often termed the Mormon law of adoption. The first essay treats antecedents and early development, concluding with Smith's death in 1844. The second essay opens with the ways that Brigham Young employed adoption in his assumption of control over the imperiled movement in the wake of Smith's death. This second paper then brings the law of adoption through its heyday into its dismantling by Wilford Woodruff as part of significant transitions in Mormon thought and practice at the end of the nineteenth century.

Adoption theology is a reminder that the idea world of early Mormons was in some ways strikingly different from that of the early twenty-first century. Understanding this aspect of early Mormonism on its own terms may be useful to our era's engagement of questions of human relationships and identity. The adoption theology of early Mormonism may inform discussions about topics as diverse as spirit birth, agency, kinship, salvation, and the nature and shape of family relationships. As one example among many, on the matter of spirit birth we feel that this expanded view of adoption theology provides a possible lens for understanding premortal divine parenthood as a process of adoption rather than the more familiar model associated with the Pratt brothers.

We do not suggest that the views held by the earliest Latter-day Saints should be normative for twenty-first-century Mormons in any specific tradition. We do believe that understanding the earliest meanings of this theology helps to illuminate its development and many of its modern instances. We believe that these insights can be brought into productive dialogue with later and current approaches.

More than anything, adoption is a testament to the extent to which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was meant to be the society of heaven and full membership in it the sign of and pathway to salvation and exaltation.

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*Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), integrates adoption into a model deriving from Puritan covenant theology; his study is an important exception to this general observation.

# EARLY MORMON ADOPTION THEOLOGY AND THE MECHANICS OF SALVATION

*Samuel M. Brown*

A WELL-BORN SON OF PENNSYLVANIA landowners, John Milton Bernhisel (1799–1881) was an elegant gentleman, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania practicing medicine in New York City, when itinerant elders brought him the message of the Latter-day Saint gospel in the late 1830s. The middle-aged doctor converted and rapidly rose through Church leadership ranks. After a brief stint as the presiding elder of the Church’s interests in New York City, Bernhisel gathered to Nauvoo in 1843. A confirmed bachelor, he boarded with Joseph Smith’s family, providing political and medical advice, even delivering Smith’s child. That same year, eight months before Smith’s death, Bernhisel, still unmarried at age

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forty-four, participated in a distinctive ritual that changed forever the esteemed convert's kinship.<sup>1</sup>

An affidavit-like note placed retrospectively in Smith's official journal reported: "The following named deceased persons were sealed to me (John M. Bernhisel) on Oct 26th 1843, by President Joseph Smith: Maria Bernhisel, sister; Brother Samuel's wife, Catherine Kremer; Mary Shatto, (Aunt); Madalena Lupferd, (distant relative); Catherine Bernhisel, Aunt; Hannah Bower, Aunt; Elizabeth Sheively, Aunt; Hannah Bower, cousin; Maria Lawrence, (intimate friend); Sarah Crosby, intimate friend, /died May 11 1839/; Mary Ann Bloom, cousin."<sup>2</sup> In this curious transaction, Bernhisel became eternal husband, brother, or father to eleven deceased friends and relatives, including his sister, his brother's wife, and four aunts.

Bernhisel's family continued to expand in Nauvoo. On February 3, 1846, Bernhisel "came to the sacred Alt[a]r in the upper room of the 'House of the Lord' . . . and there upon gave himself to Prest. Joseph Smith (martyred) to become his son by the law of adoption and to become a legal heir to all the blessings bestowed upon Joseph Smith pertaining to exaltations even unto the eternal Godhead."<sup>3</sup> In this rite, the now-dead Prophet became Bernhisel's sacerdotal father. The final phrase in this ritual adoption ceremony—one that would involve scores of Latter-day Saints through the nineteenth century—made clear that the ultimate destination of these familial connections was "exaltations" that would extend all the way to the "eternal Godhead" through a "legal heir[ship]." Although contemporary Protestants occasionally employed these terms, Latter-day Saints understood them quite differently. By the power of Smith's priesthood, this adoptive ritual integrated Bernhisel into a sacred scale of exaltation

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<sup>1</sup>Gwynn Barrett, "John M. Bernhisel: Mormon Elder in Congress," (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1968).

<sup>2</sup>Scott H. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 424, October 26, 1843, in Robert Campbell's hand, with John Bernhisel's signature appended. See also Lyndon Cook, ed., *Nauvoo Marriages, Proxy Sealings, 1843-1846* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 2004), 22-25.

<sup>3</sup>Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845-1846* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 566.

that ultimately encompassed God Himself.

Armed with this holy sonship, the doctor took his adopted father's widow, Melissa Lott, as a levirate wife that same year, briefly engaging in polygamy with live spouses before settling down with the youngest of his wives.<sup>4</sup> In the 1860s, by then an earthly monogamist and prominent Utah politician, Bernhisel took another 106 deceased women as plural wives.<sup>5</sup> Linked to Smith's sacerdotal family even as he was the patriarch of his own kindred, Bernhisel had the assurance of glory and security in the life to come. When he finally died, Bernhisel was the first-degree celestial relative of hundreds of people. In the heavily communal idiom of Mormon salvation, heaven for the loyal doctor had begun well before he closed his eyes in death.

Bernhisel's story emblemizes the distinctive ritual and theological system that Joseph Smith elaborated over the last decade of his life. The doctor was one of hundreds, then thousands, who entered Smith's celestial kindred through the rites of the temple *cultus*, a term I use in the neutral, academic sense of a system of interrelated beliefs and rituals. The resulting kindred, a sacerdotal genealogy extending backward past the Garden of Eden and forward to a glorious future beyond time, became the doctrinal and ritual core of Smith's legacy.<sup>6</sup> Through this sacerdotal genealogy, all of humanity could be intercon-

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<sup>4</sup>Cook, *Nauvoo Marriages*, 185, 214. On Mormon levirates (mimicking the ancient Hebrew custom of marrying a widowed sister-in-law), see Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 61, 154–56.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Van Wagoner and Steven Walker, *A Book of Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1982), 16. See also Historian's Office Journal, CR 100, 1, Vol. 30, p. 53, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, in Richard E. Turley, ed., *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, [December 2002], 1:17 (hereafter cited as *Selected Collections*).

<sup>6</sup>By sacerdotal genealogy, I mean a pedigree or family tree dependent upon priesthood rather than biology for its connections. See Samuel M. Brown, "Joseph Smith's Death Conquest: Sacerdotal Genealogy and the Great Chain of Being," *American Academy of Religion*, November 18, 2006, Washington, D.C. Douglas Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2000), 146–47, terms a subset of this concept the "soteriological lineage."

nected in indissoluble connections; this sacerdotal kinship group represented the structure of heaven. Drawing on and responding to antecedents in evangelicalism, the diluted Swedenborgianism that contributed to the Protestant domestic heaven, the neoplatonic Chain of Being, and metaphysical Israelitism, the Mormon sacerdotal genealogy provided for the Latter-day Saints an eternal chain of belonging. Smith proposed a sacramental guarantee of salvation that was in its very essence communal.

The practices and theology of Smith's sacerdotal family contain many themes and tensions. Smith's family addressed or resolved the complex tensions among election, regeneration (the process or status of conversion), Arminianism, and the perseverance and scope of salvation. In doing so, though, Smith's family system sometimes pitted nuclear and biological families against extended and ecclesial communities. As Smith refracted, reformed, and translated several interwoven ritual and theological systems, his sacerdotal family developed in step with his temple liturgy, both situated firmly within other currents of early Mormonism. Beginning in the early 1830s with a "patriarchal" priesthood and associated patriarchal blessings, the sacerdotal family incorporated a new mode of Christian adoption (baptism for the dead) and a distinctive revival of the ancient practice of plural marriage, all in a novel genealogical reformation of the Great Chain of Being.

Throughout, Smith was struggling with fundamental questions: How big was the society of heaven? Who could and would join it—what did election mean? How would it be entered—what were the mechanics of salvation? What did the afterlife society have to do with salvation? What happened to one's offspring in the afterlife; could their salvation be guaranteed? What role did one's ancestors play in the salvation community? These questions proved to have multiple, complex, interwoven answers. Together, those answers constituted a sacerdotal kindred, a heaven protected from loneliness and heartache by the restoration of the divine family.

In this article, I consider what came to be called the law of adoption from its origins through the death of Joseph Smith in 1844. By considering Mormon adoption in its various contexts, I clarify distinctive aspects of Latter-day Saint soteriology and afterlife theology. As Jonathan A. Stapley clarifies in his companion article, after Smith's death the ritual adoption system came to connect unmarried kin and created novel social units within Mormonism as it evolved

during the exodus from Nauvoo and the settlement of Utah, generating unfortunate rivalries in an attempt to tie all humanity to their first parents and their youngest progeny. The later rituals of the law of adoption make sense only when we understand their roots in a distinctive reinterpretation of an old and prevalent Christian concept.

After reviewing spiritual adoption in antebellum America, I trace the development of adoption theology in Mormonism, from its roots in Christian belief to its early implementation in Nauvoo within the temple *cultus*. Finally, I trace the implications of this adoption theology, which serves as a window on the distinctive soteriology of Mormonism, a legacy that Smith's followers spent many decades attempting to understand and resolve.

#### SPIRITUAL ADOPTION IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

For most early American Protestants, the most important cultural antecedents were understood to derive from the Bible.<sup>7</sup> The concept of spiritual adoption among most Protestants arose straightforwardly from the New Testament, where the term refers to a spiritualization of the Israelite covenant in the Pauline writings. Rather than national salvation bestowed on Abraham's offspring, the house of Israel, Paul proclaimed that Jesus had made salvation available to all believers. Through Christ, the Gentiles could join a spiritual house of Israel on equal footing with the Jews.<sup>8</sup> Thus in the inspiring and potent language of Paul's letter to the Roman church:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

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<sup>7</sup>On the role of the Bible in early America, see the essays collected in Mark Noll and Nathan Hatch, eds., *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), and Paul Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777-1880* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999). See also the illuminating revisionist discussion of biblical authority and canon in David Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>8</sup>Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Paul appears to have been claiming that in Christ a prophecy of Hosea (1:10) had been fulfilled.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. (Rom. 8:14–17)<sup>9</sup>

A version of adoption patterned on Pauline theology circulated among early Christianities, culminating in an understanding of “supernatural adoption” in Catholicism.<sup>10</sup> Later Protestant views derived from and modified such originals.

Many formal systems within Protestantism integrated “adoption” into the path from depravity to final salvation: Adoption generally came between justification—the initial forgiveness of sins—and sanctification—a higher level of purity and piety.<sup>11</sup> Throughout the history of Christian adoption, a tension existed between the individual and the corporate, between personal regeneration and formal entry into a community. Always, adoption described a gateway, whether to a higher stage of individual piety or into a community of Saints. From Puritans and their heirs, to Methodists and Baptists, to Anglicans, American Protestants embraced the Pauline vision of adoption across a spectrum from individual regeneration to formal establishment of community membership.

The congregational covenants of the New England Puritans cast

<sup>9</sup>The Greek term *huiiothesia* means “making a son.” See also Rom. 8:23, 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5. Of these passages, Smith modified only Romans 9 in his New Translation, replacing “pertaineth” with “are” after initially considering “belongeth.” The use of the copula in the New Translation seems significant. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004), 491.

<sup>10</sup>For one of many discussions among Catholics, see Robert Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (London: John Murray, 1848), 12.

<sup>11</sup>For two of many examples, see Isaac Watts, *Dr. Watts’s Plain and Easy Catechisms for Children: Shorter Catechism of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster* (Cambridge, Eng.: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1825), 24–25, and *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1839), 387–88. The shorter Westminster catechism defined adoption as “an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.” See also Joel R. Beeke, *Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008).



a long shadow over the communities that derived from them, including the frontier societies of the Old Northwest in which Mormonism arose. For Puritans, salvation was inescapably corporate. Even as predestination and the omnipotent God of Calvinism ensured that the regenerate were saved by the inscrutable and irresistible grace of Christ, salvation for Puritans occurred federally. Puritan society, an interlocking collection of church covenants, carried God's seal of approval. Though critics called them theocrats, Puritans saw their society as intrinsically both secular and religious because it encompassed the entire community of the elect. This federal theology meant that the Massachusetts Bay Colony—and by extension pious New England and possibly the rest of North America—was itself elect. Puritans had high hopes for family integrity and at times attempted to merge election with family, as in the famous claim that God “cast the line of Election” by and large “through the loyns of godly parents.”<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, however, the assurance that God would bless the commonwealth and save the regenerate in church covenants did not mean that biological families would necessarily stay together after death.<sup>13</sup>

Children often, notoriously, failed to live up to parental and societal expectations, and the requirement of a public account of regeneration before the congregation to effect membership in the covenant was a high bar. When children failed to make such a public proclamation of conversion, they lost hold on the federal salvation protecting their parents. The seemingly boundless potential for offspring to fall from the covenant caused great concern among loving family members. Opposite worried relatives stood ecclesial purists who saw the inclusion of unregenerate members in the church covenant as a mortal threat to the federal election that protected the regenerate. From this tension between the purity of a church community and the worry over the eternal fate of a community's children arose, at least tempo-

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<sup>12</sup>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), 68, quoting Increase Mather.

<sup>13</sup>Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 2d ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), is a perceptive treatment of the clash between “theocentric” and “domestic” models of heaven, though it may overstate the extent to which Calvinists rejected family relationships in the afterlife. Compare Brown, *Early Mormon Conquest of Death*, chap. 1.

rarily, the Halfway Covenant, a system to allow children to derive at least some protection from the regenerate status of their parents or grandparents.<sup>14</sup>

Though formal church covenants weakened with disestablishment and the wane of Congregationalism, nineteenth-century Congregationalists still often saw adoption in terms of covenant.<sup>15</sup> Some, like the Massachusetts divine Joseph Lathrop (1731–1820), emphasized to their listeners that they did not belong to God by nature but became children of God by the act of His divine choosing into the community of the elect.<sup>16</sup>

The populist denominations that overran Calvinist orthodoxies in the early Republic, primarily Methodists and Baptists, tended to emphasize a community of believers in ways distinct from Puritan covenants or election. Wary of excessive ecclesiastical power, these evangelicals saw adoption as entry into the body of Christ rather than the federal society of the elect. More frequently they emphasized adoption as a phase, related to the rite of baptism, in the believer's progress from justification to salvation.

The meaning of adoption as the experience of regeneration was perhaps most prominent among the Methodists.<sup>17</sup> In a pair of sermons titled "Witness of the Spirit," John Wesley laid out his thinking on adoption and Christian experience.<sup>18</sup> He spoke of the "spirit of adoption" of Romans 8 as the personal witness of God's love, "proof

<sup>14</sup>See Rex Eugene Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), and Robert G. Pope, *The Halfway Covenant: Church Membership in New England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), for a general treatment.

<sup>15</sup>James R. Rohrer, *Keepers of the Covenant: Frontier Missions and the Decline of Congregationalism, 1774–1818* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>16</sup>"Adoption," in *Sermons on Various Subjects, Evangelical, Devotional, and Practical: Adapted to the Promotion of Christian Piety, Family Religion, and Youthful Virtue* (Worcester, Mass.: Isaiah Thomas, 1810), 3:49–59.

<sup>17</sup>Holifield, *Theology in America*, 269.

<sup>18</sup>See discussion of the sermon within the debates over religious experience and enthusiasm in Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 50–51. Some have designated the sermons #10 and #11.

that [the believer] is a child of God.” He distinguished it, as Paul had, from the “spirit of bondage,” the state of unregeneration. Among the sectarian Reformed Methodists, many believers claimed adoption as a “child of God” as synonymous with regeneration and distinct from the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> With many Mormon founders coming from Methodist traditions, the spirit of adoption as regeneration of a believer is an important precedent for the later Mormon practice.<sup>20</sup> The other important group from which Mormons came was the sectarian Baptist tradition out of which the Campbellites arose. Alexander Campbell, summarizing his views on baptism toward the end of his career, termed adoption as “making a son of God out of a son of man.” Campbell was reluctant to endorse the formal model of adoption as sandwiched between justification and sanctification, emphasizing instead that those adopted were “born into the Divine family, enrolled in heaven.”<sup>21</sup>

The relationship between adoption and baptism was complex and often a casualty of the Protestant aversion to Catholic sacramentalism. Groups like the Reformed Methodists saw baptism as a “duty,” but the rite itself did not define adoption.<sup>22</sup> Churches closer to Anglicanism, like the Protestant Episcopal, saw baptism as the “public rati-

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<sup>19</sup>William Pitts, *The Gospel Witness* (Catskill, N.Y.: Junius S. Lewis and Co., 1818), 104.

<sup>20</sup>Christopher C. Jones, “We Latter-day Saints Are Methodists’: The Influence of Methodism on Early Mormon Religiosity” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 2009), and Christopher C. Jones, “The Power and Form of Godliness: Methodist Conversion Narratives and Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 88–114.

<sup>21</sup>Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptism: With the Antecedents and Consequences* (Bethany, Va.: Alexander Campbell, 1852), 275–76. Campbell had presented this view as early as 1829. Robert Owen and Alexander Campbell, *Debate on the Evidences of Christianity; Containing an Examination of the “Social System,” and of All the Systems of Scepticism of Ancient and Modern Times*, 2 vols. (Bethany, Va.: Alexander Campbell, 1829), 2:106. See also Alexander Campbell, *A Debate on Christian Baptism, between the Rev. W. L. Maccalla, a Presbyterian Teacher, and Alexander Campbell* (Buffaloe, VA: Campbell and Sala, 1824), 16.

<sup>22</sup>Pitts, *Gospel Witness*, 104.

fi[ction]” of the “adoption of sonship.”<sup>23</sup> Most Protestants acknowledged the tie between adoption and baptism but could not allow a sacrament to achieve excessive significance in their theology.

Not all adoption references were to the abbreviated stage of conversion between justification and sanctification. Some learned commentators sought to situate adoption within the culture in which Paul wrote. Charles Buck, author of the theological dictionary preferred by both Mormons and evangelicals, represented this literature when he argued for Roman legal precedent as the source of Paul’s comparison.<sup>24</sup> Adoption, according to Buck, “was much in use among the Romans in the apostles’ time” as a way for childless individuals who

were possessed of an estate, to prevent its being divided . . . to make choice of such who were agreeable to them, and beloved by them, whom they took into this political relation of children; obliging them to take their name upon them, and to pay respect to them as though they were their natural parents. . . . This new relation, founded in a mutual consent, is a bond of affection; and the privilege arising from thence is, that he who is in this sense a father, takes care of and provides for the person whom he adopts, as though he were his son by nature.

Buck continued by describing an early Christian practice of bestowing a “new name,” the name of Christ, on the believer undergoing adoption. Through such an adopting regeneration and the new identity it conferred, the convert achieved an “eternal glory” that was “perpetual as to its duration.”<sup>25</sup> In dramatic ways, each of these themes found expression in Mormon adoption theology.

The individualist and populist rhetoric associated with anti-Calvinism tended to emphasize the idea of adoption as a stage in regen-

<sup>23</sup>Alonzo Bowen Chapin, “Protestant Episcopal,” in Israel Rupp, comp. and ed., *History of All Denominations*, 2d ed. (Harrisburg, Pa.: John Winebrenner, 1849), 251.

<sup>24</sup>On the significance of Buck’s dictionary, see Matthew Bowman and Samuel M. Brown, “The Reverend Buck’s *Theological Dictionary* and the Struggle to Define American Evangelicalism, 1802–1851,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 441–73.

<sup>25</sup>Charles Buck, *Theological Dictionary* (Philadelphia: Edwin T. Scott, 1823), 11–13. This concept, modulated through the teaching on secondary saviors outlined later in this article, may underlie the way Brigham Young understood the new names bestowed on temple-endowed Latter-day Saints. See Brown, *Early Mormon Conquest of Death*, chap. 7.

eration; and there has always been in adoption, as in Christianity more broadly, a tension between the individual and the corporate. Evangelicals and revivalists acutely perceived the community of believers, both in life and in death. By receiving regenerating grace with its promise of God's adoption, these Protestant believers knew that their souls were saved and that they would thereby be reunited with their regenerated friends after the final judgment. For a variety of antebellum evangelicals, the image of regeneration as adoption played naturally into an understanding of the afterlife community. English Methodist Bible commentator Adam Clarke, whom the Latter-day Saints occasionally quoted, described Christian adoption as "the redemption of our mystical body." In his exegesis of Galatians, Clarke further indicated rather typically that adoption "gives us our place in the heavenly family."<sup>26</sup>

Evangelism provided clues as to how the individual and the corporate could coexist in adoption. Nancy Towle, the non-denominational if largely Baptist itinerant known best for her popular 1832 memoir *Vicissitudes Illustrated*, understood herself to be building a family of converts to bring with her to the throne of grace. These regenerated believers were adopted to Christ; and if they would stay faithful, they would be her "plentiful harvest" to present to God at final judgment. Towle used the language of Paul, maintaining that the conversion her preaching effected sealed<sup>27</sup> people in heaven as on earth, in recapitulation of the power given to the early apostles in the New Testament. Of one particularly devoted congregation she had assembled, Towle reflected that "many joined in covenant, to seek eternal life, at the loss of all things; and to meet me, in a better world." Because she was an itinerant, Towle's communities were almost always mental or spiritual rather than physical. At one emblematic parting with a group of new believers, Towle remarked, "Although, I could now expect to meet them on earth no more, I rejoiced that it was my privilege to bear their case to the throne of

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<sup>26</sup>Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co., 1838), 51–53, commentary on Romans 8:15, 23; and 210, commentary on Galatians 4:5–7.

<sup>27</sup>On Mormon ideas about the sealing power, see Gregory Prince, *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 155–72, 226–27; Brown, *Mormon Conquest of Death*, chap. 6.

grace” in heaven “where parting can never come.”<sup>28</sup>

Through evangelism such Protestants were creating communities of the saved that could endure the high mortality and geographical instability of the early American Republic.<sup>29</sup> Such communities were joining the family of God. The New Testament included images that came readily to hand for this evangelistic application of adoption. In Philemon 1:10, Paul employed the language of adoption of converts to describe his relationships with Onesimus, a man he had “begotten in my bonds.” Paul’s bondage to Christ allowed him to beget another in those same bonds. The vision of an evangelist collecting souls into the family of Christ proved important, in distinctive modification, to early Mormonism.

Such was the context for adoption when Joseph Smith began his religious career.<sup>30</sup> Adoption referred to the dual nature of conversion, the sense of an individual’s experiencing salvific regeneration

<sup>28</sup>Nancy Towle, *Vicissitudes Illustrated in the Experience of Nancy Towle, in Europe and America*, 2d ed. (Portsmouth, N.H.: John Caldwell, 1833), 43–44, 60, 65, 67, 70, 75, 93, 159, 186, 283. On Towle and other female itinerants, see Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

<sup>29</sup>See Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), on the various dislocations and innovations of the period.

<sup>30</sup>Practices called “adoption” among Native groups and esoteric fraternal organizations are interesting but not immediately relevant to this article. On Native groups, see Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 159–61; Brett Rushforth, “‘A Little Flesh We Offer You’: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (October 2003): 777–808; John Tanner, *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner, (U.S. Interpreter at the Saut De Ste. Marie.) During Thirty Years Residence among the Indians in the Interior of North America* (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830); and James Axtell, “The White Indians of Colonial America” *William and Mary Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (January 1975): 55–88. On Freemasons, see Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 126; Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 69; Steven Bullock, *Revolutionary*

through communion with God, as well as the community of people similarly regenerated. From that starting point, Smith moved in dramatic and distinctive ways to a sacramental and sacerdotal system that transformed the concepts underlying Christian adoption.

#### EARLY MORMON ADOPTION

Mormons employed the evangelistic motifs of their peers in slowly diverging ways, even as they connected a fundamentally New Testament set of themes to complexly Old Testament images and practices. In this section, I trace Mormonism from its earliest scriptures to applications of adoption in the context of evangelism, through patriarchal blessings and the mystical priesthood that undergirded them, to the liturgical applications of adoption theology in early 1840s Nauvoo: baptism for the dead, temple endowment, and polygamy. Smith never practiced the precise rituals his followers implemented after his death. These rituals, as Jonathan Stapley eloquently demonstrates in his companion paper, were an attempt to come to terms with Smith's complex legacies and the diverse rites that supported the adoption theology during his life. The adoption theology and ritual during Joseph Smith's life were primarily concerned with the role of a special power and authority called priesthood in the establishment of relationships among believers and between believers and Christ. These relationships were believed to assure, even to define, both salvation and personal identity.

The initial Mormon description of adoption came in the 1830 Book of Mormon. The lost scripture of ancient America confirmed the understanding of adoption as conversion. The mighty evangelist Alma, the son of Alma, recovering from his own regenerating trance, announced to his peers that "the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of

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*Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730–1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 30–32, 86–89, 191–95. Clyde Forsberg, *Equal Rites: The Book of Mormon, Masonry, Gender, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 149, misapprehends Masonic adoption. For a better context for early "adoptive" Masonry, see David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590–1710* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

God, becoming his sons and daughters” (Mosiah 27:25). Another Book of Mormon encounter framed adoption in similar terms. In endorsement of the Christian covenant King Benjamin’s people had entered, he announced to them that “because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters: for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you.” Explaining Christ’s role as adoptive parent, Benjamin taught in straightforward terms that “ye are born of him and have become his sons, and his daughters.” Then invoking the power of the new name of those adopted into the covenant, he encouraged, “I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives” (Mosiah 5:7–8). Toward the end of the Book of Mormon narrative, Mormon, according to the posthumous reminiscence of his son Moroni, preached that, on converting, “by faith, they [believers] become the sons of God” (Moro. 7:26). In the same sermon, after an extended meditation on Paul, Mormon urged his audience to pray “that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him” (Moro. 7:48).<sup>31</sup>

The Book of Mormon also contained aspects of the more radical view of the later 1830s. One of the three main narrators, a prophet-king named Nephi, provided a royal-dynastic image of adoption. As his life drew to a close, Nephi “anointed” his replacement, then, at the urging of his people, bestowed his name on this successor and those who followed in the dynasty (Jacob 1:9–11). Though it would be a few years before Smith clarified the implications of adoption theology, the Book of Mormon contained the kernels of later teachings: adoption as salvation and entry into the family of God, the role of sacred names in adoption, the possibility that adoption might teach humans about their equivalence to God, and the royal or dynastic imagery that came to predominate in Nauvoo.

Early Mormon preaching tended to accord with the view outlined in the Book of Mormon. In a revelation shortly after the Church’s founding, Smith announced that “all those who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom” (D&C 25:1).<sup>32</sup> This was the traditional belief that adoption referred to conversion. In their first hymnal, the Saints echoed this understanding of Pauline

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<sup>31</sup>The final phrase appears to be an exegesis of 1 John 3:2.

<sup>32</sup>This phrase was added between 1833 and 1835. Curt A. Bench, ed.,



adoption, singing that God “owns me for his child, / I can no longer fear; / With confidence I now draw nigh; / And Father, Abba Father, cry.”<sup>33</sup> Though his thinking developed over the next decade, Joseph Smith affirmed a traditional definition of adoption in two sermons as late as 1841. In May, he lectured on Romans 9, a key New Testament passage on Pauline adoption. In that sermon, Smith posed his view of Abrahamic adoption as counter to Calvinist election.<sup>34</sup> Then in December, he preached that “whom the Lord loveth he Chasteneth & Scourgeth evry son & daughter whom He receiveth & if we do not receive chastizements then are we Bastards & not Sons.”<sup>35</sup>

William W. Phelps, ever curious to solve theological mysteries, extended the Book of Mormon image of Christ as the father of the faithful. In a letter to his wife, Sally, in 1835, Phelps argued that man has “his agency given him” that “he might become a Son of the Lord Jesus, for Jesus was the Only Begotten of the Father.”<sup>36</sup> Jesus was the father of believers inasmuch as converts became His sons and daughters through adoption. Such rhetoric was not yet very far from the mainstreams of Protestantism, though by the 1840s this image had radically different implications for the status of the relationship between Christ and humanity.<sup>37</sup>

Through the 1830s, the Latter-day Saints continued to employ

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*The Parallel Doctrine and Covenants: The 1832–1833, 1833, and 1835 Editions of Joseph Smith’s Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2009), 41; see also the terminology in D&C 11:30, 34:3, 35:2, 45:8, and 76:58.

<sup>33</sup>Emma Smith, *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Nauvoo, Ill.: E. Robinson, 1841), 79.

<sup>34</sup>“To Those of Our Readers,” *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 15 (June 1, 1841): 430, reporting Smith’s May 16, 1841, discourse.

<sup>35</sup>Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 1833–1898*, Typescript, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–85), 2:142, December 19, 1841.

<sup>36</sup>William W. Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, September 9, 1835, William Wine Phelps collection, VMSS 810, Box 1, fd. 1, item 3, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

<sup>37</sup>On Mormon views of Trinity, see Thomas G. Alexander, “The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology,” *Sunstone* 10, no. 5 (May 1985): 8–19.

Protestant images of Christian adoption, though with increasing reliance on sacramentalism. In 1837, Parley P. Pratt, writing probably the most important noncanonical publication of the new Church, his *Voice of Warning to All People*, touched on the meaning of adoption. Describing the activity of the apostles in establishing God's "organized government on the earth," Pratt announced that the apostles "prepared to unlock the door of the kingdom, and to adopt strangers and foreigners into it as legal citizens, by administering certain laws and ordinances, which were invariably the laws of adoption; without which no man could ever become a citizen."<sup>38</sup> Emphasizing rising Mormon sacramentalism, Pratt taught that "there were no natural born subjects of that kingdom. . . . [N]one could be citizens without the law of adoption, and all that believed on the name of the king, had power to be adopted; but there was but one invariable rule or plan by which they were adopted," which he conflated with baptism into the Mormon Church. Pratt simultaneously looked beyond baptism, maintaining that "the Holy Spirit of promise was the seal of their adoption."<sup>39</sup> In this last phrase, Pratt nodded toward an evolving Mormon belief about seals and assured salvation that became closely tied in Nauvoo to adoption and the temple.

Other Saints emphasized a basically sacramental view of adoption. According to an 1841 proselytizing statement made by missionaries near Boston, believers "must be adopted in order to become citizens of his kingdom. Baptism of course then is the ordinance of adoption."<sup>40</sup> By the 1840s Mormon sacramentalism had confirmed adoption as a ritual, specifically believer's baptism by immersion, administered by one of the Mormon elders.<sup>41</sup>

On into the 1840s, traditional views of adoption persisted in Mormon discourse. The British editor of the *Millennial Star*, Thomas Ward, endorsed the traditional Christian reading of adoption in two related pieces disseminated through Church organs, calling it "the

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<sup>38</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People, Containing a Declaration of the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of the Latter-day Saints, Commonly Called Mormons* (New York: W. Sandford, 1837), 96, 99.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 103–5, 109–11.

<sup>40</sup>Erastus Snow and Benjamin Winchester, "An Address to the Citizens of Salem," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 1 (November 1, 1841): 578.

<sup>41</sup>See also V. H. Bruce, "Water Baptism," *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 21 (January 15, 1846): 1095.

glorious law of adoption into the kingdom of God.”<sup>42</sup> By 1843, when Smith reminded believers that they would need to “subscribe [to] the articles of adoption to enter” the kingdom of God, he meant something rather different, even while the language he used remained superficially the same.<sup>43</sup>

Baptism and individual conversion were far from the limits of adoption. Adoption was also about relationships. Much like other Protestants, many Mormons saw adoption through an evangelistic lens. Early on, the notion of “adopting” one’s proselytes into the family of God played a prominent role. That baptism was the rite of adoption and that the evangelist performed or supervised the baptism only strengthened this association. Thus, Apostle Wilford Woodruff claimed of his British proselytes that “the first fruits of my ministry . . . are bound to me closer than the ties of consanguinity,” making explicit the inherent comparison between bloodlines, biological kinship, and the relationships evangelists created with converts.<sup>44</sup> Addison Pratt wrote in a similar vein from Tubuai in the South Pacific to tell his wife of “the six first persons I have adopted into the kingdom by baptism.”<sup>45</sup> Emphasizing the spiritual power that rested on a successful evangelist in early 1836, William Phelps looked forward to the “many stars” in his eternal “Crown in the day of rejoicing” if he continued to fulfill his evangelistic duties.<sup>46</sup> Something like this image was present in an 1829 revelation encouraging evangelism with the promise that an evangelist’s “joy” would be “great” in proportion to his proselytizing harvest (D&C 18:15–16).

The twin images of regeneration and evangelism underwent dramatic transformation as the Latter-day Saints, assiduous primi-

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<sup>42</sup>[Thomas Ward], “The Gathering,” *Millennial Star* 3, no. 12 (April 1843): 195, and [Thomas Ward], “The Law of Adoption,” *Millennial Star* 4, no. 2 (June 1843): 17–19.

<sup>43</sup>Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauwoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 256, October 15, 1843.

<sup>44</sup>Wilford Woodruff, “President O. Cowdery, Dear Brother,” *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 3 (December 1836): 432.

<sup>45</sup>Addison Pratt, “My Dear Wife,” *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 8 (May 1, 1845): 882.

<sup>46</sup>William W. Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, January 3, 1836, Phelps Collection, VMSS 810, Box 1, fd. 1, item 8, Perry Special Collections.

tivists, tied adoption back to spirited reinterpretations of the Hebrew Bible. They first did so in the context of their appropriation of images of biblical patriarchs and their relationships to their offspring.

*Orphans and Patriarchs*

Shortly after the founding of the Church and concomitant with traditional Protestant rhetoric on adoption, Smith presented a distinctive merger of church and family, sacerdotal and biological genealogy. In 1833, the Mormon prophet announced that his father, Joseph Smith Sr., would be the modern patriarch Jacob to the Church of Christ. Though he did not integrate it consistently into his broader sacerdotal system, Smith made clear that his father exercised a patriarchal priesthood on behalf of the Church. Armed with this priesthood and in a self-conscious imitation of Jacob's deathbed blessings—one that echoed across the Book of Mormon in the person of Lehi (2 Ne. 1–3)—Joseph Sr. began to impart words of wisdom and promises of power to believing Saints.<sup>47</sup> These blessings reflected a combination of hopeful prayers directed at fellow worshippers and a distinctive exercise of metaphysical fatherhood.

In time, after the patriarch's own deathbed transfer of the patriarchal power to his oldest living son Hyrum, Joseph Jr. made clear that the patriarchal priesthood he had bestowed on his father represented the power given to the New Testament apostles, "that whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."<sup>48</sup> "Binding" and "sealing" were synonyms for the power and scope of adoption as the theology developed. The relationship to Christ through adoption

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<sup>47</sup>The deathbed image was strongly present in early blessings, a point Orson Hyde advertised to the German people in 1842. Orson Hyde, *A Cry from the Wilderness, A Voice from the Dust: A Brief Sketch of the Origin and Doctrines of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" in America, Known to Some as: "The Mormons,"* translated by Justus Ernst (Frankfurt, Germany: n.p., 1842), 62.

<sup>48</sup>Lucy Mack Smith lingers in great detail over Joseph Sr.'s deathbed speeches. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 716–17; Samuel M. Brown, "The 'Beautiful Death' in the Smith Family," *BYU Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 121–50. On Hyrum's patriarchal power, see the 1841 revelation canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 124:93, 124, with some discussion in Irene Bates and E. Gary Smith, *Lost Legacy: The Office of*

bound or sealed believers to their ultimate salvation. Through patriarchal priesthood, Smith taught, the Latter-day Saints gained control over such sealing power.

Smith's patriarchal system was not without antecedents. Various American Protestants cherished opportunities to bless each other, formally and informally. Blessings from venerable old men were particularly prized, in gentle echoes of Old Testament exemplars.<sup>49</sup> In the hands of the elder and younger Joseph Smiths, this usually informal practice became a highly specific ritual embedded in a richly contoured conceptual system. In many early cases, the blessings were bestowed in communal meetings similar to Methodist agape love feasts.<sup>50</sup> This distinctive aspect of Mormon ecclesiology became widely known and pilloried outside the Church, critics maintaining that Joseph Sr. "mumble[d], with his eyes shut, over the heads of the orphan children of the church."<sup>51</sup> Some seceders reprinted their blessings as signs of the credulity of their former co-religionists.<sup>52</sup>

The scoffing of critics and seceders is not terribly surprising. Jo-

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*Presiding Patriarch* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 49–50. Matthew 16:19 describes such a power as the "keys of the kingdom." On seals, see Prince, *Power from on High*, and Brown, *Early Mormon Conquest of Death*, chap. 6.

<sup>49</sup>See, e.g., David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 218, 231.

<sup>50</sup>See, e.g., Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Vol. 1: 1832–1839*, in THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 139, December 29, 1835; 146, January 7, 1836. See also William Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, December 18, 1835, Phelps Collection, VMSS 810, Box 1, fd. 1, item 7, Perry Special Collections, and Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 245.

<sup>51</sup>J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages: or the Rise, Progress, and Causes of Mormonism* (New York: Platt & Peters, 1842), 245–47.

<sup>52</sup>See, e.g., John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland and Whiting, 1842), 42–43, and William Swartzell, *Mormonism Exposed, Being a Journal of a Residence in Missouri from the 28th of May to the 20th of August, 1838* (Pekin, Ohio: Author, 1840), iv.

seph Sr.'s blessings promised amazing powers to recipients, from gifts of tongues to supernatural translocations, from willed immortality to interplanetary travel. Often Joseph Sr. announced to recipients that they were sealed to eternal life or that their names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life, emphasizing again the close relationships between sealing and the patriarchal priesthood.<sup>53</sup> Such dramatic elements are prone to divert attention from a central meaning of blessings bestowed in the 1830s and 1840s. In these patriarchal blessings, the image of a sacerdotal "priesthood" father wove in and out of the process of adoption into a sacred lineage.

Essentially all of the major themes understood under the rubric of adoption theology were present in the early patriarchal blessings. The blessings framed the fundamental human problem as orphanhood and the solution as adoption into the family of God. While the blessing could serve as proof of one's place among the seed of Abraham,<sup>54</sup> it could also identify the patriarch performing the blessing as a special kind of sacerdotal father. In a shift that most Protestants would find heretical, patriarchal blessings offered new fathers to desirable Saints. These blessings represent one of the first indications that early Mormons would introduce human extensions to Christ into the meaning of divine adoption.

The group best understood as requiring a sacerdotal father consisted of bona fide orphans. A number of Latter-day Saints received their blessings specifically "that thou mayest no longer be an orphan."<sup>55</sup> Joseph Sr. made clear to such orphans that the Church would provide the family structure they otherwise lacked—the Saints would thereby "have Fathers and Mothers in israel."<sup>56</sup> The Saints embraced Joseph Sr.'s role as father to the fatherless. In his 1840 eulogy

<sup>53</sup>H. Michael Marquardt, comp. and ed., *Early Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007), is the most convenient source for these early blessings. Unless otherwise noted, Joseph Smith Sr. pronounced all of the blessings cited in this section.

<sup>54</sup>Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), and Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 7–8, 43.

<sup>55</sup>Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 40, blessing on Levi Jackman, August 27, 1835; see also 44, blessing on Frederick G. Williams, September 14, 1835; and 65, blessing on Charles Jameson, March 21, 1836.

to the dead patriarch, Robert B. Thompson, Joseph Jr.'s secretary, recalled that "the widow and the orphan have received his Patriarchal blessing."<sup>57</sup> In 1840 Heber Kimball continued to worry over the fatherless, as they required a duly ordained patriarch to care for them and bestow the required blessings.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to literal orphans, Joseph Sr. and others revealed that a biological father, if "an idolator" (a self-conscious allusion to Abraham, whose father worshipped idols according to tradition), would need to be replaced by a spiritual father to ensure the recipient's place in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>59</sup> Joseph Sr. told one blessing recipient, David Elliot, that he would not be abandoned, in phrases that evoked seals, private fatherhood, and adoption as God's fatherhood: "I seal a father's blessing that thou mayest not be an orphan, but call God, thy father."<sup>60</sup> Stephen Post learned he was "an orphan as to the things of the kingdom, for thy natural father hath no power to bless thee," a void filled by the Mormon patriarch.<sup>61</sup>

For a controversial sect like the Latter-day Saints, conversion often meant estrangement from biological family. The practice of gathering to consecrated lands only intensified the threat Mormonism represented to traditional kinship ties. The patriarchal priesthood and its blessings presented one solution to the problem, a central one for the fledgling Church. The first patriarch recognized that his namesake son was constructing an ecclesial family that could come into sharp conflict with biological kindreds. In his blessings, Joseph Sr. reminded the Latter-day Saints of their sacrifices and the compensatory rewards. Joseph Sr. told Mary Smith in 1834, "Thou hast

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 187, blessing on Jesse Walker Johnstun, February 5, 1839.

<sup>57</sup>Robert B. Thompson, "An Address Delivered at the Funeral of Joseph Smith Sen. Late Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by R. B. Thompson, September 15th, 1840," *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 11 (September 1840): 172.

<sup>58</sup>Kimball's comments are in Brigham Young, "From England: Preston, April 17th, 1840," *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 8 (June 1840): 121.

<sup>59</sup>Jesse Hitchcock learned that his "father hath become an idolator." Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 56, December 16, 1835. Abr. 1:5-7, 30; 2:5; Josh. 24:2.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., blessing on David Elliot, 70, May 5, 1836.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 67, March 26, 1836; see also blessing on Calvin W. Stoddard, 13, December 9, 1844.

left thy father's house, and thy near relatives for the gospel's sake," emphasizing her sacrifice.<sup>62</sup> In other cases, Father Smith asserted, "Thou hast been united to Kindred blood," an attempt to minimize the social fracture of conversion and establish the Church community, with him as its patriarchal head and his priesthood as the power that made it possible.<sup>63</sup>

Orphanhood could even extend to those whose parents were baptized Latter-day Saints. Joseph Sr. told David Elliot that his father is "not as yet perfected in the faith, yet if he will seal this blessing upon the head it shall be well, and it shall be called in his name."<sup>64</sup> Another believer learned that "if thy father also shall bless thee, then thou shalt receive a double blessing."<sup>65</sup> This dual approach provided flexibility for a natural father to become sufficiently righteous to complement the spiritual blessing bestowed by the Mormon patriarch. Even as the patriarch held open the possibility of a natural father's integration into the process, the tension between spiritual and natural relationships intruded. In a more obviously collaborative mode, Joseph Sr. and his brother John jointly pronounced a blessing on John's son George A., integrating John into the ranks of patriarchs.<sup>66</sup> At times Joseph Sr. urged evangelism to solve the problem, as when he instructed Emanuel Murphy to "preach to thy father and mother and bring them into the kingdom."<sup>67</sup> (Tensions related to differential merit, including competition between potential father figures, persisted both into polygamy and into the law of adoption, as Smith's followers implemented it in the latter 1840s.)

The blessing on Martha Jane Knowlton exemplifies the tension that animated the patriarchal project. Employing the language of evangelism as the adoption of converts, Joseph Sr. blessed Martha "by the consent of thy Father and the request of Br Page thy Spiritual Fa-

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 16, blessing on Mary [Bailey] Smith, December 9, 1834. She was married to Joseph's son, Samuel Harrison Smith.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 175, blessing on Roxanna Freeman, December 5, 1837.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 70, blessing on David Elliot, May 5, 1836.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 64, blessing on Julian Moses, February 20, 1836.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 30–31.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 183, blessing on Emanuel Masters Murphy, September 30, 1838.



ther.”<sup>68</sup> Three father figures thus hovered over Martha’s head. The patriarch stood physically beside the figurative presence of her biological father and Elder John E. Page, the apostle who converted her. Each of these men had a claim on Martha, the first and last making their claims through the patriarchal and evangelistic interpretation of spiritual adoption.

Sometimes the role of the patriarch sounded dramatically like that of Jesus. To Margaret Johnstun, Joseph Sr. announced, “I will be wil[l]ing to acknowledge the[e] in the great day of the lord.”<sup>69</sup> This was the language Jesus used, the idea that taking Christ’s name meant that He would acknowledge the believer at the final judgment. This framing illustrates one central meaning of the early patriarchal priesthood, an act of creating relationships based on the Pauline image of adoption into Christ. In important ways, the patriarch stood in for Christ in this sacred transaction.

Some of the audacity of the substitution of patriarchs for Jesus likely derives from the Old Testament imagery that permeated the Mormon view of adoption. Employing Hebraic language of genealogy and created ethnicity, the patriarchs adopted believers into the nation of Israel. Joseph Sr. advised Roswell Blood that “thou art not of gentile blood but of the seed of Israel yet thy companion is a Gentile and goeth in the way of the Gentiles. But if she will repent and obey the gospel she shall become the seed of Abraham through the law of adoption.”<sup>70</sup> Even as Joseph Sr. declared Roswell’s righteous bloodline, his wife’s proved susceptible to correction. The notion that patriarchal blessings could identify and establish a sacred lineage became increasingly prominent with time.<sup>71</sup> These beliefs need to be seen within British and American Israelism, as documented by several scholars. Anglo-American Israelism played an important role within Protestantism: Thinkers as eminently reasonable as Jonathan Ed-

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 188, blessing on Martha Jane Knowlton, January 21, 1840. She received this blessing before her marriage to Howard Coray.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 187, blessing on Margaret Johnstun, February 5, 1839.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 71, blessing on Roswell Blood, May 8, 1836.

<sup>71</sup>Cooper, *Mormon Covenant Organization*, 74. Hyrum Smith blessed Susanna White in 1841 “that you might have a Name in Israel, as Daughter of Abraham in the lineage of Joseph, in the tribe of Ephraim,” quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 67, September 8, 1841.

wards saw Israelite blood in white Christians.<sup>72</sup> What distinguished the Latter-day Saints was that they acquired access to that lineage through patriarchal adoption.

Reflecting Smith's tendency to merge and integrate strands from diverse intellectual traditions, in Nauvoo's earliest months the Mormon prophet announced to his followers that "an Evangelist is a patriarch even the oldest man of the Blood of Joseph or of the seed of Abraham, wherever the Church of Christ is established in the earth, there should be a patriarch for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints as it was with Jacob in giving his patriarchal blessing unto his Sons."<sup>73</sup> Though on its face the definition sounds like an idiosyncratic attempt to ensure that Mormon priesthood offices covered all those presented in the New Testament, there is a poorly appreciated continuity. Evangelists brought souls to adoption and thereby gained a claim on the people they converted. The pure-blood patriarch was the Mormon evangelist *par excellence*—and he served as a New Testament precedent for the fundamentally Old Testament concept of a patriarch. This image of an apostle acquiring spiritual children animated many of the earliest patriarchal blessings. Joseph Sr. promised David Elliot "thou shalt bring thy thousands as seals of thy ministry."<sup>74</sup> Bringing "thousands" referred to the spiritual children a missionary brought to the throne of grace at the end of time, including family, friends, and strangers. Others received similar promises, emphasizing friendship networks much as Nancy Towle did in her descriptions of anticipated afterlife community. Joseph Sr. promised Wilford Woodruff's wife, Phebe, that "if thou wilt keep the commandments thou shalt have all of thy friends. They shall be members of the covenant."<sup>75</sup>

Family particularly could be preserved by the patriarchal priesthood. The early patriarchs gave power to parents to save their own

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<sup>72</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 15–40; Gerald R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>73</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 6, June 27, 1839.

<sup>74</sup>Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 70, blessing on David Elliot, May 5, 1836. Jonathan Crosby learned that he would rise to meet Jesus at the second coming, "and thy thousands shall be with thee." *Ibid.*, 64, February 21, 1836.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 87, blessing on Phebe W. Carter Woodruff, November 10, 1836.

children.<sup>76</sup> Amos Fuller learned from Joseph Sr. that his was “a blessing which shall rest on thee and on thy seed.”<sup>77</sup> Clarissa Perry learned she would “have children in the covenant.”<sup>78</sup> Wielding this power, men could become patriarchs to their own biological kindred. Joseph Cooper learned he would “be a patriarch in thy family to seal blessings on thy children to the latest generation.”<sup>79</sup> Joseph Bosworth received “power to save thy family, even all so that none of them shall be lost.”<sup>80</sup> These blessings connect the vast expanse of sacred history—Father Israel and his sons—to the intimate and personal love of believers for their children and grandchildren. The theme of assured salvation for offspring continued to expand over the course of the next decade.

Recalling that adoption represented secure salvation for converted believers, seals and sealing appeared prominently in early patriarchal blessings. To Emanuel Murphy, Joseph Sr. announced, “I seal the seal of God upon thy forehead, and seal thee up unto eternal life.”<sup>81</sup> To Marcellus McKown, Joseph Sr. pronounced “many blessings upon thy family, even to the sealing of them up unto eternal life.”<sup>82</sup> The new relationships established in the evangelizing adoption prepared individuals and their kindreds for the Second Coming of Christ. Emphasizing the extent to which participation in the sacerdotal genealogy could save kindreds intact, Joseph Sr. promised Lorenzo Snow that “all thy kindred shall be brought into the kingdom

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<sup>76</sup>William Law critiqued Joseph Sr. as something of an automaton, issuing promises of plenteous and righteous offspring. Lyndon W. Cook, *William Law: Biographical Essay, Nauvoo Diary, Correspondence, Interview* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994), 121.

<sup>77</sup>Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 76, blessing on Amos Fuller, June 17, 1836.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 163, blessing on Clarissa Perry, May 27, 1837.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 72, blessing on Joseph Cooper, May 14, 1836.

<sup>80</sup>This would happen through transmission of patriarchal authority, as Bosworth would receive “power to bless thy children in due time, and give them power to bless their children.” Ibid., 104–5, Joseph Bosworth, probably 1836. See also 120, blessing on Allen Gray, probably 1836.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 183, blessing on Emanuel Masters Murphy, September 30, 1838.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 56, blessing on Marcellus McKown, December 9, 1835; 56, blessing on Applia Dow, December 17, 1835.

and have a Celestial Glory” through his patriarchal blessing.<sup>83</sup> The desire to fill the space once occupied by the Halfway Covenant is particularly clear in the blessing on Jacob Chapman: “Great grace shall flow unto thee through the covenant which thou hast received, and by which thy blessings shall descend down and reach thy posterity that they may be numbered with the children of Abraham and receive an inheritance with their brethren and enjoy all the privileges of the kingdom on earth.”<sup>84</sup>

*Priesthood and the Legal Heirs of God*

Patriarchal blessings were a ritual window on a rich set of interconnected beliefs. These beliefs—a cluster of priesthood, heirship, and birthrights—merge several important threads in early Mormonism. A power called priesthood made possible the adoptive promises of the patriarchal blessings. This authority made sacred adoption “legal” and established the Latter-day Saints as definitive heirs who possessed a birthright to this adopting priesthood.

In attempting to explain what it meant for his father to be the Church’s patriarch and to come to terms with Hebrew Bible exemplars of priestly and cultic power, Joseph Jr. spent most of his religious career elaborating a sacerdotal system for the Mormon Church, a system he denoted with the semantically complex term “priesthood.” Smith’s persistent fascination with priesthood is much commented on but still relatively poorly understood.<sup>85</sup> From early on, Smith intended that the Church be heavily sacerdotal, announcing a tiered priesthood system with one stratum based on the “Aaronic” priesthood of the Hebrews, another transiently identified with Abraham, and the most elevated named for the mysterious biblical figure Melchizedek. Ultimately absorbed into the Melchizedek Priesthood, in the 1830s and 1840s the patriarchal priesthood of Abraham proved central to adoption theology.

Abraham’s patriarchal priesthood made available to believers powers once held to be identical with Christ, as if extending the Christological imagery of the book of Hebrews. This extension made possible the dual sense of sealing as an individual’s assured salvation

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 95, blessing on Lorenzo Snow, December 15, 1836.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 108, blessing on Jacob Kimble Chapman, probably 1836.

<sup>85</sup>Prince, *Power from On High*, is the best treatment to date. Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, provides additional insight into Ohio-period priesthood developments.

and direct connection to other human beings. Simultaneously priesthood represented legal authority, a way of establishing those who were citizens of the kingdom of God. In ways that the early Latter-day Saints and Joseph Smith never fully worked out, this priesthood functioned in the spirit of the genealogical ties and birthrights of Hebrew scripture. In certain respects, Mormons believed with some other Christians that they were literal descendants of the ancient Hebrews. But what nourished their belief was the conviction that their priesthood could *make* them Israel. Biological ties could be unreliable; sacerdotal ties were secure. Priesthood offered a metaphysical substitute for blood, a power that defined and transformed human beings and their relationships (D&C 84:33–34).

Smith experimented with images of priesthood lineality early on, particularly in a collection of revelations merged for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, in which Smith persistently left open the possibility that a “literal descendant of Aaron” might claim a leadership position in the Church outside normal appointment channels.<sup>86</sup> Though no one ever received Church office on the basis of such a descent from Aaron, this policy served as a reminder of the close association between lineality and priesthood.

Images of royal and priesthood lineages expanded further when Joseph Smith and William Phelps began a sustained exploration of a collection of funerary papyri in June 1835. For each hieroglyph on the papyri, they supplied a transliteration and definition in a collection of manuscripts now called the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. In this exploration, Smith and Phelps amplified their ideas about lineality and heirship.<sup>87</sup> As they struggled to interpret glyphs on the papyri, these sacred linguists espied pictograms that traced sacred power “from Abraham back to his father and from Abraham’s father back to his father and so on back through the line of his progenitors.”<sup>88</sup>

Smith and Phelps interpreted one glyph that they understood to represent the Hebrew letter *resh*, “head,” as referring to “Patriarchal

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<sup>86</sup>D&C 107:17, 69, 73, 76. See discussion in Prince, *Power from On High*, 66.

<sup>87</sup>For an interpretation of the meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers, see Samuel M. Brown, “Joseph (Smith) in Egypt: Babel, Hieroglyphs, and the Pure Language of Eden,” *Church History* 78, no. 1 (March 2009): 26–65. On lineality, see *ibid.*, 27–28, 40, 59–61.

<sup>88</sup>“The Grammar and A[l]phabet of the Egyptian Language,”

government, or authority; a land governed according to the pattern or order given to the patriarchs or fathers, rules and laws of a gover[n]-ment administered by the direction of Heaven or God . . . a priestly government; a government administered by the authority of the priesthood less or under the patriarchal.”<sup>89</sup> Another glyph, which they called *Phah ho e oop*, described a sacred “king who has universal dominion over all the earth,” who ruled by “power” that could be “exten[ded . . .] by marriage or by ordination.”<sup>90</sup>

The Book of Abraham that resulted from the encounter with the papyri followed those same themes of a heritable power and authority. Its opening verses describe Abraham’s desire to obtain “the blessings of the fathers” by which he could become “rightful heir” of a power that “came down from the fathers.” He was, in prescient terms, a “prince of peace,” an early and pregnant reference to Christ applied to human priestly authorities. The patriarch Abraham “sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.” Later in the first chapter, Abraham announced that God would “put upon thee my name.” The second chapter reflected more clearly the relationships between biology and priesthood. Abraham’s “seed” was to carry the “priesthood” to the nations. Abraham was an adoptive father to those who would follow. Summarizing, God told Abraham “in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body)” (Abr. 1:2–4, 18, 20, 31; 2:9–11). The striking parentheticals suggest the complex relationships between ideas about physical or biological, what the Mormon scripture called “literal,” and sacerdotal rights and inheritances.

Language about priesthood as establishing legal claims to au-

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Kirtland Egyptian Papers, MS 1295, fd. 1, p. 18, LDS Church History Library. Following Brian Hauglid, *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Study, Brigham Young University, 2010), 7, I will refer to this manuscript as GAEL.

<sup>89</sup>GAEL, 5–6; H. Michael Marquardt, comp., *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers* (Cullman, Ala.: Printing Service, 1981), 13–16; Moses Stuart, *Grammar of the Hebrew Language* (Andover, Mass.: Flagg and Gould, 1831), 2.

<sup>90</sup>GAEL 3, 9.

thority or power extended more broadly than the Egyptian project. Priesthood was the legal authority by which adoption could take place.<sup>91</sup> An editorialist, presumably John Taylor, describing Smith's higher priesthood, explained that "previous to the introduction of the gospel and Melchisedec priesthood, it was impossible for a person to become a son of God, (they might be a servant but not a son)."<sup>92</sup> Adoption, according to Taylor, could happen only through the special priesthood Smith unveiled. The Hebrew Bible explained the Christian Bible. Joseph Fielding, a British convert in Nauvoo, reflected on the same message: "I had thought much on the subject of the redemption of those who died under the broken covenant, it is plain they could not come forth in the kingdom of God, as they had not been adopted, legally into it."<sup>93</sup> These questions about legal status pointed to the Mormon interpretation of another key term in Paul's adoption theology, "heir."

The Latter-day Saints interpreted Paul's "heirs of God" and "joint-heirs with Christ" in terms that again merged Old and New Testaments. Paul's letter to Galatians (3:29) broadened heirship into the Hebrew Bible model by telling believers that "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This passage underscored the association between Abraham and priesthood authority. Other Protestants tended to read heirship less literally, as involvement in the community of Christ. In generally spiritual terms, being an heir usually meant salvation—going to heaven.<sup>94</sup>

Latter-day Saints emphasized the "lawful" nature of their inheritance, language they used to associate heirship with Smith's priest-

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<sup>91</sup>This is the central point of Pratt, *Voice of Warning*, 105ff.

<sup>92</sup>"The Melchisedec Priesthood," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 1 (November 15, 1842): 10.

<sup>93</sup>Joseph Fielding, "Dear Br. Robinson," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 5 (January 1, 1842): 649.

<sup>94</sup>See, e.g., John Brown, *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible: Containing an Historical Account of the Persons, a Geographical Account of the Places, a Literal, Critical, and Systematical Description of Other Objects* (Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear, and Eichbaum, 1811), s.v. "heir"; William Burkitt, *Expository Notes with Practical Observations, on the New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: James Dinnis, 1832), 69. Thomas Watson, on the other hand, in *A Body of Practical Divinity* (Glasgow: John Hall, 1759), 384, provides a view rather similar to Mormonism, in which joint-heirship signified

hood (D&C 86:9). As the Saints experimented with communalism in Missouri, the phrase “legal heir to the Kingdom of Zion” referred specifically to someone who had committed fully and formally to the Church covenants regulating their economic affairs.<sup>95</sup> When Wilford Woodruff committed himself to economic communalism in 1830s Kirtland, he indicated that he did so “that I may be a lawful heir to the Kingdom of God.”<sup>96</sup> When Joseph Sr.’s brother John began giving patriarchal blessings in the 1840s, he emphasized that recipients were identified as “lawful heirs” of the kingdom, as did other patriarchs.<sup>97</sup>

### THE MORMON CHAIN OF BELONGING

While the details are more complex than can be presented in this essay, Joseph Smith Jr. reformulated the neoplatonic Great Chain of Being into a genealogical network of salvation, thereby producing what I have termed the Mormon Chain of Belonging.<sup>98</sup> The original Chain of Being, a dominant philosophical system that organized all existence into a single hierarchy, derived from Aristotle’s interpretation of Plato. Based on the principles of plenitude, continuity, and gradation (all things that could exist do exist, and all types of thing are unique and hierarchically ordered without intervening gap), the chain extended from the highest demigods to the lowliest particles of

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an ontological status possibly superior to angels.

<sup>95</sup>See, e.g., Joseph Smith et al., “Letter to the Brethren in Zion,” June 25, 1833, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>96</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:16, December 31, 1834, a New Year’s pledge.

<sup>97</sup>See, e.g., the blessings of Bathsheba B. Smith and George A. Smith in October 1844; George A. Smith, *Diary*, October 1, 1844, MS 1322, Box 1, fd. 4, in *Selected Collections*, 1:32. For another example, see John D. Lee and William W. Bishop, *Mormonism Unveiled: or, the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee; (Written by Himself), Embracing a History of Mormonism from Its Inception Down to the Present Time, with an Exposition of the Secret History, Signs, Symbols and Crimes of the Mormon Church* (St Louis: Bryan, Brand & Company, 1877), 95. See Stapley, “Ritual Adoption,” on the efflorescence of legal heirship in later Mormonism.

<sup>98</sup>This section summarizes the arguments of Samuel M. Brown, “Early Mormon Chain of Belonging,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 1–52, while situating the chain within adoption theology.



dust. At several points, Christian thinkers employed a version of this chain, also called the Scale of Nature (*Scala Naturae*), to justify human hierarchies and to discern the hand (and mind) of God in biological diversity.<sup>99</sup> Though the original Chain of Being had been a static organizational principle in which different entities stayed forever in their decreed state, by the late eighteenth century various thinkers had propounded what Arthur Lovejoy, its best-known scholar, has called the “temporal” Chain of Being.<sup>100</sup> In this eternally progressive version, relationships remained immutable and hierarchically ordered, but every individual’s level of glory increased endlessly as the entire chain progressed in glory.

By transforming the Chain of Being into a heavenly family tree, Smith seems to have been making the argument that human families paralleled the structures of the cosmos in a mystically powerful way, an echo of the metaphysical law of correspondence.<sup>101</sup> Adoption theology served as an important link between, on the one hand, traditional Christian teachings about adoption as regeneration and assuming the name of Christ and, on the other hand, more metaphysical ideas about human nature and destiny. Adoption was the mechan-

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<sup>99</sup>Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, 4th ed. (New York rpt.; London: Whittaker, Treacher & Co., 1832), 253, is emblematic of the continuing social relevance of the chain to transatlantic arguments about social hierarchy. This visiting British littérateur complained of Thomas Jefferson’s philosophy as “too palpable to a people, each individual of whom would rather derive his importance from believing that none are above him, than from the consciousness that in his station he makes part of a noble whole.” See also Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 8, 54; Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 152–56, 166; Alden Vaughan, *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 26–28; Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man’s Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 197–98.

<sup>100</sup>Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), esp. 76, 252.

<sup>101</sup>On correspondence, see Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 8–9, 23, 72, 155–72.

ism by which believers entered the Chain of Belonging in all its ritual and conceptual richness.

In April 1844, Joseph Smith delivered what is known as the King Follett Discourse, probably his first public, explicit characterization of God as a divinized being, a core doctrine of his divine anthropology.<sup>102</sup> About a month later, he delivered a second sermon, the Sermon in the Grove, in which he incorporated several elements of his adoption theology into the divine anthropology. The meeting opened with Samuel Medley's hymn "Mortals, Awake! with Angels Join," in which Medley termed Jesus "Redeemer, Brother, Friend!" Smith then began using a familiar metaphor and a creative misreading of Revelation 1:6 to show that, just as Jesus had a Divine Father, so God Himself also had a Divine Father. He then returned to the Egyptian project to secure logical and scriptural support for the Chain of Belonging. After clarifying that the "intelligences" who had a place in the Chain of Belonging would be called "kings and priests," Smith quoted from and amplified the Book of Abraham (Abr. 3:18), explaining that there "may exist two men on the earth—one wiser than the other—wo[ul]d. shew that an[o]t[he]r. who is wiser than the wisest may exist—intelligences exist one above anot[he]r. that there is no end to it."<sup>103</sup> This argument exemplified the chain's principle of gradation, expressed in terms of a cosmic hierarchy. Using the philosophical construct of the chain, Smith explained how the Latter-day Saints could be like Jesus ontologically. Just as God taught Jesus who He was, so Jesus taught humans who they were. The gradations of the chain's hierarchy were of degree rather than of essence. The notion that humans could stand in relation to Jesus as Jesus stood in relation to God became clear in Smith's elaboration of the concept of "saviors on Mount Zion" (discussed below).

While adoption theology provided a conceptual framework for understanding the possibility that Saints could become members of God's family in new ways, rituals were required to effect this transfor-

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<sup>102</sup>On divine anthropology—my term to describe the conspecificity of humans, angels, and gods in Smith's theology—see Brown, *Early Mormon Conquest of Death*, chap. 9.

<sup>103</sup>The sermon, to the extent it is recorded, is printed in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 380–82. Despite the sparse documentation, the meanings of the sermon are relatively clear in the context of Smith's thought in 1844.

mation. The concept could have become a theological dead end, littering Mormonism's past; but Joseph Smith built upon the concept, centering it in the liturgical developments that became the most important Mormon developments of the 1840s. In these rites, the implications of the Chain of Belonging became clear, a marvelous divine future for the Latter-day Saints.

*Baptism for the Dead*

Adoption theology formally entered Mormon ritual life in the early 1840s. Addressing bereaved followers at the 1840 funeral of Seymour Brunson, a loyal follower, Smith revealed that the Saints could perform baptisms—what they understood as the New Testament rite of adoption—for their deceased ancestors. Mormon apologists often invoked this practice as a solution to the apparent injustice of the Calvinist system, in which those who die without hearing the gospel are damned, what evangelicals term the “scandal of particularity.” At an even deeper level, however, baptism for the dead allowed the Latter-day Saints to craft permanent, sacerdotal associations with their dead.

The Saints embraced the opportunity with great gusto.<sup>104</sup> Descending beneath the earth into the liquid grave, the Latter-day Saints rescued their departed kin from the obliterating silence of the tomb. In the complex, overlapping meanings of early Mormonism, the Saints thereby adopted their ancestors to themselves. Baptism for the dead drew on and amplified various images and symbols within the Mormon movement and its environment. Explaining the practice in a newspaper editorial a few months after its announcement, Smith called on ancient Christian precedent. Quoting Chrysostom on the Marcionites as filtered through Charles Buck, Smith announced: “After any catechumen was dead, they hid a living man under the bed of

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<sup>104</sup>For general histories of baptism for the dead, none of which describe the grounding of the rite in adoption theology, see M. Guy Bishop, “‘What Has Become of Our Fathers?’: Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 85–97; 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; Alexander L. Baugh, “‘Blessed Is the First Man Baptized in This Font’: Reuben McBride, First Proxy to Be Baptized for the Dead in the Nauvoo Temple,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 253–61.

the deceased; then coming to the dead man, they asked him whether he would receive baptism; and he making no answer, the other answered for him, and said that he would be baptized in his stead; and so they baptized the living for the dead.”<sup>105</sup>

Smith editorialized his borrowing from Buck by explaining that “the church of course at that time was degenerate, and the particular form might be incorrect, but the thing is sufficiently plain in the scriptures.”<sup>106</sup> Three years later, after the amplification of the concepts behind baptism for the dead in the temple endowment ceremony, Smith reiterated the close association between adoption theology and baptism for the dead. In a sermon on “the resurrection of the dead,” Smith detailed the role baptism for the dead played in preparing friends and relatives for a grand reunion on Mount Zion.<sup>107</sup>

In the act of lineal reversal subsumed by baptism for the dead, Mormon believers served as surrogate saviors—as “Saviors on Mount Zion,” according to Smith, of their dead kin. Where the patriarchal blessings and the priesthood associated with such blessings had identified a lineage deep in Israel’s past, baptism for the dead began to assemble the individual links into a “chain” that ran back to Adam. Smith tied baptism for the dead to an exegesis of Malachi’s prophecy of Elijah’s return (Mal. 4).<sup>108</sup> In 1844 Smith explained that Malachi’s reference to Elijah’s “turn[ing]” hearts should have been translated “bind” or “seal,” a statement that made explicit how closely Smith tied adoption to baptism for the dead and the temple project.<sup>109</sup> A little over six months after Smith’s death, Young preached in strong terms that “baptism for the dead” was the mechanism by which secondary priesthood saviors could “hold them [their dead relatives] . . . in spite of all Earth and hell.”<sup>110</sup>

<sup>105</sup>Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, 44, s.v. “baptism for the dead.”

<sup>106</sup>[Joseph Smith], “Baptism for the Dead,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 12 (April 15, 1842): 760–61.

<sup>107</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 367–68, May 12, 1844.

<sup>108</sup>See Samuel M. Brown, “The Prophet Elias Puzzle,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 1–17.

<sup>109</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 318, January 21, 1844; cf. Mal. 4.

<sup>110</sup>Brigham Young and Willard Richards Family Meeting Minutes,

*Temple Liturgy and Plural Marriage*

From the theological foundation of baptism for the dead, Joseph Smith pushed forward during his last two years of life to create a richly textured ritual system he associated with the new temple. Through highly symbolic rites that purified believers and prepared them for their postmortal journeys by situating them with the world's first parents in the Garden of Eden, Smith began to clarify the ways that the sacramental and sacerdotal would combine in his solution to the problem of election (discussed below).<sup>111</sup> Employing images of royal and priestly power from the New Testament book of Revelation, Smith informed Latter-day Saints that they would become "Kings and Priests" (and, by extensions, queens and priestesses) in the kingdom of God, roles they assumed with great enthusiasm. Participants in the temple liturgy gained a power, mediated by Smith's priesthood, that allowed them to seal their offspring to themselves just as they sealed their ancestors to salvation.<sup>112</sup> In the temple rites, Smith had captured the sacramental power necessary to make real the promise of the Mormon Elijah. The sacred lineage of the patriarchal priesthood came to fruition as the Latter-day Saints discovered that they were not just descendants of Bible patriarchs—they were the sacred royalty anticipated by the book of Revelation.

Through the temple *cultus* the Latter-day Saints acquired new names of great power by which they gained access to heavenly powers. These names echoed the images of seals as adoption. Seals represented God's ownership of humans, the bestowal of His name upon them. When the Saints acquired parallel names in the temple liturgy, they experimented with similar power. In addition, Smith anointed and sealed men and women, the parental couples who would engage in formal adoption rituals after Smith's death. These rituals were

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January 8, 1845, 5, General Church Minutes, 1839–77, *Selected Collections*, 1:18.

<sup>111</sup>On the significance of the temple, see Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 39–40, 92, and Brown, *Early Mormon Death Conquest*, chaps. 6–7.

<sup>112</sup>See George Laub, "Reminiscences and Journal," MS 9628, LDS Church History Library, 101–3, for one example of ways rank-and-file Mormons understood adoption and the temple liturgy. Mormons later incorporated explicit parent-child sealings to reify the suggestion in Smith's liturgy that the sealings of couple included their children within its salvific power.

closely related to the establishment of novel family structures. In Smith's attack on proto-Victorian culture, the promise of sealing and adoption expanded in a surprising recapitulation of the most controversial aspect of Hebrew patriarchal family life—polygamy.

The vast scope of adoption theology, generally stretched vertically through the generations of time, in polygamy stretched horizontally through the contemporary world. Though the first steps dated to the 1830s, by the early 1840s Smith had begun to expound a marital/sexual system scholars have termed proto-polygamy and which early Latter-day Saints denominated “plural” or “celestial” marriage.<sup>113</sup> In several important respects, polygamy is the marital amplification and application of adoption theology. “Plural” not only indicated that there would be multiple wives for each man but that such ritual marriages would unite worshippers as part of the celestial plurality of Smith's heaven family. In the words of a revelation, the righteous “shall be crowned upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old and young because of the lineage of my Preathood saith the Lord it shall be upon you and upon your Children after you from generation to generation By virtue of the Holy promise which I now make unto you.”<sup>114</sup>

The adoption theology, particularly as it was expressed through the temple liturgy, explains how Smith could claim that plural marriage was a sacrament that vouchsafed salvation.<sup>115</sup> The notion that salvation depended on relationships, though, was much broader than polygamy. As he came to elaborate the rationale for polygamy, particularly in the revelation announcing the practice that Smith dictated on July 12, 1843, he used language that was already familiar to the Saints from the rite of baptism for the dead and the analogy from patriarchal priesthood and its blessings. In his polygamy revelation, Smith warned that, if individuals could not be brought into the sacerdotal family, they could not be saved; they would instead live “sepa-

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<sup>113</sup>Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 31, coined the apt term “proto-polygamy” to describe the Nauvoo experience.

