

Journal of Mormon History

Volume 38 | Issue 3

Article 1

6-13-2012

Journal of Mormon History Vol. 38, No. 3, Summer 2012

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/mormonhistory>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Journal of Mormon History, Vol 38, Summer 2012: Iss. 3.

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Mormon History by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



Journal of Mormon History Vol. 38, No. 3, Summer 2012

Table of Contents

CONTENTS

LETTER

--Fitz John Porter's Letter *William P. MacKinnon*, vii

ARTICLES

--Mormonism in Cultural Context: Guest Editors' Introduction *J. Spencer Fluhman, Steven C. Harper, and Jed Woodworth*, 1

--A Charmed Life *Claudia L. Bushman*, 5

--The Hermeneutics of Generosity: A Critical Approach to the Scholarship of Richard Bushman *Stuart Parker*, 12

--To Mend a Fractured Reality: Joseph Smith's Project *Philip L. Barlow*, 28

--The Language of Heaven: Prolegomenon to the Study of Smithian Translation *Samuel Morris Brown*, 51

--"The Wars and the Perplexities of the Nations": Reflections on Early Mormonism, Violence, and the State *Patrick Q. Mason*, 72

--Zion in America: The Origins of Mormon Constitutionalism *Mark Ashurst-McGee*, 90

--Joseph Smith as the Philosopher King: Neoplatonism in Early Mormon Political Thought *Stephen J. Fleming*, 102

--LDS Understandings of Religious Freedom: Responding to the Shifting Cultural Pendulum *Mauro Properzi*, 128

--Joseph Smith, Romanticism, and Tragic Creation *Terryl L. Givens* 148 God, the World, and the Long Journey to Divinity: Mormonism and German Romantic Idealism *James M. McLachlan*, 163

--Early Mormonism and the Re-Enchantment of Antebellum Historical Thought *Jordan T. Watkins*, 187

--"Reasonings Sufficient": Joseph Smith, Thomas Dick, and the Context(s) of Early Mormonism *Benjamin E. Park*, 210

--After the Golden Age *Richard Lyman Bushman*, 225

REVIEWS

--Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer, eds. *Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*. Volume 2 of the *Revelations and Translations* series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* *Joe Geisner*, 232

--Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds. *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*. Volume 2 of the *Journals* series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. Series editors: Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman *Brian C. Hales*, 236

--Devery Scott Anderson, ed. *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000: A Documentary*

History *John-Charles Duffy*, 254

--Richard V. Francaviglia. Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient *Christine Talbot*, 259

--John S. Dinger, ed. The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes *Robin Scott Jensen*, 262

--Sherman L. Fleek, Called to War: Dawn of the Mormon Battalion, and Sherman L. Fleek, War in the Far West: The March of the Mormon Battalion *Paul A. Hoffman*, 268

BOOK NOTICES

Richard H. Bullock, *Ship Brooklyn's Saints*, 274 James V. D'Arc, *When Hollywood Came to Town: A History of Moviemaking in Utah*, 276 Andrew H. Hedges and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, *Within These Prison Walls: Lorenzo Snow's Record Book, 1886–1897*, 278

JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

SUMMER 2012

Cover illustration: Clint Whiting, *Piazza della Radio*, egg tempera on board, 50 cm x 50 cm, 2011.

The Mormon History Association

The Mormon History Association (www.mormonhistoryassociation.org) is an independent non-profit 501(c)3 organization devoted to all aspects of the Mormon past. It strives to be the preeminent catalyst and forum worldwide for encouraging the scholarly study of Mormon history. It pursues its mission by sponsoring annual conferences; encouraging the highest quality research and publication; and awarding book, article, and other prizes. Its official periodical, the *Journal of Mormon History*, fosters the publication of independent, scholarly research. Membership in the Association is open to all.

© 2012 Mormon History Association. Printed in the United States of America.
ISSN 0194-7342

Copies of articles may be made for teaching and for research purposes free of charge and without securing permission, as permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of U.S. Copyright Law. For other uses, permission must be obtained from the author(s).

All statements of opinion are the authors' own and not necessarily those of the Mormon History Association, its officers, directors, editors, and/or members. Authors alone are responsible for the factual accuracy of their articles, including quotations, citations, and all other uses of source materials.

Articles are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*, published by ABC-CLIO.

The *Journal of Mormon History* is published by the Mormon History Association and is distributed to association members. Annual dues are: Regular, \$55; Spouse/Partner, \$65; Student, \$25; Institution, \$75; Sustaining, \$125; Patron, \$250; and Donor, \$500. For subscriptions outside the United States, DVDs of back issues, individual back issues, and all questions, see www.mormonhistoryassociation.org, or contact (801) 521-6565. Digital copies of back issues are available at EBSCO and Utah State University Digital Commons: <http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/mormonhistory>.

Members are asked to notify the association immediately if they change their membership mailing address, including their email address.

The Journal of Mormon History

Publisher: Mormon History Association (founded 1965)

President: Richard L. Jensen

President-Elect: Glen M. Leonard

Past President: William P. MacKinnon

Executive Director: Ronald O. Barney

Executive Director/Business Manager: Marilyn S. Barney

Directors: Curtis Atkisson (2012)

Andrea Radke-Moss (2012)

Christopher C. Jones (2013)

Grant Underwood (2013)

Barbara Walden (2013)

Polly Aird (2014)

Gary James Bergera (2014)

Executive Staff

Editor: Martha Taysom

Board of Editors:

Ruth Knight Bailey

Matthew Bowman

Keith A. Erikson

Scott C. Esplin

Sarah Barringer Gordon

David Hall

David J. Howlett

Hollis R. Johnson

Jennifer L. Lund

Susanna Morrill

Christopher A. Newton

Jonathan A. Stapley

Production Staff

Copy Editor: Lavina Fielding Anderson

Production Manager: Brent Corcoran

Art Director: Thayne Whiting

Book Review Editor: Boyd Jay Petersen

Advertising Manager: Steve Eccles

Electronic Initiatives Coordinator:

Connie Lamb

Digital Commons: Noel A. Carmack

Editorial Staff:

Elizabeth Ann Anderson

Laura Compton

Linda Wilcox DeSimone

Sherman Feher

Zachary R. Jones

Linda Lindstrom

Craig Livingston

H. Michael Marquardt

Rene Romig

Jerilyn Wakefield

Manuscripts dealing with any aspect of the Mormon past are welcome. Primary consideration is given to manuscripts that make a significant contribution to the knowledge of Mormon history through new interpretations and/or new information. Acceptance is based on originality, literary quality, accuracy, and relevance. Reprints and simultaneous submissions are not accepted.

Submissions should be sent to mormonjournal.taysom1@gmail.com in Word. The author's name and contact information should be located on a page separate from the manuscript. All illustrative materials, including maps, charts, and graphs, should be attached in a separate file(s), and not embedded in the electronic document. All such illustrative materials must be supplied by the author. The *Journal's* style guide, based on the *Chicago Manual of Style* and the *LDS Style Guide*, including specifications for illustrative materials, is available at www.mormonhistoryassociation.org. The peer-reviewed evaluation process usually takes three to six months.

JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

VOLUME 38, No. 3
SUMMER 2012

CONTENTS

LETTER

Fitz John Porter's Letter *William P. MacKinnon* vii

ARTICLES

Mormonism in Cultural Context: Guest Editors'
Introduction
J. Spencer Fluhman, Steven C. Harper, and Jed Woodworth 1

A Charmed Life *Claudia L. Bushman* 5

The Hermeneutics of Generosity: A Critical
Approach to the Scholarship of Richard
Bushman *Stuart Parker* 12

To Mend a Fractured Reality: Joseph Smith's Project
Philip L. Barlow 28

The Language of Heaven: Prolegomenon to the
Study of Smithian Translation
Samuel Morris Brown 51

"The Wars and the Perplexities of the Nations":
Reflections on Early Mormonism, Violence,
and the State *Patrick Q. Mason* 72

Zion *in* America: The Origins of Mormon
Constitutionalism *Mark Ashurst-McGee* 90

Joseph Smith as the Philosopher King:
Neoplatonism in Early Mormon Political
Thought *Stephen J. Fleming* 102

- LDS Understandings of Religious Freedom:
Responding to the Shifting Cultural
Pendulum *Mauro Properzi* 128
- Joseph Smith, Romanticism, and Tragic Creation
Terryl L. Givens 148
- God, the World, and the Long Journey to Divinity:
Mormonism and German Romantic Idealism
James M. McLachlan 163
- Early Mormonism and the Re-Enchantment of
Antebellum Historical Thought *Jordan T. Watkins* 187
- “Reasonings Sufficient”: Joseph Smith, Thomas Dick,
and the Context(s) of Early Mormonism
Benjamin E. Park 210
- After the Golden Age *Richard Lyman Bushman* 225

REVIEWS

- Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and
Riley M. Lorimer, eds. *Revelations and Translations,
Volume 2: Published Revelations*. Volume 2 of the
Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph
Smith Papers* *Joe Geisner* 232
- Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd
Anderson, eds. *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–
April 1843*. Volume 2 of the Journals series of *The
Joseph Smith Papers*. Series editors: Dean C. Jessee,
Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman
Brian C. Hales 236
- Devery Scott Anderson, ed. *The Development of LDS
Temple Worship, 1846–2000: A Documentary History*
John-Charles Duffy 254

Richard V. Francaviglia. *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* Christine Talbot 259

John S. Dinger, ed. *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes* Robin Scott Jensen 262

Sherman L. Fleek, *Called to War: Dawn of the Mormon Battalion*, and Sherman L. Fleek, *War in the Far West: The March of the Mormon Battalion* Paul A. Hoffman 268

BOOK NOTICES

Richard H. Bullock, *Ship Brooklyn's Saints* 274

James V. D'Arc, *When Hollywood Came to Town: A History of Moviemaking in Utah* 276

Andrew H. Hedges and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, *Within These Prison Walls: Lorenzo Snow's Record Book, 1886–1897* 278

LETTER

Fitz John Porter's Letter

One of the Utah War's minor mysteries is the authorship of an unsigned letter written during the campaign from Fort Bridger, Utah Territory, on November 29, 1857, and attributed by the *New York Times* to U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke when it published the document two months later. Because the letter impugned the courage of Mormon troops, its appearance in Salt Lake City in early May 1858 enraged the Nauvoo Legion's adjutant general, Brigadier General James Ferguson, who wrote a long, angry letter to Cooke taking him to task for ingratitude while reminding him of the hardships endured and services rendered by the Mormon Battalion, which Cooke had commanded during the earlier Mexican War.

On June 8, 1858, Cooke responded to Ferguson in a brief note denying authorship and characterizing the letter as a "mysterious forgery." In light of Cooke's disavowal, historians have long treated this letter as one of the multiple bogus documents lamentably encrusting the

Utah War's historiography.¹ Since the published version of my MHA presidential address ("Not As a Stranger': A Presbyterian Afoot in the Mormon Past," 38, no. 2 [Spring 2012]: 1–46) recently identified this document's author as Major Fitz John Porter, the Utah Expedition's adjutant, I want to explain my attribution at greater length here than was practical earlier this year.

Major Porter and the Utah Expedition's infantry and artillery troops reached the charred ruins of Fort Bridger on November 17, 1857, after a march so arduous that it forced Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston into winter quarters while bringing him a brevet promotion to brigadier general. Two days later Cooke's Second U.S. Dragoons came up after an even more daunting trek that cost the regiment roughly half its horses and the life of one private.

On November 21, 1857, Cooke wrote his official report describing this march; and Johnston, through Porter, couriered it from Fort Bridger to army headquarters in the East. This document made no reference to Mormon troops but, when

¹See the section titled "Trouble in Paradise: Beware the Bogus," in MacKinnon, "Loose in the Stacks: A Half-Century with the Utah War and Its Legacy," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 40 (Spring 2007): 66–67.

obtained by the press over a month later, caused a public sensation because of the brutal weather conditions that it described and Cooke's dramatic closing assessment that the miles of animal carcasses and shattered wagons strewn across the trail, "mark, perhaps beyond example in history, the steps of an advancing army with the horrors of a disastrous retreat."² On November 29, 1857, Major Porter, Albert Sidney Johnston's closest aide and tent mate, wrote a long, personal letter to a friend at army headquarters, Major Irvin McDowell, to chronicle the Utah Expedition's ordeal while lauding both the troops' fortitude and Johnston's personal leadership. In this unofficial document Porter asserted that "the Mormons are a set of cowards, like all assassins."

Because of continued bad weather and the absence of regular mail service across the Great Plains, Porter's letter did not reach McDowell until the last week of January 1858, whereupon he promptly leaked it to the Washington, D.C., *Union*, the Buchanan administration's journalistic mouthpiece. To disguise the identity of the sender and recipient, either McDowell or the newspaper's editor deleted Porter's signature and military title and also altered the salutation to an opaque "Dear Major." The *Union* then ran the letter on this basis in its January 24 issue under the headline, "Interesting Information from the

Utah Expedition." Two days later, hungry for news about the campaign, the *New York Times* reprinted the *Union's* coverage, but for unknown reasons added an inaccurate second headline ("Col. Cook[e]'s Report"), thereby providing the catalyst for General Ferguson's May 5, 1858, reaction when a copy of this issue of the *Times* belatedly reached Salt Lake City via the tortuous New York-Panama-California route.

When Cooke wrote to Ferguson on June 8 to deny authorship, he was in the field and did not have the *Times* article at hand. Accordingly, lacking the wherewithal to identify the letter's distinctive style and telltale internal evidence as that of his brother officer (but arch-enemy) Porter, Cooke simply dismissed the letter that Ferguson had described to him as a "mysterious forgery."

Presumably choosing discretion over valor in not wishing to become embroiled with either Cooke or Ferguson, Porter remained silent on his role in writing the November 29 letter and never set the record straight. As a consequence, Major Porter, in effect, permitted the legend to take hold in Cooke's mind (and that of subsequent historians) that his letter was the bogus work of an unknown provocateur rather than an authentic letter unwittingly attributed to Cooke by a befuddled New York newspaper working on deadline

²Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke, Report to Asst. Adj. Gen. Fitz John Porter, November 21, 1857, in William P. MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword's Point, Part 1: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858* (Norman, Okla.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 2008), 403.

nearly 2,000 miles to the east.³

I have determined in three ways that Porter wrote the November 29 letter. First, a critical reading of the letter indicates that it was written by one of the Utah Expedition senior officers who had marched from Hams Fork to Fort Bridger with the main body of Johnston's force rather than with the mounted troops that, in effect, constituted its rear guard. In fact the Second Dragoons were not even mentioned in the letter, an unlikely omission if that regiment's commander had been the writer.

Second, the letter's fulsome praise for Albert Sidney Johnston was consistent with Porter's known admiration for his leader but wholly at variance with Cooke's views, especially in the aftermath of Johnston's refusal to allow him to march on the Salt Lake Valley with a pack train and the colonel's decision to rusticate Cooke's dragoons to the isolated, unglamorous, but essential duty of herding the Utah Expedition's surviving animals in the more viable valleys and river bottoms thirty miles away along Henrys Fork. So upset was Cooke over what he perceived as unfair treatment for his exhausted troops that he sent a letter to New York protesting Johnston's assignment of this duty to Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, the army's general in chief.

Third, and even more important than this circumstantial evidence, is a

comparison of the text of the November 29 "Dear Major" letter to the nearly identical phrasing of an unpublished letter that Porter wrote on February 28, 1858, to former army captain George B. McClellan in Chicago and the similar language in the diary that he kept during the Utah War. Both Porter-generated documents are available in the Library of Congress's Manuscript Division in Washington, D.C.

It was several months after delivering my presidential address in St. George on May 28, 2011, that I somewhat accidentally read Porter's letter to McClellan, so it was only belatedly that I recognized the familiarity of its phrasing with that contained in the "Dear Major" letter printed under differing headlines by first the *Union* and then the *Times*. A check of the language contained in Fitz John Porter's field diary provided all the confirmation I needed of his identity as the writer. Here was a process of serendipitous discovery of the very kind that I had tried to advocate and illustrate in my St. George talk.

What happened to these officers after the Utah Expedition marched through Salt Lake City on June 26, 1858, to end the military phase of this extraordinary armed confrontation? Within five years all were dead or reputationally tarnished. Albert Sidney Johnston fell mortally wounded at the battle of Shiloh on

³For Cooke's hard feelings toward Johnston and Porter that developed with their arrival at Fort Bridger, see *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 445; Cooke, Letter to Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, May 7, 1889, Philip St. George Cooke papers, 1837-1942, Library of Virginia, Richmond; MacKinnon, "Epilogue to the Utah War: Impact and Legacy," *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 203.

April 6, 1862, the Confederacy's senior general in the field. The same year the Union Army's Major General Fitz John Porter was relieved of command and cashiered following a court martial for refusal to follow orders during the battle of Second Bull Run.⁴ Ironically, one of the witnesses testifying against Porter at his trial was his former friend, Brigadier General Irvin McDowell, who, in turn, had been relieved of command after his own dismal performance at First Bull Run. President Lincoln's relief and forced retirement of Major General George B. McClellan, Porter's hero in the Army of the Potomac, needs no further elaboration. In 1863 Brigadier General James Fergu-

son was forced to resign his commission in the Nauvoo Legion and later that year died an agonizing, tragic death from alcoholism. Ferguson's old commander in the Mormon Battalion, Philip St. George Cooke, acquitted himself honorably during the Civil War as a Union Army brigadier but served under a vague, unfair cloud throughout the conflict because of his Virginia birth and the fact that his son and two sons-in-law became senior Confederate officers, including J.E.B. Stuart, another veteran of the Utah War.

*William P. MacKinnon
Santa Barbara, California*

⁴After decades of struggling to clear his name, the army exonerated Porter in 1886 and returned him to duty as a colonel with the understanding that he would immediately retire.

MORMONISM IN CULTURAL CONTEXT: GUEST EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

J. Spencer Fluhman, Steven C. Harper, and Jed Woodworth

INCLUDED IN THIS VOLUME OF THE *JOURNAL* are essays written to commemorate Richard Lyman Bushman's eightieth birthday. They were originally presented, along with other papers, at a symposium held in Bushman's honor in June 2011. The symposium, hosted at the Springville Art Museum in Utah, gathered scholars and friends for a memorable day that itself portends good things for the study of the Mormon past. Bushman had been fêted earlier at the American Historical Association's annual conference; but because the essays presented there engaged his historical work more broadly, we (along with co-organizer Reid Neilson) conceived of the June symposium as a way both to thank him for his influence on us personally and to mark his influence on the writing of Mormon history in particular. (The impressive essays from the AHA gathering were published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 3 [Fall 2011]: 1–43.) If any concern existed about the future of Mormon history, this gathering demonstrated the vitality of the field and its bright future prospects.

J. SPENCER FLUHMAN {fluhman@byu.edu} is assistant professor of history at Brigham Young University, where he teaches American religious history. STEVEN C. HARPER {steven_harper@byu.edu} is professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, where he teaches LDS history and scripture; he is currently teaching the Bible at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. JED WOODWORTH {jlwoodworth@wisc.edu} is a Ph.D. candidate in the history of American education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Organized around the theme of “Mormonism in Cultural Context,” the symposium sought to underscore Bushman’s influence by playing on the central theme of his body of work on Mormonism. His rigorous and creative contextual project both culminated the New Mormon History and laid the groundwork for what has come after. It is not improbable that Mormon historiography, written at some future point, will mark his *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling, A Cultural Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005) as a watershed work in the field, both as capstone of one era’s work and as the launching pad for another. As a founding member of the profession’s mid- and late-twentieth-century efflorescence, Bushman’s work has evinced the best of its professionalizing trends: archival mastery, documentary precision, and an enhanced attention to context and historiography. Bushman has pushed still further, though, moving beyond framing Mormonism primarily as a feature of western history to more fully connect it with the pressing questions of American intellectual, social, and religious history. His erudition, confidence, and grace have helped set something of a tone for the entire field, at least as we have experienced it as younger scholars.

Conspicuous among the presenters at the symposium and among the editors and authors appearing here are graduates of the famed “summer seminars” held annually at Brigham Young University since 1997. Parallel with Bushman’s writings is this deeply personal legacy that he has left for the field. Dozens upon dozens of scholars have enjoyed the uniquely intimate and intensive tutoring that the seminars provided. The seminar members, combined with the students who worked with him during his stint as the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University (2008–11), form an impressive web of intellectuals who routinely credit Bushman with a major share of their formative experience. We hoped the symposium would put some of that mentoring work on display and were not disappointed. We note that among the symposium papers not appearing here are three that will appear elsewhere: Donald Westbrook, “Catholic-Mormon Dialogue: Ecumenical, Inter-Religious, or What?” (forthcoming in *The Religious Educator*); Armand L. Mauss, “Rethinking Retrenchment: Course Corrections in the Ongoing Campaign for Respectability” (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 4 [Winter 2012]:1–42); and Rosalynde Welch, “Joseph Smith and John Milton: Affinities, Infinities” (forthcoming in *BYU Studies*).

For the most part, the essays appearing here reflect the original text of the author's symposium papers, with some elaboration and revision here and there. While they emerge as provocative thought pieces and initial inquiries, they also reflect the dynamism, creativity, and promise of the field as it is developing. The authors cover the gamut of professional life, from seasoned scholars to graduate students developing a first major project. If the topics they cover still veer toward the field's long-standing fascination with the nineteenth century, they do so from a variety of fresh perspectives and methodological approaches. A brief reflection by Bushman himself and a biographical sketch by Claudia Bushman, both originally delivered at the symposium, are added to help convey the personal warmth of the June event and to round out readers' appreciation for this remarkable historian and friend.



Claudia and Richard Bushman, photo taken for their fiftieth wedding anniversary, 2005. Fiona Robertson Photography.

A CHARMED LIFE

Claudia L. Bushman

WE USED TO SAY THAT RICHARD had never applied for an academic job. He had never asked for a raise. He had never gone up for tenure. That was true for his entire academic career. We said that he lived a charmed academic life at a time when such a life was possible. But actually he spoiled that record when he applied for the Claremont job. He sent in an application for that. And for a while, it appeared that they did not even want him. But they all eventually came around, and we are glad they did. We had a wonderful time at Claremont, in California, in Pasadena. That has been the most recent chapter of our long lives of adventure in academia.

Tributes like those of today make Richard very uneasy. He knows areas where he is less than superman. Any life can be described as a life of great success or great failure from the same circumstances. We are always more acutely aware of our failures than our successes. But Richard has had a lot of success. Which he has deserved. He can be said to have lived a charmed life.

Richard was born in Salt Lake City to an LDS family, and I think that the basic reason for his success is the love and admiration that his family has had for him. His parents and siblings always considered him a person of promise. His parents made serious sacrifices for him. They encouraged him to do well and expected that he would.

CLAUDIA L. BUSHMAN {claudia.bushman@benikana.com}, who holds three university degrees and has written twelve books, considers Richard Lyman Bushman her primary mentor.

Richard was a promising student when he arrived at Harvard as a freshman many years ago. I knew him by reputation long before I actually met him there. He was known for being rigorous, hard-working, a man of principle who did not compromise and who could not be swayed. I was told in hushed tones that, when he decided to run for Harvard's student council his freshman year, he knocked on every freshman door in the school, asking for support. I could not imagine anyone doing that. I was told that, when a friend of his asked for his support for higher elective office at Harvard, he had turned him down. Richard had decided to support the other candidate. He was not cool. He was upright and inflexible. I thought that he was rather frightening.

I was a very different sort of fish, a person who liked small pleasures, who did not want to be seen as working hard in school, and who did not care to do well unless I could do it with apparent ease. Trying hard was definitely not cool. I knew that the principled Richard Bushman disapproved of me, and I tried to stay out of his way. But something else was meant to be; and we were married when he graduated from college, before he began his graduate work, and when I had a year of college to complete, which I did. We were married for some time before I discovered that he was absolutely opposite from the character that I and others had created for him. I believe that the same thing happened to Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*. Mr. Darcy seemed to be someone, when he was actually someone else.

But fierce or kindly, Richard has always been impressive. As we drove away after we were married, my mother turned to my father and said, "I wonder if she's good enough for him." My very own mother!

When we were in graduate school, it didn't seem as if we were living the charmed life that we seem to have lived in retrospect. We were hard up like most graduate students. Richard always had good scholarships and fellowships; but he had a wife, and before he was through with school, there were four of us. Besides which he always paid tithing on his fellowships, which cut down the funds considerably. We had some hard times. Still, we never even considered that I should leave the children and go to work, and we were able to get through school without serious debt. Things were easier for scholars then. Before Richard finished up, he was recruited for a job at Brigham Young University, and he was repeatedly recruited after that. In

retrospect we seem to have been favored by fate all along the way.

Richard has never been willing to teach summer school. He never has agreed to write a textbook to order. He has kept that time for his own work—even though we could have used the money. I suppose one of the real secrets of his success is that he lives cheaply. We all live cheaply. I think we have always been respectable, but we have never lived high. The children and I were always aware that money was tight and was not to be spent frivolously. We have also been willing, if not always happy, to move on to new places, even though I have noted that the men move from something to something else, while the women and children move from something to nothing and must begin new lives under new circumstances all over again. All of the moves have eventually paid off for all of us. The most extravagant thing we have ever done is to educate our children. And that was only accomplished with an annual miracle or two. Richard has always been single-minded, devoted to his work and the Church.

So while he is devoted to his work, he has frequently put off one job for another. He has always been willing to subordinate his school job to his Church job. He has been a bishop three times, a stake president, a temple worker, and a stake patriarch. We were married by ElRay L. Christiansen, one of the First Council of the Seventy, who did not know us at all, because Richard refused to request anyone he knew to perform the ceremony. Elder Christiansen admonished Richard to do his home teaching. And so that responsibility, to see a few families or individuals monthly, and to befriend them or help them as he can, has taken precedence over many other responsibilities.

From Richard's Church choices come his reputation as an upright citizen. When he was teaching at Boston University, I was a graduate student in an adjacent department. We knew the same faculty and students. It was a time of considerable moral laxity. Faculty members, including mature, married ones, were looked upon by adoring graduate students as very desirable partners. We saw a number of these older male professors leave their wives and families for attractive and willing young women. One of my friends asked me if I wasn't worried that I would be superseded in Richard's affections. Tossed aside like a squeezed lemon. After all, Richard was and is a very attractive man. But I said that I wasn't concerned, that even more than he was committed to me, he was committed to commitment. Any temptation to engage in loose sex with someone else

would be such a personal failure for him that I could not imagine it. It was unthinkable.

In academia, success comes from writing books, not from being a good citizen. But he has been a good citizen anyway. He has never grandstanded as a great man, a great educator. He has always done his duty on committees, helping colleagues in whatever ways came up. At the University of Delaware, he even conducted the funeral service for a deceased colleague in his department. He managed the whole funeral. As a bishop, of course, he knew how to do such things. He goes out of his way for students, calling off other appointments, meeting them at inconvenient times, reading their work, helping them along, writing letters of recommendation, serving as both a mentor and an example. One of his colleagues in graduate school reported to another friend that Dick Bushman gave Mormons a good name. One of his Columbia students, walking through the campus at night, reported that he saw the light burning in Richard's office. That burning light, he later reported, gave him strength and confidence to go on.

Richard sees helping current young LDS students navigate among the treacherous shoals of academia as one of his major responsibilities. He has devoted twelve summers to working with young intellectuals on LDS topics. He saw his work at Claremont as a continuation of that work. And the potential growth of chairs of Mormon studies at universities around the country has been very gratifying to him. He sees the need for informed young people who can take over some of these positions as they develop, after they learn to speak about Church history with confidence and assurance, after they have learned to speak the language they need to interact with other academics. This is one of his major causes. Some time ago, it was feared that there would be no young LDS scholars to carry the work forward. Now there are many promising young people to keep up with.

Since his early days as a historian of the colonial states of America, Richard has had repeated opportunities to move away and up and he has taken some of them, all of which have led him in different directions. He has steadily expanded his areas of interest and expertise. In an example of discipline drift, he is always moving on. At Boston University he could be close to the sources of colonial history again, and he broadened his interests to work on a new American Studies Department. At the University of Delaware, he moved into material culture while teaching at Winterthur. At Columbia Univer-

sity, he taught revolutionary history during revolutionary times, and then moved into writing the Joseph Smith book. Few successful academics have written well about such divergent topics as he.

What are the secrets of his success? He works hard, and he doesn't put off his work. He goes right to it. There is no procrastination, no hesitation. He frequently wrestles with ideas and organization, but he is working all the time. He is sometimes so busy doing other parts of his work that he bemoans not getting to the thing he wants to do, and he seldom takes time off. When he gets an invitation to speak, he immediately thinks up a title, a topic, and an approach and begins to outline the talk. He will go back later and work more on it.

When he works on a project, he steepes himself in the material, in the documents, information about the times, and the interpretations. Then he lays his mind on the material, as he would his hand, and the ideas begin to come. One of the most important things he has taught me is that new ideas are always available on any subject.

He is a well-informed visionary. He sees the ideas that are and then sees ideas beyond them. He knows what topics are becoming large. He can see what can and should be done. The projected sixteen-volume history of the Church, planned some years ago and eventually aborted, was his idea. He saw that the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History was well situated to do documentary editing. He saw that teaching sanitized Church history to our young people would cause problems in the future. His way is to tell it all and then work with it. He teaches that Latter-day Saints do not need to fear discoveries about their past. Let it out. Let it all out. He has long been speaking to people outside the Church in a new way. He talks easily about the Church in academic discourse. We all learned how to do that at Claremont.

He did put off writing the book on farming that he had been planning for a long time. He put it off to write *Rough Stone Rolling*, which occupied him completely for seven years. He retired from Columbia to write that book. Then he put farming off to teach at Claremont. He felt that both of those assignments with their benefits to a larger audience trumped the farming book. But it is now at the top of his list, and he will get it done. He is currently reading the scriptures in Spanish, a language he has never studied, so he can read original sources about Latin American farming. To concentrate on farming, he turned down another very attractive opportunity, one

with big pay. As he says, you cannot paint for bread, that is, write for money.

He has never had a hobby or indulged a special interest. He has been all business. In these later years, however, he has found a profoundly satisfying pastime which is to work over and improve our Little Pink House in the West, the pioneer adobe house in Provo built by his great-grandfather in the 1880s. We bought the house from the heirs of his Aunt Jessie and have lived there every summer since. We may eventually end up here.

This has been a year of big tributes for Richard. When I gave a few off-the-cuff remarks at a meeting of the American Historical Association in Boston earlier this year, a magnificent occasion arranged by Grant Underwood, I used a throwaway line to describe our relationship. I said that he was always too busy to take me dancing or to read Victorian novels out loud, things that I had been led to expect in marriage, but that he was never too busy to discuss possible paper topics or to tell me what I really thought about things. It was a true enough description, one that I meant to be funny, and people did laugh.

What was interesting, however, was the fallout. Richard was horrified by the line about telling me what I really thought. Surely he had never said such a thing. He is always trying very hard to be a feminist husband, going against generations of chauvinistic LDS behavior and against all his own instincts. I said yes, indeed, he did say that and could even provide his words in print, going back some time. But this is an example of the way he grows and changes. He is now convinced that men in the Church are often tone deaf to the things they say of women, and he tries to hear what he says and to temper his statements. In this, as in all things, he is a good man always trying to be better.

I doubt that he will ever choose to take me dancing. I was even forced to take a salsa dancing class all by myself back in Pasadena. He absolutely would not do it. However, to my amazement, I have discovered that we have begun to read novels to each other. Who could have thought that could ever happen? But we do now read aloud on occasion and enjoy the experience. I expect that we will do more of it.

Richard and I consider ourselves very lucky to be able to live the life we want to live: to be in relatively good health and to have each other and our beautiful and interesting children and grandchildren.

We can live in New York with easy access to the world's best cultural scene. We can live in Provo surrounded by all the good Saints. We can move to California, the greatest state of all, and enjoy the people and the work there. We have a charmed life or at least Richard has lived a charmed life, and I have been privileged to be a part of it.

THE HERMENEUTICS OF GENEROSITY: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE SCHOLARSHIP OF RICHARD BUSHMAN

Stuart Parker

I MUST COME TO THE GENEROSITY of Richard Bushman almost immediately in explaining the origins of this article. My doctoral dissertation was a survey of the theories of time put forward by nearly a dozen Mormon thinkers or groups. Having read Bushman's scholarship with admiration and being afforded the opportunity to study with him through the Joseph Smith Seminar to which he and Terryl Givens generously admitted me, I began work on a dissertation chapter describing what I term "The Bushman Chronicon." I use the term "chronicon" as shorthand to describe a thinker's historical narrative, historiography, and the theory of causation underpinning both.¹ This work, however, was promptly halted when my supervisor informed me that Dr. Bushman had agreed to serve as the external examiner on my committee.

STUART PARKER {stuart@subversive.org} is a postdoctoral fellow with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, based at Brigham Young University. His first book, *One Hundred Years of Mormon Pasts*, is currently under contract to Greg Kofford Books.

¹This term was developed by ninth-century German thinkers to whom it meant something akin to one of the meanings currently attached to the term "historiography." Coined by Fréculphe of Lisieux in 852 and defined by Otto von Freising, it is a universal history that includes a meta-theory of causation underpinning the historical events it unites. Henri de

This generosity, from which I have benefited from the moment I first made his acquaintance, is something easily understood as a personality feature and something to which many eloquently spoke at his American Historical Association *festschrift* in 2011.² But I want to suggest that this attribute is not only an element of his personality and professional ethics but is also the best way to comprehend the connection between his scholarship as a leading academic authority on colonial America and the Early Republic and his identity as a faithful LDS historian. There is an intellectual manifestation of this generosity that suffuses the corpus of work he has produced.

When Bushman stated, during his AHA *festschrift* that the way he practiced the historical method and engaged with evidence in his non-Mormon work on early America and in LDS-focused work like *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* or *Rough Stone Rolling* was identical, I was immediately skeptical.³ How could an identical methodology govern books held in high regard by both LDS General Authorities and the American historical profession? My skepticism, I realized, was an entailment of my professional training—a standard part of my methodology as a scholar of American religion, “the hermeneutic of suspicion.”

In the 1960s, Paul Ricoeur coined the term “the school of suspicion” to describe the hermeneutical approaches of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche. Opposing the school of suspicion was the “school of reminiscence,” characteristic of European thought prior or oppositional to the intellectual revolution he associates with these preem-

Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, translated by E. M. Macierowski (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 2000), 2:42–43.

²Catherine E. Kelly, “Remarks on *The Refinement of America*,” paper presented at A Retrospective on the Scholarship of Richard Bushman, American Historical Association, Annual General Meeting, Boston, January 8, 2011; published as “*Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 19–28.

³Richard Lyman Bushman, Remarks presented at A Retrospective on the Scholarship of Richard Bushman, American Historical Association, Annual General Meeting, Boston, January 8, 2011; published as “Response,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 36–43; see also Jed Woodworth and Reid L. Nielson, “Introduction” to Richard L. Bushman, *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), ix.

inent thinkers. While the school of reminiscence interpreted phenomena by engaging in a “recollection of meaning,” the school of suspicion interpreted phenomena with a view to “reducing the illusions and lies of consciousness.”⁴ In particular, the founders of the latter approach shared a special commitment to challenging phenomenologies of the sacred and developed various practices of demystification.⁵ In doing so, they moved to a new hermeneutical project, one that supplanted approaches focused on “spel[ling-out] the consciousness of meaning” to one that sought “to decipher its expressions,” premised on the understanding that “consciousness is not what it thinks it is.”⁶

Central, then, to any hermeneutic of suspicion, be it Marxian, Freudian, or Nietzschean, is a general opinion of human consciousness as naturally dishonest and untrustworthy and of human beings as generally lacking in the self-awareness necessary for self-description. This approach does not entail a belief in the impossibility of such awareness or description or even a thoroughgoing pessimism; Ricoeur suggests that in Freud exists a real optimism for gaining access to the hitherto-obscured world of the unconscious, something clearly evident in the conclusion of Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams*.⁷ Whereas additional entailments of these hermeneutics include questioning both the ontology and the intellectual categories signified by such things as reason, faith, and thought, I want to focus here on the basis on which these other entailments of the school of suspicion rest: the human capacity for accurate self-description. Although originally coined by Friedrich Engels, the idea of “false consciousness” is generally understood to be a Marxian term, arising, as it does, from the concept of commodity fetishism introduced in *Kapital*.⁸ It is this term that Ricoeur suggests best exemplifies the problem that the herme-

⁴Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, translated by Denis Savage (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), 32.

⁵*Ibid.*, 35.

⁶*Ibid.*, 33.

⁷*Ibid.*, 34; Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, no editor or translator identified (Cutchogue, N.Y.: Buccaneer Books, 1985), 44, 469.

⁸Friedrich Engels, *Marx and Engels Correspondence*, edited and translated by Donna Torr (New York: International Publishers, 1968); Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: The Founders, the Golden Age, the*

neutics of suspicion address.⁹

While we find traces of the opposing hermeneutics of reminiscence in the theology and commerce departments of our universities, most academic enterprises in the social sciences and humanities fall firmly into the suspicious camp and can be viewed as intellectual heirs to the school of suspicion. We see this especially clearly in the discipline of religious studies. In addition to following the school of suspicion's premise of an untrustworthy human consciousness, it also commonly practices a "methodological atheism" that is reflexively distrustful in that it automatically performs the move that postcolonial theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty identifies as "anthropologizing" the supernatural.¹⁰ He defines anthropologizing as converting a reported phenomenon "into somebody's belief or . . . into an object of anthropological analysis."¹¹ In this way, heirs of the school of suspicion naturally act to exile suspect data about the world into the unreliable realm of consciousness.

In suggesting that Bushman does not subscribe to the school of suspicion, it is not my intention to paint him as a member of the school of reminiscence. The New Mormon History movement, with which we today associate him as a key member, was a reaction against just this kind of hermeneutical approach in Mormon history. The conflation of LDS memory with LDS history was very much the problem to which the movement responded, rejecting an affirming hermeneutics for a more skeptical, critical approach. The historiographies of polygamy, theocracy, and persecution have been extensively problematized through this movement's importation of historical methods informed by academic social science. I would like to suggest, rather, that Bushman's work falls into neither of the two approaches posited by Ricoeur but instead reflects what might be termed a "hermeneutic of generosity."

A hermeneutic of generosity is critical, but its practice arises

Breakdown, translated by P. S. Falla (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2004) 88, 226–27, 974, 1123.

⁹Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 34.

¹⁰Seth D. Kunin, *Religion: The Modern Theories* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 74.