<sup>114</sup>Revelation, July 27, 1842, MS 4583, Box 1, fd. 104, in *Selected Collections*, 1:19.

<sup>115</sup>Davies, *Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 155.

rately and singly, without exaltation.”<sup>116</sup> Four days after dictating the revelation on plurality, Smith preached a sermon on July 16 that referred to polygamy in coded terms. In it, he emphasized that those who failed to participate in the sacerdotal family through polygamy would “never becom Sons of God,” an explicit equation of adoption and polygamy.<sup>117</sup> The scandalous sexuality associated with polygamy has distracted peers and scholars from a central component of Smith’s protest against the Victorian family, polygamy’s deeply biblical and communal reflections on the meaning of salvation.

As with the rest of adoption theology, polygamy contained complex contradictions and tensions that predicted fracture lines for the future. Just as orphans could find a new father in Israel, so inadequately married women could find a celestial patriarchal husband. Much has been made of Smith’s early pattern in Nauvoo of marrying the wives of his followers, a practice that accounted for most of the early plural marriages. This practice was not polyandry, despite a common practice in Mormon studies of employing that term.<sup>118</sup> The women to whom Smith become a second living husband are probably best considered “dual” wives, participating in two marital companionships: one polygamous, the other monogamous; one legal, the other sacerdotal.<sup>119</sup> Their status calls to mind immediately the ecclesiastical orphans whose fathers were inadequate to the task of spiritual adoption. The presence of dual wives in Nauvoo suggests two things: the sacerdotal family would disrupt proto-Victorian norms, and there would be a hierarchy within the Mormon Chain of Belonging.

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<sup>116</sup>Revelation, July 12, 1843, Revelations Collection, MS 4583, Box 1, fd. 75, in *Selected Collections*, 1:19 [D&C 132:17].

<sup>117</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 232.

<sup>118</sup>Polyandry is a rare marital system in which a woman becomes wife to several men, usually brothers or other close kin. It generally occurs in materially impoverished societies. On the problems with using “polyandry” to describe Nauvoo Mormonism, see Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 165. Foster has proposed that “proxy wives” replace the overuse of “polyandry” in Mormon studies, but Foster’s term misapprehends this aspect of proto-polygamy.

<sup>119</sup>For the stories of these dual wives, see Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 71–144, 171–253.

**IMPLICATIONS: ELECTION, SECONDARY SAVIORS,  
AND THE MECHANICS OF SALVATION**

Mormon adoption theology was fundamentally a story about salvation. Framed explicitly as a response to Calvinist election, Mormon adoption theology confronted and overwhelmed the vexing problem of the uncertainty of salvation in antebellum Protestantism. Smith's solution to election came, though, at the expense of the famed individualism of the early Republic. Smith was advancing a claim about both the ineluctably communal nature of salvation and the remarkable role other humans could play in the salvation drama.

*Certain Election*

There should be no doubt that Joseph Smith presented a solution to the problem of election, a project central to the folk anti-Calvinism that was coming to dominate American Protestantism. Election was the theological assertion that God, in his perfect wisdom, chose who would be saved and who damned. For centuries, this concept had stood in for much of the rest of Reformed theology, even though reading God's mind on the topic was notoriously difficult. Repeatedly Smith made clear that his Restoration solved the problem of the inscrutable and seemingly arbitrary decrees of the God whom critics attributed to Calvin and his American heirs. Mormons would be assured of their salvation through the relationships created by the exercise of restored priesthood, validated by God. Their capacity to create eternal seals was central to the Mormon assault on the Calvinist God, whom Smith generally presented in caricature.<sup>120</sup> In his sermon on Elijah, he proclaimed, "If you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be crafty. . . . Go & seal on earth your sons & daughters unto yourself & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory. . . . Use a little Craftiness & seal all you can & when you get to heaven tell your father that what you seal on earth should be sealed in heaven. I will walk through the gate of heaven and Claim what I seal & those that follow me & my Council."<sup>121</sup>

These instructions—an idiosyncratic combination of folk wit, biblical allusion, perfectionism, and a complex challenge to Calvin-

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<sup>120</sup>Brown, "The Prophet Elias Puzzle."

<sup>121</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:364. All extant sources for the sermon are published in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 327–36, 389–92. Eulogies and accounts of the funeral are printed as "Com-



ism—thrilled early Latter-day Saints. Smith’s use of “crafty” (revised to “wise” for the official history) probably meant “resourceful” rather than “conniving,” though the latter reading is not unreasonable.<sup>122</sup> In this call to seize power over a parody of the Calvinist God, Smith made two points clear: Mormons would not languish uncertainly over their ultimate election, and the pathway to salvation was a mystically charged process by which believers created novel relationships with each other. Smith rejected pietistic reasoning, both in its Calvinist and Arminian versions, and strongly endorsed sacerdotal sacramentalism in his solution of the problem of election.

On May 9, 1841, Smith used Romans 9 to bring out the connection between election and adoption.<sup>123</sup> He preached again on May 16 on the same scriptural text, making it clear that he understood election as a kind of physical status coterminous with being the seed of Abraham. Smith employed the pregnant phrase “to them belonged the adoption, and the covenants &c.” to refer to Abraham’s seed. He continued by stating: “All the election that can be found in the scripture is according to the flesh and pertaining to the priesthood,” using the intertwined images of biology and priesthood. Bringing ancient scripture to bear on the modern Latter-day Saints, Smith announced that “the election of the promised seed still continues,” by

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municated,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 47 (March 20, 1844): 2. I treat this sermon and its implications in similar terms in “Early Mormon Chain of Belonging,” 1–3.

<sup>122</sup>*History of the Church*, 6:253. The term “crafty” had primarily negative connotations but could be used in a positive sense then as now. I do not believe that “crafty” was a veiled reference to Masonry, although “crafty” was occasionally used in specific reference to a “craft” (generally priestcraft, but occasionally magic). For other uses of “crafty” by Latter-day Saints, generally in the negative but not particularly mystical sense, see, e.g., Orson Pratt to Oliver Cowdery, November 18, 1835, *Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 2 (November 1835): 223–24; W. A. Cowdery, “Valedictory,” *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 12 (September 1837): 570–71; Joseph Smith, “The Globe,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 8 (April 15, 1844): 508; “For President, Gen. Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, Illinois,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 9 (May 1, 1844): 519; “For President, Gen. Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, Illinois,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 10 (May 15, 1844): 535.

<sup>123</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 71, May 9, 1841.

which he meant adoption through the Mormon priesthood.<sup>124</sup>

In 1843, Joseph Jr., provided to Joseph Kingsbury “a Patriarchal and Sealing Blessing” informing Kingsbury that “thy companion Caroline, who is now dead, thou shalt have, for I seal thee up for and in her behalf, to come forth in the first resurrection unto eternal life, (and it shall be as though she was present herself) and thou shalt hail her, and she shall be thine, and no one shall have power to take her from thee, and you both shall be crowned and enthroned to dwell together in a Kingdom.”<sup>125</sup> In this blessing, Smith wielded his patriarchal authority to assure the salvation of both Kingsbury and his dead wife, even as Smith made clear how familial this salvation would be.

Smith visited the same themes in his 1843 memorial to Judge Elias Higbee, who was “sealed unto the throne.” In this memorial, Smith continued to affirm that the “doctrine of Election” was “sealing the father & children together,” a process designed “to effect their mutual salvation.” The individual continued to coexist with the corporate. Invoking the language of Revelation, Smith looked forward to “seal[ing] the servants of our God in their foreheads,” which he explained was to “seal the blessing on their heads meaning the everlasting covenant thereby making their calling and election sure.”<sup>126</sup> Two weeks later Smith reiterated that the adoptive associations, “seal[ing] the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers” would be operationalized through the temple rituals of “anointing & sealing.” Their exercise would ensure that the Saints were “called elected and made sure.”<sup>127</sup>

This power over election meant Mormons could save their children, reliably and durably. This development of the adoption theology eliminated the specter of families broken apart by the later iniquity of a child. This Mormon solution, more powerful than the Halfway Covenant, had been a goal for the Latter-day Saints for years. In October 1835, Church elders prayed “that he will also pre-

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 74, May 16, 1841.

<sup>125</sup>Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 216, Joseph Smith Jr., blessing on Joseph C. Kingsbury, March 23, 1843, presented for recording on April 14, 1860.

<sup>126</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 239–41, August 13, 1843.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 244, August 27, 1843.

serve our posterity, that none of them fall even to the end of time.”<sup>128</sup> By 1842 Smith had made clear that the full-fledged adoption theology was adequate to secure the salvation of children. In his famous Elijah sermon, he preached that “a measure of this sealing is to confirm upon their head in common with Elijah the doctrine of election or the covenant with Abraham—which when a Father & mother of a family have entered into[,] their children who have not transgressed are secured by the seal where with the Parents have been sealed.”<sup>129</sup> William Clayton’s account of the sermon confirmed that when parents make “their calling and election sure . . . a seal is put on the father and mother [securing] their posterity so that they cannot be lost but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father.”<sup>130</sup>

About nine months later and only six weeks before his death, Smith preached again, “In order for you to receive your children to yourself, you must have a promise, some ordinance some blessing in order to ascend above principalities or else it [the child] may be an angel.”<sup>131</sup> Several elements are present in this announcement: the “promise” of certain election, the threat of falling out of the hierarchy of the heaven-family in the absence of a seal (the child would be condemned to eternal life as a mere angel, following the language of the 1843 polygamy revelation), and the prospect of progression beyond the angelic hierarchies, represented in this case by “principalities,” a code word in Christianity for higher orders of angels that the Latter-day Saints used to describe the royal scope of their afterlife.<sup>132</sup> (Though many modern readers see the New Testament words “dominions” and “principalities” as references to kingdoms or royal domains, in New Testament and at least partly in earliest Mormon us-

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<sup>128</sup>Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journal*, 1:111, October 23, 1835 (placed after the November 27 entry).

<sup>129</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 238–42, August 13, 1843. The reference to “transgression” probably meant the same thing it had meant in Doctrine and Covenants 132:26.

<sup>130</sup>George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 115–16, August 13, 1843.

<sup>131</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 369, May 12, 1844.

<sup>132</sup>D&C 132:16–17 denominates unattached individuals as mere “angels” in the afterlife.

age, these were references to specific angelic hierarchies.<sup>133</sup>) This sermon tied Smith's adoption theology back to his Chain of Belonging with its language of ascent, via temple rites, to a secure and glorious place in the eternal hierarchy.

In solving the problem of election, the adoption theology was sufficiently flexible to explain the mechanics of salvation and the nature of human identity, the early Mormon divine anthropology. In this system, human beings were of the same species as divine beings, and their organization was based on relationships within a sacerdotal genealogy.<sup>134</sup>

### *Secondary Saviors and the Divine Anthropology*

The adoption theology, with its novel Chain of Belonging and its temple liturgy, made clear that people could recruit others into the family of God. Such proselytizing Saints were called "saviors on Mount Zion," a reappropriation of an obscure prophecy in Obadiah 1:21. In elevating his people to the status of secondary saviors, Joseph Smith used adoption as a template for his radical conception of humans as divine beings. By conceptualizing the Saints as secondary saviors, Smith also provided the connection between sealing to eternal life and sealing to another person.

Smith referred to secondary saviors publicly in May 1841, when he preached on the "election of the promised seed." When this seed acquired the patriarchal priesthood, they would become "Saviors on the mount Zion."<sup>135</sup> In October 1841, Smith announced that baptism for the dead was the ritual through which the Saints could become saviors on Mount Zion, thereby "bringing multitudes

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<sup>133</sup>The textual basis for the highly durable tradition of equating "principalities" with orders of angels is in Ephesians 3:10, 6:12; Colossians 1:16. See John Reynolds, *Inquiries Concerning the State and Economy of the Angelical Worlds* (London: John Clark, 1723), for an emblematic treatment of the tradition. Charles Buck used Reynolds in his treatment of angels.

<sup>134</sup>Samuel M. Brown, "William Phelps's 'Paracletes': An Early Witness to Joseph Smith's Divine Anthropology," *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 62–81.

<sup>135</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 74, May 16, 1841. Smith tied the surrogate saviors to the reference in Isaiah 61:6 to the "ministers of our God."

of their kin into the Kingdom of God.”<sup>136</sup>

Smith’s language about secondary saviors accorded with images of the patriarchal priesthood of the 1830s. Joseph Kingsbury learned that he would “be a Saviour on mount Zion with Power to Save all thy Dead friends with many if not all thy living ones and a grate Multitude of Others.”<sup>137</sup> John Smith blessed Susannah Bigler that she would “redeem thy dead friends and bring them up in the first resurrection.”<sup>138</sup> These later images drew on prior images that explored the power of an adoptive father. In 1838, Isaac Morley had blessed John D. Lee that “Kings and Princes shall acknowledge thee to be their father in the new and everlasting covenant.”<sup>139</sup>

The early Mormons had a very specific image in mind when they referred to Mount Zion. Mount Zion was the place where the dead would gather in heaven, the place of the great reunion at the end of time. Hebrews 12:22 called it “the city of the living God,” inhabited by “an innumerable company of angels.”<sup>140</sup> The Latter-day Saints, like many Protestants, had in mind the joyful reunion of the blessed at the time of Christ’s return or final judgment.<sup>141</sup> Smith’s journal entry for January 7, 1836, described a patriarchal blessing meeting that participants saw as a foretaste of the “Joys that will be poured upon the head of the Saints w[h]en they are gathered to-

<sup>136</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 77, October 3, 1841.

<sup>137</sup>Joseph C. Kingsbury, *Diary*, 18, August 2, 1844, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

<sup>138</sup>John Smith, Patriarchal Blessing to Susannah Bigler, February 10, 1844, Nauvoo, in George A. Smith, *Journal*, ca. 1835–47, MS 1322, Box 1, fd. 4, *Selected Collections*, 1:32.

<sup>139</sup>Lee and Bishop, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 95.

<sup>140</sup>See, e.g., “The Resurrection of the Just,” *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 7 (December 1832): 51; “The Church of Christ,” *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 10 (March 1833): 74; “Millennium,” *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 20 (May 1834): 154–55; “Millennium,” *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 21 (June 1834): 161, and “The Beauty of the Writings of the Prophet Esdras,” *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 17 (July 1, 1841): 464; “History of Joseph Smith,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 8 (April 15, 1844): 498.

<sup>141</sup>These images were also eschatological, as witnessed in George Laub’s use of them, “Reminiscences and Journal,” 28–29.

gether on Mount Zion to enjoy each other's society forever more."<sup>142</sup> When Phelps poetically reworked the 1832 Vision for publication over Smith's signature in 1843, he described the ascent of Mount Zion as occurring with the "trump of the first resurrection."<sup>143</sup> In his Book of the Law of the Lord, Smith prayed on August 23, 1842, "May the God . . . save me . . . that on Mount Zion I may stand and with my father crown me eternally there."<sup>144</sup>

For the early Latter-day Saints, a savior on Mount Zion was an individual responsible for ensuring a place for his adoptive kindred in the society of the blessed at the time of final judgment. The Saints were human extensions of Christ. In a May 1844 sermon, Smith tied the understanding of saviors on Mount Zion strongly to the temple liturgy and its power to create adoptive relationships: "Those who are baptised for their dead are the Saviours on mount Zion & they must receive their washings and their anointings for their dead, the same as for themselves, till they are connected to the ones in the dispensation before us and trace their leniage to connect the priesthood again."<sup>145</sup> By performing endowment rituals, these secondary saviors managed to fill any conceivable gaps in the Mormon Chain of Belonging. According to Smith, the temple work of the secondary saviors "is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children & the children to the Fathers *which fulfills the mission of Elijah*."<sup>146</sup> Connecting the priesthood meant ensuring there were no missing links in the chain. In the Mormon chain, just as in the neoplatonic chain, a single missing link invali-

<sup>142</sup>Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journal*, 1:146.

<sup>143</sup>Joseph Smith [William Phelps], "The Answer," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 6 (February 1, 1843): 84.

<sup>144</sup>Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 1:175. See also the illuminating hymns: [Joseph Murdock], "Come Listen," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 21 (September 15, 1843): 335; Hymn 29, "The Towers of Zion," and 52, "Adieu, My Dear Brethren" in Emma Smith, *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Nauvoo, Ill.: E. Robinson, 1841), 39, 68–69.

<sup>145</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 370, May 12, 1844; see also Eugene England, ed., "George Laub's Nauvoo Journal," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 174.

<sup>146</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:341–43, January 21, 1844; emphasis mine.

dated the harmony of the entire structure.<sup>147</sup>

Surrogate fathers included not only living Saints but their dead ancestors as well. In a striking use of the plural, Smith preached in March 1844 that “the spirit of Elijah” is “that we redeem our dead & connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven.”<sup>148</sup> The familial framing of the genealogical Chain of Belonging provided a natural infrastructure for moving from the “Father in Heaven” of prevailing Protestantism to the “fathers in heaven” of the Mormon Chain of Belonging.

Accompanying these secondary saviors came the logic necessary to understand how the seals of salvation could refer to specific interpersonal relationships. When a sacerdotal father adopted a loved one, that loved one received the seal of the adopting father, a secondary savior. The fact that the seal came through another person rather than from Jesus directly meant that the seal could describe relationships between people rather than just between people and Christ.

The power that saviors on Mount Zion wielded was astounding. Just as the chief Savior, Jesus, had demonstrated, the Saints could effect the salvation of their friends. In his January 1844 sermon on Elijah, Smith taught (in Wilford Woodruff’s account) that “any man that has a friend in eternity can save him if he has not commit[ed] the unpardonable sin.”<sup>149</sup> Thomas Bullock remembered essentially the same thing, that “every Sp[irit] in the Et[ernal] world can be ferreted out & saved unless he has com[mitte]d that Sin which cant be rem[itted] to him.”<sup>150</sup> Striking out both at Calvinism and Arminianism, Smith’s theology radically revised growing American sensibilities about the meaning of human agency and free will. The promise of salvation vouchsafed by the temple’s adopting power required significant revisions to Protestant theology and ideology that would prove difficult for Joseph Smith’s followers as they struggled to understand and adapt his legacy over the next century and a half.

Various aspects of the adoption theology led to the same stunning conclusion: humans and Gods were of one species. Smith’s view of anthropology departed radically from the main streams of Chris-

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<sup>147</sup>Lovejoy, *Chain of Being*, 76, 232–35; W. W. Phelps, “Despise Not Propheysings,” *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 7 (February 1, 1841): 299.

<sup>148</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 2:361–64, March 10, 1844.

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:341–42, January 21, 1844.

<sup>150</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 353, April 7, 1844.

tianity. Whereas adoption in American Christianity represented the chance for a depraved creature to become a child of God, adoption for the Latter-day Saints was a way for a child of God to create sacerdotal relationships to other children of God, all of them divine beings.

The Chain of Belonging in its genealogical version required such a view. In George Laub's striking memory of Smith's King Follett Discourse, "We are to goe from glory to glory and as one is raised to a higher so the next under him may take his degree and so to take the Exaltation through the regular chanel and when we get to where Jesus is he will be just as far ahead of us again in Exaltation."<sup>151</sup> This canonical invocation of the temporal Chain of Being reminded believers that, because they were Christ's through adoption, they could become links in the chain that included him. As the entire chain progressed, they would one day achieve the glory that Jesus had once possessed.

The dramatic sermons in late spring 1844 were not the first time Smith had used adoption theology and the Chain of Belonging to demonstrate that humans were conspecific with God. Language about heirship and adoption integrated naturally into the divine anthropology. In 1843, during a public reinterpretation of Hebrews 7, Smith had announced, "What was the design of the Almighty in making man, it was to exalt him to be as God, the scripture says ye are Gods and it cannot be broken, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ equal with him possessing all power &c."<sup>152</sup> George Laub captured the equivalence perfectly when he looked forward to the millennial time when "the antians shall come and rede[e]m [the as yet unredeemed dead] in their glory. then Saviours or in other words gods will come on mount Zion."<sup>153</sup> The saviors on Mount Zion who adopted their kith and kin into the Chain of Belonging were gods in the calculus of the divine anthropology.

In his Sermon in the Grove, Smith read Paul's letter on resurrection as reflecting the metaphysical law of correspondence: "that which is Earthly is in likeness of that which is Heavenly." He then announced, following the logic of his King Follett Discourse, that Jesus did only "what he seeth the Father do." In the kind of simultaneously

<sup>151</sup>Laub, "Reminiscences and Journal," 18.

<sup>152</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 247, August 27, 1843. See also Psalm 82:6, with exposition in John 10.

<sup>153</sup>Laub, "Reminiscences and Journal," 29.



literal and creative readings of the Bible that the Latter-day Saints engaged in, Smith explained John 5:19 (“The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do”) as indicating that God Himself had taken a body, died, and been exalted. Jesus provided the clue, in this exegesis, to understanding God’s nature. Through the adoption theology, and in a subsequent exegesis of 1 John 3, Joseph argued that Jesus showed the Latter-day Saints their nature. As Jesus became the father to adoptive believers, He stood in the same relationship to them that God the Father did with Jesus. He showed them who they were and where they were headed, both as individuals and as constituent members of the Chain of Belonging.

*Communal Salvation against Jacksonian Individualism*

Mormon adoption theology arose in very specific cultural and social contexts. The early nineteenth century witnessed dramatic changes in urbanization and the scale of commerce, the shape of families, and the relationship to the land.<sup>154</sup> A variety of individuals, movements, and ideologies resisted the social changes. Smith and Mormonism can be understood productively in this milieu.

Early in his career, Joseph Smith was influenced by utopian, communitarian experiments, as historian Mark Staker has recently described in some detail.<sup>155</sup> He was also influenced by an abiding nostalgia for an older family model that was under great stress during the early decades of the new Republic. Simultaneously Smith was resisting the intense personalization and desacramentalization of salvation that Protestant Christianity advocated. As Smith saw it, election was not a story about any individual’s regeneration or piety, not really even a story about sins confessed or absolved. Election was also, radically, not a story about a Creator and his creation. These two Mormon departures from Christian orthodoxies—the rejection of piety and the collapse of the ontological space between God and humanity—are related. When he placed humans beside God, Smith was also positioning humans durably with other humans.

Some observers have sought to locate Smith’s divine anthropology within the cult of the common man, a movement they see as tied

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<sup>154</sup>Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, is the current standard for this period. Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), is rather dated.

<sup>155</sup>Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 45–47.

to the rise of Jackson and the Democratic Party. To be sure, some such individuals were drawn to the Mormon banner in its early decades, intrigued by the promise of lay priesthood. But the divine anthropology and the adoption theology were more a statement about relationships than about individuals. Believers could be secondary saviors, not just because the American Republic was increasingly uncomfortable with Calvinist beliefs about human depravity, but because Christ had shown the way to atonement, reconciliation, and formal entry into the family of God.

Smith knew well how radical his adoption theology sounded in antebellum America. "To becom[e] a joint heir of the heirship of the son," he preached in the fall of 1843, a believer "must put away all his traditions."<sup>156</sup> These traditions were the ideas that made sense to early American Protestants, notions about the ontological separation of God from creation, of the depravity of humanity, and of the individual nature of salvation. According to Joseph Smith, these traditions were malignant and needed to be abandoned.

Smith's followers discovered hazards and controversies as they attempted to come to terms with communal salvation in the decades after his death.<sup>157</sup> Whereas individual regeneration relied primarily on an individual's beliefs about self, personal worth, and ultimate fate, the notion of communal salvation could be harder to maintain. Smith never taught his followers what the inevitable squabbles of communal living meant. Apostasy from the movement was one of the rare sins that could condemn a person to eternal perdition, but what did it mean to bear a grudge, raise one's voice in anger, tell a lie to another Saint, or misappropriate the property of a co-religionist? If salvation was communal, could it be lost in a feud with another member of the community? What did it mean that Smith's relationship with his first wife was strained, in large part because of his rejection of the proto-Victorian domestic nucleus? These were difficult problems that Smith's followers would spend decades trying to resolve.

The myth of Jacksonian individualism is, of course, just that—a myth. Many counterexamples resist the general trend toward what

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<sup>156</sup>Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 244, August 27, 1843.

<sup>157</sup>Davies, *Culture of Salvation*, esp., 67, 145, has written perceptively on communalism in Mormon salvation.

Alexis de Tocqueville called American “individualism.”<sup>158</sup> The great fraternal organization of Freemasonry that had cemented late colonial American political culture was returning to social prominence in the mid-1840s when Smith joined it and translated elements of its rites to enrich his temple liturgy. The capacity of Freemasonry to resist the new nuclear family structure of early Victorian culture may have been part of the reason Smith embraced Masonry the way he did.<sup>159</sup> Fruitful research could address the evolution of Smith’s communal model of salvation through his various successors, particularly through the course of the Utah period among the main body of the Church. In many respects, the conflicts between individual and communal salvation continue to be worked out through the present day.

### CONCLUSION

By the time Joseph Smith died in June 1844, he had revealed an intricate and profound theology and liturgy to replace the election of Calvinism and regeneration of the Arminians. This sacramental and sacerdotal system had set his people on a long voyage of separation from even the radical Protestants among whom many of them had developed their religious sensibilities. He had not, however, systematized his teachings or carried them through to their ultimate ramifications.

The system he proposed was also explosive; indeed, it was the extremes of his new system that contributed to his ultimate death at the hands of a vigilante mob. Smith proposed a radical rejection of the proto-Victorian family, a new human ontology, a rigorously humanized vision of cosmos and its ultimate Creator, who was literally a Heavenly Father.

Smith left to his followers the difficult problems of understanding what the theology and liturgy meant and how to reconcile the intense otherworldliness of his teachings with the this-worldly stress they experienced. Having received from Smith both a biological and a sacerdotal understanding of lineage and eternal power, Smith’s fol-

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<sup>158</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, translated by Henry Reeve, 3d ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Sever and Francis, 1863), 2:119–21.

<sup>159</sup>On Mormon Masonry, see Brown, *Early Mormon Conquest of Death*, chap. 7.

lowers were soon forced to choose between his biological family—represented by his widow, his sole surviving brother, his mother, and his young sons as the heirs apparent—and the sacerdotal family created by temple rites—represented by Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles he presided over.

The story of the adoption theology took new turns as Smith's largest group of followers began the process of creating an independent kingdom in Mexico (soon to become U.S. territory), while the second largest group of followers resolved the problem by suppressing the sacerdotal family. In many respects, the course of the adoption theology in the church that Brigham Young led is a story about the ways a community comes to terms with competing interests in the integrity of biological units and the mutual commitment required by a religious tradition that may run against and over preexisting family relationships. Even without the second half of the story of the adoption theology, though, this set of interconnected ideas, doctrines, and rituals demonstrates some of the impressive, even astounding, ways that Joseph Smith reformulated intellectual and religious material in the religions that surrounded him and his Church community.

# ADOPTIVE SEALING RITUAL IN MORMONISM

*Jonathan A. Stapley*

IN THE SPRING OF 1879, James H. Martineau set off from his home in Logan, Utah, to the city of his childhood, just north of New York's Finger Lakes. He gathered genealogical data, visited his extended family, and on March 18, knelt among drifts of snow and wept over his mother's grave. "There is one inestimable consolation," he wrote, "I can do a work for them, by which the family bonds may be reunited, and they made partakers of the blessing of the gospel in the world to come, and this, with the help of my Father in Heaven, I intend to do."<sup>1</sup>

Martineau waited five years before commencing temple work for his family; then, only days after the Logan Temple dedication, Martineau began his prolific labor, resulting in hundreds of baptisms and endowments for relatives and historically notable figures. While many Latter-day Saints rarely attended to temple rituals besides their own, Martineau was one of the most active nineteenth-century tem-

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<sup>1</sup>Donald G. Godfrey and Rebecca S. Martineau-McCarty, eds., *An Uncommon Common Pioneer: The Journals of James Henry Martineau, 1828–1918* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2008), 234.

ple participants.<sup>2</sup> During this time, however, he participated in only two adoption rituals. On June 6, 1884, he adopted a young girl who had been abandoned on the doorstep of a friend—the first adoption ritual performed in the Logan Temple—and he then adopted the grown son of a deceased woman to whom he had been sealed.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after his 1879 visit to the eastern states, Martineau met with President John Taylor to discuss the possibility of being ritually sealed to his biological parents, who had died without hearing the restored gospel. Temple policy prohibited child-to-parent sealings if the father did not hold the priesthood, however, and he eventually agreed to be adopted to his first wife's Mormon parents. When he started laboring in the Logan Temple, he wrote to his mother-in-law for formal permission to be adopted to her family. Still he waited several more years to get permission from President Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor's successor, to effect the ritual—and, even then, he never went to the temple to solemnize the relationship.<sup>4</sup>

Instead, fifteen years later and after a transformative revelation on the subject, Martineau finally finished the process begun over his mother's grave. In 1898 he gathered the names of his family to be sealed in a chain that united children to parents. He started by being sealed to his biological parents and then sealed his parents to their parents. Writing of the experience, he effused: "How thankful I am, that I now have a father and a mother. Having been all these years an orphan; and they, now, have their children—before childless and alone. . . . Now I can meet my father and mother without shame and confusion."<sup>5</sup>

Martineau's experience captures the vibrancy of Joseph Smith's vision to redeem the human family and the struggle after Smith's death to systematically realize that redemption. The sealing of chil-

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 342–43; November 19, 1887.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 296, 298, 300; June 6, July 14, and August 20, 1884. The sealing of deceased women to men in marriage was a common practice during the nineteenth century; Martineau was eventually sealed to dozens of women by proxy, including Joan of Arc (321–22). This work began on May 27, 1884, and he labored for much of the summer in the temple. In subsequent years he continued to participate in the temple as much as proximity allowed.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 244, 339, 298; May 2, 1876, September 8, 1887, and July 17, 1884.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 476; November 16, 1898.

dren to parents, biological or other, is central to Mormonism's cosmology and salvific liturgy. Continuing from Samuel Brown's history and analysis of pre-martyrdom adoption theology ("Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation," immediately preceding), my article traces the theology and practice of Mormon adoptive sealing ritual from the time of Smith's death to the early twentieth century. Several authors have discussed this "law of adoption"; however, this article approaches the theological and ritual system of adoption with novel documentation, analysis, and accuracy.<sup>6</sup> This system connected unmarried kin, created novel social units within Mormonism during the crucial exodus and Utah periods associated with Brigham Young's early leadership, and attempted, in essence, to tie all humanity to their first parents in a sacred network of belonging.

After detailing the early Mormon cosmology which necessitated adoption ritual, this article treats the participants, practice, and meaning of adoption in the Nauvoo Temple. Adoption theology, though still burgeoning, also served as an organizational nexus for the trek west. After reaching Utah, Church leaders' views of adoption continued to develop though no adoptions were performed until the St. George Temple was dedicated in 1877. The thirty-one-year hiatus in the ritual's performance did not impede belief in the importance of adoption, though confusion abounded. Once temples were available in Utah, Latter-day Saints performed adoption rituals, but in different ways than in Nauvoo. Furthermore, Church leaders began to

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<sup>6</sup>The principal study of adoptive sealing ritual to date has been Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase in the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 291-314. See also Rex Eugene Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990); Richard E. Bennett, "Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept': Reflections on the 1877 Commencement of the Performance of Endowments and Sealings for the Dead," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005), 39-77. The theological system which incorporates adoption has also been called the sacerdotal genealogy or soteriological lineage. Samuel Brown, *In Heaven As It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2011), chap. 8; Douglas James Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace and Glory* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2000), 146-47.

question and debate the practice, which ultimately led to Wilford Woodruff's 1894 revelation, transforming the temple liturgy and leading to contemporary Mormon belief and practice.

Throughout this discussion, this article focuses on the changing theology of heirship and sacramental perseverance. Additionally, it traces the conflicts between biological and sacerdotal kinship as Latter-day Saints aspired to realize themselves in Obadiah's vision of saviors on Mount Zion. How adoption developed from Joseph Smith and Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff and beyond provides a vital window into the development of Mormons' relational theology.

### NAUVOO AND THE TRAIL WEST

As Brown shows in his companion article, adoption figures prominently in the doctrines of early Mormonism, informing rich themes of salvation. Integrating evangelism, the patriarchate, lineal priesthood, and baptism for the living and the dead, Mormon adoption evolved from traditional Christian scripture and culture in unique ways. In Nauvoo, these different features collapsed into the sacramentalism of the temple. Joseph Smith revealed to a band of dedicated followers a series of rituals intended for the temple, but which exigency required that he administer before the temple itself was complete. This group, later called the Quorum of the Anointed, served as the guardians and transmitters of Smith's temple rituals and doctrinal innovations.

As was his proclivity when revealing or expanding doctrine and practice, Smith imbued words in common parlance with new and sometimes radical meaning. Smith expanded "priesthood" to comprise the eternal structure of heaven as mediated in the temple on earth. Members of Smith's temple quorum contemporarily referred to the group as "the order of the priesthood," "the quorum of the priesthood," and simply "the priesthood." Through the temple rituals, participants wore priesthood vestments and looked forward to the ultimate promise of the "fulness of the priesthood," where men and women reigned through eternity as kings and queens, priests and priestesses.<sup>7</sup>

In a revelation to Newel K. Whitney in 1842, the Lord declared that, by entering into the new relationships formed through Joseph

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<sup>7</sup>On Smith's temple quorum and the associated temple liturgy, see Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and



Smith's sealings, Whitney would attain "immortality and eternal life" for himself and for all his "house both old and young because of the lineage of my Preathood saith the Lord. it shall be upon you and upon your Children after you from generation to generation."<sup>8</sup> By having a member of his family sealed to Smith's family—joining the cosmological priesthood—Whitney became part of the structure of heaven.

This new and cosmological priesthood was not always discussed in terms that were discrete from older conceptions of priesthood. Highlighting the expansion of the lineal priesthood as manifested in the hierarchy of the Church and general Latter-day Saint Israelism, Patriarch John Smith, brother of Joseph Smith Sr. and a temple quorum member, often referred to both old and new conceptions of priesthood simultaneously in his blessings. For example, he blessed his son's mother-in-law in 1844, declaring that she was "a Daughter of Abraham through the loines of manssee [Manasseh] and a lawful heir to the Priesthood in common with thy Companion and thou shall have power through that Priesthood to redeem thy dead friends."<sup>9</sup> As this blessing shows, it is clear that the purpose of this new priesthood was the salvation of the human family. Like Whitney, Susannah Bigler

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the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982). For the various appellations of the temple quorum, see Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 32, 65, 85, 93, 94, 112, 117, 119, 186, 195.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Smith, Revelation, July 27, 1842, MS 4583, Box 1, fd. 104, in Richard E. Turley, ed., *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, [December 2002], 1:19.

<sup>9</sup>John Smith, Patriarchal Blessing on Susannah Bigler, February 10, 1844, Nauvoo, in George A. Smith, Journal, ca. 1835–47, MS 1322, Box 1, fd. 4, in *Selected Collections*, 1:32. See also John Smith, Patriarchal Blessing on Bathsheba Bigler Smith, n.d., George A. Smith Papers, MS 1322, Box 10, fd. 25, in *Selected Collections*, 1:33; John Smith, Patriarchal Blessing on Joseph C. Kingsbury, August 2, 1844, in Joseph C. Kingsbury, Diary, digital copy of holograph, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections). Patriarchal blessings retained similar language for decades. See, for example, the patriarchal blessings of Charles Hyde who participated in the Nauvoo Temple ceremonies. Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *An Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 138–39.

was both promised heirship to the priesthood of heaven and the capacity to extend it to others.

This cosmological priesthood was lineal, passing from parents to children, both male and female. Wilford Woodruff and his wife Phoebe had participated in the temple rituals before they left for England in 1844. Phoebe gave birth to a son the following year. As was common in nineteenth-century Mormonism, eight days after he was born, she held the child in her arms while Wilford anointed him and declared, "Thou hast a legal right to the Melchizedec Priesthood by lineage. Thou art the first fruits of the Priesthood unto thy parents since there *endowment*." Like John Smith, Woodruff incorporated older conceptions of priesthood with the newer cosmological priesthood. Still it is clear that he viewed this priesthood as part of an eternal network, promising his son that he would eventually "take thy station in the celestial kingdom in the lineage of thy Fathers in the family organization of the celestial world."<sup>10</sup>

It is unclear what Joseph Smith ultimately envisioned when he referred to the station of priest and king in his cosmology as the "fulness of the Melchizedec Priesthood."<sup>11</sup> He died before the completion of the Nauvoo Temple, and consequently it was left to the Quorum of the Twelve to transmit these concepts to the broader church. These Church leaders generally treated the older administrative priesthoods of the church as distinct from the newer cosmological priesthood of the temple, particularly with regard to the inclusion of women.<sup>12</sup>

As Smith's system began to formalize, becoming a legal heir to

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<sup>10</sup>Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 2:585; emphasis Woodruff's. Significantly, Woodruff also ordained his son a high priest during this blessing.

<sup>11</sup>Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 329, 331, March 10, 1844. See also 215, June 11, 1843; 246, August 27, 1843; Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances. See also Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:271; Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1902-1932 printing), 5:527.

<sup>12</sup>For an expanded discussion of this priesthood dynamic over time, see, Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in

the priesthood required individuals to either be born to parents sealed in marriage or be themselves sealed to parents. However, the one temple ritual that Joseph Smith never administered during his lifetime was the sealing of children to parents, biological or other.<sup>13</sup> Smith taught that the power to “bind or seal” children to parents was the power of Elijah.<sup>14</sup> This understanding was manifest in the temple where both biological children and non-biological relations became

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Mormonism,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 32–53.

<sup>13</sup>Ehat, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances,” 279–80 note 414, was the first to observe that no child-to-parent sealings/adoptions were performed during Smith’s lifetime. While LDS leaders made provision throughout the nineteenth century to perform their temple rituals outside of these sacred edifices they uniquely confined all child-to-parent sealings to their temples in both Nauvoo and Utah. For Brigham Young’s comment on this constraint, see October 6, 1863, and September 4, 1873, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1854–86), 10:254, 16:185–88. Some authors have tried to argue that adoptions did indeed occur during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Notably Juanita Brooks argued in a bit of anachronistic religion-making, that “if the Prophet Joseph were to become a God over a minor planet, he must not only have a large posterity but able assistants of practical skills. Brigham Young had been ‘sealed’ to Joseph under this law.” Brooks based her research on the skewed reminiscences of John D. Lee, but the details of planetary inheritance and a sealing between Young and Smith were apparently her own interpolation. Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1972), 73. Elsewhere Brooks hypothesized (incorrectly) that Joseph Smith had sealed to himself the first members of the Council of Fifty. Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diaries of Hosea Stout*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:178 note 50. Young, a senior member of the Council of Fifty, alluded to his unadopted state when lecturing against misconceptions of adoption in 1847. Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:130. Later Young explicitly declared that he was not adopted to anybody and that he wished to be sealed to his father. “Discourse by President B. Young, Delivered at the General Conference in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, April 8, [sic, April 9] 1852,” *Millennial Star* 16 (May 27, 1854): 326; Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 4:124; Brigham Young, September 4, 1873, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:187.

<sup>14</sup>Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 318, January 21, 1844; 334, March 10, 1844.

heirs through sealing ritual. Both those not sealed in marriage and those not sealed to parents were to be “single & alone” in the eternities.<sup>15</sup> It is within this network that Mormonism’s unique perseverance was realized. Not only did these relationships provide heirship to the new cosmological priesthood, but they also were the means of salvation, as the definition of salvation transformed to encompass the heavenly kinship network or, as one temple quorum member and subsequent Nauvoo temple worker described it, “the ‘bundle of eternal life.’”<sup>16</sup> Kinship, priesthood, and salvation became synonymous. On August 13, 1843, Smith preached a funeral sermon: “When a seal is put upon the father and mother it secures their posterity so that they cannot be lost but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father.”<sup>17</sup> While Smith taught that perseverance was a blessing of various discrete temple rituals, he did not intend to create discrete liturgies. Instead, Smith revealed a single unified liturgy. Mormon seal-

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 232, July 16, 1843. See also George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 104, May 18, 1843; Joseph Smith, Revelation, July 12, 1843, MS 4583, Box 1, fd. 75, in *Selected Collections*, 1:19 (D&C 132:15–17).

<sup>16</sup>Orson Spencer, *Letters Exhibiting the Most Prominent Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . In Reply to the Rev. William Crowell, A. M., Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.* (Liverpool: Orson Spencer, 1848), 169–71. Though uniquely employed to describe the cosmological priesthood here, this phrase was not uncommon among other Christian groups during this period and was likely drawn from 1 Samuel 25:29.

<sup>17</sup>Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 241–42, August 13, 1843. Cf. the original account from which Ehat and Cook transcribed it (pp. 240–41) in Howard Coray and Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, Notebook. The concept of covenantal heirs persisted in Mormon thought, with some qualification. Perhaps surprisingly, aspects of this concept are expressed in the contemporary LDS Church in the frequent quotation of Orson F. Whitney’s April 1929 conference address: “The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it

ing, whether for marriage, for children, or for the fullness of the priesthood, sealed in the traditional sense (i.e., guaranteed salvation) inasmuch as it formalized eternal bonds in the interconnected network of the cosmological priesthood.<sup>18</sup>

Smith lived only a few months after his famous King Follett Discourse and delivered his Sermon in the Grove on June 16, 1844, mere days before his assassination. These addresses were his most detailed public explications of the new cosmology. Documentation for all the ramifications of his vision is not extant. Critically, many of his closest associates in Church leadership—temple quorum members and the Twelve—were absent from Nauvoo at least some of this time. It would be these same individuals, however, who were left to realize Smith's vision. Though the crisis of succession loomed over them, the Twelve Apostles confidently maintained their positions as keepers of the temple. In early October 1844, William Clayton recorded their consensus: "A man has a right to be baptized for his acquaintances who are not relatives and sealed to them only by the consent and authority of him who holds the keys."<sup>19</sup> The Twelve controlled the authority to effectuate Smith's celestial family—his priesthood of heaven—on earth.

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leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain." *Conference Report*, April 1929, 110. See, e.g., Henry B. Eyring, "Our Perfect Example," *Ensign*, November 2009, 70–73; James E. Faust, "Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered," *Ensign*, May 2003, 61; No author, "Hope for Parents of Wayward Children," *Ensign*, September 2002, 11; Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 54; Boyd K. Packer, "Our Moral Environment," *Ensign*, May 1992, 66. Cf., Bruce R. McConkie, comp., *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56): 2:91.

<sup>18</sup>On the blessings of perseverance in marriage sealings, see Revelation, July 12, 1843 (D&C 132:19); Ronald O. Barney, ed., *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847: Norton Jacob's Record* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005), 64; Revelation, July 27, 1842, *Selected Collections*, 1:19; Vilate Kimball, Letter to Heber C. Kimball, June 8, 1844, Nauvoo, in Anderson and Bergera, *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*, 54. Orson F. Whitney dates this latter letter at June 8, 1843. *Life of Heber C. Kimball, An Apostle; the Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), 345.

<sup>19</sup>George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 150, October 1, 1844.

Still, one should not underestimate the significance of conflict between the Twelve and Joseph Smith's biological family. Emma Smith commanded the loyalty of the Prophet's mother and, most importantly, the two designated heirs, Joseph III and David Hyrum, one the oldest son, the second the firstborn in the covenant, both born to prophesied greatness. More immediately, Joseph's only surviving brother, William, tried to promote his office as apostle and presiding patriarch into that of the Church's chief hierarch, citing lineage in his argument.<sup>20</sup> Young relied on Joseph Smith as the source for his authority and vision of a unified and eternal family; however, he and his close associates also provided the Saints with a biological alternative to the Smiths in its realization.

In the leadership crisis following Smith's death, one factor stands above others that allowed Young and the apostles to take control of a large majority of the members. Young's control of temple associations, dramatically established in the rites of adoption that were practiced in the winter of 1845 and 1846, allowed him to demonstrate the integrity of the priesthood family described by Joseph Smith. Young's control of this sacerdotal family secured his authority over the Church in crisis; this context must be kept centrally in mind in any discussion of adoption in the period after Smith's death.<sup>21</sup>

Although the integrity of the cosmological priesthood was key to the succession of the Twelve, it appears that Young was not completely confident in his grasp of Joseph Smith's vision. Within a year of finishing the temple work in Nauvoo, Brigham Young told his fellow travelers, "This Principle [adoption] I am aware is not clearly understood by many of the Elders in this Church at the present time as it will Hereafter be: And I confess that I have had ownly a smattering of those things[;] but when it is necessary I will attain to more knowledge

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<sup>20</sup>On succession, see, e.g., Ronald K. Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve: A Succession of Continuity," *BYU Studies* 21 (Summer 1981): 301–41; Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances"; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 143–262; Irene Bates and E. Gary Smith, *Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), chap. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances," correctly identifies the temple as central to the authority claims of the Twelve Apostles, though he did not elucidate all the ways this relationship played out.

on the subject & consequently will be enabled to teach & practice more.”<sup>22</sup> However, it is also clear that, through participation in the complete temple liturgy overseen by Young, many Church leaders grew to share similar views of the structure of heaven as a hierarchy through which kinship bonds governed all and overwhelmed the proto-Victorian nuclear family.

In 1846 Mary Haskin Parker Richards recorded the teachings of Willard Richards, her husband’s uncle, specifically regarding women and the expansion of these family ties: “[He] gave us some good instruction in regard to adoption. Said if he had 12 Daughters. he would give them to 12 good men allowing it should be their choice. Then if these men should become 12 Kings he would have connection with 12 Kingdoms. and they would be under obligations to Sostain him. Said that those who were so over ancious to have their family all piled in one little corner together would by & by find themselves the lesser number.”<sup>23</sup>

In 1847, the *Millennial Star* carried an editorial, typically attributed to Orson Hyde, illustrating the post-mortal “Kingdom of God.” The article included an image with an explanation saturated in temple imagery: “The eternal Father sits at the head, crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. Where-ever the other lines meet, there sits a king and a priest unto God, bearing rule, authority, and dominion under the Father. . . . and such as do the will of the Father, the same are his mothers, sisters, and brothers. . . . The chosen vessels unto God are the kings and priests that are placed at the head of these kingdoms.”<sup>24</sup> Latter-day Saint leaders interpreted Joseph Smith’s teachings to mean that, in order to become a king and priest, one must be an heir of a king and

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<sup>22</sup>Kennedy, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:134.

<sup>23</sup>Maurine Carr Ward, ed., *Winter Quarters: The 1846–1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 83–84. Ward notes that the individual offering the instruction could also have been Heber C. Kimball. George A. Smith similarly declared in a February 17, 1847, sermon, quoted in Charles Kelly, ed., *The Journal of John D. Lee, 1846–47 and 1859* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 94: “It does [not] matter so much where we are sealed provided we form part of link the Priesthood.”

<sup>24</sup>[Orson Hyde], “A Diagram of the Kingdom of God,” *Millennial Star* 9 (January 15, 1847): 23–24. Parley P. Pratt was perhaps the first to publish on this cosmology in the British press. P[arley]. P. Pratt, “Celestial Family

priest. Children born to couples sealed by the priesthood were considered natural or legal heirs, whereas those whose parents were not members of the Church could not be assured that their parents would ever become heirs. Logically, it was best to be sealed to a couple who had already demonstrated their valiancy and received the promised blessings of the temple.<sup>25</sup> Through adoptive sealings, individuals acted with Christ and shared his titular stations as adoptive parents and saviors. Unlike Christ, however, mortals are frequently unreliable, and complex adoption policies resulted in an effort to compensate.

By the time the Latter-day Saints left Nauvoo, the preferred appellation for sealing to parents any children (living or dead, biological or adopted) was “adoption.” As the governing quorums later declared in preparation for the return of the temples in Utah, “Which of them, if he understands the laws of God, can feel indifferent as to whether his wife shall be his for eternity or for time only; or whether his children shall be born in the covenant and be legal heirs to the priesthood or have to become such by adoption?”<sup>26</sup> Nauvoo Temple records listed the sealing of biological children to parents separately from the non-biological sealings. Biological sealings were recorded as “sealings” of children to parents and non-biological rituals were recorded as “adoptions.” This practice continued with the Utah temples. In common parlance and in official discourse, however, Church leaders and lay members tended to refer to all child-to-parent sealings as adoptions, regardless of biology.<sup>27</sup> There is no evidence that they viewed the rituals as theologically disparate, even when terminology sometimes vacillated. For the balance of this article, however, unless

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Organization,” *Millennial Star* 5 (May 1845): 189–94.

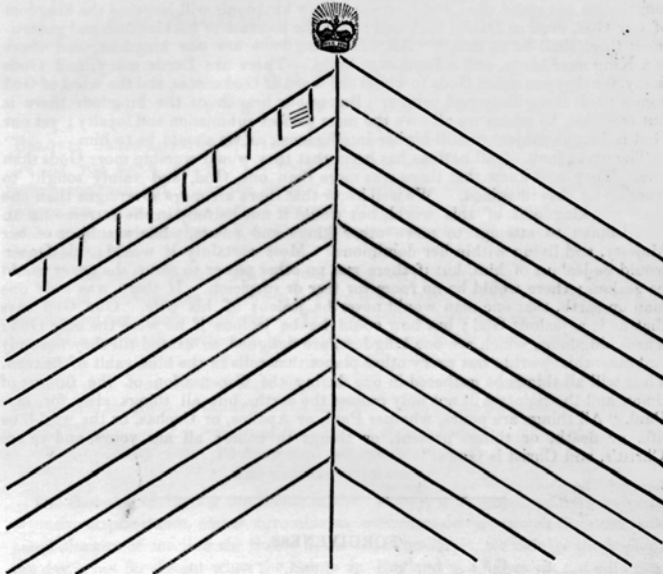
<sup>25</sup>This perspective remained normative through the duration of adoption ritual. E.g., Daniel H. Wells, Letter to Jonathan Browning, April 13, 1870, Brigham Young Office Files, microfilm of typescript, CR 1234/1, Letterbook 12, p. 82, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>26</sup>Brigham Young et al., Letter to Bishops and Members, October 25, 1876, in James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 2:279.

<sup>27</sup>E.g., Jane S. Reynolds, Temple Record and Adoption Books, microfilm of holograph, 1597620, items 2 and 3, LDS Family History Library, esp. record 47b, chronicles many biological child-to-parent sealings in the early twentieth century, listing them as “adoptions.”



## A DIAGRAM OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.



The above diagram shows the order and unity of the kingdom of God. The eternal Father sits at the head, crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. Wherever the other lines meet, there sits a king and a priest unto God, bearing rule, authority, and dominion under the Father. He is one with the Father, because his kingdom is joined to his Father's and becomes part of it.

The most eminent and distinguished prophets who have laid down their lives for their testimony (Jesus among the rest), will be crowned at the head of the largest kingdoms under the Father, and will be one with Christ as Christ is one with his Father; for their kingdoms are all joined together, and such as do the will of the Father, the same are his mothers, sisters, and brothers. He that has been faithful over a few things, will be made ruler over many things; he that has been faithful over ten talents, shall have dominion over ten cities, and he that has been faithful over five talents, shall have dominion over five cities, and to every man will be given a kingdom and a dominion, according to his merit, powers, and abilities to govern and control. It will be seen by the above diagram that there are kingdoms of all sizes, an infinite variety to suit all grades of merit and ability. The chosen vessels unto God are the kings and priests that are placed at the head of these kingdoms. These have received their washings and anointings in the temple of God on this earth; they have been chosen, ordained, and anointed kings and priests, to reign as such in the resurrection of the just. Such as have not received the fulness of the priesthood, (for the fulness of the priesthood includes the authority of both king and priest) and have not been anointed and ordained in the temple of the Most High, may obtain salvation in the celestial kingdom, but not a celestial crown. Many are called to enjoy a celestial glory, yet few are chosen to wear a celestial crown, or rather, to be rulers in the celestial kingdom.

[Orson Hyde], "A Diagram of the Kingdom of God," *Millennial Star* 9 (January 15, 1847): 23-24. Image courtesy of Perry Special Collections.

**TABLE 1**  
**RITUAL ADOPTIONS PERFORMED IN THE NAUVOO TEMPLE**

<i>Adoptive Parents</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Samuel Bent/ <i>Mary Kilborn</i>	1	0	1
Alpheus Cutler/Lois Lathrop	2	2	4
Winslow Farr/Olive Hovey Freeman	3	5	8
Heber C. Kimball/Vilate Murray	20	18	38
John D. Lee <sup>1</sup> /Aggatha Ann Woolsey <sup>1</sup>	12	10	22
Amasa Lyman/Mariah Louisa Tanner	2	1	3
George Miller/Mary Catherine Fry	2	1	3
Isaac Morley <sup>1</sup> /Lucy Gunn <sup>1</sup>	3	0	3
Willard Richards/ <i>Jennetta Richards</i>	5	6	11
<i>Hyrum Smith</i> / <i>Jerusha Barden</i>	7	5	12
John Smith/Clarissa Lyman	1	3	4
<i>Joseph Smith</i>	1	0	1
John Taylor/Leonora Cannon	14	13	27
<i>Robert B. Thompson</i> <sup>2</sup> /Mercy Rachel Fielding <sup>2</sup>	1	1	2
Newel K. Whitney/Elizabeth Ann Smith	3	3	6
Brigham Young/ <i>Miriam Works</i>	31	29	60
Brigham Young <sup>3</sup> /Augusta Adams	3	3	6
Total	111	100	211

*Sources:* The table is constructed from data in Joseph F. Smith, comp., “Sealings and Adoption, 1846–1857” (ca. 1869–70), microfilm 183374, Special Collections, LDS Family History Library; photocopy in Accn 2113, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah. Perhaps due to their early cancellations, Smith did not include Lee’s adoptions in his compilation. For documentation of these adoptions, see Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 585–86.

#### NOTES

Italicized names are deceased individuals.

<sup>1</sup>These individuals were adopted to Brigham and Miriam Young.

<sup>2</sup>These individuals were adopted to Hyrum and Jerusha Smith.

<sup>3</sup>For Young’s adoptions with Augusta Adams, see note 30.

otherwise qualified, I use the term “adoption” to refer specifically to the sealing of non-biologically related individuals.

### NAUVOO TEMPLE ADOPTION

In December 1845, the Nauvoo Temple was ready for its intended use. The following weeks were a flurry of activity as 5,583 individuals participated in the endowment ritual and officiators performed 1,097 marriage sealings.<sup>28</sup> There was insufficient time—and perhaps vision—to establish the complete heavenly family on earth; however, sixteen couples formalized a small portion of the Kingdom of God by adopting 211 individuals. (See Table 1.) Only three of these adoptive couples were themselves adopted to another couple. It is evident that adoption theology was not completely systematized after Joseph Smith’s death; however, the demographics of the various participants in the Nauvoo adoptions and their experiences are particularly insightful.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the Nauvoo Temple adoption is Joseph Smith’s absence as adoptive parent. While Brigham Young adopted sixty-six individuals, proxies adopted only one person to Joseph Smith. By comparison, Smith was posthumously sealed in marriage to thirty women in the temple compared to Young’s forty.<sup>29</sup> One might argue that, with limited time and pressing temporal concerns, adoptions to Joseph Smith were not considered a priority, but this assertion is contradicted by the fact that Hyrum and Jerusha Smith received many posthumous adoptions. Rather, there is a more compelling explanation: except for six aberrant adoptions,<sup>30</sup> all of the adoptive mothers in the Nauvoo Temple were the first wives of the adoptive fathers, and Emma Smith did not participate in the completed tem-

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<sup>28</sup>Lisle G Brown, *Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions, and Anointings: A Comprehensive Register of Persons Receiving LDS Temple Ordinances 1841–1846* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006), 361.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 281–85, 351–53.

<sup>30</sup>Joseph F. Smith, “Sealings and Adoption, 1846–1857” (ca. 1869–70), 597–98, microfilm 183374, Special Collections, LDS Family History Library; photocopy in Accn 2113, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City indicates that Brigham Young and Augusta Adams [Cobb] adopted six individuals on February 3 and 4, 1846. These are the only adoptions in that register to a mother other than an adoptive father’s first wife. Researchers at the LDS Church History Library kindly confirmed that the original Nauvoo Temple “Book of Adoptions &

ple.<sup>31</sup> It is consequently not surprising that the sole individual adopted to Joseph Smith, John M. Bernhisel, was also the only individual sealed without an adoptive mother.<sup>32</sup> Emma's refusal to participate may also partly explain why the Nauvoo adoptive parents were not themselves linked to a specific heir. It is possible that they planned to have been sealed to Joseph Smith.<sup>33</sup> Whereas this practice was instituted in the Utah temples with significant changes in the position of adoptive

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Sealings of Parents & Children," which is not publicly available, indicates that the adoptions did occur and that there was no indication that Adams acted as proxy for Young's first wife, Miriam Works. Alan Morrell, emails to Jonathan Stapley, January 27, 2010, printouts in my possession. During this time, Young and Augusta Adams had a strained relationship and there are some conflicting accounts of ritual performance. It is possible that Young offered her the role of mother in the adoptions as an incentive to be sealed to him on February 2, 1846. See John Turner's forthcoming biography of Brigham Young (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming 2012).

<sup>31</sup>Discord or irregular relations with a first wife may also explain why two apostles—Parley Pratt and Orson Hyde—did not participate in adoption rituals.

<sup>32</sup>John Milton Bernhisel was a bachelor and Smith's resident physician. Peculiarly, this ritual was also the only adoption not recorded in the "Book of Adoptions & Sealings of Parents & Children." It was instead recorded in the "Book of Proxey [sic] Sealings," which recorded that Bernhisel "gave himself to Prest Joseph Smith (martyred) to be bec<sup>o</sup>me<sup>e</sup> his son by the law of adoption and to become a legal heir to all the blessings bestowed upon Joseph Smith pertaining to exaltations." See also *Journal History of the Church, 1896–1923*, February 3, 1846, *Selected Collections*, 2:1.

<sup>33</sup>On May 4, 1845, Brigham Young addressed the Latter-day Saints and declared: "Let Sidney have a year to himself & see what he can do—there is not a faithful man but who will have 1000ds crying take me to Zion with you they will claim the protection of the Elders—the innocent will flood around you for protection—we have the power of sealing on Earth & the Almighty has—promd to seal in heaven—are you the Sp. Guide are you their protector etc you want to have the lead in the eternal world—do you not want them sealed to you? You go thro' the ordinances of sealing men & women to Eternity. I want to have as these brethren & sisters in Eternity—our affections etc etc are one—will you be sealed to Joseph—I intend to be sealed to him there, that he may be our prophet priest & king every one in their order, before God & each other—this is the secret of the whole thing—the seal-

mother, Brigham Young apparently thought no ritual was at that time feasible.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the following year while discussing adoption, Heber C. Kimball declared that both he and Brigham Young were “both heirs to the priesthood. How did we know it? Jos. had a vision and saw and traced back our bloods to the royal family.”<sup>35</sup> Brigham Young made similar public pronouncements, which situated their families as alternative archetypes commensurate with Smith’s.<sup>36</sup> While not formally integrating themselves into the sacerdotal chain back to Adam—there were still generations of apostasy to bridge—this some-

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ing power—it is a glorious doctrine.” Brigham Young, Sermon Minutes, May 4, 1845, 6, General Church Minutes, 1839–77, in *Selected Collections*, 1:18.

<sup>34</sup>Young later invoked time constraints as the reason he was not adopted to anyone in Nauvoo. He further stated that he would have been adopted to his biological father. Brigham Young, September 4, 1873, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:187.

<sup>35</sup>Heber C. Kimball, quoted in Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 91.

<sup>36</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:131. Also, at a family meeting on January 8, 1845, Brigham Young declared that the Youngs, Kimballs, Smiths and several other families were “all in one family.” He further stated that Joseph Smith’s blood “was pure in him and that is why the Lord chose him. . . . That blood was in him pure and he had the sole right and lawful power, and he was legal heir to the blood that has been on the Earth.” Young noted that if they were to trace their family back to “our great grand father’s days” they would find “this Gentile race is devilism from first to last.” He rejected republican government and then gave what he viewed as the proper organizing of heaven and earth: “I will shew you the order of the Kingdom—one is placed here, another there, another there, and so on—I should be their Ruler, savior, dictator & governor—they would have an innumerable posterity and say just as I say.” Adam was to be the “King of all, Seth next, Seth rules under his Father and over all, this process will never end; this is the order of the Kingdom of Heaven, that men should rise up as Kings and Priests of God.” Brigham Young and Willard Richards Family Meeting Minutes, January 8, 1845, 4 and 9, General Church Minutes, 1839–77, *Selected Collections*, 1:18. See also Brigham Young, April 8, 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:268. In 1853, Young claimed: “You will never see a man called to preside in the Priesthood of God on the earth who is not purely of the blood of Abraham.” Brigham Young, October 9, 1853, in “Minutes of the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Millennial Star* 16 (January 28, 1854): 52. For context on Mormon Israelism, see Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children: Changing*

what ambiguous position was analogous to Joseph Smith's own claims<sup>37</sup> and mitigated the immediate tension with regards to their role in the adoptive hierarchy and Church government.

The individuals who participated as adoptive parents in Nauvoo were intimates of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.<sup>38</sup> The cases of John D. and Aggatha Lee's significant number of adoptions reflect their access to the temple—Lee was the temple recorder—and his apparently misplaced zeal for the practice.<sup>39</sup> Joseph C. Kingsbury's experience with the temple rituals is representative. He began clerking

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*Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 17–40.

<sup>37</sup>On Joseph Smith's claims to lineal priesthood heirship, see Revelation, December, 1832, Joseph Smith Papers Online, Documents, ID: 2959, p. 2 (D&C 86:8–10); Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Vol. 1: 1832–1839*, in THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS, general editors Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 1:239 (D&C 113:5–8).

<sup>38</sup>Besides Robert B. Thompson, who died in 1841 before polygamy was practiced by others than Joseph Smith, all adoptive fathers were polygamists. Winslow Farr was the only adoptive father who was not a member of the Council of Fifty.

<sup>39</sup>In 1848 Brigham Young claimed that Lee “electioneered also & disgusted me—& men were sealed to him who expected to be sealed to me.” Brigham Young, Minutes of the Meeting of Prst. Young's family in the Council House, March 12, 1848, 1, General Church Minutes, 1839–77, *Selected Collections*, 1:18. As will be seen later, Lee was fairly intemperate and was the locus of several controversies regarding adoption. In a situation that appears unique, many of the families adopted to Lee formally dissolved their covenants in 1847 and 1848. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:290; Joseph F. Smith, “Sealings and Adoptions, 1846–1857,” 803. George Laub wrote: “Now on the 4th Day of April 1848 I understood that John D Lee was obliged to Relees all his Adopted that wish to be free so I demanded my freedom which he promised I should have. This I spoke to president Young about and Br. Bullock Promised to Put it on Record at my request.” Reminiscences and Journal, April 4, 1848, 194, microfilm of holograph, MS 9628, LDS Church History Library. Almost fifty years later Wilford Woodruff claimed that, with regards to Nauvoo adoption, Lee manifested a spirit “that was not of God” with regards to adoption. Wilford Woodruff, April 8, 1894, in Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. (Sandy, Utah: B.H.S.

for Newel K. Whitney in Ohio, soon converted to Mormonism, and continued to work for Whitney later as they moved to Nauvoo. Kingsbury married Whitney's younger sister, Caroline, who passed away in 1842 shortly after giving birth.<sup>40</sup> He was inducted into the temple quorum on January 26, 1845, by the rituals of washing and anointing and married Dorcas Adelia Moore on March 4, 1845, for time and all eternity.<sup>41</sup> When the temple was finished, he then completed the temple rituals. Six weeks after participating in the endowment ritual, Kingsbury, his wife Dorcas, and another woman, Loenza Alcena Pond, were adopted to Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, after which Brigham Young sealed the two women to Kingsbury in marriage over the temple altar.<sup>42</sup>

Many adoptees in Nauvoo were married couples or children-in-law of the adoptive parents. Both men and women, single and married, were adopted. Scribes recorded individuals in the temple ledgers with their adoptive parents' last name adjoined to their own. Though this naming custom was implemented only for a short time, Brigham Young preached that individuals were to use these new names publicly.<sup>43</sup> For example, David Candland, who was adopted to Heber C. Kimball, published several missionary tracts in Liverpool in 1846, signing them "David C. Kimball."<sup>44</sup>

The time constraints on access to the Nauvoo Temple were real,

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Publishing, 1987), 4:72.

<sup>40</sup>Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph C. Kingsbury: A Biography* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1985), 23–24, 40, 71.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 89–92. Cook assumed that Kingsbury was endowed on the same date that he was inducted into the quorum, a conclusion that is not supported by the evidence. Heber C. Kimball, who performed the marriage sealing also sealed Kingsbury's first wife to him by proxy. Joseph C. Kingsbury, *Diaries, 1832–64*, 21–22, digital copy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>42</sup>For dates of Kingsbury's participation in the complete temple liturgy, see *ibid.*, 21–23; George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 156.

<sup>43</sup>Willard Richards, *Diary*, March 27, 1846, 174, holograph, MS 1490, *Selected Collections*, 1:31. See also Historian's Office Journal, March 6, 1845, and January 26, 1846, *Selected Collections*, 1:17.

<sup>44</sup>The pamphlets are known collectively as David C. Kimball, *The Fireside Visitor; or Plain Reasoner* (Liverpool: Printed for the author by R. James, [1846]). See also David C. Kimball, "Reflections on the Economy and Ordi-

and not everyone who wished to participate in adoption rituals could do so. For example, in mid-March, a month after the last adoptions were performed in the temple, Samuel Richards wrote that he “went to father Parker’s, my wife [Mary Haskin Parker Richards] being there. While there received a covenant from him that he would be adopted to me, and sealed, and in the presence of Bro John, and also Mary as witnesses, he put upon me the responsibility of seeing that all the works of salvation, both for him and his Progenaters, were done that they might not come behind, whether he be dead or alive, all done with the consent of the witnesses above named.”<sup>45</sup> After leaving Winter Quarters as part of the Mormon Battalion, George Dyke wrote to Brigham Young:

I am now an Orphan wandering through a wicked world without a Father of promise Shall my Days be numbered & my pilgrimage ended, & I go to the silent tomb without a Father to call me forth from the deep sleep of death? or Shall I enjoy in common with other citizens of the common wealth of Israel enjoy the legal rights of adoption. . . . I know President Young it is a great thing for an unworthy saint to ask at the hands of the highest authority on Earth & if you think it too great a condecension for you to accept of me in your Family, then place me if you please in the Family & under the guarding care of Amasa Lyman.<sup>46</sup>

A few months later, Brigham Young wrote to Thomas Alvord who had questions about the “order of the kingdom of God”: “In as much as you have made a covenant with Br. Samuel Bent to be sealed to him & come into his Kingdom, you aught to keep that covenant. And

nances of the Kingdom of God,” *Millennial Star* 8 (August 1, 1846): 22–25. In contrast to his experience in Nauvoo, Candland recounts a narrative of the “law of adoption” similar to Pratt’s *A Voice of Warning*, whereby people become children of God by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. For other examples of individuals going by their adopted names, see Irving, “The Law of Adoption,” 296 note 15.

<sup>45</sup>Samuel W. Richards, Diary, March 13, 1846, typescript, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>46</sup>George Dyke, Letter to Brigham Young, August 17, 1846, Fort Leavenworth, “Incoming Corr 1846,” typescript by Edyth Romney, MS 2736, Box 19, fd. 2, LDS Church History Library. Adoptions were not resumed until 1877; note that Young kept a list of individuals to be adopted to him (see discussion below).



when there is someone to act in his sted or as proxei for him, (as he is fallen asleep) and a Temple built for such purposes, you must attend to it. And if you should not live, you must leave on record your request with some of your relations or some one you shall select."<sup>47</sup>

The anxiety to formalize the priesthood chain through adoption reflects Joseph Smith's redefinition of heaven, and various accounts of the adoption ritual reinforce its associated salvific character. By being sealed to their parents in the temple, children were "sealed unto eternal life" and "sealed against all sins and blasphemies," except the sin against the Holy Ghost.<sup>48</sup> And as Dyke wrote to Young, celestial kinship lines appear to have become the means of realizing priesthood resurrection, whereby individuals looked forward to raising their children to the eternities.<sup>49</sup> George Laub recorded a detailed description of his experience in the temple that highlights these important relationships:

This order of Adoption will Link the chain of the Prieshood in such a way that cannot be seperated by covenanting before god, Angels and the Present witnesses we covenant together for him to be a father unto those who are sealed to him to doo unto them as he would to his own children and to counsell them in rituousness and to teach them all the Principles of Salvation and to share unto them of all the Blessings to comfert these and all that are calculated to make them happy Both in time and in Eternity. Now we also did covenant on our side to do all the good for his upbuilding and happyness Both in time & Eternity this was done in the hous of the Lord across the alter as was Prepared for this Purpos of ordinances.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the imagery of links in the priesthood chain, Laub here

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<sup>47</sup>Brigham Young, Letter to Thomas Alvord, January 6, 1847, Winter Quarters, Brigham Young Office Files, microfilm of holograph, CR 1234/1, Box 16, fd. 11; see also "Manuscript History of the Church," January 6, 1847, in *Selected Collections*, 1:2.

<sup>48</sup>Joseph F. Smith, "Sealings and Adoption, 1846-1857," 517-18, 561-62.

<sup>49</sup>See also Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:171; Ward, *Winter Quarters*, 105-6; Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:301, 325, 4:390.

<sup>50</sup>Laub, *Reminiscences and Journal*, February 5, 1846, 106-7; see also Eugene England, ed., "George Laub's Nauvoo Journal," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 164-65, which is based on a later edited version of the same text.

describes a covenant between participants that incorporated a significant temporal commitment. It was on the trail west that this commitment would be tested.

#### ADOPTION AND THE WESTERN TRAIL

As Young's followers abandoned Nauvoo, the refugees organized in traveling companies. After wintering in the Omaha Nation Territory, Young led the vanguard pioneer company to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving in July 1847. This exodus was a time of communal reliance, theocracy, and peril. It was also the only time when Latter-day Saints systematically implemented certain practical aspects of their adoption theology.<sup>51</sup> In January 1847 Church leaders in Winter Quarters organized their companies as families. Wilford Woodruff wrote that on January 19, 1847, "President Brigham Young met with his Company or family organization or those who had been adopted unto him or were to be, & organized th[em] into A company out of which may grow a people that may yet be Called the tribe of Brigham."<sup>52</sup> Very few of the company had been formally adopted to Young in the temple. However, Young certainly viewed this organization as being based in adoption theology—theocracy mediated through kin network. The use of familial language could thus amplify the perceived role of actual adoption ritual in the traveling companies.<sup>53</sup> For example, the day after Young organized his company as a family, Woodruff, who had never even seen an adoption ritual performed, "organized my family company this

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<sup>51</sup>An important illustration of Brigham Young's views regarding the primacy of the familial organization during this period is Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor's attempt to reorganize traveling companies and Young's response, denouncing them publicly. Terryl Givens and Matthew Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2011), chap. 10; Stephen F. Pratt, "Parley P. Pratt in Winter Quarters and the Trail West," *BYU Studies* 24, no. 3 (1984): 385–88.

<sup>52</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:118. It appears that the individuals who made up these family-companies intended to formalize their commitment to the company patriarchs at a later date. Brigham Young also encouraged the leaders of the Mormon Battalion to "be fathers to their companies. & in their cos manage the whole affair by the power of the priesthood." Willard Richards, *Diary*, July 18, 1846.

<sup>53</sup>E.g., Richard E. Bennett mistakenly claimed that hundreds of adop-

night At my own House consisting of 40 Men mostly Head men of families. Those that Joined me entered in a covenant with uplifted Hands to Heaven to keep all the commandments & Statutes of the Lord our God And to sustain me in my office.”<sup>54</sup> Before Young spoke out against it the following month,<sup>55</sup> familial language had become pervasive, as Norton Jacob, who had not been adopted to anyone, when he needed some advice, sought out Heber C.

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tion rituals were performed in Winter Quarters. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: “And Should We Die”* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 190–91; Bennett, *“We’ll Find the Place”: The Mormon Exodus, 1846–1848* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 82–83. He appears to have conflated the lobbying of certain individuals for others to be adopted to them, with actual ritual performance. For examples of such lobbying, see Job Smith, *Diary and Autobiography, 1849–77*, 25 [67], digital copy of holograph, Perry Special Collections; Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:178; Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 93–94, 104, 135. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards specifically preached against such “electioneering” or “lexeering.” Willard Richards, *Diary*, February 16, 1847; Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 91–93. Willard Richards appears to have received at least one commitment for adoption himself. Willard Richards, *Diary*, February 6, 1847. See also Brigham Young, *Letter to Thomas Alvord*, January 6, 1847. Young later claimed that while “John Taylor had men running thro’ the city [Nauvoo] to get men sealed to him,” he (Young) did not ask any man to be sealed to himself. Brigham Young, *Minutes of the Meeting of Prst. Young’s Family in the Council House*, March 12, 1848, 1.

<sup>54</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:119, January 20, 1847. On Woodruff’s not having had or seen adoptions performed, see Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 93; Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 7:340–41.

<sup>55</sup>In his extended February 16, 1847, sermon on adoption, Young declared: “I have a request to make of my family & that is that they (esspecially old people) omit calling me their Father. Call me Brother Brigham. I shall feel better when you do for I do not consider that I am worthy of that Appellation. Father in the Priesthood implies the great head. The term would be proper to Father Adam. Jesus had reference to the same thing when He told his deciples not to call any man Father on earth for their Father was in heaven.” Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:132. See also Kelley, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 82.

Kimball, he “being my Spiritual Father in the Church.”<sup>56</sup>

As is not surprising under these intensely familial conditions, Brigham Young repeatedly preached on the law of adoption and its ramifications in 1847, both spiritual and temporal. On January 16, Young addressed the concerns of those who thought adoption reduced their eternal glory. According to Woodruff’s summary: “President Young said there kingdom consisted of their own posterity And it did not diminish that at all by being sealed to one of the Twelve but ownly bound them by that perfect Chain” back to Adam.<sup>57</sup>

A month later, however, on February 16, Young opened a special two-day family meeting and feast<sup>58</sup> to which he invited the Twelve “though they were not of his family.” Young preceded the meal with a lengthy sermon on adoption, beginning with apparent jealousies regarding ecclesiastical position and plural marriage. Then he shifted to adoption, “Such jealeousies do exhist & were I to say to the Elders you now have the liberty to build up your kingdoms one half of them would lie, swear, steal, & fight like the vary devil, to get men & women sealed to them. They would even try to pass right by me & go to Joseph thinking to get between him & the Twelve.” As Joseph Smith had done previously, Young described adoption as “being the means of salvation left to bring us back to God” established due to previous generations’ apostasy, and consequently not being “legal heirs.”<sup>59</sup> “If men are not saved together,” he taught, “they cannot be saved at all.”<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps, in an effort to shore up his authority, he continued in

<sup>56</sup>Barney, *Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847*, 77. Jacob was later made “a capt of the eighth ten in the third hundred 2d grand division under H[eber]. C. Kimbal” (92).

<sup>57</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:117.

<sup>58</sup>On the planning of this meeting, see Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 65, 73–74. Such meetings were apparently not completely uncommon. For a similar family meeting held by Heber C. Kimball, see George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 365–67.

<sup>59</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:130–37. See also Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 76–89. Woodruff’s report and Lee’s report appear to be copies of the same text. Willard Richards, Diary, February 16, 1847, includes a completely different report of the meeting.

<sup>60</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Willard Richards, *Journal*, February 16, 1847.

his sermon declaring that he, along with Joseph Smith and several other leaders, was “entitled to the Keys of the Priesthood according to lineage & Blood.” Still, when he had another temple built he would “extend the Chain of the Pristhood back through the Apostolic dispensation to Father Adam.” He specified this relationship in greater detail:

Those that are Adopted into my family & take me for their Councillor<sup>61</sup> if I Continue faithful I will preside over them throughout all Eternity. I will stand at their head, and Joseph will stand at the head of this Church & will be there President Prophet & God to the People in this dispensation.<sup>62</sup> When we Locate I will settle my family down in the order & teach them there duty. They will then have to provide temporal Blessings for me instead of my boarding from 40 to 50 persons as I now do. I will administer in spiritual Blessings to them. I expect to live in the House of the Lord & recieve & administer ordinances to my Brethren & for the dead all the year round.<sup>63</sup>

After addresses from a few others, the meeting adjourned for a dinner meal, where the adopted sons sat around a massive table according to seniority “with there companion oposite them commenc-

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<sup>61</sup>John D. Lee also wrote that individuals adopted to him, “claimed me to be their counselor.” Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 76, 31.

<sup>62</sup>On the use of “god” in lieu of ecclesial leader, see Joseph Smith’s June 16, 1844, Sermon in the Grove, in which he uses Moses as an archetype. Thomas Bullock, scribe, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 381, June 16, 1844. On January 8, 1845, Brigham Young made several similar points and described the governing unit of the “Kingdom of Heaven” as a “ruler, savior, dictator, & governor.” Young and Richards Family Meeting Minutes, January 8, 1845, 9. In Utah during the Reformation, Young preached: “I dont want you to call me a God to you: you dont know the meaning of that name term. Br. Heber always will keep calling me President Young—if you don’t stop calling me President Young, Br. Heber, I’ll stick it onto you, and call you President Kimball all the time.” In the following sermon, Kimball responded: “I have called Br. Brigham a God to me—well, he is a son of God. I wont do so any more—or if I do I will take it back again.” Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *An Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 58–59, December 30, 1856.

<sup>63</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:132–33. See also Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 82–83.

ing with the Twelve President Young at there head.” As they ate, the band played.<sup>64</sup> After the meal and the welcome of John Tippets and Thomas Woolsey, two Mormon Battalion members who had arrived the night before on February 15, 1847, apparently bringing money and letters, Young again preached to the assembly on adoption. He confessed that he did not yet have the full vision of the doctrine, but asserted that his information was sufficient. He told the company how adoption was the manner in which the dead and the living are made interdependently perfect, then, according to the Woodruff and Lee’s accounts, elaborated:

I will use myself as A figure, & say that I am ruling over 10 sons or subjects ownly & soon each one of them would have 10 men sealed to them & they would be ruler over them & that would make me ruler over 10 Presidents or Kings whareas I was ruler over 10 subjects ownly or in other words I ruled over one Kingdom but now I rule over 10. Then let each one get 10 more. Then I would be ruler over 100 Kingdoms & so on continued to all eternity & the more honor & glory that I could bestow upon my sons the more it would add to my exhaltations.

After discussing ways in which one could limit one’s exaltation, he said he would answer a question that many had asked him and that revealed much about adoption as it had been practiced: “Should I have A father Dead that has never herd this gospel, would it be required of me to redeem him & have him adopted into some mans family And I be adopted unto my Father? I answer No. If we have to attend the ordinances of redemption for our dead relatives we then become their saviors & were we to wait to redeem our dead relatives before we Could link the Chain of the Priesthood we would never accomplish it.”<sup>65</sup>

The following morning, Young felt unwell and “fainted away,

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<sup>64</sup>The adoptive covenant organization had a hierarchical character. On September 22, 1846, displeased with the tenor of his camp, Young preached ardent repentance. Norton Jacob recorded a vote of reformation, adding “that Br Rockwood is to be made an instrument to accomplish that thing, as he is Brother Brigham’s eldest son by adoption.” Barney, *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847*, 86. See also, perhaps, Greg R. Knight, “Journal of Thomas Bullock,” *BYU Studies* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 42, January 10, 1846.

<sup>65</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*,

apparently dead for several moments.”<sup>66</sup> Later, around noon, while several apostles preached to Young’s family company on adoption in his stead,<sup>67</sup> he rested; and while he slept, he had a vision of Joseph Smith. Though scribes wrote virtually all Young’s written materials at this point, he made the effort to write down a description of his experience. He described pleading to regain Smith’s association and then pointedly queried: “The Bretheren have grate anxiety to understand the law of adoption or seeling principles and I said if you have word of council for me I should be glad to recive it.” Joseph Smith repeatedly counseled him to instruct the Church to receive the Holy Ghost and that if the people keep the Spirit of the Lord, “they will the[n] find them selves jest as they ware organ[ized] by our Father in heven before they came into the world. Our Father in heven organized the human famely, but they are all disorganized and in grate confusion.” Young wrote that Smith then “shued me the patren how they they [sic] ware in the begining this I cannot describe but saw it and where the Preasthood had ben taken from the Earth and how it must be joined to gether so there would be a perfect chane from Father Adam to his latest posterity.” Smith again said, “Tel the people to be sure to Keep the Spirit of the [sic] and fallow it and it

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3:134–37. See also Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 86–89. Four months later, John Pack, a captain of fifty in Young’s company wrote: “After I John Pack having had much contem pilation about the order of adoption and my Kindred and maid it a Subject of prayer for a long time I rite this my will to my Wife Julia and my Children being dictated by the spirit of the Lord first of all I want my Children to be sealed to me and I want to be sealed to my Father and my Father to his Father and so on from Son to Father Until all of our Kindred are redeemed[.] Then I want your Kindred to be Sealed to me in like maner[.] Thanks be to god it is my privilige to be A Saviour on Mount Zion and save our kindred.” John Pack, *Autobiography*, digital image of holograph, 11, [http://www.johnpackfamily.com/gallery/v/journal/page\\_11.jpg.html](http://www.johnpackfamily.com/gallery/v/journal/page_11.jpg.html) (accessed August 1, 2010).

<sup>66</sup>Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 90. Young later recalled that he felt that he had died. Young, quoted in Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:238. According to Willard Richards, *Diary*, February 28, 1847, Young said, “when we get thro’ the vail we can talk how I felt—I felt like death grappled with me. I [spoke?] I had been where Joseph & Hyrum were—its hard coming to life again.”

<sup>67</sup>Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 91–94.

would lead them just right.”<sup>68</sup>

This visionary experience appears to have had a cooling effect on Young’s public engagement of adoption theology. Easily the apex of his own experience, it was also a delimiter. Besides one sermon the month after they arrived in Utah and another in 1848, where Young mentioned adoption,<sup>69</sup> the documentary record is generally silent for years on the topic. There was conflict within the adoptive hierarchy during the exodus,<sup>70</sup> a marked inability to realize Joseph Smith’s visionary exhortation to “keep the quiet spirit of Jesus.”<sup>71</sup> Perhaps because of this failure, any day-to-day implications of adoptive relation-

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<sup>68</sup>Brigham Young, “Pres. B. Young’s dream Feb.y 17, 1847,” Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234/1, Box 75 (Reel 87), fd. 34. A week later he described the experience to several individuals in the Historian’s Office, who recorded detailed descriptions. Willard Richards, Diary, February 28, 1847; Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 238; Kelley, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 105. See also Joseph Fielding, Diary, 1847, microfilm of holograph, MS 1567, LDS Church History Library; Heber C. Kimball, December 4, 1856, *Journal of Discourses*, 4:135–36. Various clerks copied and edited Young’s account, which copies were ultimately used for inclusion in the “Manuscript History of the Church,” February 23, 1847, in *Selected Collections*, 1:2. See also Robert Lang Campbell, Diary, March 13, 1847, 59, digital copy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>69</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:259–60; Brigham Young, Minutes of the Meeting of Prst. Young’s Family in the Council House, March 12, 1848, General Church Minutes, 1839–77. Orson Pratt followed the earlier sermon by declaring that all Church rites performed before the Restoration were invalid, declaring, “that as all the ordinances of the gospel Administered by the world since the Aposticy of the Church was illegal, in like manner was the marriage Cerimony illegal and all the world who had been begotton through the illegal marriage were Bastards not sons & Hence they had to enter into the law of adoption & be adopted into the Priesthood in order to become sons & legal heirs of salvation.” Orson Pratt, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 3:260. Pratt made similar remarks decades later in Utah. Orson Pratt, October 7, 1873, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:257–58.

<sup>70</sup>On the conflict within and over adoptive relationships during the exodus, see Irving, “The Law of Adoption,” 299–303. John D. Lee appears to have been the frequent locus of conflict.

<sup>71</sup>Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 238.



ships quickly attenuated, then disappeared.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore it would be decades before a temple was available in which to administer adoption rituals. When Orson Pratt published his widely distributed series of pamphlets entitled “The Kingdom of God” in 1848 and 1849, which treated the “law of adoption” in great detail, he abandoned Nauvoo-era temple theology and instead returned to and expanded his brother’s earlier narrative from *A Voice of Warning*.<sup>73</sup>

### ADOPTION IN THE INTER-TEMPLE PERIOD

The thirty years between the arrival of pioneers in the Great Basin and the inauguration of the first temple in Utah Territory was an incubator for the law of adoption. While every other temple ritual for the living was practiced in various temporary locations, adoptions and biological child-to-parent sealings were not.<sup>74</sup> Adoption ritual remained a viable, if yet inaccessible feature of Mormon liturgy, though older pre-temple conceptions of adoption by baptism continued to circulate.<sup>75</sup> Beliefs regarding adoption evolved in conjunction with other doctrinal ideas and experiences of the Saints. Though not sup-

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<sup>72</sup>Some adopted individuals did continue to refer to their adoptive fathers as “father.” It also appears that land in the Salt Lake Valley was at least partially distributed through the family companies of the Twelve. Bennett, *We’ll Find the Place*, 237–41; Brigham Young, Letter to Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, Ezra T. Benson, et al., October 9, 1848, Salt Lake City, Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234 (Reel 24), Box 16, fd. 16.

<sup>73</sup>See Orson Pratt, *A Series of Pamphlets, by Orson Pratt . . .* (Liverpool: R. James, 1851), nos. 2–5. On the publication of the pamphlets and their circulation, see Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church: Vol. 2, 1848–1852* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005), 53–60. Pratt relied on a similar narrative decades later, August 4, 1872, *Journal of Discourses*, 15:109.

<sup>74</sup>As previously noted, though adoptions and child-to-parent sealings were recorded separately in temple records, the only difference is the biological relationship of participants. Latter-day Saints called child-to-parent sealings “adoptions” into the twentieth century.

<sup>75</sup>E.g., the popular “Jaques’ Catechism” included the following section: “13. Q. What is baptism sometimes called? A. The law of adoption, or the door of the kingdom of God. 14. Q. Why is baptism so called? A. Because mankind having become, through sin, strangers and aliens to God, they, by obeying the ordinance of baptism, become His adopted children,

ported by all Church leaders, Brigham Young's ideas about adoption evolved with his innovative cosmology and communalism, and in response to perceived pettiness and devilishness among Church members. While ideas regarding adoption seem to have retained some of the Nauvoo-era character during this time, Church members generally appear to have been confused by the practice.

As the availability of the Endowment House approached, Brigham Young began to discuss temple rituals in earnest. It is evident that his views on adoption had expanded. While adoptions in Nauvoo were regularly performed before people were sealed in marriage, by 1856 Young placed adoption at the liturgical apex of Mormonism: "We will seal men to men by the keys of the Holy Priesthood. This is the highest ordinance. It is the last ordinance of the kingdom of God on the earth and above all the endowments that can be given you. It is a finall sealing an Eternal Principle and when once made cannot be broaken by the Devel."<sup>76</sup> Young may have arrived at this position because all the other temple rituals were available outside the temple. Young then proceeded to discuss Joseph Smith's role in a ritualized resurrection:

After Joseph comes to us in his resurrected body He will more fully instruct us concerning the Baptism for the dead & the sealing ordinances. He will say be baptized for this man & that man & that man be sealed to that man & such a man to such a man, and connect the Priesthood together. I tell you their will not be much of this done untill Joseph comes. He is our spiritual Father. Our hearts are already turned to him and his to us. This [is] the order of the Holy Priesthood and we shall continue to administer in the ordinances of the kingdom

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and members of His kingdom." John Jaques, *Catechism for Children, Exhibiting the Prominent Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (London: F. D. Richards, 1854), 41.

<sup>76</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:389–91, January 13, 1856. Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 280, included an undated letter excerpt from "John Read" to his wife describing Brigham Young's preaching that "*men* would be sealed to men in the priesthood in a more solemn ordinance than that by which women were sealed to man, and in a room over that in which women were sealed to man in the temple of the Lord" (emphasis in publication). Unfortunately, Kimball Young used pseudonyms for his sources and the correspondence cannot therefore be easily validated.

of God here on Earth.<sup>77</sup>

As early as April 9, 1852, Young had distanced himself from the possibility that adoption might become a common ritual, essentially limiting all child-to-parent sealings to immediate biological kin within the Church. He explained that most sealings and adoptions would be performed in the Millennium and be directed by resurrected beings.<sup>78</sup>

In 1857 Young responded to Andrew Love, an inquiring correspondent, that the doctrine of adoption “has not been taught of late,” but that when the temple was finished he would again bring attention to it. In the interim, Young advised that Love make a record of the individual to whom he wished to be adopted, so that, in the case of his death, the ritual could be executed posthumously.<sup>79</sup> Between February 4, 1846, when Young received his last adoption in the Nauvoo Temple and in 1854, 175 individuals had recorded with Young that

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<sup>77</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:389–91. Woodruff described this as “one of the greatest sermons he [Young] had ever delivered on earth.” James Henry Martineau, summarizing the same sermon, wrote: “The 1000 years will be used in sealing man to man.” Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *An Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 49.

<sup>78</sup>Young claimed that if he died without being sealed to his father and his posterity failed to perform that sealing, then when he was resurrected, he would personally direct the work in the temple. “Discourse by President B. Young, Delivered at the General Conference in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, April 8, [sic, April 9] 1852,” *Millennial Star* 16 (May 27, 1854): 326. In an earlier sermon, Young stated: “We can get our own ordinances and as many of our ancestors as we can. . . . It will be the work of the Mil. Saviors will go into the Temple & minister from year to yr & bec[ome] pillars in temple of our God—a resurrected body cant act for a body here—they wod tell us what to do—they will not go thro the ordinances—but will tell their child who is worthy & who will rece the gospel.” Brigham Young, Minutes of the Meeting of Prst. Young’s family in the Council House, March 12, 1848, 1, General Church Minutes, 1839–77, *Selected Collections*, 1:18.

<sup>79</sup>Brigham Young, Letter to Andrew Love, February 17, 1857, Salt Lake City, microfilm of typescript, Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234/1, Letterbook 3, 409. Young continued to advise people to leave a record about the person to whom they wished to be adopted. Brigham Young, Letter to John McCarthy, September 18, 1872, Salt Lake City, microfilm of typescript, Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234/1, Letterbook 13, 227.

they wished to be adopted to him.<sup>80</sup>

So rare were the expositions on the law of adoption that it was generally regarded as a mystery, a perception compounded by the increasingly small percentage of the population that had any real first-hand experience with it. In response to several questions regarding the necessity of adoption, in 1851 Parley P. Pratt, who had not participated in the Nauvoo adoptions, stated simply, "I don't know."<sup>81</sup> Franklin W. Young confessed to his uncle Brigham Young in the summer of 1862: "I have heard of a sealing ordinance ever since I was a little boy, but ~~nothing~~ much has been said about it until lately in the last weeks paper (that we have here) I am again reminded of it by 'Remarks' by yourself delivered at Conference, and long before this have I thought, and talked with my brother John on the same subject, but I will acknowledge that I know but *very little* about it."<sup>82</sup>

The sermon to which Franklin referred was a fiery April conference discourse castigating the Saints. After Brigham Young discussed the power of Elijah and the sealing of generations, he then declared:

I have known men that I positively think would fellowship the Devil, if he would agree to be sealed to them. "Oh, be sealed to me, brother; I care not what you do, you may lie and steal, or anything else, I can put

<sup>80</sup>Joseph F. Smith, "Sealings and Adoptions, 1846–1847," 787–99; tally by Irving, "The Law of Adoption," 304. For earlier drafts of these records see Endowment House, Pre-Endowment House Ordinances, 1847–1854 Manuscript Books, CR 334/13, fds. 1–2, LDS Church History Library. These records sometimes include transcripts of letters requesting adoption. See also records in Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 198; Brigham Young Office Papers, CR 1234, Box 64, fd. 32, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>81</sup>Parley P. Pratt, Letter to Andrew Silver, January 6, 1851, *Deseret News*, January 11, 1851, 187. Erastus Snow, who had similarly never participated in an adoption ritual, preached peculiarly in 1855 that parents "had no claim on their children. But if their children wished to be sealed to their ~~children~~ parents, it was all right; if to be sealed to some one else, it was equally right, and that ~~this~~ was the key to the principle of adoption." Quoted in Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *An Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 48, December 25, 1855; emphasis Martineau's.

<sup>82</sup>Franklin W. Young, Letter to Brigham Young, July 4, 1862, Grafton, Utah, Brigham Young Office Files, microfilm of holograph, CR 1234/1, Box 29, fd. 7; emphasis Franklin Young's.

up with all your meanness, if you will only be sealed to me.” Now this is not so much weakness as it is selfishness. It is a great and glorious doctrine, but the reason I have not preached it in the midst of this people, is, I could not do it without turning so many of them to the Devil. Some would go to hell for the sake of getting the Devil sealed to them.<sup>83</sup>

These words are somewhat peculiar considering that there were no adoptions being performed, nor would there be for fifteen more years. They perhaps reflect Young’s lingering distaste left over from his experience on the trail west. Moreover, according to Young, people apparently continued to lobby others to become their adopted kin. In one example of such activities, Albert King Thurber wrote in his diary in 1850 that “B. F. Johnson, in a round about way proposed for me to be adopted to him.” Emphasizing the ambiguity around such jockeying, Thurber responded, “I told him I thought it would be well for him to be adopted to me.”<sup>84</sup>

Further in his 1862 sermon quoted above, Young qualified the idea of perseverance originally associated with adoption and the other temple rituals. He highlighted the benefit of those joining him in righteousness, “but when men want to be sealed to me to have me feed and clothe them, and then act like the Devil, I have no more feeling and affection for them than I have for the greatest stranger in the world. Because a man is sealed to me, do you suppose that he can escape being judged according to his works? No. Were he sealed to the Saviour, it would make no difference; he would be judged like other men.”<sup>85</sup> Young had first articulated this position in 1848 during a family meeting in which he disclaimed any responsibility for those

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<sup>83</sup>Brigham Young, April 6, 1862, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:269–70. Nine years earlier, Young had made similar comments about those who tried to get widows sealed to them in order to co-opt the decedent’s family in the eternities. Brigham Young, April 8, 1853, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:306–8.

<sup>84</sup>Charles Kelley, ed., *Journal of Albert King Thurber* (N.p.: mimeograph, 1952), 46, in Charles Kelly Papers, MS 100, Box 16, Marriott Special Collections.

<sup>85</sup>Brigham Young, April 6, 1862, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:269–70. This limitation was perhaps part of a similar shift in perspective about other aspects of the temple liturgy. David John Buerger, *Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 124–26.

sealed to him who did not follow his counsel.<sup>86</sup>

Young apparently modified his perspective regarding adoption due to the behaviors of certain individuals, perhaps including John D. Lee. Soon after arriving in Utah territory, Church leaders received testimony of Lee's abusive and lewd conduct towards his family, and he was disciplined by an ecclesiastical court.<sup>87</sup> At the time of his 1862 sermon, Young also knew that Lee was a leading participant in the atrocity at Mountain Meadows. Furthermore, it was not long after arriving in Utah Territory that Young received letters from people begging to be adopted to him or to leverage existing adoptive relations of others to secure pecuniary favors.<sup>88</sup> Despite these shifts away from sacramental perseverance in the temple, in 1860 Young had claimed that "himself & Br. Heber, would be able to draw their children to them again, even if they should turn away. All they had to do was to do right themselves."<sup>89</sup>

For Young, the concept of adoption also evolved in conjunction

<sup>86</sup>Brigham Young, Minutes of the Meeting of Prst. Young's family in the Council House, March 12, 1848, 1, General Church Minutes, 1839–77. In this important sermon, Young described the great chain that needed to be forged back to Adam and stated "I don't care how many r sealed to me—nor who—if a man steals & wants to come into my fam—I tell him he must stop that—or lying or swearing—now suppose if they wont stop it—am I responsible—if I was where is your agency" and further that "my friendship is just as great to a man who is sealed to HCK or John Taylor, if he is a riteous man—for we shall find we r all of one fam."

<sup>87</sup>Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 61.

<sup>88</sup>E.g., Esther Harrington, Letter to Brigham Young, January 5, 1848, Nauvoo, Ill., microfilm of holograph, Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234/1, Box 21, fd. 12; James Tomlinson, Letter to Brigham Young, March 27, 1848, Holth County, Mo., microfilm of holograph, Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234/1, Box 21, fd. 14. For a much later occurrence, see Charles M. Hatch and Todd M. Compton, eds., *A Widow's Tale: The 1884–1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2003), 167.

<sup>89</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Fred C. Collier, ed., *The Office Journal of President Brigham Young, 1858–1863, Book D* (Hannah, Utah: Collier's Publishing, 2006), 175, December 4, 1860. See also Brigham Young, April 29, 1866, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:215.

with the development of his controversial “Adam-God” beliefs.<sup>90</sup> Young’s hyper-literal views regarding the biological relation of humans to God/Adam reinforced the idea that welding priesthood links back to Adam was essential to the cosmology of divinization.<sup>91</sup> To the Salt Lake School of the Prophets in 1869, Young declared: “Men also will have to be sealed to Men untill the Chain is united from Father Adam down to the last Saint. This will be the work of the Millennium & Joseph Smith will be the Man to attend to it or to dictate it. . . . Some have thought it strange what I have said Concerning Adam But the period will Come when this people of faithful will be willing to adopt Joseph Smith as their Prophet Seer Revelator & God But not the father of their spirits for that was our Father Adam.”<sup>92</sup> As on the trail west, Brigham Young’s perspective emphasized the necessity of the priesthood chain back to Adam, though with expanded meaning. This posi-

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<sup>90</sup>Gary James Bergera, *Conflict in the Quorum: Orson Pratt, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), index: Young, Brigham—theology and teachings of: Adam-God doctrine; David John Buerger, “The Adam-God Doctrine,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Spring 1982): 14–58.

<sup>91</sup>In recasting the language of Romans 8, Brigham Young reconceptualized Pauline adoption in light of his ideas on spirit generation: “I think, however, that the rendering of this Scripture is not so true as the following, namely: ‘But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to continue to be the sons of God.’ Instead of receiving the gospel to become the sons of God, my language would be—to receive the gospel that we may continue to be the sons of God. Are we not all sons of God when we are born into this world? Old Pharoah, King of Egypt, was just as much a son of God as Moses and Aaron were His sons, . . . Inasmuch as all had apostatized, they had to become the sons of God by adoption, still, originally, all were the sons of God. We receive the gospel, not that we may have our names written in the Lamb’s book of life, but that our names may not be blotted out of that book. . . . My doctrine is—that there never was a son and daughter of Adam and Eve born on this earth whose names were not already written in the Lamb’s book of life, and there they will remain until their conduct is such that the angel who keeps the record is authorized to blot them out and record them elsewhere.” Brigham Young, November 17, 1867, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:100–101.

<sup>92</sup>Brigham Young, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 6:508; cf., Salt Lake School of the Prophets, Minutes, December 11, 1869, photocopy of typescript, Leonard J. Arrington Papers, Special Collections

tion also minimized concerns over an immediate link to Joseph Smith.<sup>93</sup>

This is further illustrated in one of Young's 1873 sermons. After explaining that many rituals could be performed outside of the temple, he stated: "When we come to other sealing ordinances, ordinances pertaining to the holy Priesthood, to connect the chain of the Priesthood from father Adam until now, by sealing children to their parents, being sealed for our forefathers, etc., they cannot be done without a Temple. But we can seal women to men, but not men to men, without a Temple. When the ordinances are carried out in the Temples that will be erected, men will be sealed to their fathers, and those who have slept clear up to father Adam."<sup>94</sup>

Perhaps the greatest practical manifestation of Young's vision of adoption is something which has not typically been associated with it. In the 1870s, Brigham Young began to preach the formation of communal groups, frequently referred to as United Orders.<sup>95</sup> Young described these economic and social organizations as the Order of Enoch. As he explained to the Salt Lake Third Ward in 1874:

While we were in Winter Quarters the Lord gave me a revelation just as

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and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan (hereafter Merrill-Cazier Library).

<sup>93</sup>See, for example, Brigham Young, Salt Lake School of the Prophets, Minutes, June 18, 1870: "The Question of Adoption was preached. Presidt Young said the Priesthood had been on the Earth at different times. When the Priesthood has not been on Earth Men will have to be sealed to Each other untill we go on to Father Adam. Men will have to be sealed to Men so as to link the Chain from begining to End & all Children will have to be sealed to their Parents that was born before they had their Endowments. But this must be in A Temple & No whare Els. Joseph will be with us No doubt & Joseph will have to be sealed to Somebody But it will require Revelation to do this." Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 6:553. To Andrew Love, Young wrote that adoption "is for the purpose of having an unbroken Chain of Priesthood from the present time bak through Joseph, the apostles to the Jews—Jesus—even back to Adam." Brigham Young, Letter to Andrew Love, February 17, 1857.

<sup>94</sup>Brigham Young, September 4, 1873, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:186.

<sup>95</sup>See, e.g., Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).



much as he ever gave one to anybody. He opened my mind and showed me the organization of the kingdom of God in a family capacity, I talked it to my brethren; I would throw out a few words here and a few words there to my first counselor, to my second counselor and the Twelve Apostles, but with the exception of one or two of the Twelve it would not touch a man. They believed it would come, O yes, but it would be by and by. Says I—"Why not now?"<sup>96</sup>

Young appears to be recalling his February 17, 1847, vision of Joseph Smith, where he asked about adoption and was shown the pattern of existence before this world and the formation of priesthood relationships.

Expanding on the communalism of the trail West, Young described his vision of the family in vivid detail during one 1872 general conference address. "After the Order of Enoch," he "would arrange for a little family, say about a thousand persons" and build large communal dining and prayer halls. All would eat and pray together and all would labor for the whole.<sup>97</sup> Most of the examples of United Order communities were established before the dedication of the St. George Temple in early 1877 and did not last long after Young's death later that year. I am unaware of any United Order families that were formalized through adoption in the temples, and such organization would have been in definite tension with Young's stated view that adoption would be somewhat limited until the Millennium. However, it is clear that Brigham Young viewed both practices—adoption and the Order of Enoch—as rooted in the same heavenly pattern.

As Brigham Young hinted, not all of the Church's leaders viewed adoption in similar terms. In an unusual break from his regular solidarity, Heber C. Kimball dissented from Young's adoption doctrines, a position that is all the more surprising because he was one of the few adoptive parents in Nauvoo. In fact, he was the "father" with the second largest number of adopted kin. In January of 1857, he entered the Church Historian's Office and, according to Wilford Woodruff, who was present,

said that He did not Believe in this custom of Adoption that had been practiced in this Church. No man should give his Birthright to another but should keep his birthright in the lineage of his Fathers & go to & unite

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<sup>96</sup>Brigham Young, June 23, 1874, *Journal of Discourses*, 18:244.

<sup>97</sup>Brigham Young, October 9, 1872, *Journal of Discourses*, 15:221.

the link through the whole lineage of their fathers untill they come up to a man in the Linage who held the priesthood. . . . Now unless a man is a poor Cuss he should keep his priesthood & unite it with his Fathers & not give it to another, & the Lord will save our Father[s?]. Evry man that gets his Patriarchal Blessings & Priesthood He becomes the Patriarch of his own family & should bless his own family.<sup>98</sup>

In a perspective that recalled the patrilineal priesthood of early Mormonism and anticipated the rationale justifying the shift away from the law of adoption in the 1890s, Kimball viewed biological relations as eternally sufficient in light of the temple rituals. Later in 1857, Kimball delivered a sermon in which he described the young boys in the congregation as “legal heirs to the Priesthood.” Kimball elucidated: “After receiving the Priesthood, when a person receives his endowment, he is an heir to the Priesthood—an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ.”<sup>99</sup> It appears that Kimball simply grew to reject the notions of heirship that necessitated adoption and viewed the temple endowment as conferring legal rights to the cosmological priesthood. Three years later, however, he told several of his wives that “should the principle of adoption ever be brought up again, he would be adopted to Br Brigham, but no one should ever be adopted to him.”<sup>100</sup>

During the first three decades of settlement in Utah Territory, adoption was rarely discussed publicly. Brigham Young felt that he had received a divine vision of the practice; however, the perceptions of those most involved with the practice in Nauvoo evolved in ways that are not easily systematized. Claiming it as a reason for not preaching on adoption, Young’s pessimism on the trail west intensified in Utah. However, his belief that the human family must be organized in life and connected back to Adam in death also intensified.

### RETURN OF THE TEMPLE

On January 1, 1877, Latter-day Saints gathered in the partially

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<sup>98</sup>Heber C. Kimball, quoted in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 5:3–4. Compare this 1857 sermon to Heber C. Kimball’s sermon ten years earlier in Winter Quarters on February 17, 1847. Quoted in Kelly, *The Journal of John D. Lee*, 91.

<sup>99</sup>Heber C. Kimball, December 13, 1857, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:125.

<sup>100</sup>Laura Pitkin Kimball, Diary, March 14, 1859, microfilm of holograph, MS 1775, LDS Church History Library.

finished St. George Temple for private dedicatory events that included several prayers in multiple locations. The last, attended by General Authorities and a few others, took place in the sealing room. Apostle Brigham Young Jr. offered the prayer: "Our Father we have assembled in this upper room wherein we anticipate performing the ordinances of Sealing woman to man, children to their parents and man to his fellow man, that the bond may reach unto heaven thy dwelling place. And when we attain to that happy state and rise with the just in the Morning of the first resurrection, that we may legally claim the relationship of husbands and wives, parents and children, and be crowned Sons and daughters of god and joint heirs with Jesus Christ our elder brother."<sup>101</sup>

The formal dedication of this temple occurred three months later as part of general conference held in St. George. But before this second dedication, Church leaders began to administer the various temple rituals; and on March 22, Wilford Woodruff adopted two couples to Brigham Young, commenting that "this day was the first time in my life that I Ever herd or performed the Ceremony of Adoption."<sup>102</sup> After the formal dedication, L. John Nuttall recorded that, on April 7, Phoebe and Wilford Woodruff were sealed to their biological son and daughter at the altar and that these were "the first adoptions of children to parents in this generation," meaning the first biological child-to-parent sealings.<sup>103</sup> Several days later, Woodruff adopted the newly called St. George Stake president to Brigham Young and then had two couples adopted to himself.<sup>104</sup> Young passed away later that summer.

From this period forward, adoptions were a regular part of temple service. Wilford Woodruff is one of the best documented participants in adoption ritual due to his regular journalizing and commitment to the practice. He is also a powerful figure in its developmental arc. In the years after the St. George Temple dedication, Woodruff regularly participated in adoption rituals and eventually had hundreds of people joined to his family by them.<sup>105</sup> Woodruff also re-

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<sup>101</sup>Brigham Young Jr., quoted in L. John Nuttall, *Diary*, January 1, 1877, typescript, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>102</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:340-41.

<sup>103</sup>Nuttall, *Diary*, April 7, 1877.

<sup>104</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:344.

corded several adoptions of people to other General Authorities.<sup>106</sup> In the first year of operation, the St. George Temple recorded fifty-seven adoptions, twenty-seven of them claimed by Woodruff.<sup>107</sup> For example, on May 31, 1877, Woodruff adopted Henry Eyring and his wives, and subsequently in 1881 he adopted thirty-four members of Eyring's extended family.<sup>108</sup> When considering his own position in the eternal chain, Woodruff later remembered that the "Spirit of God" revealed that he should be sealed to his biological father. He and his wife Phoebe were both sealed to his father on April 13, 1877.<sup>109</sup> Woodruff then waited fifteen years before deciding to whom he should have his father and mother sealed; on June 15, 1892, Woodruff had his parents and grandparents adopted to Joseph Smith.<sup>110</sup>

Adoptions performed in Utah differed significantly from the Nauvoo ritual in one important way. Temple recorders wrote down

<sup>105</sup>For examples of living and proxy adoptions to Wilford Woodruff, see Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, May 6, 22, and 31, 1877, 7:352, 353, and 356; February 1, 15, and March 1, 1878, 7:397, 399, and 401; March 2, 1879, 7:468; March 2 and 17–19, 1881, 8:16 and 19–20; December 13, 1883, 8:211; January 22 and July 2, 1885, 8:300 and 322; July 7, 1887, 8:445; May 9, 1892, 9:199; August 24, 1893, 9:258. For another register of a prominent Church leader, see Record of Sealings of Children of Adoption to Daniel H. Wells, 1888-1893, microfilm of holograph, 1036993, Special Collections, LDS Family History Library.

<sup>106</sup>For example, Woodruff recorded adoptions to Willard Richards and John Taylor. Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:18, 64–65. See also Jedediah S. Rogers, ed., *In the President's Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879–1892* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2007), 73.

<sup>107</sup>Samuel Roskelley, Temple Record Book, 100–101 and 170–71, holograph, Samuel Roskelley Papers, Book 1, MS 65, Box 1, Merrill-Cazier Library; Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:389.

<sup>108</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:352, 8:19. Eyring subsequently had several individuals adopted to his family. Henry Eyring, Journal, February 24, 1877, and February 15, 1884, typescript, MS 0008, Marriott Special Collections.

<sup>109</sup>Woodruff, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:67–75; Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:345.

<sup>110</sup>Nuttall, Journal, March 1, 1892; Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:204. That same year, Woodruff adopted thirty-six other ancestors to Joseph Smith. *Ibid.*, 9:232.

adoptees' names and vital statistics, and that they were being adopted, for example, to "Willford Woodruff and Family." On the next line, the name of a woman, typically a wife of the adoptive father, was listed, followed by "Female line" or "Rep. Female line."<sup>111</sup> In 1883, Eliza R. Snow wrote a letter, answering questions about Relief Society and some aspects of temple worship:

When persons are adopted to Joseph Smith they are initiated into his family, and become his heirs—a wife, or someone to represent a wife as proxy, must be present, but who is to be the mother is not designated. I officiated in the adoption of seventy-five individuals at one time when I was in St. George, others have been adopted since who do me the honor to choose me for mother—some of them felt much disappointed because I was not present, but I think it will make no difference—we shall have our choice. I shall feel quite honored if, after you are adopted into our family, you and brother East recognize me as mother.<sup>112</sup>

It is unclear whether Snow's belief that adoptees would ultimately be able to choose their relations in the kingdom of God was common; however, Apostle George Teasdale described being "adopted to the Prophet and on a new-years day he was given to Eliza R Snow wife of Joseph [Smith] as son. He had at once felt a love as a son to a mother."<sup>113</sup> This ambiguity was perhaps in tension with the temple cosmology, as evidenced in an 1894 patriarchal blessing of Zina D. H. Young, in which she was promised that she would "in connection with thy companion wear a Celestial crown in the highest order thereof and preside over thy posterity and the adopted ones throughout eternity."<sup>114</sup>

Temple recorders kept statistical reports of temple activities, in-

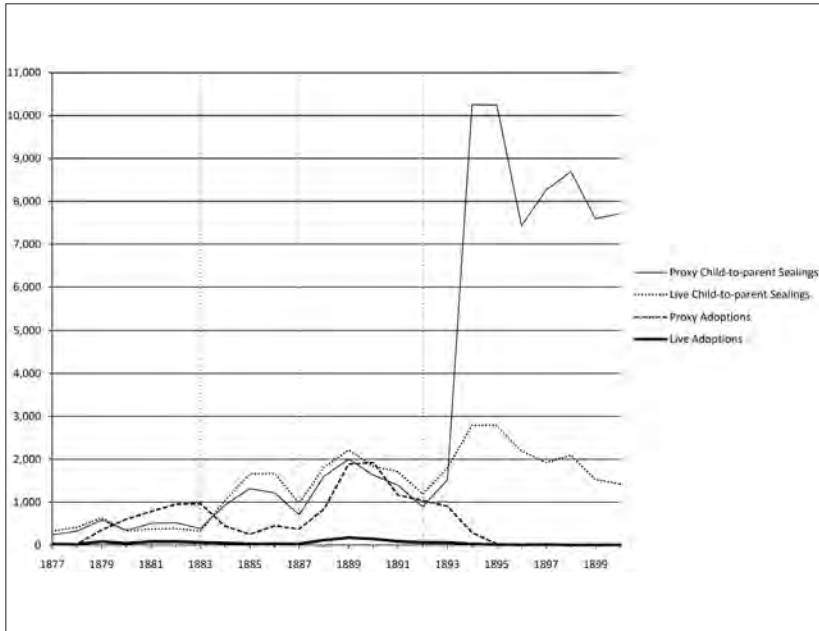
<sup>111</sup>"Adoption Record Book A," microfilm of manuscript, 170583, Special Collections, LDS Family History Library.

<sup>112</sup>Eliza Roxcy Snow, Letter to Sister East, April 23, 1883, Salt Lake City, MS 2325, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library; emphasis hers.

<sup>113</sup>George Teasdale, summarized in John P. Hatch, ed., *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon Lund, 1890–1921* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006), 14.

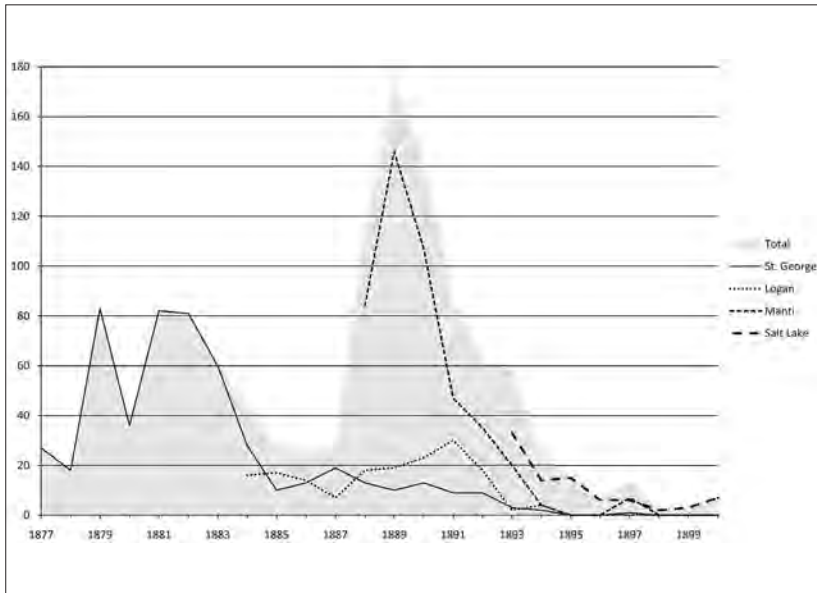
<sup>114</sup>Daniel Tyler, Patriarchal Blessing to Zina Diantha Huntington Smith Young, September 16, 1894, photocopy of holograph in my possession.

**FIGURE 1. ADOPTIONS AND CHILD-TO-PARENT SEALINGS, 1877-1900**

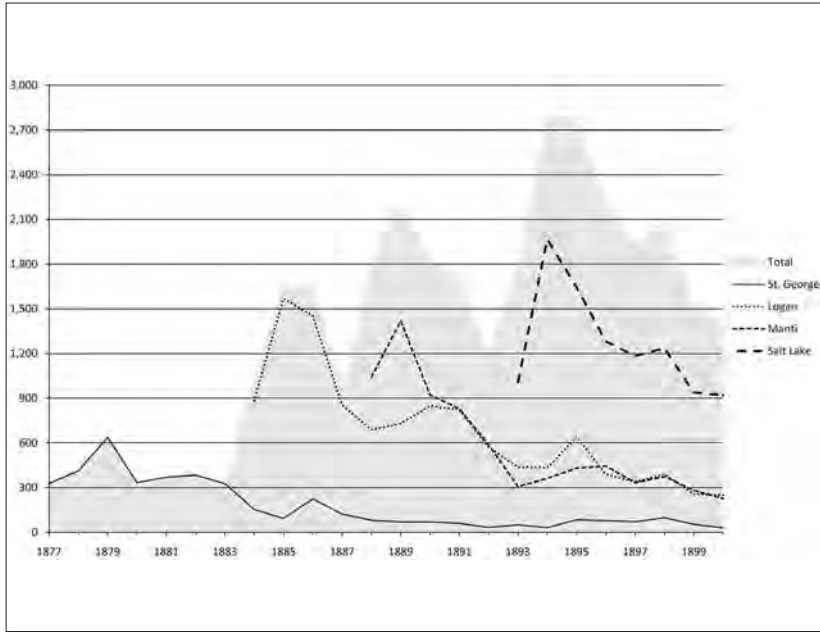


Note: For sources of data in these figures, see note 115.

**FIGURE 2. LIVE ADOPTIONS, 1877-1900**

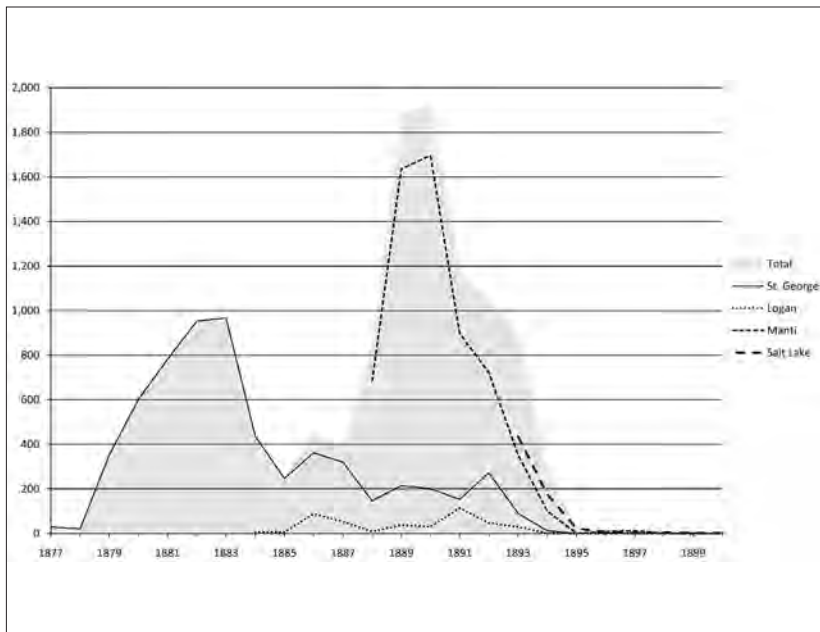


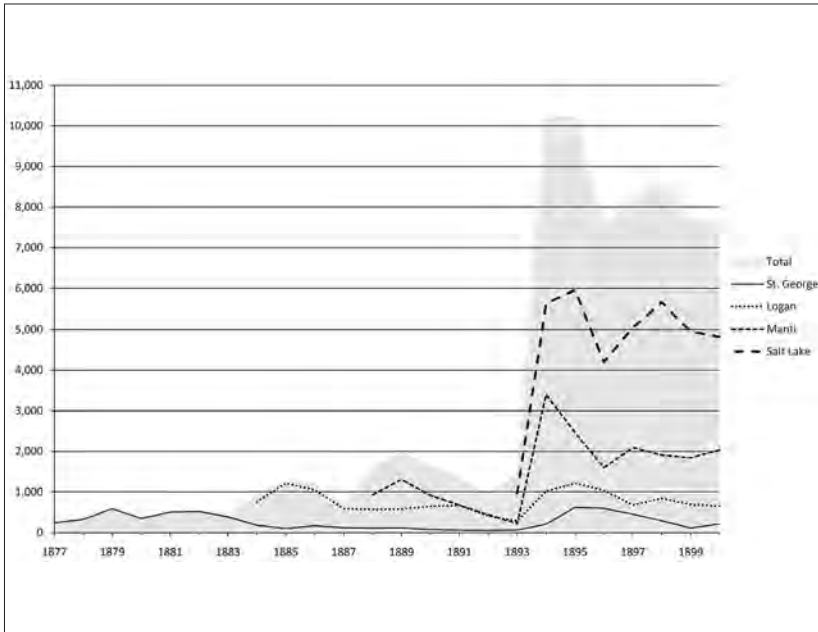
**FIGURE 3. LIVE CHILD-TO-PARENT SEALINGS, 1877–1900**



Note: For sources of data in these figures, see note 115.

**FIGURE 4. PROXY ADOPTIONS, 1877–1900**



**FIGURE 5. PROXY CHILD-TO-PARENT SEALINGS, 1877–1900**

cluding records of adoptions, as well as the sealings of biological children to their parents, both for the living and the dead. The frequency patterns of these rituals are unique among the temple rituals. Moreover, all of these rituals were the least common temple rituals during the nineteenth century. (See Figures 1–5.)<sup>115</sup> Approximately 66 percent of the living and 77 percent of the dead were adopted to General Authorities, and Joseph Smith was the most common Church leader

<sup>115</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, temple statistics as discussed in this article are based on the monthly and annual reports of the various temples as included in Samuel Roskelley, Book 1, holograph, Samuel Roskelley Papers. Note that the temple data also include adoptive sealings for those civilly adopted and therefore overestimate by some degree the rates of rituals performed by extra-civil relations. Unfortunately, adoptions were also the only rituals for which the sex of the participants was not recorded on the general statistical reports. Consequently, a substantive analysis of that demographic cannot be made from these data.



to whom people were adopted.<sup>116</sup>

For example, in 1880 Levi Savage Jr. went with his son to the St. George Temple and was sealed to him as father “agreeable to the Law of Adoption.”<sup>117</sup> Eight years passed before Savage wrote to the Church president, then Wilford Woodruff, for permission to be adopted with his wife, Ann Brummel Savage, to Joseph Smith.<sup>118</sup> In another example, in 1881 Oliver Huntington and his sister Zina Diantha Huntington Smith Young arranged to formalize their family heirship by adopting their mother’s siblings and parents to their father. Their father and mother were then sealed to their paternal grandparents along with their grandfather’s siblings. Lastly their paternal grandparents “were adopted to Joseph Smith.”<sup>119</sup> As indicated by these and other examples, First Presidency approval was required for adoptive ritual performance. Charles Lowell Walker asked John D. T. McAllister, the St. George Stake president, about being sealed to Joseph Smith. McAllister instructed him to write Joseph F. Smith, then second counselor in the First Presidency. After receiving approval, Walker wrote that he was “adopted to the Prophet Joseph Smith agreeable to counsel of Jos F Smith, having no Father in the Holy Priesthood.”<sup>120</sup>

Adoption also had a role in shaping other temple rituals. For a period, Brigham Young considered splitting the endowment ritual into two parts, one for men holding the Aaronic Priesthood and the other for the Melchizedek Priesthood. Thus, initiates could receive the first portion of the endowment and then prove their merit before being responsible for the latter. However, in light of the Melchizedek Priesthood requirement for temple marriages, the de-

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<sup>116</sup>Irving, “The Law of Adoption,” 309–10.

<sup>117</sup>Levi Mathers Savage, *Journal of Levi Mathers Savage* (Provo, Utah: Mimeographed by the Brigham Young University Extension Division, ca. 1955), 28, February 2, 1880.

<sup>118</sup>Lynn M. Hilton, comp., *Levi Savage, Jr. Journal* (N.p.: John Savage Family Organization, 1966), 147. One year after receiving this approval, Levi and Ann traveled from Toquerville, Utah, to the St. George Temple to effect the ritual (151).

<sup>119</sup>Oliver B. Huntington, *Diary*, January 12, 1881, typescript, 2:5–6, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>120</sup>A. Karl Larson and Katherine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 2:551, 573.

sire to have children born in the covenant as “legal heirs and consequently not have to be adopted” trumped any effort to bifurcate the endowment.<sup>121</sup>

Before he passed away in 1877, Brigham Young formalized some policies regarding the practice of adoption. In response to several questions, he wrote to Wilford Woodruff “regarding children who die under eight years old. For their happiness and their salvation no ordinances are required for ‘of such are the kingdom of heaven.’ But if parents desire to have their children secured to them in the eternal worlds, and those children were not born under the covenant, then they must be sealed to their parents no matter if they die before or after they are eight years old or live to man and womanhood.” He then noted that children “born in the covenant,” but whose parents have apostatized, “might desire to be adopted into some other family, and if so permitted by the priesthood, the ordinance of adoption not of sealing, would have to be attended to.”<sup>122</sup>

L. John Nuttall similarly recorded several questions and answers from Brigham Young regarding adoption policy and closely related questions regarding marriage: “Is a woman who has been born out of the covenant and who is married, to be sealed to her husband and his family, or to her own parents? She should be sealed to her own parents, unless they Yield up their right to her as a daughter, and wish to surrender her to some other family.” Further the St. George Stake president, John D. T. McAllister, whose father had died without accepting the gospel and had been posthumously sealed to his mother, wondered to whom he should be adopted. Young responded that his mother “must be Sealed to a man in the Priesthood faithful in the church, and the

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<sup>121</sup>Salt Lake School of the Prophets, Minutes, September 27, 1883, in Merle H. Graffam, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minutes, 1883* (Palm Desert, Calif.: ULC Press, 1981), 28. On the debate over splitting the endowment, see *ibid.*, 8–26; Brigham Young, June 11, 1864, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:309. For a similar discussion of the temple, adoption, and heirship, see Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 6:232. See also George Q. Cannon, Sermon, January 14, 1894, “Blessings Not Appreciated,” *Deseret Weekly*, March 10, 1894, 349–50.

<sup>122</sup>Brigham Young, Letter to Wilford Woodruff, June 12, 1877, Salt Lake City, microfilm of typescript, Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234/1, Letterbook 14, 916–21, LDS Church History Library.

children adopted to them.”<sup>123</sup> Church leaders remained concerned that individuals who had not received the gospel in this life or who died before the Restoration, but were not known intimately and therefore could not be adjudged as righteous people, could not be relied upon to be the linking bond establishing eternal heirship.<sup>124</sup>

#### THE TWILIGHT OF ADOPTION

After Brigham Young passed away, adoption ritual remained a regular part of the temple liturgy. However, beginning with the 1884 dedication of the Logan Temple, Church leaders began to critically evaluate the practice and the assumptions that led to its current form. This engagement resulted in heterogeneous policies across the temples but also led to a liberalization of temple ritual prerequisites more generally. Ultimately, Wilford Woodruff presented a revelation to the Twelve and then to the Church that completely reformed the temple’s ritual framework and eventually ended the performance of adoptive sealing rituals.

In 1882 John Taylor published his *Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, which wedded his Mormon Christology and cosmology with more traditional Protestant soteriology.<sup>125</sup> Taylor was a rigorous and defiant advocate for polygamy, which informed every aspect of his beliefs; but he appears to have ignored virtually all of Brigham Young’s statements regarding adoption. Instead, Taylor wrote of the more traditional Christian conception of adoption through Christ’s atonement to become “a son of God by adoption; and being a son then an heir of God, and a joint heir with

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<sup>123</sup>The complete questions and answers are included under the title “Questions submitted to President Young,” in Nuttall, *Diary*, August 24, 1877.

<sup>124</sup>Having accessed temple letterpress copy books, correspondence, journals, and temple reports, Gordon Irving, “Law of Adoption,” 306–8, summarized major policy positions about adoption in the Utah Temple era. Typescripts of much of this correspondence are available in Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives 1, Box 78, fd. 9, Series IX, Merrill-Cazier Library. See also Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *An Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 247, 465–66, 735–36, August 31, 1879, November 28, 1897, January 12, 1898.

<sup>125</sup>Matthew Bowman, “The Crisis of Mormon Christology: History, Progress, and Protestantism, 1880–1930,” *Fides et Historia* 40 (Summer/Fall 2008): 1–10.

Christ.”<sup>126</sup> This adoption was, however, cast within the distinctively Mormon cosmological priesthood: “Thus shall we also become legitimately and by right, through the atonement and adoption, Kings and Priests—Priests to administer in the holy ordinances pertaining to the endowments and exaltations; and Kings, under Christ, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”<sup>127</sup> It is unclear whether this linguistic emphasis on adoption through atonement indicated a distancing from temple adoption ritual; however, when Taylor dedicated the Logan Temple, his first as Church president, he dramatically altered standard adoption practice.

On the first day of ordinances in the Logan Temple after its dedication, President John Taylor’s secretary, L. John Nuttall inquired into the possibility of participating in some adoptions. Just a month earlier, Taylor had attended to the ritual himself; however, after some conversation with his counselor George Q. Cannon and Apostle Erastus Snow, Taylor indicated that he would instruct them regarding the matter on the following morning.<sup>128</sup> The next day, the First Presidency and the Twelve met; and John Taylor stated that, in a short time, everything would be made plain, so that there would “be no misunderstanding.” After the meeting, Taylor walked to the temple sealing room with Cannon and Nuttall. There, according to Nuttall, he “explained further in regard to the ordinance of Adoption and concluded to postpone any action on that ordinance for the present and until he shall give further instructions pertaining thereto.”<sup>129</sup> I was unable to locate any further documentation of these discussions. However, Wilford Woodruff later said that Taylor believed additional revelation on adoption was necessary,<sup>130</sup> and Apostle Marriner Wood Merrill remembered that Taylor spoke of possible changes that were similar

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<sup>126</sup>John Taylor, *An Examination into and an Elucidation of the Great Principle of the Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1882), 133, see also 137–38, 141, 145–46, and 179.

<sup>127</sup>*Ibid.*, 158–59.

<sup>128</sup>Rogers, *In the President’s Office*, 147, 129.

<sup>129</sup>John Taylor, quoted in *ibid.*, 147–48.

<sup>130</sup>Wilford Woodruff, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:72.

to those which later ended adoption.<sup>131</sup>

Taylor consciously limited the number of recommends for adoptions at the Logan Temple.<sup>132</sup> This shift in policy had a dramatic effect on adoption rates, which did not rise with the Logan Temple dedication. (See Figures 2 and 4.) For the next decade, the Logan Temple maintained a low relative rate of adoptions performed for the living and the dead compared to the number of rituals in other temples.<sup>133</sup> Still, after laboring for several years in the Logan Temple, Zina D. H. Young wrote: “I have stood for the dead in sealing and adoption for many[,] these are blessings that no value of earth can compare.”<sup>134</sup>

The period after Taylor’s death in July 1887 appears to have been one of continued confusion regarding the law of adoption. Two months later in September 1887, John M. Whitaker, John Taylor’s son-in-law, wrote:

I went back to the office where I found [Apostle] Brother Lorenzo Snow and [First Council of the Seventy member] Jacob Gates. They conversed a long time. He finally entered into a deep subject on “The Law of Adoption.” Brother Gates said he didn’t believe in it as did also Brother Snow. He [?] referenced back to the time that Brigham Young was in Kirtland[;] he had a person asked him about it and he said “I know nothing about it.” President Taylor on one different occasion had a letter written to him for the following reason: it was [two undecipherable words] of Prophet J Smith or rather Sister Eliza R. Snow Smith (Brother Gates didn’t know which)[;] a about [sic] 70 persons were adopted into President J Smith’s [family;] Sister Snow Smith said “she didn’t understand the law” but had no objections to them being sealed to her husband. And this led Brother Gates to write to President

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<sup>131</sup>Marriner Wood Merrill, quoted in Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, April 5, 1894, photocopy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>132</sup>John Taylor, Letter to John D. T. McAllister and David H. Cannon, September 13, 1884, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20, LDS Church History Library. Taylor later had “the Ordinance of Adoption administered” for several families. Rogers, *In the President’s Office*, 158.

<sup>133</sup>Compare to Figures 1 and 2 in Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, “‘They Shall Be Made Whole’: A History of Baptism for Health,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34 (Fall 2008): 95–96.

<sup>134</sup>Zina D. H. Young, Diary, September 26, 1889, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

Taylor asking him if he knew anything about it. He never answered the letter. But on another occasion Brother Gates saw him and asked him plainly. President Taylor said he knew nothing about it. And also just lately when asked by Brother Snow, President Wilford Woodruff knew nothing about it. ["It hadn't been revealed to him." I know this at this time to say [or show] a prevailing feeling among the Twelve that they don't understand it. George [undecipherable] Cannon also said he didn't understand it.<sup>135</sup>

Whitaker's experience with Church leaders is not completely consistent with other documentation, and this diary entry includes some historical errata. Still, it is clear that many Church leaders and those close to them struggled to understand adoption.

Despite this confusion, Wilford Woodruff, Taylor's successor, appears to have retained more of a commitment to adoption. Shortly after the Logan Temple dedication, Woodruff delivered a sermon at the Cache Valley Stake Conference. One observer recorded that he spoke "of the Lawe of adoption" and that people "should not run around to get men & women to be adopted to us. Get your endowments for your dead & dont go wild over it. When the spirit reveals it

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<sup>135</sup>John M. Whitaker, *Diary*, Book No. 4, September 16, 1887, to September 20, 1888, November 16, 1887, MS 0002, Marriott Special Collections; transcription from Pitman shorthand by LaJean Purcell Carruth. Cf. John M. Whitaker's edited transcript which he prepared many decades later: "[John Jacques] said he had understood that among many leading brethren, some 70% Of them had been adopted to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that with the consent of Emma Smith herself; and that also he heard that Emma Smith herself had no objections to Eliza R. Snow being SEALED to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Brother Jacques also said he had asked John Taylor about the matter, and he said President Taylor said he knew nothing about such an affair, neither did Brigham Young. But much is being discussed that no one seems to know practically about. . . . I especially make note of this idea here to show the spirit of the times that many people infused with new ideas and rush into things sometimes without knowing much about the seriousness of the matter involved. Even among the members of the Twelve Apostles there seems to be little known about the Law of Adoption at this particular time, that I can find out about. President George Q. Cannon said he did not understand the matter." John M. Whitaker, "Daily Journal of John M. Whitaker," 3 vols., 2:122-23, photocopy, Perry Special Collections.

to you then it will be time enough to act.”<sup>136</sup>

The month before President Taylor’s death, Woodruff responded by letter to some questions of Samuel Roskelley, recorder of the Logan Temple. Woodruff’s response points to reasons for his commitment. He started by testifying of the transmission of the temple liturgy from Joseph Smith to Brigham Young and how, in St. George, Young worked with Woodruff to systematize and record various temple rituals for the first time. After emphasizing strict adherence to this liturgy, he discussed some details regarding marriage sealings to dead women, a large number of which he had contracted. He then stated, highlighting the literalness with which Mormons viewed temple relationships, “I don’t know whether I shall have to build them each a palace in the Celestial Kingdom of God or not. If I do, I shall have time to do it.” Then he wrote:

So in relation to Adoptions, most, if not all, of the Presidency and Twelve, have had men adopted to them, and all these Sealings and Adoptions are for the Salvation of the living and the dead. I have never asked any man to be adopted into my family that I can recollect of; but I have had a number of families of friends adopted into my family, as have other men, without any regard to whether it will, in the future, cost me one dollar or a million. What we have done in this matter has been for the salvation of man. It may possibly be a correct doctrine that a man’s Kingdom will consist of only the fruit of his own loins. Yet Jesus Christ died to save the whole world, and if we, as Apostles and Elders, do nothing for the human family only for the fruit of our own loins, we shall not do much towards magnifying the Holy Priesthood God has given us for saving the souls of men—either the living or the dead. . . . I have adopted this rule in Sealing and Adoptions: to take such as the Lord has given me, and leave the result in His hands. . . . Paul talked a good deal about Adoptions, but we did not understand much about it, until the Lord revealed it to Joseph Smith, and we may not, perhaps, understand it now as fully as we should. Still the Sealings and Adoptions are true principles, or our Prophets have been badly deceived.<sup>137</sup>

Woodruff here highlights the conflict between biological and

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<sup>136</sup>Wilford Woodruff, quoted in Donald G. Godfrey and Kenneth W. Godfrey, *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card: The Utah Years, 1871–1886* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2006), 541–42.

<sup>137</sup>Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Samuel Roskelley, June 8, 1887, typescript, Samuel Roskelley Collection, Box 2, Book 4, Merrill-Cazier Library.

sacerdotal kin, as well as the view of sealings as being essentially salvific. Woodruff also hints that the vision of adoptions may not have been complete. However his close relationship to Brigham Young and his commitment to the complete temple liturgy appear to have affirmed his dedication to the practice.

In 1888, Woodruff wrote to Eliza I. Jones of Salt Lake City, who had sent him some questions about sealing rituals. In his answer, Woodruff reaffirmed the Church policy while highlighting the inherent problem of human links in the chain of salvation and an imbalance between male and female participants in sealing: “We do not consider it safe for a woman in the Church to be sealed to a man who died before receiving the Gospel.”<sup>138</sup> When Woodruff received questions in 1889 from John D. T. McAllister, then president of the St. George Temple, Woodruff maintained the status quo about adoptions.<sup>139</sup> Soon thereafter, however, policies and ideas began to change. In 1890, he cancelled the adoption of his counselor George Q. Cannon to John Taylor, originally performed in Nauvoo.<sup>140</sup> The following day, Cannon gathered his siblings in the temple, and they were all sealed to their parents.<sup>141</sup> Such cancellations were very rare, but several prominent individuals had their Nauvoo adoptions cancelled in the subsequent years and then were sealed to their biological parents.<sup>142</sup>

Two months after Cannon cancelled his Nauvoo adoption, the First Presidency and Twelve met for their regular meeting and dis-

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For an example letter of Woodruff accepting an invitation to be adopted as father in 1890, see James B. Allen, Kahlile B. Mehr, and Jessie L. Embry, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1894–1994* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994), 56 note 30.

<sup>138</sup>Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Eliza I. Jones, February 24, 1888, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20.

<sup>139</sup>Wilford Woodruff, Letter to John D. T. McAllister, March 19, 1889, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20.

<sup>140</sup>Joseph F. Smith, “Sealings and Adoptions, 1846–1857,” 537.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*; Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, October 15, 1890, photocopy of holograph, Perry Special Collections. That same day, George Q. Cannon adopted several individuals that were not biologically related to him. *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup>E.g., Mary Isabella Horne’s adoption to John Taylor and Howard and Martha Jane Coray’s adoptions to Hyrum Smith were cancelled in 1893. Bathsheba Smith’s adoption to her father-in-law, John Smith, was



cussed adoption. Apostle Abraham H. Cannon summarized the conversation:

The question was asked if a married couple having parents who died out of the Church could be sealed to the same parents. The answer was in the affirmative.—Bro. Joseph F. Smith rather held to the idea that children should be sealed to their parents even when the latter died without a knowledge of the gospel, and thus the connection with our ancestry should be extended as far back as it was possible for each, when the link should be made with the Prophet Joseph who stands at the head of this dispensation and he will form the connecting link with preceding dispensations. Father [George Q. Cannon] holds that we who live on the earth now and are faithful, will stand at the head of our lineage, and will thus become Saviors as has been promised us. Pres. John Taylor was not sealed to his parents though they died in the Church, as he felt that it was rather lowering himself to be thus sealed when he was an apostle and his father was a high priest; but this is rather a questionable proceeding.<sup>143</sup>

Several aspects of this conversation highlight shifts in belief and policy, but also the lingering tension with older beliefs. The statements of George Q. Cannon, first counselor in the First Presidency, invoke the celestial hierarchy where each of these men reigned as adoptive fathers and kings, yet Joseph F. Smith, second counselor in the First Presidency, championed a position that not only challenged this salvific role but that also asserted the precise content of the revelation which ultimately overcame the practice of adoption just a few years later.

The following several years were a period of reflection regarding adoption. While adoption rituals still occurred in the temples and President Woodruff still participated in them, several events indicate that adoption was being critically evaluated by the governing quorums. On September 23, 1891, L. John Nuttall recorded that John Taylor had dictated his views on adoption to Nuttall some time before he had passed away in 1887. I have not been able to locate this document; but Nuttall wrote that, on October 7, 1891, he made a copy of

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cancelled in 1894. Joseph F. Smith “Sealings and Adoptions, 1846–1857,” 517, 520, 536.

<sup>143</sup>Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, December 18, 1890.

the document and delivered it to Apostle Anthon Lund.<sup>144</sup> Adoption was the topic of conversation at several subsequent meetings of the governing quorums.<sup>145</sup>

Despite these discussions, procedures in the temples strictly followed the traditional position regarding marriage and adoption. For example, in 1892 Alberta Stake president Charles Ora Card worked with his aunt to receive all the temple rituals. She had never been sealed to her husband, then deceased, and consequently her children were born outside of the covenant. Moreover, her husband had “denied the faith”; and as a consequence, Apostle Merrill, president of the Logan Temple, instructed that she could not be sealed to him. Furthermore, as Card wrote, “You cannot Seal a child who bears the Priesthood to a father who does not hold it.” Merrill did allow a way for her immediate family to receive temple sealings, instructing: “She can choose some good man & have the sealings done with him and b[e] sealed to him.”<sup>146</sup>

The next year, in 1893, the First Presidency and Twelve concluded that marriage sealings would be performed for only one gen-

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<sup>144</sup>Rogers, *In the President's Office*, 471, 476.