¹¹Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 105.

from an understanding of human self-awareness which is different than that on which the hermeneutics of suspicion are premised. As such, it must be viewed as oppositional to critical approaches and ideologies that share with their nineteenth-century progenitors the demand for considerable and immediate suspicion of actors' self-description. Instead, a generous hermeneutic proceeds from the conviction that historical actors possess, if anything, a privileged perspective on their motivations and actions, though hardly an infallible one. In this way, Bushman's approach and those hermeneutically allied do not deny the existence of the unconscious or of false consciousness but they do necessarily oppose any ideology or approach that confers on such things the kind of magnitude and importance that Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud posit.

Because Bushman's approach does not *a priori* deny the possibility of false consciousness, as the school of reminiscence necessarily would, it confers what might be termed the 'right of first refusal' upon historical actors. Like social science informed by the school of suspicion, it requires a critical analysis of actors' claims about themselves in the face of evidence but it rejects those claims only when they cannot reasonably be shown to be true. Only in the event that their own words about themselves cannot be supported by the evidence are other explanations sought or constructed. While a reminiscent approach would continue to trust an actor, especially an authoritative historical subject, even after the evidence made such trust untenable, a generous approach is still critical and intellectually courageous. We see this approach in Bushman's numerous confrontations with Joseph Smith Jr. in *Rough Stone Rolling*, such as when he finds that Joseph Smith misdescribed the language of his revelations.¹² Although *Rough Stone Rolling* offers excellent examples of Bushman's generous hermeneutical practice, this approach is best exemplified in *King and People in Provincial Massachusetts*.

Rough Stone Rolling is at once a critical, scholarly work and one premised on the understanding that Joseph Smith was sincere.¹³ In this way, it is explicit in articulating Bushman's more general hermeneutical approach. The text is also explicit in its methodological

¹²Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (2005; New York: Vintage Books edition, 2007), 174; Bushman, *Believing History*, 249.

¹³Bushman, "Response."

position at a practical level. Points of divergence between methodological atheism and faithful scholarship are brought to the reader's attention to show how Mormons and debunkers of Mormonism have approached historical episodes differently. For instance, to cope with the acknowledged problem of discrepancies in Smith's accounts of the First Vision and its late recording, Bushman makes a series of suggestions that neither strain the modern, non-Mormon reader's credulity nor reject Smith's own explanations by giving a series of plausible reasons, some acknowledged by the Smith family, some not, for why "at first Joseph was reluctant to talk about his vision" and how "as Joseph became more confident, more details came out."¹⁴ But these generous explanations differ from the reminiscent explanations Hugh Nibley might have offered half a century previous, in part because they acknowledge that there is something to explain.

The decision to premise *Rough Stone Rolling* on Smith's "sincerity," should not be confused with one based on the Prophet's honesty or consistency. His penchant for exaggeration is well canvassed,¹⁵ as are his episodes of genuinely misleading people or concealing the truth—for example, Smith's claims that revelations are in God's language and not his own. More importantly still, Bushman relentlessly contextualizes Smith and his ideas within the intellectual and social movements of his age. Smith is situated not just as a nineteenth-century American exposed to popular theories of Indian origins in Israel,¹⁶ popular magical practice,¹⁷ theories of race,¹⁸ and so on, but in a family already situated in the Early Republic category of "visionaries," ready, after Joseph Sr.'s seven visions, both to both accept the reality of his son's visions and to place them in a preexisting cultural category.¹⁹

Of course, I expected to find this approach in *Rough Stone Rolling*. After all, it is available for sale not just in bookstores but at LDS and Community of Christ historic site gift shops along the Mormon

¹⁴Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 39–43.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 49–51.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 36.

Trail from Sharon to Independence. But had I not chosen to at least attempt to practice Bushman's hermeneutic of generosity, I might have failed to see this same phenomenon as the master approach in *King and People in Provincial Massachusetts*. In essence, this book tells the story of Massachusetts from its seventeenth-century origins to the Revolutionary War based on the following premise: The people of the colony were sincere in their declarations of loyalty both to the English king and to the principles of monarchical governance that upheld his authority. Again, by privileging explanations of human actions and intentions consistent with self-aware and sincere historical actors, not by ignoring evidence but simply testing these explanations, first, against historical data prior to considering others, we can gain a valuable and often absent historical perspective. This is certainly the case in *King and People*.

By doing so, Bushman is able to resist the strong teleological impulses he observed in other historians of colonial America in inflating both the significance and influence of the small elite cadre of republican thinkers in eighteenth-century America.²⁰ Support for individual rights and democracy was something shared by the republican minority and monarchist majority in New England or, at least, Massachusetts. And, as Bushman points out, the expansion of these elements within a monarchical framework was a long historical process that proceeded on both sides of the Atlantic and continued in Europe and British North America following the Revolution. The real question, he suggests, is why Americans chose to follow the Cromwellian tradition rather than that of the Glorious Revolution, given the availability of both models in their political thinking.²¹ If, as he suggests, Americans were sincere in the exuberant public celebrations in honor of George III,²² there is still much to explain.

How can historians square routine defiance of requests by the king and his representatives by the legislature²³ or, more problematically, episodes of popular civil disobedience, violence, or even re-

²⁰Richard L. Bushman, *King and People in Provincial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 6.

²¹*Ibid.*, 5.

²²*Ibid.*, 16.

²³*Ibid.*, 27–29.

bellion with this sincere monarchical loyalty?²⁴ The long heritage of popular resistance to royal authority, Bushman suggests, was a key constitutive element of British monarchical culture necessary to its longevity. The capacity to distinguish between a monarch's obviously good intent and his specific pronouncements, along with the capacity to blame evil counselors and corrupt officials, had conferred on English dissidents a substantial vocabulary of loyal resistance undertaken to protect the king's good name and realm.²⁵ As long as pledges of loyalty and discourses of submission and inferiority were appended to revolutionary or dissenting acts, these acts could be situated within monarchical culture. Indeed, some such actions were understood as rights inherent in all royal subjects.²⁶ In this way, the master terms "king" and "people" were not constructed oppositionally in popular discourse until after the Revolution,²⁷ rendering the question of the individual sincerity of specific persons or specific declarations with respect to loyalty functionally irrelevant.²⁸ Here we see the mobilization of the hermeneutic of generosity embracing even individuals whom Bushman strongly suspects of insincerity.

The hermeneutic of generosity similarly underpins *The Refinement of America*, taking seriously people's own explanations not just for changes in the aesthetic preferences of middling folk but also their reasons for constructing America's first social program, the public school system.²⁹ Rejecting the hindsight teleology that might have situated public schooling as a proto-entitlement program or as a logical entailment of liberal ideology, as it was in England, the on-the-ground motivations that Americans declared for sending their children to school and donating to support schools are taken seriously and powerfully explain, once again, that eighteenth-century Americans were more culturally conservative than American exceptionalist dis-

²⁴Ibid., 37–39.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 46–49.

²⁷Ibid., 93.

²⁸Ibid., 31.

²⁹Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 28.

courses make them.³⁰ As we can see, the hermeneutic of generosity is not equally generous to everyone. Self-proclaimed academic authorities are sometimes roughly treated through its application because it requires an imaginative empathy centered not on one's professional peers but on the historical actors one studies, an empathy necessary to defend them from what E. P. Thompson famously terms "the enormous condescension of posterity."³¹

The hermeneutic of generosity is more than sufficient to unite *Mormons in America*, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, *The Refinement of America*, *King and People in Provincial Massachusetts*, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, *From Puritan to Yankee* into a single historical practice. But my task here is not just to unite the most popular works but to take seriously the case for total scholarly consistency. At first glance, it is a challenge for me to see some of Bushman's earlier Mormon material—like the essays reprinted in *Believing History* and his chapter in FARMS's *Book of Mormon Authorship* as unproblematically the work of a conventional scholar who simply dissents from the school of suspicion on the subject of human self-knowledge.

In *Mormons in America*, *Rough Stone Rolling*, and *The Beginnings of Mormonism*, all supernatural events and objects are carefully anthropologized. In each case, Bushman presents readers with the option of rendering the otherworldly or miraculous as a product of historical actors' internal consciousness even as he presents his own beliefs as an alternative. This practice is—not entirely but enough to make a difference—dropped in his other work as a faithful scholar. God and His angels really do deliver revelations, for instance.³² More importantly, when it comes to addressing the analytical framework on which the books rest, Bushman goes beyond conventional generosity in opposing the Tübingen School's widely accepted position that the correctness or fulfillment of prophecies in a scriptural text allow us to date the composition of the text to a time following the prophecies' fulfillment.³³ Here, he comes into direct conflict with methodological atheism, not

³⁰Ibid., 216–19.

³¹Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), 12.

³²Claudia L. Bushman and Richard L. Bushman, *Mormons in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29.

merely with respect to the social scientific foundation on which it rests but also with the physical scientific. In *Believing History*, he notes that he welcomed the post-modern critique and saw it as opening new possibilities for the confluence of mainstream and faithful scholarship. But is such a robust postmodernism sufficient to render the Book of Mormon what it purports to be within conventional academic practice? I would suggest it is not. While there exists a caricature of postmodernism arising from the Sokal hoax and other dramatized excesses of the science wars, most scholars working with the heuristics provided by Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, and others do not understand them as nullifying or superseding the physical sciences.³⁴

To explain these positions regarding prophecy, angels, and the like, it is necessary to consider something more subversive to the social scientific enterprise. But to do so, I want to introduce another provocative term “Mormon physics.” I am persuaded by Fenella Cannell and others that Doctrine and Covenants 131 is a scriptural declaration of ontological monism and one that profoundly informs the LDS worldview.³⁵ This approach is often misdescribed as an inability on the part of Mormons to distinguish between moral and physical

³³Richard L. Bushman, “The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution” in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1982), 191.

³⁴The famed “Sokal hoax” refers to an article written by physicist Alan Sokal titled “Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity” that was deliberately designed to expose the postmodernist movement as (1) believing that its worldview did, in fact supersede the physical sciences, and (2) expressing itself in an empty, deliberately obfuscating discourse. His motivation, curiously, was to discredit postmodernism among leftists, not to defend the physical sciences from criticism. Nevertheless, the article epitomized the “science wars.” Alan Sokal, “A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies,” *Lingua Franca: The Review of Academic Life* 6, no. 3 (May 1996), http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/lingua_franca_v4/lingua_franca_v4.html (accessed December 1, 2011).

³⁵Fenella Cannell, “The Christianity of Anthropology,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 11 (2005): 338, 349.

law.³⁶ Such descriptions not only miss the point but obscure a serious problem with most Christianities' strategy for comprehending and categorizing phenomena, namely the arbitrary bifurcation of the universe's contents into the "natural" and "supernatural," a mode of thinking known as ontological dualism. In ontological dualist systems, cause and effect for natural things are governed by the physical sciences whereas the rules of causation for the supernatural are governed by a parallel system sometimes termed "metaphysics."

As an alternative to this bifurcated universe, Mormon ontological monism seeks to offer divergent and supplementary rules to modern physics rather than seeking to fashion a parallel system of causation.³⁷ For Mormons, spirit is a type of matter; and God, His throne, the spirit world, angels, and spirits exist within profane space and time (D&C 131:7–8). Mormonism does not create a parallel set of rules for these things, unlinked from the physical sciences but instead makes additions and modifications to them.³⁸

The upsetting question that this project raises is the following: If a historian believed in Mormon physics, would his fellow historians be able to tell? What if *From Puritan to Yankee* and all of Bushman's widely accepted historical works are undergirded by a system of physics in which the vast majority of their readers do not believe? If we cannot see *Believing History* as part of mainstream academic scholarship, in the sense that its base theory of physical causation is outside of that mainstream, let us consider the reverse operation. If we view *Rough Stone Rolling* as a towering work of faithful scholarship, is there any problem in seeing *From Puritan to Yankee* or *King and People* as towering works of faithful scholarship, too? Does any aspect of their content or methodology breach Mormon physics? These books never come up against the physics of spirit, exaltation, prophecy, and angels—not

³⁶Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15; James E. Ford, "Battlestar Galactica and Mormon Theology," *Journal of Popular Culture* 17, no. 3 (1983): 85–86.

³⁷Canell, "The Christianity of Anthropology," 338, 349.

³⁸For instance, we see priesthood adopted as a supplementary physical force, cohabiting with such phenomena as gravitation or spirit as a supplemental form of matter. Orson Pratt, "Figure and Magnitude of Spirits," *The Seer* 1, no. 3 (March 1853): 33; rpt., Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 1990; Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 309.

because they are written from the perspective of these things' non-existence but because that is not the business in which they are engaged.

It is at this point, that one can see that, despite key similarities, the hermeneutics of generosity are clearly distinct from the approach of "seeing things their way" that Brad Gregory imports into religion scholarship from Quentin Skinner's history of political thought.³⁹ While Gregory's approach shares with Bushman's an emphasis on the self-description of historical actors, it requires a methodological agnosticism paired with a reinforcement of the physics-metaphysics boundary. Gregory suggests that we equate religious and "secular" metaphysics, then reject both, implying that some stable residue of shared physics will be left behind with which to do our work.⁴⁰ But it has been my experience that the more frequently "religious" experiences intrude on the domain of the physical (rather than the social) sciences in history, the more often such approaches are exposed as either unworkable due to the absence of a sufficiently consistent, stable, or complete residue of physics or masking a continuing allegiance to contemporary physical-scientific synthesis behind a veneer of liberal relativism.

In contrast, a hermeneutics of generosity is portable among conflicting systems of physical causation because it takes no position on physical scientific questions other than the reliability of people in reporting their internal state to others. It is not that Bushman has discovered Gregory's putative "middle way"⁴¹ between a suspicious reductionism and an affirming recollection. It is simply that his hermeneutics are portable across the divide between the physics of the contemporary physical sciences and the physics of the Mormon worldview. Generous hermeneutics float above physics, refusing to become entangled in debates among cosmological systems, remaining equally available to any historical practitioner. At the same time, generous hermeneutics do not provide historians of religion with what so many

³⁹Alister Chapman and John Coffey, "Introduction: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion," *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, edited by Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S. Gregory (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 12, 16.

⁴⁰Brad S. Gregory, "Can We 'See Things Their Way'? Should We Try?" in *ibid.*, 35, 43.

⁴¹Chapman and Coffey, "The Return of Religion," 17.

seem to want: the tools by which to sidestep the necessity of situating historical actors within a specific framework of physical laws that are necessarily incompatible with competing frameworks.

Too often, when the subject of Bushman's faith comes up in conversation with historians of colonial America and the Early Republic, there are expressions of obvious discomfort—not with him as a person or historian but with the fact that he can be one of the most respected practitioners in the historical profession, one whose work they deeply admire, yet still be a Mormon—and not just a cultural Mormon but a faithful member of the Church.⁴² What strikes scholars as problematic is the assertion that the same system of understanding the nature of cause and effect in the world that allows Moses to appear in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110:11) is sufficiently capacious, logical, and critical to produce *The Refinement of America*. It is disquieting to many of us who practice methodological atheism and a hermeneutic of suspicion that modes of thinking lacking these elements are capable of generating such piercing, critical analysis of historical events and actors, even when, as in *From Puritan to Yankee*, religious questions are central to the analysis.⁴³

The consequences of Bushman's both declared and evident refusal to "wall off the Mormon parts of my mind"⁴⁴ clearly lack the dire analytical consequences many of us would predict as a logical entailment of a faith containing post-Enlightenment prophets and miracles. It is not the peculiarity of his non-Mormon scholarship that upsets but, rather, its exemplary character. The ability of a miracle-believer who professes opposition to Enlightenment disenchantment to "pass," as it were, in their midst does and should engender discomfort,⁴⁵ especially as he claims for Joseph Smith an equally legitimate Enlightenment heritage when discussing such things as

⁴²Bushman tells about a group of scholars forgetting he was a Latter-day Saint and remarking that, while academia needed to become more tolerant of the diverse religious beliefs that social science practitioners brought to their work, belief in the LDS narrative of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon was beyond the pale. Bushman, *Believing History*, 36–37.

⁴³Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690–1765* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 4, 276–81.

⁴⁴Bushman, *Believing History*, 38.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 274.

the doctrine of preexistence.⁴⁶

It is in Bushman's engagement with the Mormon scriptural past—and by this, I mean chunks of space-time about which specifically LDS scripture directly speaks (i.e., the times and places described in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants)—that we see, most clearly and surprisingly, his commitment to a generous engagement with the testimony of historical actors, even when this generosity clashes with mainstream social scientific readings. Bushman's approach to the scriptural past is far more generous and less suspicious than that of most FARMS members who are far more likely to be labeled apologists by non-Mormons. While John Sorenson and others question the Nephites' assertion that they possessed a state, in contradistinction to the Lamanites, a combination of fidelity and generosity forces Bushman to accept the Nephite account that it was the reality of a Nephite state, not pretensions to a state, that differentiated them from the Lamanites.⁴⁷ Similarly, Bushman accepts the Anthon transcript as being both Egyptian in character and a true copy.⁴⁸ Most radically, he does not rise to the bait in terms of archaeology or DNA studies but asserts that the Book of Mormon cannot be connected to the archaeological record as it currently stands, yet is nevertheless a history of the ancestors of the American Indians.⁴⁹

At the same time, he is not trapped into oppositional positions when it comes to the scholarship of those seeking to debunk Smith's ministry based on the obvious points of confluence with the practices and people of his day, such as money-digging, the visionary movement, Campbellite restorationism, and pre-Columbian Israelite mi-

⁴⁶Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 209.

⁴⁷Bushman, *Believing History*, 87; John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 314.

⁴⁸Bushman and Bushman, *Mormons in America*, 22; Hugh Nibley suggests otherwise. Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967), 168.

⁴⁹Bushman, *Believing History*, 13, 123; Sorenson accepts that present-day Native Americans are not descendants of the Lehites. John L. Sorenson, *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 18.

grations to the Americas.⁵⁰ These things are acknowledged and mobilized to reinforce his arguments in much the way that Jesus's movement is now comfortably situated within the apocalypticism, messianism, and social movement politics of first-century Judea.

Would I have reached these conclusions regarding Richard Bushman's corpus of work had I not attempted to practice his hermeneutic of generosity, by granting his own explanations and descriptions a right of first refusal, so to speak? Possibly not. And, ironically, had I not, I think that an analysis dividing his work by date or subject matter, as it would likely have been, would be further from, and not closer to, Occam's razor. I would have generated a theory less elegant and more complicated, one that told us a little less about him, a little less about Mormonism, and a whole lot less about non-Mormon practitioners of the humanities and social sciences. Ultimately, Bushman's hermeneutic of generosity is not persuasive through the human virtues to which it appeals; it is persuasive because it allows us to discover and to know things that we would not otherwise know. And it does so, not by blunting our critical or analytical instincts, but by directing them more precisely when it comes to where to look first and what to test first.

As a successful method, it allows us to see that which was previously invisible: thousands of New Englanders who were simultaneously revolutionaries and committed monarchists, loyal to the persons and principles of English royal authority, overturning the authority of the crown as was their right as loyal subjects of the king. It allows us to see American universities, private and public schools founded and matriculated-at, based not on a liberal idealism that mandated universal education but instead on a deep desire to emulate and enact the trappings of European aristocratic and gentry culture. And it allows us to see a sincere and earnest Joseph Smith. Does it allow us to see the golden plates? Not by itself. My application of the hermeneutic cannot take me to the same place that it takes Bushman because, at the end of the day, I am not a Mormon. We can both practice the same hermeneutics with respect to human self-consciousness within our respective cosmologies, but this practice will yield narratives that can be both generous and cosmologically/physically at odds. Nevertheless, the similarity of the narratives we might generate presents me with a comforting conclusion.

⁵⁰Bushman, *Believing History*, 210–11.

Many characterize today's America as one that is ideologically polarized. I think that this description obscures far more than it reveals. The primary battle in America is not between ideologies but between epistemes. We are not debating what to do in response to facts we discover; we are in conflict over the very processes by which knowledge is made. Fox News, not the Republican Party, is more often the target of liberal derision because it is its conservative knowledge-making practices, more than policies, that offends liberals. Thomas Jefferson's cosmology and epistemology are more likely to be the site of debate today than his theories of the economics of liberty. Therefore, the knowledge that *King and People* has been written by a scholar whose epistemology is supposedly radically different from mine is strangely reassuring. If he is standing on the opposite side of the supposed chasm of Enlightenment disenchantment, I am reassured by the evident narrowness of the chasm, at least from where *we* stand, and the surprising similarity of the terrain where the two sides almost meet.

TO MEND A FRACTURED REALITY: JOSEPH SMITH'S PROJECT

Philip L. Barlow

"NO MAN KNOWS MY HISTORY," Joseph Smith famously avowed less than three months before his own death. What the Mormon Prophet seemed to mean was that his life, full of the unexpected, doused in marvels and wonders, stretched credulity. It would have stretched his own had he not experienced it directly. No mortal, he implied, could comprehend and capture his life, and he blamed no one for failure to believe. Prospects for an autobiography? Joseph was emphatic: "I can not do it; I shall never undertake it."¹

Smith's proclamation of his inaccessibility has become true in ways other than those he spoke of. Three are germane here. The first is that our access to his thought is more limited than many realize. The most careful student of the matter calculates that not more than 10 percent of the Prophet's sermons were recorded, and that they were not captured with any consistency until the last eighteen months of

PHILIP L. BARLOW {philip.barlow@usu.edu} holds the Leonard J. Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture at Utah State University in Logan and is the Director of Religious Studies there. He thanks Christopher Blythe, Chase Kirkham, and Andrew Izatt for assistance in research and annotation for this essay.

¹Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 355. Wording in the several accounts of the sermon varies.

his life.² Many of the Prophet's revelations, especially after 1835, were only incidentally and partially captured: not in a formal and complete decree commencing with "thus saith the Lord," but in an allusion in a fragment of a letter or through the ragged notes of a homespun scribe not apt to win a spelling bee. The notion that spirit is refined matter came eventually into Mormon consciousness by way of a casual aside from Smith to a Methodist minister.³ Given the potential importance of such strands for understanding Smith's experience and mind, one wonders about the untold ones. Of even the written revelations, many, as the Prophet complained, were snatched from him before the ink was dry, never to be recovered to public knowledge.⁴ Others were not written at all. The revelation on celestial marriage was inscribed because Hyrum Smith asked for a written document that would add weight to his negotiations with Emma on Joseph's behalf. The Prophet simply kept other divine manifestations to himself, as he professed on more than one occasion. At a Church conference in Orange, Ohio, in October 1831, he declined to describe how the Book of Mormon was translated, a reticence that he maintained for the rest of his life.⁵ On major issues like the temple endowment and plans for the kingdom of God, we possess precious little from Joseph himself. Our image of the first Mormon, then, ought not be confused with a fully formed mosaic. Sundry tiles and clusters, legible and otherwise, are missing and unassembled.

The meaning of Smith's life is elusive for a second—and nearly opposite—reason: because it seems so familiar. Despite the limited firsthand sources, a *lot* of attention has been paid to Mormonism's founder. Traditions of devotion, scorn, or curiosity are entrenched among alternate and widening constituencies. Moroni's seemingly

²Dean C. Jessee, "Priceless Words and Fallible Memories: Joseph Smith as Seen in the Effort to Preserve His Discourses," *BYU Studies* 31 (Spring 1990): 23.

³Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 419.

⁴Joseph Smith, Letter to W. W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, quoted in Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 130.

⁵Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (6 vols., 1902–12, Vol. 7, 1932; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980 printing), 1:220.

grandiose prophecy informing the teenage Joseph in 1823 that his “name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues” (JS—H 1:33–34) marches toward symbolic fulfillment. Dozens of biographers and commentators had already tried their hand at Smith’s character, thought, and life by the time Fawn Brodie published hers, three-score and seven years ago. From that point, things began to get serious in rigor and in volume. By the early twenty-first century, Joseph Smith was among the most studied of religious figures to have arisen in the most religiously complex nation in human history. A range of considerable illumination has been the bequest of a constellation of works.⁶ The crown jewel of this constellation, Richard Bushman’s magisterial *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, was published in 2005. In its wake, and on top of all that came before it, the essentials of the Prophet’s life, including its once-shocking elements, have come to seem familiar.

But familiarity is the opiate of the people. It warms and soothes; it mutes difficulty and offers a fleeting euphoria; it dulls the imagina-

⁶Something of the attention given the Mormon Prophet can be symbolized by the viability of the large Joseph Smith Papers Project, which will itself bring yet-wider attention. Examples of full biographies—and these are, of course, not the only important works—include Edward W. Tullidge, *Life of Joseph the Prophet* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1878); John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989); Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2d ed. (1971; New York: Vintage Books, 1995 printing); Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977); Robert V. Remini, *Joseph Smith* (New York: Viking, 2002); Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004); Richard Dewey Lloyd, *Joseph Smith: A Biography* (Provo, Utah: Stratford Books, 2005). A sample of partial treatments includes Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet: Illustrated Edition* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010); Susan Easton Black and Andrew C. Skinner, eds., *Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005); I. Woodbridge Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1902); William D. Morain, *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Dissociated Mind* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1998); Robert D. Anderson, *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999). Reid L. Neilson and Terryl L. Givens, eds., *Joseph Smith, Jr.: Reappraisals after Two Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) provides a range of interpretations of essay length.

tion, spawns cataracts, and at last addicts. A Joseph Smith too comfortably in our sights is a distorted Joseph Smith. Properly seen, Smith is partly unseen. Read through primary sources, he seems familiar, then perplexes. He changed over time, as did his thinking. Just when we've tamed him through our conventional categories, unsuspected teachings and behaviors impose themselves, which ought to temper confident judgment. All this is not to fault Bushman and his assistant Jed Woodworth or other pensive contributors; in their hands, Joseph Smith is nothing if not complex. Mine is simply a prompt to remember our nature. Once we name something, or have seen or heard it recurrently, we risk the delusion that we thereby understand it.

This essay intends not so much to introduce new facts or sources about the Mormon Prophet's life; I take these to be largely established so far as they are within our reach. Instead it reminds us that familiar facts may be arranged and marshaled toward a less familiar interpretive lens. What follows is not a heavily annotated account of a historical event. It is a meditation on the possibility of a radical portrait of a radical man.

This portrait signals a third sense in which Joseph Smith was correct beyond his intent in telling us we do not know his history and its meaning: The Joseph Smith we carry about in our heads is too small. This is a large claim, given the dizzying heights to which his followers have elevated him, the potency against which his enemies raged, the decidedly grand claims Smith himself issued, and the high caliber of available biographical work.

With characteristic lucidity, B. H. Roberts cast Joseph Smith's project in familiar terms embraced by adherents: "What was Joseph Smith's mission? It was the mission of Joseph Smith, under God's direction, to establish the Church of Christ and the Kingdom of God upon the earth; and to the accomplishment of this work he devoted the whole energy of his life, and was faithful unto death."⁷ Beyond this, Smith's prophetic mission is commonly construed as a "restoration": through the Mormon Prophet, God *restored* the church-kingdom, once extant on earth, to which Roberts alludes.

Smith's project, however, was sharply more expansive than what is captured in traditional devotional formulations such as Roberts's. And it was more than a "quest for empire" or a "quest for refuge"

⁷B. H. Roberts, January 28, 1884, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1854–86), 25:130.

from American religious pluralism, as characterized by thoughtful scholars.⁸ We need a larger blueprint. We need also a larger space for the concept of “restoration,” for it harbors distinct meanings.

The core of my proposal is suggested in the essay’s title. The trajectory of Smith’s mission—its cumulative content, what he was responding to, and the patterned nature of his proposed solution—is more sweeping than either Roberts’s stated or implied formulation; it is more sweeping than is ordinarily grasped. The *sum* of Joseph’s mostly familiar social and theological thrusts are so thorough-going as to comprise reality itself—a broken reality in need of healing. Smith’s unfolding diagnosis of the human condition and the religious situation of his epoch amounted to: “Estrangement; Multiple Fractures.”

His prescription for this all-encompassing malady was *at/one/ment*: repairing alienation, making the world of human (and divine-human) systems and relationships cohere again. The center of *at/one/ment* was the work of Christ, and Smith married the ancient divide between the roles of grace and human responsibility in a deft Arminian stroke possessed of its own flavor: It is “through the Atonement of Christ, [that] all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (Third Article of Faith).

But Smith’s vision of *at/one/ment* entailed more than traditional Christian soteriology, wherein Christ’s vicarious suffering reconciled God and sinners. *At/one/ment* for the Mormon Prophet included also an ontological and teleological revolution: God and His children were related more closely than either Calvinist or Arminian perspectives imagined; Christ embodied and revealed the union of these two natures; and God’s project is to invite humans to participate in the same ultimate goals (Moses 1:39). For Smith, the human potential for sin is of such a depth that the Son of God died in the flesh to confront it; the human capacity for good is of such a height that the Son of God lived in the flesh to reveal it.

Eclipsing traditional understandings further still, Smith’s eventual notions of *at/one/ment* radiated from this epicenter, through diverse strands, to cosmic scope. It went beyond overt reference to the

⁸Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967); Marvin Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

figure of Christ; it defined the work of Christ and God as incorporating virtually all relations and spheres of activity in which humans had a part, whether practical or conceptual.

I do not argue that my proposal necessarily comports in all respects with what Smith said or construed his mission to be. His millennialist thrusts, for example, might be seen as running counter to my sketch, though even here Smith anticipated the millennium as a repair of severed relations, as a reunion of heaven and earth, of the heavenly “city of Enoch” and the earthbound “New Jerusalem.” Furthermore, what comprised Smith’s mission perhaps exceeded even what he himself may have supposed at any given time—not a far-fetched possibility given the fact that his mission shifted and expanded throughout his life. To the extent that this is so, my approach resembles the effort to critique an artist who invites several friends periodically to engage her paintings and installations. One observes not only what the artist says but what one sees in her work. The critics may lack the artist’s talent and training, and she knows her work as only a creator can. Nonetheless, the artist values the critics, who may on occasion point to elements, moves, provocations, and implications in her work to which she replies, “Ah! Perhaps it is so; I never thought of that.”

It may help to fathom the scope of Joseph Smith’s enterprise to notice that several meanings are embedded in his “Restoration.” The first concerns assertions of what once “was,” then was lost through apostasy, and was finally brought back again. This sense of “restoration” resonates with how Smith often spoke when he announced, for instance, the restoring of lost scriptures and the primitive Christian church. This is the common understanding in Mormonism and requires little elaboration here.

A latent concept in the Mormon “Restoration” is related, but distinct and less noticed. It refers not to that which has been lost and brought back but to that which is broken and which begs restoration to its perfect state. It may also refer, more loosely, to that which is neither lost nor broken, but absent—previously withheld and never before revealed. The purity to be restored sometimes referred to primordial and eternal verities rather than historical truths. This third aspect is made clear by prophetic references to intelligence, knowledge, or ordinances kept hidden “from before the foundation of the world.” This language, echoing Matthew 13:35, intimates not the restoration of things as they were on the earth in days of yore but rather

the coming forth of things from outside history, withheld by divine providence since before history began: perfect things to be placed in perfect order. The two latter meanings of Joseph's "Restoration" do not reference things as they *had been*, but things as they *should be*. These restored and newly revealed truths and ordinances enabled "a welding link" in otherwise separated or separable relationships, such as marriage, family generations (D&C 121:26–32; 124:33, 38–41; 128:18), or between existing fragments and new elements to complete the work of the "Restoration."

Smith came of age in an epoch of commotion, at the westward-moving edge of the new, exhilarating, and vulnerable American republic, whose character and course were up for grabs. Many historians have written of the torrent of democratic forces undammed by the American experiment. Alice Felt Tyler was among the earliest genuine scholars to analyze—condescendingly in her case—the wild religious "ultraisms" spun off by "freedom's ferment." Joseph Smith's movement was, for her, a prime example of the extremism that flourished in a new United States abruptly shorn of European law, customs, dignity, and restraints. Mormonism was the product of anxieties bred by the era's rapid, dislocating social transformations.⁹

That Mormonism's rise was enabled by its time and place is hardly contestable, but the movement exceeded the bounds of its culture; it cannot be reduced to a byproduct of its setting. Nor did Smith merely plagiarize and borrow in the ordinary sense, as he has been de-

⁹Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History to 1860* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944). For less jaundiced accounts of related themes, see Stephen A. Marini, *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989); Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). In more specifically Mormon scholarship, see especially Klaus J. Hansen, "Joseph Smith, American Culture, and the Origins of Mormonism," in Neilson and Givens, eds., *Joseph Smith Jr.*, 31–45, and Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Zion Rising: Joseph Smith's Early Social and Political Thought" (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2008), in *Dissertations & Theses: Full Text*, online database, <http://www.proquest.com>, publication number AAT 3338414 (accessed December 3, 2011).

scribed as doing. Instead, he was moved to respond creatively. This revelatory creativity certainly incorporated elements from his immediate and imagined environs, but this was after the pattern of how, as Joseph would later explain, God created the world itself: not *ex nihilo*, but by drawing from and fashioning the debris and chaos of unorganized materials.¹⁰

Hence, what interests here is not the simple fact that Smith appropriated elements from his culture, but rather the particular, radical, and synthetic *ways* that he interpreted and responded to the crisis and opportunity presented at least in part by American and existential freedoms. With fabulous imagination enabled and crafted through his revelations, he linked these freedoms and the fractures they brought, then extended them cosmically and responded to them in so extraordinary a fashion and scope that its whole tends to remain beyond our ken. He genuinely brought forth something new under the sun.

He forged something surprising and large. His need to reconceive and rearrange the world was so keen and so thoroughgoing that it is almost as if the prism through which he saw—literally, at times—brought him to the point that he inherited and prophetically discerned the fragmentation of “everything.” From his actions, revelations, and words, we can infer that he saw the human situation as teeming with breaks, shards, gaps, and chasms. Reality was cracked.

I do not mean by this that Smith was mentally deranged, though others have asserted as much, and certainly his mode of thinking transcended the ordinary. I mean that he came to understand (through revelation, as he explained) that (as he did not quite explain) virtually *every realm of human conception and endeavor* that impinged on major

¹⁰The Prophet theologized on the point after learning a word for “create” (*barau*) from Professor Joshua Seixas in Kirtland (Abr. 4:1). See the reconstruction of the King Follett Discourse in Stan Larson, “The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 193–208 and the speech’s critical edition in Donald Q. Cannon and Larry E. Dahl, *The Prophet Joseph Smith’s King Follett Discourse: A Six-Column Comparison of Original Notes and Amalgamations* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1983). Smith’s private secretary, William Clayton, reported Joseph Smith as saying in 1841, “This earth was organized or formed out of other planets which were broke up and remodeled and made into the one on which we live.” Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 60.

relationships was fissured and wanted mending. This is my Humpty-Dumpty thesis. Smith believed that neither all the king's horses nor all the king's men, nor the worldly philosophers, nor the clerics of traditional religion could put Humpty together again. Such a restoration and reconstruction required an activist prophet and seer.

Presciently, if less mystically, something of these cracks in the world was given prose by discerning contemporaries. Looking backward on his New England from after the Civil War, Ralph Waldo Emerson conjured his own imagery for the fractures in society's shell and the extreme and novel individualism hatched and come of age in the twenty years following 1820. There are always two parties, wrote the sage: "the party of the Past and the party of the Future: the Establishment and the Movement." "The schism runs under the world and appears in Literature, Philosophy, Church, State and social customs." At certain junctures, the fault line gives way, an earthquake erupts, "the resistance is reanimated." The 1820s and '30s became, said Emerson, "a war between intellect and affection; a crack in Nature, which split every church in Christendom into Papal and Protestant; Calvinism into old and New schools; Quakerism into old and New; [and] brought new divisions in politics." Temperance and slavery gashed the fabric of the nation. More broadly, an insurrection in consciousness was emerging. Whereas former generations "acted under the belief that a shining social prosperity was the beatitude of man, and sacrificed uniformly the citizen to the State . . . , [the] modern mind believed that the nation existed for the individual, for the guardianship and education of every man." This idea, incipient in revolutions and national movements, achieved precision and extension in the mind of the philosopher: "the individual *is* the world."

The erupting revolution of mind was as consequential as the military revolution that had preceded it a generation earlier. Forces severing bonds in these years comprised a sword such as was never drawn before. It divides and detaches bone and marrow, soul and body, yea, almost the man from himself. It is the age of severance, of dissociation, of freedom . . . of detachment. Every man for himself. The public speaker . . . answers only for himself. The social sentiments are weak; the sentiment of patriotism is weak; veneration is low; the natural affections feebler than they were. People grow [abstractly] philosophical about native land and parents and relations. There is an universal resistance to ties and ligaments once supposed essential to civil society.

One could naturally pose counter-examples—fraternities and Bible

and temperance societies and the like come to mind—but most struck Emerson as without root and against the tide. “College classes, military corps, or trade-unions might, for a moment, over their wine,” fancy their attachments sacrosanct. But these were really three-dimensional objects painted on a two-dimensional canvas: illusions. At bottom, social ligaments grew “accidental, momentary, and hypocritical.” Detachment seemed “authentic, intrinsic, and progressive.” Association had become not an end in itself, but a means to power. The goal of this power was the enlargement and independence of the individual. Among the victims of the new sway was *authority*. Authority was in freefall, said Emerson: “—in Church, College, Courts of Law, Faculties, and medicine.” Experiment alone had become credible to the people. “Antiquity is grown ridiculous.”¹¹

The Age of Severance was not unique to New England. The hopeful but probing Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, made public in two volumes the sum of his reconnaissance of American democracy as a whole. Published near the climax of Joseph Smith’s prophetic enterprise, Tocqueville’s analysis was less poetic than Emerson’s, but more sustained.

He, too, observed the breaks and fissures that came with the dissolution of the old ways. A common, sometimes fanatical, clutch at individual freedoms dissolved wider connections. In aristocratic communities, all citizens occupy fixed positions, one above the other. Thus “each of them always sees a man above himself whose patronage is necessary to him, and below himself another man whose co-operation he may claim.” In America’s democracy, by contrast, individuals consider themselves “as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.” Whereas aristocratic patronage had forged a chain of all the members of the community, from the peasant to the king, “democracy . . . severs every link of it.”