<sup>145</sup>Anthon Lund, Journal, November 14, 1891, and August 28, 1892, LDS Church History Library. In 1892 First Presidency members Woodruff and Cannon also attended an ecclesial council held against former Bishop Edward Bunker, who was charged with teaching false doctrine. In describing his beliefs, Bunker wrote, among other items: “The adoption of one man to another out of the lineage, I do not understand and for that reason I would not enter into it. And adopting the dead to the living is as adopting the father to the son. I don’t believe there is a man on earth that thoroughly understands the principle. If there is, I have never heard it taught as I could understand it. I believe it is permited [sic] more to satisfy the minds of the people for the present until the Lord reveals more fully the principle.” Edward Bunker, Letter to the Bunkerville High Council, April 25, 1891, Edward Bunker Autobiography (1894), 37, microfilm of holograph, MS 1581, LDS Church History Library. See also James G. Bleak, Annals of the Southern Utah Mission, Box 2, fd. 2R, May 15, 1891, to May 22, 1891, and June 11, 1892, *Selected Collections*, 1:19; Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:203. The participants of the council fully reconciled with each other and Bunker was several years later ordained a patriarch.

<sup>146</sup>Marriner W. Merrill, summarized in Donald G. Godfrey and Brigham Y. Card, eds., *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card: The Canadian Years, 1886–1903* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 202.

eration beyond those who were in the Church.<sup>147</sup> In the month following this decision, however, the same governing quorums sustained President Woodruff's decision to formalize some liberalization of temple policies. According to Abraham H. Cannon's summary of the decision: "It has been the rule to not seal women to their dead husbands unless those husbands were in the Church. It was today decided that where men are dead who would likely have joined the Church their wives may, if they so elect, be sealed to them.—It is also proper for children to be sealed to their parents, and then have those parents sealed to the Prophet Joseph."<sup>148</sup> By the fall of the same year, the governing quorums also affirmed a decision that allowed suicides to receive proxy temple work.<sup>149</sup>

The most dramatic shift in policy and doctrine occurred the following year, one year after the 1893 dedication of the Salt Lake Temple. In January 1894, the First Presidency critically evaluated at least one case where several people had made requests to be adopted to an individual.<sup>150</sup> Then in April, the day before general conference, Wilford Woodruff met with his counselors and the Twelve. After song

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<sup>147</sup>Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, June 1, 1893.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., July 12, 1893. The following month, Woodruff wrote to William H. Evans, whose father had died without joining the Church: "I take it for granted that you fully appreciate the risk which a woman runs in being sealed to a man, who is dead, who had not received the Gospel; and appreciating this I feel to allow your mother her own choice in the matter [sic]." He further counseled that, if Evans wanted to be adopted to his father, he should "immediately after the adoption, have your father adopted to some good faithful man, dead or alive." Wilford Woodruff, Letter to William H. Evans, August 11, 1893, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20.

<sup>149</sup>Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, October 5, 1893. In 1860, seventeen years before proxy rituals were available to the Church, Brigham Young indicated that such a policy would eventually be in force. Collier, *The Office Journal of President Brigham Young, 1858–1863*, 28, January 20, 1860. Cf. Godfrey and Godfrey, *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card*, 539. During Lorenzo Snow's tenure as president of the Salt Lake Temple (1893–98) temple presidents were to approve all proxy work for suicides. Lorenzo Snow, "Instructions Regarding Preparation for Temple Work," n.d., microfilm copy, MS 1357/1/2, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>150</sup>Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, January 25, 1894; George O. Gibbs, secretary to the First Presidency, Letter to Samuel Roskelley, January 26,

and prayer, he spoke:

I have felt we are too strict in regard to some of our temple ordinances. This is especially the case in regard to husbands and parents who are dead. Heretofore we have not permitted wives to be sealed to their dead husbands unless such husbands were in the Church, nor have we permitted children to be sealed to dead unbaptized parents. This is wrong I feel. . . . The Lord has told me that it is right for children to be sealed to their parents, and they to their parents just as far back as we can possibly obtain the records, and then have the last obtainable member sealed to the Prophet Joseph, who stands at the head of this dispensation. It is also right for wives whose husbands never heard the Gospel to be sealed to those husbands, providing they are willing to run the risk of their receiving the Gospel in the Spirit world.

President George Q. Cannon responded by saying that he was “thankful for what has been revealed. This matter has weighed for a long time on my mind.” He then described how this change would avert abuses and clannishness. In doing so, he invoked the introduction of baptism for the dead and how before Joseph Smith revealed the full procedural details, many Mormons, in their zeal for the doctrine, engaged in practices that were later considered outside the design of God. Specifically, individuals baptized without witnesses and recorders, and individuals acted as proxy for members of the opposite sex. The analogy between baptism for the dead and the evolution of adoption held a potent explanation for the Saints’ interpretation of decades of temple activity and was later repeatedly referenced. Then, each of the apostles “spoke in turn and expressed himself as delighted with the new order of things.”<sup>151</sup> In his diary, Woodruff described the day simply, stating that he had “met with the Presidency & Twelve Apostles Upon the Subject of Endowments & Adoption And the following is a Revelation to Wilford Woodruff

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1894, typescript, Samuel Roskelley Collection, Box 2, Book 4, Merrill-Cazier Library.

<sup>151</sup>Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, April 5, 1894. See also Jean Bickmore White, ed., *Church, State, and Politics: The Diaries of John Henry Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 294–95. Franklin D. Richards also wrote: “W.W. presented the subject of sealing and adoption for consideration—stated that it was among the last of the Prophet Joseph’s instructions & therefore but little understood.” Richards, Diary, April 5, 1894, *Selected Collections*, 1:35.

upon that Subject.” He then left half the page of his journal blank, with the unrealized intention of filling it with the actual text of the revelation.<sup>152</sup> I have not found any evidence that the revelation was ever recorded.

Three days later, both Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon addressed the general conference.<sup>153</sup> After a brief introduction by Woodruff, Cannon rehearsed the history of sealing as salvation from the scriptures to Joseph Smith. Woodruff, returning to the stand, emphasized the necessity of revelation, then described Joseph Smith’s expansive work for so short a life, but also noted that “we have not got through revelation.” Woodruff then described Brigham Young but noted that “he did not receive all the revelations that belong to this work; neither did President Taylor, nor has Wilford Woodruff.” The Manifesto ending new public polygamic relations was fresh in everyone’s mind. He then demanded the attention of the temple presidents, two of whom were apostles, and declared:

You have acted up to all the light and knowledge that you have had; but you have now something more to do than what you have done. We have not fully carried out those principles in fulfillment of the revelations of God to us, in sealing the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. I have not felt satisfied, neither did President Taylor, neither has any man since the Prophet Joseph who has attended to the ordinance of adoption in the temples of our God. We have felt that there was more to be revealed upon this subject than we had received. Revelations were given to us in the St. George Temple, which President Young presented to the Church of God. Changes were made there, and we still have more changes to make, in order to satisfy our Heavenly Father, satisfy our dead and ourselves. I will tell you what some of them are. I have prayed over this matter, and my brethren have. We have felt, as President Taylor said, that we have got to have more revelation concerning sealing under the law of adoption.

Just two years earlier, Woodruff had finally had his father adopted to Joseph Smith and he described his feelings to the conference:

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<sup>152</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 9:296.

<sup>153</sup>Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:67–75; Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon, “The Law of Adoption,” *Deseret Weekly*, April 21, 1894, 541–45; George Q. Cannon, “The Linking of Generations by the Law of Adoption—Equality in Temporal Affairs and How to Attain It,” *Deseret Weekly*, May 26, 1894, 701–4.

I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, let every man be adopted to his father. When a man receives the endowments, adopt him to his father; not to Wilford Woodruff, nor to any other man outside the lineage of his fathers. That is the will of God to this people. . . . We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. When you get to the end, let the last man be adopted to Joseph Smith, who stands at the head of the dispensation. This is the will of the Lord to this people.

Avoiding loose ends in the familial chain, Woodruff attached the ecclesial and spiritual terminus to Joseph Smith, long dead and beyond the reproach of clannishness.

Woodruff then spoke on the practice of temple marriage and indicated the change in policy regarding those being sealed as spouse to those who died without joining the Church. In doing so, Woodruff invoked a principle which may have catalyzed his change in perspective regarding adoptions. Reminiscent of Joseph Smith's penchant for sacramentalized universalism and contemporary trends in liberal Protestantism,<sup>154</sup> Woodruff stated plainly, "There will be very few, if any, who will not accept the Gospel." Woodruff described those that suffered in Hell, and how they would "doubtless gladly embrace the Gospel, and in doing so be saved in the kingdom of God."<sup>155</sup> Woodruff thus broke with decades of logic which reasoned that one's ances-

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<sup>154</sup>James J. Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 84-85. The theological controversy over "future probations" also influenced Protestant missiology. William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1992), 132-40.

<sup>155</sup>Wilford Woodruff, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:67-75. Reflecting this optimism, James Henry Martineau recorded doing temple work "for over 2000 of the dead, and I have had a testimony that our work has been accepted by them all." Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *An Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 482; emphasis his. One Mormon who read Woodruff's revelation in the newspaper described the changes to adoption and marriage practice as simply "good & happy news." Joseph Hatten Car-

tors could not be relied upon to function as links in the chain of divine inheritance. No longer were Mormons to be the saviors in being but they were to be saviors in doing—performing proxy rituals for the dead, sealing the lineal chain as far back as possible. With this vision, Woodruff approached Brigham Young’s vision of a sealed lineage back to Adam and paved the way for modern conceptions of eternal nuclear families.

Subsequent to Woodruff’s sermon, George Q. Cannon spoke to the conference and outlined his impressions regarding this revelation, laying the foundation for modern Mormon theology and creating theological space for God to ensure justice. He reaffirmed that adoption was necessary to become “legitimate heirs of the Priesthood and of the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant.” He then urged the congregants to trace their families back to previous eras when “the Priesthood was on the earth.” This was somewhat different than Woodruff’s exhortation to seal the last discernable ancestors to Joseph Smith and is reminiscent of Brigham Young’s teachings in Nauvoo. He noted that such a work would take a very long time but that the Saints would have “a thousand years to do it in.”<sup>156</sup> Worthiness requirements had been a perennial focus of Mormon temple practice.<sup>157</sup> As the sealing liturgy expanded to incorporate the dead as well as the living, the vision of eternal kinship was in natural tension with those requirements. However, only “seldom,” when one’s ancestors are “entirely unworthy,” Cannon specified, should the Church president decide what was to be done.<sup>158</sup>

The effect of Woodruff’s revelation cannot be overstated. The confusion common for decades ceded to a unified vision of temple work for the dead. Instead of being prohibited from administering proxy temple rituals for one’s ancestors, Church members received a renewed obligation to seek out their relatives for their mutual salvation. As Woodruff declared, being a savior on Mount Zion was now a

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penter, *Diary*, 4 vols., 4:123, digital copy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>156</sup>George Q. Cannon, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:76–78.

<sup>157</sup>Edward L. Kimball, “The History of LDS Temple Admission Standards,” *Journal of Mormon History* 24 (Spring 1998): 135–75.

<sup>158</sup>Cannon, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:78.

job, not a relationship.<sup>159</sup> The Utah Genealogical Society, promptly organized on November 13, 1894, and acted as the foundation for the modern Mormon zeal for proxy temple work as the Saints sought to document their deceased relatives.<sup>160</sup> In the year Woodruff announced his revelation, proxy child-to-parent sealings increased 675 percent over the previous year (Figure 5), approximating the same rate as proxy marriage sealings.

In the months after the revelation, the governing quorums created policies to deal with the questions that naturally followed such an enormous policy shift. For example, only a month later on May 10, 1894, the First Presidency and Twelve met, and as Abraham Cannon described: “Past adoptions, it is decided by Pes. Woodruff, are to remain unchanged, but where desirable sealings may be cancelled.”<sup>161</sup> The First Presidency instructed a correspondent in May: “It is not desirable to make changes in the work that has been done, as there will be very few cases where changes are necessary” and that “we wish to

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<sup>159</sup>Woodruff, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:74: “Go and be adopted to your fathers, and save your fathers, and stand at the head of your father’s house, as Saviors upon Mount Zion, and God will bless you in this.”

<sup>160</sup>Allen, Mehr, and Embry, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 44–47.

<sup>161</sup>Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, May 10, 1894. See also Franklin D. Richards, Diary, May 10, 1894. For other policy decisions, see Cannon, Journal, June 14 and August 6, 1894; November 14, 1895. See also Wilford Woodruff’s 1894 correspondence in Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives 1, Series IX, Box 78, fd. 9, item 8. In explaining the change in policy to the St. George Temple presidency, the First Presidency wrote that cancellations of sealings were to be exceptional and that “where adoption have been made to Presidents Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Heber C. Kimball, Geo. A. Smith, and others of our good brethren who have passed away; also to some who are living, it is not deemed advisable to interfere with that work, but leave it as it is. Should it appear in the future that changes should be made, the Prophet Joseph Smith who does and will stand at the head of this dispensation, can direct as to what changes are necessary in all cases, and then all parties interested will be satisfied.” Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, Letter to David H. Cannon, May 4, 1894, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20; see also Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, Letter to J.D.T. McAllister, April 26, 1894, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20.



do as little changing of the work and the records as possible.”<sup>162</sup> Still, they authorized several cancellations of adoption within the first month.<sup>163</sup> In 1897, the governing quorums also debated whether to let individuals who were otherwise unworthy to participate in the temple liturgy be nevertheless sealed to worthy parents.<sup>164</sup>

The last few years of the nineteenth century and first years of the twentieth saw only a handful of adoptions for the living and the dead. The descendants of Asael Smith, for example, worked to seal their ancestors “back to the Emigrant from England.”<sup>165</sup> In 1900 Apostle John Henry Smith and President Joseph F. Smith participated in some proxy work extending back seven generations and had the last ancestors adopted to Joseph Smith.<sup>166</sup> Further, a few cases of adoption similar to those performed before the 1894 revelation also occurred. For example, in 1901 Ephraim Nye, former president of the California Mission, was sealed to the dead mother of a previous California branch president and adopted all of her children in the temple.<sup>167</sup>

Woodruff’s counsel to adopt the last ancestor found to Joseph Smith was occasionally reiterated,<sup>168</sup> however, it appears that, over time, the quest to find one’s dead proved an endless task and the idea of linking to Joseph Smith was eventually dismissed or

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<sup>162</sup>L. John Nuttall, Letter to John Steele, May 7, 1894, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20.

<sup>163</sup>E.g., see the following items in the First Presidency Letterpress: Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Lorenzo Snow, April 24, 1894; Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Marriner W. Merrill, May 1, 1894; Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, Letter to David H. Cannon, May 4, 1894.

<sup>164</sup>Charles Ora Card summarized the discussion at the October general conference priesthood leadership meeting in his diary. Quoting Joseph F. Smith, Card wrote: “The Opinion is yet not decided that an adult not worthy to receive his other blessings should not be admitted to be Sealed to parents.” Godfrey and Card, *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card*, 440.

<sup>165</sup>White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 338.

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*, 449.

<sup>167</sup>Ephraim Hesmer Nye, Journal, November 1, 1901, digital copy of holograph, 3 vols., 2:237, Perry Special Collections. See also John R. Winder, Letter to Mrs. A. Bouck, June 8, 1908, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20.

<sup>168</sup>L. John Nuttall, Letter to Elder Neils Graham, April 20, 1894;

**TABLE 2**  
**NINETEENTH-CENTURY ADOPTIONS BY TEMPLE**

<i>Temple</i>	<i>Live</i>	<i>Proxy</i>	<i>Total</i>
Nauvoo	210	1	211
St. George	517	6,165	6,682
Logan	168	421	589
Manti	450	6,107	6,557
Salt Lake City	86	650	736
<i>Total</i>	1,431	13,344	14,775

*Sources:* Joseph F. Smith, comp., “Sealings and Adoption, 1846-1857” (ca. 1869–70), 597–98, microfilm 183374, Special Collections, LDS Family History Library; and Samuel Roskelley, Temple Record Book, holograph, Samuel Roskelley Papers, Book 1, MS 65, Box 1, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

forgotten. When the *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* republished Woodruff’s 1894 revelatory sermon in 1922, editors removed the instructions about sealing ultimate ancestors to Joseph Smith.<sup>169</sup> Though still used as late as the 1920s, the term “adoption,” referring to the sealing of children to their parents, also appears to have fallen out of use by the 1930s.<sup>170</sup> Language regarding priesthood heirship and the temple declined throughout the

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Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, Letter to J. D. T. McAllister, April 26, 1894; Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, Letter to David Candland, May 4, 1894, First Presidency Letterpress, CR 1/20.

<sup>169</sup>“The Law of Adoption: Discourses Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, Sunday, April 18 [sic], 1894,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 13 (October 1922): 145–58. James R. Clark included this redacted version in *Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:251–60.

<sup>170</sup>E.g., Joseph F. Smith, Temple Instructions to the Bishops, 1918, reprinted in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5:110–13; No author, “Nature of Temple Ordinances, Second Sunday, October 12, 1924. Lesson 18. Endowments, Sealings, Adoptions, etc.,” *Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the Arizona Temple District 1* (October 1924): 24; George F. Richards,

twentieth century, and in the 1970s, official discourse surrounding the purpose of child-to-parent sealings shifted to securing “eternal parentage.”<sup>171</sup> After the first decade of the twentieth century, any adoption-like practices are very rare and apply only to exceptional cases. One example is a case of children born to a post-Manifesto polygamist marriage in which the parents were excommunicated. In the 1970s, after the couple had passed away, their children wished to do temple work for their parents and be sealed to them. Church leaders decided that this sealing was not possible and suggested that the children be sealed to their grandparents instead.<sup>172</sup>

### CONCLUSION

As Joseph Smith’s small quorum of temple initiates expanded to the thousands poised to leave Nauvoo, adoptive sealing rituals remained revealed to only a select few. Adoption theology, however, was the foundation for Brigham Young’s westward organization. Despite his vision, Young struggled with contention and jealousies erupting from that theology, and then selectively retreated from its practical implementation as he focused on settling the Great Basin.

Child-to-parent sealings, biological or non-biological, were the only rituals of the temple liturgy not administered outside of temples. Consequently, from 1846 to 1877 no such sealings were performed.

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*Salt Lake Temple*, pamphlet dated May 13, 1927, PAM 6813, Utah State Historical Library.

<sup>171</sup>Thomas E. Daniels, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, March 1974, 22–24; James A. Cullimore, “Q&A: Questions and Answers,” *New Era*, December 1975, 14–15. For present usage of this terminology, see *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 21–22.

<sup>172</sup>Henry E. Christiansen, Temple Ordinance Coordinator, Genealogical Department, Letter to Zola Draper, October 18, 1977, Salt Lake City, and Val D. Greenwood, Special Services Group Manager, Genealogical Department, Letter to Zola Draper, August 28, 1978, Salt Lake City, photocopies in my possession, courtesy Marantha Miles. The 1968 edition of the *General Handbook of Instructions* introduced a significant codification to non-biological child-to-parent sealings. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, General Handbook of Instructions*, no. 20 ([Salt Lake City]: Deseret News Press, 1968), 101–2.

During this period, Church members were generally confused by adoption, which leaders only infrequently discussed publicly and probably did not clearly understand themselves. But Brigham Young expanded his views of adoption in conjunction with other doctrinal developments; and in adoption theology, he saw the communal salvation of his people, both spiritual and temporal. Adoptions were integral to Mormon theology when temples were constructed in Utah, though they were the least common rituals performed. Questions remained, however, even among those most committed to the ritual; and after the governing quorums discussed and debated temple policy for several years, Wilford Woodruff received a revelation that transformed temple work and the kinship relations of all Mormons.

The power to bind on earth and in heaven rested heavily on Mormon leaders. The salvific interdependence of the cosmological priesthood chain required that each link be reliable, that each individual be securely bound. The prophesied alternative was a wasted and accursed world. As participants in that network shared with Christ His character as adoptive parent and saviors, human pettiness and sin were particularly offensive to those charged with directing its creation. Still, the essence of Joseph Smith's grand sacramental universalism persevered through the first decades of Utah's colonization and was condensed in the 1894 revelation of Wilford Woodruff.

After this great revelation on adoption, one temple president wrote the First Presidency with regard to the past adoptions and future temple work of several individuals. He needed direction. Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith considered each case and responded accordingly with tailored advice. In the final case, they wrote that, in the eternities, the individual to whom one group of relatives had been adopted "will not interfere with justice being done" and that "all will be made right." Woodruff and Smith then added that this principle "will apply to a great deal of this work which has been done and you can so explain to the saints."<sup>173</sup>

Perhaps the greatest ramification of the adoption revelation was a shift away from micromanaging eternal relationships to a position

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<sup>173</sup>Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, Letter to John D. T. McAllister, April 26, 1894. A few months earlier, before the revelation, Apostle John W. Taylor made a similar statement regarding marriage sealings: "Said where women desired in the next world they would have a chance to choose and where men were cross & stern they would be apt to be deserted by their

of aspiration—a belief that a just God will ensure that no blessings are kept from the faithful. Church members are currently free to perform proxy rituals for the dead as they generally see fit.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, modern Latter-day Saints are instructed that all the faithful, including the childless and unmarried, will eventually receive the eternal blessings of family.<sup>175</sup> In light of sealing cancellations, some Church leaders have even instructed that it is the covenant one is born in that is important and not necessarily the person to whom one is sealed as child.<sup>176</sup> The precise structure of heaven is no longer defined by Church leaders; however, Woodruff's comments while announcing his revelation are likely still applicable. A great work must yet be done "to satisfy our Heavenly Father, satisfy our dead and ourselves."<sup>177</sup>

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wives." Quoted in Godfrey and Card, *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card*, 244.

<sup>174</sup>This open policy allows, for example, dead women to be sealed to more than one man, but it has also created public relations problems as some LDS Church members perform proxy rituals for "unrelated persons, celebrities and unapproved groups, such as Jewish Holocaust victims." Mark Thiessen, "Clinton, Hatch Discuss Holocaust Baptisms: Jewish Group Wants Church to Keep 1995 Deal," *Deseret News*, April 10, 2004, B3. *Handbook 1* (2010), 20–21.

<sup>175</sup>E.g., Dallin H. Oaks, "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, November 1993, 75; Boyd K. Packer, "Cleansing the Inner Temple," *Ensign*, November 2010, 74–77.

<sup>176</sup>Ezra Taft Benson, then Church president, wrote to one family after a divorce: "Please note that a cancellation of sealing of a wife to her husband does not affect children born in the covenant or previously sealed. Such children are entitled to birthright blessings, and if they remain worthy, are assured the right and privilege of eternal parentage regardless of what happens to their natural parents or the parents to whom they were sealed." Ezra Taft Benson, Letter to Deborah Milne's family, quoted in Elaine Walton, "Children of Divorce," *Ensign*, August 2002, 40–41. This position was perhaps foreshadowed by the Utah temple practice of adopting individuals to a vague female line instead of an actual mother. See also *Handbook 1*, 21–22; McConkie, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:91–92.

<sup>177</sup>Wilford Woodruff, April 8, 1894, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 4:74.



*Albert Carrington, LDS apostle (1870–85. He hoped to excuse his transgressions as “a little folly in Israel” and seemed genuinely mystified at being excommunicated. Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.*

# TRANSGRESSION IN THE LDS COMMUNITY: THE CASES OF ALBERT CARRINGTON, RICHARD R. LYMAN, AND JOSEPH F. SMITH

## Part 1

*Gary James Bergera*

*Editor's note: This article is the first in a three-part series on sexual transgressions of the LDS moral code, regarded as reprehensible, especially when committed by any member of the LDS community. The sections involving Apostle Richard R. Lyman and Patriarch to the Church Joseph F. Smith will appear in the fall 2011 and winter 2012 issues.*

BROADLY DEFINED, "TRANSGRESSION" REFERS to the violation or breaking of laws or commands, as well as to exceeding accepted limits or boundaries of codes of thought and behavior. As a noun, "transgression" may be used in a relatively valueless sense, functioning

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more to describe than to judge. However, within religiously oriented communities, “transgression” is often partnered with “disobedience” and “sin,” and consequently carries greater prescriptive meaning and weight. Within such a context, the study of transgression helps to identify and delineate a community’s self-defined, self-maintained codes of acceptable and unacceptable conduct, thereby illuminating what it means to be a member of the community. Any discipline and punishment applied to transgressors and administered by the community signal the extent to which the community is willing to enforce its membership boundaries and takes action to do so.

The present three-part study focuses on the transgressive sexual behaviors of LDS Apostles Albert Carrington and Richard R. Lyman, and Patriarch to the Church Joseph F. Smith. Apostles Carrington and Lyman were both excommunicated from the Church for violating the Church’s law of chastity (in 1885 and 1943, respectively); Smith, the Church’s presiding patriarch, was effectively disfellowshipped for alleged homosexual activity (in 1946). Within the LDS community, sexual transgression is often viewed as second only to capital murder in seriousness.<sup>1</sup> As each of these three men occupied a high position of leadership within the LDS community, their transgressions generated greater exposure and comment than those attending similar cases involving strictly lay members of the Church. Their stories present an instructive opportunity to consider in detail how sexual transgression, in particular, may be addressed in the LDS Church. In addition, the punishment each man received from the Church hierarchy marked a pivotal event in his life and represented a major turning point in his relationship to the LDS community. If nothing else, an examination of these episodes helps to render more complete both the biographies of these men and the history of the LDS Church.

Such an approach acknowledges that the public exposure of the transgressive acts, given the moral and ethical strictures governing acceptable behavior within the LDS community, probably caused each man pain, anguish, and embarrassment. It also admits that focusing on the facts of transgression necessarily ignores other, less “difficult”

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, LDS Church Apostle, and later President, Spencer W. Kimball’s influential treatise *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), especially the chapter titled “The Sin Next to Murder,” 61–76.



aspects of an individual's life, the result of such analysis being not a full, multi-faceted portrait but a small, narrowly focused glimpse though not, I trust, to the exclusion of the genuine contributions that each made. "We must avoid inflating a single incident out of proportion to its significance," LDS historian Davis Bitton has cautioned, "and presenting as typical something that is unique or out of character with everything else. On the other hand, I must insist that, if the writing of a given biography is itself legitimate, then events and issues, challenges and disappointments, struggles and lapses should not be ignored or swept aside simply because they might be considered embarrassing."<sup>2</sup> "We may not be edified by every move [our leaders] made," Leonard J. Arrington, LDS Church Historian, added, "but we are warmed by their humanity."<sup>3</sup> I am aware of the difficulties attending the discussion to follow and hope simply to contribute to a more complete reconstruction of Carrington's, Lyman's, and Smith's lives and to a fuller appreciation of the function of transgression in the LDS community.

#### PRELIMINARIES AND CONTEXT

For members formally convicted in LDS Church courts (now disciplinary councils) of transgression, the Church usually applies one of three punishments: probation ("restricted privileges"), disfellowshipment, or excommunication. "Disfellowshipment" involves the "temporary suspension of membership privileges," and disfellowshipped members "may not enter Church temples, hold Church callings, exercise the priesthood, partake of the sacrament, or participate openly in public meetings." An excommunicated person is "no longer a member of the Church. . . . Excommunicants may not pay tithing and, if previously endowed in a temple, may not wear temple garments. They may attend Church meetings" if their behavior is "orderly." An excommunicated person may later apply for rebaptism and later still for the restoration of any priesthood and temple-related

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<sup>2</sup>Davis Bitton, "Brushes with Mormon Biography," in *Lives of the Saints: Writing Mormon Biography and Autobiography*, edited by Jill Mulvay Derr (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, Brigham Young University, 2002), 93.

<sup>3</sup>Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 4.

blessings.<sup>4</sup> Charges leveled against members holding the Melchizedek Priesthood (adult men) are typically tried before a stake high council; most other cases are tried first before a ward bishop's court. But in some extraordinary instances—such as those involving one of the Church's ranking officers—cases may be tried before the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and/or the First Presidency. In all cases, the First Presidency is the tribunal of last appeal.

Historically, excommunication has been imposed to identify and punish a variety of transgressive behaviors. These include sexually based transgressions (adultery, fornication, prostitution, rape, incest, etc.), socially based transgressions (drunkenness, lying, disorderly conduct, quarreling, dishonesty, gambling, evil speaking, murder, stealing, swearing, slander, cruelty, using narcotics, etc.), and "apostasy" (unbelief, joining another church, opposition to priesthood leaders, rebellion, refusing to pay tithing, etc.).<sup>5</sup> Today, according to LDS Church protocol, disciplinary councils *must* be convened in cases involving allegations of murder, incest, child abuse, apostasy (that is, publicly opposing the Church, teaching as Church doctrine "information that is not Church doctrine") and following apostate

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<sup>4</sup>Bruce C. Hafen, "Disciplinary Procedures," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1:387. For a historical review of LDS Church discipline, see Lester E. Bush Jr., "Excommunication and Church Courts: A Note from the *General Handbook of Instructions*," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Summer 1981): 74–98; Lester E. Bush Jr., "Excommunication: Church Courts in Mormon History," *Sunstone* 8 (July/August 1983): 24–29; and Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

<sup>5</sup>In the late 1950s, LDS leaders ruled that baptized children should not be automatically excommunicated simply because their parents are, and that refusing to admit ward teachers, being inactive in the Church, or joining another church is not sufficient grounds for excommunication. See *The Messenger* (published by the LDS Church), September 1957, February 1958, and August 1958 issues. In 2010, the Church decided that joining another church and "advocat[ing] its teachings" may be grounds for excommunication. *Church Handbook of Instructions: Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops, 2010* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 53–73. It specifies, "In this chapter, references to transgressions are in the masculine gender but also include the feminine" (53).

groups (total inactivity or attending another church “does not constitute apostasy”), serious transgressions (attempted murder, forcible rape, sexual abuse, spouse abuse, intentionally serious physical injury of others, adultery, fornication, homosexual relations, deliberate abandonment of family responsibilities, robbery, burglary, theft, embezzlement, sale of illegal drugs, fraud, perjury, and “false swearing”) while holding a prominent Church office, being a “predator with tendencies that present any kind of serious threat to other persons,” committing “a pattern of serious transgressions,” and committing serious transgressions that are widely known. Disciplinary councils *may* be convened in cases of members committing serious transgression(s), being involved in abortions, undergoing transsexual operations, or requesting to have their names removed from Church records. Normally, disciplinary councils are not convened in cases involving failures to comply with some Church standards, business failures, the nonpayment of debts, civil disputes, or if a member voluntarily confesses a transgression that occurred “long ago and his faithfulness and service in the intervening years have demonstrated full reformation and repentance.”<sup>6</sup>

While the remainder of this essay focuses on sexual transgression, Table 1 indicates that most excommunications have resulted from allegations of apostasy. These figures should be viewed as preliminary only, as the sources from which they are taken are incomplete.<sup>7</sup> Still, other sources paint a similar picture: one reported fifty-five total excommunications in 1913 and 4,500 per year for the years around 1970;<sup>8</sup> and another noted 2,668 excommunications in 1965: 1,887 for “apostasy” (71 percent), 257 for “immorality” (10 percent), and 96 for joining the Catholic church (4 percent).<sup>9</sup>

The figures in Table 1 suggest that (1) while the annual number of excommunications remained fairly constant from the 1850s through the 1950s, it rose significantly during the last fifty years of

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<sup>6</sup>*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 95–97.

<sup>7</sup>For example, “Excommunicated Members, Book A,” evidently does not include the excommunications of such prominent Mormons as John D. Lee (October 8, 1870, for murder) and George D. Watt (May 3, 1874, for apostasy).

<sup>8</sup>Bush, “Excommunication and Church Courts,” 78.

<sup>9</sup>David O. McKay, *Diary*, January 7, 1966, photocopy, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

**TABLE 1**  
**LDS EXCOMMUNICATIONS:**  
**A SAMPLING FROM THREE TIME PERIODS**  
**(Percentages Rounded)**

<i>Total for Period</i>	<i>1849-78</i>	<i>1930-53</i>	<i>1965-75</i>
<i>Total for Period</i>	1,456	1,324	40,380 est.
Yearly average	48.5	58.0	3,981
Percent female	N/A	50.5%	51%
Percent male	N/A	49.5%	49%
Major reasons			
Apostasy	86%	50%	94%
Sexual transgression	3%	5%	4%
Social transgression	11%	2%	0.6%
Unauthorized plural marriage	Not applic.	6%	0.4%
Reason not given	Not applic.	36%	Not applic.

*Note:* This information is drawn from six sources: (1) “Record of Excommunicated Members, Book A (1845–1878),” as abstracted in D. Michael Quinn, Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.; (2) weekly branch, ward, stake, and mission reports, as abstracted in Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), LDS Family History Library; excommunication notices appearing in three of the Church’s periodicals: (3) *Progress of the Church* (1939–43), (4) *Church News* (1943–47) and (5) *Improvement Era* (1942–47); and (6) information reported in Lavina Fielding Anderson, “A Decade of Excommunications: A 1965–75 Profile,” 1997; print-out in my possession courtesy of Anderson. I also consulted the *2011 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Morning News, 2010).

From 1877 to 1932, the Church’s British Mission published annual statistical reports that included information on excommunications (without citing reasons). Grouped into ten-year periods, these figures are: 1877–86: 1,014 (101.5/yr.); 1887–96: 372 (37/yr.); 1897–1906: 102 (11.5/yr.); 1907–16: 92 (9/yr.); 1917–26: 119 (13/yr.); and 1927–32: 11 (2/yr.); for a total of 1,710 (30.5/yr.). Data for 1901 and 1922 were not published. See the reports appearing annually in the *LDS Millennium Star* and subsequently compiled in Gordon Irving, “Information about British Mission Conferences, 1877–1932,” May 1991, 39; photocopy in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

the twentieth century; (2) roughly the same numbers of women and men are excommunicated; and (3) the majority of excommunications result from charges of apostasy, not from sexual or social transgressions.<sup>10</sup> Researcher Lester Bush has explained the “ten-fold overall increase” in excommunications during the last half of the twentieth century as follows: “one is tempted to suggest that Mormons are simply more likely to ‘transgress’ these days. Considering the social context in which the modern Church operates, this may be true. I would suggest, however, that a changed perspective on the part of local leaders—reflecting both firmer informal guidance from above, and the new notion that [Church] court sanctions have a redeeming function—is also a significant factor.”<sup>11</sup>

The foregoing overview is intended to provide some context for the three-part discussion that follows chronicling the specific cases of sexual transgression and punishment involving Apostle Albert Carrington (this issue) and those of Apostle Richard R. Lyman and Joseph F. Smith, Patriarch to the Church (forthcoming).

#### ALBERT CARRINGTON: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Albert Carrington was born on January 8, 1813, in Royalton, Vermont. He graduated from Dartmouth College at age twenty-one, then taught school and studied law in Pennsylvania. In 1839, he married Rhoda Maria Woods (b. 1824). In mid-1841, the Carringtons joined the LDS Church. In late 1845, now living in Nauvoo, Illinois, Carrington received his temple endowment and, in January 1846, took his first plural wife, Mary Rock (b. 1822). The Carringtons crossed the Mississippi River in February 1846, joining the vanguard of Latter-day Saints for the Great Salt Lake Valley.

In 1870, at age fifty-seven, Carrington was ordained a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and subsequently presided three times over the Church’s European Mission. From 1870 to 1874, he served as the LDS Church Historian. In 1873, he was named a counselor to LDS Church President Brigham Young, and in May 1874 was appointed an assistant counselor. Following Young’s death in 1877, Carrington was named an administrator of Young’s estate and, from

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<sup>10</sup>However, Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 358, found that for 1830–1900 the “most common grounds for disfellowshipping . . . were adultery, seduction, rape, and other sexual offenses.”

<sup>11</sup>Bush, “Excommunication and Church Courts,” 78.

1877 to 1880, was assistant trustee-in-trust for the Church.<sup>12</sup>

Better schooled than most Latter-day Saints, Carrington once described himself as “radical by nature, conservative by strict schooling.”<sup>13</sup> “Don’t try to force anybody [to live the Word of Wisdom],” he advised members of Salt Lake City’s School of the Prophets in late 1870, “but ~~eat~~ calmly & kindly reason with and try to persuade men to do right, and leave off doing wrong.”<sup>14</sup> “Education is not a system of stuffing in the heads of children, by teaching them, parrot like to recite piece after piece &c,” he also counseled, “but Education consists in leading the minds to exercise themselves, and ~~teaching them~~ endeavour to draw out their full capabilities in the study of all kinds of knowledge.”<sup>15</sup>

Although later reports indicate that Carrington engaged in extramarital sexual relations as early as the 1870s, word of the specific activity that would result in his excommunication first surfaced in November 1882, shortly after the arrival in Liverpool, England, of Apostle John Henry Smith, his replacement as the Church’s European Mission president.<sup>16</sup> Initially, thirty-four-year-old Smith labeled the rumors involving sixty-nine-year-old Carrington and the mission’s twenty-year-old ex-housekeeper, Sarah Kirkman, as “founded on indiscre-

<sup>12</sup>The preceding paragraph summarizes the following sources: Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901; rpt. ed., 1971), 1:126–27; “Apostles of the New Dispensation[:] Albert Carrington—28th of the Council of Twelve,” *Church News*, March 23, 1935, 2; Brigham D. Madsen, “Albert Carrington,” in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 75–76; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1997), 650–51; and Steven H. Heath, “Albert Carrington: Counselor to Brigham Young (1873–77),” in *Counselors to the Prophets*, compiled by Michael K. Winder (Roy, Utah: Eborn Books, 2001), 205–14.

<sup>13</sup>Albert Carrington, quoted in Salt Lake City School of the Prophets, Minutes, March 16, 1872, typescript, Leonard J. Arrington Papers, Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, December 31, 1870.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, January 21, 1871.

<sup>16</sup>For Smith’s appointment, see Jean Bickmore White, ed., *Church, State, and Politics: The Journals of John Henry Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1990), 86–88.



*John Henry Smith, LDS apostle (1880–1911). Smith first brought rumors of Carrington’s transgressions to the attention of Church authorities in Salt Lake City. Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.*

tions and not on Criminal acts.”<sup>17</sup> (Kirkman had recently left Liverpool, arriving in Salt Lake City in mid-September 1882.) Additional allegations soon emerged, however; and less than two weeks later, on December 10, Smith recorded: “Bro. R[obert]. R. Anderson says that Bro. A. Carrington cannot get within the neighborhood of a woman without fondling her and that the Housekeeper [i.e., Kirkman] was petted and fondled by him, and familiarities taken that brought disgrace upon the house.”<sup>18</sup>

Smith was still disinclined to believe such gossip. Neither of Carrington’s wives—both in their late fifties to early sixties—had accompanied Carrington to England in 1880, and Smith may have assumed that Carrington was simply courting another, much younger plural wife. (Carrington’s activities had already been remarked upon in Salt Lake City. “You know how bro C. thinks a deal of wimmen,” the wife

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 93.

of one of the Church's apostles had written several years earlier.)<sup>19</sup> However, in view of the British public's antipathy for plural marriage, Smith began to worry about the stories' effect on the Church's proselytizing activities.<sup>20</sup> He recorded on December 26, 1882:

Jane Pond [another young employee of the mission home] told me this morning that Mary J. Nowlan told her that she found Bro. Carrington laying on the lounge and Sarah Kirkman lying on top of him. On board of one of Guions steamers in the cabin and in the presence of G. Ramsden and Moroni Brown and others Sarah Kirkman put her arms around Bro. Carringtons neck and laid her head upon his bosom.

He took this same woman to London paying her way, and they were gone 9 days. She stop[p]ed in the prayer room evenings and they drank beer and had good times together. She bit his nose untill it was red for several days. They played on the floor like children and he kissed and cud[d]led her. He gave her his bed and slept upon the lounge when their were plenty of beds in the house, and when he was wanted he could not be found although he was in the House.<sup>21</sup>

Smith decided to inform Church President John Taylor,<sup>22</sup> writing the next day that "Brother Carrington took Sarah Kirkman to

<sup>19</sup>Julina L. Smith, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, March 7, 1875, in Joseph F. Smith Papers, transcription in D. Michael Quinn, Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. (hereafter Quinn Papers). Joseph F. Smith was then in England as mission president. Julina's comments followed the *Salt Lake Tribune's* allegations in "That Amorous Apostle," January 31, 1875. See also "On a Mission," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 26, 1875: "Brother Albert [Carrington]'s departure [for England] will be deeply regretted . . . especially by the sisters of the 19th ward; but . . . there are other loving sisters in the far off land, who will administer comfort to the weary pilgrim." Sources courtesy of Steven H. Heath.

<sup>20</sup>A study of conversion numbers, etc., suggests that Carrington's activities had no effect on baptisms. See Richard O. Cowan, "Church Growth in England, 1841-1914," in *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987*, edited by V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, and Larry C. Porter (Solihull, Eng.: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987), 199-235.

<sup>21</sup>White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 95.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. Smith also recorded that Pond and James Purdee, another young local employee of the mission office, had "confessed their Sin [i.e.,



London for nine days once, took her out shopping; he seemed very fond of her and our neighbors began to enquire about the old gentleman and his girl. He kissed and fondled her, and called her pet names, they spent their evenings in the prayer room [of the mission headquarters], eating, and drinking beer."<sup>23</sup> Smith also sent twenty-two-year-old Jane Pond, the source for many of these stories, home, hoping to put an end to the gossip.<sup>24</sup>

#### “UNWISE AND IMPRUDENT”

Sarah Kirkman sailed from Liverpool on September 2, 1882, on board the S.S. *Wyoming*, arriving in New York City on September 12. Carrington left England about three months later on November 25, aboard the S.S. *Abyssinia*. He arrived in New York on December 7. By mid-March 1883, Kirkman had not only reached Utah but was engaged to twenty-year-old Richard Bridge, another English convert, who had accompanied Kirkman from Liverpool. They married on August 2, 1883; a son, Richard Kirkman Bridge, was born a year later.

Shortly after returning to Salt Lake City in December 1882, Carrington met with John Taylor. According to Carrington, the two “had a very pl[ea]s[an]t interview, in which he informed me, among other matters, that he was well pleased and satisfied with my conduct of affairs while absent Presiding in the European Mission, which was very gratifying to me & for which I thanked the Lord, & gave Him all the glory, for it was only through Him that I was enabled to accomplish whatever of good I had done as President of the E[uropean]. Mission.”<sup>25</sup>

Following receipt of John Henry Smith’s report, which did not reach Utah until after Carrington had been in the United States for a little over a month, Church officials decided to refer the matter to Carrington’s quorum. “Concerning Elder John Henry Smith’s letter of Dec[ember] 1882,” one of the apostles reported in mid-March 1883,

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fornication] to the Presidency of this branch and were forgiven.” Ibid., 94.

<sup>23</sup>Smith, Letter to John Taylor, December 1882, D. Michael Quinn’s reconstruction of Scott G. Kenney’s notes, in Quinn Papers.

<sup>24</sup>Pond left Liverpool in late 1882, arriving in Salt Lake City less than a month later. She began seeing George Oswald Sunderland (1854–1913) and gave birth to his daughter in early 1885. The couple married six weeks later. Jane Pond Sunderland bore three more children and died in 1912.

<sup>25</sup>Albert Carrington, Diary, 1847–86, holograph, December 15, 1882, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

Sister Nowlan only indirectly admitted seeing “Bro. C[arrington]. on the lounge and Sarah Kirkman lying on top of him.” She remembered that she said to Sarah K. that [“]if she would do so when she (Sis N.) was present what would she do when she was not.” Sis N. said there was considerable talk among the tradesmen of whom the Office dealt, which made it very unpleasant to have to go and buy things and it gave the office a bad repute in the neighborhood. There was also considerable talk in the Branch. Bro. Carrington on his way home from Europe stayed over at Evanston to visit Sister Kirkman, and he now visited her at Bishop [John] Sharp’s and sometimes took her out. Sarah had told her she would rather be the third wife of Bro. C. than the wife of the young man to whom she was engaged [i.e., Richard Bridge].

With respect to the scene in the ship’s cabin spoken of in the letter, neither one of these three persons witnessed it. Bro. Victor Anderson was on board the ship, and when on the tender returning to the docks, he heard Wm Ramsden[’s] opinion and the others talking about it.

It appears that Sis Kirkman was not well, Bro. C. invited her to stay in the prayer room while she was indisposed, when she got well she continued to spend her evenings with him in that room, and much of her time was spent in his company, they used to go out shopping together to[o]. He took her to London and Bolton with him.

Bro V[ictor]. Anderson stated she told him that if any of the Elders wanted a favor of Bro. C. he used to ask her advice, and if she said grant it, it was granted.

Once he (V[ictor]. A[nderson].) came into the Kitchen without his shoes and found them standing very close together, apparently with her arms around his neck but he made a noise to let them know some one was present, and feeling kind of ashamed he did not take particular notice of exactly how they were standing. He had heard her speak in a very disrespectful manner to Bro. C. whom she used to call Pa, and some supposed she was his daughter; he has seen letters from her to Pres. C. addressed to “her dear Pa.[”]

Bro Felt only speaks of the general feeling in the office, the branch, and among the tradesmen with whom they dealt. Knowing that he had no power to change things he avoided hearing all he possibly could as they passed him.

With respect to the beer, when Sister Sarah was sick Bro. C advised her to drink some, the boy used to be sent out for it frequently.<sup>26</sup>

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Carrington admitted to his quorum that he may have acted thought-

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<sup>26</sup>Letter to John Taylor, March 12, 1883, handwritten notes by Steven H. Heath; used with permission. Heath’s notes do not identify the letter’s writer.

lessly, but insisted that he had not violated Church teachings on chastity.

Six months later in September 1883, Wilford Woodruff, president of the Twelve, assembled a majority of apostles to discuss the allegations more formally. That same afternoon, Woodruff reported to the First Presidency:

We have been together as a Quorum since this mornings meeting except for one hour. . . . We examined into the reported criminality of Brother Carrington while in England, and have had a full explanation from him of these matters, and find there is no criminality to be attached to him, yet he was very unwise and imprudent in his course while abroad, which might have given cause for grave suspicions. Brother Carrington is also convinced that his conduct was not consistent with his calling as an Apostle. . . .

President Taylor then advised the Twelve:

As a body of Apostles, you have the right to examine into the lives, conduct, and character of each of your members, and if upon your investigation you are and can be satisfied with each other, I am sure I ought to be. For you are competent to investigate and adjudicate as between yourselves. I am satisfied with your actions today and your report as I feel assured my councillors will also be.

So far as Brother Carrington is concerned I had received a letter from Brother John Henry Smith pertaining to some matters which I considered more a matter of imprudence and indiscretion rather than criminal. Yet I felt it proper to have the matter referred to you brethren of his Quorum for such consideration as you might think proper, and handed to Bro. F[ranklin]. D. Richards that you might see what the charges were.

The Twelve and First Presidency heard John Henry Smith's letter read, then Carrington responded: He again insisted that the statements against him, if not blatantly false, were "very much mixed" and misinterpreted:

As to the statement that Sister K. was seen lying on my body, while I was on the lounge in the Prayer room, I do not know of any such an occurrence, as there was none. Such a report may possibly have arisen from her free manner in coming into the room at times, and she may have sat down on the foot of the lounge at the same time Norman came into the room. There could have been no other cause. As regards to the London trip as Sister Kirkman was about to emigrate had not seen much of the country, and never been to London—I asked her if she would like to go to London and she accepted the invi-

tation. I wrote to a Sister where I generally stay when there, inquiring if a room could be provided for her use and found it could—we went to London and while there I asked Brother West to take her around and show her the sights, and I never accompanied her to any place while there. . . .

Now as to my course, [Carrington concluded,] I must admit that others might have had suspicion as to my conduct, as Sister Kirkman was very free and talkative,—and which was to say the least very unwise, and imprudent; but there was no intuition of wrong by me or by her in these matters, yet I now see that others might think so. I can say that I have never in my life, had any connection with any female other than my wives, either at home or abroad, the Lord had preserved me free from anything of that kind.

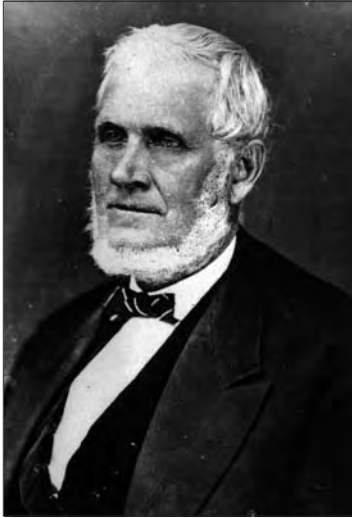
Following Carrington’s comment, Taylor, who presided, called for a vote on whether to accept Carrington as a continuing member of the Quorum of the Twelve. The response was unanimous in the affirmative.<sup>27</sup> However, what his brethren did not know was that Carrington had lied about his relationship with Kirkman, that his extramarital affairs included other women, and that they had actually begun during his second tenure as president over the European Mission in the mid-1870s.

### **“A SAD, HORRIBLE TALE”**

The Twelve’s investigation of Carrington occurred during John Taylor’s drive to reestablish the School of the Prophets (disbanded in 1874). Previously, the school functioned as a discussion group focused primarily on current events. Taylor hoped the new school, which he envisioned in strictly religious terms, would serve as a mechanism for cleansing the Church of iniquity, and questions regarding transgression figured prominently in the interviews asked of prospective members.

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<sup>27</sup>Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and First Presidency, Minutes, September 28, 1883, in *Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book, 1883* (1981; rpt. ed., Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1992), 47–50. Eleven days later, condemnations of sexual transgression figured prominently in the public counsel of Church officials, including the “heinousness of Adultery, Fornication, Masturbation, & concomitants . . . also of self-pollution of both sexes & excessive indulgence in the married relation.” Franklin D. Richards, Diary, October 9, 1883, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers. Further quotations from Richards’s diary are from the Quinn Papers.



*John Taylor, LDS Church president (1880–87). Taylor left most of the decisions about Carrington’s membership status with the Quorum of the Twelve. Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.*

Evidently sometime soon after their marriage, Kirkman told Bridge of her relationship with Carrington. In fact, not only had Carrington and Kirkman been sexually intimate prior to her marriage, but the relationship had apparently continued afterward. Bridge confronted Carrington in letters but, dissatisfied with the results, contacted Apostle John W. Taylor (son of President Taylor), who immediately consulted a small group of apostles on October 23, 1885. “In the evening,” recorded Elder Heber J. Grant, one of the newest members of the Twelve,

met at the residence of Apostle John W. Taylor. Present Prest Geo. Q. Cannon, Apostles Franklin D. Richards, Heber J. Grant and John W. Taylor George F. Gibbs [quorum secretary], Richard Bridge and his wife. A letter from Brother Richard Bridge was read also a written statement made by Bro John W Taylor from statements made to him by Bro Bridge. This statement accused Apostle Albert Carrington of having committed adultery with his wife before and since her marriage. Sister Bridge was housekeeper at the church offices in Liverpool (42 Islington) at the time that Albert Carrington was presiding and she claims that he then seduced her and that he was the first man that had ever had intercourse with her.<sup>28</sup>

“A sad, horrible tale, if true,” added Elder Franklin D. Rich-

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<sup>28</sup>Heber J. Grant, Diary, October 23, 1885, typed excerpts in Quinn

ards.<sup>29</sup> Grant also met privately with Elder Francis M. Lyman “regarding what a sad and terrible thing the affair with Bro Carrington was. We considered it especially unfortunate coming just at this time when our enemies were so hard at work enforcing the provisions of the Edmunds [federal anti-polygamy] Law and so many of our brethren were suffering in penitentiaries for having kept God’s commandments and entered into His law by marrying more than [one] wife.”<sup>30</sup>

Word of the allegations quickly spread among quorum members. “Bro. F. D. Richards told Bro. M. Thatcher and I,” wrote John Henry Smith on November 2, 1885, “that a charge of adultery had been made against Bro. Albert Carrington.” “Bro. J. W. Taylor, F. D. Richards and I met together,” Smith added the next day, “and Bro. Richards read to us the evidence against Bro. Carrington and instructed Bro. Taylor and I to hunt up more testimony both for and against him. We did so.”<sup>31</sup> Smith and his colleagues spent the remainder of the week “searching for evidence.”<sup>32</sup> Much to their chagrin, they discovered that Kirkman was not Carrington’s only past partner.

On Friday, November 6, 1885, John Henry Smith and quorum secretary George Gibbs met with former British Mission employees Mary Nowlan and Jeanette Paton. According to Smith, “the former gave some damaging testimony against Bro. Carrington,” however, the “latter was unwilling to say anything.”<sup>33</sup> The two men submitted their findings to quorum members later that same day. “The following members of the Twelve were together this evening in the Histo-

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Papers. Additional quotations from this diary are from the Quinn Papers. A year earlier, dissenting LDS convert Scott Anderson had written to President John Taylor, complaining of Carrington’s behavior in England: “I saw him myself in the presence of several hundred witnesses, on board a tug-boat in Liverpool, conducting himself so disgracefully with a young girl, then a servant in the Mission Home, that every Elder present held his head down with shame.” Anderson, Letter, September 22, 1884, in Salt Lake Stake High Council, Minutes, February 3, 1885, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers; see also Scott Anderson, *Mormonism: By an Ex-Mormon Elder. . . .* (Liverpool, Eng.: Scott Anderson, 1885), 6–10.

<sup>29</sup>Richards, Diary, October 23, 1885.

<sup>30</sup>Grant, Diary, October 30, 1885.

<sup>31</sup>White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 141.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid. See also Franklin D. Richards, Diary, November 4, 1885.

<sup>33</sup>White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 141.

rian[’s] Office,” Smith recorded:

Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, F[ranklin]. D. Richards, B[righam]. Young [Jr.], A[lbert]. Carrington, M[oses]. Thatcher, F[rancis]. M. Lyman, H[eber]. J. Grant, J[ohn]. W. Taylor, J[ohn]. W. Young Councillor and myself and G[eorge]. F. Gibbs met together. Bro. Richard Bridge and wife Sarah K[irkman]. made a charge of adultery in writing against Br[other]. Albert Carrington. Bro. J. W. Taylor, to whom the complaint was made stated the case and I gave what evidence I had obtained. Bro. A. Carrington got up and Confessed to guilt with Janette Johnson [i.e., Janet Edgar Johnstone], Ruth Worsdale, and Sarah K. Bridge. All of the brethren but Bro. G[eorge]. F. Gibbs spoke, and could find no way to do but cut Bro. A. Carrington off from the Church. Bro. W. Woodruff decided that he be cut off[f] and he was sustained by the vote of all present.<sup>34</sup>

Brigham Young Jr. had married Carrington’s seventeen-year-old daughter, Jane Maria, in 1857, although they would separate in 1886 after Jane had borne Young four sons and four daughters. Still, the forty-eight-year-old Young was as close to Carrington as any of the apostles. Young wrote in his diary after this Church court on November 6:

Today has been one of the solemn days of my life. At a meeting of the Twelve in the upper room His[torian’s]. Office . . . Jno. H. Smith and Jno W. Taylor presented the charge of La[s]civ[ious]. Cohab., Fornication and adultery against Albert Carrington all of which he confessed to, altho’ talking incoherently about those crimes stating tho’ if he were with another mans wife but did not mix the seeds he was only foolish, not criminal. The most immoral confession I ever heard fell from the lips of Bro Carrington and this wickedness had been going on for about twelve years commencing in Liverpool while he was president of the British Mission. The Twelve sat as a High Council president Woodruff presiding, Each expressed their opinion & all agreed. President delivered judgement, accused guilty of all charges when by unanimous vote Albert Carrington<sup>35</sup> was cut off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints.

Twenty-eight-year-old Heber J. Grant, equally upset with Carrington, added:

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<sup>34</sup>White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 141.

<sup>35</sup>Brigham Young Jr., *Diary*, November 6, 1885, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers.

*Heber J. Grant, ordained LDS apostle in 1882, was shocked at the disclosure of Carrington's transgressions. "Never in my life," he wrote in his diary, "have I listened to a more disgusting recital than the confessions from the old man's lips." Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.*



Albert Carrington's mind was so darkened that he appeared to have no real appreciation of the crime he had committed and claimed that inasmuch as he did not "go the whole figure," as he called it, that he had not committed adultery and went so far as to thank God for His goodness in preventing him from ever having committed adultery. By not "going the whole figure" he explained that he would enter a woman and before he had an emission he would withdraw and not spill his seed within the woman and as there was no mixing of seed there was and could not be any adulteration & therefore no adultery. He claimed that his actions were wrong but he only looked upon what he had done as "a little folly in Israel" and actually insisted that he saw no reason why we could not forgive him and retain him in fellowship in our quorum. Never in my life have I listened to a more disgusting recital than the confessions from the old man's lips this night and I pray to God that I may never be called upon to listen to another especially when a high official in the church shall be the guilty person. His crimes had extended over a period of ten years during all of which time he had been preaching purity of life etc etc to a fallen wor[l]d & testifying to the restoration of God's kingdom to the earth.<sup>36</sup>

John Henry Smith, writing a report to Elder Joseph F. Smith a

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<sup>36</sup>Heber J. Grant, Diary, November 6, 1885. See also Grant's account as reported in Lowry Nelson, *In the Direction of His Dreams: Memoirs* (New



few days later, saw God's hand in the episode:

All of my quorum have been together in the last few days but G[eorge]. T[eadsdales]. [W]hen called home I was in the Oneida Stake preaching in the branches. We had A. C[arrington]. . . . before us . . . on a charge of adultery which was proved, and he got up in and admitted of three cases, commencing with his second mission and continued at home and abroad until this last August. We cut him off from the Church. This however is not made public yet, but no doubt will be before many days. . . .

I begin to feel sanguine that the Lord has now brought or permitted the present Crusade only for our good and purification when rottenness crops out in all most every quorum of the Priesthood. Something should cleanse us. The old gentleman begged for mercy but we were [united] in our action. He has sunk I am afraid to rise no more. Oh! how terrible it is that a life times work should be wrecked by misdeeds and a mans name go down branded with infamy. I Pray my God to give me the strength to maintain my purity that I may be a free man. I never want to see another man in the condition this one was. He regarded himself as not committing adultery in that he said he never permitted his seed to mix with that of the woman, spilling it as Onan did [Gen. 38:8-10].<sup>37</sup>

“Special mtg. of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,” Wilford Woodruff wrote to the First Presidency the next day,

was held in the Hist[orian's]. Office, on Friday evening, Nov 6, 1885. There were present all the members of the Quorum (excepting George Teasdale), also Counselor John W. Young.

The object of the meeting was to consider a charge of Fornication and Adultery against Albert Carrington, made by Richard and Sarah Bridge of Salt Lake City.

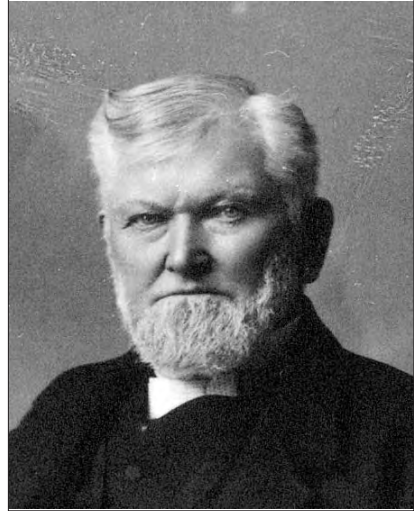
After the Charges and statements were read, and testimony in relation to his conduct in Liverpool and London and subsequently in Salt Lake City was given he admitted all the facts alleged, Namely sexual intercourse with Ruth Worsdale in 1870 and 1871; with Jeanette Cairns [i.e., Janet Edgar Johnstone Cairns] about the same time and with Sarah Kirkman during his last mission to England; also in Salt Lake City with Jeanette Cairns Smith and with Sarah Kirkman both before and after her marriage to Richard Bridge.

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York: Philosophical Library, 1985), 254-55.

<sup>37</sup>John Henry Smith, Letter to Jason Mack (pseud. Joseph F. Smith), ca. November 6-10, 1885, John Henry Smith Letterbook, George A. Smith Family Papers.

*Wilford Woodruff, LDS apostle (1839–89) and Church president (1889–98). In announcing the decision to readmit Carrington into the Church, Woodruff instructed the ailing Carrington’s bishop to “baptize him in the bath tub in his house” but “do not ordain him to the Priesthood or bestow any other ordinance upon him.” Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.*



Brother Carrington claimed that he did not spill his seed inside of these women, that he did not mix his seed with theirs; that the mixing of the seed was what he terms adultery, against which he said, he had a natural abhorrence from his youth up; and he thanks the Lord for having kept him from doing that which alone was regarded by him as adultery.

The Council each spoke in turn and was unanimous in their feeling. Pres. Woodruff after expressing his feeling in full, decided that Albert Carrington be excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for the crimes of lewd and lascivious conduct, fornication and adultery, which decision was sustained by unanimous vote of the Twelve.

Brother Carrington pled for forgiveness, and asked if he were cut off that he might be recommended to the mercy of the First Presidency for re-baptism, which the Council felt that it could not consistently do.

Would be pleased if you would suggest in what form our action should be made public.<sup>38</sup>

Since seventy-two-year-old Carrington, to his mind, had not technically committed adultery, he was mystified at his colleagues’ reac-

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<sup>38</sup>Wilford Woodruff, “on behalf of the Council of Apostles,” Letter to John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, November 7, 1885, handwritten notes by Steven H. Heath; copy courtesy of Steven H. Heath and used with permission.

tion to his “folly.” “At Council of the Twelve,” he recorded in his diary, “where they excommunicated me from the church for loud [?] & lewd and lascivious conduct, and adultery, the last of which I never committed even in thought, as I understood the English language.”<sup>39</sup> Carrington’s brethren, however, seem to have interpreted his reasoning as both proof of an unrepentant attitude and an insult to his quorum. There are hints that Carrington’s first wife, Rhoda, did not respond favorably to the prospect of additional wives;<sup>40</sup> and as a consequence, Carrington may have felt less constrained regarding extramarital sexual activity. Still, most of the quorum may have wondered why Carrington, as family patriarch, had not simply brought Kirkman to Utah and married her regardless of his wives’ reaction.

One of the women whom Carrington confessed “to guilt with” evidently considered their relationship to be in the nature of a future plural marriage. Janet Edgar Johnstone (1842–1905), identified in most of the correspondence as Janette Johnson, married Joseph Cairns (1843–95) in 1863 in Scotland and bore two children: Mary (1866–1948) and Thomas (1868–1901). Johnstone later joined the LDS Church; her husband did not. Johnstone migrated to Utah in late 1871; her daughter and parents joined her four years later. Johnstone expected that she and Carrington would marry. However, Carrington’s wives opposed any such union, and Johnstone instead married Robert Paton in 1883.

Although family tradition holds that Johnstone married Car-

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<sup>39</sup>Carrington, Diary, November 6, 1885. Carrington was not alone in his definition of adultery. Five months earlier, William Bricker (1832–1916) had claimed that “he did not commit Adultery with Sister Elizabeth Phelps as he always spilled his seed before having any connections with her.” Salt Lake Stake High Council, Minutes, June 16, 1885. He was excommunicated.

<sup>40</sup>At the beginning of Carrington’s first term as European Mission president in 1868, Brigham Young had counseled him (and other missionaries): “When you get over there I want each of you to select a good girl and marry her.” Brigham Young, quoted in *The Journal of Jesse Nathaniel Smith*, edited by Oliver R. Smith, 3rd ed. (Provo, Utah: Jesse N. Smith Family Association, 1970), 185. When asked how he intended to follow Young’s advice, Carrington responded that “he didn’t think he should do anything about it, as he dared not trust himself to select a wife without the help of Rhoda Maria, his first wife.” *Ibid.*, 186. Sources courtesy of Steven H. Heath.

rington the day before his death, the two were not sealed until 1893. On September 16, 1889, Johnstone wrote to John Henry Smith:

I consider it my duty to inform you that the Sufferings that I have endured In tryin[g] to carry out the counsel that I received [sic] from you after the Carrington trial is now and has been Something that is without a parrell and could not be described in Language. [W]hile saying this I do not wish to bring any charges against any one seeing that it is the result of circumstances connected with my associations with A. C[arrington]. Therefore my object in writting you this letter is to request you to release me from this Counsel if I can have the privilege of being Sealed to A. C[arrington]. by Proxy. . . . [W]ill you therefore have the kindness to interview Bro Woodruff with regard to this matter and return me the result of your Interview what I wish to know Is if on getting a divorce from Paton I can be sealed to A C[arrington] by proxy so that as far as possible these wrongs may be made right and put to order and also my affliction and reproach lightened a little.

Four months later, on January 17, 1890, Johnstone reminded Smith: "If I could have this favour granted to me I would then be protected to some degree from so much persecution and reproach."<sup>41</sup> Three years later on May 5, 1893, Joseph F. Smith, then a counselor in the First Presidency, wrote to Lorenzo Snow, president of the Salt Lake Temple, granting permission for Johnstone's cancellation of sealing to Cairns and for her proxy sealing to Carrington.<sup>42</sup>

By the mid-1890s, Johnstone began signing her name as "Janet Carrington." "Granny Carrington," wrote grandson T. Edgar Lyon, "assumed the surname Carrington and was known as such. She wrote and published many bits of poetry, and used the name Janet Carrington to identify her."<sup>43</sup> Sometime after Johnstone's death, her daughter successfully petitioned LDS Church President Heber J. Grant to cancel her mother's marriage sealing to Carrington and then had her

<sup>41</sup>Janet Johnstone Cairns, Letters to John Henry Smith, September 16, 1889, and January 17, 1890, John Henry Smith Letterbook, George A. Smith Family Papers, Marriott Library.

<sup>42</sup>Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Lorenzo Snow, May 5, 1893; transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

<sup>43</sup>T. Edgar Lyon, "Albert Carrington and Janet Johnstone Cairns," April 10, 1968, 3; excerpts courtesy of Steven H. Heath.

sealed by proxy to Joseph Cairns.<sup>44</sup>

**“TOTTERING AT THE VERGE OF THE GRAVE”**

Three days after Carrington’s trial, the First Presidency met with a few of the Twelve to determine if “we [should] relent and not publish Crime of Bro Carrington.” They decided to treat the errant apostle’s case no differently from other such instances “& publish what he was cut off for.” “Yours of November 7 has been received and in reply we submit the following,” the First Presidency instructed the Twelve by letter:

Charges having been preferred against Albert Carrington, a full and patient hearing was had before the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when the following decision was unanimously adopted: “That Albert Carrington be excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the crimes of lewd and lascivious conduct, fornication and adultery.” We suggest that you get this matter into shape, and if you choose all can sign it and have it published as soon as you may wish after you have taken care of yourselves.<sup>45</sup>

The next day, November 10, 1885, the following terse notice appeared in the *Deseret Evening News*:

EXCOMMUNICATED.

Charges having been preferred against Albert Carrington, a full and patient hearing was had before the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, when the following decision was unanimously adopted.

“That Albert Carrington be excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints for the crimes of lewd and lascivious conduct and adultery.”<sup>46</sup>

“The revelations [against Carrington],” the First Presidency informed Elder Daniel H. Wells, “have been of the most disgusting character and have given us all deep pain. It is a terrible thing to con-

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.; see also T. Edgar Lyon Jr., *T. Edgar Lyon: A Teacher in Zion* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 4–6.

<sup>45</sup>Brigham Young Jr., Diary, November 9, 1885; see also Franklin D. Richards, Diary, November 9, 1885; John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, Letter to Wilford Woodruff and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, November 9, 1885, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

<sup>46</sup>“Excommunicated,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 10, 1885, 2.

*Joseph F. Smith, ordained an apostle in 1866, was John Taylor's counselor.*

*When he learned of Carrington's transgressions, it "made me feel like scrutinizing well the pedestal on which I stood to see, if possible, if it was sound." Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.*



template that a man who has had the opportunities and held the position which he has done should fall to such a depth of degradation. He seems to be tottering at the verge of the grave . . . and to have such a close to a long career like his, is most dreadful to think of.”<sup>47</sup> “That a man so venerable in years,” they added in communicating the same news to Elder George Teasdale, “so prominent in the Church, and having had such close intimacy with its leading men ever since we came to these valleys, should fall to such a depth of degradation is dreadful to contemplate. . . . He asked to have the privilege of remaining in the Church as a member, but when the Twelve acted upon his case, he then besought them to recommend to the First Presidency that he should be permitted to be rebaptized. But the Twelve were so disgusted with the revelations made to them concerning his conduct that they could not make any such recommendation.”<sup>48</sup>

“[A] few weeks ago,” the First Presidency explained publicly in an epistle to Church members,

it became the sad duty of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to sever

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<sup>47</sup>First Presidency, Letter to Daniel H. Wells, November 9, 1885, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

<sup>48</sup>First Presidency Letter to George Teasdale, November 17, 1885, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

[from] the communion of the Saints one of its members who had violated the law of chastity. He was a man of education, of experience, of judgment, of long standing in the Church, but neither these nor his exalted position to the Priesthood could save him from the penalty of the law he had so flagrantly broken. And as with him, so with all others. The law must be administered by the officers of the Church with justice and impartiality, with malice towards none, but with due regard to the commands of God and the honor of His holy name.<sup>49</sup>

“The dreadful case of A. Carrington is sickening and lamentable beyond all measure,” Joseph F. Smith, President Taylor’s forty-seven-year-old counselor, wrote to future Apostle Orson F. Whitney in January 1886:

The fall, (and such a disgraceful one!) of an Apostle, and one of so long standing in the church, is well calculated to spread a glare of fiendish delight over the camp of the enemy, and gloom like a pall over all the household of faith. I marvel at this permission of providence. What good can possibly come out of such an example, equal to the evil done is past comprehension. What a mercy to him and his had kindly death stepped in years ago and stricken him down while innocent. Yet his fate should be a fearful warning to others if there be any who need such warning. I trust there are no others in the leading Councils of the Priesthood or in the Church who need to be warned from the adulterous and Apostates doom.

I know not whether we are most to be condemned for our blindness or for our charity towards him for so many years. Not charity that would condone sin and cover it up. There can be no excuse for that and I protest that we are innocent of that crime, but that charity which is lo[a]th to believe it possible that one so highly favored in all respects, could possibly fall so low, and thus parried off all immoral charges against him. I am satisfied that we erred if we did not sin in this, and I can offer no excuse for the blindness which rendered us insensible to the presence of such vile turpitude in the midst of us. For my part in this matter I do humbly crave the forgiveness of God and the pardon of the Saints. I cannot but regret the terrible sacrifice that has taught us this sad lesson, and pray that this may be the last. I can assure you the news of A. C[arrington].’s fall made me feel like scrutinizing well the pedestal on which I stood to see, if possible, if it was sound. I came to the conclusion that while I may not have been so responsible as some of my

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<sup>49</sup>First Presidency, “Epistle,” March 1886, in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 3:62.

brethren, I am perhaps as guilty of blind charity towards my erring brother. Still I can prove that I was never satisfied for years—with the standing and spirit of Albert Carrington. It is too late however to bring this up now. I own up. I was in the dark.<sup>50</sup>

#### **“BETTER TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF MERCY”**

Shortly after his excommunication, Carrington suffered two strokes that left him bedridden. His first wife, Rhoda, passed away several months later on August 1, 1886.<sup>51</sup> His health in decline, Carrington began requesting readmission into the Church. Taylor would consent, but only if a majority of the Twelve agreed. “Albert Carrington’s mental and physical condition has been represented to us as being very deplorable,” the First Presidency wrote on September 16, 1886. “The probabilities are that his days on the earth will be few. In view of

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<sup>50</sup>Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Orson F. Whitney, January 18, 1886, handwritten notes by Steven H. Heath; photocopy in my possession courtesy of Steven Heath and used with his permission. “An Apostle has been cut off from the Church for committing adultery,” Smith reported six months later. “He continued to practise it for years and the people wondered and said: ‘Apostle Carrington’s remarks were very dry; nothing in them whatever,’ etc.” Salt Lake Stake Historical Minutes, July 28, 1886, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers. “This is a terrible thing,” Smith also wrote to A. J. Merriott, December 1, 1885, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation, “and a shocking thing . . . that he should be guilty of such a crime—and that it should be Albert Carrington—and at his time of life!”

<sup>51</sup>During this period, LDS leaders tended to view marriages in which one partner was guilty of adultery as having been effectively dissolved. “The innocent spouse,” write Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 379, “had little discretion to forgive such misconduct.” “A man who could take an adulteress back to his bosom as a wife,” said Church President John Taylor in 1884, “must have a very low view of morality and the ordinary decencies of life; and the Saints did quite right in saying to him that they could not fellowship such conduct in one of their number. Such conduct set a bad example and should not be permitted to go unrebuked. . . . It is immoral, low and degrading, and utterly unworthy of a man calling himself a latter-day Saint.” Qtd. in *ibid.* However, in all of the cases Firmage and Mangrum cite, the wife had committed adultery, so it is not clear whether the same policy would have covered the Carrington case of an adulterous husband.



his condition he has made an earnest appeal, through Elder Franklin D. Richards, for re-baptism. His case we deem a most pitiable one, and we have consented . . . for the Twelve, who can meet together, to take his petition into consideration and to decide . . . after the absent members of the quorum have been communicated with and the consent of a sufficient number obtained.”<sup>52</sup>

The next day, September 17, Apostles Richards, Lyman, Smith, Grant, and John W. Taylor met and “unanimously decided that unless some additional light on the subject was given, that we did not care to consent to his baptism.”<sup>53</sup> Richards asked Smith and Grant to visit Carrington, who pled for rebaptism. Moved by Carrington’s contrition and his age, Smith recommended leniency, but Grant remained unmoved. On September 25, 1886, they reported to Woodruff:

Yesterday we called upon Albert C[arrington] by request of Franklin D. Richards, and had some conversation with him in regard to his case; he says he is willing to do anything required of him, if he can only be rebaptized.

We found him quite feeble, being just able to walk across the room, he claims to have paid his tithing and attended to his prayers regularly, always remembering his brethren. He harbors no feelings against any one, and bears his testimony to the truth of the work. He will sign a written confession, admitting that he was guilty of adultery

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<sup>52</sup>First Presidency (John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith), Letter to Brigham Young Jr., September 16, 1886, typescript in Scott G. Kenney Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library. During this same period, John Q. Cannon (1857–1931), a counselor in the Church’s Presiding Bishopric and the oldest son of George Q. Cannon, publicly confessed to having committed adultery and was excommunicated. The next year, he was also found to have embezzled Church funds. In 1888, after having been out of the Church less than three years, he was rebaptized and reordained to the priesthood, and his temple blessings were restored—all at his father’s hands. Clearly, George Q. Cannon’s involvement played a significant role in facilitating John Q.’s return to full membership. George Q. had been similarly helpful in securing a lenient approach to the sexual transgressions of another son, Frank J. Cannon. See Kenneth C. Cannon II, “Wives and Other Women: Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Lives of John Q. Cannon, Frank J. Cannon, and Abraham H. Cannon,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43 (Winter 2010): 71–130. Carrington lacked such family support.

<sup>53</sup>Grant, Diary, September 17, 1886.

and asking the people to forgive him. He is not able, he says, to go before the public.

Brother Grant can not feel that Albert Carrington is humble, or that he fully appreciates the great crime that he has committed. Brother Smith feels that he is as humble as it is possible for him to be with his organization, and that his mind is too weak to fully appreciate this condition. . . .

P.S. We feel that Albert Carrington is gradually losing his mind.<sup>54</sup>

Richards wanted to solicit additional reactions before reporting officially back to Woodruff and John Taylor, explaining: "As to his [Carrington's] request to be baptized the great wealth of the Gospel is the priesthood. He does not ask for this nor does he expect it; he seeks only a membership—the least he can receive, if he gets anything, so much for my personal feelings."<sup>55</sup> "Yours . . . re[garding] condition of Albert Carrington: and the earnestness of his desire in view of his approaching dissolution to be permitted to be baptized a member of the Church," replied the First Presidency to Richards. "His case with all the sad incidents connected with it, is a pitiable one and we have decided [in] view of his approaching death, to consult [with] the Twelve who are at the present time in the city, to take his case into consideration and to decide whether he should be admitted into the Church. If they so decide, it will be agreeable to us . . . after the absent members of the Twelve have been communicated with and their consent been obtained, or at least a sufficient number to constitute a respectable quorum."<sup>56</sup>

Richards dutifully contacted additional members of the Twelve. "Bro. C[arrington's] case seems to me the worst of its class," Francis

<sup>54</sup>John Henry Smith and Heber J. Grant, Letter to Wilford Woodruff, September 25, 1886, copy in John Henry Smith Letterbook.

<sup>55</sup>Richards, Letter, handwritten copy courtesy of Steven H. Heath; used with his permission. This copy does not identify the addressee or date of writing. "The great, crying sin of this generation," the First Presidency announced publicly on October 6, 1886, "is lasciviousness in its various forms. . . . It requires an incessant warfare to check its spread and to prevent the people of God from becoming its victims." In Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:74.

<sup>56</sup>First Presidency, Letter to Franklin D. Richards, September 13, 1886, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation. "Albert Carrington's mental and physical condition has been represented to us as

M. Lyman responded sternly about three weeks later.

If I am correctly informed, his course of corruption has been followed for ten years or more. That he was accused of adultery before Pres B Young and by his corrupt lying he managed to escape punishment. Again three years ago when the Presidency and Twelve were called together and their standing and conditions were considered, I understand that Bro. Carrington was asked in relation to ugly stories circulated abt. his taking improper liberties with women and that on that occasion he proclaimed his innocence. Thus again corruptly lying to the Priesthood and before God, he succeeded in continuing his fellowship in the Apostleship and Church. Again when he was brought [to] trial for Adultery in Nov. 1885 before ten of the Apostles, Pres. Woodruff presiding, bro Carr. upon hearing the charge said he was not guilty and used words like these "I thank God that he has preserved me from that sin, I have carnally known no woman but my wives." These are abt the words as I remember them. While bearing the Holy Apostleship, A[lbert] C[arrington] for ten years was indulging occasionally in carnal knowledge with four different single women, if my memory is correct. He was not content with that indulgence with single women but followed two of them after marriage and while their husbands were living, frequently continued his adulterous relations with them. Further than this, while thus an Apostle he put forth the doctrine to those silly and wicked women that his transgression was only a "little folly in Israel" and that a man could carnally know a women sexually, single or married to the depth of four inches, if he would withdraw his seed, and it was not adultery. He stood up before the 12 and defended this doctrine and the quorum were unable to convince him of his error. If adultery in any case can be considered a capital crime I consider A[lbert] C[arrington] guilty of it.

It appears to me that the capital punishment which has been inflicted upon him in his excommunication from the Church should be final as far as the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS is concerned.

A[lbert] C[arrington] as an Apostle put forth a most damnable doctrine the fruits of which are manifest in the appeals of one at least, of those silly women, as I have heard, clamoring for his restoration on the ground that he is an innocent and injured man. For the reasons

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being very deplorable," the First Presidency explained three days later to Brigham Young Jr., "the probabilities are that his days on the earth will be few. . . . His case we deem a most pitiable one, and we have consented . . . for the Twelve, who can meet together, to take his petition into consideration and to decide . . . after the absent members of the quorum have been communicated with and the consent of a sufficient number obtained." Letter, September 16, 1886, copy in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

above stated and the spirit in me I would do violence to my conscience were I to consent to receive A[lbert] C[arrington] into the Church. The prospect of Bro. C's early demise has more influence with me than if he were a person who was 20 years of age only.

If Bro. Carrington's repentance is genuine, and he is convinced of the awful crime he has committed, I have no doubt but he will be found in the day of redemption, and receive his place in the Celestial Kingdom. I would need more and different light from what I at present possess before I could change the conclusion we came to as unanimously on the 17th ult. before referred to.<sup>57</sup>

"Has any member of our Quorum ever known of a more aggravated case of sexual impurity," wrote Moses Thatcher,

than that revealed in his trial and confession. Have any of us ever read or heard of more shocking gross revelations of premedi[t]ated, persistent and continuous defilement than that to which we listened when his case was investigated. In the practice of debauchery extending over a period of years the unmarried and married alike the victims of unholy lust, who and what was he who committed such crimes? . . .

The very contemplation of his career for, as I remember more than ten years is to my mind simply horrible; and the thought of it blights and dries up In [illegible] of the heart like a ludicrous nightmare from which there seems no awaking. Oh what an irreparable wrong was done to God, Angels and men by his years of deceit and debauchery.<sup>58</sup>

On October 21, John W. Taylor wrote with equal concern to members of the First Presidency:

Concerning the question of allowing A[lbert] C[arrington] to be rebaptized into the church, . . . it would seem to me if A[lbert] C[arrington] can be forgiven and be rebaptized into the church; that there are none excepting the murderer who could be excluded from the Church; after they had confessed and repented of their sins, and requested baptism—I do not however wish to be the judge in this matter—individually I am free to forgive him, but feel like the establishment of such a precedent will be looked upon by this and future generations as a license for the most horrible sins, and a means whereby the most

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<sup>57</sup>Francis M. Lyman, Letter to Franklin D. Richards, October 9, 1886, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission.

<sup>58</sup>Moses Thatcher, Letter, October 10, 1886, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission. Heath's notes do not specify the addressee.

depraved of mankind can be justified before the Lord.<sup>59</sup>

Franklin D. Richards, summarizing the answers he had received from other apostles, finally wrote to President Taylor on October 28:

You will recollect that on the 13th day of Sept last, you gave your consent for A[lbert] C[arrington] to be baptized, conditioned or provided that a respectable Quorum of the Council of Apostles should consent and etc.

I immediately communicated with each of the Eleven members and yesterday received answer from the Last one of them.

1st. Pres. [Wilford] Woodruff has answered by letter in the affirmative enclosed herewith.

2nd. L[orenzo] S[now], through my son Franklin [S. Richards], sent verbally. He had meditated much upon it and that he cheerfully and freely gave his consent.

3rd. E[rastus] S[now] writes freely but undecidedly from the City of Mexico, dated on the 11th inst.

4th. F[ranklin] D R[ichards] sending my letters herewith consenting conditionally.

5th. B[righam] Y[oung Jr.], under date of Sep[tember] 24 writes his consent from Arizona.

6th. M[oses] T[hatcher] writes lengthily his aversion, but leaves it to God and His Prophet.

7th. F[rancis] M L[yman] lengthily and decidedly objects to the proposition, in a letter dated at Richmond Cache Co[unty, Utah] the 9th inst.

8th. J[ohn] H[enry] S[mith] was one of a Committee who visited Bro. Carrington with

9th. H[eber] J G[rant] and they join in a report of their labors, which I forward herewith but not specifically answering the question as to baptism.

10th. G[eorge] T[easdale] by his letter from Juarez [Mexico] of the 19th inst. received yesterday, decided[ly] objects.

11th. J[ohn] W T[aylor] at first shared the views of Pres Woodruff and others who were more favorable and requested me to so report him to you, but since reading Bro. Thatcher's and Lyman's letter, he has written and handed in the accompanying note which indicates a change in his views.

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<sup>59</sup>Letter to John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, October 21, 1886, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission. John W.'s letter was evidently included as a kind of attachment to Franklin D. Richards's October 28 letter to President John Taylor.

This, I believe, includes all the communications of importance bearing upon this case.<sup>60</sup>

“The moral effect upon the whole Church comes first,” John Henry Smith explained in his own separate letter to John Taylor, appealing for compassion upon the aged Carrington,

and then comes the number of parties with whom he was guilty, and the effect upon whom he was guilty, and the effect upon many others who were told that sexual crimes were on[ly] a “little folly in Israel.” His saying it was only a “little folly” and that idea being repeated by his partners in guilty [sic] has led to the fall and disgrace of a number of young people. All of these things are weighty as against him, and his request being granted.

How far we can be justified in refusing to grant his request, considering that for a number of years he has been nearly imbecile, and that he now appeals with all of the Humility he is capable of or ever has been, to be permitted to come within the fold, I know of no such rule or law that would bar him from the enjoyment of this little boon if he has repented? His Priesthood is gone, he has been humbled in the dust, all he asks is may I die among you.

Taking the dealings of God with all of his servants from the beginning, I find them nowhere fully barred from communion with his people save for the crime of Murder.

Justice however must have its own, but should the spirit of Charity in you and from your exalted station, say let a repentant, though an erring, brother die within the church, I would endorse [it], believing it is much better to err on the side of mercy if we err at all.<sup>61</sup>

With the quorum more or less evenly divided on the issue of Carrington’s readmission, the First Presidency was reluctant to finalize a decision. “The majority of the brethren are so emphatic in their expressions,” they wrote to Richards, “in opposition to his re-baptizing, that we think it would be improper for us, after having submitted it to the Twelve, to do anything more in the matter. There is a way which may be provided hereafter, to meet the wishes of himself and friends, which will not interfere with the sentiments expressed by the

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<sup>60</sup>Franklin D. Richards, Letter to John Taylor, October 28, 1886, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission.

<sup>61</sup>John Henry Smith, Letter to John Taylor, October 29, 1886, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission.

majority of the Twelve.”<sup>62</sup>

Over the ensuing months, members of the Twelve periodically continued to discuss the issue: “Spent a pleasant hour with Geo[rge]. Q. Cannon & Charles W. Penrose,” Richards wrote in June 1887, “concerning about A. Carrington’s & other like or similar cases—interchanging views as to particular features of his & their cases.”<sup>63</sup>

#### “A PENITENT MAN?”

In the meantime, Carrington’s family dealt with the painful repercussions of the excommunication,<sup>64</sup> while Carrington himself pushed for readmission. “I desire very much to be rebaptized,” he wrote in early July 1887 to Wilford Woodruff, president of the Quo-

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<sup>62</sup>First Presidency, Letter, November 2, 1886, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation. The Twelve tended to separate along age lines. Of the five apostles over fifty-two, four (Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Erastus Snow, Franklin Richards) voted for rebaptism with one (George Teasdale) against; of the six under fifty-two, two (Brigham Young Jr. and John Henry Smith) voted for, and four were against (Moses Thatcher, Francis Lyman, Heber J. Grant, and John W. Taylor).

<sup>63</sup>Franklin D. Richards, Diary, June 18, 1887; emphasis his. Two days earlier, Church officials agreed to pay Carrington \$3,035.22 to settle any claims he may have had against the Church for unreimbursed expenses, presumably during his mission to England, and claims of the Church against him. See a typescript of Carrington’s notarized statement, dated June 16, 1887, in John Taylor Family Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

<sup>64</sup>These included daughter Jane’s estrangement from Brigham Young Jr. “Jane you know the prime reason I have not lived with you,” Young wrote to her on June 22, 1887, transcription in Quinn Papers. “Had I continued to do so, our natures are such that you would have continued to bear children. You were not in a condition of mind during the terrible ordeal through which you have passed in the last few years to be a mother to more children. Your mind and body were seriously affected. Now I cannot tell our children the feelings that I had in relation to this matter. Neither could they understand them, but you can reflect and see that it was infinitely better for us to avoid the chances of having imperfect children.” Young seems to be referring, at least in part, to Jane’s having suffered from some form of anxiety-related stomach distress. See Ardis E. Parshall, “There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Lizard,” May 19, 2008, and comments, [www.keepapitchinin.org](http://www.keepapitchinin.org) (accessed January 22, 2011).

rum of the Twelve: "If it[']s possible to be done, please inform me some way, what to do by which to obtain this honor, and greatly favor a repentant, very feeble, and erring brother."<sup>65</sup> "I feel well towards all the authorities of the Church, and faithful members," he added in a follow-up letter to Woodruff five weeks later, "and have never said or wished, any thing but prosperity for Israel, and the honest the world over. And my sin I can not understand only being blinded and overcome by the devil. I repent right along and have all the time. And do earnestly wish rebaptism if the blessing is possible."<sup>66</sup>

When the Twelve met the day after Carrington's second letter, the former apostle's rebaptism was far from settled; many of the apostles were still irate—as much at Carrington's having lied to them as at his adultery. "After dinner the case of Albert Carrington was brought up," recorded Heber Grant.

President Wilford Woodruff stated that he had received a number of letters from Carrington requesting baptism. He said he would feel much better to rebaptize him than to deny him this boon. Felt that when he got through with this life, and met Albert Carrington in the eternal worlds, that he would dislike to have him accuse him of a lack of mercy.

John W. Taylor moved that our quorum sanction the rebaptism of Albert Carrington into the Church. This motion was seconded by Daniel H. Wells.

Grant then narrated in considerable detail the deliberations that followed:

Brother Moses Thatcher said that he very much disliked to be placed in a position where it would be thought that he was lacking in mercy. He had always been called a charitable man, and he felt that he was justly entitled to such a reputation. He asked if any of us had ever heard of a more horrible case of sexual crime than that developed in the trial of Albert Carrington? When he was in Europe preaching purity, he was practicing sin. Returning from Europe, he met with his brethren around the holy altar of prayer, kneeling with them and supplicating God for His blessings, being impure and cutting off his brethren from the spirit of the Lord, which they were otherwise enti-

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<sup>65</sup>Albert Carrington, Letter to Wilford Woodruff, July 6, 1887, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission.

<sup>66</sup>Albert Carrington, Letter to Wilford Woodruff, August 11, 1887, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission.



tled to. He had denied his sin repeatedly. At the time that President Taylor received a revelation, in October, 1882, calling on the Twelve and the people to repent of their sins, he had been accused of sexual crimes, and he denied them, and thanked God that He had preserved him from ever committing adultery. While holding the authority to seal men for all time and eternity, and exercising the same, he was debauching the wives of men that had thus been sealed. We had done our full duty when we cut him off the Church, so Brother Thatcher thought, according to the Doctrine & Covenants, and by our admitting him back into the Church, hundreds would be injured. He hoped that the day was not far distant when the adulterer would forfeit his life, and then the question of rebaptism would never be raised. He stated that the contemplation of the terrible crimes that had been committed by Albert Carrington when holding the Apostleship shocked the very inmost fountains of his soul with disgust and horror.

Brother Joseph F. Smith felt that the light and knowledge which Albert Carrington possessed was such that he had committed the unpardonable sin, and was guilty of the shedding of innocent blood. For a man to enter into plural marriage, and all the ordinances of the Gospel, in the House of God, and then willfully & viciously be guilty for years of the most heinous crimes, if he does not come as near to the shedding of innocent blood as a man possibly can, then Brother Smith would like to know what he would have to do to be considered guilty of the shedding of innocent blood. For years he had daily associated with the Prophet of God. He had listened to his teachings, and he should have been an exemplar of truth and righteousness before the people. Carrington's is an exceptional case. If he had not been an Apostle, and received so much light and knowledge, then it would be different. Brother Smith could not see why we should dignify this case because the man had once been an Apostle. He had abused his Apostleship, and lost, not only that, but his standing in the Church; and he felt that if any action was taken in the Albert Carrington case, that it should be taken by the Bishop of his ward, the same as action would be taken with any other individual, and that we should not dignify it by making any decision in the case. Brother [Smith] felt that there was no comparison between him and a young man, filled with youthful passion, who had fallen in an unguarded moment, and then had sincerely and honestly repented. He felt that in such cases mercy should be extended.

Brother Smith was willing, as an individual, to consent to the baptism of Albert Carrington, as he had nothing against him personally; and if he had sincerely repented the Lord would forgive his sins; but he was not willing, as a member of our quorum to consent to his rebaptism.

President Woodruff requested the brethren to express freely and frankly their feelings. Stated that Albert Carrington had never been

with us for years in spirit; that we knew for many years before he was disfellowshipped that he was dead. Taking all sides into consideration, and looking forward to an endless eternity, President Woodruff preferred to forgive rather than to meet God, after he had passed from this earth, and have it said that he had no mercy. That Albert Carrington had forfeited every right in the Priesthood, there was no question. But did we have the right as Apostles to refuse baptism to a penitent man? He hardly felt that we should assume such a position.

Lorenzo Snow stated, there had been times in his life, in years gone by, that he should have decided the same as Brothers Moses and Joseph F. Considering the position occupied by Albert Carrington, and the bad example that some felt would follow his rebaptism, years ago he would not have favored rebaptizing him. But there were many things that had come to his mind in later years that favored the exercise of mercy. He did not feel to exercise any mercy to Albert Carrington because he had been an Apostle. He stated that Brigham Young was not so radical in his rulings on sexual crimes as John Taylor had been. Stated that he knew President Taylor had changed considerably before the end of his administration. Brother Snow did not think that we could find anything in the Doctrine & Covenants or the Bible or any of the written word of God that would give us authority to prevent the rebaptism of any man who claimed that he had repented of his sins. He felt that Brother Joseph F. was wrong in assuming the position that Albert Carrington had committed the unpardonable sin. Nothing short of apostasy from the Church, and the denying of Jesus Christ and the efficacy of his blood to save, in the opinion of Brother Snow, could be considered the unpardonable sin. Brother Snow did not know that any of us had sufficient light and knowledge to say that Albert Carrington, provided he had sincerely repented of his sins, would not obtain the blessings which had been pronounced upon his head at the altar in the house of God. There had been many instances that we have had in ancient times as well as modern where the mercy of God had been extended in a wonderful degree. There were many cases, such as Reuben, Judah and others, in olden times where their sins had been forgiven. All men that commit sin must suffer. Albert Carrington has suffered immensely for his sins, and he never can reach that position that he would have attained to had he never been guilty. God has provided that all sins, except the shedding of innocent blood, can be forgiven.

F. M. Lyman stated that twelve or fifteen years ago that Albert Carrington was accused of sexual crimes. The accusation was brought up before Brigham Young, and he lied to him. Again in 1882, he lied to the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, at the time that the investigation was being had in compliance with the revelation received by President Taylor. At the washing of the feet in the Endowment House, he was unclean and unfit to have this ordinance administered to him. Yet

he deceived his brethren, and pretended to be a pure man. Brother Lyman did not blame him for wishing to be rebaptized. He feared to meet God and the consequences of his sins. Brother Lyman did not believe that he had sincerely repented. He felt that he could not repent; that God would not give him sufficient power, nor allow him to repent. Felt that if he were to do as Albert Carrington had done, that he would be damned eternally.<sup>67</sup>

Brother John W. Taylor referred to have done some copying for his father from a little book called the Book of Keys. This book contained some of the revelations of Joseph Smith. In this book there was an account that when Moses was pleading with the Lord to bring the Children of Israel to the land of their redemption, the Lord said that at present this was impossible; but that the time would come when every soul would be redeemed. Brother Taylor referred to the meeting held in Richmond, Cache Co. some months ago, at which F. M. Lyman, Franklin D. Richards, John W. Taylor and myself [i.e., Grant] were present, when we discussed the question of Albert Carrington. Said he felt at that time in his heart that Albert Carrington should be rebaptized; but after listening to the arguments of Brother Lyman and myself, he concluded that he ought not to be baptized; and that when he was requested for a letter expressing his mind on the subject, that he simply wrote and said that if Albert Carrington can be baptized, then what sins must a man commit to be refused that privilege. At the same time, in his heart, he felt condemned in refusing rebaptism to Albert Carrington. There are many men that have fallen in an hour of temptation; but, in their hearts, have sincerely repented, but because of the strict rulings and the feeling that there is no hope for them they have gone on from bad to worse: while, if the hand of mercy had been extended, and there was some chance for their redemption, he felt that they would have struggled back from their fallen condition. He was willing to forgive Albert Carrington. He quoted from Section 64 of the Doctrine & Covenants, wherein it is stated that the Lord requires that we shall forgive all men, and that He will forgive whosoever He will forgive. On several occasions while preaching to the people, and declaring that there was no forgiveness for those who committed sexual crimes, he had become very radical in his remarks, and had afterward felt rebuked by the spirit.

George Q. Cannon stated that he had not been in full accord with the radical position taken by President Taylor regarding sexual crimes; and that he knew that President Taylor had changed very

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<sup>67</sup>According to Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Minutes, August 12, 1887, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers: "Francis M. Lyman said he never heard of a crime that came near to the crime of Albert Carrington. . . . It is without a paral[lel]; it is enough to permit him to live."

much in his feelings before the day of his death. He said he felt that it was wrong to make an indiscriminate condemnation of sexual crimes. Said that he had never taken any liberty in his life with any woman, not even so much as to kiss them until such time as they were promised to him in marriage; that he had endeavored to live the celestial law of marriage [i.e., polygamy], and that never in his life had he been guilty of touching a woman when she was pregnant. The subject under consideration was a very grave one indeed. He did not want Albert Carrington brought back into the Church unless it was God's will. . . .

Joseph F. Smith desired to have it determined what would constitute the shedding of innocent blood. He stated that notwithstanding the fact that Albert Carrington knew that his sins had been forgiven him, still he had been guilty of transgression. He had sinned against light and knowledge. . . .

John Henry Smith referred to the visit that he and I [i.e., Grant] made to Albert Carrington; that we were divided, and so reported to President Woodruff; brother Smith feeling that Albert Carrington was a penitent man, and I feeling that he was not. Brother Smith stated that as he desired God to forgive him, he was willing to forgive Albert Carrington, and that he dared not refuse his consent for the baptism of Albert Carrington. He knew of no law, no matter how sincerely repented, [t]hat would justify us in refusing baptism. He did not believe that the penitent sinner could be turned away, no matter how deep he was steeped in crime, provided that he had not been guilty of murder. It was his opinion that Albert Carrington was partially insane. He could not believe in his heart that Albert Carrington was lost forever. He believed that, with his peculiar organization, he had repented with as much sincerity as it was possible for him to do so. He felt that there was nothing that Albert Carrington was capable of doing that he was not willing to do, that our quorum might require of him. He did not endorse the idea advanced by Brother Joseph F. Smith that Albert Carrington had committed the unpardonable sin.

Franklin D. Richards stated that he favored the rebaptism of Albert Carrington. He felt that we should be merciful, and that we had no authority to turn away the penitent sinner.

Daniel H. Wells took the position that we were not justified in refusing Albert Carrington rebaptism.

President Wilford Woodruff stated that he could not agree with Brother Joseph F. that Albert Carrington had committed the unpardonable sin. Stated that he should not call a vote on the question, as our quorum was divided right in the middle. He felt that the Lord would not be pleased with a vote that was a divided one. Felt that we had better let this case drop. We all had a right to our views and our own feelings, and he was glad to have the brethren express their ideas freely and frankly, and he had no feelings because the brethren disagreed with him.

Before Brother Woodruff spoke, I stated that I would like to express my opinion on the subject, but he told me that it was unnecessary, as he had decided to drop it. After Brother Woodruff had made his remarks, I stated that there had been a feeling in my heart from the first application of Albert Carrington for rebaptism to grant it; and that each time that I had refused to do so, I had felt condemned; but that so far as my judgement was concerned, that all of the intelligence that I possessed was opposed to the rebaptism of Albert Carrington. I felt that he was unworthy of baptism, and I had fought against the inclination to admit him back into the Church, feeling that the disposition to be merciful had warped my better judgement.

I would be thankful indeed in my heart if the word of God to our quorum would come through Prest W. Woodruff on the Albert Carrington case. It is painful to me to feel that I am lacking in mercy to a fallen brother and it is equally painful to vote to let a man return to the church that has been guilty of such fearful crimes as Albert Carrington. To vote directly against the best judgment a man has is a serious thing, and to turn away one crying for baptism is also a serious thing.

Presumably exhausted, Woodruff closed the meeting by admitting frankly: "I am very much undecided."<sup>68</sup>

#### **"THE PROPRIETY OF NOT SAYING ANYTHING"**

Carrington and his family continued to beg quorum members, particularly President Woodruff,<sup>69</sup> for compassion. "Albert Carrington, asks in all kindness," daughter Jane wrote in September 1887, "if the Twelve Apostles will read section sixty-four, tenth verse in the Doctrine and Covenants and consider his condition."<sup>70</sup> Another of Carrington's supporters, who had agreed to write a letter for the ailing

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<sup>68</sup>Heber J. Grant, Diary, August 12, 1887. See also Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 8:452: "We discussed the propriety of Baptizing Albert Carrington, But the Council did not Consider it wisdom." John Henry Smith in White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 176, summarized: "We did not reach a conclusion."

<sup>69</sup>Despite his leniency, Woodruff may have had long-standing concerns about Carrington: "Pres Woodruff told us he never had misgivings about any man brought into the quorum of Apostles but one. That was bro Carrington." Francis M. Lyman, Diary, January 3, 1895, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers.

<sup>70</sup>Jane Carrington Young, Letter to the Twelve Apostles, September

ex-apostle, wrote a month later,

I who am an eye-witness to the deep sorrow and true repentance of Albert Carrington, take the liberty of pleading for mercy unto him. Yes I say here could you each one look on him as he lies on his bed (for he is confined to bed day and night) and see the tears he sheds for his sins, his whole frame trembling all over and he pleading to our God for mercy, and that he might soften the hearts of you his servants to grant him his only request to be rebaptized ere he passes from among [us]. After listening to so much at our Conference I make bold to plead for a fellow sinner, yes he is not guilty of shedding innocent blood nor has he denied the Holy Ghost; only last night he wept much when talking to him of the good times, yea the feast of fat things we have had at our Conference and he exclaimed "Oh! the blessings I have had given to me, and where am I now[.]" Oh dear! it was a sight I will never forget "God help you my brethren to be merciful to him.["] He also said "if they would allow me to be rebaptized and reconfirmed by whoever may dictate then I feel that I can go in peace."

You brethren who know more than I do pray let this man's case have your consideration, God being your helper, may each of us be kept by his Holy Spirit, that we may never fall is my prayer and desire and ask all in the name of Jesus of Nazareth Amen.

P.S. He, Albert Carrington is not able to leave the house but has a good bathroom and bath where the ordinance can take place. God grant it may be done soon.

P.S. Being unable to write the foregoing myself, Sister Ellen Grieve kindly proffered to do so. Albert Carrington<sup>71</sup>

When the Twelve convened the next month, Woodruff again presented the ex-apostle's case. "After which," according to Richards, "It was moved by E[rastus]. S[now]., seconded by F[ranklin]. D. R[ichards]., that the bishop of 17th Ward be instructed to Bap[tize]. & confirm him." Quorum members debated the resolution for the next two to three hours, finally consenting unanimously to

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12, 1887, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission. This verse of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants reads: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men."

<sup>71</sup>Ellen Grieve, in behalf of Carrington, Letter to Woodruff and the Twelve Apostles, October 11, 1887, handwritten copy by Steven H. Heath; used with permission. Ellen Grieve may have been Jessie Helen Anderson Russell Grieve (1867–1902), a plural wife of James Henry Martineau (married April 18, 1887, in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City).

Carrington's readmission.<sup>72</sup> Carrington's age and health no doubt contributed to a change of heart among the quorum's more reluctant members. "You are hereby instructed," Woodruff wrote to the bishop of Carrington's home ward the next day, November 1, 1887, ". . . to go to the residence of Albert Carrington and baptize him in his bath tub in his house, and confirm him into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and let that end all ceremonies with him. Do not ordain him to the Priesthood or bestow any other ordinance upon him. You will see the propriety of not saying anything regarding this."<sup>73</sup> Later that same day, Carrington was rebaptized as directed and, three days later, was quietly reconfirmed a member of the Church.

More than thirty years later, Heber J. Grant, by now LDS Church president, publicly recalled his own initially angry response to Carrington and subsequent change of heart:

I was reading the D&C through for the third or fourth time systematically, and I had my bookmark in it, but as I picked it up, instead of opening where the bookmark was, it opened to: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men; but he that forgiveth not his brother standeth condemned before the Lord."

And I closed the book and said: "If the devil applies for baptism, and claims that he has repented, I will baptize him." After lunch I returned to the office of President Taylor and I said, "President Taylor, I have had a change of heart. One hour ago I said, never while I live, did I expect to ever consent that Brother So and So should be baptized, but I have come to tell you he can be baptized, so far as I am concerned."

President Taylor had a habit, when he was particularly pleased, of sitting up and laughing and shaking his whole body, and he laughed and said, "My boy, the change is very sudden, very sudden. I want to ask you a question. How did you feel when you left here an hour ago? Did you feel like you wanted to hit that man right squarely between the eyes and knock him down?"

I said, "That is just the way I felt." He said, "How do you feel now?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, President Taylor, I hope the Lord will forgive the sinner."

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<sup>72</sup>Richards, *Diary*, October 31, 1887; emphasis his.

<sup>73</sup>Wilford Woodruff, Letter to John Tingley, November 1, 1887, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

He said, "You feel happy, don't you, in comparison. You had the spirit of anger, you had the spirit of bitterness in your heart toward that man, because of his sin and because of the disgrace he had brought upon the Church. And now you have the spirit of forgiveness and you really feel happy, don't you?"

And I said, "Yes I do; I felt mean and hateful and now I feel happy." . . .

And so he went on. I cannot remember all of the teachings, but he continued in this way, telling me that he could never have given me that experience, that he could not give to me a testimony of the gospel; that I must receive that testimony for myself; that I must have the right spirit come into my heart and feel it—the spirit of forgiveness, the spirit of long-suffering and charity—before there would any good come to me as an individual; that by simply surrendering my will to his, and voting to baptize this man, I would never have learned the lesson that the spirit of joy and peace comes in the hour of forgiveness, and when our hearts are full of charity and long-suffering to those who have made mistakes.<sup>74</sup>

Carrington's health deteriorated rapidly. Family members hoped that his priesthood and temple blessings might be restored while he still lived. "I have received your inquiry concerning your burial clothing," Woodruff wrote to Carrington in September 1888. "I prefer giving you no definite answer to this at present. It will be time enough for this to be considered when the event of which you speak occurs. Until then I prefer saying nothing on the subject."<sup>75</sup> A year later, on September 19, 1889, John L. Nuttall, secretary to the First Presidency, noted in his diary: "It was decided that Bro. Albert Carrington who is reported to be dying may be Ordained an Elder, that when he died he could be buried in his Temple clothing. Prest Angus M. Cannon [of the Salt Lake Stake] was authorized to ordain him. As Bro. Cannon entered the house [at 18 West North Temple Street] he was informed that Bro. Carrington died at 18 minutes to 4 P.M. It was afterwards decided th[at] Bro. Carrington may be buried in his Tem-

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<sup>74</sup>Heber J. Grant, Sermon, October 8, 1920, *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1920), 5–7; reference courtesy of Steven H. Heath.

<sup>75</sup>Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Albert Carrington, September 10 1888, transcription in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation. Temple-endowed members are usually buried in sacred temple clothing.



ple Clothing.”<sup>76</sup> Carrington was seventy-six.

Carrington’s surviving wife, Mary, died five years later in 1895, at age seventy-three; the last of Carrington’s children passed away in 1908. Sarah Bridge, age seventy-seven, succumbed in Salt Lake City in 1939. Her husband, Richard, had died eight and a half years earlier at age sixty-seven, also in Salt Lake City; the couple’s last surviving child died in 1953.

*[“Part 2: Richard R. Lyman” follows in the next issue.]*

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<sup>76</sup>Jedediah S. Rogers, ed., *In the President’s Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879–1892* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007), 374. According to Orson F. Whitney, Diary, September 21, 1889, Special Collections, Marriott Library: “15 minutes after [his] death, elders arrived at [Carrington’s] house to ordain him Elder—at direction of Pres. Woodruff.”

# HOSTILE MORMONS AND PERSECUTED PRESBYTERIANS IN UTAH, 1870–1900: A REAPPRAISAL

*R. Douglas Brackenridge*

DRIVING THE GOLDEN SPIKE IN 1869 on Promontory Point marked the completion of the first transcontinental railroad and triggered a dramatic increase of Gentile immigration into Mormon Zion. Although many arrived to seek adventure and acquire wealth, some came to gain converts and save souls. Most prominent in this ambitious missionary enterprise was a cohort of Presbyterian clergy and schoolteachers who established a network of churches and schools extending from St. George in southern Utah to Malad in southern Idaho. More than any other Protestant denomination, Presbyterians committed human and financial resources to achieve their goal of drawing Mormons back into the folds of traditional Christianity and mainstream American culture. Unlike other Protestants, who largely confined their missionary activities to areas of mixed Gentile-Mormon populations, Presbyterians ventured into remote Mormon towns and villages to plant churches and establish schools.<sup>1</sup>

In their evangelistic campaigns in western territories, Presbyterians targeted three “exceptional populations” as potential converts:

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<sup>1</sup>Methodists and Congregationalists also established evangelistic work in Utah and raised the ire of Mormons but not to the same extent as Presbyterians. See, for example, “Pious Lies,” *Deseret Evening News*, Decem-

“Pagan Indians, besotted [Hispanic] Catholics, and deluded Mormons.” They regarded Indians and Hispanics to be of inferior racial stock and prone to negative traits such as alcoholism, indolence, and superstition. Mormons, however, presented a unique situation because they derived primarily from the very Anglo-Saxon lineage that Protestants prized so highly. To account for their surprising defection from mainline Protestantism and stubborn resistance to evangelical preaching, Presbyterians theorized that converts to Mormonism had been “psychologized” (brainwashed) by Mormon leaders into accepting a morally corrupt religion.<sup>2</sup>

Presbyterian missionaries’ interaction with Latter-day Saints provides a unique case study in the social dynamics between converts

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ber 22, 1976, 2, “A Lying Religious Report,” August 21, 1975, 2, and “The Methodist Wing of the New Crusade,” June 7, 1881, 2. For overviews of Protestant missionary activities in Utah, see Edgar T. Lyon, “Evangelical Protestant Missionary Activities in Mormon Dominated Areas, 1865–1900 (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1962), and Robert J. Dwyer, *The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study of Religion and Social Conflict*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1971). For an overview of Presbyterian missionary activities in particular, see Mark T. Banker, *Presbyterian Missions and Cultural Interaction in the Far Southwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), and George K. Davies, “A History of the Presbyterian Church in Utah,” a series of articles in the *Journal of Presbyterian History*: 23 (December 1945): 228–48; 24 (March 1946): 44–68; 24 (September 1946): 147–51, and 25 (March 1947): 46–63. See also R. Douglas Brackenridge, *Westminster College of Salt Lake City: From Presbyterian Mission School to Independent College* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), and “Presbyterians and Latter-day Saints in Utah: A Century of Conflict and Compromise, 1830–1930,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 80 (Winter 2002): 205–24.

<sup>2</sup>*Report of the Superintendent of School Work to the Board of Home Missions and the Woman’s Executive Committee*, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1895, 3, Presbyterian Historical Society Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. See also “The Mormon Delusion,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 7, 1879, 3. Duncan J. McMillan, Presbyterian missionary in Mt. Pleasant, San Pete County, reported that, to reach the Mormons, “The missionary will have to *thaw* his way into their hearts, and then lift them by degrees out of their ignorant, dreamy, unreal state of mind, before he can feed them even on the milk of the word. They are *psychologized*, and must be brought to a normal state.” “Missionary Correspondence,” *Presbyterian Home Missions* 27 (August 1876): 227–28; emphasis his.

# WOMAN'S WORK.



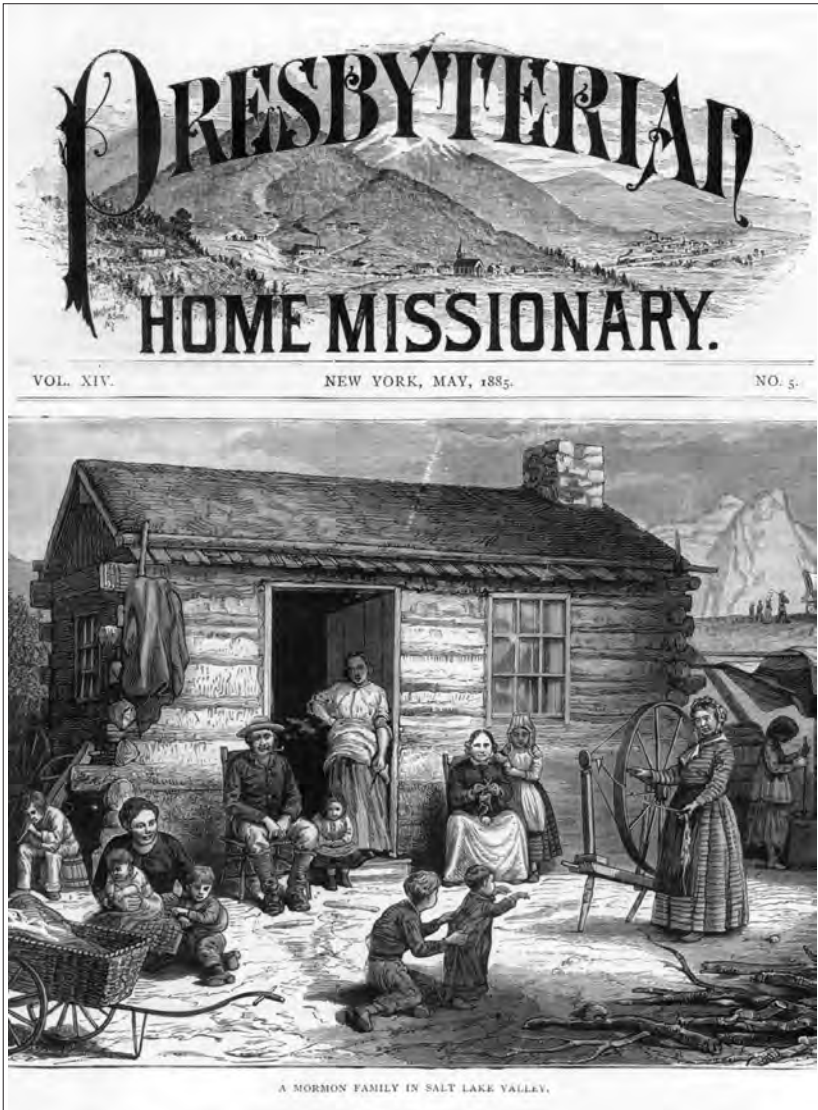
## \$150,000

Needed for the current year for  
**WOMAN'S WORK**

AMONG THE

**MEXICANS, MORMONS, AND INDIANS.**

*Advertisement of the Woman's Executive Committee of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in the Presbyterian Home Missionary, 15, no. 2 (February 1886): 40. Courtesy Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Philadelphia. This committee was established in 1877 to carry out educational missions to Mexican, Mormons, and Indians. Presbyterian women raised money by donations from local missionary societies and other sources.*



Cover of the Presbyterian Home Missionary, May 1885. By publishing articles and letters from missionaries throughout the United States and its territories, this monthly magazine encouraged financial support for teachers and ministers. Photo Courtesy of Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Philadelphia.

to a new religious movement and members of established denominations. From their perspective as mainline Protestants, Presbyterians categorized Latter-day Saints as “fanatics” or “cultists” and relegated them to the margins of society. When Presbyterian missionaries entered Utah, however, they encountered an environment in which Mormons dominated the social, political, and religious milieu. Much to their chagrin and consternation, Presbyterians were perceived as “outsiders,” “sectarians,” and “so-called Christians” whose ecclesiastical authority, theological credibility, and personal integrity were highly suspect.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from the politically charged issues of polygamy and statehood, the most contentious and ongoing debate between Presbyterians and Mormons centered on accusations by Presbyterians that they suffered religious persecution in Utah similar to that experienced by missionaries in foreign countries. They cited difficulties such as social ostracism, destruction of property, physical harassment, and death threats as obstacles to their work. In remarkable role reversals, Mormons were portrayed as perpetrators of religious persecution rather than its victims. Mormon officials repeatedly dismissed Presbyterian claims as fabrications or gross exaggerations promulgated to generate animosity and to secure financial support from eastern benefactors.<sup>4</sup>

Seen in juxtaposition, these conflicting assertions appear irrec-

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<sup>3</sup>John Coyner, Presbyterian Principal of the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute in Salt Lake City, expressed indignation regarding his reception in Utah. “I [cannot] understand why, as a law-abiding American citizen, I have not equal rights in Utah, the same as I formerly had in other States, nor why it should be said to me, because I do not belong to a certain religious sect, or pin my faith to the raiment of a certain leader, ‘You have no right in this Territory; it belongs to us. We came here when it was a desert and we intend to have it for our own, and when we get the power, we will exercise it.’” John Coyner, “Women Pleading for Polygamy,” *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian*, March 1879, 3. For Mormon attitudes, see “Who Owns Utah?” *Deseret Evening News*, January 19, 1872, 2, “A Representative Anti-Mormon Radical,” *Deseret Evening News*, August 14, 1880, 2, and “The Scum of the Earth,” *Deseret Evening News*, April 4, 1880, 2. See also “The Gentile Minority,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 19, 1871, 2.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, “A Sample Presbyterian Bait,” *Deseret Evening News*, June 13, 1879, 2.

oncilable. Were Presbyterian allegations contrived propaganda, as Mormons contended, or did they describe real-life experiences? Some scholars, citing the rhetoric of modern “cult-sect” controversies, suggest that claims of persecution by Presbyterians are similar to fear tactics employed by modern opponents of new religious movements.<sup>5</sup> Others, unconvinced, continue to repeat alleged incidents of Mormon hostility as proof of the movement’s disreputable origins.<sup>6</sup> A careful examination of primary sources, however, indicates that relationships between Presbyterians and Latter-day Saints varied due to time frame, geographical setting, and the interactions of different personalities. They defy simplistic generalizations. Beneath, and even within, the inflammatory rhetoric are indications that social interaction varied more widely than either side was willing to admit. By utilizing these sources, it is possible to move “beyond the stereotypes,” as Jan Shipps and others have advocated in their analyses of Latter-day Saint history.<sup>7</sup>

After a contextual overview, this study presents the case for persecution as articulated by Presbyterians followed by Mormon responses to these charges. The third section offers a more nuanced description of relationships between the two groups than can be deduced from partisan accounts. In addition to clarifying the historical record, the information may prove useful for contemporary Mormons and non-Mormons, especially those who reside in Utah, in gaining insight into an era of history that has shaped their respective perceptions of each other.

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<sup>5</sup>Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Protestant Clergy in the Great Plains and Mountain West, 1865–1915* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 160. See also Lyon, “Evangelical Protestant Missionary Activities in Mormon Dominated Areas,” 125.

<sup>6</sup>Sarah Yates, *A Centennial History of the Community Presbyterian Church of Brigham City, Utah, 1878–1978* (N.p.: Privately Printed, 1978), 2–3, and Davies, “A History of the Presbyterian Church in Utah,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 24 (March 1946): 44–68.

<sup>7</sup>Jan Shipps, “Beyond the Stereotypes: Mormon and Non-Mormon in Twentieth-Century Mormondom,” in *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington*, edited by Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 342–46.

### THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Long before Presbyterians came to Utah, they played prominent roles in opposing the nascent religious movement of Joseph Smith and his followers. Some of the earliest anti-Mormon pamphlets and broadsides came from the pens of Presbyterian apologists and were widely distributed through denominational channels. They categorized Latter-day Saints as cultists and intolerant fanatics whose presence threatened America's democratic and domestic institutions.<sup>8</sup> In turn, Mormons were influenced by unfavorable images of Presbyterians based on confrontations with them in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. They singled out Presbyterian ministers as leaders of organized efforts to suppress their new religious movement by raiding Mormon homes, destroying property, and physically abusing Church members.<sup>9</sup>

Once securely settled in Utah, however, Mormon authorities were initially receptive to Protestant clerics who visited their territory. They exuded confidence that few, if any, Mormons would divest themselves of their new faith for previously discarded denominational theology. As one Mormon writer expressed it, "No true Latter-day Saint, not one who is worthy of fellowship, will ever be proselyted to the sectarian religion. We cannot go back from a great faith to a small one. Who would exchange a golden harp for a whistle? When

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<sup>8</sup>Milton V. Backman Jr., "Truman Coe's 1836 Description of Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 17 (Spring 1977): 347-55. See also Robert Baird, *Religion in the United States of America*, 1856 edition, critical abridgment, ed. Henry Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 271-74; and Marianne Perciaccante, "Backlash against Formalism: Early Mormonism's Appeal in Jefferson County," *Journal of Mormon History* 19 (Fall 1993): 4-45. Perciaccante examines Presbyterian session records from churches in the area where Joseph Smith began his new religious movement.

<sup>9</sup>"Gentile Clergy," *Deseret Evening News*, February 6, 1871, 2. See also these *Deseret Evening News* articles: "Insatiable Clerical Sponges," December 26, 1879, 2; "The 'Mormons' and Their Enemies," September 18, 1875, 2; "Extinction of the Mormons," June 1, 1880, 2; and "Coins for Coyner," November 8, 1883, 2. According to one Mormon official, "there were fifteen Presbyterian preachers in the mob which murdered the prophets Joseph and Hyrum Smith." Moroni Priesthood Minutes, April 27, 1901, LDS Church History Library. All ward and stake minutes cited in this essay are from microfilm copies of the originals housed in this library.



we fled to the valleys of the mountains we left the counterfeit Christianity of Christendom and its persecuting spirit which drove us here, behind us . . . and unless deprived of our reasoning faculties, and by dishonoring our beings, it would be impossible for us to return to it.”<sup>10</sup>

When Henry Kendall, general secretary of the New School Presbyterian Church Board of Domestic Missions, visited Salt Lake City on his way to San Francisco in 1864, he found Brigham Young to be an affable conversationalist. Kendall inquired if he had any objections to the establishment of Protestant churches in Utah. Young replied, “No objection whatever on our part, or to sending missionaries to the Mormons either, if you like.” Young invited Kendall to speak at the Tabernacle where he preached to “a large, respectful, and attentive audience.”<sup>11</sup> Young advised his people, “Accord to every reputable person who may visit you, and who may wish to occupy the stands of your meeting houses to preach to you, the privilege of doing so, no matter whether he is a Catholic, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist, Free-will Baptist, Methodist, or whatever he may be; and if he wishes to speak to your children, let him do so.”<sup>12</sup>

This felicitous relationship rapidly deteriorated with the arrival of the first resident Presbyterian ministers. Shortly after Kendall’s visit, Norman McLeod, a Presbyterian clergyman serving under the auspices of the interdenominational American Home Missionary Society, organized a Congregational Church in Salt Lake City in January

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<sup>10</sup>“Correspondence: The Ladies of Utah—To All the World,” *Deseret News*, December 15, 1871, 1. See also “Discourse of Orson Pratt,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 17, 1871, 2, and Charles W. Penrose, “Why ‘Mormons’ Are Not Convertible,” *Deseret Evening News*, October 18, 1887, 2.

<sup>11</sup>Henry Kendall, “A Week in Great Salt Lake City,” *Hours at Home* 1 (May 1865): 63–66. When Presbyterians opened a church in Logan in 1878, President Moses Thatcher of Cache Stake, recommended “that those of mature age and judgment were at liberty to go and hear the minister preach.” He urged everyone “to extend that courtesy to him that you would like extended by them in the world.” Cache Stake Meeting Minutes, September 1, 1878.

<sup>12</sup>President B. Young, “Remarks,” *Deseret Evening News*, June 17, 1871, 2. See also Young’s, “Discourse,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 6, 1873, 2. President John Taylor spoke in similar terms: “Address,” *Deseret Evening News*, January 5, 1880, 1.



*First Presbyterian Church and Parsonage, Salt Lake City, dedicated 1874. The church moved to its present location at C Street and South Temple in 1905. During the nineteenth century, it was one of the few self-supporting Presbyterian churches in Utah. Photo courtesy Giovale Library, Westminster College, Salt Lake City (hereafter Giovale Library).*

1865. McLeod immediately launched into vicious attacks on Mormon theology and practices. Reproduced in local and national newspapers, his fiery anti-Mormon speeches at political and ecclesiastical meetings aroused anger within the Mormon populace. Harassment and rumors of death threats caused McLeod to curtail his ministry in Salt Lake City before the year ended.<sup>13</sup> Josiah Welch, who established the first Presbyterian Church in Salt Lake City in 1871, published a plea to Presbyterian women in eastern newspapers requesting finan-

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<sup>13</sup>He returned in 1872 as an army chaplain but served only one year. On one occasion, McLeod publicly stated that “Brigham Young was a sham and his theocracy of crime and blood a miserable scare-crow.” “The Complicity of the Republic,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 13, 1872. For more detail on McLeod’s ministry in Utah, see Lyon, “Evangelical Protestant Mis-



*The first Presbyterian day school established in Utah, the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, opened its doors on Second South and Second East on April 12, 1875, and functioned until 1910 when it became the preparatory department of Westminster College. The photograph is of students and faculty during the winter of 1880–81. Courtesy of Giovale Library.*

cial support. He described Mormon women as “poor, deluded, and downtrodden” and referred to Mormonism as a “heathen system.” The Mormon press responded with equal hostility.<sup>14</sup>

Another deterrent to amicable relationships between the two groups occurred in 1875 when Presbyterians opened two day schools to operate alongside Mormon territorial schools. Three years later they created the Woman’s Executive Committee of the Board of

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sionary Activities in Mormon Dominated Areas,” 38–44.

<sup>14</sup>“Presbyterian Church,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 1, 1875; “Insult to Gentile Ladies,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 15, 1871; and “The Heathen System,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 8, 1872. See also “Editorial,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 13 and 19, 1871.

*Mary Coyner was the first woman to be certified as a missionary teacher by the Woman's Executive Committee of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. She taught primary class students in the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute 1875–85.*



Home Missions that assumed the responsibility of funding educational missions for Native Americans, Hispanics, and Mormons. Presbyterians claimed that Mormons were more interested in indoctrinating children with Mormon theology than inculcating the rudiments of education. While assuring Mormons that the schools were strictly educational institutions, Presbyterian officials spoke openly in denominational circles of their efforts to reach adult Mormons through their children.<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, Mormon authorities condemned Presbyterian day schools as covert evangelistic enterprises and counseled Mormons not to patronize them.<sup>16</sup>

For readers unfamiliar with the ferocity of nineteenth-century

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<sup>15</sup>See *Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions*, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America 28 (July 1877): 196, Presbyterian Historical Society. A decade later, the Presbytery of Utah reported, "The influence of the schools in predisposing the minds of the young toward the truth is manifest on every hand. Instances of hopeful conversions resulting from the quiet labors of those long in the work are by no means rare." "Minutes of the Presbytery of Utah," April 5, 1888, Presbyterian Historical Society. See also *Report of the Superintendent of School Work to the Board of Home Missions and the Woman's Executive Committee*, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1895, 3, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>16</sup>Mormons were aware of the Presbyterian duplicity regarding the



*John Coyner (1827–1908), a graduate of Hanover College in Indiana, served as the founding principal of the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute (1875–85). Coyner came to Salt Lake City following a brief tenure as principal of the Presbyterian mission school for Native Americans in Lapwai, Idaho. An outspoken critic of Mormon theology and political power, Coyner was a frequent target of Charles W. Penrose, Deseret Evening News editor.*

rhetoric, a few citations will set this confrontation in context. Regarding Mormon schools, one Presbyterian writer said, “They [Mormons] have no desire for education or light of any kind, for that would only reveal the skeleton horrors in this filthy dungeon of wickedness.”<sup>17</sup> Mormon authorities responded in kind. George Q. Cannon warned Mormons that the establishment of Presbyterian schools was designed to “gain control of ‘Mormon’ children and pervert them from the truth taught by their parents, [and] provide situations and salaries for impecunious Presbyterian preachers.”<sup>18</sup> Charles Penrose queried, “What kind of Christian morality would use children in such a devi-

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purpose of their denominational schools. “We have no antipathy whatever to the Presbyterian or Methodist manner of educating *their* children. What we object to is their manner of attempting to teach *our* children. They are gathering money from every possible source, with the avowed intention of leading ‘Mormon’ children from the faith of their parents. They proclaim this to the world, while they deny or strive to conceal it in Utah.” Charles W. Penrose, “Only a Stroke of Policy,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 7, 1881, 2.

<sup>17</sup>“Missionary in Utah,” *The Home Mission Monthly* 5 (May 1890): 152.

<sup>18</sup>George Q. Cannon, “‘Christian’ Cunning and ‘Mormon’ Duty,”

ous manner? When they seek to ensnare the feet of the children under the pretense of friendship to the cause of education, let them be remembered for what they are, and shunned as moral lepers.”<sup>19</sup>

Representatives of both groups denied the validity of the other’s form of Christianity. Presbyterian Robert McNiece proclaimed, “Christianity is the only religion based on historic facts. We, with other intelligent people, do not believe in the Mormon religion because it does not rest on historic fact, but on the unsupported statements of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Parley P. Pratt, who were bad and immoral men, ready at any time to swear to a falsehood to help the Mormon Church.”<sup>20</sup> Evangelist Duncan J. McMillan wrote, “The whole world knows that the Mormon religion is not regarded by the Christian Church as the religion of Christ and the Bible. . . . They are without the gospel.”<sup>21</sup> With equal vehemence, Mormons denied the legitimacy of “so-called Christianity.” George Q. Cannon editorialized, “The churches of the present day are greatly in need of a purification; they are in a far worse fix than those mentioned in the New Testament. The latter were threatened with the loss of their candlesticks; but if present day churches ever had any, they have lost them completely, for their light has become gross darkness.”<sup>22</sup>

Presbyterian apologists portrayed the evils of Mormonism and the wickedness of Utah in language designed to stir emotions. One missionary described Mormonism as “a virulent and wonderfully contagious disease. It is not of typhoid nature or of that class which must run its course. It is diphtheria that poisons the blood and the atmo-

*Deseret Evening News*, June 6, 1879, 22. See also Charles W. Penrose, “The Sectarian Crusade against the ‘Mormons,’” *Deseret Evening News*, June 6, 1881, 2, and “Denominational Unity against ‘Mormonism,’” *Deseret Evening News*, October 5, 1882, 22.

<sup>19</sup>“Presbyterian Schools,” *Deseret Evening News*, June 30, 1881, 22. See also these *Deseret Evening News* articles: “The School Question,” April 12, 1881, 22; “Morality and Religion in the Schools,” March 4, 1879, 2; and “Some Glaring Errors Corrected,” December 2, 1879, 2.

<sup>20</sup>“The Sunday’s Lectures,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 20, 1888, 6.

<sup>21</sup>Duncan J. McMillan, “Appeal for Mt. Pleasant, Utah,” *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* 4 (June 1875): 2.

<sup>22</sup>George Q. Cannon, “Present Day Churches,” *Deseret Evening News*, May 3, 1871, 2. See also “Discourse of Elder Orson Pratt,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 11, 1876, 1.

sphere alike, and while producing death with alarming certainty, spreads its contagion all around. . . . The danger to the whole country from Mormonism cannot be exaggerated and it is imminent.”<sup>23</sup> Presbyterian educator, John Coyner, principal of the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, described Mormon theology as “eight parts diabolism, three parts animalism, from the Mohammedan system, one part bigotry from old Judaism, four parts cunning and treachery from Jesuitism, two parts Thugism from India, and two parts Arnoldism [Arnold of Brescia was a medieval reformer who advocated using political power for religious ends], and then shake the mixture over the fires of animal passion and throw in the forms and ceremonies of the Christian religion, and you will have the system in its true component parts.”<sup>24</sup> The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church denounced Mormonism as “an affront to our Christian civilization and a menace to our social order” and stated that it “regard[ed] the doctrines and practices of the Mormon Institution with loathing and abhorrence.”<sup>25</sup>

Mormon apologists were equally passionate in their condemnation of Presbyterianism and its messengers. Apostle Erastus Snow described the Presbyterian conception of the Trinity as “a footless stocking without a leg, sitting upon the top of a topless throne, far beyond the bounds of time and space,” and queried, “We are asked to believe in, render obedience to and worship this being?”<sup>26</sup> Wilford Woodruff said, “The Christianity of the day in connection with its ministers has done more to cause infidelity than all the writings of Professed In-

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<sup>23</sup>S. L. Gillespie, “Box Elder, Utah,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 15 (December 1886): 277. See also “Tallmadge on Mormonism,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 8, 1880, 4, in which the writer refers to Mormonism as “one great surge of licentiousness” and “hell enthroned.”

<sup>24</sup>“The General Assembly,” *The Interior*, May 29, 1879, 3. See also John Coyner, “The Work of the Mission Schools,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 20, 1879, 2.

<sup>25</sup>*Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly, 1879), 586; hereafter cited as *Presbyterian Church, General Assembly, Minutes*, by year and page. See also *ibid.*, 1877, 633; and 1881, 533.

<sup>26</sup>Erastus Snow, “Tabernacle Discourse,” *Deseret Evening News*, May 4, 1878, 1. See also Charles W. Penrose, “Tabernacle Remarks,” *Deseret Evening News*, July 5, 1879, 1, and Orson Pratt, “Tabernacle Discourse,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 30, 1876, 1.

fidels put together.”<sup>27</sup> Charles W. Penrose, editor of the *Deseret Evening News* and future (1904) apostle, referred to Presbyterian ministers as “snuffling, collection-taking hypocrites” and “miserable wretches [who] are beneath contempt. Satan would not be seen in their company, but would despise and spurn them as too low even for the society of a demon.”<sup>28</sup>

### THE CASE FOR RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION PRO AND CON

Viewing themselves as minorities in the midst of a Mormon theocracy, Presbyterians described their status as analogous to that of overseas missionaries who lived in alien cultures and encountered daily “depredations” and potential martyrdom. In his “Missionary Heroism—Thrilling Experiences—Mormon Persecutions,” Robert McNiece alleged that Presbyterian ministers and teachers were constantly “exposed to all manner of insult, opposition and malicious slander, for the sake of honoring their Master by carrying light and liberty to those who sit in darkness and bondage.” As evidence, McNiece presented a list of reported death threats, physical harassments, and other impediments to their work. “It may well be doubted,” he asserted, “if the laborers in far-off foreign fields are more isolated from Christian society, and compelled to endure great hardships, or to labor amidst great opposition and hostility, than the majority of the ministers and teachers in Utah.”<sup>29</sup> Presbyterians attributed the underlying source of religious persecution to the dictatorial power exercised by Mormon Church authorities rather than to the Mormon people as a whole. As one writer expressed it, “When the Twelve Apostles in Utah take snuff, all Zion sneezes, whether they are on their knees in prayer, pitching hay, digging carrots, or voting.”<sup>30</sup>

Mormon authorities repeatedly dismissed Presbyterian claims as malicious fabrications or gross exaggerations promulgated to se-

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<sup>27</sup>Wilford Woodruff, quoted in Cache Stake, Quarterly Conference Minutes, April 30, 1881.

<sup>28</sup>Charles W. Penrose, “For Prudential Reasons,” *Deseret Evening News*, August 13, 1880, 2, and Penrose, “Fathering Falsehoods,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 12, 1881, 2.

<sup>29</sup>Robert G. McNiece, “Spring Meeting of Presbytery of Utah,” *Presbyterian Home Missions* 11 (June 1882): 134–35.

<sup>30</sup>“Church and State,” December 3, 1881, 2. See also Robert G. McNiece in *Salt Lake Tribune*, “Final Reply to ‘The News,’” June 9, 1884, 2,





*Robert G. McNiece (1839–1913), was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake City (1877–97) and later dean of Westminster College. A prolific writer, McNiece was a frequent contributor to the Salt Lake Tribune and the Deseret News and Deseret Evening News. Photo courtesy of Giovale Library.*

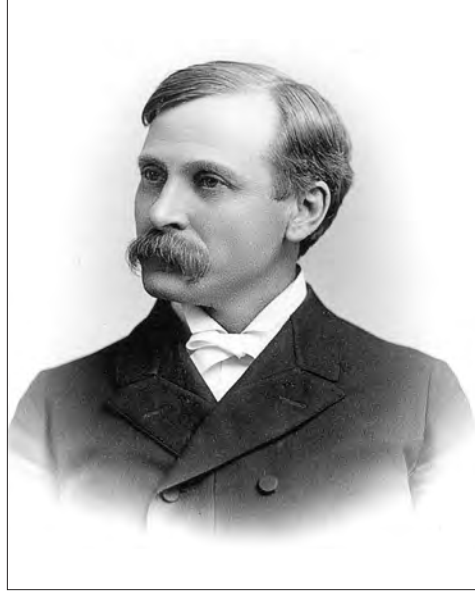
cure financial support from eastern benefactors and claimed that unfounded fears of Mormon opposition allowed imaginations to run wild. If their goal had been to physically abuse, assassinate, or kidnap Presbyterians, they had ample opportunity to do so, especially in remote areas of the territory. Speaking to a large audience in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in 1883, Mormon President John Taylor denied charges of persecution directed at Mormons by Protestant denominations and emphasized the importance of religious freedom for all the inhabitants of Utah, friends or foes. “In Salt Lake City we have Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics and others; do we interfere with them? No. . . . If any of them were persecuted in any way or in any place among our people, I would be the first to step forward for their defense.”<sup>31</sup> Charles Penrose contended: “No preacher, missionary, or teacher of religion, however false, foolish or mercenary, has ever been maltreated by the ‘Mormons.’ . . . We challenge the [Presbyterians] to name an authentic case of either ‘secret’ or open ‘murder’ or of any danger from attack by the

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and “How Shall we Overthrow Polygamy?” October 3, 1880, 4. For a Mormon response to this criticism, see Charles W. Penrose, “The Causes of ‘Mormon’ Unity,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 29, 1888, 2.

<sup>31</sup>John Taylor, “Discourse,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 29, 1883, 1.

*Duncan J. McMillan (1846–1939), established a school at Mt. Pleasant in 1875 that became the present Wasatch Academy. McMillan served as superintendent of Presbyterian mission schools in Utah and founded many of the early Presbyterian schools and churches in southern Utah. Photo courtesy of Giovale Library.*



‘Mormons’ upon a so-called ‘Christian’ minister in any part of this territory. There has never been such a case. Any statement or intimation that there has is nothing but sheer slander.”<sup>32</sup>

The most serious accusations against Mormons came from a cohort of pioneer Presbyterian ministers who reported incidents of death threats and attempted assassinations when they first arrived in Utah in the 1870s. Widely publicized stories of Mormon persecution emanated from the pen of Duncan J. McMillan, a young Presbyterian evangelist who came to Utah in 1875. Denominational officials suggested that he begin his labors in Ogden, but McMillan wanted to venture into the Mormon hinterland where no Presbyterians had previously gone. Despite warnings that Mormons practiced “blood atonement” on outsiders, McMillan arrived in Mt. Pleasant, San Pete County, in March 1875 to preach and open a school. Much to his surprise, he was received kindly by local inhabitants and opened a school

<sup>32</sup>“Religious Slanderers,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 10, 1891, 2. See also Charles W. Penrose, “A Sample Presbyterian Bait,” June 13, 1879, 2, and Penrose, “Freedom of Worship in Utah,” January 29, 1883, 2; both in *Deseret Evening News*.

the following month with thirty-five pupils in attendance.<sup>33</sup>

When Brigham Young stopped in Mt. Pleasant on his way to St. George in June 1875, he rebuked Mormon authorities for allowing McMillan to beguile them with promises of free education and advised residents to avoid the school altogether. According to McMillan, many families withdrew their children from his school, his residence was repeatedly stoned at night, and he was subjected to threats and attempts on his life. When he announced his intention to hold services in nearby Ephraim, the local bishop reportedly greeted him by asking, "Are you that damned Presbyterian devil who is preaching at Mt. Pleasant?" He then warned McMillan, "If you value your neck, do not try to preach." Ignoring the pointed threat, McMillan related that he entered the pulpit carrying a Bible in one hand and displaying a revolver in the other. Details of his harrowing encounter graced the pages of *Harper's Weekly Magazine*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and other secular and denominational publications.<sup>34</sup>

Samuel Gillespie, a former Presbyterian missionary in Africa, described a similar welcome when he arrived with his family in Brigham City in 1878. According to Gillespie, the Mormon bishop censured his parishioners for permitting the Presbyterian evangelist to live among them and proclaimed, "If this hell hound had been met with blood about his ears, and fire in his tracks, when he came here, he would have left sooner than he came."<sup>35</sup> Inflamed by the bishop's rebuke, Gillespie said, a crowd of men and boys "kicked at [my] door uttering threats of burning the house and of personal violence unless I should get out of town before morning."<sup>36</sup> Gillespie subsequently alleged that vandals overturned and destroyed outbuildings, tore down fences, and shattered windows, sending pieces of broken glass rattling

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<sup>33</sup>For a summary of McMillan's career, see Florence McMillan, *The Reverend Duncan J. McMillan, 1846-1939: A Tribute* (New York: Privately printed, 1939), 8-19, 114-15. For his early ministry in Utah, see Davies, "A History of the Presbyterian Church in Utah," 45-68.

<sup>34</sup>For various eyewitness accounts of McMillan's encounter with Brigham Young and the evolution of McMillan's Bible-and-revolver story, see R. Douglas Brackenridge, "'Are You That Damned Presbyterian Devil?' The Evolution of an Anti-Mormon Story," *Journal of Mormon History* 21 (Spring 1995): 86-102.

<sup>35</sup>"Persecuting a Gentile," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1878, 4.

<sup>36</sup>Samuel Gillespie, "A Libel Corrected," *Salt Lake Tribune*, Septem-

about the heads of his sleeping children.<sup>37</sup>

In Ogden, a railroad center with a substantial Gentile population, Presbyterians established a church and school with little opposition. While Pastor George Gallagher and his wife were out of town on a fund-raising trip to eastern states, however, *The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* published an article claiming that Mormon officials in Ogden had obtained photographs of the Presbyterian missionaries and “the supposition runs that these are intended for distribution among the Danites, and that on the return of the couple to the mission field they will be persecuted.” The article concluded by observing that Gallagher “can handle a shillalah, and can also make creditable bull’s eye with pistol or rifle.”<sup>38</sup>

In response to specific allegations of threats and physical abuse, Mormons accumulated eyewitness testimonies and affidavits that either contradicted or modified Presbyterian accounts. Usually they came from law enforcement officers or leading citizens in the community, mostly Mormons, but sometimes from local Gentiles who confirmed the veracity of Mormon statements.<sup>39</sup> Mormons challenged Duncan McMillan’s version of the Ephraim encounter with affidavits from residents who had attended the service and who claimed that the minister’s life was not in danger and that he never displayed a revolver in the pulpit. They pointed out that schools and churches founded by McMillan were flourishing and that he visited them frequently with no threat to his person. Moreover, they noted that McMillan felt sufficiently safe to bring his mother and bride to live with him in Mt. Pleasant. Such behavior contradicted stories of a beleaguered missionary in

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ber 16, 1881, 4.