One stream fueling the American Revolution had been an understandable hostility to monarchical abuse of patronage and family influence. As a byproduct of the overthrow of this system, continued de Tocqueville, the new American system tended to obliterate tradi-

¹¹Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Notes of Life and Letters in New England,” <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/historicnotes.html> (accessed November 25, 2011). According to Emerson family recollections, these notes for a lecture or lectures were penned in or around 1867.

tion, erode the extended family, and induce a generational amnesia: "The woof of time is every instant broken, and the track of generations effaced. Those who went before are soon forgotten; of those who will come after no one has any idea. . . . Thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants, and separates his contemporaries, from him; it throws him back for ever upon himself alone, and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart."¹²

Among democratic nations, what passes for families "are constantly springing up, others are constantly falling away." The possibility of the melding of social classes becomes real as people shed staid aristocracy, and this fluidity carried ennobling possibilities for individual persons. Unfortunately, society risked forgetting its familial roots and fragmenting as a coherent entity. Young Joseph's own family felt the strains, both through competing pulls from religious sectarianism and through a fractured capitalist economy whose promise had passed the Smiths by.¹³

It was in such a context of generational amnesia that Joseph Smith's Abraham was discovered to have kept a record "for the benefit of my posterity" and to write relentlessly of "the fathers" and their children (Abr. 1:31 and *passim*).¹⁴ It was in such an American context of familial dissolution that the Mormon Prophet produced an overarching vision that reclaimed, extended, and redefined the meaning of family, that eventually changed the thrust of his religion, dropped the jaws of observers, and turned the hearts of "the fathers" to their children and of the children to their forebears. Grasping this context, we can better appreciate the resonance of Smith's introduction of *patriarchs*, who in formal ordinances blessed faithful recipients, assign-

¹²John Stone and Stephen Mennell, eds., *Alexis de Tocqueville: On Democracy, Revolution, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 293–96.

¹³Dan Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, chaps. 1, 2, 5, 6, and *passim* has accomplished suggestive if theoretical and speculative work on Smith family dynamics.

¹⁴Among many other examples that might be offered, the first words of the Book of Mormon are generationally conscious. The threat of generational amnesia presents important context for the rise of Mormons as world-champion record keepers, as mandated by Doctrine and Covenants 21:1.

ing each an ancient Israelite family lineage—assigning them, that is, a new identity coupled to an old heritage of biblical “begats.” We can better see motives in Mormonism’s preoccupation with genealogy and its startling effort to vicariously and individually baptize the dead, for “we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us” (D&C 128:18). We can better understand the Prophet’s definition of heavenly exaltation as a marital and family, not an individual, affair. We can better discern the role of polygamy. On this point, Richard Bushman simplifies a complex and controversial reality, yet gets at something profound: Joseph “did not lust for women so much as he lusted for kin.” Like Abraham of old, he yearned for “familial plentitude.”¹⁵ These yearnings throw light also on the “law of adoption,” which entailed no sexuality. Against the democratic fragmentation of families, descendants, and memory that alarmed de Tocqueville and Smith, the Mormon Prophet imagined a network of wives, children, siblings, and kin that would transcend generations—transcend even death.

The weeping God who encountered Enoch in Smith’s Book of Moses explained that his tears were for his children, who are “without affection” and who “hate their own blood.” It would be no surprise if Joseph identified with Enoch, who was shown in vision all the nations of the earth, generation upon generation. Enoch saw the wickedness of the children of men “and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook” (Moses 8:22–24, 28–33, 41). Much of Mormon scripture suggests that the wickedness over which Enoch lamented may have included not only individual sin, but also the sin of entire societies, with their cyclic inclinations to prosperity, division into rigid social classes, elitist pride, exploitation of the poor, and destruction.¹⁶

The antithesis of this misery and disorder was Zion. Beyond confronting individual sin, Zion’s mantras (“and there was no poor among them” [Moses 7:18]; “if ye are not one, ye are not mine” [D&C 38:27]) aspired to un-break divisions in society’s class systems, economic systems—and in its political, legal, gender, and family systems. In addition, Smith’s vision perceived chasms to be conquered be-

¹⁵Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 440.

¹⁶See, for example, Alma’s speech (Alma 5:53–57). This prophetic theme permeates the Book of Mormon.

tween heaven and earth, between humans and God, and between life and death.¹⁷

Smith inherited and addressed an additional tectonic rupture, this one in the authority of that pillar of civilization, the Holy Bible. On the one hand, the Age of Reason and the incipient Age of Science had introduced a new skepticism to the culture, undermining the Bible's prestige. Thomas Paine offended many but spoke for and attracted others, presaging two centuries and more of decline in biblical influence. For him, Jesus was a teacher of ethics and compassion, not the supra-human figure later disciples made of him. The Hebrew Proverbs "are an instructive table of ethics," but "not more wise . . . than those of the American Franklin." Indeed, when we read "the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the Word of God."¹⁸ Ben Franklin construed Jesus and Socrates as equal exemplars of moral virtue. Thomas Jefferson famously created what in effect was his own Bible by excising from the traditional one all portions he deemed supernatural, superstitious, and misinterpreted. Thus was the authority of the Judeo-Christian Bible, for many Americans, made to defer to a new epistemological god: Reason.

In direct opposition to this trend among (especially) cultural elites, the Bible's already strong authority in popular culture in the new American republic had been jarred upward by democracy itself. In drawing the line at *sola scriptura* centuries earlier, Martin Luther had dismissed such competitors as tradition, councils, humanist "reason," and papal decrees as authoritative. But he never questioned that scripture must be interpreted by competent, trained handlers, and he was prepared to urge coercion where untamed usurpers breached this postulate. In Andrew Jackson's America, however, the authority of the unmediated Bible, presumed to be accessible and

¹⁷Samuel M. Brown provocatively recasts the elements comprising early Mormonism as a campaign to extinguish death in his *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁸Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*, chaps. 7–8, http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/thomas_paine/age_of_reason/part1.html (accessed November 23, 2011).

straightforward, rose to unprecedented heights never countenanced by the magisterial Reformers. American farmers, midwives, and merchants increasingly claimed authority and capacity to be their own biblical interpreters, finding no need for a stuffy clergyman trained at Yale or Andover Seminary to act as mediator.¹⁹

Addressing this active fault line cracking through one of America's bedrocks, this almost simultaneous ascent and descent of the Bible's cultural sway, Joseph Smith responded by "translating" the Holy Book afresh, not largely by scholarly means, but through reason, "common sense," and inspiration—thereby entwining Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment modes of mind. In both process and result, one can detect in the translation the plural aspects of how Smith enacted "restoration." He spoke betimes of replacing or amending passages lost or corrupted by some ancient scribe; and across the decades, his scholarly followers have here and there demonstrated the plausible historicity of selected texts. But as a whole the emendations and additions of his biblical translation exude a *targumic* quality—not necessarily the Bible as it once was, but the Bible as it was supposed to be.²⁰

The previously published Book of Mormon played a yet more distinctive role in addressing the seismic cultural rift in biblical authority. On one side, both the content and the very existence of the new Mormon book diluted and challenged biblical authority as construed in (especially) the Protestant world, for they implied that the Bible was not of itself sufficient—a lack that Joseph Smith also experienced directly (JS—H 1:12). Thrusting in the opposite direction, however, the Book of Mormon aimed to complement and reinforce the Bible. For those who believed it, the newly published work demonstrated that biblical-style revelation and miracle were real, current, and applicable to the new American context.

Extending this network of fractures, Joseph Smith's America was encountering a cleft in authority not only of the Bible, but *within* it. Restorationists competing with Mormonism in the new American nation, steeped in the quest for new and pure beginnings,²¹ submerged the Old Testament. "We speak where the Scriptures speak,"

¹⁹Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press), 6–9.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 46–61.

²¹R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition*

they said, “and where the scriptures are silent, we are silent.”²² This became the rallying cry of American Protestant Restorationism and the mantra marks portions of American Evangelicalism even today. The scriptures the Campbells had in mind, though, were effectively the New Testament. Unlike, say, the Puritans before them, they drove a large wedge between the biblical testaments. Here, too, Joseph Smith stitched shut the slash with a sinew: The Book of Mormon virtually dissolved the distinction between the testaments while adding a third. The “pre-Christian” narratives of the Book of Mormon were thoroughly Christianized and spoke of the future Christ as clearly as if he had already come.

In a way, Smith’s employment of scripture, coupled with the forging of new temple liturgy, even bridged a centuries-old chasm between ritual-laden Roman Catholicism and ritual-lean Protestantism, with its biblical consciousness that stood closer to his own heritage. The Prophet’s actions altered and augmented the role of scripture, but also added in Nauvoo a private ritual almost startlingly rich in symbolism, setting, anointings, vestments, narratives, invocations, and rites.

Competing religious sects, of course, sprang up like flowers and weeds in the new nation and, in particular, in New York, which had separated church and state even before the federal government had. This separation was a relief to many. Among other things it shed the burden of taxes in support of churches dissenters did not embrace. Others of the faithful, though, feared religious chaos and a vacuum in authority. Indisputably the disestablishment fertilized a profusion of *sects*—a fragmentation by definition. As Joseph later remembered it, the failure of the Bible to resolve the tumult of religious opinions was precisely what caused the young Smith unease, driving him to what would become his sacred grove.

Smith discerned many other divisions that his revelations at-

in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955), explores the idea of the American as a “new man,” an innocent Adam in a new world unencumbered by its historic past.

²²Robert Richardson, ed., *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1868), *passim*. The saying retains currency among the later (virtual) denominations influenced by Campbell: the Churches of Christ, the Christian Churches, and, at least historically, the Disciples of Christ.

tempted to resolve, divisions both in the world he encountered and the worlds that others perceived. As individual threads, though not in the *gestalt* I am arguing for here, some of these are well known to students of Mormonism. For example, there famously came to be, for Smith, no ultimate distinction between the physical and spiritual realms: Spirit is refined matter (D&C 131:7–8). Nor was there an authentic divide between the spiritual and the temporal: The same God who would issue the Word of Wisdom and who had instructed Moses and Smith himself in countless tangible, mundane matters, declared, “I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal . . . for my commandments are spiritual” (D&C 131:7; 29:34–35).

The Mormon leader furthermore corrected a sundered Christian *ontology*—and the result was a unique definition of “soul,” incorporating (literally) body and spirit (D&C 88:15). Smith eventually went so far as to pronounce language itself to be “crooked, broken, scattered, and imperfect,” which explains his frustration in expressing his revelations and his yearning for and experiments with an uncorrupted, unbroken Adamic tongue.²³

For Joseph Smit, even the fabric of time was *dis*-integrated, sectioned like a cubist’s canvas. He thought it necessary to weld all “dispensations” (as with all keys, powers, glories, and knowledge) into a perfect union. Through his teachings and the temple ritual he fashioned, he addressed these fractures, forging kinship with past and future. He lived, of course, in the material reality of the nineteenth century: cutting trees, mending wagons, growing crops. But from this mundane present, the Prophet cast his spiritual eyes back to “restore” essentials from a layered past—an ancient, then more ancient, and at last primordial past when things were whole and pure, when communication with God was unfiltered, and when patriarchs counted their birthdays by centuries.

An essential characteristic of this primordial and prophetic past, however, was itself to look forward to layered futures—even to Smith’s own day, beyond that to the end of history, and further still into the eternities. By bringing this layered past that looked to the layered future back into the present, Joseph led the Saints to live with one leg planted in the ordinary present, the other leg reaching beyond ordi-

²³Joseph Smith, Letter to W. W. Phelps, November 27, 1832, *History of the Church*, 1:299.

nary, sequenced time (what the Greeks called *chronos*) and into *kairos* (the opportune moment) and thence into divine *mythos*, the extraordinary realm where the divine may be distinctively symbolized and accessed.²⁴ Segmented *chronos*, where disorder flourished, was put in proper relation: *restored*, rendered seamless and whole.

Like time, the material earth also was fractured, its lands divided since the days of the biblical Peleg (Genesis 10:25), whose name derives from a Hebrew verb meaning “to split” or “divide.” Against this, Smith prophesied of a future geological healing at the return of the Lord, whose voice

shall break down the mountains, and the valleys shall not be found.

He shall command the great deep, and it shall be driven back into the north countries, and the islands shall become one land;

And the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their own place, and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided. (D&C 133:22–24)

Beyond offering a distinctive lens through which to interpret Joseph Smith’s prophetic trajectory, seeing Smith as working to repair a constellation of relational chasms may have practical application for believers and those who study them. For example, a selective anti-intellectualism has flourished in Mormon culture across its history and into its present. This is not to suggest that Mormonism is defined by anti-intellectualism and lacks an intellectual community; such a community developed rapidly after the Second World War. For so young a movement, in fact, Mormonism has produced a respectable and, in some domains, an impressive contribution to scholarship, art, and culture. But in other Mormon zones, faith and spiritual gifts are put in opposition to formal study in science and the humanities. The Mormonized ghost of Tertullian asks with rhetorical flair: “What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem?” The “arm of flesh” is ironically applied to the human mind, seen as separated by a gulf from “the gospel.” The intellect is divided from the spirit—one’s own and the Holy Ghost. As a separate entity, the intellect is properly to defer to the spirit and the mantle of institutional authority.²⁵

“Intellectuals” and “intellectualism” become terms of depreca-

²⁴Philip L. Barlow, “Toward A Mormon Sense of Time,” *Journal of Mormon History* 33 (Spring 2007): 26–27.

²⁵Selective anti-intellectualism is sufficiently common in Mormon so-

tion. This gulf between intellect and spirit in segments of Mormon popular culture runs counter to Joseph Smith's integrated epistemology, ontology, teleology, and experience. He insisted on the importance of authority and revelation, to be sure, and he sometimes derided the doctors, clerics, and "learned men" dispossessed of the spirit of revelation. Yet the problem he saw in them was a lack of receptivity, not the intellect as such. The Prophet himself was not above good, honest study, nor above taking instruction from a professor, nor above attempting to blend conventional learning with his revelatory gifts. He looked dimly upon arrogance, but he did not conceptually cast asunder the spirit and the intellect. To Smith, persons *are* intelligences, fully as much as they are spirits—and this from a time before their mortal birth. This "intelligence" and "spirit"—which comprises each person—can neither be created nor destroyed but only

ciety and history that it is often lamented and sometimes contested from within. Even widely known, historical, and public examples of the perceived divide between mind and spirit, and between education and revelation, are easy to point to. They may be seen in tensions between philosopher-apostle Orson Pratt and the intelligent but earthy, practical, and uneducated Brigham Young; in the literal or effective dismissal of the Peterson and Chamberlin brothers from Brigham Young University over the teaching of evolution and biblical criticism in and after 1911; in the discharge of Lowell Bennion and the dissolving of the unusually capable faculty of the Institute of Religion at the University of Utah in the 1960s; and in the treatment of certain of the "September Six," prominent scholars and thinkers simultaneously excommunicated in 1993. For LDS cultural and intellectual achievements, see Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). To sample debates over the proper role of the intellect within the church, see Davis Bitton, "Anti-Intellectualism in Mormon History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Autumn 1966): 111–34; James B. Allen, "Thoughts on Anti-intellectualism: A Response," *ibid.*, 134–40; and Davis Bitton, "Mormon Anti-Intellectualism: A Reply," *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): 59–62, <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/review/?vol=13&num=2&id=387> (accessed November 28, 2011). The latter article is acerbic and condescending and represents something of the tone that such debates may engender, but it is notable because the object of Bitton's derision is his younger self, thirty-five years previous. See also Douglas Tobler, Letter to the Editor, https://dialoguejournal.com/wpcontent/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V37N01_7.pdf (accessed December 4, 2011). Boyd K. Packer, "The Mantle

nurtured or withered. God himself is an intelligence, the greatest intelligence. The “spirit of revelation” available to mortals may come through “sudden strokes of ideas,” when one notices “pure intelligence” flowing into the intelligence that one is. Knowledge and intelligence attained in this world through diligence and obedience will endure and be to one’s advantage in the world to come (D&C 93:33–36; 130:19–20; Abr. 3:19–21).²⁶

It is not clear whether Smith thought of premortal intelligences as individuated intrinsically and always, or rather as initially some impersonal “intelligence stuff,” later separated and developed into plural intelligences. In either case, intelligence is or came to be individualized, possessed of a moral sense and agency to act. From there, two possibilities present themselves as interpretations of Smith’s understanding of what makes up the preexistent person in relation to embodiment and eventual mortality. One is that unembodied intelligences at some point, thanks to the Father’s action, experienced a sort of spiritual birth and were placed in a “spirit body” composed of “refined” matter (D&C 131:7–8). Subsequently this package was housed, *matryoshka*-like, in a mortal body of flesh and blood. Intelligence in spirit, spirit in flesh: Russian dolls, each nested inside the other. The alternative and more likely speculation is that the Prophet did not think of intelligence as separate from spirit at any point in the past. In this case, each person before mortality was, from the beginning, a “spirit-intelligence,” an indivisible being; “spirits” and “intelligences” are different terms for the same entities. In either model, Smith integrated the splintered notion of spirit and intellect. Neither Mormon disciples nor their analysts can lobotomize mind and spirit without altering Smith’s religious mode.

Gauging Joseph Smith through the prism of fracture and healing might have additional applications—for example, inviting historical inquiry into how Saints have related to other religions. In a series of sermons during the last year of his life, Smith proclaimed the need for a “reformation” of his movement. While he continued to insist on

Is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect,” (http://www.mormonismmi.net/kirjoitukset/bkp_mantteli.shtml) is a classic comment by one influential leader.

²⁶Ehat and Cannon, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 5, 352, 359. On combining revelation and conventional learning, see Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 142, 293.

the unique authority granted his people for their peculiar mission, and while his theology grew ever less traditional, he ironically strove to bridge the gap with other denominations, a gap that he himself had helped create in earlier years with the strong language he adopted in characterizing them. By July 1843, however, the Prophet spoke of reformulated “grand fundamental principles of Mormonism,” which centered on universal “friendship” (“like welding iron to iron”) and the viability of “truth,” whatever its source. Mormons were to seek truth and virtue whether it originated among the Baptists, the Presbyterians, or anywhere in the world. In the end, Smith aspired to integrate a fractured religious world and, more broadly, a fragmented *humanity*. It was Satan, the Book of Mormon Jesus taught, who had divided humanity against itself into contending parties and factions, Satan who had stirred up “the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another” (3 Ne. 11:20; see also 2 Ne. 29; Thirteenth Article of Faith).²⁷

The implications of all this unifying in Joseph Smith’s theological and practical program were many, broad, and more radical even than believers and critics commonly recognize. One example, for one informed modern believer, is how Smith’s theologized mending of cosmic fractures redefined even God and God’s source of power: “God is one of a number of superior intelligences,” writes Richard Bushman, explicating Smith’s thought, who have learned—how we do not know exactly—to obtain glory and intelligence [and power].” These gods, like-minded and like-souled in goodness, find their purpose in elevating lesser intelligences.

One of their great lessons is that we can do more by working together than alone. We are not only to obey them; we are to join with our brothers and sisters in the order of the priesthood under God’s direction. This priesthood goes back before the foundations of the earth and includes all the gods who have gone before. They are bound into one God whose combined force and intelligence is the source of glory. We may even add to the glory by joining them—like computers strung in parallel, generating computing power. Hence the essential importance of unity. In this sense, the priesthood is God. When joined together like the council of gods that organized the earth, it manifests its

²⁷Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 229–336. See also Don Bradley, “The Grand Fundamental Principles of Mormonism,” *Sunstone*, April 2006, 32–41.

godly powers. At the same time, any one God can speak for the whole because they are unified.²⁸

CONCLUSION

I summarize this exploration by suggesting that the contributions of scholars addressing “the Prophet Puzzle” have been diverse and sometimes important. Informed by these, we might go farther yet in characterizing how drastically sweeping was Joseph Smith’s venture. In him, the prophetic imagination was unbounded.

A few years back, I learned a lesson I ought to have mastered by the second grade: Math is not ultimately about numbers; it is about relations.²⁹ Joseph Smith’s religion (*religio*: to bind together) was like this. Doctrines, policies, priesthoods, keys, revelations, and ordinances were ultimately in the service of *restoring* proper relations and order in time and eternity.

The trajectory of Smith’s enterprise exceeded his aspiration to restore the primitive Christian church and to combine this entity with the restored, literal kingdom of Israel—although this combination of itself was sharply distinctive. The distinctiveness deepens when we add the Prophet’s intent to restore correct doctrine, spiritual gifts, prophetic knowledge, ancient authority, and new ritual. Beyond all this, however, the Prophet’s undertaking entailed a visionary diagnosis of the human condition itself: Everything was cracked; relations were out of joint; order was broken. This web of fractures included the split in traditional Christianity’s perception of the relation of the spiritual to the temporal and the spiritual to the physical. It included fractured time, broken language, and a prescientific tectonic-like geology. It entailed the meaning and nature of “family” and of virtually every essential dimension of how humans relate to one another. Their sources of authority, the makeup of their religion, their social classes, their politics and economies, how they know things, what they in essence are, their connection to God, their means and meaning of salvation, and their relation to death—all these were part of the mesh. It was not merely a time of rapid social change and consequent social dislocation. It was that the universe of relations and conceptions itself

²⁸Richard Lyman Bushman, *On the Road with Joseph Smith: An Author’s Diary* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 60–61.

²⁹Thanks to Becky Cantonwine Voyles, then a college sophomore, for my belated enlightenment.

was splintered. This required repair.

The effort to do so entailed an almost wholesale reconceptualization of the scope and extent of what the gospel was. The “restoration of all things” included more than the return of principles, powers, doctrines, ordinances, and authority once allegedly lost through long-ago apostasies. It included meta-historical matters kept hidden from before earth’s creation, and it included rendering things “as they should be,” whether or not they once had been. This “restoration” was radical in Smith’s time—exponentially more multi-faceted than that launched by any other Restorationist, including Alexander Campbell, who, like Smith, borrowed the language of Acts 3:21 to speak of the “restoration of all things.” Joseph Smith meant the phrase rather literally. It was an attempt to restore a fractured reality.

To this end, Smith envisioned a literal kingdom of God, where the authority of law and political freedom came from Christ and God—the same source as the authority of religion and of all life. As he built this kingdom, “connecting” terms increasingly laced the Prophet’s speech, some biblically sponsored, some borrowed from Masonry and elsewhere: “kin” and “kindred”; “sociality,” “friendship,” and “association”; “covenants” forming eternal alliances beyond traditional Christian notions; “linking” and “welding” together the generations; “binding” and “sealing” spouses and families; “forging” a great “chain” of connections; “truth” as indivisible (past, present, future, whatever its source, circumscribed into “one great whole”); the course of God and man as “one eternal round.” Such terms suggest the direction of his unfolding preoccupations. Seen through this lens, Smith’s belief in the restoration of the “lost” ten tribes of Israel, as well as the great “gathering” of scattered peoples into a geographically concentrated Zion, may be recognized as of a piece with God’s project, facilitated by His prophet, to “gather together all things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon the earth, even in one.”³⁰

Even the Prophet’s interior life may be seen as a labor to integrate opposites. In the words of his biographer, “Blending was an issue for Joseph. His whole life divided between the ordinary and the strange. At times he appeared to be two persons.”³¹ His struggle to reconcile what he had been with what he had become may have in-

³⁰*History of the Church*, 4:610.

³¹On Smith as two persons, see Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone*

formed his declaration that no man knew his history.

All this was about *relations*. Joseph Smith's view of the world did not closely resemble a Hindu's "monism," where distinction among all things is illusion. Perhaps Smith's program had something more in common with the concluding perspective of homespun Burley Coulter, a character in Wendell Berry's "The Wild Birds." Near the story's end, Burley explains, with painful understatement, that he hasn't always done right. He then explains why he is doing something good, something selfless, at last: "I ain't saying we don't have to know what we ought to have been and ought to be," he says. "But we oughtn't to let that stand between us. That ain't the way we are. The way we are, we are members of each other. All of us. Everything. The difference ain't in who is a member and who is not, but in who knows it and who don't."³² That "everything" to which Burley Coulter bequeaths a name, Joseph Smith found strained and wanting. In response, he created a religion, which evolved posthaste to heal the Age of Severence.

Our own twenty-first century faces the old fractures in modern guise. It also encounters a new and modern divide. Here rises a secular, materialist age in the wealthy, technologized nations. Here efforts swell to ground ethics in psychology, psychology in biology, and biology in biochemistry. An intellectual elite explains human thought and intuition and yearning in terms of neurochemistry. In the interest of scientific advance, we separate from ourselves. Had he breathed in our century, perhaps such a prophet as Joseph Smith may have spoken a word to heal the breach.

Rolling, 142, 143.

³²Wendell Berry, *That Distant Land* (Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 356.

THE LANGUAGE OF HEAVEN: PROLEGOMENON TO THE STUDY OF SMITHIAN TRANSLATION

Samuel Morris Brown

IN APRIL 1842, A WANDERING BRITISH EXPATRIATE, the Anglican divine Henry Caswall, visited Mormon Nauvoo to satisfy his curiosity and, apparently, to do research for his next book.¹ Caswall, then in Madison, Indiana, had described the “Mormonites” in his 1839 history of American Christianity as “one of the grossest impostures ever palmed on the credulity of man.” Among other

SAMUEL MORRIS BROWN is assistant professor of pulmonary and critical care medicine at the University of Utah/Intermountain Medical Center and the author of *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: I thank Richard Bushman, Jared Hickman, and Kate Holbrook for stimulating conversations on the topics covered in this essay and Brett Dowdle for his able work as research assistant. None of them is to blame for my errors and infelicities. This essay summarizes some early thoughts from a book in preparation: Samuel Brown and Jared Hickman, *Human Cosmos: Joseph Smith and the Art of Translation*. In the interests of brevity, many arguments will be deferred from this essay to that book.

¹I contextualize Caswall’s visit in Samuel Brown, “The Translator and the Ghostwriter,” *Dimensions of Faith: A Mormon Studies Reader*, edited by Stephen Taysom (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 2011), 268–69. This opening vignette is drawn from that essay.

idiosyncracies, he noted that the Mormons “consider the study of the Hebrew language to be a religious duty.”² Caswall was aware of the Mormons’ fascination with biblical languages as well as their claim that founder Joseph Smith had translated gold plates into an American Bible and had been working with Egyptian papyri for several years. Situated at Kemper College outside St. Louis in 1842, Caswall decided to investigate Mormonism personally, a project which ultimately generated two more books. Beyond general Anglican concerns about the crudeness of the American frontier and Mormon religion, Caswall’s ultimate indictment of Smith and Mormonism focused on the Prophet’s storied translation ability.

By Caswall’s 1842 account, he entered Nauvoo with a six-hundred-year-old Greek psalter, reportedly a family heirloom. According to his vitriolic reminiscence, simple-minded Mormons identified the psalter as a lost book of the Bible that their prophet could translate. Breaching the inner sanctum, Caswall met Smith, “a coarse, plebeian person in aspect, [whose] countenance exhibits a curious mixture of the knave and the clown [and whose] dress was of coarse country manufacture.” The visiting scholar reportedly displayed the psalter to Smith, feigning ignorance of its origin, and heard in reply, “It ain’t Greek at all; except, perhaps, a few words. What ain’t Greek, is Egyptian; and what ain’t Egyptian is Greek. This book is very valuable. *It is a dictionary of Egyptian Hieroglyphics.*” By Caswall’s account, Smith pointed at the “capital letters at the commencement of each verse” and said, “Them figures is Egyptian hieroglyphics; and them which follows, is the interpretation of the hieroglyphics, written in the reformed Egyptian.” By Caswall’s triumphant account, the disgraced charlatan fled in embarrassment, leaving the visiting divine to explain to his Mormon audience that he had caught their famed translator in a fraud.³ Such an accusation against Smith, who owned a Greek lexicon and had some limited knowledge of Greek, was offensive; the significance of the story was not lost on critics, who gleefully summa-

²Henry Caswall, *America and the American Church* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1839), 322–23.

³Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1842), 5, 19–21, 24, 28–29, 34–37, 43; emphasis his.

rized Caswall's account in late 1843.⁴ While Mormons recalled the visit and the minister's "old manuscript," they denied Caswall's account and rejected him as something like an English spy on the basis of his Anglicanism.⁵

This strange, almost comical, encounter draws attention to central aspects of Mormonism: its antagonistic relationship with creedal Protestantism; problems of class, nationality, and refinement; the power of language; and the respect Smith enjoyed among his followers as a translator. In this essay, I emphasize translation, the centerpiece of the encounter between an Anglican academic and the Mormon prophet.

Translation mattered a great deal to Smith. It was crucial to his self-image and part of his original title as the founder of the Church of Christ.⁶ Through translation Smith staked a claim for religious power that drew on ideas about knowledge as power and the infrastructure of social location⁷ even as it echoed the New Testament promise that Christ's disciples would "speak" and "interpret" "tongues" (Mark 16:17, Acts 2, 1 Cor. 12). As putative miracles and claims to religious authenticity, Smith's translations elicited considerable controversy. From the 1830s on, critics and defenders have emphasized either the miraculous or the deceptive basis of Smith's translations; both sides

⁴"The Mormon Prophet and the Greek Psalter," *Warsaw Message* 1, no. 37 (November 15, 1843): 2. It seems likely that Smith and Caswall were speaking at cross purposes as Smith attempted to explain the Mormon Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language (often denoted GAEL) and Caswall attempted to promote his psalter.

⁵[John Taylor], "Reward of Merit," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 23 (October 15, 1843): 364–65.

⁶Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 26–27; 1981 LDS D&C 21:1.

⁷Richard Bushman has reminded readers that translation, particularly of biblical languages, was a marker of erudition, of clerical legitimacy, in Smith's cultural milieu: Richard L. Bushman, "Joseph Smith as Translator," in *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays*, edited by Reid L. Neilson and Jed Woodworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 233–47.

have generally seen them as central to Smith's truth claims.⁸ (One exception is an accidentally useful reading of Smith's Book of Mormon as an example of Antique "spirit channeling."⁹) In this essay, I contextualize Smith's translations within his broader quest to recover pure language and create a unified family of all humanity. Within this context, I frame issues relevant to understanding Smith's translations, in what I term xenoglossic and glossolalic models of translation.

THE PURE LANGUAGE OF EDEN

Smith worried over the limits of human language for his entire career, perhaps for most of his conscious life. Words notoriously deceived and obfuscated; foreign languages acted as barriers separating peoples. Words often failed Smith himself, who too frequently felt that he could not adequately express the revelations he experienced.

Latter-day Saints, like many other believers, understood that the fall of language was described in the Bible. A complex, multivalent story in Genesis 11 apparently meant to explain human linguistic diversity proved to contain the secret to the state of human language and human culture. According to this ancient narrative, an attempt to build a tower "unto heaven" resulted in the confusion of human language, its division along ethnic lines. In the early modern Christian West, Babel was espied behind most of the problems of human lan-

⁸On the role of translation in the 1830s and 1840s, see Brown, "The Translator and the Ghostwriter." For an example of nineteenth-century contention, see Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: J. B. Alden, 1890), 490–94. In the twentieth century, see, e.g., Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler, *Revelations of the Restoration: A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 89–98 and David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1985). However, two recent works depart from those older polarized models: Don Bradley, "Written by the Finger of God?" *Sunstone* 161 (December 2010): 20–29, and Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011).

⁹Douglas Robinson, *Who Translates? Translator Subjectivities beyond Reason* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 7, 54–61.

guage.¹⁰ Smith saw the language beyond language spoken in Eden as the solution to such failings. Without retreading too much ground that I have covered in another setting,¹¹ I would draw attention to some central elements of the pure language of Eden—"Adamic," as Smith termed it. Adamic was the language in which Yahweh first addressed creation, the language Yahweh used in the Garden with the first humans. This pure language contained the possibility that humans could gain access to God's presence.¹² Such language had stunning, even mystical, power according to early Mormon scriptures.¹³ Language also represented community and its integrity through time, a point strongly emphasized in the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses.¹⁴

In the cultures from which the Hebrew and Christian Bibles derive, names often represented the essence of objects or entities.¹⁵ This was true, particularly as regards pictograms, for antebellum be-

¹⁰Samuel Morris Brown, "Joseph (Smith) in Egypt: Babel, Hieroglyphs, and the Pure Language of Eden," *Church History* 78, no. 1 (March 2009): 36–40. On the parallel view of language's fall as coincident with the fall of Adam and Eve, see Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3–6, 109–10. I thank James Faulconer for insight on this topic.

¹¹I describe and contextualize Smith's quest to recover pure language in "Joseph (Smith) in Egypt," 26–65.

¹²The fascinating question of the apparent homonymy of "translation" as the creation of a text and "translation" as the transfiguration of a human is treated in Brown and Hickman, *Human Cosmos*.

¹³See, e.g., Moses 7:13–15. Some language was so powerful that it could not be written in human language at all: see, e.g., 3 Nephi 7:17, 17:15, 19:32, 34; Ether 12:24–25. See also D&C 76:116.

¹⁴1 Nephi 3:19; Omni 1:17; Mosiah 1:2. See also the general philosophical discussion in John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 18–20.

¹⁵An archetypal instance of this phenomenon is Adam's naming the animals (Gen. 2). Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 4 vols. (New York: T. Mason & G. Lane, 1837), 1:43, believed that the passage proved that Adam had a "perfect" knowledge of the "grand and distinguishing properties" of the animals; Smith's New Translation added

lievers as well.¹⁶ Because names, both pictographic and more generally, supported a strict correspondence between word and object, they seemed to represent the possibility that language could become a perfect map of the cosmos. In Adamic there were no guesses as to meaning, no *double entendres*, no unintelligibility, the types of linguistic failings that bothered the early Latter-day Saints and other observers.¹⁷

Though this concept can be made more precious than insightful, several European philosophers have suggested that the act of calling, “interpellation” in the idiosyncratic Marxist phrase of Louis Althusser, is central to the constitution of identity.¹⁸ *Mutatis mutandis* (and there are many *mutandis* between these two worlds) the concept of interpellation mirrors strains of premodern thought such as those on which early Mormonism drew, in which a true name could serve to constitute identity.¹⁹ Philosophers see a “habitus” as addressing and therefore constituting an identity. Where the rich habitus of social life

the fact that animals were enspirited much as humans; whether this occurred as a result of the naming or in parallel with it is not clear from the text. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004), 90. See also the general review, Bruce Porter and Stephen Ricks, “Names in Antiquity: Old, New, and Hidden,” in *By Study and Also By Faith, Volume 1*, edited by John Lundquist and Stephen Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 501–22. Western esoteric traditions have particularly preserved these traditions.

¹⁶Brown, “Joseph (Smith) in Egypt,” 44–45, 47–50.

¹⁷William Phelps, “Writing Letters,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1, no. 4 (September 1832): 25; Brown, “Joseph (Smith) in Egypt,” 31.

¹⁸Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes toward an Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 171–83. Althusser is attempting to map onto a Hegelian model the ways that historical and social forces determine individual lives.

¹⁹The analytical framework espoused by theoreticians like Ferdinand de Saussure would have been almost entirely foreign to early Mormons. The arbitrary flexibility of language was a central failing of human language rather than a source of rich theorizing. I realize that the two groups had different ideas about when an individual was called/interpellated but want to

calls a modern, the name itself could call the premodern.²⁰ Other philosophers describe the constitution of self and others through language in a parallel way.²¹

Early Mormons revered names. They cherished the words that Adam found to name the animals, they learned the eternal names of ancient patriarchs and themselves, they assumed the name of Christ (albeit with a different meaning from that of their Protestant peers), some learned the omnific word of Royal Arch Masonry, which they understood as an echo of the temple names. Smith and others also puzzled through the meanings of biblical names.²² According to Smith, Eve's own name tied her into the complex of reproductive power standing at the foundation of human existence.²³

In the Nauvoo period, Smith's exegesis of scripture sounded increasingly Kabbalistic, though it is worth distinguishing speculative theology based in the power of words from the actual tenets of Jewish mysticism.²⁴ Smith fleshed out many elements of holy language in his revelation of the advanced temple liturgy in Nauvoo, Illinois. The

highlight the power that language in address can wield.

²⁰*Habitus* is a term generally associated with the French cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu. *Habitus* certainly applied to premoderns; I want to emphasize that premoderns understood names as having a power equivalent, within Bourdieu's framework, to *habitus*.

²¹Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 9–16.

²²See, e.g., Eugene England, ed., "George Laub's Nauvoo Journal," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 174–75, a transcription of a sermon delivered in May 1844. Smith's translations were consistent with traditional Protestant interpretations of these names.

²³Samuel Morris Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 137–38. I thank Kevin Barney for insight on this topic.

²⁴Smith's formal involvement with Kabbalah has been overstated in various sources, e.g., Lance Owens, "Joseph Smith and Kabbalah: The Occult Connection," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 117–94. However, Smith's interest in the power of language certainly bears at least a phenotypic similarity with other esoteric traditions about the power of language, including Kabbalah. On Kabbalah, see Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1995) and "Jewish Influences," in Wouter Hanegraaff, ed., *Dictionary of Gnosis and*

Saints learned special ways to pray that bypassed the usual limitations of language, as they learned the sacred power of ritual names for objects and even for themselves. They also learned that one had to address the intelligences more senior than they in the Chain of Belonging by their right names.²⁵ In his King Follett Discourse, Smith explained temple names and the power of ritual reference in a consideration of the name of the New Testament disciple James. Though the transcripts of the sermon are somewhat muddled on this point, Smith's beliefs seem reasonably clear. Apparently holding aloft a multilingual New Testament, Smith announced that the text "talks about Yachaubon the son of Zebedee—means Jacob." By comparison, the King James version of "the N[ew] T[estament] says James—now if Jacob had the keys you might talk about James and never get the keys." Keys were passcodes, secret phrases, potent words—sacred names—obtained through temple rites. These names were crucial to the order of the universe; failure to use them correctly could result in damnation. In the phrasing of another sermon transcript, "you may talk about James thro all Eternity" and still not "escape the d[amnatio]n. of hell." Simply put, if the patriarch's name was Jacob, he could never provide keys to someone calling him James.²⁶

Sacred language also expressed itself in less formal ways. In outbursts of charismatic religion probably drawn from scattered sectarian revivalists,²⁷ some early Mormons participated in dramatic hymn-singing in unknown tongues, patterned on the account in Acts (2:1-21) of the first self-consciously Christian Pentecost, itself the miraculous inversion of the Tower of Babel. Early Mormons proposed

Western Esotericism (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 633–47.

²⁵Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, 192–94, and Samuel M. Brown, "The Early Mormon Chain of Belonging," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 1 (2011): 1–52.

²⁶Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 351, 358. I drew this paragraph from Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, 194. Many others in, e.g., Antique, Western esoteric, and Catholic traditions affirmed the importance of names rightly identified and spoken.

²⁷Though Pentecostals publicized tongues as part of the postbellum Holiness movement, speaking in tongues was largely restricted to Shakers and some Baptist and Methodist sectarian groups in antebellum America.

two main accounts for their gift of tongues, either evangelism-focused mastery of America's Native languages or fleeting access to the lost language of Adam.²⁸ Though intermittent power struggles occurred between Church leaders and some of the most energetic charismatics within Mormonism, tongue speaking had an important role in lived religion for many early Mormons.²⁹ At least some of this power was associated with tongue-speaking's claim to the priority of Adamic over human languages.