<sup>37</sup>“Persecuting a Gentile,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1878, 4. See also (all in the *Tribune*): “Saintly Intolerance,” July 2, 1878, 4; “The Morality of Mormonism,” July 16, 1878, 2, and “The Work of the Mission Schools,” May 20, 1879, 2.

<sup>38</sup>“Utah,” *The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* 8 (July 1879): 2; see also “Rev Gallagher’s Story,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 3, 1879, 2.

<sup>39</sup>For example, Charles W. Penrose, “Another Affidavit in the McMillan Case,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 31, 1881, 2, and his “More Proof of McNiece’s Falsehood,” *Deseret Evening News*, June 23, 1884, 2.

the Mormon heartland living in fear of his life.<sup>40</sup>

Responding to Samuel Gillespie's charges of harassment in Brigham City, Charles Penrose wrote a lengthy rebuttal in the *Deseret Evening News* in which he downplayed Gillespie's short-lived "persecution" as "some petty annoyance" from "idle boys" in the community. "Neither he nor any member of his family has been hurt nor did anyone ever attempt to hurt them." He cited sworn affidavits alleging that, when Gillespie appealed to Church and civil authorities, the city marshal "took prompt measures to stop it [the harassment]." Penrose also produced a police record showing that, based on Gillespie's testimony, a young man was convicted of attempting to prevent people from entering Presbyterian worship services for which he was jailed five days and fined \$20.<sup>41</sup>

As for allegations of death threats to Gallagher and his wife in Ogden, Mormons dismissed the incident as sectarian propaganda based on unfounded rumors. After a two months' absence, the couple returned to Ogden where they found a tranquil environment and a friendly populace. Gallagher subsequently informed readers of *The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* that, because of "abusive articles in Mormon journals," he was "led to expect open violence on my return. We have thus far been agreeably disappointed." While he accused the Mormons of abusing the Christian church at large, he noted that "upon us individually no vials have been poured."<sup>42</sup>

Presbyterians also claimed that their women school teachers

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<sup>40</sup>"It's All a Lie," *Deseret Evening News*, March 12, 1880, 2. See also A. O. Nyborg, "Mouthy McMillan," *Salt Lake Herald*, March 12, 1880, 2, and Charles W. Penrose, "Fathering Falsehoods," *Deseret Evening News*, September 12, 1881, 2. McMillan informed Presbyterian Church officials that, after the alleged Ephraim incident, he was free to conduct his preaching and teaching ministries. He boasted to Sheldon Jackson in 1876 that "all the machinery is in gear—oiled and running there now—the priests are whipped and with their caudal extremities drooped, their fierce barking has shrunk to a melancholy growl." Duncan J. McMillan, Letter to Sheldon Jackson, Sheldon Jackson Correspondence, January 8, 1876, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>41</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "Falsehood Refuted," *Deseret Evening News*, October 7, 1881, 2. See also "Utah Presbytery," *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 15 (October 1886): 232–33.

<sup>42</sup>"Presbyterian Work in Utah," *The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* 8

were subjected to harsh treatment by Mormons. J. F. Millspaugh, principal at the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, asserted: "The stoning of houses and attempts at destroying property were so common as to be expected by every new teacher entering the field. Teachers were accustomed to give instruction to a few children during the day and at night barricade their houses and prepare for an assault or a siege."<sup>43</sup> The women, mostly single, often lived alone in small villages where they were the only Gentile residents.<sup>44</sup> In Cedar City, Eliza Hartford described a visit by Mormon President John Taylor and his entourage. "I went and never felt so frightened in my life. I was almost persuaded that I was the old Devil himself. Such a tirade against sectarian teachers and preachers! No good preacher could have been so earnest in warning his hearers against the wiles of Satan as they were in urging the people to beware of Presbyterian teachers and preachers. I wondered if I would be allowed to get away alive."<sup>45</sup> At Spanish Fork, the woman teacher who roomed alone in the schoolhouse, periodically faced "a rough crowd" that gathered around the building "throwing

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(July 1879): 2, and "Utah," *ibid.*, 8 (September 1879): 1. See also "Rev. Gallagher Explains," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 19, 1879: 4. In similar fashion, while fund-raising in the East, McMillan related a story about a young Swede from Salt Lake City who wanted to marry his fiancée and escape from Mormonism. He asked McMillan to perform the ceremony when he returned with his bride-to-be the next day. When the couple failed to appear at the appointed time, McMillan concluded, "It is my firm conviction that they were murdered by the Danites, or avenging angels, the bloody servants of the priests, who had probably made what it is termed 'blood atonement,' which provides that heresy and apostasy shall be expiated with blood." Sheldon Jackson, "Scrapbook," 60:90–92, Presbyterian Historical Society. The article is a clipping from the *Cleveland Leader*, January 14, 1884.

<sup>43</sup>"Progress of the Work among the Mormons," *Home Mission Monthly* 3 (May 1889): 152–53.

<sup>44</sup>For an excellent analysis of the work of Presbyterian women missionaries in Utah, see Jana Kathryn Riess, "Heathen in Our Fair Land: Presbyterian Women Missionaries in Utah, 1870–1890," *Journal of Mormon History* 26 (Spring 2000): 165–95.

<sup>45</sup>Eliza Hartford, Letter to D. J. McMillan, November 23, 1881, quoted in McMillan, *The Reverend Duncan J. McMillan*, 49. Mary Agnes Craig described conditions in Fillmore in 1882: "Times are exciting now. The Mormons are simply raging. They would, I believe, cut all our thumbs if they dared. They declare they will continue to practice polygamy and they

showers of stones against the building, endangering the life of the teacher both directly and indirectly." Once a "fanatic" reportedly fired a load of shot through the window of the school house frightening the children who covered beneath their desks."<sup>46</sup>

Alice Young, who came to Spring City in 1880, related how for safety she felt obliged to spend evenings securely locked in her quarters. One evening she heard a group of inebriated men outside her door, shouting and "bawling out a rowdy song." She bolted the door, blew out the lamp, and went to bed. As she lay awake, she heard a noise outside and then some talking. One voice said, "Let's go in and see how the school marm's getting along." For an hour she sat in a chair with a poker in her hand, afraid that they would break through the window. Although the men attempted no physical entry, their shouts and threats caused the young woman considerable emotional distress. The next morning one of her Mormon neighbors offered sympathy and told Young that her husband had stayed awake all night with a gun in his hand, "ready to shoot if those drunks had made any trouble." Nevertheless, shortly thereafter Young left and never returned to Utah.<sup>47</sup>

In 1884 Presbyterians reported perhaps the most serious incident. Two inebriated Mormon men broke into the woman teacher's residence in Mendon late one night while she was sleeping. After being "roughed up," by the men, she escaped through a bedroom win-

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will send their children to Hell before they will see them in Presbyterian schools." Mary Agnes Craig, letter to family, (typescript copy) September 17, 1882, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>46</sup>Duncan J. McMillan, "Early Education Days in Utah," *The Utah Westminister* 9 (October 1922): 10; special issue. See also Robert G. McNiece, Letter to Charles W. Penrose, quoted in "Rev. (?) R. G. McNiece Self-Convicted," *Deseret Evening News*, June 23, 1884, 2.

<sup>47</sup>Alice Young quoted in Ethlyn Walkington, *Journey through a Century* (Twin Falls, Ida.: Standard Publishing Company, 1966), 69. Young also described a stranger who knocked on her door late at night, ostensibly to find directions to the bishop's house. *Ibid.*, 67. In 1880 a Presbyterian teacher in Ephraim related: "A few days ago the Mormon Indians were in town armed with knives &c. The report was soon spread, 'they were going to kill all the Presbyterians.' It seems to have been a pre-concerted affair, and I presume, was to scare our children." Miss Brown, "Ephraim," *Presbyterian Home Missionary*, 13 (December 1884): 283.

dow clad only in her nightgown. Her cries roused Mormon neighbors who provided refuge and alerted authorities. Emotionally scarred by the terrifying experience, the teacher elected not to renew her missionary appointment. Presbytery of Utah officials expressed “utmost indignation [at] the cowardly assault made upon one of its teachers at Mendon, by two drunken hoodlums,” and publicized the event as an example of Mormon harassment of “sectarian” missionaries.<sup>48</sup>

While acknowledging their verbal opposition to denominational schools, Mormons dismissed accounts of alleged attacks on Presbyterian teachers as over-dramatized propaganda. Regarding the incident in Spanish Fork, for example, Mormons offered a quite different scenario than that presented by Presbyterians. According to their sources, the shot through the window was accidental. The hunter apologized to the teacher and replaced the glass. Two young girls on their way to the Mormon school tossed some pebbles at the Presbyterian school while class was in session. Learning of the incident, the Mormon teacher made the girls apologize to the Presbyterian teacher for such irresponsible behavior. In regard to complaints of groups of men and boys gathering around the school at night and interrupting her sleep, the local mayor attributed the teacher’s complaints to the fact that she “was getting somewhat advanced in years and is inclined to nervousness.” He opined that “she wanted herself placed upon the list of Presbyterian martyrs to ‘Mormon intolerance.’”<sup>49</sup>

However, the attack on the Presbyterian teacher in Mendon was too well documented to be dismissed as hyperbole. Mormons emphasized that it was an aberration rather than a frequent occurrence and that the perpetrators were not active Church members. When summoned to make public confession of guilt, the men stated that they would be “dammed first and go to hell” before comply-

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<sup>48</sup>Minutes of Utah Presbytery, March 30, 1885, Presbyterian Historical Society, *The Church Review*, 4 (December 1895): 55, and Davies, “History of the Presbyterian Church in Utah,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 23 (December 1945), 228–45. The two men were identified as George Graham and David Minor.

<sup>49</sup>George D. Snell, Letter to Charles W. Penrose, quoted in “More Proof of McNiece’s Falsehood,” *Deseret Evening News*, June 23, 1884, 2.



ing.<sup>50</sup> They were excommunicated, and Bishop Henry Hughes condemned such deplorable behavior in a Mormon community. Addressing the congregation, he said, "It is a shame to think that a young lady could not come to reside in our midst without having been submitted to such outrages by hoodlums." In an extended discourse, Hughes affirmed, "It is the duty of the saints in relation to those who desire to reside in our midst who are not of us, they have a right to worship how, where, or what they may, and it is our duty to protect them in these rights." He then charged local ward teachers "to see that she wants for nothing and that she is protected in her rights."<sup>51</sup> Civil authorities acted swiftly against the culprits who were arrested, found guilty, and fined.<sup>52</sup> Mormons noted that Presbyterians commended local authorities for bringing the men to justice and acknowledged that subsequent teachers never experienced any such mistreatment.<sup>53</sup>

In spite of their widespread dissemination, specific allegations of death threats or physical harassment were not common occurrences. What does frequently appear, however, are reports from Presbyterians about attempts by Mormons to impede their efforts to establish and maintain churches and schools. Missionaries often complained of difficulties in finding lodging and securing property and supplies in Utah towns and villages. When Josiah Welch came to Salt Lake City in 1871, the only accommodation available to him was a refurbished hayloft above a livery stable.<sup>54</sup> In Logan, the Presbyterian minister initially was unable to find living quarters. He finally managed to rent a furniture warehouse, the rear of which extended into a group of pigpens, stables, and cow yards. He partitioned the front off

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<sup>50</sup>Mendon Ward, Sacramento Meeting Minutes, October 19, 1884.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. Hughes was quoting the eleventh Article of Faith, composed in 1844 by Joseph Smith: "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may." These articles had been canonized four years earlier in 1880 and hence had the force of scripture for Hughes's congregation.

<sup>52</sup>Minutes of the Presbytery of Utah, March 1885, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>53</sup>Samuel Wishard, *The Mormons* (New York: Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, 1904), 64–65.

<sup>54</sup>"Presbyterian Church," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 1, 1877, 7.

for a chapel and lived in the rear section with his family for two years before acquiring property to build a chapel and parsonage.<sup>55</sup> In 1881 a teacher in Cedar City related how no one would sell or rent to the Presbyterian minister and that she secured lodging only by promising not to teach or preach in her room. Even though she fulfilled her promise, she was later asked to leave.<sup>56</sup>

Presbyterians also related numerous incidents of vandalism and disruption of religious services and classrooms perpetrated by Mormons. In 1875 Duncan McMillan reported that he had been “sere-naded” by “a crowd of boys and young men [who] assembled in front of my door with boisterous talk and laughter and hurled three volleys of stones against my door, then ran away as fast as they could go.”<sup>57</sup> In 1877 the minister in American Fork reported that Mormon men smashed windows in the new Presbyterian Church and “wantonly tore up five or six hymnbooks and threw them on the floor.”<sup>58</sup> In 1880 the Presbytery of Utah charged that buildings had been “defiled in unmentionable ways, our property injured by stoning, and our books cut to pieces and scattered under the seats by those attending our services.”<sup>59</sup> From Cedar City, Eliza Hartford wrote in 1881, “Have suffered considerable annoyance—the boys have stoned the new bell & broken the new gate so often that it has cost me several ‘four bits’ to have it mended. I think it is better to bear those things in silence than to try to have the offenders punished as they come when it is too dark to see them.”<sup>60</sup> Another teacher said, “You ask if I need anything? It seems to me that I ought to have shutters. I feel that I am risking a good deal to have only *glass* between me and the Mormons.”<sup>61</sup> As late as 1897 a clergyman described how Presbyterian teachers and schools were constantly subject to “petty persecutions” and “insults.” He also

<sup>55</sup>“Presbyterians in Logan,” *Earnest Worker* 1 (December 1883): 3.

<sup>56</sup>Eliza Hartford, Letter to D. J. McMillan, November 23, 1881, in McMillan, *The Reverend Duncan J. McMillan*, 49.

<sup>57</sup>Duncan J. McMillan, Letter to Sheldon Jackson, May 1, 1875, Sheldon Jackson Correspondence, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>58</sup>“American Fork,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 16, 1877, 4.

<sup>59</sup>Presbytery of Utah, Minutes, March 12, 1880, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>60</sup>Eliza Hartford, Letter to D. J. McMillan, December 19, 1881, quoted in McMillan, *The Reverend Duncan J. McMillan*, 49.

<sup>61</sup>“Utah: A Call for Help,” *Presbyterian Home Missions*, 11 (August

reported that “buildings are defaced, and in some instances, damaged by the hoodlums who have been turned loose by the ‘powers that be.’”<sup>62</sup>

On two occasions in 1882, Presbyterians reported suspicious fires at church buildings in Nephi and Logan which they attributed to Mormon arsonists. Visiting Nephi shortly after the fire, touring Presbyterian dignitaries reported that “the church had just been set on fire by hostile Mormons. We saw the charred seats, the burnt shades, and the ruined chandeliers. Everything looked desolate, but with the insurance money and the sums contributed by friends, the building was put soon into a state of repair.”<sup>63</sup> During the same year, an arsonist attempted to kindle a fire in the bell tower of the Presbyterian Church in Logan. The rags soaked with coal oil failed to ignite but caused smoke that alerted local residents to take swift action. As with the Nephi fire, Presbyterians alleged that the arson attempt in Logan was the work of a fanatical Mormon.<sup>64</sup>

Mormons did not dispute that these two incidents of fires took place. They attributed the causes of the fires, however, to quite different sources. Charles Penrose termed Presbyterian accounts of arson as “trumped up and ridiculous fallacies and exaggerations.” He contended that the Nephi fire was accidental. Citing testimonies of local residents, Penrose concluded that the Nephi fire was caused by careless construction workers who did not properly extinguish their cigarettes. He also pointed out that, because a Mormon neighbor alerted citizens to the blaze, damage to the building was minimal.<sup>65</sup>

Mormon sources ascribed the Logan fire to a disgruntled resident identified as William Buder, who had a confrontation with C. M.

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1882): 186–87.

<sup>62</sup>*Report of Superintendent of School Work to the Board of Home Missions and the Woman’s Executive Committee*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1897, 8–10, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>63</sup>“Utah and the Mormons,” *Presbyterian Home Missions* 12 (December 1883): 269.

<sup>64</sup>Robert G. McNiece, Letter to Charles W. Penrose, June 18, 1884, quoted in “Rev. (?) R. G. McNiece Self-Convicted,” *Deseret Evening News*, June 21, 1884, 2.

<sup>65</sup>Penrose, “Rev. (?) R. G. McNiece Self-Convicted,” 2. Penrose concluded, “If a member of the Mormon Church can be proven guilty of an attempt to burn the chapel at Nephi, his co-religionists will rejoice to see the

Parks, the Presbyterian minister. Arriving inebriated at a Thanksgiving-evening entertainment, Buder was forcefully escorted out of the building shouting threats against Parks and his church members. Late that evening, someone broke a window, entered the church, placed kindling wood saturated with coal oil on a seat, and set it ablaze. The fire did little damage, charring only a bench and a piece of carpet. According to Penrose, "There was a moral certainty that Buder was the incendiary." Parks and the county attorney took steps to have Buder indicted, but the evidence against him was inconclusive and they dropped the case. Penrose averred that Buder was a disgruntled Gentile, not a fanatical Mormon as Presbyterians alleged.<sup>66</sup>

Beyond charges of vandalism and arson, Presbyterians claimed that Mormons often disrupted their worship services and Sunday School classes. The Presbytery of Utah complained that in towns like Logan, American Fork, Springville, and Payson, religious meetings were "frequently disturbed by hootings through the windows, cursing against the teachers, and by boisterous singing and shouting around the doors."<sup>67</sup> Richmond Pastor W. E. Renshaw related in 1882 how Mormon youths disrupted his evening meeting by talking and laughing outside of the church. "When we were singing the last hymn before the sermon, some one outside at the window played 'the Arkansas Traveler,' I think it was, on the harmonica. I motioned to my wife at the organ, to continue playing, and as she did so I sprang out at the door, and about twenty rowdies scattered with all their might in different directions. I caught one of them, however, and after giving him a good shaking, started him off in the direction of his home. They did not bother the service any more after that."<sup>68</sup>

While acknowledging isolated instances of vandalism and disruption of services, Mormons vehemently denied they were instigated by "priest-inspired hostile Mormons" as Presbyterians fre-

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penalty of the law inflicted upon him. But we protest against such charges being made unless they are supported by proof." See also "Fire at Nephi," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, October 2, 1882, 3, and "Chapel at Nephi," *Utah Journal*, October 6, 1882, 2.

<sup>66</sup>Penrose, "Rev. (?) R. G. McNiece Self-Convicted," 2, and Penrose, "More Proof of McNiece's Falsehood," 2.

<sup>67</sup>Minutes of the Presbytery of Utah, March 12, 1880, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>68</sup>"Utah," *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 16 (January 1886): 16.

quently alleged. Instead, they identified the culprits as uncontrolled young rowdies who often roamed the streets after dark in towns and villages. When John Coyner and Robert McNiece charged Mormons with breaking windows in the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, Penrose's *Deseret Evening News* dismissed the accusations as "an exhibition of Presbyterian bigotry, as these twin sons of the Father of Lies who watch over that school have to denounce the 'Mormons,' and call down vengeance on their heads, if some willful schoolboy throws a stone through a pane of glass in a Presbyterian window."<sup>69</sup>

The most persistent indictment leveled against Mormons by Presbyterian missionaries, however, related to psychological rather than physical harassment. Especially during 1875–90 when the anti-polygamy campaign and opposition to Presbyterian parochial schools were at their height, Mormon authorities advised Mormons to "let outsiders severely alone." The *Deseret Evening News* urged Mormons to treat Presbyterian missionaries "with silent contempt" and avoid all unnecessary social contact.<sup>70</sup> In areas where Presbyterians had churches and schools, they were frequently subjects of condemnation and scorn. One Mormon bishop, who had been raised a Presbyterian before becoming a Latter-day Saint, stated that "he had never visited the Presbyterians since" and advised the Saints to do likewise.<sup>71</sup> At Mt. Pleasant, Bishop Canute Peterson said, "It is your duty as Latter-day Saints not to patronize any Outsiders. You must not associate with them in any way, but treat them as though they were not here, and they will soon dry up and leave, never to return."<sup>72</sup> A speaker at the St. George Relief Society commented, "Gentile influences are brought by visiting their homes and bringing it back to ours. What would keep them here if

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<sup>69</sup>"Are the Presbyterians Responsible?" *Deseret Evening News*, June 18, 1884, 8.

<sup>70</sup>"Two Modes of Attack," *Deseret Evening News*, June 2, 1881, 2, and "What Shall We Do With Them?," *Deseret Evening News*, July 11, 1881, 2.

<sup>71</sup>San Pete Stake, Tabernacle Meeting Minutes, September 25, 1898.

<sup>72</sup>"Mt. Pleasant Letter," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 5, 1880, 4. See also Moroni Ward, Priesthood Minutes, March 30, 1882, September 3, 1882, October 3, 1882, and March 7, 1886.

we let them alone?”<sup>73</sup>

In personal correspondence, Presbyterians acknowledged that “shunning” was the most demoralizing aspect of their labors in Utah Territory. Workers frequently became discouraged and left Utah after short stays due to feelings of loneliness and isolation rather than fear of bodily harm. A teacher in Ephraim described how the social shunning caused her mental anguish. “The Mormon children are not permitted to speak to us; but they seem to feel quite sadly when we meet them. I often hear of their misrepresentations. Anything to injure our work. I often ask myself—How long will their zeal continue?”<sup>74</sup> Another teacher reported, “A Mormon girl says, ‘Just to think that Presbyterian girl [the teacher] right next door to Bro. Arthur & opposite Bro. Lunts. Don’t you think it too bad?’ I indulge in a good cry sometimes & then I feel better & things look brighter.”<sup>75</sup> After listening to a presentation by pioneer missionaries describing how Presbyterians had “suffered violence” at the hands of Mormons, one young clergyman in 1898 said, “It would be a relief to be hit with a club rather than to be studiously avoided and severely let alone, as is the present policy of the Mormons.”<sup>76</sup>

One of the most eloquent testimonies to the deleterious effects of social isolation came from Claton Rice, a young Presbyterian clergyman stationed in St. George. Describing his ministry as a Gentile in Mormon Dixie, Rice spoke candidly as one

who learned to live alone beside a busy road traveled by unseeing, silent people. Yet a feeling of lonesomeness such as one is likely to experience when transplanted from the world he had known into a strange country and an alien culture grew upon me. Even more difficult to endure was the manner in which people in the community, young and old, stared at me as I walked down the street. I like people, and I wanted to be friendly, and when they let me pass by without a word, with nothing but hard looks, or even hostile ones, there in this small town where everyone knew everyone, I was distressed. I

<sup>73</sup>St. George, Relief Society, Minutes, September 8, 1881.

<sup>74</sup>Carrie Ray, Letter to D. J. McMillan, January 12, 1883, quoted in McMillan, *The Reverend Duncan J. McMillan*, 60.

<sup>75</sup>“A Missionary Teacher’s Experience in Utah,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 11 (March 1882): 66–67.

<sup>76</sup>“Editorial Notes,” *The Home Mission Monthly* 12 (January 1898): 50.

suppose that a sensitive person might begin to wonder if something abnormal or even repulsive existed in him if such treatment continued indefinitely. It was not pleasant, to say the least, and for one who felt he had come as a friendly ambassador to the people who called themselves Saints.<sup>77</sup>

Presbyterians also contended that social shunning extended to Mormons who sent their children to Presbyterian schools or converted to the Presbyterian faith. George Martin, pastor at Manti, reported in 1880 how “several families of children have recently been thrown still more completely out of Mormon society, by their parents joining the Presbyterian Church. That is ostracism.” Martin related how one man who sent his son to the Presbyterian school was “roughly taken to task by the Bishop, and not showing signs of penitence, he was notified to leave the hovel in which he lived. A wagon was driven to his door and he was told he would better move.” In nearby Ephraim, a man whose wife proposed to join the Presbyterian Church and whose children had attended the Presbyterian school was forced to sell his house and move. According to Martin, “They were smothering him. The same policy is now being carried out against others of our members.”<sup>78</sup>

To charges by Presbyterians that they were denied the common courtesies of social interaction, Mormon authorities insisted that overall denominational ministers and teachers were treated humanely and permitted to pursue their preaching and teaching ministries. Considering that their avowed goal was the overthrow of Mormonism, they should have been grateful rather than resentful of Mormon toleration. Mormons also pointed out the irony that Presbyterian charges of persecution came at a time when Mormon missionaries in eastern states were being tarred and feathered, beaten by angry mobs, and denied the right to preach and teach. Accounts of these events appeared in newspapers throughout the country and evoked strong editorial responses in Mormon publications, including charges that the horror stories emanating from Utah written by Presbyterians were partly responsible for the at-

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<sup>77</sup>Claton Rice, *Ambassador to the Saints* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1965), 104.

<sup>78</sup>George Martin, Synodical Missionary Report ending May 31, 1880, Westminster College Archives.

tacks.<sup>79</sup> Even though Presbyterians repudiated violence directed at Mormons, they were hard pressed to dissociate themselves from such criminal actions.<sup>80</sup>

### A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

Based on the evidence presented from both sides, it is difficult to determine whom to believe. Presbyterians claimed that Mormon sources were tainted by a desire to conceal and understate adverse social conditions in Utah, and Mormons contended that Presbyterian sources grossly exaggerated and misrepresented their behavior. Both were anxious to win support for their causes: Presbyterians to “Christianize and Americanize” Utah and Mormons to convince the public that they were decent, law-abiding citizens. There is, however, a third alternative, one that moves beyond partisan loyalties to attempt a more objective analysis. Viewed through this lens, a nuanced picture of relationships emerges, one that is neither passionately Presbyterian nor partisan Mormon.

Correspondence from Presbyterian missionaries and clergy in rural Utah delineates diverse portrayals of daily life in rural Utah that are obscured in anti-Mormon pamphlets and articles. Their descriptions are characterized by sympathetic but critical evaluations of the social setting in which they labored. While not free of bias, they often speak approvingly of Latter-day Saints and cite instances of mutual cooperation and respect. They also are more candid about the complexity of the cultural milieu in Utah and occasionally reflect an awareness of how their own presuppositions make it difficult to communicate effectively with local residents. In turn, Mormon ward and stake records reveal a diverse community of believers who expressed respect for religious freedom, including their own, and exercised discretion in following the dictates of Church authorities. Despite indications of deep-rooted xenophobia, due in part to their long history of persecution and extended geographical isolation, Latter-day Saints at all levels of leadership denounced physical retaliation and advocated toleration of “outsiders” while discouraging close rela-

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<sup>79</sup>“Georgia Assassins Arrested,” *Deseret Evening News*, August 11, 1879, 2. See also Charles W. Penrose, “Mobocracy in the South,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 22, 1887, 2.

<sup>80</sup>See, for example, “The Murder of Mormon Missionaries,” *The Presbyterian Home Missionary* 13 (November 1884): 245.



tionships with those who were not of their faith.

When Mormons abrogated community standards by disrupting religious services, they were severely reprimanded by LDS authorities. After several drunken men in Ogden interrupted a Methodist meeting “in a rude and unseemly manner,” a contributor to the *Deseret Evening News* condemned their conduct as meriting public censure. “The rights of the Methodists should be as sacred in our eyes as the rights of the Latter Day Saints or any other body of worshippers. . . . Shame on them.”<sup>81</sup> A similar complaint was made about “hoodlums” who disturbed a Salvation Army meeting in Salt Lake City: “Such disgraceful proceedings are enough to make a Latter-day Saint blush with shame. Our children ought to be taught to respect all men in their rights and especially the right to worship God.”<sup>82</sup> The Mormon editor of the *Logan Leader* told his readers, “We have been informed that the services at the Presbyterian Church on Sunday evening last were very seriously disturbed by some of the youngsters of Logan. It is said that they became so rude in their behavior that the minister was under the necessity of expelling them. All right-minded citizens feel sorry that such things should occur.”<sup>83</sup>

Such proclamations of religious freedom were not limited to public addresses by Mormon stake presidents or apostles. In 1881 the bishop of Richfield decried the disturbance of a Presbyterian meeting in another town “and hoped that nothing of that kind would occur in this place.”<sup>84</sup> Isaac Sorensen, the presiding elder of Mendon Ward in Cache Valley, told residents that “Methodists, Baptists, or any other sect have just as good a right to their belief as we have and should be protected in their rights.” At the same meeting another elder affirmed, “We believe in allowing all men the same religious freedom that we ourselves desire.”<sup>85</sup> Frequently cited was the golden rule of “doing unto others as we wish they should do to us,” especially when it

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<sup>81</sup>“Conditions in Ogden,” *Deseret Evening News*, February 9, 1875, 3.

<sup>82</sup>“Priesthood Meeting,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 3, 1887, 3.

<sup>83</sup>“A Grave Question,” *Logan Leader*, November 13, 1879, 2.

<sup>84</sup>Richfield Ward, Sacramento Meeting Minutes, July 28, 1881, and San Pete Stake, Tabernacle Meeting Minutes, February 22, 1885.

<sup>85</sup>Mendon Ward, Sacramento Meeting Minutes, July 5, 1896.

came to religious liberty.<sup>86</sup>

Presbyterian claims of death threats against ministers and teachers need to be viewed in the context of heated verbal exchanges between two passionate constituencies. In spite of the publicity they received in denominational publications, specific allegations of death threats were extremely rare. Except for the one incident in Mendon reported above, no documented reports of physical assaults on Presbyterian ministers or teachers appear in any denominational record or publication that I have examined. Both Presbyterians and Mormons employed language that they later came to regret, but in midst of conflict the tongue often operated independently of the mind. Like two bullies hurling threats at each other on a playground, when it came to actual fisticuffs, neither relished a fight. As minorities in isolated and often unfriendly settings, however, and given the alleged Latter-day Saint participation in the widely publicized Mountain Meadows Massacre in 1857, it is not unreasonable to assume that Presbyterians took such language seriously and feared that they might be targeted for harm.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, Utah in general was a safe environment for denominational emissaries. There were no Presbyterian martyrs. All ministers and teachers who died in Utah did so of natural causes rather than at the hands of hostile Mormons.<sup>88</sup>

It is also apparent that a few Presbyterian ministers sensa-

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<sup>86</sup>San Pete Stake, Tabernacle Meeting Minutes, October 2, 1892.

<sup>87</sup>Forty years after the massacre, the memories of the event remained vivid. Presbyterian minister Claton Rice related how in 1897 he camped out on the Meadows with a group of Mormons who related details of the horrible event. "That night as I tried to sleep, I thought I could hear the shrieks of mutilated women and children and the cries of helpless, betrayed men. . . . Foolishly enough, I wished for a gun. There was no need to protect myself, for these Mormons were friendly to the strange Gentile traveling south. Perhaps I was not to blame though, for one imagines insane things on a dark night out in the lonesome desert, miles from the railroad and from friends, on a field where innocent men, women, and children have been murdered." Claton Rice, *The Mormon Way* (n. pub., 1929), 9.

<sup>88</sup>In 1893 the mother of a Presbyterian teacher in Richfield claimed that her daughter "died under mysterious circumstances" in the village. An investigation conducted by the Presbytery of Utah concluded that she died of typhoid fever. A resident Presbyterian minister said that the "whole com-

tionalized their experiences in order to attract public attention to missionary activities in Utah. Indeed, in the case with Duncan McMillan, it is possible to trace how descriptions of encounters with Mormons increased in detail and intensity as they passed from oral tradition to printed word. Tellingly, McMillan's Presbyterian colleagues in Salt Lake City were so alarmed at his inflammatory rhetoric that they purchased and burned copies of *The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* in which one of his sensational articles appeared.<sup>89</sup>

It took nearly three decades before McMillan clarified details about his oft-repeated Bible-and-revolver episode. In 1903, en route to a meeting in Los Angeles, McMillan visited Salt Lake City and reprised his dramatic story at the Presbyterian-related Salt Lake Collegiate Institute. Confronted by local reporters with eyewitness accounts that contradicted his version of the event, McMillan finally acknowledged an element of exaggeration in his account. "That remark is a metaphor," he admitted. "I did not go into the pulpit with a drawn pistol, but I went armed. One of the officials of the Mormon Church told me that my life was in danger, and advised me to go armed. I knew that I was in peril, and at the time this friend spoke to me, I had already taken the precaution to provide myself with a pistol. I was determined I would not bite the dust first."<sup>90</sup>

Shortly before he died, McMillan wrote a narrative of his years in Mt. Pleasant that presented a different scenario than the one he offered during the early days of his ministry. While affirming that he faced opposition to his educational ministry in Mt. Pleasant, McMillan offered this revealing statement. "I cannot close this letter without acknowledging most gratefully the unfailing kindness of all the people of Mt. Pleasant. The threats and attempts upon my life were from authority high up in the church. Some of the local preach-

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munity was moved and concerned, for all, without reference to shade of belief or opinion, loved Miss Snow and earnestly desired her recovery." "Mrs. Snow's Petitions," *Deseret Evening News*, January 12, 1893, 5, and "Believed to Be a Crank," January 7, 1893, 4.

<sup>89</sup>Josiah Welch, Letters to Sheldon Jackson, April 3 and 16, and May 3, 1875, Jackson Correspondence, Presbyterian Historical Society. McMillan's article was "An Appeal to Christian Women," *The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* 4 (April 1875): 2.

<sup>90</sup>"Puts Blame on Brigham Young," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 17, 1903, 8. See also "Who Was Attacked?" *Deseret Evening News*, June 8, 1903, 4.

ers in duty bound uttered threats and used scurrilous language about me, but they were always personally kind and were most courteous in their treatment of me, so that I have most pleasant recollections for all who live there.”<sup>91</sup> While this, too, might be deemed an exaggeration of an old man, it does provide a caveat to published accounts of his encounters with Mormons in Mt. Pleasant.

Presbyterian sources confirm that Mormon authorities quickly defused opposition to Samuel Gillespie’s ministry in Brigham City. Gillespie acknowledged that Mormon Apostle Lorenzo Snow called a special meeting to address the problem and told residents that “it was a disgrace on Latter-day Saints if further violence was attempted in order to drive [him] out of town.” Following Snow’s exhortation, Gillespie said, “I have not been molested.”<sup>92</sup> In 1884 Gillespie gave an optimistic report on his ministry in Brigham City. “Our Sabbath evening meetings are crowded, and with the most promising class of young people and heads of families. The Sabbath-school and week day meetings are generally well attended by the pupils of the day school.”<sup>93</sup> Moreover, Gillespie became active in local political affairs, serving as the registration officer for local elections, and the Utah Commission appointed his wife as postmistress.<sup>94</sup>

While definitive proof of who perpetrated the attempted arsons in Nephi and Logan remains elusive, such incidents were rare occurrences. No similar attempts are mentioned in the Minutes of the Utah Presbytery or in any other primary sources that I have examined. Given the frequency of diatribes between Mormons and Presbyterians, it is unlikely that the torching of schools or churches

<sup>91</sup>Duncan J. McMillan, Letter to Mrs. H. F. Wall, typescript, n.d., n.p., Wasatch Academy Archives.

<sup>92</sup>Samuel Gillespie, “A Libel Corrected,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 16, 1881, 4.

<sup>93</sup>Rev. S. L. Gillespie, “Utah,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary*, 13 (May 1884): 107.

<sup>94</sup>Sarah Yates, *A Centennial History of the Community Presbyterian Church of Brigham City, Utah, 1878–1978* (N.p., n.d.) 3–4. Two years later, Robert McNiece reported to the Utah Presbytery that “for the past three years the little chapel [Gillespie’s] has been crowded, week after week, to hear the Bible truly applied to Mormon wrongs and errors, social, civil, and religious.” Robert G. McNiece, “Utah Presbytery: Another Grand Meeting,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 15 (October 1886): 232–33.

would have passed unnoticed. In response to McNiece's charges that Presbyterian churches and school houses were "repeatedly injured and set on fire," Charles Penrose posed these rhetorical questions. "If the 'Mormons' wished to burn every sectarian chapel and school-house in the Territory, what is there to hinder them? In villages which he [McNiece] says are 'exclusively Mormon,' who could prevent the entire destruction of buildings erected for the purpose of introducing the vagaries and darkening influences of apostate, sect-breeding Christendom?"<sup>95</sup>

Despite their questioned methods of operation, Presbyterian schools enjoyed considerable success in Mormon towns and villages. Mormons had a penchant for education and recognized that their children could benefit from exposure to skilled teachers and comprehensive curriculums no matter what their source. Initially, in some instances, Mormons helped to finance construction of some Presbyterian buildings. In 1879, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that Mormons in Springville and Ephraim had raised funds for Presbyterian schools in their respective communities: "This is not consistent with Mormon doctrine, and is in utter disregard to the teachings of their priests. But they urgently want good schools. . . . [D]evout Saints pool with Outsiders, regarding education of their children as of more value than Latter-day seclusion."<sup>96</sup> In a subsequent article, the *Tribune* reported that "in a number of settlements, the people have pledged themselves to back every dollar expended in building from the Presbyterian fund with a dollar raised among themselves."<sup>97</sup> As early as 1879, Presbyterians reported attendance at schools in Manti (135), Monroe (45), Mt. Pleasant (75), Payson (35), Springville (30), and Pleasant Grove (25). By 1890 Presbyterians had thirty-three day schools and four

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<sup>95</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "More Proof of McNiece's Falsehood," *Deseret Evening News*, June 23, 1884, 2.

<sup>96</sup>"Successful Missionary Work," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 21, 1879, 2.

<sup>97</sup>"The Work of Mission Schools," *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 20, 1879, 2. Another denominational official said, "We are reaching many Mormon parents through their children. The children rule the parents in Utah as well as in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and hence bring them often to our chapels to hear the gospel. The quiet work going on there is slowly undermining the strongholds of that system which is to-day the curse of our favored country." "Utah," *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 10 (December 1883): 268-69.



*Westminster College faculty and students 1902-03. Robert G. McNiece, the dean, is seated far right. Founded in 1897 as Sheldon Jackson College, Westminster was the “crown jewel” of the Presbyterian network of educational institutions in Utah. Photo courtesy of Giovale Library.*

academies with 2,500 students out of a total student population in Utah of 15,000.<sup>98</sup> In 1897 the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions estimated that approximately 50,000 students had attended their schools since their inception in 1875. During the same year, Sheldon Jackson College (later Westminster College) opened in Salt Lake City, providing a source of baccalaureate degrees for Presbyterian and other denominational students.<sup>99</sup>

Presbyterians achieved this measure of success despite opposition from their alleged nemesis, “the priesthood.” This is confirmed

<sup>98</sup>Banker, *Presbyterian Missions*, 148, and Frederick S. Buchanan, *Culture Clash and Accommodations: Public Schooling in Salt Lake City, 1890–1904* (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates in Association with Signature Books, 1996), 21–23.

<sup>99</sup>Clifton Drury, *Presbyterian Panorama* (Philadelphia: Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1950), 205. In many locations, the only “Mormon” students came from what Presbyterians described as “apostate” families. In 1881 Mary Agnes Craig

by statements from teachers on the field. "There is a continued effort made by the priests and bishops to influence the patrons to discontinue their children in our school," said one teacher. "They persuade, and threaten excommunication; but so far none have been sufficiently influenced or intimidated as to withdraw their children."<sup>100</sup> At Nephi in 1884 a correspondent reported, "It is said, and perhaps truly, that Nephi is the most priest-ridden town in Utah; but notwithstanding this, the Presbyterian school is now in a very prosperous condition—the chapel having to be occupied as a school room."<sup>101</sup> Richmond Pastor W. E. Renshaw related how the bishop forbade his people to come to hear him preach, and most obeyed. "But I determined not to be outdone by him. I spoke my religious conviction in private whenever common sense dictated it for the best. I distributed tracts—went ahead with my work, and now we have a good congregation again; and those who come inside the house are more respectful and attentive than before."<sup>102</sup>

Mormon ward and stake minutes confirm what Presbyterians noted anecdotally. Even though local Mormon authorities warned people not to send their children to Presbyterian schools, their admonitions and threats of excommunication apparently had little impact on some segments of the population. At Toquerville in 1886 a special delegation of ward teachers representing the bishop visited a man

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in Fillmore described her class as follows: "We have in our school about fifty, all children of poor apostates, and many of them thinly clad, half starved, neglected little waifs." Mary Agnes Craig, letter to family [typescript copy; no date but ca. October 1881], Presbyterian Historical Society. A roll book of students in the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute covering the period 1888–1920 indicates that only a small percentage of students came from active Mormon families. Many were from various Protestant denominations or indicated no religious preference. Westminster College Archives.

<sup>100</sup>Mrs. McMillan, "Utah," Mrs. McMillan, *Our Mission Field* 8 (April 1878): 44. See also Miss Galbraith, "Manti," *Our Mission Field* 10 (March 1881): 186, and J. A. Olmstead, "Utah," *Our Mission Field* 10 (January 1881): 160.

<sup>101</sup>"Thanksgiving at Nephi," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 30, 1884, 4.

<sup>102</sup>"Utah," *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 15 (January 1886): 16. For similar accounts, see "Utah," *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 11 (June 1882): 134.

who was sending his son to the Presbyterian school and reported that “he would not renew his covenants until he had sent his children two quarters to the Presbyterian school; said that there was not anything further that they could do about it.”<sup>103</sup> A ward teacher in Richmond reported that he “visited Casper Jensen about sending child to Pres. school; the wife did not want to send to the outside school but he insisted upon continuing to send to the outside school.”<sup>104</sup> Even excommunication did not stop Mormons from patronizing Presbyterian schools. At Mt. Pleasant in 1876, an LDS member was excommunicated because he insisted that Duncan McMillan “was a gentleman and said no one could force him to take his children out of school.”<sup>105</sup>

When Mormons withdrew their children from Presbyterian schools, they did not always do so because of threats of excommunication or other punitive measures. A Mormon mother who took her child out of one of the mission schools sent this note of explanation to the teacher: “Miss Macullery [likely Margaret McCullough, missionary teacher at Mendon, 1897–1902] dear friend you will learn by this note that abie [her son] will not attend your school eny [sic] more the reason I take him away I don’t want him to learn another religion only the true gospel that was taught by Jesus Christ when he was upon earth and your religion and ours is so much different and I feel as a Mother I am responsible for my children till they get old enuff [sic] to choose for themselves with the kindest of wishes I remain yours respectfully.”<sup>106</sup>

How Mormons treated Presbyterian teachers varied from place to place depending on the personality of the teachers and the inclinations of the populace. While some teachers experienced social isolation and never became fully accepted, others reported different results. This was especially true for missionaries who stayed longer than

<sup>103</sup>Toquerville Ward, Priesthood Minutes, December 26, 1886.

<sup>104</sup>Richmond Ward, Priesthood Meeting Minutes, January 5, 1885. Subsequent minutes do not indicate that any action was taken against Jensen.

<sup>105</sup>Mt. Pleasant Ward, High Priests’ Quorum Minutes, January 5 and March 11, 1876, quoted in William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 230. See also Kaysville Ward, Teachers’ Quorum Minutes, November 6, 1898.

<sup>106</sup>“Editorial Notes,” *Home Mission Monthly* 12 (June 1898): 170.





*Presbyterian school teachers and students at Fillmore, Utah, in 1882. Duncan J. McMillan had secured part of the old capitol building at Fillmore for use as a school in 1881. Mary Agnes (“Aggie”) Craig arrived in November 1881 and taught until April 1884. The school closed in 1891 following the adoption of a free public school system in Utah. Photo courtesy of Carl Camp, Territorial State House Museum, Fillmore, Utah.*

the usual three-year term and made concerted efforts to develop friendly relationships with their neighbors. Even missionaries who came to Utah bearing negative impressions of Latter-day Saints conceded that most Mormons were decent and respectable people. Mary Agnes Craig, who arrived in Fillmore in 1881, initially expressed revulsion at the primitive conditions she encountered. “We are like lions among dogs,” she told her family in 1882, indicating that she did not plan to return when her contract ended. In the same letter, however, she referred to pleasant social contact with Mormons and their families. “It is something new for us to be thrown in with such people,” she acknowledged, “but so it is, and they treat us respectfully for all.”<sup>107</sup> Six months later when Apostle Francis Marion Lyman visited Fill-

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<sup>107</sup>Mary Agnes Craig, Letter to family, January 18, 1882, typescript copy, Presbyterian Historical Society.

more, Craig and her friends listened to his address, and he in turn attended the Presbyterian service.<sup>108</sup> Toward the end of her stay in Fillmore, she observed that “we are growing in favor with all these people and are treated exceedingly kindly.” When Craig and a co-teacher needed boarding accommodations for the summer, she informed her family, “You would have thought everybody in town wanted us.”<sup>109</sup>

Ada Kingsbury, missionary in American Fork, described in 1880 how she held singing, sewing, and reading classes after regular school hours. “Nearly every night, after school hours, I am besieged with, ‘please Miss Kingsbury, won’t you sing and play for us?’” She further described her work, “All the time I can command evenings after school and Saturdays, is devoted to making calls upon the people. I am always kindly and politely received, notwithstanding the people have been told, ‘not to speak to, or to have anything to do with the Presbyterians.’”<sup>110</sup> In the same year, Marcia A. Scovel wrote from Ogden, “In our calls upon Mormon families we are received with the utmost cordiality and they nearly always think to thank us for coming. . . . [A]ll the Mormons with whom we have to deal treat us very kindly.”<sup>111</sup> In 1881 Julia Olmstead described her reception in Richfield. “So here I am, a hundred and five miles from the railroad, in a Mormon town, with the nearest Gentile ten miles away. . . . The people are very kind to me. I expected to meet with much opposition, but the Lord has indeed come before me and prepared the way. Even the church officials are kind, and I have met one of the bishops several times. He always inquires after the school and wishes me success.”<sup>112</sup>

Mary McCartney, a missionary in Richmond, Utah, wrote, “I get many a friendly recognition from Mormon Officers while at the

<sup>108</sup>Mary Agnes Craig, Letter to family, June 2, 1882, typescript copy, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>109</sup>Mary Agnes Craig, Letter to family, May 13, 1883, typescript copy, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>110</sup>Ada Kingsbury, Letter to Mrs. F. E. Haines, May 1, 1880, Record Group 105-1-4, Presbyterian Historical Society; emphasis hers.

<sup>111</sup>Marcia A. Scovel, Letter to Mrs. F. E. Haines, December 14, 1880, RG 105-1-6, Presbyterian Historical Society Archives. Another missionary wrote, “The people [were] unexpectedly kind, and she [had] won the love and confidence of both parents and children.” “Utah,” *Our Mission Field* 10 (May 1881): 12.

<sup>112</sup>J. A. Olmstead, “Utah,” *Our Mission Field* 10 (January 1881): 160.

Bell-rope. By God's grace, I have succeeded in getting the good will of these people as a person at least, and my belief or principles I uphold and teach will be more kindly listened to, I am sure, and I trust recognized. Every day I live, I am more convinced it's our lives that are going to tell for Jesus among these people. . . . I have many callers—most of them Mormons and among whom I believe I have many warm friends. They treat me with utmost deference and in many cases with marked kindness. I am invited to tea in their homes often." She also spoke of Mormons who attended her Sunday evening service where she read a sermon. "I wish you could have seen the attention a more than usually intelligent audience gave me last Sabbath evening. One young man—a Mormon teacher—Public School teacher—lingered to shake hands and tell me how he enjoyed it all."<sup>113</sup>

In a letter to mission headquarters in New York, Julia Olmstead described her pangs of conscience about teaching Protestant theology when publicly Presbyterians denied that they were injecting "sectarian" religious values into their teaching. She went to the stake president, told him that she was indeed teaching religion, and that, given her convictions regarding religious truth, she could hardly do otherwise. If he had the greater revelation, she argued, it was his duty to pray that God would show her the light. If she had the greater revelation, then it was her duty to lead him into the light. According to Olmstead, the stake president "acknowledged that I was right," and the two began a dialogue comparing the Bible and Mormon scriptures.<sup>114</sup>

Other Presbyterian missionaries cited incidents of support from the much-maligned "priesthood." A teacher in Hyrum related a conversation she had with a Mormon counselor (presumably in the bishopric) regarding her Presbyterian day school. He proclaimed that he

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See also J. A. Olmstead, Letter to G. W. Martin, May 28, 1881, Martin Papers, Westminster College Archives. Mary Crowell, a missionary in Gunnison, expressed similar sentiments in a letter to Mrs. F. E. Haines, June 25, 1881, RG 305-15-22, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>113</sup>Mary McCartney, Letter to Mrs. Greenleaf, January 27, 1892, RG 51-2-3, Presbyterian Historical Society. Despite this positive assessment, McCartney's landlord later asked her to leave, due to pressure from Mormon authorities.

<sup>114</sup>J. A. Olmstead, Letter to George W. Martin, May 28, 1881, Martin Papers, Westminster College Archives.

would never send any of his children to such a school but assured her that he would defend her right to teach unmolested in that community. She informed him that recently someone had thrown ripe melons at her American flag, an act that she interpreted as being anti-American. On the following Sunday, this man told Mormon congregants that anyone who disturbed her flag would be subject to immediate arrest. No more incidents occurred.<sup>115</sup> From Gunnison, Martha M. Greene reported in 1888 that the local Mormon bishop supported her efforts to teach afternoon classes in preventative health measures by allowing her the use of the LDS meetinghouse. According to Greene, the bishop said that “I was doing more good than anyone else in Gunnison.”<sup>116</sup>

Occasionally missionaries expressed dismay at newspapers that perpetuated “hostile Mormon” stereotypes. In 1885 the *Salt Lake Tribune* published an account of an incident in Nephi in which Mormons battered the Presbyterian schoolhouse with a barrage of stones, breaking all the front windows and damaging the building. The Presbyterian minister in Payson, who had oversight of the school, accused the *Tribune’s* editor of inaccurate reporting: “Christianity has nothing to gain but everything to lose by such exaggeration of facts, and righteously demands that it should not be held responsible for the false zeal of its ill-advised friends.” The building was undamaged except for two panes of glass and the teachers were unharmed. Although describing the attack as “brutal and cowardly,” he urged that the Mormon community not be held responsible “for the outlawry of a few drunken scoundrels.”<sup>117</sup>

Commenting on a negative article on Mormon abuse, longtime missionary Laura Work termed it “unjust to the Mormon people and unfortunate to all concerned. No teacher who conducts herself with dignity and kindness will ever suffer indignity at the hands of Mor-

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<sup>115</sup>Edna Defore, Letter to Woman’s Board of Home Missions, n.d., RG 111-4-14, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>116</sup>“Words from Workers: Utah,” *The Home Mission Monthly* 3 (August 1888): 230, and “Words from Workers: Utah,” *The Home Mission Monthly* 4 (April 1889): 132.

<sup>117</sup>“A Question of Fact,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 2, 1885, 4. In response, the editor called the clergyman “a credulous gentleman” and said that “drunken hoodlums do not stone the houses where respectable ladies lodge in any other country except Utah.”

*Laura B. Work. Photo courtesy of Wasatch Academy, Mt. Pleasant, Utah. Miss Work was a Presbyterian mission teacher at Pleasant Grove, Springville, and Ephraim and later was a government teacher among Native Americans in southern Utah.*



mons.”<sup>118</sup> Miss Josie Curtis, a veteran of twenty-nine years in the field, said, “We may well hate the degrading system and influence of Mormons, but never the Mormon people as we know them.”<sup>119</sup> They also confided to friends that their stiffest opposition came not from Mormons but from “infidel Gentiles” who ridiculed and opposed their labors. A missionary in Salina, Utah, wrote, “You can scarcely imagine what we have undergone during the past month, not from the Mormons, they have always been kind, but from the Liberals. . . . [W]e met falsehood and wicked misrepresentation, from the very ones we have tried to befriend.”<sup>120</sup> Another in Richmond reported “there are only two families of ‘Gentiles’ in town and they only came during the last year, but sad to say they are rather a hindrance to our work than a help as they are so Godless.”<sup>121</sup>

In fairness to Presbyterians, their schools and academies played a significant role in advancing the cause of public education in Utah

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<sup>118</sup>Laura Work, Letter to Samuel E. Wishard, June 19, 1901, RG 51-2-15, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>119</sup>Josie Curtis, quoted in *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Woman’s Board of Home Missions*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1917, 14, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>120</sup>Lillie L. Throop, Letter to Mrs. Crosby, November 22, 1890, RG 105-4-2, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>121</sup>Mary E. McCartney, Letter to Mrs. Greenleaf, January 17, 1892,



*Presbyterian Teachers and Pastors Conference, Springville, Utah, August 1903. These annual meetings provided opportunities for missionaries to meet socially and to discuss educational and theological issues. Seated front right are George W. Martin and wife Matilda. Martin served as pastor at Manti from 1879 until his death in 1919. Photo courtesy of Giovale Library.*

Territory. Thousands of Mormon men and women received a sound educational foundation in Presbyterian schools that enabled them to become productive citizens in a variety of civic, business, and professional vocations. Moreover, their interaction with Presbyterian teachers and ministers broadened their perspectives on “outsiders” and in turn helped Presbyterians to appreciate the quality and potential of Mormon youth.<sup>122</sup> D. H. Christensen, who later became a leading Mormon educator in Utah, attended the Presbyterian school in Manti as a child. He credited the denominational schools with providing an

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RG 105-4-2, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>122</sup>For an excellent summary of the impact of denominational schools on Mormon education, see Charles S. Peterson, “A New Commu-

impetus to encourage Latter-day Saints to improve their schools, noting that they stimulated an enrichment of the public school curriculum to include such studies as music, art, Latin, geometry, and algebra. Christensen concluded by saying, "A sense of justice and fairness, and a feeling of gratitude impel me to make acknowledgement of the efficient and devoted service of that splendid body of men and women that constituted the teaching force. They not only gave the inspiration of example, an inspiration which has in my opinion moved our public schools forward at least a decade, but they performed a worthy part in producing a generation of men and women that reflect well on their native state."<sup>123</sup>

Beyond the issue of Presbyterian parochial schools, ward and stake minutes suggest that the Mormon priesthood was neither as despotic as Presbyterians alleged nor as democratic as Mormons contended. Reality lay somewhere in between the two extremes. That Mormon authorities exerted considerable influence over the lives of their constituents is undeniable. That they held absolute sway at all times and in all places is unrealistic. Church members' response to official pronouncements varied from willing or grudging acceptance to outspoken opposition.

Mormon sources abound with references to incidents of uncontrolled vandalism not only perpetrated on "outsiders" but on their own members as well. A woman in Salt Lake City complained in 1874 that she had been subjected "to numerous petty annoyances, such as having the fence broken down, the gate lifted from its hinges, and profane sentences around the premises."<sup>124</sup> In 1879, a Mormon bishop reported that he had "labored with the young men in my ward until I am wearied, and now I inform of the swearers before a Justice and have them fined."<sup>125</sup> About the same time, the *Logan Leader* lamented the unchecked "hooliganism" that negatively impacted the community. "Young men and boys stand around in the evenings smoking, swearing, and fighting and the larger boys tear down fences, carry off gates, and overturn bridges. In the early evening [they] congregate at

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nity: Mormon Teachers and the Separation of Church and State in Utah's Territorial Schools," *Utah State Historical Quarterly*, Winter 1980, 292–311.

<sup>123</sup>D. H. Christensen, "Mission Schools in Utah," *Utah Educational Review* 8 (November 1913): 13–14.

<sup>124</sup>"Local News," *Deseret Evening News*, January 31, 1874, 3.

<sup>125</sup>Box Elder Stake Priesthood Minutes, January 4, 1879.

convenient points to insult people who may be obliged to pass their chosen localities.”<sup>126</sup> In Mendon, Church leaders discussed how to deal with the problem of boys “who were in the habit of stealing; one boy has broken into our Bishop’s Storehouse and stolen wheat there from, now what shall we do with him and others?”<sup>127</sup> At American Fork in 1883, Bishop William Bromley stated that “there was one evil in this ward that should be checked. Our children are running loose in the streets.”<sup>128</sup>

Bishops expressed frustration at their inability to enforce other aspects of Church discipline in their local communities. In Box Elder, the bishop quoted a number of problems beyond his control. “It appears to me that the designs of man is [sic] that the Holy Priesthood shall not rule, I have much difficulty in the ward about dancing; we have apostate fiddlers and many who will not be controlled in these matters and I have much trouble.” Others spoke along the same lines.<sup>129</sup> The minutes also contain numerous references to a failure to attend meetings or tithe and reports of excessive drinking, all of which, despite efforts by the ward teachers and the bishops, remained unchecked.<sup>130</sup>

Mormon bishops sometimes found their authority questioned even by devoted LDS members. At a Cache Stake conference in 1879, twenty-two people complained that the bishop was too harsh in dealing with apostasy and controlled water rights in ways that the people found unfair. After a lengthy meeting, in which the bishop apologized if he had wronged anyone and asked for forgiveness, “most of the brethren forgave the bishop and asked his forgiveness and some met each other half way and extended the hand of fellowship.” After the bishop agreed

<sup>126</sup>“A Grave Question,” *Logan Leader*, November 13, 1879, 2. See also “Hoodlumism,” *Deseret Evening News*, May 13, 1881, 2, which reports similar problems in Salt Lake City.

<sup>127</sup>Mendon Ward, Priesthood Meeting Minutes, June 6, 1888.

<sup>128</sup>American Fork Ward, Priesthood Meeting Minutes, December 10, 1883. See also Mendon Ward, Sacrament Meeting Minutes, September 24, 1893.

<sup>129</sup>Box Elder Stake, Priesthood Minutes, March 2, 1879. In 1885, the problem remained unsolved.

<sup>130</sup>See, for example, American Fork Ward, Teachers Quorum Minutes, August 6, 1874, April 2, 1878, October 11, 1879; Moroni Ward, Priesthood Meeting Minutes, January 4, 1883.



to “meet all the obligations required for settlement,” the people voted unanimously to extend forgiveness.<sup>131</sup> In Monroe, Bishop Thomas Cooper resigned because a number of the brethren had brought charges against him at a recent priesthood meeting. “The bishop said that people who brought charges did not understand the true condition of things. A vote of thanks was tendered for his services.”<sup>132</sup>

On other occasions, Church members engaged in animated discussions about such subjects as free schools, liquor licenses, and dances. Sometimes they were unable to reach a consensus and left the matter for future consideration. At still other times, after airing their different positions, they achieved a compromise.<sup>133</sup> Records also indicate that bishops often preferred persuasion to arbitrary enforcement of authority. Bishop Marriner Merrill in Richmond “didn’t counsel the Teachers to over persuade any to be baptized, but give them their own time letting them to be the judge whether they could live to the covenants required.”<sup>134</sup> In dealing with members who failed to pay tithing, Merrill told his ward teachers that he “had thought of spreading their names publicly, but did not know as it would be productive of good results, thought the teachers had better treat & instruct them kindly in hopes that they would see their folly.”<sup>135</sup> At a Mendon sacrament meeting, Brother John Smith, visiting from Logan, preached: “We as elders advocate our principals [sic] we should do so persuasively and not by coercion, we should be obedient saints as God requires.”<sup>136</sup> When a church member in Brigham City complained that boys were throwing rocks at his house and quarrelling on his premises, his bishop counseled the complainant “to be kind to the children and do the best you can.”<sup>137</sup>

In other ways, primary sources provide insight into the diversity of relationships between Presbyterians and Latter-day Saints. Apart

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<sup>131</sup>Cache Stake Minutes, December 6, 1879. For a similar event, see Brigham City Ward, Teachers Meeting, March 5, 1887.

<sup>132</sup>Monroe Ward, Conference Minutes, January 21, 1891.

<sup>133</sup>See, for example, Payson Ward, Teachers Quorum Minutes, December 23, 1873; May 27, 1881, and July 16, 1882.

<sup>134</sup>Richmond Ward, Teachers Quorum Minutes, September 6, 1875.

<sup>135</sup>Richmond Ward, Teachers Quorum Minutes, February 11, 1876.

<sup>136</sup>Mendon Ward, Sacrament Meeting Minutes, September 24, 1893.

<sup>137</sup>Brigham City Ward, [Ward] Teachers Meeting Minutes, June 12, 1892.

from the public arena of polemical discourse, the two parties often spoke kindly of each other. While critiquing Mormonism as a theological system, Presbyterians were careful to distinguish between believers and their religious organization. Thomas F. Day, a minister in American Fork, emphasized his appreciation of local Mormons: "I say nothing against our neighbors who sincerely embrace this system as their hope in life and death. I speak only of the system itself."<sup>138</sup> Another minister acknowledged that "the Mormon people, as a class, are honest, industrious, devoted to their religion from principle; many of them having made heroic sacrifices for their religion. I have found among them hospitable, generous people."<sup>139</sup> Even Robert McNiece admitted that "it is only just to say that, scattered all through the Mormon ranks, are hundreds of devout, worthy, kind-hearted, hospitable people, who came to Utah from England, Scotland, and the Scandinavian countries, bringing their Bibles and Christian sentiments with them."<sup>140</sup>

In similar fashion, Mormons often spoke appreciatively of other religious traditions. At a sacrament meeting in Mendon Ward, Counselor John Donaldson referred to "the history of John Knox, Martin Luther, and other reformers, they were inspired of God to perform the labors which they performed, also that Mohammed was a true Prophet and was inspired to perform the labor which he done

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<sup>138</sup>Thomas F. Day, "Mormon Perversion of the Bible and of True Religion as an Obstacle to Christian Progress in Utah," *Christian Progress in Utah: The Discussion of the Christian Convention Held in Salt Lake City, April 3rd, 4th, and 5th, 1888* (Salt Lake City: Parsons, Kendall & Company, 1888), 38–39.

<sup>139</sup>George W. Gallagher, "Rev. Gallagher Explains," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 19, 1879, 4. Gallagher adds: "But their good qualities are not due to Mormonism, for that religion teaches them to persecute and hate those who are opposed to Mormon polygamy and the Mormon priesthood."

<sup>140</sup>Robert G. McNiece, "Mormonism," *Presbyterian Review* 2 (1881): 341. He continued, "It must be remembered, however, that only a minority of the Mormon people are in polygamy. So far as the rest are concerned, the writer rejoices to believe that among them, in spite of the terrible errors and evil tendencies of Mormonism, there are great numbers of upright and worthy men and women who are still influenced by the wholesome teaching of their Christian ancestors" (345).

[sic].”<sup>141</sup> Addressing the Sevier Stake quarterly conference, Apostle John Henry Smith praised the Protestant reformers and said “that we should honor and respect and appreciate the work done by them even though incomplete.”<sup>142</sup> On another occasion, he told attendees, “We can learn many lessons from the denominations of the world such as the observance of the Sabbath, the attendance at Sacramental meetings, and observance of fast days.”<sup>143</sup> Apostle Moses Thatcher, speaking on Catholicism, “deprecated the idea of any one finding fault with another’s religion, and in referring to the Catholic one he did not wish to do so to offend anyone.” In his judgment, Catholics “were more devoted to their system than we are to ours.”<sup>144</sup> A Mormon elder returning from a mission to the U.S. South spoke favorably about “the good order of the different denominations of Christendom” and stated that “it would be a good thing for us to pattern after.”<sup>145</sup>

More informally, Presbyterians and Mormons discussed theology on an individual basis. Incidental references in primary sources suggest that these were not uncommon occurrences. Latter-day Saints loved to discuss theology, and Presbyterians relished opportunities to challenge Mormon doctrines. American Fork minister Thomas Day noted in his journal that he had “a profitless discussion with a young Mormon at Pleasant Grove about ‘laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.’”<sup>146</sup> A Mormon elder from Mt. Pleasant described a conversation he had with two Presbyterian students from Wasatch Academy. They asserted that Presbyterianism was based solely on the Bible while he argued that Latter-day Saints based their

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<sup>141</sup>Mendon Ward, Sacrament Meeting, December 16, 1883.

<sup>142</sup>John Henry Smith, quoted in Sevier Stake, Quarterly Conference Minutes, February 18, 1894.

<sup>143</sup>John Henry Smith, quoted in Cache Stake, Quarterly Conference Minutes, April 30, 1887.

<sup>144</sup>Moses Thatcher, Cache Stake, Quarterly Conference Minutes, October 16, 1881.

<sup>145</sup>Mendon Ward, Sacrament Meeting Minutes, January 23, 1887. See also Cache Stake, Quarterly Conference Minutes, April 30, 1887, for similar sentiments.

<sup>146</sup>Thomas F. Day, Journal, March 25, 1883, quoted in Clarence B. Day, “Gentle Heretic,” typescript, 1978, San Francisco Theological Seminary Archives.

faith on “more recent revelation.”<sup>147</sup> Sometimes the discussions centered on common values rather than disagreements. In 1885 a Mormon elder in Payson related a conversation that he recently had with the Presbyterian minister in which they shared concerns about “Sabbath breaking, profanity, and other vices in our midst.”<sup>148</sup>

Visiting Presbyterian dignitaries frequently reported friendly receptions from Mormon villagers. Presbyterian Mission Secretary G. S. Boardman described his visit to Manti in 1883. “On arrival, a cow bell was rung throughout the streets that a stranger from New York would preach. The beautiful chapel was soon filled with Mormons, apostates, gentiles, and mission scholars. At the close of the service they kindly spoke to us, and one of them, introduced us to his several wives.” He had a similar experience in Cache Valley. They were told that, on Sunday morning, they should not expect an audience in church because the people were all Mormons, and planned to speak to the children in Sunday School. “We agreed to the arrangement, but to our surprise the chapel was filled, and the order was given to preach, because all present were English-speaking residents.”<sup>149</sup> Rev. Henry Gage visited various mission points in southern Utah in 1883. While emphasizing the difficulty of missionary work in Utah, Gage reported that he “preached *five* times, always to Mormon audiences and *crowded* houses. The people listened as attentively and respectfully as any eastern audience.”<sup>150</sup>

Presbyterian missionaries frequently relied on Mormon hospitality during the course of their journeys. On a trip to a presbytery meeting in Springville in 1880, a minister told how he and his wife stopped along the way to seek overnight accommodations. Local residents directed them to the bishop’s home where they were warmly welcomed. “Of course, I do not insinuate that all the bishops of the Latter-day Saints are alike. This much I have reason to believe, that all, and indeed many of them, are as kind and hospitable as our host, and we had the best the house afforded, even though we each took our

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<sup>147</sup>Mt. Pleasant South Ward, Sacramento Meeting Minutes, October 20, 1912.

<sup>148</sup>Payson Ward, Sacramento Minutes, September 28, 1890.

<sup>149</sup>“The New Northwest,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 12 (December 1883): 268–69.

<sup>150</sup>Henry B. Gage, “Utah,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 12 (October 1883): 236.

turn in the presence of the assembled house other travelers included, in performing our morning ablutions.”<sup>151</sup>

Even though Presbyterians considered it sacrilegious to permit Mormons to speak in denominational chapels or schools,<sup>152</sup> Latter-day Saints routinely opened their meeting houses and school rooms to “sectarian” clergymen for religious services. At Kanosh in 1881, a Presbyterian minister from Fillmore spoke at the Mormon schoolhouse which had been secured through a request from a local board member. The Mormon audience listened attentively to the sermon and musical selections from a Presbyterian choir, but some noted afterwards that the service “was an offering again of dry husks that many of them had cast away forty years ago.”<sup>153</sup> In 1888 Bishop Charles Adams of Parowan granted permission to a team of four Presbyterian ministers, led by Robert McNiece, to preach at the Mormon meetinghouse. According to the *Deseret Evening News*, “The remarks were such as could be fully endorsed by the Latter-day Saints. The singing by the reverend gentlemen was very fine indeed.” McNiece noted that he and his brethren had been kindly treated in all the Mormon settlements they had visited.<sup>154</sup>

Mormons also attended worship services when the Presbytery of Utah held its quarterly meetings and offered accommodations for

<sup>151</sup>“Home Missions: Utah,” *The Interior*, April 8, 1880, 2.

<sup>152</sup>“Josephite Mormons” were members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, headquartered in Independence, and led by Joseph Smith III, son of Joseph Smith Jr. When they requested permission to preach in Presbyterian houses of worship, the policy announced by the Presbytery of Utah was emphatic: “Chapels not to be given to Josephites.” In 1880 and again in 1882 the presbytery confirmed: “With reference to the use of our churches and chapels to the sect known as Josephites [the policy] is hereby unanimously reaffirmed.” The reason given was that “these buildings have been dedicated to the Gospel of our Divine Savior, & we do not desire to have them used for propagating the Gospel of any false prophet.” Minutes of Utah Presbytery, March 12, 1880; see also *ibid.*, August 21, 1882, both in Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>153</sup>“Correspondence” *Deseret Evening News*, November 29, 1881, 4. See also “A Mormon Fraud,” *Salt Lake Tribune* December 14, 1881, 4, which questions some details of *Deseret News* account.

<sup>154</sup>“Preachers in Parowan,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 18, 1888, 2.

the visitors. At a meeting in Manti in 1879, the Presbytery of Utah reported that “the hall has been crowded at our evening meetings, and the people seem to be much interested in what is so entirely new to them.”<sup>155</sup> McNiece described a presbytery worship service in Springville in 1880 where the building was “packed like a herring box” with nearly 400 people half of whom were Mormons.<sup>156</sup> The following year in Mt. Pleasant, the *Salt Lake Tribune* noted that the residents received the members of presbytery “with open arms, throwing open their houses and manifesting the most generous hospitality.”<sup>157</sup> In 1886, when the presbytery met in Brigham City, commissioners were greeted by a brass band. One minister reported, “We received the greatest kindness from the people during our sojourn of nearly a week among them, and crowds of four and five hundred attended the Presbyterian meetings.”<sup>158</sup> At a presbytery meeting in 1887, Manti citizens opened their homes and provided meals and lodging to commissioners for two weeks. According to the local pastor, “The purveyors and waiters were all Mormons, who did their work in a very acceptable manner. . . . Mormon authorities put at our disposal their commodious Tabernacle.”<sup>159</sup>

Nor was the hospitality one sided. Presbyterians reached out to their Mormon neighbors and participated in a variety of social and religious venues. In 1884 Mrs. Ada Day, wife of the pastor in American Fork, described one such event. “Last week we invited some fifty or sixty of our friends and neighbors to spend the evening with us so-

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<sup>155</sup>“Utah Presbytery,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 20, 1879, 3. See also “Utah Presbytery,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 2, 1887, 4.

<sup>156</sup>Robert McNiece, Letter to Sheldon Jackson, March 17, 1880, Sheldon Jackson Correspondence, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>157</sup>“The Presbytery of Utah,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 20, 1881, 4.