Smith's ideas about the meaning of scripture demonstrate an additional, eschatological side to pure language in the worldview of early Mormons. The concept of pure language alluded to the prophecy of Zephaniah (3:9) that all humanity would one day speak the same holy language. When Mormons heard this promise of the return of a pure language to the world, they appreciated that there would be an end to strife related to misunderstanding and mutual unintelligibility.³⁰ Simultaneously they anticipated the recovery of lost scriptures for all peoples.³¹ Language was a problem not just synchronically—whites could not understand Natives in antebellum America—but diachronically as well: antebellum Americans did not know enough about the ancients. The scriptures to be uncovered at the eschaton would contain their lost stories, their voices, their Books of Remembrance. To an extent duplicated by few if any of his peers, Smith proposed a vision of scripture that was intensely human and interpersonal. His Book of Mormon served as a reminder that the Bible was primarily the record of Judah, and that all the other tribes of Israel (both those traditionally included in the biblical account and those elided entirely from it) would have scripture of their own.³²

Pure language was central to the early Mormon worldview, to what they sought, to how they understood themselves, to their collec-

²⁸Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, 108, 136.

²⁹Dan Vogel and Scott C. Dunn, "The Tongue of Angels': Glossolalia among Mormonism's Founders," *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 1–34.

³⁰On Zephaniah, see Oliver Cowdery, "The Prophecy of Zephaniah," *The Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 18 (March 1834): 141–42 and Brown, "Joseph (Smith) in Egypt," 61–64.

³¹Bushman, *Believing History*, 72, 236.

³²I describe Smith's distinctive view of scripture in chapter 5 of *In*

tive past, and their glorious future. Problems of fallen language and the promise of its purification are necessary context for understanding what Joseph Smith's translations meant.

SMITHIAN TRANSLATION

With the power of sacred, pure language and the curse of Babel in mind, I propose to consider, in brief outline, Smith's translation projects. I remind readers of Smith's three main translation projects, then frame xenoglossic versus glossolalic models for Smithian translation and discuss their implications.

Texts

Smith's experience as a translator encompassed several major texts. From around 1827 to 1829, with the English text largely dictated in a two-and-a-half-month sprint in late spring 1829, Smith produced the Book of Mormon, his first and most famous scripture.³³ The book contained several examples of translation and established a sort of problematics for translation, called "interpreting," that help to illuminate Smithian translation (e.g., Mosiah 8:11–17, 28:11–17, 20). The book importantly contains the nested narrative of the Jaredites, a people who miraculously escaped the curse of Babel.³⁴ Smith used various implements of seerhood to accomplish his Book of Mormon translation, though mechanistic details are sparse. (Though his garrulous financier and other colleagues offered several possible details about the process decades later, Smith himself was reticent to discuss the mechanics of translating the Book of Mormon.³⁵)

Shortly after publishing the Book of Mormon in 1830, Smith un-

Heaven as It Is on Earth.

³³Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 31–33.

³⁴Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, 78–81.

³⁵Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 32–33. Late sources are listed in Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 23–31, and John W. Welch, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon," in John W. Welch with Erick Carlson, eds., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations 1820–1844* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2005), 77–214.

dertook, with the assistance and perhaps partial direction of the radical ex-Baptist and intermittent Mormon second-in-command Sidney Rigdon, a New Translation of the Authorized Protestant Bible, the King James Version.³⁶ This project encompassed the revelatory recovery of the Prophecy of Enoch and Moses's preface to Genesis (two lengthy passages that ultimately merged as the Book of Moses) as well as extensive, sometimes highly distinctive, repair of the English text. Smith continued to tinker with Bible translation until his death, even though he had largely completed the work by 1833. The New Translation seems to have evolved from a revelatory episode during the translation of the Book of Mormon, in which Smith revealed a lost epilogue to the book of Revelation from a parchment which he saw with supernatural vision in a brief text recorded in 1829.³⁷ (Rigdon may also have been pushing for the New Translation as a response to Alexander Campbell's competing "Living Oracles," first published in 1826.³⁸)

In 1835, Joseph Smith and William Phelps (a lieutenant and intellectual advisor who shared Smith's fascination with and flair for foreign languages) began a sustained textual and intellectual encounter with a collection of funerary papyri and, indeed, with the entire tradition of Egyptian hieroglyphs. This encounter, which I term the Egyptian project, resulted in a published scripture called the Book of Abraham and a collection of grammatical manuscripts generally called the Kirtland Egyptian Papers (KEP).³⁹ The Egyptian project strongly emphasized the correspondence between human and cosmic hierarchies, the power of pictographic language, the metaphysi-

³⁶The original texts are published as Kent P. Jackson, Robert J. Matthews, and Scott H. Faulring, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004). Two excellent treatments of the New Translation are Philip L. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible: Fraudulent, Pathologic, or Prophetic?," *Harvard Theological Review* 83, no. 1 (January 1990): 45–64, and Kathleen Flake, "Translating Time: The Nature and Function of Joseph Smith's Narrative Canon," *Journal of Religion* 87, no. 4 (October 2007): 497–527. See also Terryl L. Givens, "Joseph Smith: Prophecy, Process, and Plenitude," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 4 (2005): 55–68.

³⁹Brian Hauglid has completed a critical edition of several of the KEP documents: *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship,

cal meanings of human reproduction, and the power of Scripture.⁴⁰ Smith never completed the Book of Abraham, though excerpts were serialized in Church newspapers in 1842. In his turbulent last years, he hoped to return to that and other translation projects but never could. Though Phelps peppered Smith's official correspondence with snippets of foreign language and minor translations designed to secure Smith's credibility as a prophet, Smith did not complete any additional substantial translations after the Egyptian project.⁴¹

Translation and the Gift of Tongues

It seems fruitful to consider Smith's various translation efforts at least partly within the context of the gift of tongues (see, e.g., Omni 1:25). Because Smithian translation is so centrally concerned with language and miracle, the gift of tongues presents itself rather naturally as a lens for considering these texts and their sources. Specifically, two distinct understandings of the gift of tongues, xenoglossia and glossolalia, may exemplify two basic models of translation. While these two models may represent opposite explanatory poles, they are probably best understood as opposed within a mutually informative dialectic.

Xenoglossia, a Greek term meaning "foreign tongue," refers to the supernatural capacity to speak a known human language. The first apostles suddenly speak Galatian; a Euro-American Mormon in Kirtland suddenly speaks Lenape in hopes of converting the tribe. In this account, Smith suddenly receives the (intermittent) gift of understanding Reformed Egyptian and by that power renders it into English. Xenoglossia acknowledges the implications of the curse of Babel only trivially. In xenoglossia the English text is the miracle: a brief supernatural illumination, and the text can be rendered from source to destination language. Xenoglossic translation has been the prevalent model assumed by both sides in debates over the meaning of Smith's translations.⁴² It corresponds reasonably well to what some literary theorists have termed "machine translation," a sacralized version of

Brigham Young University, 2010). He and Robin Jensen are currently completing a critical edition of the grammar documents among the KEP (personal communication).

⁴⁰Brown, "Joseph (Smith) in Egypt," 40–61, and Brown, "Chain of Belonging," 15–19.

⁴²Some early Mormons reported that Smith saw Egyptian and Eng-

science fiction writer Douglas Adams's famous Babel Fish.⁴³ (Xenoglossic translation also roughly corresponds to what translation theorist Douglas Robinson denominates "spirit channeling," though Robinson fails to engage the social and cultural meanings of spirit channeling per se.⁴⁴)

In contrast, glossolalia, "tongue-speaking," describes an ecstatic experience whereby a worshiper is caused to speak (or sing) syllables that belong to no known human language. Some maintain that this production is the actual pure language, the one spoken by God, angels, and Adam. Others suggest that it is the Holy Spirit manifesting itself through the believer's fallen body. After such an ecstatic encounter, another believer is often called upon to "interpret" the glossolalia into familiar human language. Glossolalia strongly confesses the meaning of the curse of Babel and is centrally concerned with the failings of human language. In glossolalic translation, the miracle is not necessarily the resulting text but the revelatory encounter itself. Glossolalic translation seems most at home with certain strains of mysticism hinted at in Paul and portions of the Book of Mormon: there are some truths that cannot be spoken or written.⁴⁵ The English texts of glossolalic translation are the gropings of the translator toward the majestic truths available only in the space beyond lan-

lish characters in his seer stones rather than having the xenoglossic gift *in propria persona*. Pushing the gift from Smith to Smith plus seerstones (no one else demonstrated any such facility with the stones) does not alter the fundamentally xenoglossic nature of this model of translation.

⁴³On "machine translation," see, e.g., Robinson, *Who Translates?*, 55, 65. On the Babel Fish, see Douglas Adams, *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (New York: Harmony Books, 2004), 59–60. Even in this fictional account, there is a whimsical association between the conquest of linguistic coherence and divinity. A theologian purportedly demonstrates that the Babel Fish is so "bizarrely improbable" that it is taken by some as the "final and clinching proof of the nonexistence of God" because God has by policy refused to prove his existence but a Babel Fish could never appear by chance. Therefore, in the phrase of a fictive theologian addressing God, "'It proves you exist, and so therefore, by your own arguments, you don't. QED.' 'Oh dear,' says God, 'I hadn't thought of that,' and promptly vanishes in a puff of logic."

⁴⁴Robinson, *Who Translates?*, 7–12, 16–17, 31–35, 61–65, 70–73.

⁴⁵See, e.g., 2 Cor. 12:4; 3 Ne. 5:18. These teachings bear a complex re-

guage.⁴⁶

The historiography of Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon suggests the different ways that xenoglossic and glossolalic models might function culturally and conceptually. Many Latter-day Saints have understood Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon on the xenoglossic model, his finger moving along each line on the gold plates as he rendered the characters miraculously into English.⁴⁷ In the late twentieth century, practitioners of New Mormon History and critics of Smith's truth claims drew attention to the fact that Smith probably translated most of the Book of Mormon with the plates shrouded, his face buried in a hat containing his seer stones.⁴⁸ Such manuscript sources proved a stumbling block for the xenoglossic model.

The glossolalic model of translation, on the other hand, accommodates this information quite readily. On the glossolalic reading, Smith's encounter with the plates was sacred, perhaps ecstatic, existing beyond language; and from that revelation, he sought an English equivalent. (Textual evidence interpreted by Mormon linguist Royal Skousen indicates that Smith dictated the Book of Mormon in short blocks;⁴⁹ Skousen's reading does not logically force either a xenoglossic or a glossolalic model of Smith's translation in my view.) How best to interpret claims that Smith saw English text in his seer stones is not clear: the most explicit evidence comes from late reminiscences likely colored by the predominance of the xenoglossic model; in any case visualized

lationship to what is often termed apophatic mysticism. Notably Smith did not pursue the "negative" theology of traditional apophaticism.

⁴⁶This approach may have an important effect on ideas about reading scripture which cannot be pursued here, given space constraints.

⁴⁷Take, for instance, Del Parson's painting, "Translating the Book of Mormon" (1997) or Harold Kilbourn's "Joseph Smith Translating" (ca. 1970). See, e.g., the entry for "Joseph Smith Translates the Gold Plates" within "Mission of the Prophet" on the LDS Church's official josephsmith.net (accessed July 19, 2011).

⁴⁸The data are usefully summarized in Richard Van Wagoner and Steven Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing,'" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 49–68.

⁴⁹Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon."

English text could be a circumlocution for either model.⁵⁰

That Smith and his followers tended overall to emphasize a xenoglossic model does not force rejection of glossolalia by modern readers. In fact an intriguing proposal by Blake Ostler that Smith “expanded” the material of the gold plates would fit well with the glossolalic model.⁵¹ Note, though, that the glossolalic model accounts for the presence of ancient and antebellum material in the Book of Mormon (the primary data Ostler was attempting to explain) independent of “expansion” per se. Smith’s response to such an encounter beyond language would necessarily be filtered through his understandings as an antebellum American believer. There are ways to bend the xenoglossic model to try to fit the “facts” of the Book of Mormon’s content—a complex historical providentialism or a hybrid model whereby Smith had the simple xenoglossic gift but interposed his own sensibilities. But something like a glossolalic model seems a much more natural fit for the data.

The New Translation, including D&C 7, has been difficult to categorize. One traditional view seems to be that Smith gained supernatural access to the lost, pure manuscripts of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles. Some authors writing in an apologetical vein have emphasized that concept, suggesting that recent manuscript discoveries demonstrate the veracity of Smith’s translation.⁵² This approach largely represents a xenoglossic model of translation. The glossolalic model, on the other hand, seems more flexible, better

⁵⁰See, e.g., Edward Stevenson, “One of the Three Witnesses: Incidents in the Life of Martin Harris,” *Millennial Star* 44, no. 6 (February 6, 1882): 86–87; David Whitmer, Interview with Eri B. Mullin, 1874, in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 5:15–16; David Whitmer, Interview with *Chicago Times* August 1875, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:21; David Whitmer, Interview with *Kansas City Journal*, June 1, 1881, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:76; William Smith, *On Mormonism*, 1883, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 1:497.

⁵¹Blake T. Ostler, “The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 66–123.

⁵²See, e.g., Donald W. Perry, *Harmonizing Isaiah: Combining Ancient Sources* (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 2003); reviewed in Kevin L. Barney, “Isaiah In-

able to accommodate passages where Smith's translations more than anything seem to be whittling away at the problems of KJV English. Some have favored calling the New Translation a "revision," "redaction," or "correction," but this approach underemphasizes the miraculous nature of what Smith was doing.⁵³ On the glossolalic reading, Smith had a revelatory encounter in which he gained access to truths associated with prophetic figures like Enoch or Moses or John. From those encounters he brought back impressions that he rendered in English. Where he tinkered with revisions to the English text, he was confronting the problems of English. A glossolalic model of Bible translation might also account for the Vision of 1832 and Smith's marvelous literalism in biblical exegesis generally.⁵⁴ In this reading, the differences between New Translation, inspired exegesis, and Bible-based new revelations are differences of degree, rather than essence. Smith did not seem to draw sharp lines among these activities; a glossolalic account would be true to that observation as well.

The xenoglossic model for the Book of Abraham is perhaps best summarized by what critics have termed the "lost papyrus" account. In this theory, popularized by Hugh Nibley, the reason that the canonized English text does not match the extant papyri is because the portions of the papyri from which Smith translated the Book of Abraham are simply missing.⁵⁵ A glossolalic model suggests that the Egyptian funerary papyri may have provided Smith access to a revelatory encounter with Abraham and/or his writings, and the English text

terwoven," *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 353–402.

⁵³Flake, "Translating Time," 509–11, 513–14, calls it "redaction."

⁵⁴On marvelous literalism, see Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, 11, 124, 245, 260. The Vision (Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books*, 242–55) is now D&C 76 in the 1981 LDS edition.

⁵⁵Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975). For the controversy over the "missing papyrus" theory, see, e.g., John Gee, "Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri," FAIR Apologetics Conference, 2007, Sandy, Utah; John Gee, "Telling the Story of the Joseph Smith Papyri," *FARMS Review* 8, no. 2 (1996): 46–59; John Gee, "A Tragedy of Errors," *FARMS Review* 4, no. 1 (1992): 93–119; Charles M. Larson, *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Institute for Religious Research, 1992).

that resulted may not derive immediately from the Egyptian text. This model subsumes what has sometimes been termed the “catalyst” account, by which the papyri “catalyzed” Smith’s revelation of the Book of Abraham, though catalysis seems to me an inadequate metaphor for this process.⁵⁶

It is worth attempting to understand why the xenoglossic model has tended to predominate. As Craig James Hazen has reminded readers through Orson Pratt as a test case, early Mormons lived their lives and vitalized their theology in the context of Common Sense philosophy and theology. This movement, a Scottish merger of Reformed Christianity and early Enlightenment ideals that emphasized the primacy of sense data over metaphysical abstractions, affected much of LDS thought, including the way Mormons conceived scripture and inspiration.⁵⁷ Common Sense maintained that religious (and indeed scientific) truth was simple and self-evident to all rational believers. It also, through “evidential Christianity,” sought “scientific”

⁵⁶Catalysis, the process by which a chemical reaction is accelerated by external elements such as proteins, borrows the same mechanistic imagery of a scientific worldview that has undergirded the persistence of the xenoglossic model. The “catalyst” theory is discussed in Karl Sandberg, “Knowing Brother Joseph Again: The Book of Abraham and Joseph Smith as Translator,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 17–37, and Larson, *By His Own Hand*, 136–37. An example of a parallel “mnemonic” theory is Richley Crapo and John Tvedtnes, “A Study of the Hor Sen-Sen Papyrus,” *Newsletter and Proceedings of the S.E.H.A.* 109 (October 25, 1968): 1–6; however, it is still more mechanistic than the “catalyst” theory.

⁵⁷Craig James Hazen, *The Village Enlightenment in America: Popular Religion and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 15–64; Paul Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777–1880* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 45–46. For a general, theoretical view of Common Sense, see Clifford Geertz, “Common Sense as a Cultural System,” *Antioch Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1975): 5–26. In “The Early Mormon Assault on Common Sense” (unpublished manuscript), I describe the paradoxes and tensions in the Mormon (mis)appropriation of Common Sense philosophy. I presented early thoughts on this topic as “Joseph Smith and Charles Buck: Enthusiasm, Common Sense, and the Living Witness of History,” Mormon History Association conference, May 24, 2008, Sacramento, California.

proofs for theological claims.⁵⁸ The supports for this scientific Christianity were divided into “internal” and “external” evidences. Internal evidences were textual interrelationships between and within the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, while external evidences were miracles wrought to prove the validity of the gospel message—healings, raisings from the dead, the appearance of angels. The fruits of Smith’s translations served simultaneously as internal and external evidences according to this rubric. Internally they proved the Bible by corroborating its events and prophecies in the language of scripture, even as they thereby assaulted the very notion of canon.⁵⁹ Externally the translations were miraculous demonstrations that God was with the Latter-day Saints in the same way that He had been with Christ’s first disciples. In compliance with the dictates of evidential Christianity and in fulfillment of the book’s own prophecy, Moroni’s gold plates presented themselves to witnesses who then signed testimonials that themselves became part of Mormon scripture.⁶⁰ In a culture dominated by Common Sense ideologies, the xenoglossic model came most readily to hand. Smith as miraculous machine translator had the advantage of simple interpretation, undeniably miraculous nature, and a refusal to admit the limits to human understanding that persist with fallen language. A world in which truth existed beyond human language integrated poorly with Common Sense philosophy.

Besides bringing into focus the Common Sense context for translation, the two models make different predictions about whether a translation would be subject to revision. A xenoglossic translation, in which the English text is the miracle, would not generally be revised by the translator. A glossolalic translation, in which the ecstatic encounter is the miracle and the English text an admission of

⁵⁸E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 172–96, provides an illuminating review of evidential Christianity in antebellum America.

⁵⁹David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 141–57.

⁶⁰Richard L. Anderson, “Personal Writings of the Book of Mormon Witnesses,” in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997), 39–60.

the limits of human language, would be highly susceptible to revision. At the core of the glossolalic model is the recognition that human language is broken and can only approximate celestial truth. That Smith notoriously revised his translations supports a glossolalic model.⁶¹

These two models should be understood as bearing a complex relationship to each other. Some translations will contain marks of one or the other or both, and the two models will often inform each other. Smith may at times have productively merged elements of the two approaches generally conceived.

DESIDERATA AND ALTERNATIVES

This essay is only a very preliminary attempt to come to terms with the cloud of meanings attached to translation in early Mormonism. There are other potentially useful models of Smithian translation. Perhaps the most fruitful to date is the pseudepigraphic approach. In this reading, which does not necessarily take a stand on whether pseudepigraphic scripture is divinely inspired, Smith personally elaborated scripture in the name of other prophets like Nephi, Moroni, or Moses.⁶² Pseudepigrapha are common and important in ancient scripture; several of the prized books of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles are widely understood to be pseudepigraphic. The pseudepigraphic model, however, does not provide a useful account of the meanings and problems of language, and it

⁶¹Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 256 note 97. Daryl R. Hague, "Pandemonium: A Review Essay of Douglas J. Robinson, *Who Translates? Translator Subjectivities Beyond Reason*," *BYU Studies* 46, no. 1 (2007): 136–38, comes near this recognition but is still locked in something like a xenoglossic model. There is ample evidence for Smith's revisions of his Book of Mormon and New Translation: Royal Skousen, "Changes in the Book of Mormon," 2002 FAIR Conference Proceedings, http://www.fairlds.org/FAIR_Conferences/2002_Changes_in_the_Book_of_Mormon.html (accessed July 18, 2011); Stan Larson, "Textual Variants in Book of Mormon Manuscripts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10 no. 4 (Autumn 1977): 8–30; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible*, 3–8. The revisions of the Egyptian project (which may have been still more extensive if Smith had not been occupied with political and ecclesial matters in the 1840s) are presented in Hauglid, *Textual History*.

⁶²Robert M. Price, "Prophecy and Palimpsest," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (2002): 67–82.

tends to degenerate into polemics.⁶³ It also, in my view, provides only a superficial account of the complex relationships between Smith and his ancient predecessors.

Modern translation theories will also provide insights. Much ink has been spilt over questions surrounding the “subjectivity” of translators, how much of the translator’s identity is interjected into a text, and how readers and translators attempt to determine and encounter the original author. This vast literature, drawing heavily on Continental—especially French—philosophy, can be difficult to navigate; but questions of identity, perception, context, and community are highly relevant to understanding translation.⁶⁴ There are important insights to be gained from these schools of thought that will need to inform a credible account of Smithian translation.

One overwrought adaption of New Atheist philosopher Daniel Dennett’s tendentious account of pandemonium consciousness (the idea that there is no center of consciousness, just a network of interacting neural modules, and the claim that the pandemonic model of the mechanics of cognition is central to claims about human identity) has been applied by an LDS language scholar to Smith’s translations.⁶⁵ While the theory is wedded to a controversial popularization of cognitive science, “pandemonium” correctly draws attention to the multivalence of human experience and translation. As Smith struggled to come to terms with the gold plates or the revelations they vouchsafed, did his mind commonly return to the theology of his day or personal concerns or dreams or family traditions or prior encounters with Protestant clergy? Surely these contexts informed his various encounters. Perhaps that is what God hoped for in turning to Smith for these translations: a seer who could place ancient America within

⁶³See, e.g., William Hamblin, “Priced to Sell,” *FARMS Review* 16, no. 1 (2004): 37–47, and Robert Price, “Reply to Professor Hamblin,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, no. 3 (Fall 2004): v–viii.

⁶⁴See, e.g., Lawrence Venuti, *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁶⁵Hague, “Pandemonium,” responding to Robinson, *Who Translates?*, chap. 5. Daniel Dennett *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991), describes the apparent lack of a central command center within the brain. Dennett’s account, filtered through Robinson’s translation theory, describes the many different elements of a mind that together constitute its nonunitary identity.

the reach of the citizens of the new American republic.

These observations bring to mind with considerable force the taxonomic question: How do we distinguish translation from revelation from inspired exegesis? Or is one of the central claims of early Mormonism that these activities differ little from each other? What shall we make of those times in his own revelations when Smith assumes the voice of God, of the “Alpha and Omega” of existence? (See, e.g., D&C 19:1, 63:60, 68:35.) A credible account of Smithian translation will need to articulate an approach to distinguishing, or justification for not distinguishing, these related activities.

In this brief sketch, I hope to have contextualized Joseph Smith’s translation activities within the broader quest for pure Adamic language and to have opened conversations about an account, or set of accounts, of Smithian translation that are not obligated to a machine translation model, in which Smith seems like nothing so much as an antebellum hominid version of the science fiction Babel Fish. I believe that working out the meanings of Smith’s translations will provide significant insight into early Mormonism as well as the deep, general questions of language, identity, and community in religious experience.

“THE WARS AND THE PERPLEXITIES OF THE NATIONS”: REFLECTIONS ON EARLY MORMONISM, VIOLENCE, AND THE STATE

Patrick Q. Mason

TO SOME DEGREE IN THE YEARS leading up to September 11, 2011, but particularly since, a cottage industry of scholars and other commentators have wrestled with the seemingly pervasive and universal problem of “religious violence.” Some of this literature is highly sophisticated and insightful; other offerings are less so. Most of these studies, however, leave out—or at least minimize—the crucial importance of a third essentially related category: the state. While far more can be said about how Mormonism informs the broad categories of religion, violence, and the state, in this essay I focus narrowly on early Mormon history and its relationship in particular to the structures and assumptions of the modern nation-state, notably the Westphalian doctrine of inviolable national sovereignty and the Weberian notion of the state’s monopoly on violence.

A casual perusal of some of the more prominent titles in the religion and violence literature would lead one to believe that religious

PATRICK Q. MASON {patrick.mason@cgu.edu} is Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies and associate professor of religion at Claremont Graduate University. He is the author of *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

fervency inexorably leads believers to a mental and then physical state of “cosmic war,” as Mark Juergensmeyer puts it.¹ Furthermore, a common claim made not only by the so-called New Atheists but also by many believers is that religion has been the prime mover behind the world’s violence. We could gather any number of illustrative quotes, but one, opening Charles Kimball’s bestselling and influential 2002 book *When Religion Becomes Evil*, is sufficient: “It is somewhat trite, but nevertheless sadly true, to say that more wars have been waged, more people killed, and these days more evil perpetrated in the name of religion than by any other institutional force in human history.”²

Kimball’s assertion is, to use his own word, more trite than true. The fact is that, not religion, but rather the state, with its various historical antecedents and correlates, is far and away the greatest purveyor of violence in world history and never more so than in the past century. The human toll of Nazi death camps, Stalinist and Maoist purges, the Khmer Rouge’s killing fields, and the Rwandan genocide, to name only a few, are staggering. According to one count, by political scientist R. J. Rummel, the number of people killed in the twentieth century alone in acts of “democide”—his term used to connote “the murder of any person or people by a government, including genocide, politicide, and mass murder,” but not including war—was an astonishing 262 million. Add another 35 million killed in combat (including civilians caught in the crossfire) for a century total of 297 million people dead at the hands of the state.³ Other, “lower” estimates range from 180 million to 231 million.⁴ The precise number is not essential to make the point—namely, that Charles Kimball’s statement would have

¹Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), see esp. chap. 8.

²Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 1.

³See R. J. Rummel, “20th Century Democide,” <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/20TH.HTM>; and “What? Only 35,000,000 Killed in 20th Century War?” <http://democraticpeace.wordpress.com/2008/11/30/what-only-35000000-killed-in-20th-century-war/> (both accessed June 6, 2011). Rummel notes that most of these deaths resulted from authoritarian regimes.

⁴“Wars, Massacres and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century,” <http://>

been fully accurate if only he had substituted one word and observed that “more wars have been waged, more people killed, and these days more evil perpetrated in the name of [*the state*] than by any other institutional force in human history.”⁵

The faithful hardly have room to be smug, however, as believers from all traditions, including Mormonism, have all too often committed mass violence and atrocities and have sanctioned other forms of deeply embedded structural and cultural violence, including racism and misogyny. Mormon historians in particular should remember that September 11 marks the anniversary of not only the attacks on the Twin Towers and Pentagon but also the cold-blooded massacre of California-bound emigrants at Mountain Meadows less than a century and a half earlier. This is not to validate Jon Krakauer’s overstated claim that Mormon history is at heart “a story of violent faith,” but rather to recognize the tragic elements within every religious community’s past.⁶ Indeed, the best that religion, when taken in its totality, can muster when it comes to questions of violence and peace is what Scott Appleby has termed “the ambivalence of the sacred.” As Appleby persuasively demonstrates, all religious traditions have within them multiple and often conflicting resources such as scriptures, rituals, leadership structures, and cosmologies that lead “some religious actors [to] choose the path of violence while others seek justice through nonviolent means and work for reconciliation among combatants.”⁷ Religious actors’ checkered record notwithstanding, a heavier moral burden for mass violence, especially in the modern period, lies with the state, both because of the immensity of its

users.erols.com/mwhite28/war-1900.htm (accessed June 6, 2011); Milton Leitenberg, “Deaths in Wars and Conflicts in the 20th Century,” Cornell University Peace Studies Program Occasional Paper #29, 3rd ed., 2006, <http://www.cissm.umd.edu/papers/files/deathswarsconflictsjune52006.pdf> (accessed June 6, 2011).

⁵Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 1; my emphasis and substituted phrase. To be fair, religion’s lower body count may simply be a matter of capacity, as religious actors typically do not command the organizational wherewithal, let alone firepower, that have allowed agents of the state to murder so many hundreds of millions.

⁶Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004).

⁷R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and*

collective brutalities and the scope of its authority.

One notion is that this state-centric violence actually represents a form of progress in human history. According to this view, the 1648 Peace of Westphalia put an end, more or less once and for all, to the bloody “wars of religion.” The treaty which concluded the Thirty Years’ War created a stable international system by “establishing the basic unit and symbol of modern international relations: the sovereign state.” Acknowledging a differentiated political sphere and positing that its highest authority was the state, Catholics and Protestants could agree that religion now constituted an invalid cause for international conflict. Of course, Westphalia did not forever end war in Europe, but the prevailing wisdom is that it substantially “contained internal strife, protected borders, and checked imperial ambitions.” In sum, Westphalia created our modern system of nation-states, defined not only by territorial sovereignty but also by their ability to corner the awful power of mass violence within their borders.⁸

That Westphalia did not end violence, domestic or international, is a point that hardly needs mention. Yet the treaty’s impact cannot be understated, in part because it transferred the legitimacy and logic of violence from the realm of the sacred to the secular, thus formulating the modern notion of the secular state and its appropriate claims on force. As theologian William Cavanaugh argues, the constructed assumption that state power acts as a steadying force whereas religious zealotry inexorably leads to destabilizing violence has been used to “legitimate the marginalization of certain types of practices and groups labeled religious, while underwriting the nation-state’s monopoly on its citizens’ willingness to sacrifice and kill.”⁹ This validation of state power, combined with modern organizational techniques and military technologies, has resulted in an increase rather than a decrease in mass violence. As we have seen, the body count indicates that the modern state’s near-universally recognized monopoly on violence has not typically correlated with restraint; indeed, it is difficult to comprehend

Reconciliation (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 19.

⁸John D. Carlson, “Westphalia, Peace of,” in *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, edited by Robert Wuthnow, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2007), 2:946–47.

⁹William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

how 297—or “only” 180—million people killed in a century is by any measure a mark of human progress.

One of the explanations for why such mass violence is possible is because the nation-state has functionally assumed many of the characteristics traditionally associated with religion. Among these is the question of “ultimate concern,” in theologian Paul Tillich’s words, or the absolute claims made on its followers.¹⁰ Virtually no one professes to worship the state, and most believers would assert that God commands their utmost loyalty and priority. “However,” to quote William Cavanaugh, “the question is not simply one of belief, but of behavior. If a person claims to believe in the Christian God but never gets off the couch on Sunday morning and spends the rest of the week in the obsessive pursuit of profits in the bond market, then what is absolute in that person’s life in a functional sense is probably not the Christian God.” Cavanaugh elaborates further, in applying “an empirical test to the question of absolutism,” which he defines as “that for which one is willing to kill”:

This test has the advantage of covering behavior and not simply what one claims to believe. Now, let us ask the following two questions: What percentage of Americans who identify themselves as Christians would be willing to kill for their Christian faith? What percentage would be willing to kill for their country? . . . It seems clear that, at least among American Christians, the nation-state—Hobbes’s “mortal god”—is subject to far more absolutist fervor than religion. For most American Christians, even public evangelization is considered to be in poor taste, and yet most would take for granted the necessity of being willing to kill for their country, should circumstances dictate.¹¹

Much more could be said on these points, but for our purposes here, two essential propositions are important to keep in mind: first, that the modern nation-state is morally and actually responsible for far more violence than is religion (in both cases speaking in the collec-

¹⁰“The extreme nationalisms of [the twentieth] century are laboratories for the study of what ultimate concern means in all aspects of human existence, including the smallest concern of one’s daily life. Everything is centered in the only god, the nation—a god who certainly proves to be a demon, but who shows clearly the unconditional character of an ultimate concern.” Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 1–2.

¹¹Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 55–56.

tive); and second, that this is due in large part to a modern worldview and structure of international relations that ascribes sovereignty—that is, ultimate temporal and at least to some degree existential authority—to the state.

* * *

With these fundamental concepts outlined, I move now to the particular case of how Mormonism in its earliest years related to the state and the question of violence. I will rely in my limited space here upon an analysis of some of Mormonism's early revelatory texts that were later canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants. A longer treatment would merit a more exhaustive analysis of a broader range of early Mormon documents, and even a source-critical analysis of the revelations, but the rationale for my method is principally fourfold: the Doctrine and Covenants was and is authoritative for Latter-day Saints; it is concise; it is prescriptive rather than merely descriptive; and its historical setting is basically modern.

Joseph Smith's earliest revelations—excepting the Book of Mormon, which belongs in its own category—seemed to operate in a political vacuum. The expectation was of an imminent return of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth. Thus, the primary social unit was the Church, or what became known as Zion. This non-statist orientation may well have been part of the frontier legacy of early Mormonism, located as it was on the geographical and social margins of society. The state's reach into the lives of communities and citizens was markedly more limited in the Jacksonian period, particularly on the frontier, than it would become following the Civil War and especially in the wake of the Rooseveltian welfare state. Even the revelations' persistent call for "the nations" to repent seemed directed toward peoples rather than states. As is typical of radical millenarian prophecy, the revelations afforded no privileged status to any earthly political unit, including the United States of America. As Richard Bushman points out, "For Mormons, the United States was but one country among the 'nations of the earth,' and like the others must hearken or face extinction. . . . The United States had no special part in the early millennial revelations."¹²

Joseph Smith received one of the first revelations with significant political implications on the heels of the December 1830 com-

¹²Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New

mand to gather to “the Ohio” (D&C 37:3). As Mark Ashurst-McGee notes, this designation, referring to a topographical feature rather than to political demarcations, “consciously refused to acknowledge the sovereignty of the state.”¹³ A revelation received on January 2, 1831, referred to the time when “ye shall have no king nor ruler, for I will be your king and watch over you. . . . You shall be a free people, and ye shall have no laws but my laws when I come, for I am your law-giver” (D&C 38:20–22). Central to the early Mormon view of the state was this eschatological tension—that is, that the kingdom of God is simultaneously “already” and “not yet.” The Saints were to look forward to the time when the kingdom and its laws would be fully established and Christ would reign among them as their king; meanwhile, however, the Lord asserted Himself as their “lawgiver” in the here and now. The Saints’ earliest political theology, however inchoate, was distinctly oriented toward Zion and the expected millennium rather than toward the state.

Another revelation just two months later on March 7, 1831, further fleshed out the political implications of Zion. A primary characteristic of the endtimes, as revealed in this largely apocalyptic text, is the violence of the nations: “wars in foreign lands” and “wars in your own lands.” But God’s people were not to participate in this worldly violence. The revelation commanded the “elders of the church” to “gather ye out from the eastern lands” to Zion, “the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God.” Zion was envisioned not simply or even primarily as a harbor from spiritual tempests; rather, it constituted in a very real sense a refuge from violence—not exclusively for the Saints, but for “every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor.” As such, Zion would be a cosmopolitan community of peace: “And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another.” Zion and those gathered to it would be protected from their enemies not by force of arms but rather through God’s miraculous power: “The glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord . . . insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it. . . . [They will say,] Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible;

York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 168.

¹³Mark Ashurst-McGee, “Zion Rising: Joseph Smith’s Early Social and Political Thought” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2008), 218.

wherefore we cannot stand" (D&C 45:63–64, 66–70).

An interesting pattern held true in these early revelations. Political passages invariably came in connection with the command to gather. The gathering was a political act with political consequences, and the associated revelations provided a this-worldly orientation in the midst of the early Latter-day Saints' millennialist discourse. Rather than passively waiting for the coming kingdom (in this life or the next), the revelations told the Saints how they should operate in this world.¹⁴ On August 1, 1831, the first Sunday after Joseph Smith arrived in Jackson County, Missouri, he received a revelation telling the Saints to "be subject to the powers that be." This phrase closely paralleled Paul's political admonition to the Romans (Rom. 13:1–7).¹⁵ What differentiated the Missouri revelation from Pauline teaching, however, was that the latter-day revelation more specifically situated "the laws of the land" in a broader context of God's sovereignty and the imminent millennial kingdom. The passage began, not with an endorsement of earthly governments, as Romans 13 apparently does, but quite the opposite: the revelation emphasized the primacy of keeping God's law, warning that "no man [should] think he is ruler" and thus confuse his temporal (and fleeting) position with God's eternal lordship. Obeying the law of the land was contingent, temporally bound, with the Saints essentially advised to keep the peace until Jesus, invested with divine authority, returned to earth to reign. In the meantime, the true laws were the laws of the church "received from my hand," and it was "in this light" of God's present and eternal dominion that the Saints were to conduct themselves (D&C 58:19–23).

Later in August 1831, the Saints received additional instructions about how they would acquire the land of Zion. The Saints were first reminded of God's overarching sovereignty—the land was ultimately His to give or withhold. More intriguing, even striking, was the ensuing pronouncement: "I, the Lord, render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" (D&C 63:25–26). This statement might be read to give divine legitimacy and even license to the realm of secular state-

¹⁴Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

¹⁵For an excellent commentary on this passage, see John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), chap. 10.

craft. But just as in the New Testament, which recorded Jesus originally uttering the phrase in a parley with the Herodians (Matt. 22:21), perhaps this revelation showed God indulging in a bit of theological sleight of hand. If, as a revelation on April 23, 1834, affirmed, “all things” are the Lord’s (D&C 104:14–15),¹⁶ then that leaves little to no room for Caesar’s claims to territory, lordship, or sovereignty. The August 1831 revelation did allow for the basic mechanisms of fair exchange, counseling the Saints that they should obtain the land of Zion “by purchase,” but that admonishment represented only a minor concession to Caesar, falling far short of an endorsement of the authority of the state over the Saints (D&C 63:27–29; see also D&C 105:29–30).

There was theoretically another alternative—to obtain the land “by blood” (D&C 63:29). However, as the revelation noted, there were two problems with this path, one principled and one pragmatic. First, God’s people were unequivocally “forbidden to shed blood,” with no qualifiers. Second, doing so would unleash counterviolence from those they attacked. While perhaps temporarily effective, the Saints’ resort to violence would ultimately undermine their very aims. In short, as of August 1831—and arguably through at least the entire next year—the message from the revelations was plain: both “the shedding of blood” and the “wars upon the face of the earth” lay in Satan’s realm, and violence was neither an efficacious nor righteous means of advancing the cause of Zion (D&C 63:29–33; see also D&C 87, December 25, 1832).

The violence against the Saints in Jackson County in August 1833 and their resultant expulsion from Zion prompted a series of revelations that would, over the course of a two-year period, from August 1833 to August 1835, erect the basic scaffolding of an early Mormon political worldview that has informed Latter-day Saints’ relationship to the state ever since. The first of these revelations, received in August 1833, described itself as an “immutable covenant” and provided the Saints with specific instructions on how they should respond to the violence inflicted upon them as individuals, families, and a church. As in previous revelations, the language did not endorse state power or authority. Rather, God told the Saints in the Au-

¹⁶See also D&C 117:6 (July 8, 1838): “For have I not the fowls of the heaven, and also the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the mountains? Have I not made the earth? Do I not hold the destinies of all the armies of the nations of the earth?”

gust 6, 1833, revelation that they should only “observe to do all things whatsoever I”—not officers of the state—“command them” (D&C 98:3–4).

Recognizing the Saints’ temporal setting, however, the revelation did make an allowance in line with the revelation given two years earlier. In that August 1831 revelation, the Saints were admonished, “Let no man break the laws of the land” (D&C 58:21). Now, in the wake of the Missouri violence, they were justified in “befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land,” defined as that which supports “that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges.” The wording in these passages is decidedly qualified. The Saints were justified in “befriending” the law and were urged not to break it—but true obedience, with the implication of the reverence and submission due to proper and ultimate authority, was owed to the Lord alone. Government officials were to uphold and enforce constitutional law, but “whatsoever” the government sought to do that was “more or less than” the maintenance of freedom, rights, and privileges “cometh of evil.” A December 1833 revelation lent divine approbation not just to “constitutional law” in general but to “the Constitution of this land” in particular. This nod toward American exceptionalism was balanced with language connoting universality and even natural law, suggesting that these principles “belong[ed] to all mankind” and guaranteed, when conducted “according to just and holy principles,” the “rights and protection of all flesh” (D&C 98:5–10; D&C 101:77–80, December 16, 1833).¹⁷

As Mark Ashurst-McGee points out, the prescribed relationship between the Saints and the state in these revelations fell significantly short of religiously inspired nationalism or even patriotism. He argues, “They were now ‘friends’ to the Constitution and the divine principles of freedom enshrined therein, not subjects to its rule of law. This was not the natural friendship of affection, but a politically expedient friendship in which the Lord justified them. . . . Even as ‘true friends’ to the ‘country,’ they stood in a companionship, not a patriotic relationship.” When they later sued for protection and redress, the Saints came as “Zion’s ‘Embassadors,’ not domestic petitioners.”

¹⁷Joseph Smith’s 1844 presidential campaign platform was based largely on the notion of protecting universal rights. See “The Globe,” *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Ill.) 5, no. 8 (April 15, 1844): 508–10.

At least in Joseph Smith's mind, Ashurst-McGee contends, "the temporary accommodation with American law" was not an end in itself, nor a manifestation of a new Mormon-American nationalism, but rather a means to the accomplishment of Zion's purposes.¹⁸

Nevertheless, this opening wedge of engagement in which the Saints were told "to importune for redress, and redemption, by the hands of those who are placed as rulers and are in authority over you," set them on a different path in their relationship to the state. The December 1833 revelation provided the Saints with a more robust rationale for engagement with the nation by declaring that God had "established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose." Though expressly endorsing neither the American state nor contemporary political parties, the revelation did outline a divinely ordained purpose for the land, laws, and especially Constitution of the United States (D&C 101:76–80). In response, the Saints now shifted the way they presented their story to the world, as Richard Bushman observes: "not as a narrative of revelations, but as one of persecutions." This led them to adopt the inclusivist, Madisonian language of worshiping God by the dictates of their consciences rather than the exclusivist, millenarian rhetoric of conversion, gathering, and judgment. By asking the state "for toleration and the right to worship," Bushman notes, "Mormonism had to present itself not as the one true church but as one church among a society of churches, all on an equal plane."¹⁹ In this arrangement the Saints, as citizens, placed their principal dependence on the protection of the state and thus openly submitted themselves to its authority.

Bushman also comments on the importance of the Jackson County persecutions for Mormonism's relationship to violence. He writes:

¹⁸Ashurst-McGee, "Zion Rising," 374–75.

¹⁹Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 226–27. Ashurst-McGee, "Zion Rising," 397–98, similarly argues, "For the time being, the revelation provided a way for the Saints to live in America instead of Zion. . . . Adopting the Constitution as a sacred text helped Smith and the Saints develop an inclusive rhetoric of equal rights, both usable and genuine, that was strangely compatible with Zion's exclusive authority and ultimately circumscribed by it. The rhetoric in the *Star*, resuscitated in Kirtland, quickly shifted away from Zion nationalism toward American pluralism."

The only recourse in 1833 was to flee. But what about the next time? Was flight their only option? Forming a private militia had no part in the revelations, but self-defense required one. How else could they react to depredations? The seeds of Mormon militarism were sown in this moment. The Mormons were later accused of threatening the peace with violence born of religious fanaticism. But their resort to militias was the result of being treated violently themselves. Violence originated in the democracy, not in religion. From 1834 onwards, Mormons uneasily experimented with various forms of self-protection . . . [which] initiated a spiral of suspicion, resistance, and persecution that resulted a decade later in Joseph's death.²⁰

Historians typically date the beginnings of the broad Mormon accommodation with the surrounding society much later, but whatever happened in the 1890s and beyond was rooted in this watershed period from the Jackson County persecutions in late summer 1833 up through the march of Zion's Camp in the late spring and early summer of the following year. During this time, two related developments occurred, neither of which had any explicit basis in the revelations but which together charted a new course for Mormonism.

First, the Saints took upon themselves the burden of self-defense. This was most visibly on display in the so-called Mormon War of 1838 and the subsequent formation of the Nauvoo Legion. The notion of martial organization among the Mormons began earlier, however, with the formation of Zion's Camp, which has often been remembered—and was originally understood by many of its participants—to be a divinely ordained military campaign to avenge the wrongful loss of land in Zion. This interpretation, however, runs counter to the actual language of the revelations. The revelation on February 24, 1834, that precipitated the formation of Zion's Camp declared that “the redemption of Zion must needs come by power,” but it never asserted that this redemption would be through the instrumentality of human force or violence. Indeed, the only loss of life appearing in the revelation was the Saints' own self-sacrifice: “Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake.” It makes no mention of God's people taking others' lives, even in self-defense or for the sake of Zion. “Victory and glory” would be achieved not by force of arms but rather “through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith”

²⁰Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 230.

(D&C 103:15, 27, 36).²¹ The Lord reiterated the point to the camp, contra the inclinations of the militants within the group, in the June 22, 1834, revelation received while they were stalled on the banks of Fishing River still well outside Jackson County: “For behold, I do not require at their hands to fight the battles of Zion; for, as I said in a former commandment, even so will I fulfil—I will fight your battles” (D&C 105:14). The precise meaning of this promise that God would fight Zion’s battles was not elucidated, though similar language also appeared in Smith’s revelation regarding the ancient prophet Enoch’s city of Zion (see Moses 7:13–17). In both cases, the burden of battle was assumed by the Lord, who would preserve the righteous Saints from directly engaging in war.

Quite simply, early Mormon revelations never called upon the Saints to commit violence nor gave them license to do so of their own accord. Although the August 1833 revelation did leave room for direct self-defense, the stated preference—even in the face of repeated hostilities and innocent suffering—was always for a vigorous Christian ethic of forgiveness and reconciliation, with even death preferable to committing offense. Smith’s early revelations built upon the New Testament by unambiguously applying the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, long interpreted by the majority of Christian theologians as merely an individual ethic, to the social-political realm. The “armies of Israel,” no matter how large or “terrible,” would occupy Zion legally and peacefully, and only after they learned to “sue for peace, not only to the people that have smitten you, but also to all people.” Rather than invoking an Old Testament ethic of redemptive or retributive violence, the Saints were admonished to “lift up an ensign of peace, and make a proclamation of peace unto the ends of the earth; and make proposals for peace unto those who have smitten you, according to the voice of the Spirit which is in you” (D&C 105:30, 38–40; see also D&C 98:23–48). Theologically, the redemption of Zion (that never was) had more in common with Christ on Calvary than Joshua in Canaan.

The move away from a revealed position of providential protection and its related ethic of Christian peacemaking toward a more

²¹That the redemption of Zion was not intended to be a martial operation accomplished through open battle is further suggested by the fact that, in the revelation, the size of the company seems to matter very little as long as threshold of one hundred men was reached (D&C 103:30–34).

pragmatic adoption of self-defense signaled a second, related development: namely, that the early Mormon perspective shifted slightly, from a radical millenarian worldview in which God was the sole sovereign in the universe and all the nations of the earth merely ephemeral placeholders, to a more pliant (and politically compliant) notion of overlapping divine and temporal sovereignties. Even if the Mormons never had any real intention of invading Jackson County in 1834, their strategy of relying on what turned out to be a false promise of armed protection from Missouri Governor Daniel Dunklin revealed a pragmatic acquiescence to the logic of the state and its monopoly on the use of violence. The Great Accommodation of the 1890s—disavowing polygamy, abandoning communitarian economics, joining the national political parties, and sending Mormon men into the U.S. Army to kill for the nation during the Spanish-American War—is typically portrayed as a story of Mormonism’s changing relationship to the United States in particular. In fact the story began much earlier and ran much deeper, as the Missouri persecutions led the Saints to subordinate themselves to the logic of the state—not just the imperatives of Americanization—thus narrowing the sphere of God’s sovereignty in the temporal realm.

In many respects, the culmination of early Mormon political thought came not via revelation but rather by way of a public declaration penned by Oliver Cowdery, at the time serving as Assistant President of the Church. At an August 1835 general assembly of the Church held in Kirtland to formally accept the collection of revelations to be published as the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Cowdery read his short treatise, “Of Governments and Laws in General.” The assembly unanimously approved the statement and voted to publish it with the revelations. Joseph Smith was away on a mission when the meeting was held but later accepted the decision of the assembly. Qualified in its preamble to represent the “belief” and “opinion” of the church, and not a statement of divine revelation, the declaration has nevertheless retained its canonized status, and the general membership of the Church probably regards its words on par with the revelations.²²

Cowdery’s declaration was comfortably grounded in the broad mainstream of contemporary political and religious thought. Its ideas

²²Official LDS study materials note that, because of its admittedly human origins, the declaration on government “does not hold the same place

and language drew not only from the extant revelations but also from widely held Jeffersonian notions about individual liberty and conscience as well as traditional Christian understandings of Paul's counsel that believers should maintain an amicable, even submissive, relationship to government. Defensive in tone and conservative in nature, Cowdery's declaration eschewed any sense of millennialist expectation and never mentioned Zion, instead making a clear distinction between "human laws" that would govern "individuals and nations," and "divine laws" that would govern "faith and worship." Predictably, given the Saints' experiences and interests, the primary criterion for good government on earth was whether it enacted laws guaranteeing the "protection of all citizens in the free exercise of their religious belief." The declaration underscored the police function of government, acknowledging its right to punish individuals who disturbed "the public peace and tranquility." As long as earthly sovereigns preserved the "inherent and inalienable rights" of their citizens, in particular "holding sacred the freedom of conscience," then they could expect loyalty from their people, particularly Latter-day Saints who were "bound to sustain and uphold" their respective governments (D&C 134:1, 5–7).

Of course, later developments, in which the Saints experimented with forms of theocracy (or theodemocracy), would reveal the moderate republicanism of the 1835 declaration as representing only one strand of political theology within early Mormonism.²³ But the fact that Cowdery's declaration was approved without any contrary votes suggests that it reflected a broad consensus held among most

in the doctrines of the Church as do the revelations." Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Introduction to and Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 852; quoted in Church Educational System, *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 344.

²³Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967); Andrew F. Ehat, "It Seemed Like Heaven Began on Earth": Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 3 (Spring 1980): 253–79; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994); and Patrick Q. Mason, "God and the People: Theodemocracy in Nineteenth-Century Mormonism," *Journal of Church and State* 53, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 349–75.

Latter-day Saints in the mid-1830s. The declaration solidified the notion, emergent since the Saints' response to the Jackson County persecutions two years earlier, of separate sovereignties, a kind of divine federalism: God ruling over heavenly concerns and properly constituted governments exercising authority over earthly matters. It revealed early Mormons as pragmatic millennialists. Though the accompanying revelations published in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants provided only a little room for secular allegiances, the practicalities of living in time and space necessitated an accommodation to the state that in turn allowed the Saints to fulfill their mission "to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth, and warn the righteous to save themselves from the corruption of the world" (D&C 134:12).

Though not as dramatic, the 1835 declaration regarding government can thus be seen as not only a parallel but also an essential antecedent to Wilford Woodruff's 1890 Manifesto that effectively sounded the death knell of Mormon sociopolitical exceptionalism. Ironically, many of the characteristically republican themes central to Cowdery's declaration would be invoked later in the nineteenth century by critics who argued that Mormonism's embrace of polygamy and theocracy constituted an existential threat to the peace, liberty, and Christian nature of the republic. The Saints' accommodation to the sovereignty of the secular state was thus bracketed on either end by their experiences on the wrong end of violence and repression, first in Jackson County and finally in the nationwide antipolygamy crusade.²⁴

* * *

Recognizing some of their inherent tensions, Richard Bushman suggests that "the revelations did not explain how the Saints were to respond to violence."²⁵ I propose, however, that Joseph Smith's early revelations told the Saints precisely how they should react in the face of violent aggression: with an ensign of peace, a willingness to die

²⁴Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Patrick Q. Mason, *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²⁵Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 235.

(not kill) for the cause of Zion, and an absolute trust in God's power to fight their battles for them. Nevertheless, the revelations, through their justification (but not sanctification) of limited self-defense and their prudent advice to seek redress from government authorities, left open a crack for early Mormons in terms of their approach to violence and the state. The path taken ultimately helped facilitate Mormonism's coming to terms with the modern Westphalian order. Following this path of least resistance ultimately led to accommodation, modernization, and a form of secularization, in that the Church came to acknowledge, and even make itself subservient to, the temporal sovereignty of the state.

These observations are intended more by way of analysis than indictment. Indeed, it is difficult to see how things could have been much different given the LDS Church's sense of its mission in the world. The modern state necessarily compromises the exclusive sanctity of the religious enclave, which must then opt to lean either toward relative influence or absolute purity.²⁶ No religion operates in a vacuum. To some degree since 1835, and consistently since 1890, LDS leaders have decided that the Church cannot maximally accomplish what it considers to be its central and divinely ordained purpose if relegated to a position on the radical fringe, no matter how prophetically sound.

The transition I have sketched out here need not be read as a simple declension narrative, nor must it presuppose a naive textual literalism that assumes Mormonism can or even should return to the good old pacifist days of 1831.²⁷ It should be noted that Mormonism was not alone among American religious movements in navigating the thorny path of applying otherworldly religious ideals to the inherently fraught sphere of secular concerns, particularly when it came to "the wars and the perplexities of the nations" (D&C 88:79). Early Methodists before them and Pentecostals after them, though both relying on a primitivist biblical hermeneutic rather than new revelation,

²⁶See the brilliant essay, "The Enclave Culture," in Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 23–89.

²⁷In a larger project, I hope to broaden my documentary base and attempt to reconcile the early canonical texts examined here with the lived experience and realities of post-1834, and certainly post-1890s, Mormonism.

followed similar paths and reached similar outcomes.²⁸ In many ways, the course of Mormonism in its first century also displayed close parallels to the first four centuries of Christianity, when it was transformed from a marginal millenarian sect to the official religion of the empire. The transition from Jerusalem to Rome facilitated the expansion of Christendom but simultaneously forced the ancient church to trade away a substantial share of its prophetic stance, as the advancement of God's kingdom became tethered to the maintenance of Caesar's.²⁹ The Mormons' move away from the early revelations' initial urge toward an alternative normative model of political engagement was similarly sown in their complicated relationship with the modern state and its monopoly on violence, first as victims but then as supporters, agents, and eventually willing participants.

²⁸See Russell E. Richey, *Early American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), chap. 3; Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), chaps. 13–14; and Matthew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), chaps. 8–9.

²⁹For a brief historical orientation, see Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 2d ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 60–64. For reflections on the “Constantinian Shift” from select Catholic and Protestant theologians, see Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1994), chaps. 3–4; Robert W. Brimlow, *What about Hitler? Wrestling with Jesus's Call to Nonviolence in an Evil World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2006), chap. 1; and John Howard Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, edited by Theodore J. Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2009), chaps. 3–4.

ZION IN AMERICA: THE ORIGINS OF MORMON CONSTITUTIONALISM

Mark Ashurst-McGee

EVERY SOCIAL GROUP IS INHERENTLY EXCLUSIVE to some degree. If not, it would be indistinguishable as a group. On the other hand, absolute exclusivity is essentially impossible. We all share the same planet, and even the most remote groups of indigenous people have had contact with others. Almost all groups exist in some kind of equilibrium between exclusivity and inclusivity. Issues of inclusivity, pluralism, and democracy are of special interest to those working in American history and American studies—as the nation was founded in a revolution rooted in democratic principles. Mormonism, which emerged in the early American republic, began as a society which intended to be holy and separate from the wider American society. Yet early on, the new religious movement found not only a certain balance between exclusivity and inclu-

MARK ASHURST-MCGEE {ashurstmcgee@gmail.com}, where he specializes in document analysis and documentary editing methodology. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Arizona State University and has trained at the Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents. He is a co-editor of volumes of the *Joseph Smith Papers* and the author of peer-reviewed articles on Joseph Smith and early Mormon history. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: This essay is derived from my dissertation, “Zion Rising: Joseph Smith’s Early Social and Political Thought” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2008), for which Richard Lyman Bushman served as co-chair.

sivity, but a way to theoretically reconcile the two somewhat coherently. This essay focuses particularly on Joseph Smith's revelation of December 16–17, 1833, now canonized as Section 101 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants, as the pivotal text for effecting this reconciliation.

Mormonism began with the Book of Mormon, which told the stories of civilizations rising and falling in the Americas. The book also explicitly projected this pattern into the future. In the last days, Gentiles from across the ocean would come to America and conquer the land. They would wrest it from the American Indians, a “remnant” of the house of Israel that had fallen into wickedness and disbelief. Not only would these Gentile invaders conquer the natives, but they would also wrest independence from their “mother Gentiles,” who were across the ocean (in Europe). However, whereas these Gentiles had won the land with God's blessing, their victory would actually set the stage for an eschatological reversal. It would humble the American Indians and prepare them to receive the Book of Mormon, which would awaken them to their Israelite identity and to their territorial claim on the land that God had eternally promised to their forefathers. At the same time, it would make the American Gentiles proud and prepare them for their fall. However, those Gentiles who accepted the fulness of the gospel found in the Book of Mormon would join with the remnant of Israel and help them to build the New Jerusalem, the capital city of a restored Israelite territory.¹ Joseph Smith's revelations soon named this land Zion and set it apart from all the nations of the world.²

In 1831, a year after organizing the “Church of Christ” in New

¹On this eschatological background as found in the Book of Mormon, see Ashurst-McGee, “Zion Rising,” 118–22.

²See especially Joseph Smith, Revelation, July 20, 1831, as originally transcribed in “A Book of Commandments & Revelations of the Lord given to Joseph the Seer & others by the Inspiration of God & gift & power of the Holy Ghost which Beareth Re[c]ord of the Father & Son which is one God Infinite & eternal World without end Amen.” Hereafter cited as Revelation Book 1, 93–94, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City. It is published in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), Vol. 1 in the Revelations and Translations Series, of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, general editors Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard

York, Joseph Smith led a small group of Church members to the western edge of the United States, where they would attempt to affect a communion with the Indians living in the reservations just across the border. The revelation Smith dictated on the eve of the New York exodus in January 1831 plainly stated: "The Kingdom is yours & the enemy shall not overcome." And as the voice of the Lord speaking in Smith's revelation explained, "In time ye shall have no King nor Ruler for I will be your King and watch over you Wherefore hear my voice & follow me and you shall be a free People." In this context, "free people" meant a people free from subjection to any other power. The revelation thus spoke to the political independence of the Church. Just as in the Book of Mormon the American Gentiles had become free of their "mother Gentiles" across the ocean, the Lord's people would become free of the United States—and also from its laws. As the Lord further explained, "ye shall have no laws but my laws for I am your Law giver, & who can stay my hand."³ Embarking westward, toward the future land of Zion, Smith believed that God was once again setting up His kingdom on the earth. While in Kirtland, which was identified as a waystation on their journey to Zion, the Saints received the law of God through revelation.⁴ The early Saints received this law, as well as Smith's other revelations, as the very word of God and as laws that superseded any worldly laws.⁵ To administer this law, Joseph Smith appointed a judge, also known then and better known now by the title "bishop" but explicitly identified as a political authority on the model of the judges in ancient, pre-monarchial Israel.⁶

The Saints originally intended to establish Zion among the American Indians living west of the organized states. After the mis-

Lyman Bushman. Volume 1 has more than one document. It includes both Revelation Book 1 and Revelation Book 2. Compare pp. 158–61, to the LDS 1981 edition D&C 57, esp. vv. 2, 14.

³Smith, Revelation, January 2, 1831; originally transcribed in Revelation Book 1, 49–52; cf. LDS 1981 D&C 38:9, 21–22.

⁴Smith, Revelation, February 9, 1831, as originally transcribed in Revelation Book 1, 62–67, in *Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 94–105 (LDS D&C 42).

⁵Steven C. Harper, "'Dictated by Christ': Joseph Smith and the Politics of Revelation," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26 (Summer 2006): 275–303.

⁶Smith, Revelation, August 1, 1831, as originally transcribed in Reve-

sionaries to the Indians were expelled from the Indian lands just west of the state of Missouri, the Saints instead started settling just inside the state. From a cluster of settlements in western Jackson County, they sought ways to interact with and share the gospel with the Indians living across the border. When their efforts failed, they pressed forward to establish Zion themselves—from within the sovereign state of Missouri. The early settlers of Jackson County watched with concern, then with fear and loathing, as the Mormon community grew in size and strength. After two years of Mormon migration, the early settlers could see that the demographic balance of power was about to shift. Vigilantes began vandalizing Mormon property and then demanded that the Mormons leave the county.⁷

On August 6, 1833, Smith, who was then in Kirtland dictated a revelation that addressed the issue of offenses toward God's people. In a dramatic change from previous Zion revelations, this revelation opened up a new middle ground between the laws of God and the laws of the land:

And now verily I say unto you concerning the laws of the land it is my will that my people should observe to do all things whatsoever I command them & that the law of the land which is constitutional supporting the principals [sic] of freedom of maintaining rights & privileges to all mankind & is Justifiable before me therefore I the Lord Justifieth you & your brethren of my Church in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land & as pertaining to law of man whatsoever is more or less than this cometh of evil.⁸

This was the first acknowledgment of the U.S. Constitution in Smith's revelations. In addition to justifying Gentile laws that protected freedom, the revelation seemed to encourage the Saints to appeal to Gentile officials for protection under such laws.

lation Book 1, 94–98, in *Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 160–69; cf. LDS D&C 58:17–18.

⁷The most thorough account of the Mormon residence in Jackson County, Missouri, is still Warren Jennings, "Zion Is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1962).

⁸Smith, Revelation, August 6, 1833, as originally transcribed in Revelation Book 1, 173–77, in *Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 322–31; cf. D&C 98:4–10.

The revelation also acknowledged, however, that governing officials did not always uphold the rights of others. It continued: "I the Lord your God maketh you free therefore you are free indeed & the Law also maketh you free nevertheless when the wicked rule the people mourn wherefore honest men & wise men should be sought for dilligently & good men & wise men ye should observe to uphold otherwise whatsoever is less than this cometh of evil." Formerly disengaged from outside politics and politicians, the Saints were now to support those Gentile officials who were willing to uphold laws consistent with the principles of freedom articulated in the U.S. Constitution.

This revelation and others were soon followed with a letter from Smith in Kirtland to the Saints in Missouri dated August 18, 1833, in which he expressed his hope that the Lord would destroy Zion's enemies.⁹ While acknowledging, as he did, that "this affliction is sent upon us . . . for the sins of the chิร์ch," he prayed that the Lord would remove the Gentiles, not the Saints, from Jackson County: "let thine anger <is> be enkindled against them and <let> them <and they shall> be consumed before thy face and be far removed from Zion O <they will go> let them go down to <the> pit and give pl[a]ce for thy saints." In fact, Smith explained, the Lord had allowed events to go as they had in order to purge and purify the Church, "that he might <pre>pare you for a grater work that you might be prepared for the endowment from on high." When the Saints received this endowment of divine power, they would triumph over their enemies. Until then, the Saints were to "wait on God to be gracious and call on him with out ceasing to make bare his arm for our defence."¹⁰

Another tactic Smith advocated was for Zion printer William Phelps "to try to git influence by offering to print a paper in favor of the goverment"—meaning the Jackson administration in the nation's capital. Smith laid out a plan to temporarily relocate Phelps and the Church newspaper to Kirtland so Phelps could print Jacksonian politics instead of Zion politics. Andrew Jackson had built his political power base, in part, through a network of loyal newspapers, which

⁹Smith, Letter to William Phelps and others, August 18, 1833, in Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 307–16.

¹⁰Ibid.

Phelps would join.¹¹ “As you know,” Smith wrote, “we are all friends to the Constitution yea true friends to that Country we have for which our fathers bled.”¹²

While the Book of Mormon had denounced the nation in its current state of corruption, it had also affirmed God’s providence in the American Revolution and the founding of the United States, which it had portrayed as an escape from European bondage. In fact, both of Smith’s grandfathers had fought in the Revolution, although they had not actually bled. With other Saints of American origin—and at that point almost all were—Smith could claim the heritage of American liberty. Insofar as the principles of America’s divinely bestowed freedom had been articulated in its founding documents, they were expressions of God’s will. The Lord would therefore justify his people in befriending those laws that conformed to the Constitution, as well as the government officials who would uphold them. With the patronage of a Jackson newspaper, the Saints would then “send Embassadors to the authorities of the government and sue for protection and redress.”¹³ In seeking out Gentile officers willing to defend the God-given rights articulated in the Constitution, the Saints would engage American government at the state and national level. This was a dramatic step toward accommodation in Smith’s rapidly adapting political thought.

While fundamentally compromising the ideal of Zion’s isolationism, Smith nevertheless maintained—at least internally—a posture of political independence. The Saints were not truly loyal to Jackson, but rather wanted to “git influnce,” as Smith put it, with the administration in power. They were now “friends” to the Constitution and the divine principles of freedom enshrined therein, not subjects (“friends” vs. “subjects”) to its rule of law. This was not the natural friendship of affection, but a politically expedient friendship in which the Lord had “justified” them. And they were *not* justified in befriending unconstitutional laws. Even as “true friends” to the “country,” they stood in a companionate, not a patriotic, relationship. And while suing for protection and redress as American citizens, the en-

¹¹Robert V. Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 164–66.

¹²Smith, Letter to William Phelps and others, August 18, 1833.

¹³*Ibid.*

voys carrying their appeals were actually Zion's "Embassadors," not domestic petitioners.

In fact, a deep pessimism underlay this ambassadorial work. Its real purpose was a condemnatory witness to the suffering of the Saints, "that they [government officials] may be left with out excuse that a ritious Judgement might be upon them." In the day of God's judgment, Smith wrote, "he disigns to make *us* the Judges of the whole world generation in which we live." Smith explained that this was one of God's mysterious works—how the temporary accommodation with American law, a stance Smith had been reluctant to take, would turn to Zion's good in the end.¹⁴

By the end of 1833, the Jackson vigilantes made good on their threats and drove the Saints from the county with rifles and whips. Joseph Smith began receiving the news of the expulsion in late November.¹⁵ In an early December letter to Bishop-Judge Edward Partridge and other Missouri leaders, Smith wrote that he had long expected "that Zion would suffer sore affliction." Still it was a tremendous blow to his sense of mission. Zion had been the subject of so many of his revelations. Independence, in Jackson County, was the place at which to build the New Jerusalem. The Church had invested most of its financial resources in Jackson in land and improvements that were now lost to them. What were the Saints to do? Smith tendered Partridge some comfort by promising an endowment of power that would come after the trial but admitted, "How many will be the days of her purification, tribulation and affliction, the Lord has kept hid from my eyes." Smith confessed his bewilderment that God had allowed such devastation to befall his people and wondered how He would restore them to the land of their inheritance. These things, he confessed, "the Lord will not show me." He advised Partridge not to sell any Jackson land and to try "<every> lawful means to obtain redress of your enemies." Turning to prayer, he asked that their enemies "be distroyed from off the face of that Land," that the temple could be built and the Saints rewarded therein, "that the borders of Zion be enlarged forever, and

¹⁴Ibid.; emphasis mine.

¹⁵Smith, Journal, November 25, 1833, Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Church History Library; Smith to Edward Partridge and others, December 10, 1833, in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 328–32.

let her be established no more to be thrown down.”¹⁶

The answer to Smith’s questions came in a revelation he dictated a few days later, on December 16–17, 1833.¹⁷ It explained that the Lord had allowed the Saints to be driven from Zion because they had not lived up to its peaceful purpose: “there were Jarrings, and contentions, and strifes, . . . by these things they polluted their inheritances.” Yet the Saints were not entirely forsaken; the pure in heart would return to Jackson County. In fact, it would be a fresh start. The current trial would purge those who were not sufficiently devoted to living God’s law in his land. By no means were the Saints to seek out a new land of promise. “Behold,” the Lord declared, “there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed.” The revelation explained that the Saints would need to be gathered safely in the “holy places”—in Jackson County—for the coming days of calamity and for the day of God’s judgment. In that day, the Lord declared, “the enmity of man, and the enmity of beasts, yea, the enmity of all flesh shall cease from before my face.” Peace would reign for a thousand years. But until then, the only safety would be found in Zion. The Saints must and would return. But how?

The revelation addressed the means of Zion’s redemption with two parables. The second, more comprehensive, of the two parables, was an adaption of Jesus’s parable of the unjust judge, in which a widow pled her case before a judge who “feared not God, neither regarded man.” The widow continually wearied the judge with her complaints until he finally avenged her of the wrongs she had suffered—not out of a sense of justice but to relieve himself of her pestering (Luke 18:1–8). The Saints were to weary the government in a similar manner. “It is my will,” the Lord commanded, “that they should continue to importune for redress [sic] and redemption by the hand of those who are placed as rulers, and are in authority over you, according to the law and constitution of the people.” This was another important step in Smith’s changing political thought. It both affirmed and completed the policy of turning away from isolation in a separatist Zion toward engagement with American government. Whereas the Lord had recently “justified” the Saints in befriending constitu-

¹⁶Smith to Partridge and others, December 10, 1833.

¹⁷Smith, Revelation, December 16–17, 1833, as originally transcribed in Revelation Book 1, 183–89, in *Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 342–55; cf. LDS D&C 101.

tional law, now it was His express will that they take their claims to Gentile officials. The Saints had taken their case to the Lord, and He had sent them to the government. Mormonism was thus compelled to engage with America on its own political terms.

Sending the Saints to the government, however, was appropriate in that the Lord had watched over the creation of the Constitution. As the revelation went on to explain, “I stablished the constitution of this land by the hands of wise men, whom I raised up unto this very purpose.”¹⁸ The Book of Mormon had placed great importance on the scriptures as foundational texts on which civilizations were built—starting with Nephi and the brass plates (1 Ne. 4:13–16, 5:21). In Nephi’s vision of the future, he saw that the latter-day Gentiles who came to America carried with them a book—the Bible. However, as the great and abominable church had corrupted the Bible by removing many of its plain and important truths, the American nation was flawed in its founding (1 Ne. 13:29–35). With the plain truth removed from its foundational scripture, America became a contentious arena of biblical interpretation that resulted in a proliferation of competing churches. In contrast, the unadulterated Book of Mormon and new revelation from heaven would serve as the sure foundation for the latter-day Zion.

But now, as Zion was faltering, a newly revealed perspective on the American founding emerged. The revelation on Zion’s redemption recognized the Constitution, not the Bible, as America’s foundational civic text. The Lord explained that He had “stablished” the Constitution Himself in order that “every man may act in doctrine and principal pertaining to futurity, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.” In owning the Constitution, the Lord eschatologically adjusted America’s status. Adopting the Constitution as a sort of scripture made it easier for the Saints to seek its protection. Moreover, the revelation expressed the Lord’s will that the Constitution “should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh.”¹⁹

Such “maintenance” and “protection” of the divinely inspired Constitution, however, was provided by the Gentile government

¹⁸Ibid., cf. LDS D&C 101:80. Note that comparisons to the current canonized version should be considered supplemental to quotations from these earliest texts; in many cases, the wording has been changed or even excised.

¹⁹Smith, Revelation, December 16–17, 1833, as originally trans-

that the Saints had heretofore avoided. Before this point, while the early Mormon eschatology of rising and falling civilizations had identified the American Revolution and founding as acts of providence, it had also judged the current nation as being in a state of corruption and positioned it on the very verge of destruction. In fact, the emergence of Zion was eschatologically dependent on America's demise. Now, when Zion's refuge had failed, the revelation expressed God's will that the Constitution be "maintained" by the current government. No matter how corrupted American government had become, its responsibility to protect the freedoms enshrined in the Constitution was still a divine charge. This, perhaps, was the revelation's most significant break with the early Zion revelations. The relationship between America and Zion had become complicated; the redemption of Zion was now tethered to the maintenance, not the demise, of America.

Or was it? Returning to the parable of the unjust judge, the revelation introduced a process of appeal that led back to God. If rejected, the Saints were to appeal their case higher and ever higher: "Let them importune at the feet of the Judge; and if he heed them not, let them importune at the feet of the Govoner, and if the Govoner heed them not, let them importune at the feet of the President and if the president heed them not, then will the Lord arise and come forth out of his hiding place, and in his fury vex the nation."²⁰ The revelation placed the burden of redeeming Zion on the Saints and committed them to engage with the government at the local, state, and national level. And yet at the same time, the charge to appeal their case ever higher seemed to imply that lower judges would *not* give in to their wearying complaints. Only God, the supreme judge in the heavenly court of final appeal, was certain to render a just judgment. The Lord explained the purpose for this process: "What I have said unto you must need be that all men may be left without excuse."²¹ If the unjust judges on the lower rungs of the ladder of appeal rejected the Saints' complaints, they would be left with-

cribed in Revelation Book 1, 183–89, in *Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 342–55; cf. LDS D&C 101:77.

²⁰Smith, Revelation, December 16–17, 1833; cf. LDS D&C 101:86–89.

²¹*Ibid.*, cf. LDS D&C 101:93.

out excuse and bring down God's judgment on the nation.

The revelation thus seemed to end with an apology for the new mission of redeeming Zion *in* America. Clearly, submitting Zion's case to the Gentile government of America was a fundamental compromise of Zion's rightful sovereignty as expressed in earlier revelations. However, the predictable path seemed to be that America would reject Zion's case, thus incurring God's fury. This situation would ironically become the means of Zion's redemption. The revelation's use of the phrase "unjust judge" seems to have been something of a play on words. In Jesus's original parable, the unjust judge symbolized God, and Jesus used the parable to enjoin his followers to "cry day and night" to God until He answered their prayers. In appealing to America's unjust judges, were the Saints merely building the case that they really wanted to take to God? In the final analysis, was their new commission to engage American government really a cynical form of condemning the nation and bringing down God's judgment? Such an outcome would merely elaborate the position Smith had taken in his earlier letter of August 18: The persecution of Zion would incur God's wrath and effect its redemption. In this sense, it seemed that the ladder of appeal sketched out in the revelation only deferred the moment of redemption.

The revelation, however, had done more than *simply* defer Zion's redemption. In Smith's earlier letters, he had straightforwardly prayed for the destruction of Zion's enemies. The new redemption revelations did not encourage the Saints to importune vengeance on their enemies; rather it commanded them to pray *for* the American judges—that they would hear their complaints, redress the Saints' grievances, reinstate them on their land, and escape God's fury. How could the Saints offer up such prayers to God in sincerity if they longed only for divine redemption? Perhaps the ambiguity was deliberate. It activated the Saints to make a genuine attempt to redeem a compromised Zion from within the American political system while still placing their ultimate trust in the Lord. For the time being, the revelation provided a way for the Saints to live in America instead of Zion.

The revelation on Zion's redemption became as important in Smith's mind as the revelations that had brought Zion into being—shaping his efforts and his understanding of events through the rest

of his life.²² Adopting the Constitution as a sacred text helped the Latter-day Saints develop an inclusive rhetoric of equal rights, both usable and genuine, even while it was strangely compatible with Zion's exclusive authority and ultimately circumscribed by it.

²²Ashurst-McGee, "Zion Rising," 398–405.

JOSEPH SMITH AS THE PHILOSOPHER-KING: NEOPLATONISM IN EARLY MORMON POLITICAL THOUGHT

Stephen J. Fleming

“UNTIL PHILOSOPHERS RULE AS KINGS,” Socrates declares in Plato’s *Republic* “or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide . . . cities will have no rest from evils, Glaucon, nor, I think will the human race.”¹ For the Neoplatonists, the philosopher-king was one who sought to become like God, acquiring great power in the process, and who then sought to create the ideal state where all things were shared in common. The Book of Moses tells the story of Enoch who speaks to the Lord face to face, causes the earth to shake and the mountains to flee, and in midst of “wars and bloodshed” preaches “righteousness unto the people.” He then builds “a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion” where “they were of one heart and one mind . . . and there were no poor among them” (Moses 7:4, 13, 16–19).

STEPHEN J. FLEMING {stephenjfleming@yahoo.com} is a graduate student in religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he is writing a dissertation comparing Mormonism and Neoplatonism.

¹Plato, *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve in Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 473 c-e. Socrates, Plato’s teacher, was the principal speaker in Plato’s dialogues.

Scholars have puzzled over Joseph Smith's political thought and action: Was it American or not? monarchical or republican? and what lay behind his utopianism and political ambition? From the ideals set forth in the Book of Mormon and other revelations, to Smith's plans for the City of Zion, to his U.S. presidential run, Smith's political goals fit those of the Neoplatonic philosopher-king. I argue here that framing Joseph Smith's politics within the context of Neoplatonism, which had persisted in Western history through various avenues and was available to Smith from eclectic source, sheds considerable light on his rationale and motives.