<sup>158</sup>“Another Grand Meeting at Brigham City,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 16 (October 1886): 232. “The Presbytery of Utah,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 31, 1886, 4, reported that, at a presbytery meeting at Nephi, “some 400 people crowded into the chapel at this Sunday evening service. All remained to the close even though some two hours were taken for the exercises.”

<sup>159</sup>“Report of Presbytery Meeting, August 17-29, 1887,” William M. Paden Collection, Westminster College Archives, Similar meetings were held at Payson and Nephi. See *Salt Lake Tribune*: “Presbytery of Utah,” March 31, 1886, 4, and “Presbytery of Utah,” April 2, 1888, 2.

cially. Forty or more came, some who had never been in our house before, most of them Mormons. Many of them were polygamists, and some brought two of their wives with them. Misses W. and I. were with us, and we all exerted ourselves to entertain with books, pictures, music, conversation and refreshments. They were unused to spending an evening in that way, and evidently appreciated it. Some of the ladies, upon whom Miss S. called this evening, told her it was the most delightful evening they had ever spent.”<sup>160</sup>

Presbyterians also invited Latter-day Saints to attend social gatherings in local churches. In 1891 the Presbyterian Church in Logan held a summer festival featuring “salads and sandwiches, coffee and cake, jellies and berries and ice cream and a program of music all for a nominal fee of 15 cents.” The *Logan Journal* praised the host minister and his wife for their hospitality and concluded, “Contact with our fellow creatures is the best education afforded mortal man and anything that tends to that end is always deserving of encouragement.”<sup>161</sup>

Death often caused Mormons and Presbyterians to forget their differences. In 1893 Mormons in Manti invited Presbyterians to hold the funeral services of one of their female missionaries in the local tabernacle, and the service was attended by numerous Mormons.<sup>162</sup> When the Reverend Galen M. Hardy, missionary and teacher of the Presbyterian Church in St. George, died suddenly in 1899, “in the absence of a minister and any adherents of his own faith, Mormon bishop Andrus and others of his church kindly conducted the funeral service, in which he was assisted by Presbyterian laymen.”<sup>163</sup> George W. Martin related that he had been called to conduct two funerals “of more than ordinary interest.” The first, in Ephraim, was that of an aged lawyer from Sioux City, Iowa. LDS Bishop Canute Peterson spoke first, followed by Martin. According to Martin, “The Mormon audience gave the closest attention.” The second funeral was conducted for an ac-

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<sup>160</sup>“Utah,” *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 13 (December 1884): 283.

<sup>161</sup>“Presbyterian Church Festival,” *Logan Journal*, June 20, 1891, 1. Subsequently the Presbyterians held a “literary and social evening” and invited the community to attend. “Local Points,” *Utah Journal*, May 25, 1895, 8.

<sup>162</sup>*Board of Home Missions Annual Report, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 93, 2, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>163</sup>“The Death of Moderator Hardy,” *The Kinsman*, April 1899, 190, Westminster College Archives.

tress from the East who died following an accident in Manti. The local lodge of Odd-Fellows had charge and services were held in the South Ward Assembly Hall. Martin preached on Psalm 90:12 and several Mormon bishops also spoke briefly. "At present," said Martin, "it is the fashion here [1893] for non-Mormons to have Mormon speakers participate in such services."<sup>164</sup>

Other ministers reported similar experiences. In 1891 a service at the Presbyterian Church in Logan was conducted by Rev. E. W. Greene after which Apostle Moses Thatcher "made some very appropriate remarks. The choir rendered some sweet and solemn songs, and the services ended with prayer from the Rev. Mr. Campbell."<sup>165</sup> When a nine-year-old child in Hyrum died of a kidney disease, Mormons and Presbyterians conducted the funeral under joint auspices. "Eloquent and appropriate" sermons were delivered by representatives from both traditions. "Many of those present remarked that it was one of the most impressive funerals they ever attended."<sup>166</sup>

In contrast to Mormon stereotyping of Presbyterian ministers as "plotting and mendacious priests," most clergymen in Utah led quiet unassuming lives, ministering to their small flocks and participating as responsible citizens. Living on small incomes and devoid of many amenities available to them in eastern parishes, they served in fields that had a low priority in denominational mission strategies. While a few of their colleagues attained notoriety combating Mormonism by writing polemical articles and preaching inflammatory sermons, most ministers were more circumspect in their behavior.<sup>167</sup> Those who came proclaiming a positive gospel and seeking opportunities for intercultural activities rather than engaging in anti-Mormon polemics, found more receptive audiences than their fire-breathing

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<sup>164</sup>Manti Presbyterian Church Session Records, April 5, 1898, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>165</sup>"At Rest," *Logan Journal*, January 21, 1891, 4.

<sup>166</sup>"Union Funeral," *Logan Journal*, April 29, 1893, 8.

<sup>167</sup>William R. Campbell, who served as minister in Mendon from 1889 to 1897, attacked Mormonism from the pulpit and in anti-Mormon publications. To Mormons, Campbell epitomized the arrogance and insensitivity of Presbyterian clergy who came to Utah with closed minds and sharp tongues. He experienced strained relationships with Cache Valley residents throughout his Utah ministry. See Mendon Ward, Sacrament Meeting Minutes, December 11, 1895.



brethren. This statement by Charles W. Penrose best captures the attitude of Mormons toward Presbyterian missionaries: "If the Presbyterians have something better than we have for a creed, let them show it to us. If we are in the clouds of error, they should try to disperse the mists with gospel light instead of a bayonet or a club. No missionary who comes to Utah with the sincere object of converting us by fair argument or prayerful persuasion will meet with any opposition different from his own mode of procedure. He may run against stiff reasoning which he will find difficult to controvert, but will not receive anything contrary to kind treatment."<sup>168</sup>

Latter-day Saints had high regard for George W. Martin, whose missionary career in Manti lasted from 1880 until his death in 1919. Martin never encountered opposition similar to that reported by McMillan in nearby Mt. Pleasant or Gillespie in Brigham City. "I do not often fight Mormonism distinctly," he said. "The time seems required to preach the man-humbling, God-exalting doctrines of the Word, and when they are truly accepted, Mormonism is effectually disposed of."<sup>169</sup> Martin recognized that isolated Mormons were reticent to relate to strangers regardless of religious orientation and that only by establishing bonds of friendship and trust could fears and prejudice be overcome. He urged that teachers and pastors spend time becoming acquainted with Latter-day Saints rather than coming in for a year or two and moving on to more attractive mission fields. "[Mormons] are suspicious of strangers. Send us men, young men, men willing to stay and study these people until they are understood; then the people are found to be as accessible as unbelievers anywhere."<sup>170</sup>

When Martin and his wife arrived in Manti in 1880, they rented a house and concentrated on developing friendships in the community. Mrs. Martin held a Sunday School class in their home and combined instruction in sewing and embroidering with Bible readings. In

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<sup>168</sup>Charles W. Penrose, "Christian Consistency," *Deseret Evening News*, April 24, 1878, 2.

<sup>169</sup>"Utah," *Presbyterian Home Missionary* 12 (October 1883): 284.

<sup>170</sup>George M. Martin, Martin Papers, Synodical Missionary Report, February 28, 1886, Westminster College Archives. See also George M. Martin, Letter to Mrs. F. E. Haines, June 29, 1880, RG 305-15-47, Presbyterian Historical Society, which urges that the new school teacher come to Manti as early as possible because "these people are afraid of strangers."

addition, Mr. Martin conducted a Friday evening meeting for Sunday School and day students and their parents. He devoted part of the evening “to reading, fancy work and conversations, while an hour [was] given to a familiar talk on some topic such as “The Atmosphere,” “Electricity,” &c.” On one occasion Martin spoke on “The Solar System” and illustrated his lecture “by the aid of a large metallic globe, kindly loaned by the Mormon High School Teacher.”<sup>171</sup> Martin later sponsored a Thanksgiving Day public service, the first of its kind in Manti, where “twenty or thirty [attended] and the interest was very encouraging.”<sup>172</sup>

While some Presbyterian ministers reported difficulty in acquiring property on which to locate churches, Martin readily secured a prominent lot on the main street of Manti. On that site, the Presbyterians constructed an attractive church made of stone from the same quarry that the Mormons had used to erect the Manti Temple. When Martin dedicated the church in 1881, he reported that “the audience was principally Mormons.”<sup>173</sup> Despite their outsider status, Martin and his wife were respected for their personal integrity and commitment to their Christian faith. A Mormon woman, who had attended the Presbyterian school in Manti as a child, described the Martins as “wonderful examples of people who stuck with their principles who, for all the minister’s austerity—he never slipped out of his role as pastor—made friends if not converts.”<sup>174</sup>

Other ministers had similar relationships with Mormons. George W. Leonard, pastor of the Springville Presbyterian Church from 1877 to 1885, won respect as a man of integrity and deep religious conviction. Operating initially from a small adobe house, Leonard was subsequently able to erect an attractive chapel. Its dedication services in 1880 were “crowded by a courteous and appreciative audi-

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<sup>171</sup>George M. Martin, Synodical Missionary Report, Martin Papers, February 28, 1880, Westminster College Archives.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid. At a Columbus Day celebration in 1892, Martin gave the opening prayer. San Pete Stake, Tabernacle Meeting, October 23, 1892. Presbyterians and Mormons held a joint Thanksgiving service in Parowan in 1894. “Thanksgiving, Prohibition,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 5, 1894, 8.

<sup>173</sup>George W. Martin, “Utah,” *Our Mission Field*, January 11, 1882, 289.

<sup>174</sup>Quoted in Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 283.

ence who were unanimous in their expressions of delight with the exercise of the evening.”<sup>175</sup> Leonard reported that the mission in Springville was flourishing with eighty-five students in the day school and about a hundred in the Sunday School. Attendance at church services was “so large as to fill the main room every Sunday evening so that there is already a demand for a larger building.”<sup>176</sup>

An advocate of temperance, Leonard drafted a petition asking Springville’s city council to pass a prohibition ordinance. He carried the petition to every family in the village and succeeded in getting all but ten to sign. Backed by community support, the ordinance passed.<sup>177</sup> Leonard also held temperance meetings that drew large numbers of townspeople. At one meeting, Leonard reported that “the chapel was filled much beyond its seating capacity, and it was very gratifying to note that a large number of young men were present.”<sup>178</sup>

In an article written for a denominational publication, Leonard presented a counterpoint to the anti-Mormon literature of some of his colleagues in ministry. He spoke appreciatively of Mormon virtues and acknowledged that he found “much truth in their religious dogmas” and commended them for their “business energy and sagacity in their handling of religious and other affairs.” As a result, he was subjected to a vicious editorial attack in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. After cataloging Mormon vices, the *Tribune* editor concluded that Leonard was either “sadly lacking in information about Utah affairs, in which case he ought not to have written; or he is so weakly charitable that he is willing to overlook an ocean of evil for the previously known rill of truth which empties into it, in which case he is unfit to deal with such a subject as Mormonism.”<sup>179</sup>

At times, Leonard had confrontations with Springville officials but neither held grudges long against each other. After Congress passed the Edmunds Acts in 1882 forbidding polygamy, local officials lowered the American flag to half-staff on the Fourth of July. A Civil War veteran and staunch patriot, Leonard deemed the act an insult to

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<sup>175</sup>“Springville,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 6, 1880, 4.

<sup>176</sup>“The Presbytery of Utah,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 21, 1880, 4.

<sup>177</sup>Mary Cotter, ed., *Springville, Utah Community Presbyterian Church: One Hundred Years of Worship and Witness, 1877-1977* (N.p., n.d.), not paginated, Westminster College Archives.

<sup>178</sup>“Springville,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 21, 1883, 4.

<sup>179</sup>“Sentimental Charity,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 24, 1882, 2.

the American government and demanded that the flag be raised to full staff. Without argument, local officials complied.<sup>180</sup> At Leonard's funeral in 1885, the church could not hold all those who wished to attend. According to an eyewitness, "there were few dry eyes in the crowded congregation of old and young."<sup>181</sup> Leonard's son recalled that "the universal testimony of those who knew him, Mormon or Gentile, was that he was a good man. People said that to me for 30 years, 'Your father was a good man.'"<sup>182</sup>

When Claton Rice experienced social isolation as a Presbyterian minister in St. George, he ruminated on the dynamics of his minority status in a small community. "One day I remembered how I looked at the first Mormon missionaries who had come to our Nebraska town. I wondered if they were normal beings. Now some of their people were acting as though they thought exactly that way about me. . . . The question as to why I should come into a town where I was not welcome, forced itself upon me frequently during my days in Dixie. After all, these people had their own religion. They had a right to choose the wrong and there were churches [that] had wanted me as their pastor."<sup>183</sup> Over time, Rice inaugurated a ministry of friendship evangelism in the community. He reached out to a group of young boys who had little to do except to roam the streets. He formed a club and organized educational and recreational activities that created bonds of friendship. An outstanding athlete, Rice served as captain of the local baseball team and became widely accepted as part of the community. When he left St George for another parish, one of the Mormon bishops gave him a ring that he continued to wear in later years. Engraved inside the ring were the words "St. George Friends."<sup>184</sup>

Later, while serving as a missionary pastor in Parowan, Rice was anxious to begin construction of a new church. Unsuccessful at securing volunteers to excavate a basement, he took a pick and shovel and began digging. After he had worked alone for a few days, a Mormon joined him. "I ain't going to see you do this by yourself," he said, "even if I ain't a presbyr." Several days later, a second man appeared unan-

<sup>180</sup>Cotter, *Springville Presbyterian Church*, not paginated.

<sup>181</sup>"A Minister's Funeral," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 28, 1885, 4.

<sup>182</sup>Cotter, *Springville Presbyterian Church*, not paginated.

<sup>183</sup>Rice, *Ambassador to the Saints*, 62-63.

<sup>184</sup>Claton Rice, Letter to George W. Martin, 1911, Westminster College Archives.

nounced with a team and a scraper, and other Mormons joined in to help. The local bishop took part in the dedicatory service even though some of his people thought he had exceeded the boundaries of friendliness.<sup>185</sup>

Sometimes Mormons found it advantageous to have a Presbyterian minister in town in time of special needs. In Kaysville, a long-standing land dispute between residents in two sections of the town generated hard feelings between the two groups. In the early 1890s, they began an intense baseball rivalry that on several occasions erupted into heated arguments over charges of biased officiating. To remedy the situation, they called upon the resident Presbyterian clergyman to umpire their games "so that there would be no question of fairness." Although his theology might be suspect, no one questioned the minister's eyesight or his neutrality regarding the outcome of the contests.<sup>186</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The last decade of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of significant changes in relationships between Mormons and Presbyterians. Under the guidance of Church President Wilford Woodruff, Latter-day Saints took actions that marked the beginning of their entrance into the mainstream of American political and religious life. They withdrew official permission for the formation of new plural marriages, disbanded their Mormon political party and encouraged members to join one of the national parties, and established a free tax-supported public school system predicated on the principle of separation of church and state. At the same time, a new generation of Presbyterian churchmen was emerging for whom religious enmity and strife were no longer palatable. For them, compromise rather than confrontation seemed more appropriate given the changing social conditions in Utah and the rest of the country.<sup>187</sup> Rearguard efforts by veteran Utah Presbyterian clergymen to keep the battle lines intact proved to be the last gasps of a dying cause. After mounting a successful campaign in 1898 to deny Brigham H.

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<sup>185</sup>Rice, *Ambassador to the Saints*, 197.

<sup>186</sup>Carol Collett, *Kaysville, Our Town: A History* (Kaysville, Utah: n.pub., 1976), 110.

<sup>187</sup>Correspondence between the missionaries in Utah and the Home Mission officials indicates that the denomination was moving away from

Roberts his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, a vigorous and protracted effort to remove Apostle Reed Smoot from his seat in the U.S. Senate in 1904 failed. Subsequent efforts to pressure Congress to pass an Anti-Polygamy Amendment failed to generate sustained denominational or public support.<sup>188</sup>

Writing in 1893 to denominational leaders in New York on his attitude toward Utah statehood, which Utah achieved three years later, J. A. L. Smith, Presbyterian minister and educator in Springville, Utah, said:

I am not alone by any means, among our workers when I say that we fear no bad results whatsoever. I believe the Mormon people on the whole, and with the exception of only a few “mossbacks” who no longer have any great influence, are willing and anxious to do the right things and will behave better after the responsibility of self government is placed upon them than before. . . . We have opposed them in the past, and consistently, because of their practices. They understand this, but they cannot understand why we keep up the fight on the old grounds when they, with few exceptions, have relinquished those things which occasioned the trouble.<sup>189</sup>

Even Robert McNiece, a vocal critic of Mormonism for more

the anti-Mormonism that had dominated its policies in the nineteenth century. George F. McAfee, Letter to Robert G. McNiece, October 7, 1899, Westminster College Archives. For the history of these changing attitudes, see Richard H. Morton, “‘Means of Grace’: Directions in Presbyterian Home Mission Work, 1870–1885,” *American Presbyterians*, 72 (Summer 1994): 123–34.

<sup>188</sup>See Davis Bitton, “The B. H. Roberts Case of 1898–1900,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 25 (Winter 1957): 27–46, and Thomas G. Alexander and James B. Allen, *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing, 1984). In 1896 the Presbytery of Utah issued a controversial pamphlet, “Ten Reasons Why We Cannot Fellowship with Mormons.” Widely circulated, it attracted considerable attention in the eastern United States. Minutes of the Presbytery of Utah, April 4, 1896, Presbyterian Historical Society. For a comprehensive survey of women’s involvement in anti-polygamy activities, see Joan Smyth Iversen, *The Antipolygamy Controversy in U.S. Women’s Movements, 1880–1925* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997).

<sup>189</sup>Livingston Smith, Letter to George F. McAfee, December 20, 1893, RG 111-4-10, Presbyterian Historical Society. See also *Report of the*

than twenty years, grudgingly admitted that the days of hostile relationships between Presbyterians and Mormons were over. In an address delivered in 1903, McNiece lightheartedly acknowledged what he termed “a new era of peace and good will” in Utah. “The difference between 1878 and 1903 is very great. . . . One of the practical proofs that we have a new era of peace here is the fact that the editor of the Deseret News [Charles W. Penrose] and myself have shaken hands! (Laughter). Furthermore, I am a regular subscriber for the News. (Laughter). I don’t know how to get along without that great authority on systematic theology, Greek exegesis, and Constitutional law. (Much Laughter).”<sup>190</sup>

In similar fashion, Mormons displayed an awareness of changing attitudes toward their religious tradition. In 1893 Cache Stake Patriarch James G. Willis spoke of the great contrast of sympathy which exists towards us as a people than that which existed five or ten years ago. It is marvelous and we can recently see the hand of the Almighty.”<sup>191</sup> George W. Bean, patriarch of Sevier Stake, noted in 1895 that “formerly great bitterness existed in the hearts of the people towards the Latter Day Saints” but now he observed “a spirit of inquiring as regards our Religious, Social and business relation and even a desire on the part of many to come out to this western country.”<sup>192</sup> At a Sevier Stake quarterly conference in 1897, an elder proclaimed, “Until very recently the world as a whole has hated and despise us as a people; now however the sentiment has changed and the world begins to concede to us the rights which belong to us, and to realize that for these many years our motives have been misunder-

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*Superintendent of School Work of the Board of Home Missions and Woman’s Executive Committee, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1901, 14, Presbyterian Historical Society, and William M. Paden, “What to Do,” typescript, n.d., Paden Papers, San Francisco Theological Seminary Archives, San Anselmo, California.

<sup>190</sup>Robert McNiece, “Twenty-Five Years of Christian Progress in Utah,” August 1903, 15, holograph, Westminster College Archives.

<sup>191</sup>Mendon Ward, Sacramento Meeting Minutes, September 17, 1893. See also Cedar City Ward Sacramento Meeting Minutes, January 3, 1892.

<sup>192</sup>Sevier Stake, Quarterly Conference Minutes, November 28, 1895. See also Mendon Ward, Sacramento Meeting Minutes, November 25, 1894.

# HELP US BUILD A Christian College in Deseret

To Save the Youth of Utah to Christ and the Church.

## Sheldon Jackson College,



The Proposed Sheldon Jackson Presbyterian College  
AT SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

GOVERNOR JOHN KAMM, LL. D., PRESIDENT.  
ROBERT H. SMITH, LL. D., HONORARY FACULTY.  
OFFICERS: REV. JOSHUA MCCLAIN, SECRETARY;  
GILL R. PENTON, TREASURER.  
TRUSTEES OF THE COLLEGE:  
— Rev. W. E. Whipple, D. D., Rev. Geo. W. Merrill, Seth H. Patten, Otho S. Poynton, Henry G. McWhorter, Hon. Wm. M. Palmer, D. D., Rev. Sheldon Jackson, D. D., Gen. C. M. Stansbury, W. J. Brown, Edw. H. G. Stephens, Joseph H. Wickersham, N. K. L. Thompson, John D. McNeill, D. D., Rev. Josiah McClain, Col. Wm. M. Dwyer, Walter Sherman, Hon. Geo. A. Smith, Hon. Hugh H. McConery, George Smith, LL. D.

Help must come from without Utah to establish a stable college at Salt Lake City, to fight the battle of Truth and Reason for Christ and the Church.

Sheldon Jackson College is no new thing. It was first proposed by Presbyterians in Utah in 1871. In 1895, Dr. Sheldon Jackson, the first Presbyterian minister in Utah, and since famous as the agent of the United States Government in Alaska, pledged himself to give \$50,000 to found this College. Citizens of Salt Lake City donated a tract of land affording a magnificent site for future college buildings, and the work of higher education by and

for Christian scholars in Utah was begun. At the present time the College is housed in the building of the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, the best quarters to be had but still wholly inadequate to college needs. Before winter sets in the foundation of the Sheldon Jackson College building will be laid, and by the "Temple bequest" provision has been made for a College Church to cost \$20,000.

But to erect the necessary College Building, funds must come from Christian men and women who are willing to help in the redemption of Utah.

**WE APPEAL TO PRESBYTERIANS**

*Advertisement in New York Observer, October 19, 1899. Presbyterians stationed a financial agent in Washington, D.C., to raise money to erect buildings for the new college in Salt Lake City. Its stated purpose was "to educate the youth of the Mormon state in Christian morality as well as for the higher walks of secular life." The campaign failed to generate any significant funds.*



stood and misconstrued.”<sup>193</sup>

Economic considerations played a role in ameliorating relationships between Presbyterians and Mormons. Gentile businessmen, anxious to tap into the growing Utah economy, viewed anti-Mormon polemics as a barrier to improving trading opportunities. Displeased with McNiece’s vitriolic anti-Mormonism and opposition to statehood, the session of First Presbyterian Church in Salt Lake City in 1896 requested and received his resignation and replaced him with a more irenical clergyman, William M. Paden.<sup>194</sup> About the same time, a succession of presidents of Sheldon Jackson College (later Westminster College) found fund-raising in Utah and elsewhere in the country difficult because Presbyterian businessmen were reluctant to contribute to an institution that cultivated an anti-Mormon image.<sup>195</sup>

With a new public school system in place, Presbyterian missionaries were unable to justify the continuation of their parochial day schools. School closures were common in the 1890s; and by the early decades of the twentieth century, only Wasatch Academy in Mt. Pleasant and Westminster College in Salt Lake City remained under Presbyterian auspices. With the demise of the day schools, most of the churches in small towns and villages were forced to close their doors. The only sizable congregations were in metropolitan areas where a sufficient non-Mormon population existed to generate membership growth.<sup>196</sup>

Both Mormons and Presbyterians gradually eliminated pejora-

<sup>193</sup>Sevier Stake, Quarterly Conference Minutes, February 21, 189. See also Charles W. Penrose, “The Late Conference,” *Deseret Evening News*, October 8, 1891, 4, and George Q. Cannon, “Condition of Church and People,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 3, 1894, 4.

<sup>194</sup>“Dr. McNiece’s Proposed Resignation,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 21, 1896, 4; and “Dr. McNiece Resigns,” September 21, 1896, 8.

<sup>195</sup>In 1898, college President John Eaton reported little success in raising money in eastern states. “There was not only indifference,” he lamented, “but a strong disinclination to consider the facts both on part of the press and the pulpit. Americans seemed ashamed to take up anew the struggle with Mormonism.” John Eaton, Letter to E. C. Ray, August 6, 1898, RG 32–32–6, Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>196</sup>As late as 1912, the Synod of Utah had only four self-supporting churches—three in Salt Lake City and one in Ogden—both cities with large Gentile populations. Of the 1,920 communicants in the synod, 1,282 be-

tive language in their publications. No longer did terms like “enemies,” “Gentiles,” “so-called Christians,” “deluded Mormons,” “tyrannical priesthood,” and “Presbyterian devils” sprinkle the pages of books and articles issued from their respective organizations. Mormon periodicals featured articles written by members of other religious traditions in which they explained their main tenets of belief and practice. Instead of personal attacks, the debate between the two groups shifted to discussions of theological differences and eventually to ways of encouraging mutual understanding and cooperation on community improvement projects.<sup>197</sup>

Although Mormons continued to assert the superiority of their unique revelation, they were more charitable regarding denominational truth claims. An Elder Walker in Payson said, “Many people of the world are very sincere in their belief and when they are baptized by sprinkling or pouring they believe they are in a saved condition, they should be respected in their convictions.”<sup>198</sup> Charles Penrose spoke in similar terms. “We do not attempt to say that the different denominations of Christendom have no truth. We do not say that, and we do not say that what truth they have is not of God.”<sup>199</sup> Some Presbyterians were even willing to grant a measure of credence to Mormon theology. William M. Paden described it as “a sort of cross between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism with vestigial marks of paganism, too eclectic to be evangelical and yet too evangelical to be wholly non-Christian.”<sup>200</sup> Given the rhetoric of previous generations, that was quite a concession from a prominent Presbyterian clergyman.

In retrospect, the social dynamics between Presbyterians and Mormons between 1870 and 1900 are difficult to estimate either quantitatively or qualitatively because often they must be extrapo-

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longed to the four self-supporting churches. William M. Paden, “Report to Synod on Mission Work in Utah, 1912,” 2, Paden Papers, Westminster College Archives.

<sup>197</sup>For example, see “The Purpose of Preaching,” *Deseret Evening News*, February 3, 1904, 2.

<sup>198</sup>Payson Ward, Sacramento Meeting Minutes, September 28, 1890.

<sup>199</sup>Charles W. Penrose, “Tabernacle Discourse,” *Deseret Evening News*, February 20, 1904, 25.

<sup>200</sup>William M. Paden, *Is Mormonism Changing?* (Salt Lake City: Frank H. Ivory, 1929), 23.

lated indirectly from a wide variety of sources. On a sliding scale, Mormon responses to Presbyterians ranged from ostracism to minimal interaction to selective acceptance depending on the setting and the attitudes of specific individuals involved. Despite their sincerity and well-meaning efforts, Presbyterians found it difficult to accept their minority status in such a close-knit religious society. Moreover, they greatly underestimated the commitment of Latter-day Saints to their religious tradition. What they attributed to “delusion” was in reality a deep-rooted communal acceptance of a way of life that made it virtually impervious to outside influences.<sup>201</sup>

Mormon resistance to Presbyterian missions is not surprising. Given their geographical isolation, history of persecution, and precarious existence as a new religious movement, one can hardly have expected Mormons to embrace Protestant missionaries as welcome additions to their religious enclave during a tumultuous period of history. While Presbyterian missionaries often experienced painful social isolation and resistance to their educational and evangelistic endeavors, those who avoided “Mormon bashing” eventually overcame barriers to community acceptance. From time to time, both parties

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<sup>201</sup>A survey of Protestant denominations in Utah and surrounding states in 1951 reached the following conclusion regarding Mormon-Protestant relationships: “The problems of Utah Protestantism have been in sharp contrast to those of the surrounding states. Here, as in Roman Catholic centers in New England and elsewhere, Protestantism has not quite learned how to behave as a co-operative minority in the midst of an alien culture. . . . Partly because of early Mormon polygamy, partly because of Mormon theological dogmatism, partly by reason of Mormon cultural exclusiveness, non-Mormons tended to adopt an attitude of active belligerence toward Mormonism. As American missionaries to foreign lands were often extremely critical of the religion and culture of the people whom they had come out to convert, so in Utah it was easy for well-intending, devoted missionaries to specialize in flaying the Mormons for their errors of thought and behavior. In the case of one or two of the denominations, this belligerent attitude became fanatical; in any missionary group it was natural enough. But all this has markedly changed of late.” David W. Barry and Ross W. Sanderson, “Study of the Intermountain Area for the Intermountain Committee of the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.,” 1951, typescript, 3, 18, National Council of Churches Archives R7 5-24, Presbyterian Historical Society.

found common ground on which they could relate to each other as fellow human beings with similar interests and concerns.

While Presbyterians and other non-Mormons in Utah continued to have difficulty adapting to their status as social minorities throughout the twentieth century, it also proved difficult for Mormons to co-exist sensitively as social majorities. I recently met a life-long Presbyterian who had grown up in Salt Lake City and attended Westminster College in the late 1950s. In relating some of his experiences as a non-Mormon, he said, "Living in Salt Lake City made me sympathetic to the plight of minorities in our country. Even though I was a white Anglo-Saxon male who spoke fluent English, I knew what it felt like to be an alien in a dominant culture." He spoke not in anger, but in sadness. Even in the twenty-first century, the interaction of Mormons and non-Mormons remains problematic. Many Utah residents who function outside "the Church" continue to feel pangs of isolation and resent that Mormons view them as incomplete or unfulfilled Christians. Similarly, many Latter-day Saints are often not sensitive to the feelings of religious minorities in their midst and are perplexed about why many Protestant denominations continue to question their Christian credentials. In such a setting, the words of the Scottish poet Robert Burns come to mind: "O' wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us, / To see oursels as others see us! / It wad frae monie a blunder free us / An' foolish notion."<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup>"To A Louse," in James Burke, ed., *Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* (London: Collins, 1955), 138.

# THE KEARNY/STOCKTON/FRÉMONT FEUD: THE MORMON BATTALION'S MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION IN CALIFORNIA

*Sherman L. Fleek*

## PROLOGUE

“I AM NOT RECOGNIZED IN MY OFFICIAL capacity, either by Com[modore Robert] Stockton or Lieut. Co[lonel John C.] Frémont,” wrote Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny to the War Department in Washington, D.C. “Both of [them] refuse to obey my orders or the instructions of President, and as I have no Troops in the country under my authority, excepting a few Dragoons, I have no power of enforcing them.” That same day, January 17, 1847, Kearny wrote to U.S. Navy Commodore Robert Stockton: “And as I am prepared to carry out the Presidents instructions to me, which you oppose, I

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must, for the purpose of preventing collision between us & possibly a civil war in consequence of it, remain silent for the present, leaving with you the great responsibility of doing that for which you have no authority & preventing me from complying with the President's orders."<sup>1</sup>

Beginning in January 1847 and for several weeks thereafter, Kearny, Stockton, and Frémont squared off in a military, political, and personal feud that nearly erupted into open hostilities among separate U.S. military forces loyal to each man; thus, a civil war nearly occurred in occupied California during the Mexican War. How these American military professionals came to be at odds with each other is an interesting tale of slow communications, poor interpretation of orders, unintended expectations, vaunted egos, and military bravado.<sup>2</sup>

This article explores the background and events surrounding the Kearny/Stockton/Frémont feud and explains the significant role of the Mormon Battalion as a military unit in this affair. The battalion's participation in this political/military feud was, without a doubt, its most significant and lasting contribution to this American drama unfolding in California, beyond lesser contributions more often celebrated in histories about the battalion. (See Appendix.)

The contest for power, the struggle for control, and the battle of legitimate authority was a feud, a bitter and painful event that should have never occurred. As Kearny himself declared, this struggle for power nearly caused an eruption of open hostilities among these factions. This tense situation could have been avoided if two of these players had recognized proper military authority and not allowed their selfish desires to dictate policy. Another way to view this unfortunate quarrel can also be seen as a duel—symbolically, a contest between two belligerents, military men who feuded with each other at times, but also formed alliances at other times. This feud was a political and personal war of words and letters, which nearly turned into a literal duel with weapons and the threat of bloodshed. The feud even-

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<sup>1</sup>Hans von Sachsen-Altenburg and Laura Gabiger, *Winning the West: General Stephen Watts Kearny's Letter Book, 1846-1847* (Booneville, Mo.: Pekitanoui Publications, 1998), 185-86 (hereafter Kearny's Letter Book).

<sup>2</sup>Neal Harlow, *California Conquered: The Annexation of a Mexican Province, 1846-1848* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982); John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 213-14.

tually led to Frémont's court-martial in January–February 1848 in Washington, D.C. A national sensation of the time, it was one of the most important military trials in American history.

When Kearny wrote his two letters in January 1847, the Mormon Battalion was seventy miles due east of San Diego, still nearly two weeks away. The battalion was a military unit that, though it served during war, never experienced combat. The men were soldiers for a year and not pioneers as often portrayed. On July 16, 1847, in Los Angeles the battalion was honorably discharged. After their military service, many former soldiers were involved in significant historical events in California such as the discovery of gold in January 1848; but they performed these later important achievements in California as citizens, not soldiers.<sup>3</sup> Thus, as a volunteer battalion of the Army of the West, the Mormon Battalion played a role in the three-way feud and was a crucial and obedient reserve force in establishing legitimate and proper authority in California.

#### THE DUELISTS

Interestingly, cities, schools, roads, and many other public features in California are named after Stockton and Frémont—but only Kearny Street in San Francisco commemorates the colonel. Landmarks across the West (outside of California) are named for Frémont and Kearny, but not Stockton.

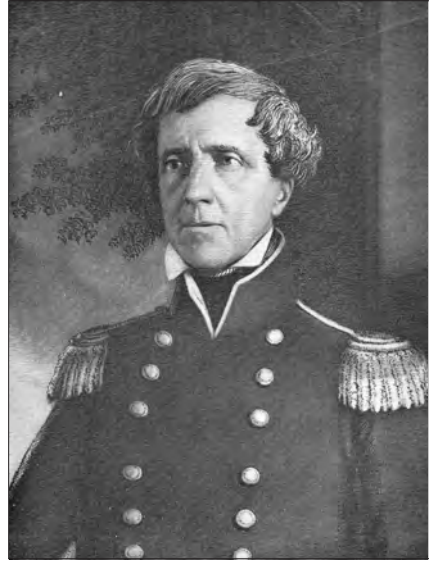
A feud typically occurs between two belligerents, or principals, yet in this circumstance three parties were involved and hundreds of Americans followed each principal. Most of the men were duly enlisted soldiers or sailors under military law and orders. Historically, their situation was like that of the Roman legions who followed either Caesar or Pompey, obeying legally issued orders but during a civil war. Two strong leaders were allied against a third. It was not exactly a triangle; nevertheless, there were two sides and three very different and headstrong personalities. Also characteristic of most duels, at issue were personalities and pride more than military protocol. In 1847, duels among American military officers were rare, but still possible.

Who were the principals? Kearny was arguably the finest frontier officer of the antebellum period. He commanded at every level of

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<sup>3</sup>Fleek, *“History May Be Searched in Vain”: A Military History of the Mormon Battalion* (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark, 2006), 36.

*Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny.  
Courtesy of the U.S. Army  
Military History Institute,  
Carlisle, Pennsylvania.*



the army from platoon to the Army of the West. A non-West Point professional, he served during the War of 1812, in which he was wounded and captured by the British. He led many Indian and overland campaigns including his remarkable Dragoon Reconnaissance to South Pass in 1845.<sup>4</sup> Historian Bernard DeVoto appraised Kearny and his First Dragoons as “the crack regiment of the army. . . . Kearny was not only a practiced frontier commander but one of the most skillful and dependable officers in the army.” DeVoto continued, “In the vaudeville show of swollen egoism, vanity, treachery, incompetence, rhetoric, stupidity, and electioneering which the general officers during the Mexican War display to the pensive mind, Kearny stands out as a gentleman, a soldier, a commander, a diplomat, a statesman, and a master of his job.”<sup>5</sup>

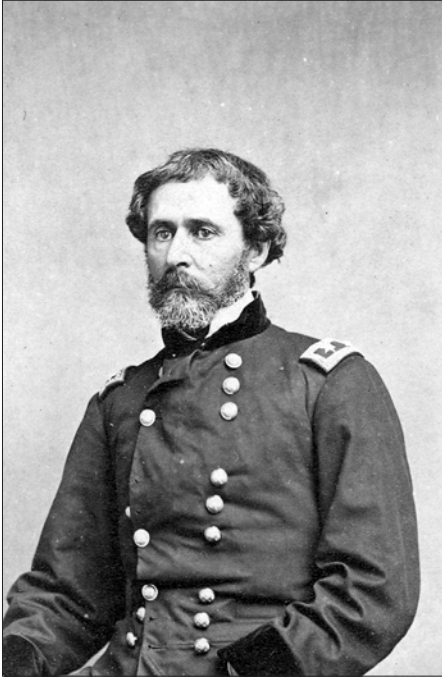
This glowing appraisal was not universally held. Allan Nevins, a biographer of John C. Frémont, described Kearny as a “grim martinet, a fighter without any mild or ingratiating qualities whatever.” Justin Smith, who has done perhaps the most thorough research on

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<sup>4</sup>Dwight L. Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny: Soldier of the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 171–72.

<sup>5</sup>Bernard DeVoto, *Year of Decision: 1846* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 234.





*Lieutenant Colonel John C. Frémont. Courtesy of the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.*

the Mexican War, called Kearny “grasping, jealous, domineering, and harsh.”<sup>6</sup> Stephen Kearny, as a brigadier general, was senior to Stockton in both grade and rank, and two grades senior to Frémont.<sup>7</sup> In a military world of rank, position, authority, and command relationships, these facts are crucial.<sup>8</sup>

John C. Frémont was born to an unwed mother in 1813 in New Orleans, assumed his French father’s name, and eventually gained an army commission mostly by his keen intelligence, fine education, exuberance, and knack for science, math, and analytical abilities. The greatest coup of his life was courting and marrying a devoted wife—Jessie Benton, daughter of a Missouri power-broker, U.S. Senator

<sup>6</sup>Justin Smith, *The War with Mexico*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 2:264.

<sup>7</sup>Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, 2 vols. (1903; rpt., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 1:436.

<sup>8</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 264–65.

*Jessie Benton Frémont, John C. Frémont's devoted wife. Courtesy of the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.*



Thomas Hart Benton.<sup>9</sup> Initially opposed to the match, the senator quickly became one of Frémont's greatest supporters. An army explorer in the 1830s and 1840s, Frémont served with the U.S. Army's topographical engineers, called "topos." Among antebellum officers, none reached the summit of national popularity and fame of Frémont the "Pathfinder." In fact, his fame may help account for the rose-tinted role historians assigned him in describing events in California.

In November 1846, Frémont, who had reached California in December 1845, learned that he had been commissioned a lieutenant colonel in the newly formed Regiment of Mounted Riflemen the previous May. It was unusual for someone who had not graduated from West Point to receive such an appointment, but he owed it to the influence of his powerful father-in-law. Frémont's qualifications were virtually nonexistent for such a post. He had no experience with the mounted service and had never commanded a unit larger than a dozen or two scientists and frontiersmen assigned to exploration, an activity in which he had spent eight years.

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<sup>9</sup>Tom Chaffin, *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 49, 68–72.

Still, few contributed so much to the discovery and charting of the West as Frémont. Allan Nevins's biography of Frémont in the early twentieth century states that "he had a personality brilliant, versatile, and adventurous, and his career abounded in almost melodramatic alternations of good and bad fortune."<sup>10</sup> His fame has hardly diminished over the last half century when a 2002 biography by an accomplished historian of the West, Tom Chaffin, summarized Frémont's appeal and career: "He won international acclaim through something he was very good at, leading scientific exploring expeditions, only to, through that success, be lifted into other positions . . . for which he lacked equivalent gifts." Chaffin added, "It was Frémont's explorations that stamped the most enduring imprint upon the nation's life."<sup>11</sup>

Despite Frémont's skimpy military expertise and lack of operational experience in line units or commands, he had marked gifts of leadership. The fact that stellar mountainmen and frontiersmen such as Christopher ("Kit") Carson, Tom Fitzpatrick, and Joe Walker each participated in more than one of his expeditions suggests his reputation and leadership ability. Even the hundreds of undisciplined volunteers in the California Battalion mustered in June 1846 stood staunchly behind him, willing to risk charges of mutiny, as discussed below.

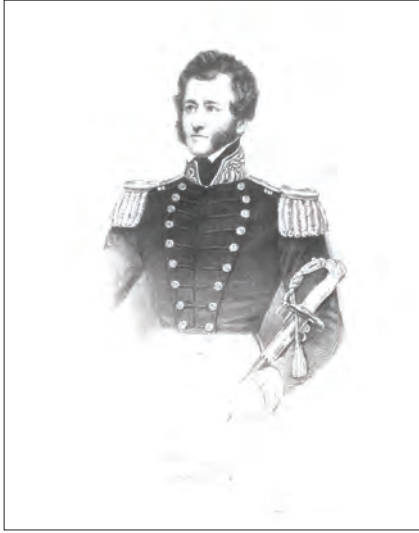
The last participant in the feud was Commodore Robert Stockton who had a long and varied career as a naval officer. He spent much of his time on shore duty, orchestrating political affairs for the navy. He also filibustered<sup>12</sup> to induce war between Texas and Mexico in the early 1840s. As a young naval officer, he relentlessly hunted and captured illegal slave traders coming to the Americas. Stockton was a well-read sophisticate and a natural politico. Daniel Webster at one time said that Stockton "knows more political facts than any other man I have met, even than John Quincy Adams." Stockton was handsome, dignified, and had the bearing of a monarch, although he had lost the hearing in one ear when a new prototype gun was demonstrated in 1844 aboard the *USS Princeton* on a day cruise on the Poto-

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<sup>10</sup>Allan Nevins, *Frémont: Pathmarker of the West* (1939; rpt., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), vii.

<sup>11</sup>Chaffin, *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont*, xxvii–xxix.

<sup>12</sup>"Filibuster" in the nineteenth century basically meant an adventurer who was either a paid mercenary or an interloper, acting for personal or political reasons.



*Commodore Robert Stockton, U.S. Navy. Courtesy of the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and National Archives.*

mac River. The gun exploded, killing the U.S. Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy. Stockton had moved a few feet away moments before the accident occurred, which probably saved his life. After the Mexican War, he was elected U.S. senator from his home state of New Jersey.<sup>13</sup>

Stockton was actually a brevet commodore, because the U.S. Navy of this era had no rank of admiral; therefore, the commander of a squadron was a brevet commodore (a temporary rank and position), which differentiated him as commander over other officers of the same rank. Stockton's permanent rank was that of captain, which made him equal to an army colonel, and therefore one grade below Kearny. Eventually, in 1862 during the Civil War, the rank of commodore was codified in law. Congress created the ranks of admiral and commodore, which is the junior-most "flag officer" in the navy. As commander of the navy's Pacific Squadron of six armed ships, Stockton had a few hundred sailors and a few dozen marines under his command.

### **BACKGROUND AND WAR**

The story begins in May 1846, soon after the United States de-

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<sup>13</sup>Hampton Sides, *Blood and Thunder: An Epic of the American West* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 48.

clared war on Mexico, President James K. Polk as commander-in-chief, determined national strategy and war aims to conduct operational campaigns by achieving tactical objectives. In mid-May Polk ordered Kearny, then a colonel and commanding officer of the elite First U.S. Dragoon Regiment and senior officer at Fort Leavenworth, to invade and capture Santa Fe and the Mexican state of New Mexico. But only three weeks later, Kearny's entire mission and invasion plan had changed. On June 3, 1846, Secretary of War William Marcy issued the following order to Kearny: "It has been decided by the President to be of the greatest importance, in the pending War with Mexico, to take the earliest possession of Upper California. An expedition with that view is hereby ordered, and you are designated to command it. . . . Should you conquer and take possession of New Mexico and Upper California, or considerable places in either, you will establish temporary civil governments therein."<sup>14</sup>

This order authorized Kearny to establish a civil government in California (besides New Mexico) as he did and, by implication, to also maintain military control over the conquered territories until the U.S. Congress and the administration defined the issue of sovereignty and acquisition once peace had been established. Interestingly, the Mexican War was the United States' first venture in acquiring territory by invading a foreign country rather than through treaty and diplomacy. Therefore, all the players involved in this political morass were executing instructions without precedent in American policy.

While orders and grand strategy were developing in Washington, American immigrants in California during the summer of 1846 were involved in a lackluster attempt to establish a type of home rule without official authority from the U.S. government. A year earlier in December 1845, Frémont, then a first lieutenant, and some sixty armed men, frontiersmen, a few scientists, and others entered California. He had no orders to invade, occupy, and establish a new government: his mission was purely scientific because Mexico and the United States were at peace. Furthermore, the central government in Mexico City had never given him permission to enter California. His bellicose actions and bravado quickly alienated leading Mexican/Californio officials, who chased him and his party out of California in

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<sup>14</sup>William Marcy, Letter to Stephen Kearny, June 3, 1846, House Executive Document, 60 (30th Congress, 1st Sess). This same order authorized Kearny to recruit and muster the Mormon Battalion.

April 1846. In May 1846, Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie, U.S. Marine Corps, with secret, memorized orders and letters from Washington, found Frémont at Klamath Lake in Oregon and delivered these verbal messages.<sup>15</sup> To this day their content is unknown, except for trial testimony and the memoirs of key figures.<sup>16</sup>

Soon thereafter, Frémont and his party reentered California. He denied that he had any authority to establish a government in California, which is logical, since he first arrived in California before war was declared. Apparently, Frémont and Gillespie were to observe and report the disposition and attitudes of the local inhabitants and report any foreign intrusion or encroachment in California, especially by Great Britain.<sup>17</sup> They should also be prepared to assist any American forces if war was eventually declared.<sup>18</sup>

For years the Californios had been slowly moving away from Mexico City's control. At this time in the spring of 1846, though, California was still a state of Mexico. More significant than the indifference of Californios to their Mexican affiliation were serious external pressures. Hundreds of Americans and other non-Mexicans had entered the region, bringing their religion, culture, and political ideals. In June 1846, American zealots—mountainmen, pioneers, former sailors, and wild adventurers—established the “Bear-Flag Republic,” that collapsed three weeks later. Frémont took advantage of the turmoil to organize a volunteer battalion of American settlers to fight the Mexicans, even though he had neither permission nor legitimate authorization to do so.

During the first week of July 1846, Commodore John Sloat and

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<sup>15</sup>The night Gillespie overtook Frémont at Klamath Lake in what would be the state of Oregon, Modoc Indians who had been following Gillespie for days attacked, killing three of Frémont's party. The next morning, a raiding party seeking frontier justice led by Kit Carson attacked and slaughtered members of a village of peaceful and innocent Klamaths. Whether Carson or Frémont knew this at the time is not known; but for the next week, whenever Frémont and his men met one or more Indians, they killed them, thus instilling fear and their type of frontier justice, Sides, *Blood and Thunder*, 85–87.

<sup>16</sup> Harlow, *California Conquered*, 82–84.

<sup>17</sup> Chaffin, *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont*, 377.

<sup>18</sup> John A. Hussey, “The Origin of the Gillespie Mission,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1940): 43–58.

his Pacific Squadron arrived at the port of Monterey. Official Mexican sources had informed him that the United States had declared war on Mexico on May 13, 1846, when he docked at Mazatlan. His orders included that, if war was declared, he was to sail to and capture the main California ports. On July 7, his sailors raised the American flag over Monterey, and the Bear-Flag Republic died. Two weeks later on July 23, Sloat relinquished command to Commodore Stockton. Immediately, Stockton met and collaborated with Frémont to complete the conquest of California. With questionable authority, Stockton appointed Frémont a major and commander of the California Mounted Volunteer Battalion (commonly called the California Battalion), which at best was a provisional, temporary organization.

President James Polk had issued an order dated June 18, 1846, giving Kearny authority to command and control any American land forces in California: "The arms, cannon, and provisions, to be sent to the Pacific, will be accompanied by one company of artillery of the regular army. Arrangements are now on foot to send a regiment of volunteers by sea," a reference to the First New York Volunteers. The order then contained this key line, "These troops, and such as may be organized in California, will be under your command." Thus, Kearny had authority from the U.S. president and the War Department to muster any American land force, whether already organized or not, into federal service.<sup>19</sup>

Frémont eventually commanded some 400 men in California, most of them American immigrants and frontiersmen. This unit was not a typical militia organization and had no official status in the volunteer service of the U.S. Army. They were paramilitary vigilantes or filibusters at best. Historian John Eisenhower labeled the California Battalion a naval unit under naval authority. But, of course, a naval officer, without strict orders from higher authority, meaning the War or Navy departments, could not conceivably create such a "land" or Army unit.<sup>20</sup> Historian Dwight Clarke has stated that Stockton's unorthodox appointment "has ever since tied in knots many an expert on military law."<sup>21</sup> Stockton initially called the unit the "Naval Battalion of Mounted Rifleman," perhaps one of the most convoluted titles in

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<sup>19</sup>Kearny's Letter Book, 290.

<sup>20</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 216.

<sup>21</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 125.

American military history.<sup>22</sup> What Stockton should have done was appoint Marine Lieutenant Gillespie, an experienced officer in amphibious (both land and sea) warfare to command the marines on hand and augment the marines with volunteers. Some of this discussion may seem to be technical military rationales, even trivia, but it is important to know that it was this provisional or para-military group that later nearly engaged the Mormon Battalion in a fight in Los Angeles.

It is understandable in military history that, when a new nation or political movement begins or undertakes a revolution, military organizations have to start from somewhere. Yet Stockton commanded a conventional maritime military force authorized, trained, and equipped by Congressional law. Thus, also organizing a “land” battalion would prove dangerous and wasteful as discussed below. The point to remember is that, regardless of legalities and technicalities, the U.S. president had authorized Kearny to command all forces organized in California.<sup>23</sup>

By September 1846, Stockton, Frémont, Gillespie, and their forces controlled almost all of the key cities and major ports of California without firing a bullet. Frémont’s chief scout and friend, Kit Carson, left to carry this wonderful news to Washington. However, the Californio leaders fomented a rebellion; and by the end of October, Stockton, Frémont, and their forces had lost nearly all their gains, especially Los Angeles. Only San Diego remained under Stockton’s control.<sup>24</sup>

### THE ARMY OF THE WEST

In June 1846, Kearny organized the Army of the West at Fort Leavenworth, a field army with operational orders that fulfilled national strategic objectives. The army consisted eventually of some 3,500 soldiers: the First Dragoons under Kearny’s direct command (some 300–400 troops); two regiments of Missouri mounted volunteers (about 1,700 men); other Missouri volunteers (300–400 troops); the Mormon Battalion (500 volunteers); and the First New York Volunteer Regiment (500 men) who sailed from New York City in September 1846 accompanied by a hundred Regular Army troops of the

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<sup>22</sup>Sides, *Blood and Thunder*, 98.

<sup>23</sup>Kearny’s Letter Book, 290.

<sup>24</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 169–73.



Third U.S. Artillery.<sup>25</sup> Of these 3,500 U.S. troops, only 100 dragoons accompanied Kearny initially into California in December 1846. In January 1847, 350 men of the Mormon Battalion arrived. The 500 men of the First New York and 100 artilleryman arrived in March.<sup>26</sup>

Kearny and the Army of the West made a swift and bloodless invasion and occupation of New Mexico in August 1846. At this time, he also received orders from the War Department and news of his promotion in the regular army to brigadier general. This point is an important one. In late September Kearny and his dragoons struck out for California. On October 6, they encountered eastbound Kit Carson on the Rio Grande south of Albuquerque. Carson informed Kearny that California had already fallen to American control, mostly naval forces under Stockton. Believing that a pacified California was under American occupation, Kearny ordered 200 dragoons back to Santa Fe to reinforce the Missouri volunteer units there. He also left his heavy freight wagons at this location for the Mormon Battalion to recover and bring to California.

Kearny then made a forced march for California with only 100 dragoons,<sup>27</sup> pressing Carson, an “acting lieutenant” in Frémont’s volunteer battalion, to guide him. This decision embittered Carson against Kearny because Carson hoped to see his family in Taos en route and also to be the messenger of Frémont’s glorious conquest in Washington.<sup>28</sup>

What Kearny and Carson did not know was that the Americans had lost control of most of California to an insurgent campaign. Kearny learned this status on December 5, 1846, when a unit of naval and marine troops dispatched by Stockton and commanded by Gillespie (now promoted to captain) met Kearny near San Pasqual to guide him to San Diego. Gillespie informed Kearny that a mounted force of Californio lancers was blocking the road ahead.<sup>29</sup>

Well before dawn on December 6, Kearny’s augmented force of about 150 troops attacked an equal number of mounted Californio lancers near the village of San Pasqual. Kearny led the wild and poorly

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<sup>25</sup>Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, 206–7; K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846–1848* (Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Press, 1974), 129–30.

<sup>26</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 195.

<sup>27</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 170–72.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 168–70.

<sup>29</sup>Kearny’s Letter Book, 177.

executed attack that quickly degenerated into a desperate mounted skirmish. Heavy rain the night before had dampened the dragoons' gun powder and made their superior firearms ineffective. Kearny had divided his force into several elements in column formation; but as the two foes met on the flats near San Pasqual, the dragoon officers lost control and the fight turned into a brawl, rather than a conventional battle. The Californios bested the dragoons initially in small clusters through the skilled use of their lances; but eventually, the Americans gained the upper hand through individual discipline. The Californios retreated, taking their dead and wounded along. The Battle of San Pasqual, though not decisive, was nevertheless an American victory.<sup>30</sup>

Nineteen of Kearny's men were killed and nearly as many were severely wounded including Kearny himself. (Some accounts state that the lancers had equal numbers of casualties.)<sup>31</sup> His battered column continued to advance on December 7 and fought off another lancers' attack, killing six. But the American mounts were exhausted, the men were low on food, water, and ammunition, and the wounded Americans stalled Kearny's advance. The dragoons established a hasty defensive position on a prominent hill and withstood a short siege by the Californios. Stockton's naval forces relieved them on December 10, and Kearny arrived in San Diego on December 12, 1846.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, Kearny's leadership at San Pasqual, admittedly less than stellar, became a matter of public debate. Senator Benton orchestrated personal attacks on Kearney during Frémont's court-martial in January–February 1848 to distract public attention from Frémont's actions. The debate continues to this day. However, the battle has nothing to do with Kearney's authority to serve as governor.

#### SETTING THE STAGE

In late December 1846, Kearny and Stockton combined their forces to march north to retake two key military objectives—Los Angeles and the port of San Pedro. Although Kearny was the ranking

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<sup>30</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 184–87.

<sup>31</sup>George Walcott Ames Jr., "A Doctor Comes to California: The Diary of John S. Griffin, Assistant Surgeon with Kearny's Dragoons, 1846–47," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 22 (September–December 1942): 193–224, 333–38.

<sup>32</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 222–29.

American officer and had federal orders to command, he agreed to allow Stockton to assume overall command of the joint force. He did this because Stockton and the navy had more forces and Stockton was more familiar with the terrain. Kearny served as tactical commander during these two battles, therefore he controlled the action and made the decisions. The combined American forces defeated the Californios at San Gabriel near Los Angeles on January 8, 1847, and then at La Mesa near San Pedro and Los Angeles on January 9, ending Mexican resistance.<sup>33</sup> These victories were successful, not due to Stockton's command, but because of Kearny's tactical control and generalship. During Frémont's court-martial in January–February 1848, Kearny's yielding of the overall command to Stockton was derisively used as evidence that Kearny saw Stockton as his superior.<sup>34</sup>

The defeated Californios, under their leaders José Maria Castro, brothers Pio and Andrés Pico, and their men fled north from the Los Angeles basin, encountering Frémont and his volunteer battalion heading south from Monterey. Stockton had ordered Frémont to join him near Los Angeles in November 1846, but Frémont had dallied, with the result that he missed all the fighting.<sup>35</sup> The Californio leaders, perhaps to negotiate better terms, surrendered to Frémont rather than to Kearny or Stockton. The absurd Treaty of Cahuenga, brokered by Frémont on January 13, 1847, was a vague instrument that resolved nothing and simply delayed serious issues.<sup>36</sup> Stockton treated this treaty with contempt, and Kearny ignored it.<sup>37</sup>

On January 14, 1847, Frémont arrived in Los Angeles, trumpeting his solo “victory” against the Californios. Now the war of words, attitudes, accusations, and egos began—a conflict in which the Mormon Battalion would serve a major role. On January 9–10, 1847, the

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<sup>33</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 239–40.

<sup>34</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 238–39, argues correctly, that according to letters and journals, Stockton was extremely reluctant to advance on Los Angeles and engage the Californios, having already lost the city once. Kearny, therefore allowed Stockton to command all forces, as long as Kearny took the responsibility of field commander and any defeat that may ensue. Kearny knew as a professional that the time to strike was while the Californios were weak and separated.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 222–32.

<sup>36</sup>Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, 229–30.

<sup>37</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 234.

battalion had just crossed the Colorado River at present-day Yuma, Arizona, and entered California.

### THE INSULT

The first real feuding developed when Frémont, in Frémont's own words, "reported" to Stockton and then "called on" Kearny.<sup>38</sup> In the military world, one reports to a superior and pays a social call on friends, comrades, and associates.<sup>39</sup> Thus, one is more official than the other.

The plot thickened two days later when Kearny learned that Stockton was forming a civil government and appointing officers. In fact, Stockton had already suggested months earlier that Frémont serve as military commandant, a suggestion he formalized by making Frémont civil governor of California six months later on June 16, 1847. Kearny, the army general, had shown Stockton his certified orders and documents from the War Department and the president, so Stockton was creating a serious breach by ignoring them. Kearny wrote Stockton on January 16, charging him with obstructing Kearny's mission to form a military/civil government and with not complying with the president's instructions. The two officers were both headquartered in Los Angeles just hundreds of yards away from each other but were communicating by letter, a measure of how seriously their relationship had deteriorated. Stockton not only disobeyed but replied with an astonishing counterattack: "I will only add that I cannot do anything, nor desist from doing anything, or alter anything on your demand, which I will submit to the President, and *ask for your recall*. In the meantime you will consider yourself *suspended* from the command of the United States forces in this place."<sup>40</sup>

In addition to displaying effrontery on a seldom-seen level in the U.S. military, Stockton had refused to acknowledge Kearny's seniority as an officer and the rightful commander of troops, yet in this letter, he is ironically relieving him of command, a command Stockton previously refused to acknowledge.

During Frémont's court-martial, Stockton was asked about the authority by which he presumed to command all American forces in

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<sup>38</sup>Nevins, *Frémont*, 309.

<sup>39</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 258.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 262; emphasis mine.

California and also to form a civil government. He replied: "My right to establish the civil government was incident to the conquest, and I formed the government under the law of nations." This response would have been appropriate when a military leader has no authority from his government; but since Stockton knew of Kearny's orders, his "law of nations" justification was baseless.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, Stockton took issue with a critical phrase in Kearny's June 3, 1846, orders. He interpreted "should you take possession of New Mexico and Upper California" as meaning Kearny himself. Stockton claimed that he and Frémont had already conquered California in August and September 1846, long before Kearny arrived, conveniently overlooking the fact that the Californios had rebelled and nearly reconquered all of California. He further forgot the fact that Kearny was allied with him during the main battles in California while Frémont did not fight at all in California. The phrase in the orders, "should you [conquer California]" really did not apply.<sup>42</sup> It is impossible to know exactly what Stockton was thinking, but it seems likely to me that both Stockton and Frémont had the same motives: ambition and arrogance.

The quarrelsome language and vainglorious phrases were the low point of Stockton's attempts to justify his outrageous and mutinous behavior, all of which he could have avoided. He sailed south in late January 1847 with a portion of his squadron to capture Mexican prizes of war for wealth and glory. When Stockton returned from his quest (which turned out to be fruitless), he learned that he was without a squadron, power, or authority. Another naval officer, Commodore W. Branford Shubrick, had arrived aboard the *USS Lexington* to relieve him on January 22, 1847, in Monterey, hundreds of miles up the coast from Kearny and Stockton. Historians have never considered Stockton the true conqueror of California.<sup>43</sup>

Shubrick carried orders from the Secretary of the Navy, George Bancroft, dated November 5, 1846, stating that he or the senior naval officer in charge, had full authority to organize a civil government and serve as governor. However, although these orders were valid, the president's authorization of Kearny to do the same tasks superseded

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<sup>41</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 237.

<sup>42</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 259.

<sup>43</sup>Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, 323.

any from his cabinet members.<sup>44</sup> Still, Stockton used Bancroft's orders to Shubrick against Kearny at Frémont's court-martial in January–February 1848. The Polk administration's lack of coordination in its military departments is shocking from a modern perspective; but as events actually occurred, the naval orders were moot by the time Shubrick arrived.<sup>45</sup>

#### THE CHALLENGE: THE GAUNTLET IS THROWN DOWN

January 17, 1847, was one of the most pivotal dates of the story. On this day, Kearny wrote the two letters quoted in the prologue and also summoned Frémont to his quarters. Frémont duly presented himself but announced that Stockton had appointed him governor of California the day before. Kearny, of course, knew this. It had caused the exchange of letters the day before between Kearny and Stockton.

On January 14, 1847, Frémont had also written to Kearny giving his version of his role in the California "war" and his description of the impasse between Stockton and Kearny. In this letter, Frémont wrote this salient passage: "I feel therefore, with great deference to your professional and personal character constrained to say that, until you and Commodore Stockton adjust between yourselves the question of rank, where I respectfully think the difficulty belongs, I shall have to *report* and *receive orders*, as heretofore, from the Commodore."<sup>46</sup>

For an Army officer to respond to a senior Army officer, a general, in this manner, was a serious breach of military discipline. Ironically, Frémont signed the letter, "Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army and Military Commandant of the territory of California."<sup>47</sup> Despite Frémont's disobedience and outrageous behavior to a senior officer, Kearny was willing to overlook the offense and reconcile with Frémont. Later at the court martial, Kearny testified:

I told Lieutenant Colonel Frémont that I was a much older man than himself . . . [which] induced me to volunteer advice to him, and the advice was, that he should take the letter back and destroy it, that I was willing to forget it. Lieutenant Colonel Frémont declined taking it back, and told me that Commodore Stockton would support him in

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<sup>44</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 240–41, 247.

<sup>45</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 277.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

<sup>47</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 234.

the position taken in that letter. . . . He told me that Commodore Stockton was about organizing a civil government and intended to appoint him as governor of the territory.<sup>48</sup>

Kearny's willingness to offer Frémont the opportunity to withdraw and destroy his mutinous letter was a rare act of mercy by a hardened career officer; but Frémont proved himself imprudent once again in rejecting the offer and storming out, with Kit Carson trailing after him. Within a week, Frémont appointed several officers in his new government, most of them California volunteers. Frémont also incurred several hundred thousand dollars in debt during January–March 1847 while trying to form and administer a new territory.<sup>49</sup> One observer of this military soap opera wrote: "Lieutenant colonel [sic] Fremont refused to report to him, [Kearny] or to obey his orders; and in this he was evidently supported by Commodore Stockton."<sup>50</sup>

At this point, a battle of wills and military precedence in time of war commenced.

#### THE SECONDS ARE SUMMONED

In a duel, a principal appoints a "second" to arrange and/or arbitrate the duel. In this case, the seconds were part of their principals' feud. On January 18, 1847, Kearny marched his dragoons south to San Diego, a reasoned decision to avoid an armed clash with Frémont and his ill-disciplined volunteer battalion. There he remained until he had sufficient military strength to force the issue with the recalcitrant Frémont and Stockton.<sup>51</sup>

On January 23, he reported to the U.S. Army adjutant general: "I should not at this time disturb him [Stockton] in his authority, but . . . as soon as I was joined by any of the Volunteers or land force I [will] then enter in the duties assd me by the Presdt."<sup>52</sup> The first land force of volunteers to report to him was the Mormon Battalion.

Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke and the Mormon Battalion had learned of the Californio insurrection and Kearny's

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 264.

<sup>49</sup>Nevins, *Frémont*, 314.

<sup>50</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 303.

<sup>51</sup>During the march south, one of the dragoon's feet were so blistered that Kearny let the soldier ride his own mount.

<sup>52</sup>Kearny's Letter Book, 189.

awkward victory at San Pasqual on December 6, 1846. On January 20, 1847, given the new circumstances, Cooke determined to ignore Kearny's earlier instructions to march to San Diego and instead march directly to Los Angeles in support of the American forces.<sup>53</sup> The next day the battalion reached Warner's ranch, a landmark and gateway to southern California. They were near Temecula on January 25 when Cooke received orders from Kearny to join him in his new headquarters at San Diego.<sup>54</sup>

The Mormon Battalion reached San Diego on January 29, having completed its long and arduous march.<sup>55</sup> That same evening in San Diego after seeing the battalion settled in, Cooke rode to headquarters and reported to Kearny in person. Cooke, a West Point graduate of 1827, had served with Kearny since 1833 in the original dragoon regiment and then in the First Dragoons since 1835. They knew, respected, and trusted each other.<sup>56</sup>

Kearny decided that, given the reinforcements represented by the Mormon Battalion, he could now act. Yet he had no wish to engage in a direct confrontation that would almost certainly lead to bloodshed. Therefore, on January 31, he and a small staff took passage on an American warship to Monterey where he expected the sea-borne reinforcements to arrive. On board was the only other legitimate official of the U.S. government, Thomas O. Larkin, consul at Monterey. Larkin quietly supported Kearny but did not enter the fray at this time, having dealt with Frémont and Stockton for months.<sup>57</sup> It was essential for Kearny to have not only Larkin's support but also control of the U.S. government offices in Monterey. Kearny ordered Cooke to march the Mormon Battalion to San Luis Rey and commence combat training, something which they had not yet receiv-

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<sup>53</sup>Cooke's journal is published in Ralph P. Bieber and Averam B. Bender, *Exploring Southwestern Trails, 1846-1854* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), 234.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>The Mormon Battalion did not make the longest march in military history, or the longest march of infantry, nor the longest march in U.S. history. Fleek, "History May Be Searched in Vain," 324-26.

<sup>56</sup>Philip St. George Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California* (1878; rpt., New York: Arno Press, 1976), 196.

<sup>57</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 247.



ed.<sup>58</sup> Kearny knew that a trained, loyal, and strictly disciplined infantry battalion would be all-important in the coming conflict. From San Luis Rey the battalion could move easily to support operations in either Los Angeles or in San Diego.

Kearny arrived in Monterey on February 8, 1847, where, to his joy, he found the *USS Lexington* and Commodore Shubrick. After one look at Kearny's orders, Shubrick immediately accepted Kearny as the senior American officer, civil governor, and military commander. Shubrick carried a dispatch and orders to Stockton from President James K. Polk through the Secretary of the Navy, George Bancroft. Dated November 5, 1846, these documents recognized that California was under American control (although Stockton had lost control of it at the moment the letter was written) but, more to the point, clearly directed that Kearny or Colonel Richard Mason, who replaced Kearny as commander of the First U.S. Dragoons when he was promoted to general, would serve as governor. "The President has deemed it best," the orders read, "to invest the military officer commanding with the direction of the operations on land and with the administrative functions of government over the people and territory occupied by us. You will relinquish to Colonel Mason or to General Kearny if the latter shall arrive before you have done so, the entire control over these matters."<sup>59</sup> Mason arrived on February 14, 1847, at San Francisco deathly ill, but Kearny had a strong ally. Also aboard were 113 regular Army soldiers aboard, mostly from the Third U.S. Artillery; a lieutenant in the company was William Tecumseh Sherman, later to gain fame in the Civil War.

Kearny's position was confirmed, and Stockton's role in this feud became irrelevant. Yet the feud with Frémont was not over. Sherman's memoirs commented wryly: "Among the younger officers the query was very natural, 'Who the devil is Governor of California?'"<sup>60</sup> Kearny intended for the answer to be unequivocal, since he now had both confirmation of his legal authority and the military muscle to deal with Frémont and the California Battalion. On March

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<sup>58</sup>William Hyde, Journal, February 8, 1847, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

<sup>59</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 277–78.

<sup>60</sup>William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*

1, 1847, Kearny issued a proclamation beginning: "Brigadier General U.S.A. and Governor of California . . . To the people of California. The President of United States [has] . . . instructed the undersigned to take charge of the civil government of California." He then outlined their rights and privileges as new citizens of the United States and called for order and peaceful relations.<sup>61</sup>

The last major contingent of reinforcements arrived on March 5, at San Francisco Bay, the First New York Volunteer Regiment, 500 strong, under the command of a New York City lawyer and politician, Colonel Jonathan Stevenson. By mid-March 1847, Kearny had more than a thousand troops under his command who were tactically positioned throughout California. In San Diego, the dragoons served under Andrew Jackson Smith, the former acting commander of the Mormon Battalion who had just been promoted to captain. The Mormon Battalion was stationed at San Luis Rey, fifty miles north of San Diego. More than 600 regulars and volunteers were in the north near Monterey and San Francisco Bay. These units would eventually deploy to other key cities and locations.

On May 14, 1847, Stockton departed overland for the East, to reemerge in the duelists' story only at the court-martial in January–February 1848. As a witness, he employed every possible strategy to undermine Kearny, all of which failed. One correspondent represented the majority view in calling Stockton "a bladder of wind."<sup>62</sup>

For Frémont the end was longer and more painful. Upon hearing that the New York volunteers and Stockton's replacement had arrived, Frémont dashed from Los Angeles to Monterey in mid-March 1847, covering in four days the same ground over which he had dawdled for two months in the winter of 1846–47. There he made a desperate attempt to right his wrongs as we will see.

### UPON THE FIELD OF HONOR

The location where duels were fought was often called the "field of honor," though there was little honor in such manifestations of enmity. Los Angeles appeared to be the battlefield if Frémont was resolved to bring his quarrel with Kearny to open battle. Although Kearny was clearly established as governor of California, Frémont

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(New York: Library of America, 1990), 48.

<sup>61</sup>Kearny's Letter Book, 200.

<sup>62</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 360–62.

would be a threat until his four hundred volunteers were disarmed and disbanded. The Department of War had created a new geographical military command, the Tenth Military Department, covering California and present-day Nevada.<sup>63</sup> Kearny divided California into two districts. The Northern Military District (covering from Santa Barbara north), was commanded by Mason. He appointed Cooke to command the Southern Military District (stretching from north of Santa Barbara to San Diego). On March 15, Kearny ordered Cooke to march the Mormon Battalion to Los Angeles, except for B Company, which was garrisoned in San Diego.<sup>64</sup>

The most important reason for Cooke's presence in Los Angeles was to control Frémont and his irregular battalion of California volunteers. During the months of March and April, civil war threatened to break out in Los Angeles. The Mormon Battalion, which had undergone a six-week training regimen in the "school of the soldier," at San Luis Rey, was in the center of the crisis.<sup>65</sup> Of all the forces available to him, Kearny chose the Mormon Battalion to perform the most dangerous mission: to confront Frémont's volunteers. Obviously, he had confidence that Cooke and the Mormon Battalion would maintain a dampening presence over the reckless horde and, if necessary, control them by force. On March 19, Cooke led his four companies of the Mormon Battalion north to Los Angeles where they immediately engaged in the civil works projects that have overshadowed the battalion's true contributions. (See Appendix.)