NEOPLATONISM

In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Theodorus declares, "Socrates, if your words convinced everyone as they do me, there would be more peace and less evil on earth." To which Socrates responds: "But is it not possible, Theodorus, that evil should be destroyed—for there must always be something opposed to good; nor is it possible that it should have its seat in heaven. But it must inevitably haunt human life, and prowl about this earth. That is why a man should make all haste to escape from earth to heaven; and escape means becoming as like God as possible; and a man becomes like God when he becomes just and pure, with understanding." "Let us try to put the truth in this way," Socrates continues, "In God there is no sort of wrong whatsoever; he is supremely just, and the thing most like him is the man who has become just as it lies in human nature to be."²

Plato (424–348 B.C.), the pupil of Socrates (469–399 B.C.), taught in Athens and had a major influence on Greek and Western thought. What scholars call Neoplatonism was founded by Plotinus (ca. 204–270 A.D.) in Alexandria when he formed a circle of followers who sought to follow Plato's dictum: to become "as like God as possible." "The philosopher," explained Socrates, "by consorting with what is ordered and divine and despite all the slanders around that say otherwise, himself becomes as divine and ordered as a human being can."³ Neoplatonism took a turn with the philosopher Iamblichus (ca. 245–325) who argued that philosophy was not enough to enable humans to return to the gods; rather, humans needed the help of the

²Plato, *Theaetetus*, translated by M. J. Levett, revised by Myles Burnyeat, in Plato, *Complete Works*, 176 a-c.

³Plato, *Republic*, 500 d.

gods themselves. To enlist the aid of the gods, Iamblichus undertook ritual practices that he called “theurgy” (“the work of the gods”), which he had derived from Chaldean and Egyptian sources. Gregory Shaw defines theurgy as “a work of the gods’ capable of transforming man to a divine status.” He elaborates: “Theurgy allowed the embodied soul to tap the divine power hidden in its mortality and to realize that its paradoxical nature, being both mortal and immortal, allowed it to participate directly in the creation and salvation of the cosmos.”⁴ Iamblichus was said to have achieved this level and hence was called “the divine Iamblichus.” Because theurgy was God’s work, one became divinized as he or she performed these rites. Says Naomi Janowitz, “In the first centuries, using human hands to employ divine power was always to some extent putting on the image of deity.”⁵

The intent of theurgy, explains Georg Luck, was “to embrace God and be embraced by God.”⁶ To effect this union, theurgists first performed various rites of fasting, washing, and purification. Theurgists would often use devices to effect trance states and would use various techniques to supplicate angels and other divine beings to gain power and wisdom to become like God.⁷ The Neoplatonists saw theurgy as initiatory mystery rites; they also sought initiation into other mysteries like the Eleusinian and Mithraic ceremonies.⁸ The ability to communicate with the gods was a special power “passed on in certain families, and could be transmitted from teacher to disciple

⁴Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1995), 5, 16, 9.

⁵Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (London: Routledge, 2001), 85.

⁶Georg Luck, “Theurgy and Forms of Worship in Neoplatonism,” in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and in Conflict*, edited by Jacob Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 189.

⁷Marinus of Neapolis, *Proclus, or On Happiness, in Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus by Their Students*, translation and introduction by Mark Edwards (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 84–86; Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, 9, 50–51, 134. Luck, “Theurgy and Forms of Worship,” 192–93, 200–1.

⁸Marinus, *Proclus*, 99–100; Robbert Van Den Berg, “‘Becoming like God’: According to Proclus’ Interpretations of the *Timaieus*, the Eleusinian Mysteries, and the *Chaldean Oracles*,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 46, no. 1 (2003): 189–202; Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and*

by the laying on of hands.” “Another name for theurgy,” explains Luck, “is ‘priestly art,’ suggesting that the theurgist saw himself as a priest.”⁹

Theurgy became normative in Neoplatonism after Iamblichus and was central to the practices of the next major Neoplatonic philosopher, Proclus (413–485). Proclus also led a group of followers at his academy in Athens. “A theurgist,” explains Brent James Schmidt, “was a hero of wisdom and love, ideals that inspired communal harmony. . . . Through the principles of love and unity, Proclus often brought out the best in the members of his community. Thus, Proclus was able to set the proper pious, religious example for his neo-Platonic utopia.” “Proclus’ authority over the community,” Schmidt describes, “came from his perceived intellectual gifts and supernatural powers. . . . Members of the community believed Proclus had a perfect knowledge of theurgy which, according to the beliefs of his followers, could control the elements and influence the gods for their benefit.”¹⁰ Proclus was said to have ascended into heaven, healed the sick, brought rain to end a drought, and even to have caused an earthquake.¹¹

Scholars have often labeled theurgy “magic” because it involved both ritual and supernatural power. During the Reformation, Protestants rejected both miracles and elaborate ceremony as magic. “Protestants,” explains Styers, “regularly denigrated Catholic sacramental and devotional practices as magical, and this polemic has echoed through modern social scientific theory.” Thus, “magic” came to represent the traditional aspects of religion that scholarly elites did not like. “Whether framed as a policy against all beliefs in the supernatural or merely as a polemic advocating certain narrow religious norms, scholarly arguments against magic have commonly prescribed an increasingly limited role for reli-

Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1981), 37–41; Luck, “Theurgy and Forms of Worship,” 187.

⁹Luck, “Theurgy and Forms of Worship,” 195, 186.

¹⁰Schmidt, *Utopian Communities of the Ancient World*, 180, 190.

¹¹Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World*, 82; Marinus, *Proclus*, 101–4; Brent James Schmidt, *Utopian Communities of the Ancient World: Idealistic Experiments of Pythagoras, the Essenes, Pachomius, and Proclus* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2010), 190.

gion.”¹² “The core irrationality in most academic theories of magic,” argues Wouter Hanegraaff, is that “this distinction belongs to the domain of theological polemics internal to Christianity, and cannot claim any scholarly foundation. The lack of such a foundation has not sufficiently bothered scholars of religion. They uncritically adopted a purely theological notion, which eventually assumed the role of an unexamined guiding intuition in their discussions.”¹³ Instead of magic, Naomi Janowitz uses the term “rites” in her survey of *Magic in the Roman World*.¹⁴ “Theurgy,” therefore, is not used here as a euphemism for “magic” but as a better description for a particular set of rites used for a particular set of purposes. “We have better and more precise scholarly taxa for each of the phenomena commonly denoted by ‘magic,’” argues Jonathan Z. Smith, and theurgy is a better label for one such set of practices.¹⁵

Upon achieving divinized status, the theurgist was not done. Socrates described the process in his allegory of the cave, where chained prisoners see only the shadows of puppeteers on the wall cast by the light of a fire behind the prisoners. The prisoners believe the shadows to be the only reality; yet if one were to be freed from the chains and leave the cave, he or she would see a true reality. The philosopher, however, now had an obligation to those still imprisoned in the cave “to go down again to the prisoners in the cave and share their

¹²Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic, and Science in the Modern World* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004), 9–11.

¹³Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “The Study of Western Esotericism: New Approaches to Christian and Secular Culture,” in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Vol 1: Regional, Critical, and Historical Approaches*, edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geerts, and Randi Warne (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 513.

¹⁴Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World*, ix. Stephen Ricks and Daniel Petersen made similar assertions in their review of D. Michael Quinn’s *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), “The Mormon as Magus,” *Sunstone*, January 1988, 38–39.

¹⁵Jonathan Z. Smith, “Trading Places,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, edited by Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 26.

labors and honors.”¹⁶ He must work to create and lead the ideal state as the philosopher-king. The Emperor Julian (331–363), Rome’s only Neoplatonist emperor, demonstrates this impulse. After the death of the Emperor Constantine, his heirs fought over the empire, leading to war, murder, and exile. Julian, Constantine’s nephew, interpreted those difficult times with the following parable. In the midst of the “impiety, chaos, and slaughter” following Constantine’s reign, Zeus tells Helios and Athena “to protect and educate in piety an abandoned child among Constantine’s heirs, Julian.” Hermes then leads Julian to the gods. There he receives more enlightenment and “Julian pleads to allow him to stay in the vision of the gods, but he is told that he must return to the murky world below, as a ruler of men, sent by Zeus and equipped with divine aid. He is given instruction on good leadership, among which the importance of piety is stressed, and he is promised as reward a return to the vision of Zeus.” Thus, Julian sought to live the Neoplatonic ideal of the philosopher-king when he became the Roman emperor in 361.¹⁷

THE PHILOSOPHER-KING IN LATTER-DAY SAINT SCRIPTURES

Interestingly Julian’s reforming program had several parallels with the political ideals of the Book of Mormon. One of Julian’s first acts as emperor was to write a letter to an administrator declaring that states ought not to have kings. “It is not just,” asserts Julian, “that one man should rule over many who are his equals, human nature being by no means of such an excess of fortune.”¹⁸ Just like Nephi, Alma, Jared, his brother, and their children, and Mosiah and his sons, Julian felt uneasy about kingship (2 Ne. 5:18; Mosiah 23:7; Ether 6:22–27; Mosiah 29:1–24). Like Nephi, Julian nevertheless accepted responsibility (2 Ne. 5:18). However, like King Benjamin, Julian rejected luxury and decadence and conducted a deep reform of the imperial household (Mosiah 2:12, 14, in contrast to King Noah: Mosiah 11:3–15). Julian “dismissed all the imperial eunuchs, most of the secret po-

¹⁶Plato, *Republic*, 519 d; for the full parable, see pp. 514–20.

¹⁷Dominic J. O’Meara, “Neoplatonist Conceptions of the Philosopher King,” in *Plato and Platonism*, edited by Johannes M. Van Ophulijnsen (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 284–85.

¹⁸Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1981), 91.

lice and most of the secretarial service. Later he reduced to just fifty the number of household guards.”¹⁹ Like Benjamin, Julian did not see himself as above his subjects (Mosiah 2:10–11). “Julian was quick to . . . proclaim that he was subject to the laws of his country like any other citizen,” explains Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden. “He continued long after he had entered Constantinople to address his subjects as ‘fellow citizens,’ and to give account of his actions to his soldiers.” Further, “he chose to exemplify this attitude by behaving in all circumstances in what was, by fourth-century standards, an ‘unkingly’ manner. He made a point of dressing simply and of treating his collaborators publicly as equals.”²⁰ Indeed Julian’s reign exhibited the Book of Mormon’s seeming contradistinction of ambivalence towards kingship while praising righteous kings.²¹

Furthermore, Julian’s ideal city sounds something like those of Joseph Smith: “A happy city,” explained Julian, “is the one that abounds in temples and secret rites, and contains within its walls countless holy priests who dwell in the sacred enclosures and who, in order to keep everything that is within their gates pure, have expelled all that is superfluous and sordid and vicious from the city—public baths and brothels and retail shops and everything of the sort without exception.”²²

Many of the prophets of great power in Joseph Smith’s revelations followed a similar pattern. Enoch walked with God, exercised great power, cried near-irresistible repentance to the people, and founded the city of Zion. As a result, “Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, Zion is Fled” (Moses 6:39, 7:4, 19, 69). Melchizedek “was king over Salem, a land that had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination.” “But,” Alma explains, “Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood

¹⁹Ibid., 97.

²⁰Ibid., 112–13.

²¹Mark Ashurst-McGee, “Zion Rising: Joseph Smith’s Early Social and Political Thought” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2008), 143, made this point: “Given its numerous benevolent monarchs, any attempt to view the book as a thoroughly republican text is doomed.”

²²Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism*, 110.

according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people" (Alma 13:17–18). Joseph Smith's translation of Genesis 14 explains that "having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest" and that "everyone being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break up mountains, to divide seas . . . to divide the earth, to stand in the presence of God" (JST Gen. 14:27, 30). Alma continues, "And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace" (Alma 13:18).

This same tendency is found in the Book of Mormon story of the three Nephites: while nine of the disciples seek to come speedily into God's kingdom when their mortal missions are ended, three wish to remain to help their brothers and sisters until Christ's second coming. "More blessed are ye," Jesus told these three, "for ye have desired that ye might bring the souls of men unto me, while the world shall stand" (3 Ne. 28:7, 9). Proclus taught that there were beings whom he called "incorruptible souls," who, although they had achieved perfection and could ascend to the gods, chose to stay on earth to help others.²³

Jesus, the ultimate prince of peace, acts similarly in the Book of Mormon. Prior to his descent, he creates tempests and earthquakes, moves mountains, and divides the earth. Jesus then literally descends from His Father, heals all the sick Nephites, and initiates more than two centuries of peace, in which all things were held in common among the Nephites (3 Ne. 8:5–18, 11:8, 17:7–10; 4 Ne. 1:3, 25). The goal of the philosopher-king was to imitate the creator god (whom Plato called the Demiurge) writes Dominic O'Meara. "As the philosopher-king orders a city after the divine pattern . . . so, on a larger scale, does the divine craftsman (the 'demiurge') of the world put it into order after the pattern of the Forms. The world is chaos brought into order, divinized."²⁴

NEOPLATONIC INFLUENCE IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

Platonism had influenced Christianity from the beginning:

²³Lucas Siorvances, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 128.

²⁴Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 36.

Church Fathers Justin Martyr (103–165), Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215) and Origen (184–253) drew heavily on Platonism.²⁵ Said Clement, “Accordingly, before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. . . . For this was a school-master to bring the Hellenic mind, as the law, the Hebrews, to Christ. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.”²⁶ Origen and Plotinus actually had the same teacher, Ammonius Saccas, who combined Christianity and Platonism; thus Christianity and Neoplatonism were intertwined from the beginning.²⁷

Certain Fathers were uncomfortable with the similarities between Christianity and Platonism and thus asserted that God created the universe out of nothing—creation *ex nihilo*—in opposition to the Platonic notion that God created the universe out of existing materials (an idea taught by Clement).²⁸ Creation *ex nihilo* “was unknown to pagan philosophy,” explains Andrew Louth, “and emerged only slowly and uncertainly in early Christian theology.” Says Louth, “Central to Platonism is its conviction of man’s essentially spiritual nature . . . the belief of his kinship with the divine. But, for [orthodox] Christianity, man is a creature; he is not ultimately God’s kin, but created out of nothing by God and only sustained in being by dependence on His will. There is an ontological gulf between God as his creation, a real difference of being.” Yet as Louth explains, this difference was a later creation of the third and fourth centuries, solidified at the Council of Nicaea in 325 when both the Arians and the orthodox accepted cre-

²⁵Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition: Studies in Justin, Clement, and Origen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

²⁶Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* book 1, chap. 5, www.newadvent.org/fathers/0210.htm.

²⁷Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2012), chap. 1. Scholars had a hard time believing that the Christian Origen and the Neoplatonist Plotinus could have the same teacher and thus asserted that there were in fact, two Ammoniuses and two Origenes. DePalma Digeser demonstrates that there as actually only one of each and that Christians and Platonists intermingled in that era, an idea later scholars found difficult to believe.

²⁸Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, 47.

ation *ex nihilo*. Nicaea, in Friedo Ricken's words, was a "crisis for early Christian Platonism." "The soul's kinship with the divine was destroyed by the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*," explains Louth, because the soul was now a "creature" of the divine, a created thing and not co-eternal. "Neither for Plato nor for Origen were souls created: they were pre-existent and immortal."²⁹

The Emperor Justinian (483–565) dealt Christian Platonism another blow by not only shutting down the Platonist Academy in Athens in 529 but also by having Origen posthumously condemned in 543.³⁰ Despite these attempts to crush Christian Platonism, it survived largely through the influence of the Neoplatonists. Proclus had a major influence on Christianity through the work of one of his followers, who called himself Dionysius the Areopagite (taking the name of a convert of St. Paul). Pseudo-Dionysius (ca. 475–525), as scholars call him, sought to merge Proclus's teachings with Christianity and called the Christian sacraments "theurgy." It was Christ who did the theurgical acts; and through the sacraments, Christians could participate.³¹ "The role of the Eucharist in deifying the participant is clearly spelled out in ps. Dionysius," asserts Naomi Janowitz.³² Because Dionysius was believed to be the convert of Paul mentioned in Acts 17:34, Pseudo-Dionysius's writings were treated as semi-canonical throughout the Middle Ages and beyond—spreading the influence of Proclean Neoplatonism throughout Christianity.³³

In addition, Arabic philosophers incorporated Greek philos-

²⁹Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford, England: Clarendon, 1981), xiii, 75–76.

³⁰E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge, England: University of Cambridge Press, 1965), 132.

³¹Gregory Shaw, "Neoplatonic Theurgy and Dionysius the Areopagite," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7, no. 4 (1999): 573–99; Andrew Itter, "Pseudo-Dionysian Soteriology and Its Transformation of Neoplatonism," *Colloquium* 32, no. 1 (2000): 71–92; Dylan Burns, "Proclus and the Theurgic Liturgy of Pseudo-Dionysius," *Dionysius* 22 (2004): 111–32.

³²Janowitz, *Magic in the Late Roman World*, 84.

³³Raymond Klibansky, "Plato's Parmenidies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: A Chapter in the History of Platonic Studies," originally

ophy, particularly Neoplatonism, during the Middle Ages. When the Christians began to reconquer Spain in the twelfth century, they began to have access to Arabic libraries.³⁴ Christian scholars were particularly interested in Aristotle but also translated works of what scholars call “ritual magic” or “angel conjuring.”³⁵ These angelic rites, drawing on Neoplatonism, are essentially the theurgy in form and intent that the late Neoplatonists promoted.³⁶ The *Sworn Book* of Honorius was an elaborate thirty-day ritual of purification, repentance, fasting, and prayer that was to end with the practitioner seeing God in a dream.³⁷ The *Ars Notoria* (or Notary Arts) was a theurgical ritual with the intent of learning the seven liberal arts. To perform these rites, the practitioner first had to be ritually and morally clean. Practitioners were to fast, abstain from sex, and ritu-

published in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 1, no. 2 (1943), rpt. in Raymond Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition during the Middle Ages* (1939; rpt., London: Warburg Institute, 1980), 283–85.

³⁴David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious, and Institutional Context, Prehistory to A.D. 1450*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), chap. 9.

³⁵For medieval “ritual magic” and “angel conjuring,” see various articles in Claire Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). On the Neoplatonic context, Gyorgy Szonyi says of the *Picatrix*, one of the major texts translated from Arabic: “The *Picatrix* is good evidence that Hellenistic neoplatonism—like other elements of Greek philosophy—returned to Europe via Arabic mediation. . . . It suggests that a constant energy radiates from the stars to the Earth and influences the happenings here.” Szonyi, *John Dee’s Occultism: Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 74.

³⁶Stephen Culcas refers to such rites as “medieval theurgy” in “John Dee’s Angelic Conversations and the *Ars Notoria*: Renaissance Magic and Medieval Theurgy,” in *John Dee Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, edited by Stephen Clucas (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2010), 231–74.

³⁷Robert Mathiesen, “A Thirteenth-Century Ritual to Attain the Beatific Vision from the *Sworn Book* of Honorius of Thebes” in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 143–62.

ally wash themselves.³⁸ Church authorities forbade the type of rites found in the *Sworn Book* and the *Ars Notoria* by the accusation that the unknown angels whom the rites supplicated were in fact demons. Seeing God was also frowned on.³⁹

Despite these attempts to suppress these theurgical rites, they (and similar rites) spread during the Renaissance after Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) translated the works of Neoplatonists Iamblichus and Proclus into Latin. Soon Ficino and other Christian Platonists of the era began performing them.⁴⁰ Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) drew heavily on Ficino’s translations, describing them to a friend as the means “whereby thou mayest be transformed, and made as God. . . . This is that true, high occult philosophy of wonderful works.”⁴¹

Another avenue by which Neoplatonism influenced Western Christianity was through the Rhineland mysticism of the late Middle Ages generated by Meister Eckhart (ca. 1260–1327). Eckhart made considerable use of Proclus in his mysticism; and Johan Tauler (ca. 1300–1361), another leading mystic of the era, called Proclus “the great pagan master.”⁴² These thinkers had a major influence on a series of early modern radical reformers who, a number of scholars have argued, had much in common with Mormonism. John Brooke, in fact,

³⁸Clucas, “John Dee’s Angelic Conversations,” 242.

³⁹Nicholas Watson, “John the Monk’s Book of Visions of the Blessed and Undefined Virgin Mary, Mother of God: Two Versions of a Newly Discovered Ritual Magic Text,” in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 163–215; Claire Fanger, “Plundering the Egyptian Treasure: John the Monk’s Book of Visions and Its Relation to the *Ars Nortoria* of Solomon,” in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 216–49.

⁴⁰D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (1958; rpt., Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

⁴¹Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, translated by James Freake, edited by Donald Tyson (Woodbury, Minn.: Llewellyn, 1993), 681.

⁴²Bernard McGinn, *The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany (1300–1500)*, Vol. 4 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroads, 2005); Siorvances, *Proclus*, 35.

asserts that they were important precursors to Mormonism.⁴³

NEOPLATONISM IN JOSEPH SMITH'S ENVIRONMENT

John Brooke's *Refiner's Fire* sought to link Mormonism to the early modern radical reformers, asserting: "Mormonism springs from the sectarian tradition of the Radical Reformation, in fact from its most extreme fringe."⁴⁴ Brooke attempted to trace hermeticism from Renaissance Italy to Joseph Smith, relying on Frances Yates's thesis about Renaissance hermeticism to do so.⁴⁵ Yet recent critiques of Yates now argue that the figures she called "hermetic magi" would be more accurately labeled Christian Platonists and theurgists. Neoplatonism and hermeticism overlapped considerably, but Yates's critics argue that understanding the sources of these figures better situates them in the history of Christianity.⁴⁶

Works by D. Michael Quinn, John Brooke, and Lance Owens provide most of the evidence of Neoplatonic influence in Joseph

⁴³D. Michael Quinn, "Socioreligious Radicalism of the Mormon Church: A Parallel to the Anabaptists," in *New Views of Mormon History*, edited by Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 363–86; Steven C. Harper, "Thomas Muntzer and the Radical Reformation," in *Prelude to the Restoration: From Apostasy to the Restored Church* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Study Center/Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 59–69; DeLamar Jensen, "Reformation and Pre-Restoration," in *Window of Faith: Latter-day Saint Perspectives on World History*, edited by Roy A. Prete (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005), 277–89; Stephen J. Fleming, "The Radical Reformation and the Restoration of the Gospel," *Religious Educator* 7, no. 2 (2006): 65–77.

⁴⁴John L. Brooke, *Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xv.

⁴⁵Francis Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Routledge, 1979).

⁴⁶Hanegraaff "The Study of Western Esotericism," 489–520; Szonyi, *John Dee's Occultism*; Florian Ebeling, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times*, foreword by Jan Assmann, translated by David Lorton (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007); Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2009); Clucas, "John Dee's Angelic Conversations and the *Ars Notoria*," 231–74.

Smith's environment. Yet these studies labeled the Neoplatonic tenets "magic," hermetic, or "occult," and thus need to be reinterpreted in the context of Neoplatonism. Quinn's extensive list of books available in Smith's neighborhood included such works as the Romantic poets Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth, David Ramsey's *The Travels of Cyrus*, and Edmund Spencer's *The Faerie Queen*.⁴⁷ Most significant are the three lamens owned by the descendants of Joseph Smith's brother Hyrum. Quinn's extensive research showed that the diagrams were taken from the grimoires of Reginald Scot and Ebenezer Sibly.⁴⁸ The diagrams on the Smith family lamens suggest that they served theurgical purposes: one for angel invocation and two for protection against evil spirits and other forms of harm.⁴⁹ Iamblichus said that one of the purposes of theurgy was to "ward off some other of the dangers that menace us"; invoking divine beings was central to theurgy.⁵⁰

Reginald Scot even used the term "theurgy" in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584),⁵¹ a book that was actually a treatise against popular rites that were considered "magic." In it, Scot printed diagrams from a manuscript called the *Secretum secretorum* (The Secret of Secrets), to ridicule such practices.⁵² Scot's attempt to discourage such beliefs largely backfired, however, as *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* became the

⁴⁷Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 179–82, 186. Quinn mentions these and other books to show that "high culture" books were for sale in the area. For the Neoplatonism of the Romantic poets, see Lucas Siorvances, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 38; Proclus, *The Elements of Theology: A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary* by E. R. Dodds, 2d ed. (Oxford, England: Clarendon, 1963), xxxiii. For Edmund Spencer, see Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, xxxi.

⁴⁸Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 104–5.

⁴⁹Ibid., 104.

⁵⁰Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, I:11, IV:2, V:23.

⁵¹Reginald Scott, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, introduction by Hugh Ross Williamson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 385.

⁵²The authors of the *Secretum secretorum* said their book was "invented and devised . . . for the edifieng of the poore, and for propogating and inlarging Gods glorie." Quoted in Davies, *Grimoires*, 70.

most popular source for such rites. Printed again in 1665, its diagrams were used well into the nineteenth century, and Scot's *Discoverie* continued to be sold.⁵³ Of theurgy, Scot declared, "There is yet another art professed by these cousening conjurors, which some fond divines affirme to be more honest and lawfull than necromancie⁵⁴ which is called Theurgie; wherein they worke by good angels. Howbeit, their ceremonies are altogether papisticall and superstitious, consisting of cleanlines partlie of the mind, partlie of the bodie, and partlie of things about and belonging to the bodie . . . the cleanlines whereof, they saie, doth dispose men to the contemplation of heavenlie things. They cite these words of Esaie for their authorite; to wit: Wash your selves and be clean."⁵⁵ Despite this condemnation, many used the very rites Scot described to "worke by good angels."

Critics of Quinn charged that these grimoires were rare and expensive and that the Smiths were unlikely to have owned them. Owen Davies, the leading expert on English folk magic, concurs with Quinn that the diagrams on the Smiths' lamens derived from Scot and Sibly's books, which Davies describes as "hefty compilations of early modern Neoplatonist wisdom." Though Davies agrees that the Smiths were not likely to have owned the books, "Quinn's thesis," he asserts, "does not stand or fall on the basis that Smith owned copies of Scot and Sibly, since extracts from all three were to be found in the manuscript grimoires and charms kept by some English cunning-folk and in those sold by the London occult dealer John Denly. It is quite likely that some of those found their way to America where they were copied once again." Thus, the Smiths' lamens and ritual practices can be considered part of what Davies describes as the "democratization of high magic."⁵⁶

Brooke drew heavily on Quinn's work but expanded Quinn's thesis to argue that early modern radicals were precursors to Mormonism. Many of these radicals drew on the Rhineland mysticism of

⁵³Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), 125–26.

⁵⁴Necromancy meant talking to demons, not talking to the dead, during this period. Claire Fanger, "Medieval Ritual Magic: What It Is and Why We Need to Know More about It," in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, vii.

⁵⁵Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 385.

⁵⁶Davies, *Grimoires*, 149, 134, 152, 61.

Eckhart and Tauler.⁵⁷ The seventeenth-century Pietists movement, in many ways a precursor to the broader eighteenth-century evangelical movement, were influenced by many of the same sources.⁵⁸ Phillip Jacob Spener, the father of Pietism, was accused by Lutheran ministers of being fundamentally Platonic in his theology and therefore a heretic. Spener “defended himself in print against these attacks,” says Florian Ebeling, “maintaining that he had built his doctrine exclusively on the basis of the Bible. And since there were incontestable parallels between his concepts and those of Plato, he reckoned that Plato had also read the Holy Scriptures.”⁵⁹ Many such Pietists made their way to America.⁶⁰

Brooke also tied Mormonism back to the radical sectarians of the English Civil War (Quakers, Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, Ranters, Diggers, and Levelers). Smith had direct contact with Quakers and Universalists, two groups that Brooke highlighted. The Quakers had a meetinghouse in Palmyra; and Smith’s earliest backer, Martin Harris, had Quaker ancestors.⁶¹ Scholars have argued that the Quaker doctrine of the inner light is Neoplatonic; John Everarde, who promoted ideas similar to those of the Quakers just prior to their rise, translated Pseudo-Dionysius into English along with the works of early modern Neoplatonic mystics.⁶² These forms of Neoplatonic mysticism persisted in Catholic lands also, which climaxed with the mysticisms of

⁵⁷Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973).

⁵⁸W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48, 310.

⁵⁹Ebeling, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus*, 111.

⁶⁰For German radical sectarians in America, see Brooke, *Refiner’s Fire*, 39–45.

⁶¹For links between Quakerism and Mormonism, see my articles: “The Religious Heritage of the British Northwest and the Rise of Mormonism,” *Church History* 79, no. 1 (2008): 73–104; “The Air, the Tone and Mannerisms of the Quakers’: The Quakers, the Protestant Ethic, and the Quaker Mormons,” *Max Weber Studies* 8, no. 1 (2008): 99–110; and “‘Congenial to Nearly Every Shade of Radicalism’: The Delaware Valley and the Success of Early Mormonism,” *Religion and American Culture*, 17, no. 1 (2007): 129–64.

⁶²Siorvances, *Proclus*, 36; David R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritan-*

Madame Guyon and François Fénelon.⁶³ Samuel Coleridge (see below) declared that “almost all the followers of Fénelon” believed that “men are degraded Intelligences, who had once all existed, at one time & together, in a paradisiacal or heavenly state.”⁶⁴ Guyon’s and Fénelon influenced German Pietists, Quakers, and Methodists in early America.⁶⁵

Finally, Lance Owens in 1994 argued for the influence of Kabbalah, which drew heavily on Neoplatonism.⁶⁶ Owens hypothesized that the vector of influence between Joseph Smith and Kabbalah that showed up in Mormonism was Jewish convert Alexander Niebaur.⁶⁷ Richard Bushman agreed with Owens that Smith’s later doctrines show similarities to Kabbalah, “but these came on the scene a decade after Joseph’s revelations defined the endowment of power as an encounter with God. We can scarcely imagine him steeping himself in Kabbalistic literature in Manchester and Harmony.”⁶⁸ However, theurgical practices, like those suggested by the Smith family’s lamens, had long been influenced by Kabbalah. Richard Kieckhefer argues that the *Sworn Book* of Honorius, a medieval theurgical text that claimed to create a vision of God, drew on Kabbalah because seeing God was a central purpose in Kabbalah even though it was a violation

ism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil War England (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 219–27.

⁶³Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), chap. 4.

⁶⁴Quoted in Terryl L. Givens, *When Souls Had Wings: Pre-mortal Existence in Western Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 246–47.

⁶⁵Patricia A. Ward, *Experimental Theology in America: Madame Guyon, Fénelon, and Their Readers* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009).

⁶⁶Arthur Green, “Introduction,” in *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 6 vols., translated by Daniel Matt, 6 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University, 2004), 1:xli–xlii.

⁶⁷Lance S. Owens, “Joseph Smith and the Kabbalah: The Occult Connection,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 117–94.

⁶⁸Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 451–52.

of orthodox Christianity.⁶⁹ Early modern theurgist Cornelius Agrippa, who influenced the works of Reginald Scot and Ebenezer Sibly, was also influenced by Kabbalah and made seeing God a central purpose.⁷⁰ Joseph Smith's revelations likewise made seeing God a priority, an important theme in Neoplatonism.⁷¹ Although Smith never immersed himself in Kabbalah, certain aspects of the practice could have influenced him early on. In summary, this scholarship suggests numerous sources by which Joseph Smith could have had contact with Neoplatonism.

YOUNG JOSEPH SMITH AND THEURGY

Theurgical rites may have been a particular source by which Joseph Smith came into contact with the concepts associated with the philosopher-king. On the basis of six factors, Michael Quinn proposes that Smith employed theurgical rites on the night of September 21–22 when he was visited by Moroni: (1) Smith remembered the exact date of the visitation while his memory of the date of the First Vision was very vague; (2) September 21–22 was the autumnal equinox, a day considered important for theurgical rites;⁷² (3) the “Holiness to the Lord” lamen is for theurgical rites and was likely drawn up near the date of Moroni's visit;⁷³ (4) Lucy's description of the rites of winning “the faculty of abrac, drawing magic circles or soothsaying” all fit within the practices of theurgy, which were to commune with holy beings; Lucy describes the purpose of these rites as “to remember the service and welfare of our souls,” which is also in line with the pur-

⁶⁹Richard Kieckhefer, “The Devil's Contemplatives: The *Liber Iuratus*, the *Liber Visionum* and Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism,” in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, 255.

⁷⁰Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, xxiii, xxvii, 618, 699.

⁷¹One of Smith's revelations declared, “Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am” (D&C 93:1). For the Platonic emphasis on seeing God, see Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, Vol. 1 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), chap. 2.

⁷²Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 141.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 104, 115.

poses of theurgy;⁷⁴ (5) Oliver Cowdery's letter to W. W. Phelps said that Smith prayed earnestly to "commune with some kind of messenger," suggesting the anticipation of an angel;⁷⁵ and (6) Smith was, in fact, visited by an "angel." Again the purpose of theurgical rites was to commune with divine beings, particularly angels, for holy purposes.

Medieval and early-modern theurgists often linked such rites with doing God's work, benefiting one's fellow humans, and creating the ideal city. The *Picatrix*, one of the first medieval theurgical works translated into Latin, tells of Hermes setting up an ideal city in ancient Egypt in which, by the powers of the heavens, "the inhabitants remained virtuous, free from wickedness and vices."⁷⁶ Seventeenth-century Italian theurgist Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) dreamed of creating "the city of the sun."⁷⁷ The *Arbatel*, a sixteenth-century text, translated into English in 1655, illustrates the nature of these theurgical practices. It instructs the adept to "call therefore upon the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. This thou shalt do, if thou wilt perform that end for which thou art ordained of God, and what thou owest to God and to thy neighbor." The text then instructs the adept to pray to God in the name of Jesus "that thou wilt give unto me thy Holy Spirit, to direct me in thy truth unto all good. Amen." The prayer continues: "Because I earnestly desire perfectly to know the arts of this life and such things as are necessary for us, which are so overwhelmed in darkness, and polluted with infinite human opinions, that I of my own power can attain to no knowledge in them, unless thou teach it to me; grant me therefore one of thy spirits, who may teach me those things which thou wouldst have me to know and learn, to thy praise and glory, and the profit of our neighbor."⁷⁸

As early-modern theurgist Paracelsus (1493–1541) explained: "God is powerful and He wills it that His power be revealed to men

⁷⁴Lucy Smith, "History," 1845, in *Early Mormon Documents*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1:285.

⁷⁵Oliver Cowdery, quoted in Quinn, *Magic World View*, 143.

⁷⁶Szonyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, 76.

⁷⁷D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (1958; rpt., Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), chap. 7.

⁷⁸*The Arbatel of Magic, or the Spiritual Wisdom of the Ancients* in Agrippa, *The Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, 372.

and to angels in the wisdom of the arts. He wills it that the world and the earth be like Heaven.”⁷⁹ God dispenses his wisdom to choice individuals who also inherit godly power with the goal of making earth like heaven. “Everything [Smith] did, he often said, was patterned after the order of heaven,” notes Richard Bushman.⁸⁰ As Socrates said in the *Republic*, “The city will never find happiness until its outline is sketched by painters who use the divine model.”⁸¹

The nature of these theurgical rites and the impulse to use heavenly wisdom for political purposes is perhaps best demonstrated in the practices of John Dee (1527–1609). Dee was considered one of the most learned men of his time, but scholars have wondered why he turned from mathematics to “angelic conversations,” which many scholars have derided as nonsensical magic. Dee himself explained to Rudolph II in Prague: “All my life time I had spent in learning . . . and I found (at length) that neither any man living, nor any Book I could yet meet withal, was able to teach me truths I desired and longed for: And therefore I concluded with my self, to make intercession and prayer to the giver of wisdom and all good things, to send me such wisdom, as I might know the natures of his creatures. And also enjoy means to use them to his honour and glory.”⁸² Ultimately Dee rejected the “vulgar scholedoctrine or humane invention” and “reasonable discourse,” choosing instead “what good Counsell the Apostle James giveth, saying, Si quis vestrum careat sapientia, postulat a Deo, &c,” that is, “If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God” (James 1:5).⁸³

To ask God, Dee performed a number of different theurgical rituals including setting up private rooms with “holy furniture,” including candles and a “Table with a white cloth,” in an arrangement he called a “temple.” Dee also employed a seer, who used a “shew-stone” to talk with angels.⁸⁴ Because of the special knowledge he received from angels, Dee proposed that he should be a special adviser to

⁷⁹Paracelsus, quoted in Szonyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, 140.

⁸⁰Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 436.

⁸¹Plato, *Republic*, 500 e.

⁸²John Dee, quoted in Szonyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, 183.

⁸³John Dee, quoted in Clucas, “John Dee's Angelic Conversations,” 248.

⁸⁴John Dee, quoted in Clucas, “John Dee's Angelic Conversations,”

Queen Elizabeth in order to bring glory to the kingdom.⁸⁵ Elizabeth's advisers turned him down, but Dee demonstrates how the philosopher-king elements of theurgical rites and political ambition could intertwine.

Furthermore, the notion of the "Patriot King," or the president who ruled with wisdom and was above party, had been popular in the politics of the early United States.⁸⁶ Plato also said that rulers should be above party.⁸⁷ Smith himself invoked similar language when he ran for president in 1844 (discussed below). But the prophets of Latter-day Saint scripture often wielded great supernatural power similar to the Neoplatonic philosopher-king, which was not a characteristic of American politics.

JOSEPH SMITH AS THE PHILOSOPHER-KING

Smith had come into the presence of God in his First Vision. Like the experience of Julian, Enoch, Melchizedek, and Proclus's incorruptible souls, God instructed Smith that he had a work to do. Smith also said that he received priesthood "keys" from angels. Such claims fit with the practice of theurgy: receiving divine powers from divine beings. The term "keys," a reference to Peter's "keys of the kingdom," was also used in early modern theurgical texts.⁸⁸ With his new priesthood keys, Smith established his church on April 6, 1830. Not long after the establishment of the Church of Christ, Smith set out to create Zion, or what the revelations called the Order of Enoch.⁸⁹ Smith seemingly sought to live out the story of Enoch, which strongly resembled the ideal of the philosopher-king. Smith

252–53; Szonyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, 208.

⁸⁵Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 190–91.

⁸⁶Ralph Ketcham, *Presidents above Party: The First American Presidency, 1789–1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 2–3.

⁸⁷Plato, *Laws*, 832-c.

⁸⁸Clucas, "John Dee's Angelic Conversations," 243. Joseph Smith's mother referred to his seer ability as "certain keys." Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853) in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:309–10.

⁸⁹Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting for Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books,

was given a divine message to share with humanity, was endowed with divine power through the priesthood, and then set about to create Zion, the perfect society.