Kearny planned to muster the California Battalion officially into federal service, pay the men, and then disband them.<sup>66</sup> Of course, Frémont and his men saw things differently, and thus the feud entered its riskiest phase. On November 3, 1846, Major General Winfield Scott, general-in-chief in Washington, had issued an order stipulating that the California volunteers surrender all military equipment, especially artillery and ammunition.<sup>67</sup> Frémont refused Mason's demands to turn over the artillery and ordnance in his possession. When Frémont defied him, Mason threatened, "None of your

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<sup>63</sup>Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and Indians, 1848-1865* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1967), 96-97.

<sup>64</sup>Kearny's Letter Book, 192.

<sup>65</sup>Fleek, "History May Be Searched in Vain," 331-32.

<sup>66</sup>Bauer, *The Mexican War*, 196.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*; Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 276-77.

insolence, or I will put you in leg irons.”<sup>68</sup> Frémont promptly challenged Mason to a duel with shotguns at twenty paces. Kearny promptly quashed the challenge, but the threat itself captures the passion of the moment.<sup>69</sup>

### THE PARTIES FACE OFF

The Mormon Battalion reached Los Angeles on March 23, 1847, and bivouacked a short distance from Frémont’s California Battalion. Opportunities for clashes occurred daily, but no actual brawls or attacks occurred. According to Mormon historian Daniel Tyler, the thirty Regular Army dragoons garrisoned in town interposed themselves between the Mormons and the volunteers, saying, “Stand back; you are religious men, and we are not; we will take all of your fights into our hands. . . . You shall not be imposed upon by them.”<sup>70</sup>

The actual task of retrieving the artillery and ordnance that Frémont had refused to yield to Mason fell to Cooke. The day after arriving in Los Angeles, Cooke met with Captain Richard Owens, second in command of the California Battalion, who followed Frémont’s lead and adamantly refused to relinquish the artillery and gunpowder, which he considered to be prizes of war, unless Frémont consented. (Frémont was still north in Monterey.)<sup>71</sup> Cooke wrote a report stating: “The general’s orders are not obeyed? . . . to be refused to them [ordnance and artillery] by this Lieut. Colonel Frémont and in defiance of the orders of his general? I denounce this treason or this mutiny.”<sup>72</sup> There is little doubt that Cooke remained calm and professional during this entire drama, yet as a soldier, he knew orders, discipline, and loyalty—values that Frémont and his men should have learned.

### OBSERVERS OF THE FEUD

Members of the Mormon Battalion, even before they were ordered to San Luis Rey in early February, knew that there was trouble in the American ranks. Sergeant Thomas William of D Company re-

<sup>68</sup>Mason, quoted in Chaffin, *Pathfinder*, 304–5.

<sup>69</sup>Nevins, *Frémont*, 322.

<sup>70</sup>Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War: 1846–1848* (1881; rpt., Glorieta, N.M.: Rio Grande Press, 1980), 280.

<sup>71</sup>Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California*, 291–92.

<sup>72</sup>Harlow, *California Conquered*, 259.

corded, “The Battalion remained in camp. In the evening orders was issued for our return to San Luis Rey for the purpose [sic] of arresting Colonel Fremont, or helping to settle by force if necessary, civil or national difficulties. As the Battalion and Dragoons were [the] only land forces that could be relied upon, that is in California.”<sup>73</sup>

Sergeant Daniel Tyler of C Company, commented in his history thirty-four years later: “General Kearny is supreme—somewhere up the coast; Colonel Fremont supreme at Pueblo de los Angeles; Commodore Stockton is Commander-in-chief at San Diego; Commodore Shubrick, the same at Monterey.”<sup>74</sup> Tyler’s facts and timing may be misleading, but he captured the confusion that rank and file soldiers felt.

Private Levi Hancock, wrote on April 1, 1847, after the battalion had been in Los Angeles for a week: “Drills it is said that Fremont is returned from Montera [Monterey] and still clames to be govonor [sic] to some newspapers have come from Montera printed by Branon [Samuel Brannan].”<sup>75</sup>

Mormon Private Joseph Standage kept one of the most interesting and detailed records: “April 20. Drill as usual. Various reports concerning Col Fremont and Col. Mason, they not being very friendly &c.” On April 23, he wrote, “Returned to camp and found the brethren packing up the Col [Cooke]. Having sent word for us to move to another camping ground, as we were not altogether safe at this place as the Missouri Vols. [Californians] had threatened to come down upon us. Moved to a beautiful green 1/2 mile below town [Los Angeles].”<sup>76</sup> Standage’s comment about the “Missouri Vols.” documents the false impression among the Mormon soldiers that Frémont’s volunteers

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<sup>73</sup>Carl V. Larson, ed., *The Annals of the Mormon Battalion 1846–1848: An Eyewitness Account* (Spanish Fork, Utah: 1700 East Electronic Media, 2000), 392.

<sup>74</sup>Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion*, 270.

<sup>75</sup>Levi Hancock, the battalion’s presiding religious leader, had little regard for professional soldiers and the military. Samuel Brannan led the Mormon immigrants who arrived June 1846 aboard the *Brooklyn* from New York City. Herbert A. Hancock, *The Saving Sacrifice of the Mormon Battalion from Journals of Levi Ward Hancock* (N.p.: Bystander at Large Productions 2000), 265.

<sup>76</sup>Frank A. Golder, *The March of the Mormon Battalion from Council Bluffs to California: Taken from the Journal of Henry Standage* (New York: Cen-

were Missourians. A few Missouri immigrants living in California may have enlisted in Frémont's California Battalion, but it consisted of citizens from several states, with no state providing a majority.

On April 26, 1847, Standage wrote disparagingly: "Last night we were called up and ordered to load and fix bayonets, as the Col. [Cooke] had sent word that an attack might be expected from Col. Fremont's men before day." Not only were the Anglo-Americans involved, but several accounts observe that local Californios, and also Indians, may have joined with California volunteers. This scenario seems unlikely on the face of it. Why would the Californios join the California Battalion, against whom they had been fighting for the previous year? The California volunteers "have been using all possible means to prejudice the Spaniards [Mexicans] and Indians against us," Standage continued on the same day.<sup>77</sup> And, in fact, this scenario of apprehension and suspicion on the part of the Mormons seems far more believable.

Cooke then conceived a brilliant military project. To keep his soldiers occupied and to demonstrate what is called today "force projection,"<sup>78</sup> he ordered the construction of a fort in Los Angeles. The Mormons, supervised by First Lieutenant John W. Davison of the First Dragoons, began building Fort Moore on April 25, 1847.<sup>79</sup>

### REPRIEVE

By the end of April, the crisis had mostly diminished. Frémont, having finally realized his foolishness, offered his resignation to Kearny, who refused it. The arms, gunpowder, and artillery were transferred to Cooke's control, and the California Volunteers were released from military service. On June 16, 1847, Kearny, Cooke, and many other officers left California for the East overland, escorted by fifteen Mormon Battalion soldiers. Kearny ordered Frémont to accompany them, which he did with a few dozen of his devoted frontiersmen. Frémont's group marched and camped separately from the main body by a few hundred yards.

Arriving at Fort Leavenworth on August 22, Kearny arrested Frémont on grounds of insubordination, and they continued on to

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tury, 1928), 219.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>This term refers to deterring the enemy by a show of force.

<sup>79</sup>Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion*, 279.

Washington for one of the most interesting courts martial in U.S. military history.

Senator Benton had not been idle as the two protagonists crossed the continent. He had labored diligently to marshal political and public opinion against Kearny, even though he had been Kearny's friend for more than twenty years. The senator deftly manufactured and orchestrated a massive smear campaign against Kearny as Frémont's court martial for disobedience and mutiny commenced in January 1848. Benton cast Kearny as an arrogant and ambitious officer who had scapegoated the noble and brave "Pathfinder" Frémont for American bungling and lack of inter-service coordination. The charming and attractive Jessie Frémont played her role as the anguished but devoted wife of the accused. Kearny did not stand a chance in the newspapers except for one element that eventually triumphed: the truth.<sup>80</sup>

The court martial board found Frémont guilty. President Polk, yielding to political pressure and manufactured popularity, pardoned Frémont, who resigned his commission and returned to the West.<sup>81</sup>

#### AFTERMATH

Thus ended one of the most fascinating and significant events in American military history. U.S. military units, during a time of war, approached armed conflict that may have ended in bloodshed. Frémont went on to more fame and western adventures (senator of California September 9, 1850–March 3, 1851, and candidate for U.S. president in 1856 for the new Republican Party), then threw himself into the Civil War for the federal union, his recklessness providing yet more evidence of his poor military ability. He lived a long life and suffered much bitter adversity, bolstered by the unwavering devotion of his loving wife.

Kearny served as military governor in Mexico City in 1848 for a few months where he contracted malaria. He died that fall in St. Louis. To this day, his reputation continues to suffer from the Frémont court-martial and Benton's smear campaign.<sup>82</sup>

The Mormon Battalion has garnered laurels for well-digging, brick-making, and other civic projects during its occupation duties in

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<sup>80</sup>Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, 270.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*

California, yet its greatest contribution to the Army, to the war effort, and to California was being a loyal and obedient reserve force that provided dependable support to California's legitimate military governor.

#### APPENDIX

#### MYOPIA: MORMON BATTALION CONTRIBUTIONS

For more than a century, students and enthusiasts of the Mormon Battalion have compiled a list of its contributions to the future state of California. These civic works projects include building a courthouse, digging wells, and firing bricks in San Diego. In Los Angeles, the men built Fort Moore.<sup>83</sup> Rarely has the feud among these military officers received appropriate attention, and no battalion historian has placed it in proper context.<sup>84</sup>

The 500-man battalion was perhaps the most journal-writing unit of soldiers to ever serve in the U.S. Army, with nearly a hundred known journals or diaries. The original claims of firing bricks in California were first made by the men of B Company, assigned garrison duty in San Diego from March to July 1847. Sergeant William Hyde recorded that the brick kiln "was said to be the first brick kiln burnt in Upper California."<sup>85</sup> Private Henry Bigler wrote thirty-four years later: "I believe laying brick is something never was much of it done in California before the Mormon Battalion came to this coast" and "for aught I know they are the first that ever made bricks in California."<sup>86</sup> In recent years, the claim that the battalion fired the first bricks in California spread to include the first bricks west of the Mississippi. These claims have entered many accounts of the battalion distributed in modern newspapers and historical societies.<sup>87</sup> Recent scholarship has discredited

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#### Notes for Sidebar:

<sup>83</sup>B. H. Roberts, *The Mormon Battalion: Its History and Achievements* (Rpt., Provo, Utah: Maasai, 2001), 73.

<sup>84</sup>An exception is my "*History May Be Searched in Vain*," 320–22.

<sup>85</sup>Hyde, Journal, June 1847, 37.

<sup>86</sup>Henry Bigler, *Reminiscences and Diaries*, June 29, 1847, 66–67. Bigler wrote this account in 1898, the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of gold in California. Bigler may have been influenced by claims, which were rampant in later years.

<sup>87</sup>D. Lynn Crook, LeRoy L. Ross, and Vernon C. Newman, comps., *Old Town San Diego Little Brick Courthouse: The First Fired-Brick Building Built*



both of these claims.<sup>88</sup>

Related to the first brick-firing myth is the view that the battalion members were pioneers. In fact, they were not. They were soldiers serving during a time of war. One well-respected history continues the narrative of the “battalion” as it split into several groups, made roads, built Sutter’s mill and discovered gold, and eventually returned to their families in Utah. “The cycle was incomplete ending the story in California.” Once discharged, “the men must return to their families and church. Only then would the saga of the Mormon Battalion be finished. The existing overview beginning with enlistment and ending with discharge simply was not enough.”<sup>89</sup> This approach obscures the point that, after July 1847, there was no Mormon Battalion and its participants were no longer soldiers.

The contribution of the Mormon Battalion as a battalion is that, in March and April 1847, it held itself ready for Kearny’s commands. With its backing as a major military reinforcement, he could effectively challenge Stockton and Frémont. Other military forces provided support later, but the battalion was the first and, arguably, the most important.

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*West of the Mississippi* (N.d.: N.pub., 1984).

<sup>88</sup>Susan M. Hector, “Mission Masonry at Rancho Guajome Adobe,” *Journal of San Diego History* 45, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 1–12. The Russians operated Fort Ross north of San Francisco Bay from 1812 to 1841. Robin Joy, “An Examination of Brick Making at the Ross Colony,” Khlebnikov Archive, 1–3, [www.fortroosstatepark.org/brickmaking.htm](http://www.fortroosstatepark.org/brickmaking.htm) (accessed December 13, 2007). See also a study concerning fired bricks used at Mission Dolores and at the Presidio in San Francisco. Dan L. Mosier, “History of Brickmaking in California,” 1, <http://calbricks.netfirms.com/brickhistory.html> (accessed December 13, 2007).

<sup>89</sup>Norma B. Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West: 1846–1848* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), xii.

## REVIEWS

John Gary Maxwell. *Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake: George R. Maxwell, Civil War Hero and Federal Marshal among the Mormons*. Norman, Okla.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 2010. 392 pp. Illustrations, acknowledgments, abbreviations, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth: \$39.95. ISBN 978-0-87062-388-2

*Reviewed by William P. MacKinnon*

Western historian Will Bagley often comments: “Cedar City was not Dodge City.”<sup>1</sup> What he means, usually while casting a gimlet eye at Brigham Young and Mountain Meadows, is that violence in centrally directed Utah Territory was fundamentally different than the more spontaneous killings elsewhere on the nineteenth-century American frontier, such as in the wide-open cow towns of Kansas. The same notion applies to the U.S. marshals appointed to enforce federal law in the West—men who came to the job in all sizes and shapes and with wildly varying levels of probity and effectiveness.

For Dodge City, screen writer John Meston created U.S. Marshal Matt Dillon, the tall, handsome, clean-limbed archetypal frontier hero whom actor James Arness played in *Gunsmoke*, the longest-running series in American television history. What served in the reality of Utah Territory was a substantially less mythic procession of federal lawmen.<sup>2</sup> With the end of the Civil War, President Grant (Ulysses S. not Heber J.) dispensed territorial offices pri-

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<sup>1</sup>While Bagley is the most frequent user of this aphorism, he attributes its origins to a suggestion made by historian David L. Bigler in 1999 while critiquing the manuscript of Bagley’s *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002); Bagley, email to MacKinnon, January 25, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>An exception was Benjamin Franklin Ficklin, who during December 1857 served as Utah’s interim U.S. marshal from Fort Bridger under the aegis of the Utah Expedition. A bright, fearless alumnus of Virginia Military Institute, Ficklin later

marily to appointees who had supported the Union cause by fighting with distinction in its army. Enter George R. Maxwell of Michigan, a twenty-seven-year-old, valorous brevet brigadier general, who became Utah's U.S. marshal in 1873.

In the fictive Dodge City office of *Gunsmoke*, the cripple was Marshal Dillon's faithful deputy, Chester Proudfoot, a Civil War veteran with a game leg. In Marshal George Maxwell's Salt Lake City office, he was himself the casualty—a man so maimed in combat with Custer's Michigan Cavalry Brigade that he had lost his left leg just below the hip, was virtually without mobility in his mangled left arm, had lost multiple fingers, and been severely wounded in the groin and both shoulders. As a result of his eight wounds, some of which festered for more than twenty years, a frequently disheveled, malodorous Maxwell was unable to tie his shoes, button his shirt, or even comb his hair unaided. If the battlefield amputations suffered by Maxwell's brother officer, Ranald Slidell Mackenzie, were severe to the point that the Indians against whom he later fought dubbed him "Bad Hand," small wonder that one of George R. Maxwell's Salt Lake City obituaries referred to him as a "stricken eagle" (299). There are few starker examples of the difference on the American frontier between romantic fiction and gritty reality.

Instead of drawing admiration and empathy for his war record from Utahns, Maxwell received scorn and, in one shocking 1874 incident, a body check into the dust outside the Lion House while unarmed and serving an arrest warrant on Brigham Young. He was ridiculed for ungroomed hair, the result of his inability to raise his arms high enough to manage a comb properly. Utah Territory, unlike every other part of the country, had opted out of the Civil War on the grounds that it was a non-Mormon fight. Furthermore, during the 1870s, Utah's Mormon noncombatants were locked in a corrosive struggle with the U.S. government to secure title to their lands, preserve the religious principle and practice of plural marriage, resolve the controversy over responsibility for the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre, and prevent the political obliteration of the territory following the loss of six large swatches of land to form or enlarge Nevada, Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming during the 1860s.

Given this milieu, George Maxwell received neither credit nor accommodation for his heroic exploits in a distant East, the spawning bed of Mormon persecution. Instead, largely alone and often unsupported by the U.S. government, Maxwell was drawn into combat anew—a high-stakes, prolonged battle as brutal as anything subsequently conceived in Hollywood. In his 2007 Tan-

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served as a moving force in the operation of the Pony Express and, during the Civil War, was a Confederate blockade runner as well as owner of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello.

ner Lecture for the Mormon History Association's annual conference, Professor William Deverell of the University of Southern California argued that the West was a place of post-war healing and regeneration for Union Army veterans.<sup>3</sup> Not so for a badly damaged George R. Maxwell.

From these circumstances and a relative paucity of personal papers, John Gary Maxwell, M.D., has crafted the biography of a man to whom he is not related but whose story he finds key in understanding Utah's violent, tortuous territorial passage to statehood. In 1853 Brigham Young wrote to President Franklin Pierce to lobby for his reappointment as governor, arguing that any Gentile seeking a federal office in Utah was ipso facto unworthy of it.<sup>4</sup> In the case of U.S. Marshal George Maxwell, his biographer argues that, to the contrary, Maxwell was a non-Mormon whose struggles with the territory's ruling hierarchy to enforce federal law ennobled him while ultimately making available public land, statehood, and the blessings of republican government to all Utahns, especially Latter-day Saints.

For Mormon apologists and others viewing federal appointees with blanket distaste, Dr. Maxwell's portrait of General Maxwell is a hard sell. Yet those who pass by this study will miss not only a provocative, worthy biography but several valuable dividends in the form of by-products not found elsewhere: a unique assessment of Utah's detachment from the Civil War and its impact on the territory's long quest for statehood; a clinical tutorial on the human wreckage created in that conflict's combat; a glimpse into the social and psychological isolation of federal appointees posted to Salt Lake City; and an understanding of the duties of U.S. marshals in the West. Gary Maxwell sheds light on these issues with an understated display of dogged research, medical expertise, eloquent prose, balanced advocacy, civility, and a fresh perspective that should attract truth-seekers from either side of the still-polarized debate on who did what to whom and why in territorial Utah. On more than one occasion I have argued for the generation of more light and less heat from commentators on this subject.<sup>5</sup> In making a sort of biographical house call on his rumpiled, combative "patient," Dr. Maxwell—lamp held high—succeeds admirably.

After presenting a useful Introduction, the author organizes the events of George R. Maxwell's life through two principal sections of unequal length.

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<sup>3</sup>William Deverell, "Thoughts from the Farther West: Mormons, California, and the Civil War," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 15.

<sup>4</sup>Young, Letter to Pierce, March 31, 1853, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>5</sup>William P. MacKinnon, "Predicting the Past: The Utah War's Twenty-First Century Future," *Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series*, No. 14 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009), 7.

Part 1 (1842–69), comprising Chapters 1–3, covers his early life and education, Civil War service, and post-war convalescence. Part 2 (1869–92), consisting of Chapters 4–15, deals with the balance of Maxwell's life and that of his widow, all of it spent in Utah with the exception of brief trips to Washington and Michigan for lobbying and family events, respectively. Within this structure, the final two chapters provide an eloquent summation of George Maxwell's life and its meaning, with prime emphasis on the Utah phase of his experiences.

To attempt even a distillation of the material in these fifteen chapters is to risk an overly long review, given the sweep of the military and territorial events in which George Maxwell participated. Had he enlisted three months earlier and received his last wound two weeks later, Maxwell would have fought in almost all of the Army of the Potomac's major engagements instead of narrowly missing the 1861 battle of First Bull Run and Lee's surrender at Appomattox in 1865. In Utah Territory, Maxwell was subsequently involved through one role or another in virtually every landmark Mormon-federal conflict between the Utah War of 1857–58 and President Wilford Woodruff's polygamy Manifesto of 1890.

In brief, the principal value of Part 1 is the light that it sheds on the Mormon-like emigration of Maxwell's family from hard-scrabble farms in New Hampshire and Massachusetts to the Burnt-Over District of upstate New York and then to the more promising public lands of the old Northwest Territory. Unlike the westering Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, the last stop for the Maxwells was Ash Township, Monroe County, Michigan, a frontier agricultural settlement near the confluence of the River Raisin and Lake Erie, where George Maxwell was born in 1842. Through an account of Maxwell's rural upbringing, his boyhood friendships, matriculation at a local teacher's college, and August 1861 enlistment in a volunteer cavalry regiment, one sees the development, not only of Maxwell's horsemanship and character, but also the formation of a network of Michigan mentors, peers, and juniors who were to inspire and support him during the Civil War as well as in Utah—men such as Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer, U.S. Senators Isaac Peckham Christy and Zachariah Chandler, as well as Lieutenant Matthew B. Burgher, who shared Maxwell's Confederate captivity and later served as warden of Utah's federal penitentiary until bludgeoned to death during an 1876 jail break.

Most of Part 1 is devoted to an account of Maxwell's war experiences, including his meteoric rise from private to brevet brigadier general in Custer's Michigan Cavalry Brigade, two stints of captivity, and brutal combat in landmark as well as obscure battles across Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland at Mount Jackson, Second Bull Run, Selectman's Ford, Brentsville, Kelly's Ford, Chancellorsville, Brandy Station, Gettysburg, Monterey Pass, Yellow Tavern,

Hanover town, Salem Church, Haw's Shop, Hanover Court House, Petersburg, Dinwiddie Court House, and finally Five Forks. In the latter battle, Maxwell received his eighth and final wound on April 1, 1865—the devastating blow that cost him his left leg only weeks before the end of the war. So frequently was Maxwell wounded that the term “shot to pieces” appears repeatedly in his contemporaries’ comments. Maxwell’s biographer observes: “One can almost create a map of the war, using the dates and places where he sustained battle injuries” (55).

In Gary Maxwell’s discussion of his subject’s medical travails, the reader finds insight and graphic eloquence that distinguishes *Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake* from the vast majority of biographies about Civil War participants and the carnage they witnessed. Therein lies part of the book’s unexpected value.

The sole clue to the author’s background is Maxwell’s single, self-effacing reference to himself as “an academic surgeon” (11). In fact, Gary Maxwell is a distinguished practitioner and teacher of surgeons, with fourteen years as an army medical officer (primarily in Utah) and forty years of clinical experience as well as faculty appointments at the medical schools of the University of Utah, his alma mater, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Perhaps most telling is Dr. Maxwell’s long immersion in the sub-specialty of trauma surgery, an arena that, together with his years in an army field hospital, qualifies him uniquely to describe what happened to George Maxwell and the condition in which he arrived in Utah four years after his discharge from the Union Army.<sup>6</sup> From such a background (and his authorship of more than eighty articles for professional journals) springs Gary Maxwell’s ability to write in arresting fashion, as with this account of George Maxwell’s command of the First Regiment of Michigan Volunteer Cavalry:

Custer’s losses were greater in this [1864] battle at the [Haw] blacksmith’s shop than in any other engagement of this Virginia campaign, and Maxwell was among those severely wounded. Maxwell felt the thud of the heavy lead ball that struck his left forearm, and he heard the fracturing of the radius and ulna bones as they splintered. Evacuated to the General Hospital in Georgetown, Maryland, he avoided amputation but required three operations, resulting in the removal of several inches of bone. He was left with a draining, infected wound and forearm disability that would continue for the remainder of his life. Maxwell was now joined in the small cadre of Civil War officers of both sides who continued to fight with only one useful arm. . . . Not unlike the one-armed cavalry major general Philip Kearny, who held the reins in his teeth, Maxwell was [thereafter] forced to rely on face-to-face, close-quarters combat with a cavalry saber held in his right hand and a revolver on his belt. He fought by asserting leadership, in person and up close. (67–69)

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<sup>6</sup>Maxwell, email to MacKinnon, January 23, 2011.

If the several remarkable chapters describing George Maxwell's Civil War experiences are open to criticism, only three points seem worth mentioning: the absence of a map to capture the sweep of Maxwell's campaigning; ambiguity about the specifics of his multiple promotions to substantive and brevet ranks; and an apparent unawareness that Maxwell fought in the midst of officers and non-coms on both sides who, less than five years earlier, were comrades-in-arms during the Utah War. The irony of the latter circumstances becomes especially prominent in examining the command structure of the Union and Confederate armies that clashed at Gettysburg, where Maxwell lost several fingers. There one sees a constellation of general officers who earlier were subalterns or even civilians in the Utah Expedition: Generals Lewis A. Armistead, John Bufford, Elon John Farnsworth, John Gibbon, Henry Heth, Thomas L. Kane, William H. F. ("Rooney") Lee, John Cleveland Robinson, J.E.B. Stuart, and Stephen H. Weed, among others.

Major General John Fulton Reynolds, the most prominent fatality at Gettysburg, had served twice with the Third Artillery in Utah—first with the Steptoe Expedition during 1854–55 and then with the Utah Expedition during the late 1850s. Deeper in the Union Army's leadership cadre at Gettysburg appears First Lieutenant James ("Jock") Stewart, Scottish-born commander of the battle's most decimated unit, Light Battery B of the Fourth U.S. Artillery, the unit in which Stewart earlier served as Captain John W. Phelps's first sergeant throughout the Utah War. Another first lieutenant, John Green, had also been a first sergeant in Utah (Second Dragoons). Green fought valiantly at Gettysburg, was breveted repeatedly, and eventually was awarded the Medal of Honor in California's 1873 Modoc War before retiring in 1889, the year of George Maxwell's death, as a brevet brigadier general.<sup>7</sup>

Part 2 of *Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake* begins with an account of Maxwell's post-war convalescence back in Monroe County, Michigan, his early practice of law there, and his brief, childless marriage to a young wife who died unexpectedly of unknown causes. In 1869, the Grant administration appointed him to the post of register of land in the Department of the Interior's new Salt Lake City Land Office, an establishment belatedly created by Congress to untangle the emotional, burning issue of land ownership in Utah, where both preemption and homesteading of public lands had been unavailable to Utahns since the territory's creation in 1850. If Brigham Young liked to brag about transforming the desert into a blossoming rose, he and the Latter-day Saints had done so through back-breaking labor on land acquired through an impromptu Church distribution system unrecognized by the U.S. govern-

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<sup>7</sup>William P. MacKinnon, "Epilogue to the Utah War: Impact and Legacy," *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 204–6.

ment. Thus widower Maxwell stepped off the newly completed transcontinental railroad and into a hornet's nest of controversy over land titles while negotiating Utah's rough terrain with the help of a prosthetic wooden leg and a burning determination to serve the Grant administration.

George Maxwell served in the land office until he was appointed U.S. marshal for Utah in 1873. It was a rocky four years, with Maxwell almost immediately demonized as the latest federal carpetbagger and heir to two decades of pent-up Mormon angst over the lack of clear title to the lands they had been occupying and improving. As the author sees it, notwithstanding repeated Mormon attempts to remove Maxwell from office, "he attempted to provide fairly, to both Mormons and non-Mormons, the long-delayed land ownership rights provided them by federal homesteading statutes. He lobbied in Washington, D.C., for laws to deal fairly with all contenders in the decisions of land distribution" (344).

While serving as register of lands, Maxwell began a practice that characterized his entire life in Utah—intervention in law suits, public controversies, criminal investigations, or lobbying efforts that may have had little or nothing to do with his official duties as a federal appointee but that provided an opportunity to diminish the power of the Mormon hierarchy while more closely aligning Utah's political tone and practices with republican principles of government. The earliest such involvement was Maxwell's high-profile pursuit of the murderer of John King Robinson, a popular Salt Lake City physician who had been lured to his death three years before Maxwell arrived in Utah.<sup>8</sup>

Maxwell's assumption of the marshal's duties in 1873 provided an even broader opportunity for him to plunge into controversy and lobbying efforts—frequently while visiting Washington—on both an official and gratuitous basis. His interventions, as described by Gary Maxwell, seem legion and included the shaping of such key anti-polygamy legislation as the Poland Act of 1874 and the Edmunds Act of 1882 as well as involvement in Ann Eliza Webb Young's titillating divorce proceedings against Brigham Young, an 1874 case that not only splashed mud on both Youngs but resulted in President Grant's abrupt removal of Judge James B. McKean—and almost of Maxwell with him.

Unquestionably the most arduous assignment of Maxwell's marshalship was his deep involvement in the first (1875) murder trial of John D. Lee for the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre. The Lee trial, conducted in southern Utah three hundred miles from Salt Lake City, resulted in a hung jury after

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<sup>8</sup>For more context and another view of Maxwell's effectiveness in this phase of his career, see Thomas G. Alexander, "Conflict and Inaction: The Administration of Public Lands in Territorial Utah," paper delivered at the Western History Association's annual conference, October 2010, forthcoming in *Utah Historical Quarterly*.



herculean efforts by Maxwell to arrest Lee and his co-indictees, select a jury, track down more than 150 witnesses (many fugitive), and provide security for both Lee and jurors in the midst of an isolated and hostile population. It was a bizarre assignment during which Maxwell developed an improbably friendly relationship with Lee based on mutual trust and their shared outcast status, all under the watchful eye of William Adams (“Bill”) Hickman, the self-confessed murderer whom Maxwell hired as part of his security detail. The cost of the Lee trial to the under-financed marshal’s office was staggering and a significant factor in the mismanagement by both the U.S. attorney general and Maxwell that ultimately led to the marshal’s replacement in 1876.

In retirement from federal service Maxwell remained in Salt Lake City, practiced law, and as a private citizen continued his advocacy of such causes as more comprehensive anti-polygamy legislation (the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887) and a reformation of Utah’s election practices to adopt the secret ballot while attacking female suffrage in the territory as a ruse to strengthen Church control over election results. As one might expect from his Civil War service, Maxwell became a stalwart supporter of veterans’ causes in Utah, especially the Grand Army of the Republic, and was a frequent speaker at patriotic celebrations, many of which turned into extensions of the ongoing Mormon-Gentile jousting that continued into the twentieth century. Worn down by his battle wounds, political battles, and financial woes, Maxwell—predeceased by his three young children—died in 1889 at age forty-seven. His second wife, daughter of a prominent Mormon physician whom he had married in 1872, followed him in death in 1892.

Given all this conflict and George Maxwell’s almost reflexive combativeness toward the LDS hierarchy, it is hardly surprising that his biographer portrays him as a driven executioner of the Grant administration’s anti-Mormon policy, if not the president’s personal agent. Fueling this latter interpretation, Gary Maxwell hints several times at ambiguous meetings and possibly secret instructions delivered in Salt Lake City by visiting White House emissaries such as Major General Phil Sheridan, Maxwell’s old cavalry commander. Directionally, the author is probably on target, but it is a mistake to presume too close a personal Maxwell-Grant relationship given the several times that the president treated Maxwell less than favorably. For example, in 1869, soon after Grant’s inauguration, Maxwell felt that he had been promised appointment as Arizona Territory’s U.S. superintendent for Indian affairs. It was a position that paid three times the \$500 annual salary of Utah’s land office post, the position to which Maxwell was assigned after being out-manuevered by a better-connected supplicant from Grant’s home state. Then there was the consistently unsympathetic reaction to Maxwell’s dire financial straits as U.S. marshal by Grant’s corrupt attorney general, the wavering in Washington over whether to remove him along with Judge McKean during the uproar over the

marshal's 1874 arrest and brief imprisonment of Brigham Young, and finally Grant's removal of Maxwell from office in early 1876 to make way for another administration place-seeker. Even Maxwell's biographer viewed this termination as stunning, given that "President Grant was notorious for his unyielding support of his [other] appointees" such as impeached Secretary of War William Belknap (256). Adding insult to injury, the U.S. government later increased Maxwell's disability pension from \$30 per month to only \$50 rather than to the requested maximum monthly stipend of \$100 allowed a totally incapacitated veteran.

At the end of the book, Gary Maxwell asks if his subject was a hero in Utah as well as in the Union Army and answers with a firm "yes." He notes: "Though his uncommon Civil War sacrifice was not honored in Utah, he nevertheless became an unexpected and unappreciated contributor to Utah's long-delayed statehood. Indeed, the Mormon faithful might find it ironic that Maxwell's criticisms helped indirectly to bring internal change within the structure and practices of the Mormon church. Statehood in 1896—and enhanced acceptance of that religious institution and the Mormon people, far beyond their early regional, cultural, and ecclesiastical boundaries—followed" (26–27).

Other than the light shed by Part 2 of *Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake* on George R. Maxwell's distinctive "footprint" in territorial Utah, it strikes me that this book's greatest value lies in its assessment of the extent to which Utah's unique non-support of the Union Army and Brigham Young's open contempt for Abraham Lincoln fueled the post-war deterioration of relations between Mormons and Civil War veterans like Maxwell.<sup>9</sup> Virtually all historical analyses of Utah and the Civil War are activity-focused, confining themselves to events such as the three-month service of Captain Lot Smith's federal cavalry company, the patrols of Colonel Robert Taylor Burton's Nauvoo Legion counterpart unit, the establishment of Camp Douglas in 1862, the Bear River Massacre of 1863, and the long-running clash between Brigham Young and U.S. Army General Patrick Edward Connor. Gary Maxwell's biography provides an unexpected, extensive conceptual analysis of the "why" of this limited Mormon involvement and its psychological impact on the mutually negative attitudes of both westering veterans and the Utahns in whose midst they arrived after the war. In the process, Dr. Maxwell treats readers to some of his best writing:

Veterans knew that not only had Mormons remained neutral in the

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<sup>9</sup>David L. Bigler's otherwise comprehensive 1998 territorial study, *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847–1896* (Spokane, Wash.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1998), leaves Maxwell in comparative anonymity: 12, 279, 296–97, 300–303.

time of moral crisis, but many of them had also anticipated the destruction of the American people and their government as justified punishment [for the 1844 assassination of the Smith brothers]. Veterans could not avoid having a biased view of Mormons; they observed [erroneously] that not a single Mormon life had been sacrificed in the titanic struggle. In Utah the preservation of the Union was neither expected nor desired, and the abolition of slavery was neither a moral issue nor an economic one but was viewed with indifference. As a consequence, polygamy in Utah became, in the minds, of the federal appointees, analogous to slavery in the South. The Mormons' refusal to acquiesce to federal authority and law and disavow polygamy was directly compared to the Southerners' refusal to yield to the supremacy of the union of the states and to disavow slavery. Many years after the war ended, some Mormon leaders in Utah still looked upon the Civil War as an event of divine retribution against the forces of an evil and corrupt government. (107)

Accordingly, among Union Army veterans, there were negative reactions to the widespread lowering of the national ensign by Mormon Utahns on July 4, 1885, to protest the Edmunds Act: "During the Civil War, [Union] military leaders [throughout the country] had not tolerated any abuse of the flag, and the men of the GAR still held that sentiment. Whether the flag was that of the United States or of their own regiment or unit, it was an object of reverence. . . . In this war, the importance of advancing one's flag and defending it from capture was accompanied by a devotion far beyond any rational military explanation, and certainly beyond the appreciation of the Mormons. . . . For war veterans the flag carried deep symbolism, almost a religious connotation, that could not be shared or understood by those who had not fought in the war. . . . One veteran attempted to make a citizen's arrest of Hamilton G. Park, the watchman on duty for the ZCMI building, for allowing its flag to be half-masted" (284–85). In one 1875 incident, even a Confederate veteran defended Maxwell against Mormon insult by referring to the offending Latter-day Saint as an "[adjective] carrot-eater," a reference to what he viewed as Utah's rabbit-like passivity during the Civil War (217).

Yet if Gary Maxwell succeeds brilliantly in limning the chasm between Utah Mormons and Civil War veterans, he bypasses a significant wedge issue also at work in the territory—alcohol. The author does not shy away from mentioning the episodic accusations of drunkenness lacing both the private utterances of the marshal's Mormon critics as well the *Deseret News's* coverage of his controversial activities, but it is not until page 296 (and a discussion of Maxwell's cause of death) that the author confronts these perceptions. Even there Dr. Maxwell's assessment is clinical and muted, with his authorial judgment, in effect, bordering on that of the ambivalent Scotch verdict: not proven. It strikes me that Mrs. Maxwell's letter to her sister, written in 1878 or 1879, in which she describes four failed attempts by her husband to abstain through subscription to a written pledge, should be adequate evidence of a serious al-

cohol problem at least at that point in George R. Maxwell's life, if not earlier. Although the Mormon Word of Wisdom was interpreted and observed quite differently in territorial Utah than during the twentieth century, inebriation by a high-profile federal adversary would unquestionably have aggravated the difference between Maxwell and the Mormon population he was sworn to serve, notwithstanding that group's willingness to overlook the frequent drunkenness of sometime deputy U.S. marshal Porter Rockwell, the Mormon bravo who died a sordid death from alcoholism in Salt Lake's Colorado Stables in 1878 while under the cloud of a federal murder indictment rooted in the Utah War.

Why has Gary Maxwell written this book? Surely not out of any family connection. Gary Maxwell's ancestors were in Utah contemporaneously with George R. Maxwell's sojourn there, but they were unrelated, having arrived in 1856 as Mormon handcarters from Great Britain rather than as a Protestant railroad passenger from Michigan in 1869. "The knee-jerk reflex response [to this question] is that the man deserved to be remembered and honored," Dr. Maxwell writes, then confesses, "A more articulate response has been difficult to put to paper. . . . My more complete and most honest answer is that it has enabled me, in a journey from elsewhere, to follow my own god home. It has been a fulfilling release from my own relative ignorance of the bowdlerized history-beneath-the-surface of my own ancestors, on whose shoulders I now stand with a far deeper appreciation of their lives. . . . [My studies have] rekindled and elevated my patriotism and pride in this nation. . . . Maxwell deserves a fresh look, an objective appraisal, before his contributions are dismissed and he is relegated to anonymity" (13, 27).

Given these motivations, Gary Maxwell has been most influenced in his plunge into historical biography by four independent or non-academic scholars of territorial Utah with backgrounds similar to his own in the sense that most of them are non-residents of Utah with family roots in Mormonism and Zion, although their current religious affiliations range through Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and so-called cultural Mormonism. Dr. Maxwell identifies Polly Aird, Will Bagley, David L. Bigler, and me as the fourth. The book is critical yet respectful in tone and entirely free of the occasional sarcasm and edge that sometimes flows from such backgrounds. Perhaps this balance is attributable to the influence of a fifth and quite different historian who also has Maxwell's respect and attention—Thomas G. Alexander, a faithful Latter-day Saint with long ties to the faculty of Brigham Young University.

*Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake* is a handsome, tight, well-designed volume in the Arthur H. Clark tradition. Chapters are headed by apt epigrams, derived from a wide range of twentieth-century authors, philosophers, and savants. The book is remarkably free of typos, although a word seems to be missing from at least three pages (219, 314, 329), and two pages contain garbled sentences (196, 207).

Occasionally Maxwell indulges in modernisms such as “hit man” and “the dark side” (160) as well as “up close and personal” (209). Laced through Maxwell’s uncommonly graceful prose are a handful of obscure words that sent me to the dictionary: nescience, interdigitates, recusant, Brobdingnagian, chiliasm, peregrinations, necromancer, and myrmidon (11, 13, 25, 33, 101, 110, 113, 329). Of more substantive concern are a series of factual errors by which George Q. Cannon is born in Canada rather than Great Britain (317), Cannon’s title appears as congressman instead of delegate (236, 263), the battle of the Little Big Horn is placed in Wyoming instead of Montana (259), and a January 6, 1857, communication to Congress and President James Buchanan is identified as a letter from Brigham Young rather than a memorial adopted by Utah’s legislative assembly (147, 239). On p. 319, the caption for an 1874 cartoon lampooning three Mormon leaders switches the names of D. H. Wells and Brigham Young and seems to misidentify George A. Smith as Hosea Stout.

For students of the Civil War, the American West, and Utah’s long, troubled territorial period, John Gary Maxwell’s *Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake* is a highly unusual, valuable source written well. If ever tempted to take two aspirin while calling a physician, one might better delve into Dr. Maxwell’s book while keeping close at hand a brace of complementary studies shedding light on the complex conflicts George R. Maxwell found in Utah: David L. Bigler’s *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847–1896*; and Ronald W. Walker’s *Wayward Saints: The Godbeites and Brigham Young* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

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W. Jeffrey Marsh with Jennifer Johnson and Celeste Pittman. *Eyewitness History of the Church. Volume 1: The Restoration*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2005, xvi, 417 pp. Photographs, index. Cloth: \$29.99. ISBN 1-55517-845-6

Jennifer Johnson, Claire Koltko, Celeste Pittman, and Rachel Cope, comps. *Eyewitness History of the Church. Volume 2: Sacrifice Brings Forth the*

*Blessings of Heaven*. W. Jeffrey Marsh listed as a mentor. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2006. xvi, 356 pp. Photographs, index. Cloth: \$24.99. ISBN 1-55517-926-6

Claire Koltko, Natalie Ross, Brittany McEwen, and Jennifer Johnson, comps. W. Jeffrey Marsh listed as a mentor. *Eyewitness History of the Church. Vol. 3: Journey to Zion's Hill*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2006, xvi, 298 pp. Photographs, index. Cloth: \$24.99. ISBN 1-55517-963-0

*Reviewed by Dave Johnson*

W. Jeffrey Marsh enlisted a group of research assistants through a student-mentoring program at Brigham Young University to compile a three-volume collection of quotations “by using the words of those who beheld firsthand the unfolding of the Restoration. Their eyewitness accounts breathe new life into the events of the Restoration, enabling us to watch Church history unfold just as they saw it” (1:v) This three-volume series is attractively bound by Cedar Fort Press, with some interesting photographs of the quoted individuals. The series is not a detailed historical account but more a scrapbook of brief quotations.

Volume 1 begins with narratives describing first impressions of those meeting Joseph Smith and the Smith family. The narratives are organized in chronological order for the most part. Volumes 1 and 2 both have quotations dealing with the Mormons in Ohio and Missouri, with Volume 2 including narratives from the Kirtland period through Nauvoo, and the martyrdom of brothers Joseph and Hyrum Smith. The first two volumes purposefully contain thirty-eight chapters in honor of Joseph Smith’s thirty-eight years of life. Volume 3 includes quotations describing life in Nauvoo after the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Continuing on with recollections of the trek to the Salt Lake Valley, it summarizes the journeys of the Mormon Battalion, and Utah missionaries traveling to Europe, and those of the handcart pioneers, ending with the Willie and Martin handcart companies.

As Marsh says in his introduction, the object of all history is to indeed behold events firsthand, “just as they saw it.” And upon first picking up Volume 1, the reader is intrigued by the opportunity to read through more than one thousand pages of first-hand quotations by participants. The introduction quotes *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness History* in promising that “this kind of eye-witness history is much more vivid than the sifted, sorted words of recorded history” (1:x). Marsh entices the reader, stating: “Each chapter consists of eyewitness, first-person narratives of central events of Joseph’s life and character, and of the history of the early Church. Reading these accounts will enable you to see and feel history as it occurred” (xi).

There continues to be something of a debate in Mormon history about

whether Joseph Smith and early Mormonism can be accurately portrayed by those who practice the religion he established. (See, for example, Richard Lyman Bushman, *On the Road with Joseph Smith: An Author's Diary* [Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007]). Marsh is very quick to let us know where he stands on the issue. "As we read their narratives, we too can vow with a renewed determination to avoid making compromises with the wickedness of the world and recommit to sustaining the living prophets as they seek to establish Zion in these latter days" (1:xii). The challenge to recommit leaves little doubt that Marsh's intention for the books is to be more a spiritual testimony rather than an intellectual history of early Mormonism.

The first chapters of Volume 1 dive right in with several recorded impressions of those first meeting Joseph Smith. As one might expect after reading Marsh's introduction, the chapters include only positive narratives of Smith. The initial narratives are engaging but brief and without much context, leaving the reader curious about the motivations and backgrounds of the writers. For example, the first chapter begins with a fairly in-depth description by future LDS Church President Lorenzo Snow of his first impressions upon meeting Joseph Smith. In the next chapter, Lorenzo's sister, Eliza R. Snow, describes her initial feelings about Joseph Smith Sr. and her decision to join the Mormons: "The old gentleman's [Joseph Smith Sr.'s] prediction, that I should be baptized, was strange to me, for I had not cherished a thought of becoming a member of the "Mormon" Church. . . . I looked at Father Smith, and silently asked myself the question: Can that man be a deceiver? His every appearance answered in the negative. At first sight, his presence impressed me with feelings of love and reverence. I had never seen age so prepossessing. Father Joseph Smith, the Patriarch, was indeed a noble specimen of aged manhood" (46).

While Eliza's narrative is interesting, left unsaid is how Eliza was attracted to the Church. Did her brother Lorenzo influence her? The reader needs to have more perspective and context about the narratives. Similarly, Volume 1:64 contains a photograph of the Reverend George Lane, a circuit rider who preached from James 1:5 at a meeting Joseph attended. The photo is courtesy of the LDS Church History Library. I had never heard of Lane in connection with this scriptural passage that had such an influence on the young, seeking Joseph and was very disappointed that nothing more was said of him. In addition to the puzzling question of illustrating a book with the portrait of someone not discussed in the book, I was eager to know more about what I would consider a landmark early Mormon experience. The omission seems odd, especially when what *is* included is a fictional account of a camp meeting from *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. Its inclusion seems very out of place for what claims to be a collection of eyewitness, first-person narratives.

There is no question the three-volume series contains some interesting,

valuable, and little-known quotations. Yet most of the narratives are from secondary sources, with few primary sources, and no footnotes. Marsh borrows heavily from Milton V. Backman Jr., Lucy Mack Smith, and B. H. Roberts's *Comprehensive History of the Church*. While forcefully claiming to be an eyewitness, first-person history of Joseph Smith and early Mormonism, the volumes shift rather quickly to something else by quoting liberally from LDS General Authorities, and traditional LDS source material. Although valuable as a study guide on topics such as the LDS priesthood, the volumes are only partly what they purport to be, an eyewitness history.

The quotations in these volumes often create more questions about the people who describe Joseph than about Joseph Smith himself. More background about the narrators would be helpful. What prompted them to write the things they did and when did they make their records? Included in Volume 1 were several turn-of-the-century quotations by those who recorded their impressions of first meeting Joseph Smith some forty or fifty years after the event. Perhaps there is an interesting story to be told of how an aging generation felt a need to document impressions and involvement regarding the beginnings of Mormonism.

Although Marsh's *Eyewitness History* would be a handsome addition to any library and provides some interesting browsing material, it is not intended as a scholarly historical study and will not satisfy the appetite of those seeking serious, in-depth eyewitness narratives of the history of Mormonism.

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Matthew B. Brown. *Exploring the Connection between Mormons and Masons*. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2009. 212 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. Cloth: \$19.95. ISBN 13: 978-1-59811-893-3

*Reviewed by Michael W. Homer*

Matthew B. Brown has written a new tome concerning the relationship between Mormon and Masonic rituals. Brown agrees with the thesis concerning that connection that was developed by LDS General Authorities Melvin J. Ballard, B. H. Roberts, Anthony W. Ivins, and John A. Widtsoe. The LDS thesis assumed that Masonic ritual was first developed in Solomon's Temple and contained remnants of an endowment that was practiced there. The thesis also posited that Joseph Smith restored the entire endowment, through revelation, before he joined the Craft; that he became a Mason primarily for friendship and never became active in the



fraternity; and that similarities between Masonic rituals and the endowment are superficial and can be explained by the connection both rituals had to a primitive endowment practiced in Solomon's Temple.

This Mormon thesis, which was built in stages by these Church authorities, was collated, combined, and galvanized by Mormon educators such as Cecil McGavin, Kenneth W. Godfrey, and Gilbert Scharffs. Godfrey's summary, "Freemasonry and Temple," was published in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, and is now considered the quasi-official position of the LDS Church.<sup>1</sup> Brown, who has written other faith-promoting books published by Covenant Communications, notes in his introduction that he wrote this book on the connection between Mormons and Masons "to assist the student of the past in separating out some of the facts from the fiction." He identifies four areas of inquiry: "Why did Joseph Smith become a Freemason? Who introduced Freemasonry into Nauvoo, Illinois, in the early 1840s? Do Masons really descend from the workmen who built Solomon's Temple? [and] What is the relationship between the Masonic Lodge and the Mormon Temple?" (2). Although Brown tackles other issues, this review will focus on the questions that have become parts of the Mormon thesis.

Brown concludes that Joseph Smith became a Freemason to "obtain influence in furtherance of the purposes of the Lord" (72). He relies on statements (which are not definitive) made by Church leaders many years after Smith was killed, the Nauvoo Lodge's dispensation was revoked, and the Saints had settled in Utah. These remarks, including those made by Brigham Young in 1860 and by Lorenzo Snow in 1901, recognized the fraternal nature of the Craft but did not suggest that Smith became a Freemason exclusively or even primarily for that reason. Brown concludes that Smith's "attachment to Masonry may not have been as great as some commentators have believed" (77). He relies on Mervin Hogan, *Founding Minutes of Nauvoo Lodge* (Des Moines, Iowa: Research Lodge No. 2, 1971), to calculate that Smith attended only 16.5 percent of the meetings of Nauvoo Lodge from the time he was initiated as an Entered Apprentice (March 15, 1842), until his introduction of the endowment to the Holy Order (May 4, 1842) (76–82). But Hogan's pamphlet only contains the minutes recorded by John C. Bennett when he was secretary of the lodge. Brown failed to consider meetings that Smith attended after he introduced the endowment, the minutes of which remain unpublished but which are available to researchers at the LDS Church History Library. This error, which has also been made by previous writers who have advanced the same thesis, distorts Smith's enthusiasm for the Craft.

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Freemasonry and Temple," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 2:528–29.

Brown next finds “no evidence that Joseph Smith played a direct role in trying to get a Masonic lodge established among the Saints, though it must be admitted that the Masons adhered to principles that would have been especially attractive to the leader of a frequently (and recently) persecuted people” (71). Instead, Brown asserts that John C. Bennett spearheaded the petition for a Mormon Masonic lodge in Nauvoo. He notes that Ebenezer Robinson, who was converted in Kirtland, recalled in 1890 that LDS Church leaders “‘strenuously opposed secret societies’ until the conversion to Mormonism of John C. Bennett.’ Then ‘a great change in sentiment seemed to take place’” (70). But Robinson, who became a Mason shortly after the Nauvoo Lodge was organized, ignored the fact that Masons who never renounced the Craft, including Hyrum Smith, Heber C. Kimball, Newel Knight, and George Miller, joined the LDS Church before Bennett. These Mormon Masons apparently signed the petition (with Bennett) requesting permission to organize a lodge in Nauvoo. The reason that Joseph Smith did not sign the petition was that he was not yet a Freemason; only members of the Craft could petition the Grand Lodge for a charter.

Brown believes that both Abraham Jonas (the Illinois Grand Master) and James Adams (the Illinois Deputy Grand Master) also played important roles in the establishment of Nauvoo Lodge. Jonas decided to grant Nauvoo Masons a dispensation because of their petition and since his own lodge in Columbus had recommended them. But, Brown concludes, it “seems likely that the Deputy Grand Master [Adams] would have exerted a degree of positive influence on behalf of his religious colleagues” (71). Although Adams converted to Mormonism, and eventually became one of the initial members of the Holy Order, he had lost much of his influence with his fellow Freemasons by the time these events took place. Brown mistakenly assumes that Adams was the Deputy Grand Master from 1840 to 1843. Adams actually began feuding with Masons in his own Springfield Lodge in 1841 and stopped attending lodge meetings. He was absent when the Grand Lodge met in October and Meredith Helm was elected to replace him. Shortly thereafter Jonas granted recess dispensations to Nauvoo Lodge and six other lodges.<sup>2</sup>

Brown next tackles the question of whether “Masons really descend from the workmen who built Solomon’s Temple?” He is familiar with the general outline of Masonic history and cites some of the most recognized and respected Masonic scholars. Although Brown’s summary is quite short, as one would expect in a book that attempts to cover so much territory, he

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<sup>2</sup>John C. Reynolds, *History of the M.W. Grand Lodge of Illinois* (Springfield, 1869), 154; Kent L. Walgren, “James Adams: Early Springfield Mormon and Mason,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 75 (Summer 1982), 126–27; *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Illinois* (Freeport, Ill.: Privately published, 1892), 52.

recognizes that Masonic historians concluded during the late nineteenth century (the “authentic school”) that Masonry cannot be traced back to Solomon’s Temple (26–35). But Brown does seem to suggest that, since Freemasonry’s origins remain shrouded in mystery, its rituals may have originated before the Middle Ages (27–29). Although Godfrey and previous LDS writers did not even mention Masonry’s “authentic school,” they suggested that there was a contingent of scholars who continued to believe that Masonry originated thousands of years before the organization of the Grand Lodge of London. Godfrey wrote: “Some historians trace the order’s origins to Solomon, Enoch, or even Adam” while “others argue that[,] while some Masonic symbolism may be ancient, as an institution it began in the Middle Ages or later” (Godfrey, 2:528–29). But despite these suggestions, the fanciful notion that Masonry’s rituals are descended from Solomon’s Temple (or practiced by Old Testament prophets) has been deconstructed and abandoned by Masonic historians.

Finally, Brown addresses the question: “What is the relationship between the Masonic Lodge and the Mormon Temple?” He argues against the notion that “Joseph Smith’s intent was to restore Freemasonry to its pure form” (129). He acknowledges that “there was no mistaking that there were some resemblances between the two rituals” but points out that none of the Masons who mentioned these similarities cried “about bootlegging or fraud” (114). Brown recognizes that “early LDS Church leaders believed the mythological stories about the Freemasons descending from Solomon’s Temple,” but he insists that Brigham Young “was simply repeating what the Freemasons had taught him during his own initiation.” He notes that Young and other Church leaders “had little reason to approach the Lord on such a matter since—as Elder Kimball wrote in a letter in 1842—Joseph Smith had already taught them the basics about the origin of Freemasonry,” and that they lived before the Masonic “authentic School” had debunked the notion that Masonic ritual was a remnant of temple ritual (152–54).

Brown concludes that Joseph Smith never claimed to have introduced a purified version of Masonic rituals, that later statements made by temple Mormons concerning “true Masonry” were isolated and contextualized, and that no primitive form of Masonic ritual had ever existed which could be restored (129–31). Although this third point is certainly accurate, Brown ignores the fact that Smith confided in others that Masonic ritual was a bastardized remnant of an endowment practiced in Solomon’s Temple and that he had restored “true masonry.” Willard Richards wrote to his brother Levi, during the same month that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were initiated as Entered Apprentices, that “Masonry had its origin in the Priesthood. A hint to the wise is sufficient,” and Heber C. Kimball reported, in a letter to fellow apostle Parley P. Pratt that “Freemasonry was taken from

[the] priesthood but has become degenerated.” Smith also confided to his lodge brothers, after he introduced the endowment, that he had “done what King Solomon King Hiram & Hiram Abiff could not do,” and his followers said the endowment was “true Masonry,” “the true origin of Masonry” and that “Freemasonry, as at present, was the apostate endowments, as sectarian religion was the apostate religion.”<sup>3</sup> Brown acknowledges most of these statements but only concludes that there “are similarities between Freemasonry and the Mormon endowment because Masonry is a product of apostasy or degeneration from a priesthood-based prototype” and that “Latter-day Saints possess the authentic version” (180–81). He does not consider the link between his two conclusions— i.e., that some Mormons were convinced that Smith had restored the degenerated ritual which was practiced in Masonic temples to its primitive state.

Instead Brown speculates concerning an alternative source for Masonic rituals. He notes that Freemasonry began as a Christian organization, that some Masons have theorized that their ritual “sought to construct a secular substitute for the elaborate Catholic liturgy that was lost at the time of the Reformation” (33), and that it borrowed much of its original practices from Christianity (43–56). He concludes that “those who are familiar with the initiation rites of Freemasonry cannot fail to recognize parallels between orthodox Christian ritual and that used for the induction of speculative Masons” (47). Brown then describes general parallels between Masonic ritual and Christian temples, Jewish temples, Christian rituals, Christian and Royal initiation rites as well as Monastic rites (46–56). But he does not discuss the significance of these connections or claim that similarities between Masonic rituals and the endowment can be explained by common elements which have been taken or adapted from these sources.

Brown’s suggestion that Freemasons may have adapted rituals practiced by primitive Christians (and that Smith restored those Christian rites when he introduced the endowment) is consistent with the approach taken by other Mormon writers who have shifted the focus from whether there are recognizable elements in Masonic rituals that Smith incorporated into the endowment (since most historians now acknowledge this connection) to whether there are other more meaningful historical antecedents for the endowment. This shift has presumably occurred because of the findings of the authentic school of Masonic historians and because of inherent differences between Masonic rituals and the endowment. As such, the portion of the

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<sup>3</sup>Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 3–4; 9, 9 note 16, 9 note 17; Devery S. Anderson, ed., *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011), 22.

LDS thesis, that “Latter-day Saints see their temple ordinances as fundamentally different from Masonic and other rituals and think of similarities as remnants from an ancient original,” has taken on increasing importance. The same Mormon authors who believe that the similarities between Masonic ritual and Smith’s endowment were superficial have suggested that there were more meaningful connections between the ancient mysteries (taught in Egypt before spreading to Greece and Rome) and Mormon ritual.

Godfrey’s essay concerning Freemasonry and Mormonism reflects this shift from the Temple of Solomon to the ancient mysteries. Although he acknowledged that “some argue that Joseph Smith borrowed elements of Freemasonry in developing the temple ceremony,” he explained these similarities by using the same rationale as nineteenth-century Mormons—i.e., that “Joseph Smith suggested that the endowment and Freemasonry in part emanated from the same ancient spring” and “some Nauvoo Masons thought of the endowment as a restoration of a ritual only imperfectly preserved in Freemasonry.” These “resemblances between the two rituals,” according to the LDS thesis, “are limited to a small proportion of actions and words” and “where the two rituals share symbolism, the fabric of meanings is different” since Mormonism is premised on priesthood authority “while Freemasonry is earthbound, pervaded by human legend and hope for something better.” He characterized Masonic rituals as “allegorical,” offering satisfaction during life but no more than “hoped-for immortality” (Godfrey, 2:528–29). Godfrey also maintained that “the endowment is more congruous with LDS scriptures (especially the Book of Abraham and Book of Moses) and ancient ritual than with Freemasonry,” and that the “Egyptian pyramid texts” are an example of ancient rituals that he believes may have a common remote source with the endowment, since their adherents believed they provided actual power to enable human beings after death “to successfully pass the sentinels guarding the entrance to eternal bliss with the gods” (Godfrey, 2:528).

Nevertheless, the Masonic context for Smith’s endowment revelation remains an important element in understanding the Prophet’s goals and aspirations regardless of whether his assumptions were always accurate. Brown acknowledges that Mormonism’s first generation believed myths and legends that Masonic ritual originated in Solomon’s Temple and there is evidence that Joseph Smith taught that he had restored the ancient ritual to its pristine form. The authentic school not only debunked the romantic notion concerning the origins of Masonic ritual but also traced the influence of medieval ritual, Enlightenment thought, and hermetic speculations on Masonry’s increasingly complex degree system. In addition, some nineteenth-century American Masons wrote exotic descriptions of how Masonic ritual

regenerated initiates and urged the Craft to restore primitive freemasonry, purify its rituals, and reemphasize their (particularly the high degrees') more esoteric meaning. The Mormon prophet's quest for ancient authority was reminiscent of Masonry's search for a new key, or *verbum significatium*, and his restoration of the "key word" empowered initiates to literally pass through a veil and ultimately become exalted. Whether Smith was familiar with these Masonic writings, other contemporary esoteric interpretations of Masonic rituals, or "grabbed on" (a phrase used by Reed Durham) to incorporate some of those elements into the endowment, remains a valid inquiry.

Brown's book provides LDS readers with more information concerning Masonic history, based on secondary sources, than previous faith-promoting books (Ivins, McGavin, and Scharffs) or articles (Godfrey) which were written to explain the LDS thesis concerning the endowment's historical background and its similarities with Masonic rituals. Although this same information is available in more detail in basic Masonic histories, some of which are cited in Brown's bibliography, some Mormon readers will find it helpful to read this summary in a book that includes a discussion of that thesis. Brown's endnotes, which include sources for many of his quotations, will make it easier for interested readers to do additional research concerning the LDS thesis regarding the connection between Mormonism and Masonry. But it is surprising that he does not include references to either Ivins or McGavin (in notes or bibliography) and that his only citation to Godfrey's encyclopedia entry (contained in an endnote) acknowledges the general editor but not Godfrey as the author. Additional studies, which explore the connection between Mormonism and Masonry, will continue to accomplish Brown's goal of "separating out some of the facts from the fiction" (2).

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## BOOK NOTICES

Hyrum Utah Stake History Committee. *Hyrum Stake of Zion: The First One Hundred Years, April 28, 1901–December 8, 2002*. Bountiful, Utah: Carr Printing Company, 2009. 216 pp. Photographs, illustrations, appendices, maps, notes. Cloth: \$20.00. No ISBN. For ordering information, contact Maurine Carr Ward: maurineward@comcast.net.

Shortly after being called to be president of the Hyrum Stake in 2002, President Steve Miller organized a committee to write the stake's history. Maurine Carr Ward and Gary Ward are the principal authors of *Hyrum Stake of Zion: The First One Hundred Years, April 28, 1901–December 8, 2002*. Drawing from a wealth of records (including photographs, oral histories, minute collections, scrapbooks, autobiographies, and many unpublished histories relating to wards and auxiliary organizations), the Wards create a detailed and informative narrative.

The book, organized in twenty-five chapters, introduces the reader to the early days of the Hyrum Stake and the nine presidents it has had since its creation by presenting a brief chapter on a stake president and following with a chapter on the history of the stake during that president's tenure.

The narrative rounds out with chapters on various stake auxiliary organizations: Genealogy and Family History, Primary, Relief Society, Sunday School, and Young Men/Young Women.

A number of useful appendices list the names and dates of tenure for the presidencies of the stake Primary, Relief Society, and Young Men/Young Women organizations, as well as high councilors, stake clerks, assistant stake clerks, stake executive secretaries, assistant executive secretaries, and stake patriarchs.

This book provides numerous points of interest, including the insight that Hyrum Stake's first president, William Chandler Parkinson, was chosen president because he "would be most likely to break down what is known as the Thatcher influence in Cache Valley" (21), referring to Moses Thatcher, a highly influential resident of the county who, just a few years before, had been dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve for refusing to support the Church's "Political Manifesto." This document barred Church General Authorities from seeking political office without the consent of the Church's highest governing bodies. Notably, this study also presents detailed information about building

costs and welfare projects, including a large-scale egg production project that supplied more than 11,000 eggs per year to parts of northern Utah and Wyoming (71).

Summarizing their efforts, the authors write, “The general events as chronicled in this book, *Hyrum Stake of Zion: The First 100 Years*, are minuscule compared to the actual day-to-day efforts of the people who made up the wards and stake over 100 years. In word and deed, these Saints, as they should rightly be called, persevered to administer and perfect the Lord’s organization in His vineyard. These good Saints gave of countless personal time and talents to a cause they believed in, showing their belief by their works. . . . Much is made of the faith of the early members of the Church in this dispensation, and particularly their travels and travails. The Saints of the Hyrum Stake have built upon this faith and magnified, not diminished, that great pioneer heritage” (208).

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Gale Sears. *The Silence of God*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010. 374 pp. Acknowledgements, map, genealogy, prologue, epilogue, notes, bibliography. Hardcover: \$24.99. ISBN 978-1-60641-6556

Gale Sears graduated with a B.A. in playwriting from Brigham Young University and a master’s degree in theatre arts from the University of Minnesota. She has written five other novels. *The Silence of God* is her most recent publication, set in 1917 in Russia at the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution. The title re-

fers to the spiritual struggles of the main character, Natasha Ivanovna Gavrilova, as she slowly turns from atheism to Christianity, and as the nation of Russia seems abandoned in the eyes of God as the turmoil of the Communist take-over mounts.

This historical novel follows the true story of the Lindlof family, the first Latter-day Saints baptized in Russia. The book illustrates the struggles of this LDS family, attempting to live their religion peacefully while still respecting and obeying the laws of the land despite the social and political upheaval surrounding them.

Sears provides footnotes for her sources, indicating where she obtained historical facts about the Lindlof family and other events, also including where she took liberties as an author. The Lindlofs are historical personages, but Natasha is fictional. They are woven into the events of the revelation. For example, two of the Lindlof brothers, Oskar and Johannes, participated in Bloody Sunday (31), the march on the Winter Palace organized by Father Georgii Gapon to protest economic conditions on January 22, 1905. The event is historical, and though the presence of the Lindlof boys is plausible, the account given by Sears is fictional.

The fictional Natasha Gavrilova provides a view of someone who desperately wants the revolution to succeed. She is an atheist intellectual and a devoted Bolshevik who throws her efforts into the revolution in its early days. Her best friend is the demure, obedient, wealthy Mormon girl, Agnes Lindlof. They have



known each other all their lives and simply set aside their political and religious differences. However, on the night of January 3, 1918, the bourgeois Lindlofs are arrested as enemies of the state and shipped to a work camp in Siberia. The violent and unwarranted arrest shakes Natasha's trust in the Soviet dream. Love and loyalty drive Natasha to turn against Bolshevism and launch a dangerous quest to liberate her friends.

"Natasha felt those words cut into her heart. That's what she hated! She hated that she had no power over anything: the cruelty they'd all suffered, the insidious spread of the Soviet doctrine, the fighting between her countrymen, the coming of winter. Her mind became her enemy as it conjured her mistakes and arrogance. How many families would be ripped to shreds by this brotherhood of the proletariat? . . . She hadn't thought about what that change would mean. But that change was killing her friend" (361).

Earlier in the story, Brother Lindlof had given Natasha a copy of *The Articles of Faith*, suggesting that she read it to practice her English. This clear articulation of Mormon beliefs becomes the foundation of her conviction and faith in God, and her testimony is cemented when her beloved Bolshevik Revolution begins to fall into chaos. Several events are instrumental in changing Natasha's heart incrementally, but the final event that culminates in her conversion is the death of Agnes Lindlof, just after the family had successfully escaped from the work camp. Natasha witnesses Agnes's peace with God even in her suffering, and it is the final stepping

stone for Natasha in accepting a firm religious faith. This story of the beginnings of Communism in Russia from an LDS perspective concludes with the safe transportation of the remaining Lindlofs to their native Finland, and the fictional conversion and marriage of Natasha.

The book is written from an omniscient point of view and frequently changes narrators, usually from chapter to chapter but sometimes within the same page.

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Paul Cardall. *Before My Heart Stops: A Memoir*. [Salt Lake City:] Shadow Mountain, 2010. xiv, 290 pp. Acknowledgments, foreword, diagrams, photographs, illustrations, newspaper articles, bibliographical endnotes, index. Cloth: \$17.99. ISBN 978-1-60641-818-5

*Before My Heart Stops: A Memoir* is a compilation, primarily of the blog posts thirty-six-year-old Paul Cardall wrote on his site, Living for Eden, as he waited from August 3, 2008, until September 9, 2009, when he received a much-needed heart transplant. His blog posts continue after the successful surgery until October 27, 2009, filling his readers in on the results of the new heart. Other pieces of the memoir include the texts of newspaper articles from various newspapers in Utah, posts from the blog kept by Lynette, Cardall's wife, and his flashbacks to what life was like before the active waiting period began. He did most of the compilation himself, although he

acknowledges Linda Prince as helping him “organize and pre-edit my story and message” (x).

Cardall was born with congenital heart disease—in essence, as the jacket flap describes it, “half a heart.” The book recounts some of the six major surgeries he endured, including the first when he was twenty-two hours old; but his main focus is his faith in the gospel, to which he attributes his strength and hope despite his difficult situation. He also shares many of his own life philosophies with his readers so they may improve their lives from lessons he has learned. “I believe there is hope for anyone in great need of help,” he writes. “People can’t take away your grief. They can’t solve all your problems. They can’t abolish your fears. What they can do, if you’ll let them into your lives, is ease your burden” (163).

Cardall is an award-winning piano recording artist (four-time Billboard-charting) and a motivational speaker. In his introduction to the book, Cardall writes: “My hope is that these weekly blog entries will inspire you. If you are looking for answers to some of life’s most important questions, perhaps this book will help. While the thoughts expressed in these blog entries are mine, I believe the principles are universal to those who appreciate spiritual things” (4).

Because Cardall shares details about his life so candidly, it is easy for the reader to become attached to him, Lynette, and their three-year-old daughter, Eden, for whom the blog was named. Lynette is a registered nurse and thus cared for him with patience while he was at home. Eden simply had

to be herself to make Cardall happy. He writes about Eden with deep love. “Late last night after a church service project, Eden noticed how tired I was and, acting like her kind mother, she said to me, ‘You wear your oxygen,’ followed by, ‘Lie down, Daddy.’ She asked me if I wanted to watch a show. Obviously, my sweet two-year-old is concerned about my illness. But she wouldn’t know anything different; this is all she’s known” (21).

The memoir also provides educational information about congenital heart disease and related illnesses. Cardall often mentions others who are similarly struggling with health problems. Most of them are children, since Cardall was hospitalized frequently at the Salt Lake City’s Primary Children’s Medical Center in the year he was waiting for the heart transplant. Many times he asks his readers to think of others and pray for them: “When you pray this week, keep in mind the kids up there in that hospital, even though we don’t know their names, faces, or stories” (84).

Cardall received his new heart on September 9, 2009. The transplant was successful and he lives today with his family in Sandy, Utah. On June 9, 2010, his new heart allowed him to climb to the top of Mount Olympus in the south end of Salt Lake Valley as he had said he would before he even knew he’d get a heart (195). The back cover shows a photograph of him standing triumphantly on the mountaintop; the caption reads, “Paul Cardall—making the most of his new life.” The ending of the book isn’t really an ending at all. It is, instead, the beginning of his new life.