Though Brigham Young “expected we should be one family” when he moved to Kirtland, the Order of Enoch never had all things in common like Nephite society after Christ’s ministry among them.⁹⁰ In Missouri, where the Saints attempted to establish Zion, property was to be consecrated to the Church, then deeded back to the individual Saints. This system more closely resembled that of Plato’s *Laws* in which city leaders “make a distribution of lands and houses; they must not farm in common . . . each man who receives a portion of land should regard it as the common possession of the entire state. The land is his ancestral home and he must cherish it.”⁹¹

“But reflection and experience,” said Plato, “will soon show that the organization of a state is almost bound to fall short of the ideal” thus, “the right procedure is to describe not only the ideal society but the second best and third best too, and then leave it to anyone in charge of founding a community to make a choice between them.” Plato reiterated that in “the ideal society and state” is “where the old saying ‘friends’ property is genuinely shared’ is put into practice as widely as possible throughout the entire state. Now I don’t know whether in fact this situation,” Plato continued, “exists anywhere today, or will ever exist”; however, the founders of a city “should keep this state in view and try to find the one that most nearly resembles it.”⁹² Plato advised establishing a city based on the principles mentioned above as the second-best city and, if that attempt met with failure, then to try the “third-best” city which, however, he never defined. Julian never tried to implement the *Republic*, but only the *Laws*.⁹³

Indeed, the Isaac Morley Family, a New Testament-based construction where all was held in common, was closer to Plato’s ideal city and closer to the ideal in 4 Nephi. This organization, based on New Testament principles, had been organized in Kirtland, Ohio,

2009), 408.

⁹⁰Ibid., 235, 409.

⁹¹Plato, *Laws*, 740 a, translated by Trevor J. Saunders, in Plato, *Complete Works*.

⁹²Ibid., 739 b-e.

⁹³O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, 121.

before Mormon missionaries reached the state in the late fall of 1830 and overlapped the rise of Mormonism for the next several months. At the same time, the Morley Family demonstrates how difficult such arrangements were, with Family members selling each other's property. Smith's method of regulating the problematic situation was accomplished, Mark Staker explains, by the revelation canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 42: "The Law of the Church completely reworked the Family organization in operation on the Morley farm. No longer could members walk off with another person's clothing; instead they should wear 'the works of thine own hands.'"⁹⁴ Despite the Morley setback, Smith still sought to enact utopian ideals with his City of Zion. After the failure of the Morley Family to implement "all things in common," Smith, as Plato had advised, opted for a more practical utopia. Part of the long heritage of utopianism inspired by Plato was figuring out pragmatic ways to most closely achieve the ideal.⁹⁵

Smith's plan of Zion also failed: even this level of utopianism was difficult to enact. Yet Smith, like other Neoplatonists, continued to work toward the best possible city he could. What became Nauvoo, Illinois, was also a holy endeavor to Smith—a site for gathering the faithful, with another temple as its centerpiece. But there was no shared property, though Smith expected communal concern from his followers in seeking each other's welfare and helping the poor.⁹⁶ The Neoplatonists also fell short of the ideal. Proclus had to keep a low profile in an era of violent persecution against Hellenes; nevertheless, said his pupil, "this man entered into the billowing tempest of affairs at a time when monstrous winds were blowing against the lawful way of life."⁹⁷ The Emperor Julian, explains Dominic O'Meara, "torn between the realities of executive action and the high ideal by which to live, reforms the state in light of transcendent principles,

⁹⁴Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 45, 228.

⁹⁵O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 92–93; Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

⁹⁶Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 414, 501–4.

⁹⁷Marinus, *Proclus*, 78–79.

in the hope of being released one day to the vision of the gods.”⁹⁸

Despite scaling back his city’s utopianism, Smith maintained his political ambitions. An unsigned editorial in the *Times and Seasons* declared, “It has been the design of Jehovah, from the commencement of the world, and is his purpose now, to regulate the affairs of the world in his own time; to stand as head of the universe, and take the reins of government into his own hand.” Only “the wisdom of God, the intelligence of God, and the power of God” could “promote universal peace and happiness in the human family.”⁹⁹ In early 1844 Smith made two bold political moves: first, he launched a campaign for the U.S. presidency; and second, he formed the Council of Fifty, which seemed to be a plan to create a kingdom in the West. Both moves, I argue, were in line with Smith’s vision of himself as the philosopher king, or the individual enlightened by heaven who ought to rule.

Smith decided to run for president after his attempts at redress for the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri met with frustration.¹⁰⁰ Like the Emperor Julian, Smith proposed major reforms in his platform.¹⁰¹ He would do away with prisons and capital punishment, would abolish slavery by buying slaves using funds obtained through the sale of western land, and would massively cut the number and pay of members of Congress. “Yea, I would, as the universal friend of man, open the prisons, open the eyes, open the ears, and open the hearts of all people, to behold and enjoy freedom—unadulterated freedom.” Smith also invoked the idea of the Patriot King, asserting that he would be above party.¹⁰² “We have had Democratic Presidents, Whig Presidents, a pseudo-Whig President, and now it is time to have a President of the Unites States.” But Smith added his connection with heaven with an apocalyptic warning: “And God who once cleansed the violence of the earth with a flood . . . and who has promised that He will come and purify the world again with fire in the last

⁹⁸O’Meara, “Neoplatonist Conceptions of the Philosopher King,” 287.

⁹⁹“The Government of God,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (July 15, 1842): 856–57.

¹⁰⁰Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 512–14.

¹⁰¹Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism*, 97.

¹⁰²Ketchum, *Presidents above Party*.

days, should be supplicated by me for the good of all people.”¹⁰³

Historians have debated the intent of Smith’s Council of Fifty extensively: It is seen as either an imperial attempt or as an anticipation of the Second Coming.¹⁰⁴ Western exploration was a primary task of the council members; most importantly, the council voted Smith prophet, priest, and king in April 1844.¹⁰⁵ Taken together, these actions suggest that Smith was planning to set up a kingdom in the West, likely where he could reign independently as philosopher-king.

CONCLUSION

Thus, Neoplatonic political thought sheds light on Smith’s political actions from utopianism to running for president: those enlightened by God had political obligations. Socrates declared that those who returned to the cave would “invite ridicule” because they were returning from light to the darkness of the cave.¹⁰⁶ This tendency to be misunderstood is perhaps best demonstrated by Josiah Quincy’s account of his and Charles Francis Adams’s visit to Nauvoo. Quincy was impressed with the city itself: “The curve in the river enclosed a position lovely enough to furnish a site for the Utopian communities of Plato or Sir Thomas More; and here was an orderly city, magnificently laid out, and teeming with activity and enterprise.” Yet Quincy could not reconcile Smith’s political achievements with Mormonism’s “monstrous claims as a religious system.” Quincy’s dichotomous views were perhaps best expressed in his opinion of the Mormon temple: “The Temple, odd and striking as it was, produced no effect that was commensurate with its cost. . . . The city of Nauvoo, with its wide streets sloping gracefully to the farms enclosed on the prairie, seemed to be a better temple to Him who prospers the work of indus-

¹⁰³Joseph Smith, “Gen. Smith’s Views on the Government and Policies of the U.S.,” *Times and Seasons* 5 (May 15, 1844): 528–33.

¹⁰⁴Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967); Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989); Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁵Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 519, 523.

¹⁰⁶Plato, *Republic*, 517 a.

trious hands than the grotesque structure on the hill, with all its queer carvings of moons and suns.” Quincy had failed to see the link between the city and the temple. Smith himself seemed aware that his agenda might have been lost on Quincy. When Quincy remarked that Smith seemed to “‘have too much power to be safely trusted to one man.’ ‘In your hands or that of any other person,’ was the reply, ‘so much power would, no doubt, be dangerous. I am the only man in the world whom it would be safe to trust with it. Remember, I am a prophet!’ The last five words were spoken in a rich comical aside, as if in hearty recognition of the ridiculous sound they might have in the ears of a Gentile.”¹⁰⁷

Socrates predicted not only that the philosopher-king would be ridiculed, but also that if “anyone tried to free [those in bondage] and lead them upward, if they could somehow get their hands on him, wouldn’t they kill him?”¹⁰⁸ Smith himself met this end. Yet Quincy’s conclusion to his reminiscences is telling: “Who can wonder that the chair of the National Executive had its place among the visions of this self-reliant man? He had already traversed the roughest part of the way to the coveted position. Born in the lowest ranks of poverty, without book-learning and with the homeliest of all human names, he had made himself at the age of thirty-nine a power upon the earth. . . . His influence, whether for good or evil, is potent to-day, and the end is not yet.”¹⁰⁹ Though Smith had not achieved all of his earthly goals, his ambitions in line with the philosopher-king would have a lasting impact.

¹⁰⁷Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past* (1883), excerpt reprinted in *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers*, edited by William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen (1958; rpt., Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1994), 135, 138, 140. Quincy concluded: “If the reader does not just know what to make of Joseph Smith, I cannot help him out of the difficulty. I myself stand helpless before the puzzle” (142).

¹⁰⁸Plato, *Republic*, 517 a.

¹⁰⁹Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 142.

LDS UNDERSTANDINGS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: RESPONDING TO THE SHIFTING CULTURAL PENDULUM

Mauro Properzi

IN RECENT YEARS, PARTICULARLY FOLLOWING the LDS Church's involvement in the debate regarding California's Proposition 8, increased criticism and public scrutiny have focused on Mormonism's stand on freedom. Many critical responses, whether coming from outsiders or insiders, and whether based on prejudice or on more careful engagement with LDS beliefs, tend to highlight a common thread. A recurrent claim is that the Church's nineteenth-century approach to freedom is inconsistent with its twenty-first-century stand.¹ Some see the Church as having changed from a powerless persecuted entity into a powerful force of persecution. Even those who offer more nuanced conclusions seem to have difficulty recognizing continuity or a solid philosophical and theological foundation in Mormonism's approach. The purpose of this

MAURO PROPERZI {mauro_properzi@byu.edu} is visiting assistant professor of religion at Brigham Young University where he teaches courses on world religions, Islam, and the Doctrine and Covenants. His main research interests are LDS-Catholic dialogue, ethics, and the intersection between psychology and spirituality.

¹See, for example, Carol Jensen, "The Mormon Church, Marriage, and Proposition 8 Hypocrisy," November 13, 2008, <http://www.opednews.com/articles/The-Mormon-Church-marriag-by-Carol-Jensen-081112-662.html> (accessed July 27, 2011).

analysis is to highlight that philosophical and theological foundation and to explore the shifting cultural backgrounds that have framed and motivated statements by LDS leaders on this topic.

Specifically, I will concentrate my remarks on LDS understandings of *religious* freedom, clearly a focus of great concern for Mormon leaders throughout the Church's history.² Indeed, as a religious institution with a specific spiritual mission, the LDS Church needs a social environment that allows or even, to some degree, facilitates that mission; Joseph Smith and all his successors have recognized the central importance of such a social environment.³ However, although this basic ideal has remained constant, the Church has had to participate in the wider American discussion about the exact nature and demarcating borders of religious freedom. In fact, although everyone seems to know instinctively what "religious freedom" and "religion" mean, these terms have been extremely difficult to define in detail with any kind of universal consensus. In the nineteenth century, Mormonism found itself on the periphery of the legal and cultural definitions of religious freedom; the Mormon call for acceptance by an American society which claimed to be religiously pluralistic went largely unheeded. Negative consequences included lack of protection for the institution and open opposition to its controversial practice of plural marriage.

Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century and through official statements by General Authorities, the LDS Church looks back at a century in which its definition of religious freedom has generally converged with wider cultural perspectives; but the current cultural perspectives exhibit tendencies that again seem to push the Mormon understanding toward the periphery. The strong historical

²Narrowing the focus is significant because "freedom," one of the most revered words in this country's culture, history, and identity, is a term with such emotional power and positive force that careful demarcations may often be overlooked. As a slogan, freedom is something you can either give or take away, something that is universally good and unquestionable. Superficial examinations of the Mormon approach often begin with this premise, thus failing to recognize the potential conflict among kinds of freedoms, their limitations, or the hierarchy among them.

³"Quotes from the Prophets on the Constitution, America, Liberty, etc.," [http:// www.latterdayconservative.com/quotes/](http://www.latterdayconservative.com/quotes/) (accessed July 27, 2011).

consciousness of LDS leaders has led them to address the issue most recently in order to prevent the Church and its practices from falling outside the protective circle of religious freedom once more. Parenthetically, I am not suggesting that the LDS approach to religious freedom has been or presently is monolithic; even in a centralized and hierarchical structure like the LDS Church, it is certainly possible to identify diverging interpretations and different areas of emphasis in relation to religious freedom and many other subjects. Yet while I am clearly presenting my own understanding of key Mormon statements in the broader milieu of LDS historical consciousness, I am confident that my focus is based on what I see as a large degree of consensus in public statements by LDS leaders, which point in the specific direction that I am about to suggest.

What I hope to demonstrate is that the normative LDS understanding of religious freedom has actually been consistent throughout the history of Mormonism. On the other hand, the understanding and implementation of religious freedom in American society has shifted significantly. Mormons have responded correctively to the oscillating pendulum of the cultural understanding of religious freedom. The LDS normative ideal has remained in the center, but wider forces have pushed the social pendulum from one extreme in the nineteenth century to the opposite side in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Consequently, nineteenth-century Mormon statements often differ in emphasis from those of the twenty-first century because they respond to forces going in contrary directions. LDS leaders have attempted to push these social forces back to the ideal center by highlighting the side they perceive to be out of balance. Without this necessary socio-historical background, which of course can be only briefly outlined in this article, one is left to observe an apparently irreconcilable contrast between a nineteenth-century “liberal” LDS viewpoint and a twenty-first century “conservative” one.

To more fully understand these dynamics it is essential to begin by identifying what I see as the consistent Mormon conception of religious freedom. Three separate though interrelated factors contribute to this broad definition: the status of civil religion, the role of government as world-maintaining rather than world-creating, and wider trends of First Amendment interpretations. In their normative forms, these concepts may be juxtaposed with LDS leaders’ perceptions of wider societal trends of religious freedom, highlighting in turn the direction or intervention that Mormon authorities have

advocated. In other words, my analysis begins and ends with the prescriptive dimension, where the present normative form appears to be distinctly shaped and affected by the historical continuum of a wider descriptive reality. Indeed, as Georgia State University history professor David Sehat has clearly and effectively demonstrated in *The Myth of American Religious Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), religious freedom must be understood within the changing context of American political and religious history.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau first defined civil religion in his renowned *The Social Contract* in 1762. In it, he highlighted the significance of civil religion as a force for cohesion and unity in a society. He saw it as a spiritual and moral foundation with a limited dogmatic core, consisting of such concepts as the existence of a deity, life beyond the grave, punishment for vice and reward for virtue, and toleration of differences in religious practices, theologies, and spiritualities.⁴ In short, civil religion is a form of public religion, associated with some rituals usually identified as “ceremonial deism.” By necessity, this arrangement requires a limited and vague philosophical foundation so that people of all different religions and denominations can build on their shared commonalities.⁵ Undoubtedly, the original context of this concept was Judeo-Christian, but it is quite possible to expand the philosophical core to include other faiths, like Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism. What is most significant about civil religion is the attempt to extract a common core that all denominations may share in the public space while maintaining their unique theological differences in the private sphere. In other words, religion is viewed as a positive force—or even a necessary

⁴Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, translated by G.D.H. Cole (1762; New York: Cosimo, 2008 printing), 126–36.

⁵“Ceremonial deism” is a term that has been used by the Supreme Court in various cases, beginning with Justice William J. Brennan’s dissenting opinion in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668 (1984), <http://supreme.justia.com/us/465/668/case.html> (accessed July 27, 2011). It states in part, “I would suggest that such practices as the designation of ‘In God We Trust’ as our national motto, or the references to God contained in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag can best be understood, in Dean Rostow’s apt phrase, as a form of ‘ceremonial deism,’ protected from Establishment Clause scrutiny chiefly because they have lost through rote repetition any significant religious content.”

force—for a peaceful, moral, and tolerant society.⁶

I see consistent evidence that Mormonism has always considered civil religion a necessary foundation for religious freedom to flourish, especially in the United States.⁷ What has changed, at least in the Mormon perspective, is the cultural American approach to civil religion as well as some of its legal authoritative interpretations in the twenty-first century vis-à-vis the nineteenth century. For Mormons in the 1800s, civil religion was not sufficiently broad. It was too specifically attached to Protestant moral and theological models of understandings that suffocated Mormonism's religious radicalism. Sehat makes one of the most recent arguments for this view, clearly outlining evidence for the fact that, in the nineteenth century, the First Amendment was applied only at the federal level, leading in turn to a public space at the state level saturated with the Protestant moral establishment. In other words, civil religion was too confession-specific and thus not sufficiently inclusive of Mormons and others whose theological and moral perspectives clashed with Protestant orthodoxy. Indeed, Joseph Smith and other leaders, using different terminology, advocated the expansion of civil religion to include a broad and basic acceptance of faith that would allow Mormonism to share the public space of civil religion and allow the toleration of its private expressions.⁸

On the other hand, there is no indication that Mormons have ever intended to completely eliminate civil religion or to reduce all re-

⁶Sociologist Robert N. Bellah highlighted the inextricable link between patriotism and civil religion in America in his highly debated "Civil Religion in America," *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 96 (Winter 1967): 1–21.

⁷For example, it would seem somewhat contradictory for Mormon leaders to repeatedly insist that the U.S. Constitution is divinely inspired in its content while also affirming that that same Constitution ultimately advocates an utter removal of religion from the public sphere. This approach essentially leaves God as socially unacknowledgeable, further complicating the application of the LDS theological "monism," which breaks down any separation between the sacred and the banal. Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37–51.

⁸LDS leaders uttered many protests against religious persecution both before and during the practice of plural marriage. For example, Brit-

ligious expressions to the private sphere.⁹ If atheism is a spiritual or moral problem at the individual level of explanation, as LDS leaders would certainly affirm, it is even more of a threat at the societal level if strictly enforced in the public sphere of expression. In fact, such enforcement would largely correspond to an elimination of civil religion, which, as already discussed and as emphasized by Mormon lead-

ish-born John Taylor exclaimed, "Where the laws that protect all men in their religious opinions? Where the laws that say a man shall worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience? What say ye, ye saints, ye who are exiles in the land of LIBERTY. How came you here? Can you in this land of equal rights return in safety to your possessions in Missouri? No!—You are exiles from thence, and there is no power, no voice, no arm to redress your grievances. . . . Are we now indeed in a land of liberty of freedom, of equal rights? Would to God I could answer yes; but no! no!! I cannot. They have robbed us, we are stripped of our possessions, many of our friends are slain, and our government says 'your cause is just, but we can do nothing for you.'" John Taylor, "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 13 (July 15, 1844): 578–79, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8375> (accessed July 27, 2011).

⁹Joseph Smith did not use the term "civil religion" but a combination of his view on the government's responsibility to guarantee freedom of religion (as contained in D&C 134, for example) with his belief on America's divine destiny leads to a picture of society that approximates Rousseau's "civil religion." True, Joseph Smith and other leaders throughout the nineteenth century adjusted their stand somewhat in consequence of persecution and their perception of the U.S. government. As Richard Bushman explained, "Joseph Smith's thought evolved as he went through life. Initially, the city (Nauvoo) was just a place for Mormons, a 'come-ye-out-of-Babylon-into-Zion' gathering place. But by the time he got to Nauvoo, Joseph Smith saw the city as more open. . . . He seemingly had no sense that church and state should be separated. He gave no hint that he was going to give up his religious offices if he were to become president of the United States. . . . There is an American dream of a goodly society. Joseph Smith's word for his own political philosophy was 'theo-democracy': God and the people." "Mormonism and Democratic Politics: Are They Compatible?" May 14, 2007, <http://pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Mormonism-and-Politics-Are-They-Compatible.aspx> (accessed July 27, 2011). In short, Mormons may have vacillated between "theo-democracy" and "theocracy," but they never envisioned a fully secular public society as the ideal world to live in.

ers, represents one of the core guarantors of religious freedom. Indeed, radical secularism, as a perspective that views the public sphere as ideally devoid of all religious elements, may be considered as functionally atheistic when it comes to the role of religion in public life, and contemporary Mormon leaders speak about it precisely in these terms. Therefore, whereas civil religion was too specific and not sufficiently broad in nineteenth-century America, it may now decline and possibly disappear because secular moral and philosophical perspectives have become so prominent in the public sphere that they are displacing civil religion or redefining it in secular terms. Civil religion, as commonly understood, is incompatible with radical secularism that is intolerant of any public expression associated with religion.

This concern is evident in several recent statements by LDS leaders who aim to defend the legitimacy of civil religion, to advocate its priority over non-theistic worldviews, and to denounce the progressive reduction of civil religion's foundational dogma. On June 10, 2010, Elder Russell M. Nelson expressed it in the following terms to an audience of Boston LDS youth:

Unfortunately, good culture alone is not strong enough to cause good culture to endure in perpetuity. Additional strength is needed from the power of theistic conviction. For this reason, a policy to separate completely church and state could become completely counterproductive. Theistic forces would be erased and atheistic forces would be allowed to flourish unopposed in the public square. The theistic and noble concept of "freedom of religion," could be twisted and turned to become an atheistic "freedom from religion." Such an unbalanced policy could sweep out theistic forces for societal success and leave the field wide open to atheistic ideology, secularism, suffering huge losses for all.¹⁰

Apostle Dallin H. Oaks has spoken extensively and repeatedly on the same subject, especially on February 4, 2011, at Chapman University, an institution affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Orange, California:

I believe the diminished value being attached to religious freedom

¹⁰Russell M. Nelson, "Apostle Talks Religious Freedom to Boston Youth," June 17, 2010 (the report is dated a week later than the talk itself) <http://newsroom.lds.org/blog/apostle-talks-religious-freedom-to-boston-youth> (accessed July 27, 2011).

stems from the ascendancy of moral relativism. Moral relativism leads to a loss of respect for religion and even to anger against religion and the guilt that is seen to flow from it. As it diminishes religion, it encourages the proliferation of rights that claim ascendancy over the free exercise of religion. As fewer and fewer citizens believe in God and in the existence of the moral absolutes taught by religious leaders, the importance of religious freedom to the totality of our citizens is diminished. . . . We must never see the day when the public square is not open to religious ideas and religious persons. The religious community must unite to be sure we are not coerced or deterred into silence by the kinds of intimidation or threatening rhetoric that are being experienced.¹¹

In short, current Mormon leaders object to a state of affairs very different from the one experienced in the nineteenth century. Their modern arguments aim to prevent and slow the persecution of religion in general whereas earlier LDS leaders focused on denouncing the persecution of a single religious minority that did not fit the American mainstream.

To be sure, civil religion does not have a life of its own; it is demarcated, sustained, and defined by governmental, cultural, and legal dynamics. Therefore, to acquire a more cohesive picture of the Mormon perspective on religious freedom, it is important to briefly address LDS understandings of government, both in their normative and in their descriptive dimensions. Again, I find consistency in LDS definitions of the role of an ideal government as outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 134 and in more recent statements by Church leaders. LDS leaders subscribe to an approach, firmly rooted in the foundations of liberalism, which distinguishes between world-maintaining and world-creating functions of government. The government's primary function is to be world-maintaining—i.e., to preserve individual choices in the pursuit of happiness through freedom of religious conscience. The way in which government should fulfill this responsibility is by maintaining a public space in which different worldviews can coexist without excessive conflict. According to this classical liberal perspective, government is to act as a referee in keeping conflict within fair and reasonable bounds, and not as a legislator that creates

¹¹Dallin H. Oaks, "Transcript of Elder Dallin H. Oaks's Speech Given at Chapman University School of Law," February 4, 2011 <http://newsroom.lds.org/article/elder-oaks-religious-freedom-Chapman-University> (accessed July 27, 2011).

and imposes a uniform purpose of life for society and its members. In this view, government should act as a neutral mediator between conflicting worldviews, and its main purpose should be to facilitate their peaceful coexistence.¹²

At the same time, it should be recognized that idealism about the liberal government in the early American republic has waned to some degree in both the LDS and the wider American consciousness. Yet even though postmodern forces and historical dynamics have challenged the ideal of a government as exclusively world-maintaining and as leaving all world-creating functions to personal and social forces, the core of this philosophy has never really been challenged. For the Mormon perspective, disillusionment came quite early and found its temporary apex in the Utah theocratic experience. As the Saints found themselves excluded from the acceptable world-creating forces of the nineteenth century, they challenged the government for failing to fulfill its world-maintaining mission and for effectively taking upon itself a world-creating purpose of its own. As seen previously, if there were any world-creating function that was appropriate for government in the LDS perspective, that function had to be restricted to a civil religion that did not give preference to specific forms of religion over others.

In the twenty-first century, the challenge is both similar and different, according to several Mormon leaders. It is similar because the government—and in most specific cases, the judiciary—is often accused of having overstepped its bounds by taking upon itself a world-creating role. For example, Elder Lance Wickman, emeritus General Authority and current General Counsel of the LDS Church, on February 11, 2010, outlined a chronology of legal decisions which “reflects a definite diminishing of the role of religion in the public square and a marked increase in skepticism toward the free exercise of religion.” Speaking at BYU’s J. Reuben Clark Law School, Wickman concluded: “A battle is looming over the effort to acquire civil social rights at the expense of civil religious rights. This battle represents the acceleration of a disturbing slide downward in the law re-

¹²The terms “world-creating” and “world-maintaining” were used by Chief Justice Warren Burger in *Bob Jones University v. United States*, 102 S. Ct. 2017 (1983). See Robert Cover, “The Supreme Court 1982 Term, Forward: Nomos and Narrative,” *Harvard Law Review* 97 (November 1983): 4.

garding the place of religion in the public square.”¹³ Furthermore, Elder Oaks, who served as a Utah Supreme Court judge prior to becoming an apostle, stated at the Utah Constitution Day Celebration in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle on September 17, 2010:

Our system of law clearly contemplates that judges will make law as well as interpret it. Appellate courts inevitably make law as they interpret legislative enactments that are ambiguous or contradictory. . . . None of these lawmaking functions of judges is subject to criticism as judicial activism, because if the popularly elected lawmakers don't like these judicial actions, they can change them by legislation. In my opinion, the judicial lawmaking that has been legitimately criticized as judicial activism concerns the interpretation of state and federal constitutions. This kind of judicial action is not reversible by the popularly elected lawmakers, and cannot even be changed by the sovereign people except in those unusual circumstances in which a constitutional amendment is feasible. If such judicial action sets aside laws enacted or approved by a direct vote of the people, it offends two fundamentals: separation of powers and popular sovereignty. The question that should always be asked in constitutional adjudication is, “Is this a matter that the sovereign people in our democracy ought to decide through their popularly elected lawmakers, or is it a matter that our constitution clearly assigns to judges not directly accountable to the popular will?”¹⁴

To be sure, Mormon objections to Supreme Court interpretations of constitutionality are not limited to recent decades, since the well-known case of *Reynolds v. United States* (1879) ultimately led to the

¹³Elder Lance B. Wickman, “The Threatened Demise of Religion in the Public Square,” address at the J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University, February 11, 2010, <http://newsroom.lds.org/article/the-threatened-demise-of-religion-in-the-public-square-talk-given-by-elder-lance-b-wickman-at-j-reuben-clark-law-society> (accessed July 27, 2011). Legal decisions he mentions include *Everson v. Board of Education*, *Epperson v. Arkansas*, *Stone v. Graham*, *Marsh v. Chambers*, *Edwards v. Aguillard*, *County of Allegheny v. ACLU*, *Lee v. Weisman*, *Sherbert v. Verner*, *Smith v. Employment Division*, *Christian Legal Society v. Martinez*, and *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*.

¹⁴Dallin H. Oaks, “Fundamentals of Our Constitution,” address at the Utah Constitution Day Celebration, Salt Lake Tabernacle, September 17, 2010, <http://newsroom.lds.org/article/fundamentals-of-our-constitutions-elder-dallin-h-oaks> (accessed July 27, 2011).

end of the LDS practice of plural marriage. Yet in relation to the nineteenth century, the present challenge is different because it is not a particular religious orthodoxy that is being unduly supported or rejected; rather, it is a nonreligious perspective, or a secular orthodoxy, that is being upheld, causing a slow erosion of all forms of civil religion. Still, the end result is similar, as American Mormons fear that they will find themselves outside the circle of acceptance, like their predecessors in the nineteenth century. Twenty-first-century LDS statements build on specific trends that point in this worrisome direction, most recently the February 2012 decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to uphold *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*'s interpretation of Proposition 8 as unconstitutional.¹⁵ The LDS Church's public response to this decision expressed regret that the judiciary has taken upon itself a world-creating role since "California voters have twice determined in a general election that marriage should be recognized as only between a man and a woman. . . . Courts should not alter that definition, especially when the people of California have spoken so clearly on the subject."¹⁶

As already noted, what has worried LDS leaders in relation to this and other rulings is the reinforced message, whether explicit or implied, that "religious" moral discourse should not play any role in the judiciary shaping of the moral framework of society as legally defined, even when expressed by the democratic majority. This trend is perceived to ultimately delegitimize civil religion as an acceptable voice in the public debate about morality; consequently, there are significant doubts that a secular government which has largely extirpated civil religion from its foundations can be truly fair to religion rather than becoming ultimately antagonistic to it. However, one must ask: Is it truly possible for a government to remain perfectly neutral in the philosophical and moral conflict between theistic and nontheistic world-views? If there is no perfectly neutral world-maintaining possibility for government, a conclusion that is anathema for liberals of the purist kind but probably increasingly realistic to many

¹⁵The February 7, 2012, ruling (133 pages) is available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/80680002/10-16696-398-Decision> (accessed March 1, 2012).

¹⁶"Church Issues Statement on Appeals Court Prop 8 Ruling," February 7, 2012, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-issues-statement-appeals-court-prop-8-ruling> (accessed February 10, 2012).

other thinkers, Mormon leaders advocate the primacy of religious freedom and the associated necessity of civil religion over other kinds of freedoms with which religious liberty may stand in conflict.

To explore the argument for the primacy of religious freedoms over other kinds of liberties, we must turn to the founding document of this nation, specifically to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as contained in the Bill of Rights. Although it may be difficult for any individual to articulate the exact meaning of the ideal of religious freedom, there is widespread agreement on where to look for guidance on the topic: the First Amendment. Mormons are no exception. Although nineteenth-century references generally focused on the Constitution rather than specifically mentioning the First Amendment, it is evident from most contexts that the First Amendment was the real focus of attention. The First Amendment was understood as the guarantor of religious freedom, and its two clauses were viewed as complementary in fulfilling this same objective. Recently Mormon leaders have recognized that, culturally and legally, the two First Amendment clauses related to religious freedom have often been placed in tension with each other, or, as Wickman stated regarding *Epperson v. Arkansas* (1968), “The Free Exercise Clause was used as a sword to strike at religion instead of a shield to protect it.”¹⁷

Let us first examine what these clauses actually state. The first part of the First Amendment, which is concerned with religion, states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion” (known as “the establishment clause”) and then continues with “or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (which is the “free exercise clause”). It is not difficult to see how Mormons, among others, have recognized that the text suggests an inherent complementarity between the two clauses. It could even be argued that the connecting link between the two, namely the preposition “or,” may imply synonymous status. Indeed, both clauses have the same objective, although it should be noted that one clause can represent the negative and the other the positive side of the coin. The negative side is that “there is to be no establishment of religion,” and the positive side emerges from the double negative of “no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion.”

Furthermore, if one places the two clauses in functional sequence, it can be argued that the former leads to the latter or that

¹⁷Wickman, “The Threatened Demise of Religion in the Public Square.”

the free exercise of religion depends on “no establishment” in order to become actualized. In short, if establishment of religion increases, free exercise of religion decreases; and if establishment decreases, free exercise increases. The establishment clause has its *raison d’être* in the free exercise clause. At the same time, LDS leaders argue that, if the establishment clause is interpreted to mean the complete elimination of religious ideas and values from the public space, then the free exercise clause, which should have functional priority, is heavily damaged. In fact, as previously explained, Mormons have not understood the establishment clause to implicitly deny civil religion; and current LDS leaders speak with concern about the increasing tendency to prioritize debatable “civil” rights over religious rights, or the Fourteenth Amendment over the First Amendment, which seems to run parallel to emphasizing the establishment clause as opposed to the free exercise clause.¹⁸

Dallin H. Oaks spoke specifically on this subject to his Chapman University audience: “I, of course, maintain that unless religious freedom has a unique position we erase the significance of this separate provision in the First Amendment. Treating actions based on religious belief the same as actions based on other systems of belief is not enough to satisfy the special guarantee of religious freedom in the United States Constitution. Religion must preserve its preferred status in our pluralistic society in order to make its unique contribution—its recognition and commitment to values

¹⁸The Fourteenth Amendment’s “equal protection clause” states that “no state shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Supporters of same-sex marriage have generally argued that any law limiting marriage to between a man and a woman fails to uphold the equal protection clause. Opponents have debated the extent to which marriage represents a civil right and whether the equal protection clause should go as far as redefining the institution of marriage in its fundamental purposes for society. Therefore, tensions extend beyond the internal relationship between the clauses of the First Amendment into the relationship between the First and the Fourteenth Amendment, at least for the specific issue of same-sex marriage. Since the focus of this paper is on LDS perspectives of religious freedom I have chosen to highlight statements and perspectives on the First Amendment.

that transcend the secular world.”¹⁹

Others, such as Apostle Quentin L. Cook, have emphasized the democratic value of allowing religious voices to be included in public debates. In October 2010 general conference, he stated: “In our increasingly unrighteous world, it is essential that values based on religious belief be part of the public discourse. Moral positions informed by a religious conscience must be accorded equal access to the public square.”²⁰ These and other messages from Mormon leaders have emerged in consequence of the strong criticism the LDS Church has received about its opposition to gay marriage. LDS leaders recognize renewed attempts to demonize or silence those whose views on the subject are informed by theological reasons and are concerned about the ultimate consequences of such patterns on religious freedom. To quote Elder Oaks at Chapman again:

The conclusion: Religious expressions are to be overridden by the fundamental right to “sexual liberty.” All of this shows an alarming trajectory of events pointing toward constraining the freedom of religious speech by forcing it to give way to the “rights” of those offended by such speech. If that happens, we will have criminal prosecution of those whose religious doctrines or speech offend those whose public influence and political power establish them as an officially protected class. A few generations ago the idea that religious organizations and religious persons would be unwelcome in the public square would have been unthinkable. Now, such arguments are prominent enough to cause serious concern. It is not difficult to see a conscious strategy to neutralize the influence of religion and churches and religious motivations on any issues that could be characterized as public policy.²¹

¹⁹Oaks, “Speech Given at Chapman University School of Law.”

²⁰Elder Quentin L. Cook, “Let There Be Light!” general conference address, October 2010, <http://lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/let-there-be-light?lang=eng&query=let+there+light> (accessed July 27, 2011).

²¹Oaks, “Speech Given at Chapman University School of Law.” In this paper I have chosen to use only official LDS Church statements or quotations by General Authorities. However, useful articulations of the position I have been describing can often be found in the *Deseret News*, a newspaper owned by the LDS Church but not writing officially in its name. For example, several *Deseret News* editorials and op-ed pieces have pinpointed evidence in support of the claim that many gay lobbyists will not be satisfied

If we turn back to the nineteenth century, it may seem an ironic fact that Mormons were then advocating rather than opposing a radical definition of marriage. Yet there is a core similarity between the two positions, which are over a century apart, that must not be overlooked. In both circumstances Mormons make their arguments in terms of *religious* rights by emphasizing the importance and priority of religious freedom over other considerations. Apostle Orson Pratt, in his landmark 1852 defense of plural marriage, made exactly this point:

I think, if I am not mistaken, that the constitution gives the privilege to all the inhabitants of this country, of the free exercise of their religious notions, and the freedom of their faith, and the practice of it. Then, if it can be proven to a demonstration, that the Latter-day Saints have actually embraced, as a part and portion of their religion, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, it is constitutional. And should there ever be laws enacted by this government to restrict them from the free exercise of this part of their religion, such laws must be unconstitutional.²²

Similarly, in present circumstances LDS leaders use arguments of religious freedom to support their opposition to gay marriage. Indeed, since the arguments in favor of gay marriage are *not* generally based on religious belief, but instead on ideas of civil or sexual rights, plural marriage and gay marriage are theologically and historically incomparable. At the same time, there is no denying that religious rights cannot trample all other rights, especially when these rights conflict with each other. For this reason the LDS Church has issued statements supporting some rights for same-sex couples and decrying discrimination and violence against them in line with the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, especially its Equal Protection Clause. At the same time Mormon leaders do not see civil rights to be so broadly inclusive as to extend into a redefinition of marriage in a

until all voices opposing or condemning a gay lifestyle will be silenced. See, for example, "Agreeing to Disagree," editorial, May 30, 2011, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700139698/Agreeing-to-disagree.html> (accessed July 27, 2011), and Lane Williams, "Gay Marriage Debate Shows Threat to Religious Freedom," July 4, 2011, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705375668/Gay-marriage-debate-shows-threat-to-religious-freedom.html> (accessed July 27, 2011).

²²Orson Pratt, August 29, 1852, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 1:54.

direction that transcends gender.²³

We should also remember that LDS concerns for religious freedom predate the issue of same-sex marriage. Indeed, the Church's significant involvement in the successful efforts that led to the passage of the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act indicates that religious freedom has been of primary concern to LDS leaders for quite some time.²⁴ This concern is presently manifested through increasing references to the importance of religious freedom in light of the negative trajectory previously described, which many Mormon leaders anticipate. As the number of people who consider themselves nonreligious or who consider religion to be destabilizing and fragmenting rather than a positive social force increases, legal decisions may follow public opinion. Free exercise of religion involving any hint of religious speech or behavior in public space may come to be seen as infringing on the rights of others, of nonbelievers in particular.

Thus, the government will increasingly be called to correct perceived excesses in the free exercise of religion with the stated objective of fulfilling its liberal world-maintaining purpose while, conversely, it will necessarily take a world-creating role by progressively removing civil religion and thus undermining the foundations of religious freedom. One of the ways in which this will take place, or has already taken place, is through judicial decisions tightening the interpretation of the establishment clause (as well as the due process clause) by using it to "correct" perceived imbalances of the free exercise clause. In this context, the presence of religious speech, symbols,

²³See, for example, "Text from LDS Church regarding Salt Lake City's Non-Discrimination Ordinance," *Deseret News*, November 11, 2009, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705343561/Text-from-LDS-church-regarding-Salt-Lake-Citys-non-discrimination-ordinance.html> (accessed July 27, 2011). Other *Deseret News* articles have emphasized that a compromise, which guarantees basic rights for all individuals while also protecting the definition of marriage, is both possible and desirable. See Sarah Israelsen-Hartley, "Colliding Causes: Gay Rights and Religious Liberty," February 12, 2012, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700224421/Gay-Liberty.html> (accessed February 13, 2012).

²⁴"Religious Freedom Restoration Act: 'Historic Legislation Signed into Law'," *Church News*, November 20, 1993, <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23993/Religious-Freedom-Restoration-Act-Historic-legislation-signed-into-law.html> (accessed July 27, 2011).

or behaviors in the public sphere is and will be interpreted as favoring religion over lack of religion, or as a form of religious interference in government, which is discriminatory toward those who do not subscribe to any religious beliefs.

Whether this trajectory will fully materialize is subject to debate, and Mormon voices are both supported and opposed by other analysts who evaluate the current state of religious freedom. On the more pessimistic side of the spectrum, Kenneth Craycraft, professor of theology turned attorney, has argued in *The American Myth of Religious Freedom* (2d ed., Dallas, Tex.: Spence Publishing, 2008) that orthodox practitioners of various religions have never enjoyed the same degree of religious freedom as secular citizens. On the other hand, David Sehat, in his *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*, juxtaposes the present condition to the nineteenth-century condition as he implicitly praises the greater freedom found in these days of decreased presence of religion in the public space when opposed to the Protestant establishment of the past. Another interesting work is *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), by University of Buffalo law professor Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, in which she claims that the religion clauses of the Constitution should be repealed because a unique constitutional privilege for religion makes it a state-sponsored freedom; instead, she argues, the law should not engage religion in any measure or degree. In short, the issue continues to be highly debated; and although the particular LDS perspective highlighted in this paper appears to be in the minority in the present American discourse on the subject, it is certainly not a lone voice.²⁵

In conclusion, my intent has not been to offer a full evaluation of

²⁵Most recent legal and legislative decisions also point in different directions when it comes to the resolution of these tensions. On the one hand, religious freedom was strengthened by the unanimous January 11, 2012, Supreme Court decision (*Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission et al.*) to uphold the “ministerial exception” which does not apply federal employment anti-discrimination laws to religious organizations, <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/10-553.pdf> (accessed February 11, 2012). On the other hand, a little over a week later, on January 20, 2012, religious freedom was challenged by the Obama administration mandate that religious employers cover birth control for employees. Even though, following a large

the Mormon perspective nor a normative overview of religious freedom in America. Rather, my intent has been to outline Mormonism's core philosophical foundation relative to religious freedom and American constitutionalism. I have attempted to demonstrate that Mormon approaches to religious freedom in the nineteenth century vis-à-vis the twenty-first are indeed characterized by some visible differences but in the context of a foundational similarity. A significant continuity is found in the Mormon normative ideal of religious freedom expressed in both historical settings. LDS leaders, especially recently, have advocated the need for a society where religious faith and practice are viewed as positive forces to be protected and valued. Yet the need for "civil religion" was affirmed in the nineteenth century as well, as indicated by a *Times and Seasons* editorial published in March 1844, possibly written by Joseph Smith himself three months prior to his death:

We have looked with abhorrence [sic] upon the monster, and shrink from the idea of introducing any thing that would in the least deprive us of our freedom, or reduce us to a state of religious vassalage . . . in consequence of a union between church and state. . . but while we would deprecate any alliance having a tendency to deprive the sons of liberty of their rights, we cannot but think that the course taken by many of our politicians is altogether culpable, that the division is extending too far, and that in our jealousy lest a union of this kind should take place, we have thrust out God from all of our political movements, and seem to regard the affairs of the nation as that over which the great Jehovah's providence, has no control, about which his direction or interposition, never should be sought, and as a thing conducted and directed by human wisdom alone. . . . Certainly if any person ought to interfere in political matters it should be those whose minds and judgments are influenced by correct principles religious as well as political; otherwise those persons professing religion would have to be governed by those who make no professions; be subject to their rule; have the law and word of God trampled under foot and become as wicked as Sodom

outcry, the rule was somewhat adjusted, the issue has remained highly controversial and is presently being challenged in court for its constitutionality. Grant Shulte, "7 States Challenge Birth Control Coverage Rule," Associated Press, February 23, 2012, <http://www.ksl.com/?nid=157&sid=19341132> (accessed February 23, 2012).

and as corrupt as Gomorrah, and be prepared for final destruction.²⁶

Within this context of civil religion, other elements of continuity between the past and the present include a view of government as ideally fulfilling a world-maintaining purpose rather than a world-creating one and a view of the First Amendment of the Constitution that never undermines the significance of the free exercise clause vis-à-vis the establishment clause.

The diversity of emphasis in Mormon discourse has come as LDS leaders have responded to shifting cultural patterns that frame the political and legal discussion of religious freedom. One of the most visible differences between the past and the present Mormon perception is the move away from a rhetoric of self-defense to a more ecumenical tone that always frames the issue as a need to defend the freedoms of all people of faith, regardless of denomination. Although this need was certainly recognized in the nineteenth century, the historical context highlighted a polemical tone of conflict toward other denominations.²⁷ Today, Mormon leaders regularly appeal to unity with other religions for the common purpose of protecting religious freedom. While a specific institutional interest in the outcome

²⁶"Religion and Politics," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 6 (March 15, 1844): 470–71, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/8375> (accessed July 27, 2011).

²⁷An example that highlights an accepting rather than a critical approach to other Christian denominations is found in an ordinance issued by the Nauvoo City Council on March 1, 1841, and signed by Mayor John C. Bennett. It stated in part: "Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, that the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Latter-day Saints, Quakers, Episcopalians, Universalists, Unitarians, Mohammedans, and all other religious sects and denominations whatever, shall have free toleration, and equal privileges, in this city; and should any person be guilty of ridiculing, and abusing or otherwise depreciating another in consequence of his religion, or of disturbing or interrupting any religious meeting within the limits of this city, he shall, on conviction thereof before the Mayor or Municipal Court, be considered a disturber of the public peace, and fined in any sum not exceeding five hundred dollars, or imprisoned not exceeding six months, or both, at the discretion of said Mayor or Court." In Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, eds., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1836 to 1844, Part 2* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 518.

is obviously present, this approach is also a way to reaffirm the good and the common foundations of all religions in an age of increased disbelief.

As a person with a passionate interest in interreligious dialogue, I cannot help but welcome this development. Were it not for this danger of loss of religious freedom commonly identified by Mormons and Catholics, for example, I do not know whether it would have taken another decade or more to have a cardinal speak to the Brigham Young University student body as Cardinal Francis George did in February 2010.²⁸ Although the common battle in support of religious freedom will probably fail to strengthen relationships with some Evangelical Christians and may exacerbate differences with radical liberals, I hope it will at least build better understanding between Mormons and many other religions, hopefully not only at the top leadership but also at the general membership level.

²⁸Cardinal Francis George, quoted in "Catholics and Latter-day Saints: Partners in the Defense of Religious Freedom," address at Brigham Young University, February 23, 2010, <http://old.usccb.org/seia/catholics-latter-day-saints.pdf> (accessed February 25, 2012).

JOSEPH SMITH, ROMANTICISM, AND TRAGIC CREATION

Terryl L. Givens

JOSEPH SMITH, AS I THINK HISTORIANS readily recognize, has much to commend him as a Romantic thinker. Personal freedom was as sacred to him as to the young Schiller, his emphasis on individualism invites comparison with Byron and Emerson, his view of restoration as inspired syncretism is the religious equivalent of Friedrich Schlegel's "progressive universal poetry," his hostility to dogma and creeds evokes Blake's cry, "I must create my own system or be enslaved by another man's," and his celebration of human innocence and human potential transform into theology what Rousseau and Goethe had merely plumbed through the novel and the drama. Even his teachings on preexistence were in line with kindred views of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Goethe—all of whose meditations on preexistence can be seen as variations of what philosopher Charles Taylor considers Romanticism's great moral innovation: "We are called to live up to our originality," because each being is "capable of [radical] self-articulation."¹ But true human authenticity, of course, must be grounded in an

TERRYL L. GIVENS {tgivens@richmond.edu} is professor of literature and religion and James A. Bostwick Chair of English at the University of Richmond. His most recent publications include *When Souls Had Wings: Premortal Life in Western Thought* (New York: Oxford, 2010) and, with Matthew Grow, Parley P. Pratt: *The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford, 2011). He is currently at work on a history of Mormon thought.

¹Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cam-

existence that is uncreated and eternal, which is why Joseph, like the Romantics, found the necessary basis of human originality and self-articulation in premortal life. Only thereby could Joseph the Romantic affirm humans as one of what he called “the three independent principles” of the universe.²

But there are strains in Joseph Smith that seem utterly incompatible with the essence of Romanticism. Joseph was—and there seems no way around this—an uncompromising legalist. Personally, I have found this the most vexing and incongruous dimension to Joseph the man, the prophet, and the theologian. A legalistic vocabulary dominated his religious thought: Authority, priesthood, laws, and ordinances were everything. “There is no salvation,” he declared, “without a legal administrator.” That title he applied to Zachariah, John, and even Jesus Christ;³ the prophet is whoever holds “keys,” and the exact “order and ordinances of the Kingdom” were non-negotiable, set in stone “by the Priesthood in the council of heaven before the world was.”⁴ In Oliver Cowdery’s 1834 version of Mormonism’s articles of faith, he wrote: “We believe that God is the same in all ages; and that it requires the same holiness, purity, and religion, to save a man now, as it did anciently.”⁵ In Joseph’s final version, that belief drops out, to be replaced by “a man must be called of God . . . by the laying on hands, by those who are in authority, to . . . administer in the ordinances” of the gospel.⁶

Months before Joseph died, his reliance on such legal power climaxed in a shocking invocation of form and authority over either God’s grace or personal virtue: “If you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be Crafty, the first thing you do go & seal on

bridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 375.

²William Clayton’s Private Book, May 16, 1841, in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Books, 1991), 74.

³James Burgess, Notebook, July 23, 1843, in *ibid.*, 235.

⁴Franklin D. Richards, “Scriptural Items,” in *ibid.*, 215.

⁵“Address,” *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 1 (October 1834): 2.

⁶Joseph Smith, “Church History,” in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith. Volume 1: Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 436-37.

earth your sons & daughters unto yourself, & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory, & go ahead and not go back, but use a little Craftiness & seal all you can. . . . I will walk through the gate of heaven and Claim what I seal & those that follow me and my council.”⁷ He sounds here as if he is prepared to out-lawyer St. Peter himself.

This is the seeming inconsistency at the heart of Joseph Smith that I want to examine today. Is there a way to make sense of these fiercely opposed tendencies in Joseph’s gospel vision? I am hoping that a broad vision of his era might help. I propose to set the stage for this conversation about Joseph Smith with what I consider the two most momentous intellectual innovations of the eighteenth century, one by William Herschel and one by Edmund Burke. And I want to position Joseph as a prophet caught up in, and yet resisting, certain developments called Romanticism in his contemporary cultural milieu. In spite of my focus on intellectual contexts, I am not going to make any claims about derivation, or influence, for two reasons. First, in Joseph’s own conception of prophetic vocation, he emphatically resists facile notions of originality or intellectual theft. His words make clear, I believe, that he considered restoration a process of inspired eclecticism and assimilation. And second, as Lord Acton said, “Few discoveries are more irritating than those which expose the pedigree of an idea.”⁸ I set the stage, rather, that we may have a fuller appreciation of how Joseph’s religious conceptions represented a particularly prescient engagement with the shifting currents of his day.

In 1789, as revolutionaries in France were reshaping the political order, the leading astronomer of the age, William Herschel, was shifting the cosmic paradigm. His paper on “The Construction of the Heavens,” published by the Royal Society in 1785, effected a change in the Western world’s cosmic vision more dramatic than Copernicus’s replacement of an earth-centered system by a heliocentric one. For generations of thinkers, God’s supreme perfections had seemed to suggest that the universe He created was likewise flawless and complete when He laid down His celestial instruments. When He pronounced His labors good and rested from His efforts, the perfectly or-

⁷Wilford Woodruff, Journal, March 10, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 331.

⁸Lord Acton, “Review of Sir Erskine May’s *Democracy in Europe*,” 1878, quoted in F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 57.

dered cosmos had naught to do but hum along in sublime harmony until the end of time.

At first, Herschel's astronomical observations through his telescopes of unprecedented power and precision only confirmed the infinitude of God's domain, revealing star systems beyond star systems in unending procession. But Herschel quickly perceived that he was observing a universe in a process of continual disruption, upheaval, and transformation on a colossal scale. He described "extensive combinations," stars in process of "condensation," others in retreat or in collision. "When, at the same time that a cluster of stars is forming in one part of space, there may be another collecting in a different, but perhaps no far distant quarter, which may occasion a mutual approach towards their common center of gravity. . . . As a natural consequence of the former cases, there will be formed great cavities or vacancies by the retreat of the stars towards the various centers which attract them." The whole was a scene of such violent contestation that he admitted surprise that the entirety did not "tend to a general destruction, by the shock of one star's falling upon another."⁹ Indeed, as one writer has summarized the import of Herschel's shocking discovery, he "completely overturned any residual idea of a stable, overarching, temple-like universe, created once and for all by the great Celestial Architect" and replaced it with a dynamic cosmos of waxing and waning worlds, "fluid movements and changes."¹⁰

Becoming versus Being, Process versus Perfection, Creation, Time, and Eternity—on diverse interpretations of such principles hang theologies, cosmologies, and philosophical systems. Five years after Herschel's essay, William Blake gave the new age its mantra when he wrote that "without contraries is no progression."¹¹ The long nineteenth century would see Blake's assertion elaborated across the entire span of intellectual achievement. The Great Chain of Being, unchallenged paradigm of a static, orderly, and harmonious

⁹William Herschel, "On the Construction of the Heavens," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 75 (1785): 216.

¹⁰Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science* (London: HarperCollins, 2008), 191–92.

¹¹William Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," *The Poetical Works of William Blake* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1905), 332.

universe, was buried beneath the emergent model of chaos, flux, radical transformation, and conflict. Thomas Malthus wrote in 1798 that human populations and natural resources were in perpetual collision, resulting in a planetary legacy of famine, disease, and calamity. G. W. Hegel made the violent confrontation of a thesis with its antithesis the interpretive key to human history. Marx made matter rather than spirit the foundational principle, and transformed Hegel's dialectic into the most influential political theory of succeeding generations. Darwin rewrote the human understanding of the natural world and God's place in it by accounting for the diversity and splendor of all creation in terms of unrelenting competition within and between species. If there was one prevailing sense in which Joseph Smith was a child of his age, it was in the avidity with which he translated this Romantic paradigm of *agon*, or struggle, into theological terms. The result pervaded his cosmology, his human anthropology, and even his doctrine of Deity.

To characterize creation as an ongoing project is quintessentially Romantic. Process was for all of them more important than product. Joseph combined the dynamism of Herschel's cosmos with the catastrophism of George Cuvier, when he announced: "This Earth has been organized out of portions of other Globes that [have] been Disorganized," he said. "Organized and formed out of other planets which were broke[n] up and remodeled and made into the one on which we live." He added, "This earth was not the first of God's work," and clearly it would not be the last.¹² As to humans, Joseph makes them co-participants with Deity itself in the ongoing project of world creation. Filtered through Pratt's rhetoric, Joseph's vision seems pure Herschel here as well: "Thus perfected, the whole family will . . . continue to organize, people, redeem, and perfect other systems which are now in the womb of chaos."¹³ And even Deity itself becomes at Joseph's hands the most moved, rather than the unmoved, mover—not just in His infinite empathy, not just in His endowment with body, parts, and passions, but in His emergence out of a murky past, in a continuing process, and who will yet continue to advance from glory to glory. Herschel's "Construction of the Heavens"

¹²William P. McIntire, Minute Book, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 61.

¹³Parley P. Pratt, "Materiality," *Millennial Star* 6, no. 2 (July 1, 1845): 19–22.

was, in other words, an appropriate prelude, and a resonant counterpart, to the cosmic stories Joseph would unfold.

Joseph was inclined to be off and running with the essence of Romantic religion. There seemed to be a clear impulse on his part to embrace the full implications of a universe of freedom, progress, and limitlessness: no creeds to constrain, no arbitrary rules or rituals to hinder. It was an impulse that animated myriads of his contemporaries. Augustine's position, embraced for a thousand years and more, was no longer tenable. Some ask, he had written, "if it was Adam and Eve who sinned, what did we poor wretches do? . . . My response is brief: let them be silent and stop murmuring."¹⁴ But by the nineteenth century, Calvinism collapsed under the onus of a fire-breathing God. Edward Beecher, son of Lyman and brother to Henry Ward, was himself part of the new wave that rebelled against the traditions of the fathers: "The inherited religious teachings about human nature and human culpability," he wrote, made of our creator a "highly unjust and dishonorable . . . God," and no sophistry or good intent could get around that intractable affront to reason and sensibility.¹⁵

For Joseph, too, none of the old explanations or authoritarian strictures seemed to apply. "Trying a man for his faith" smacked of sectarianism. "It felt so good not to be trammled," he wrote. Damning unbaptized children, he said, was "not consistent with the character of God."¹⁶ This true character, he was sure, was not the character of the creedal God.

In one sermon, Joseph went so far as to say that "all who would follow the precepts of the Bible, whether Mormon or not, would assuredly be saved."¹⁷ He added later that even those without knowledge of or obedience to the Bible would be enfolded in the arms of mercy: "God hath made a provision that every spirit can be ferretted

¹⁴Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Book 3, chap. 21, translated by Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 107.

¹⁵Edward Beecher, *The Conflict of Ages: or, the Great Debate on the Moral Relations of God and Man* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Company, 1853), 46.

¹⁶Wilford Woodruff, Journal, March 20, 1842, quoted in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 107.

¹⁷Matthew L. Davis, "MS History of the Church, C-1," 194, LDS Church History Library.

out in that world that has not sinned the unpardonable sin.”¹⁸ His vision was flexible, generous, tolerant, and liberal—in perfect harmony with the world of flux and expansiveness Herschel had discovered and that the Romantics so relished.

But let us consider another founding document of Romanticism, one that at first seems in harmony with Herschel’s, but whose eventual repercussions might explain a contrary tendency that was also developing in Joseph’s thought. This second pivotal event occurred slightly earlier in 1757, when Edmund Burke produced an interesting little essay titled, “A Philosophical Inquiry into Our Ideas Concerning the Sublime and the Beautiful.” The sublime had been a characteristic in classical conceptions of rhetoric dating back to Longinus and even earlier, but it had largely fallen into disuse in the English-speaking world. Burke’s timing was superb. He reinvigorated the concept and endowed it with a plethora of meanings and associations that were perfectly calculated to appeal to sensibilities that were already tiring of the sterility and the intellectualism of contemporary philosophers and men of science. The excesses of those secular Enlightenment *philosophes* came to a head in 1793, when Notre Dame Cathedral was repurposed as a Temple of Reason. The problem, as William James insightfully remarked a century later, was that, for some people, “richness is the supreme imaginative requirement,” expressing an “inner need” for something to which we can attach “adjectives of mystery and splendor.”¹⁹ James put his finger precisely on an irrepressible human appetite for the sublime, the mysterious. And if you do away with the *mysterium tremendum* of the creeds, you had better be prepared to put something in its place.

A thoroughgoing rationalist like Samuel Johnson could sniff that “all wonder is the effect of novelty upon ignorance,”²⁰ but Burke knew better. His treatise was written in reaction to the stolid dourness of Johnsonians and against the rationalism of Descartes and the intellectual rigor of Locke. In his essay on the sublime, Burke explicitly

¹⁸William Clayton, Report, April 7, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 360.

¹⁹William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, Gifford Lectures, 1901; first published in 1902 (Rockville, Md.: Arc Manor, 2008), 334.

²⁰Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Most Eminent Poets* (London: J. Buckland, 1787), 3:230.

gloried in obfuscation, darkness, and stupefying wonder. "Hardly any thing can strike the mind with its greatness," he wrote, "which does not make some sort of approach towards infinity; which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds, is one and the same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea." In fact, he continued rapturously, "It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration and chiefly excites our passions." Here we enter a world in which the earlier John Milton is the exemplar because, in Milton's work, Burke enthuses, "all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible and *sublime to the last degree*."²¹

The book inspired a seismic shift in aesthetic sensibility. Almost the entirety of Romantic discourse needs to be seen as the thoroughgoing elaboration of Burke's phenomenal achievement. He made it possible to excise God from his commanding presence in educated discourse and seamlessly insinuate, in his stead, mystery, wonder, sublimity. René Chateaubriand was the most popular exploiter of the new sensibility, but dozens could be cited. He wrote rapturously in 1800 that "no circumstance of life is pleasing, beautiful, or grand, except mysterious things. The most wonderful sentiments are those which produce impressions difficult to be explained." Dreamily he characterized "Mystery" as "of a nature so divine," and he glorified what he called "holy ignorance."²² Chateaubriand epitomized perfectly the strategy by which an entire generation of poets and intellectuals made their peace with the departure of the sacred from their world. They simply reconstituted it in new garb. The catastrophe that this shift invited, and the reverberations of which are still all about us, was the diminishment of the religious and the veneration in its stead of the "spiritual." Religion has been cheapened ever since.

Romanticism was not long in imploding under the weight of its obsession with feeling over intellect, emotion over substance, and selfhood over community. Schiller's experiments in freedom collapse into savage chaos, Byronic individualism becomes Napoleonic despotism, and radical subjectivism becomes Nietzschean amorality.

²¹Edmund Burke, "Obscurity," in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Montrose, Scotland: D. Buchanan, 1803), 63.

²²François-René Chateaubriand, *The Beauties of Christianity*, translated by Frederic Shoberl (London: Henry Colburn, 1813), 16–17.

Not all Romantics, of course, became secularists or New Agers. One might trace, unevenly perhaps, some of the consequences of this new sensibility as it plays out within Christianity. Religion is increasingly personalized and interiorized. The privatized spirituality of the pietists becomes the unmediated and unregulated religiosity of Methodism, the Christian version of Romanticism if there ever was one. In another strain, reaction against the God who holds us like spiders over a flame, morphs into the universalism whereby the entire human family is saved, before culminating in the dismissal of hell and Christ both. An epitome of the contemporary afterclap of Romantic thought in the religious sphere is emblazoned on the marquee of a country church I passed in rural Massachusetts inviting passersby to join the worship: "Soft pews, and no hell." And the same new sensibility emerges in the abiding popularity of a little verse by William Blake, a summation of the Romantic sensibility that has served as a virtual mantra for generations of those who confuse discipleship with self-absorption:

To see the world in a grain of sand,
and heaven in a wildflower
hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
and eternity in an hour.

Ironically, it took a Marxist critic, Terry Eagleton, to point out in reference to this verse, that the Gospel of Matthew teaches: "Eternity lies not in a grain of sand but in a glass of water. The cosmos revolves on comforting the sick. When you act in this way, you are sharing in the love which built the stars. To live in this way is not just to have life, but to have it in abundance."²³

How aware and how concerned was Joseph Smith with this other side of Romantic thought and its repercussions? How self-aware was he of the dangers of a cheapened religiosity? And might we understand his legalism as a gesture in the direction of putting the brakes on the excesses which Burke's treatise portends? In the case of universalism in particular, he was keenly aware of the stakes and dangers.²⁴ I might argue that Joseph rooted his theology in the opposing grounds of Romantic liberalism on the one hand, with its untram-

²³Terry Eagleton, *A Very Short Introduction to the Meaning of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95.

²⁴For example, Joseph Smith owned Henry Tappan's *Review of Ed-*

meled freedom, and legalistic frameworks with their laws and ordinances on the other, to avoid the excesses of both. These imperatives could go by many names: I have been referring to them as Romanticism and legalism; but let us think of them instead as love and law.

But another way to resolve the conundrum might be to see Joseph's emphasis on law as a guarantee of freedom, not its antithesis. But it's a tragic guarantee. To look more closely at a particular moment law seems to oppose but actually guarantees generosity of heart, let us look at the problem of universal salvation. The universalist agenda began with the premise that God, being full of love, would never have created the human race, "unless he intended to make them finally happy."²⁵ Joseph pushed the imperative toward universal salvation further than any of his contemporaries, because his God was more moved by compassion than any contemporary God. "The idea that God cannot suffer, [was] accepted virtually as axiomatic in Christian theology from the early Greek Fathers until the nineteenth-century."²⁶ Another concurs that it was only "toward the end of the nineteenth century [that] a sea of change began to occur within Christian theology such that at present many, if not most, Christian theologians hold as axiomatic that God . . . does undergo emotional changes of states, and so can suffer."²⁷ Joseph, of course, pronounced not only that God felt love, but that He wept real tears, as the most moved, not unmoved, mover.

But in loving man enough to give him his agency, God set up the conditions for a tragic universe. Here is how the dilemma unfolds. Man, in his freedom, chooses sin. The freedom to sin collides with God's desire to save. The two leading figures of early Universalism resolved the problem by simply declaring that any hell or torment would be temporary. That still left the problem of the biblical language of

wards's *"Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will"* (New York: John S. Taylor, 1839) and virtually paraphrased John Murray's words in *Doctrine and Covenants* 19.

²⁵Charles Chauncy, *Mystery Hid from Ages . . . , or, the Salvation of All Men* (London: Charles Dilly, 1784), 1.

²⁶Richard Bauckham, "'Only the Suffering God Can Help': Divine Passibility in Modern Theology," *Themelios* 9, no. 3 (April 1984): 6.

²⁷Thomas G. Weinandy, "Does God Suffer?," *First Things* 117 (November 2001): 35.

eternity and everlastingness. To get around this problem, and using language that Joseph would later echo, John Murray argues that “it is one thing to be punished with everlasting destruction, and another to be everlastingly punished with destruction.” The pain of a candle flame, he clarified, is brief, but the pain is still “everlasting fire.”²⁸ Eventually, Murray and Chauncy both conceded, all humans would have to come to Christ to be saved. “’Tis true,” Chauncy conceded, God “will not, in *this state*, prevail upon *all* willingly to bow down before him as their *Lord*. . . . May he not, . . . use means with sinners in the *next state*, in order to make them *good subjects* in the *moral kingdom* of God . . . ?”²⁹ Murray concurred that the great work of salvation would have to take place in the next realm. Opponents protested: “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation; you may not have another.”³⁰ Murray replied that, indeed, “now” will always be “the accepted time,” and there will always be a “now.”³¹ Notice that, in both cases, they fail to resolve the problem of how choice will be reconciled with reward. They just defer the problem, in order to blithely assert a universal salvation.

Joseph comes close to their position, of course. So close, that some members apostatized over Section 76, received in early 1832, and Brigham Young’s brother Joseph protested initially that it seemed everybody would be saved. Almost everybody. The explanation of why everybody could not be saved came almost a year later, with Section 88, which reflected Joseph’s most profound statement on law, freedom, and the cost of moral agency: “That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willet to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still” (D&C 88:35).

Hell does not exist because of some inflexible ultimatum decreed by an impersonal Justice. Reward and punishment are entailed not simply because that is the “fair” or “just” thing for God to do. For

²⁸John Murray, *Letters and Sketches of Sermons* (Boston: Joshua Belcher, 1813), 3:352.

²⁹Charles Chauncy, *The Mystery Hid from Ages and Generations Made Manifest... or, the Salvation of All Men* (1784; rpt., Bedford, Mass.: Applewood, 2009), 191.

³⁰An unnamed disputant quoted by Murray, *Sermons*, 2:40.

³¹*Ibid.*, 2:254.

God is also merciful, and if humans can remit a penalty out of compassion or mercy, why cannot God? Because, as Alma explains, such apparent generosity would undermine the essence of that agency on which moral freedom depends. Consequences are chosen at the time actions are freely committed. To choose to indulge a desire is to choose its fruit—bitter or sweet—assuming, as Lehi did, that “men are instructed sufficiently” to understand what they are choosing (2 Ne. 2:5). So following the exercise of such agency, “the one [must be] raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil” (Alma 41:5). It is a truth that harks back to Dante’s grim vision of hell, in which God is not present as Judge or dispenser of punishments, because choices are allowed, inexorably, to bear their own fruit. In Alma’s *Inferno* as well, future states are chosen, not assigned: “For behold,” says Alma, “they are their own judges” (Alma 41:7).

Law, in this vision, is the glue that binds actions to their consequences, and thus guarantees the validity of agency. It is not about justice. It is about meaningful freedom. A universal clemency would not compromise justice. It would void agency. To bestow universal salvation, would be to impose on a moral agent a consequence he did not will, that is, did not choose, to receive. Joseph understood that Satan’s tool against agency was not targeted coercion, but unfiltered acquiescence. (We have largely lost this understanding Joseph had of the War in Heaven, in which the adversary’s plan was to remit consequences and thereby void agency, not obliterate it through force).

The painful consequences of law are where tragic creation comes in. C. S. Lewis, with painfully overcautious moral probing, offered this meditation on Christian orthodoxy: “I am not sure that the great canyon of anguish which lies across our lives is *solely* due to some pre-historic catastrophe. Something tragic may . . . be inherent in the very act of creation.” For this reason, he suggested, “Besides being the Great Creator, . . . perhaps [he is] the Tragic Creator too.”³²

God is the tragic creator in the sense that Hegel meant, when he said we inhabit a tragic universe, because it is characterized by irreconcilable collisions between competing values, all of which have the right to claim an absolute validity. The tragedy of human existence in

³²C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm Chiefly on Prayer* (1964; rpt., New York: Harcourt, 1991), 91.

particular, is the tragedy of absolute freedom versus perfect love. Love is manifest in the granting of freedom. And law is but the guarantee of freedom.

The tragic cost of this agency is comprehended in all the misery that sin and alienation entail. It is only assured everlastingly in the Sons of Perdition, and Joseph's conception of agency and law suggest that their punishment has little to do with the gravity of their sin, *per se*, because the description of their sin makes clear that Christ's atonement can extend only to those whose choices are made with an imperfect or compromised will. Which means virtually all of humankind. Our choices, in other words, are usually made with imperfect clarity and flawed understanding. Only the unpardonable sin, against perfect light, committed with untainted deliberation, in full and utter knowledge of its meaning and repercussions, is the sin against the Holy Ghost. It cannot be forgiven *not* because it is so grievous or offensive, but because it is the only sin a human can make with no mitigating circumstances. All other sins are performed "through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12), as it were, without a perfect understanding, on an uneven playing field, where to greater or lesser degree the weakness of the flesh, of intellect, or of judgment intrudes. In all such cases, regret and reconsideration are conceivable. Only the choice of evil made in the most absolute and perfect light of understanding admits no imaginable basis for reconsideration or regret—which are, of course, at the root of the very meaning of repentance.

And so the law, for Joseph Smith, was not the opponent of freedom, but its ally. What at times could appear legalism might, in a broader context be seen as his resistance to the well-intentioned but disastrous illusion of an ungrounded human autonomy. The ordinances provided an unchanging framework giving continuity to our relationship to the divine. God not only revealed all the ordinances of salvation to Adam, Joseph taught, but He intended them "to be the same forever, and set Adam to watch over them [and] to reveal them from heaven to man or to send Angels to reveal them" in the event of their loss.³³ Their unvarying employment was the token of a covenant that binds us to premortal conventions we participated in creating: They constitute "the most perfect order and harmony—and their limits and bounds were fixed irrevocably and voluntarily subscribed

³³Robert B Thompson, October 5, 1840, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 39.

to.”³⁴ This is why, in Joseph’s words, we “have got to be subject to certain rules & principles” established “before the world was.”³⁵ These rules and principles, of course, are often ritually introduced and affirmed, and that usually happens in the context of covenant making. The ritualistic dimension of this covenant making occurs in the school of the prophets, baptism, the sacrament, and the temple. The ritualistic saturation, the logical culmination of Joseph’s legalistic bent, oriented around these preordained “rules and principles,” allows disciples to enact in dramatic fashion very specific choices tied to very particular consequences. I want to emphasize this point, because I think it gives an important context for understanding Joseph’s constant linking of ritual to covenants. Ritual is in this sense not merely symbolic activity, but mimetic performance. The bodily dimension to ritual gives the action a particular efficacy. Insofar as it concretizes deliberate choice, it transforms inchoate desire into somatic form. Covenant is the verbal, and ritual the performative, recognition of law’s benevolent dominion.

As a student of literature, I ask your indulgence for ending with a literary coda. If Joseph had one contemporary who shared his concerns about the dangers of unfettered freedom and what I have called law’s benevolent dominion, it was William Wordsworth, who toured revolutionary France and came to recoil in horror from what he saw. The revolutionary dream had turned nightmare, and he wrote a great “Ode to Duty” in which he recognized the illusory bliss of what he called “unchartered freedom,” the “weary strife” it engendered, and the law as the “Godhead’s most benignant grace.”³⁶ But it was in a simpler sonnet that he captured the essential paradox of Romanticism and legalism, of love and law.

“Nuns Fret Not,” he called the sonnet. The poet here finds an apt allegory in the seeming constraints that poetic rules and forms impose on the impulse toward free expression. His words about poetic discipline seem an appropriate summation of Joseph’s apparent

³⁴“Minutes of a Special Conference,” *Times and Seasons* 4 (September 15, 1843): 331.

³⁵Willard Richards, scribe for Joseph Smith, Diary, October 1843, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 254.

³⁶William Wordsworth, “Ode to Duty,” in *Complete Poetical Works* (New York: Crowell, n.d.), 245.

belief that the fullest expression of agency can only unfold within the context of a certain religious rigor.

In part, it reads:

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
. . . In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is.³⁷

Perhaps, Wordsworth concludes, "some Souls . . . who have felt the weight of too much liberty, should find brief solace there, as I have found."

For Joseph Smith's followers, of course, the solace is eternal.

³⁷Wordsworth, "Nuns Fret Not," in *ibid.*, 395.

GOD, THE WORLD, AND THE LONG JOURNEY TO DIVINITY: MORMONISM AND GERMAN ROMANTIC IDEALISM

James M. McLachlan

THE MORMON IDEA OR MORMON IDEAS OF GOD are as diverse as any tradition. Mormons have never sat down together in Church councils to define their doctrines, but they do have a highly centralized hierarchy and all appeal to the authority of the founding prophet Joseph Smith. But even here difficulties arise in relation to doctrine. Which Joseph Smith are we talking about? The young Joseph who translated the Book of Mormon, with its supposed Calvinist, Trinitarian, and Modalist elements? Joseph, the Enlightenment restorationist and quasi-traditional theist? Or the mature Joseph of Nauvoo theology with its innovations about the plurality of Gods? It may be that this is the kind of theological situation that suits us, one in which we have the freedom to emphasize praxis and devo-

JAMES M. MCLACHLAN is professor of philosophy and religion at Western Carolina University. He is co-chair of the Mormon Studies Group at the American Academy of Religion, and past president of The Society of Mormon Philosophy and Theology. He and his wife, Carrie, currently edit *Element: The Journal of the Society of Mormon Philosophy and Theology*. With Loyd Ericson he is editor of *Discourses in Mormon Theology: Philosophical and Theological Possibilities* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007). He is author of articles on personalism, idealism, existentialism, and Schelling, Sartre, and Levinas.

tion over doctrine, one that allows us to move more freely in dialogue with other religious communities. In short Mormons may be atheological.¹ It may be that Mormons are atheological and doctrinally loose. It is certainly true that the Mormon notion of continuing revelation makes theological certainty, if there could be such a thing, difficult to imagine. Still, while there may be a circuitous path from the Book of Mormon to the King Follett Discourse, it doesn't seem that there should be a broken one. After all Joseph Smith claimed he always taught the plurality of Gods.²

How to think about this theologically? I want to claim that the structure about ideas of God, the relation of the divine and the human, the sources of good and evil, and the nature of human freedom may not change as radically from Palmyra to Nauvoo as Mormon scholars sometimes have thought. In order to show how this might be so, I will compare statements in the Book of Mormon to ideas about the divine and human in German romantic idealism, a nineteenth-century philosophical movement contemporary with Joseph Smith. There is no question of historical influence, but looking at German romantic idealism can provide structural resources that may allow us to see continuity in Smith's ideas about God that don't at first appear when we assume that the Book of Mormon is based on the theological ideas of mainstream Christianity.

RICHARD BUSHMAN ON KING FOLLETT, PRIESTHOOD, AND GOD(S)

In *On the Road with Joseph Smith: An Author's Diary*, Richard Bushman lays out his view of God based on his research on Joseph Smith. Basically, God is one of a number of superior intelligences who have learned—how we do not know exactly—to obtain glory and intelligence. They can create worlds and do much else. “Those gods take us lesser intelligences, swimming about like fish in the sea, under their tutelage, saying they will teach us how to achieve intelligence and glory.” Bushman claims there is a sense in which “the priesthood is

¹James Faulconer, “Why a Mormon Won't Drink Coffee But Might Have a Coke: The Atheological Character of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Element: The Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology* 2 no. 2 (Fall 2006): 21–37.

²Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 378.

God” because it brings the disparate intelligences together into a council of Gods who cooperate to form a divine community. Evil is embodied in Satan’s rebellion against such cooperation that returns the created order to chaos.³ Bushman concludes by saying this doctrine “tastes good to me,” echoing Joseph Smith’s famous assessment of the doctrine of the plurality of Gods in the King Follett Discourse.

Bushman adds that, although this doctrine can be found in Smith’s teachings, it is not being taught by the Church today and mentions President Gordon B. Hinckley’s interview with *Time* magazine of August 4, 1997. In that famous interview President Hinckley seemed to back off from the idea that human beings might become gods. At first, Hinckley seemed to qualify the idea that men could become gods, suggesting that “it’s of course an ideal. It’s a hope for a wishful thing,” but later affirmed that “yes, of course they can.” (He added that women could, too, “as companions to their husbands. They can’t conceive a king without a queen.”) On whether his Church still holds that God the Father was once a man, he sounded uncertain, “I don’t know that we teach it. I don’t know that we emphasize it. . . . I understand the philosophical background behind it, but I don’t know a lot about it, and I don’t think others know a lot about it.”⁴

Bushman thinks that this may be the right strategy for dealing with the Evangelical critiques of the Church but adds that it would be wrong to discard such ideals entirely. “They are a precious ‘cultural resource.’ It may be one function of my book to sustain their life by explicating Joseph’s thought as part of the campaign to preserve doctrine.”⁵ It will be interesting to see if Bushman develops this thought—though in a sense he already had in his reading of the King Follett Discourse in *Rough Stone Rolling*.

Mormons love to quote Harold Bloom’s assessment of that address as “one of the truly remarkable sermons ever preached in America,” and Bushman is no exception.⁶ Bloom says notably: “I myself can think of not another American, except for Emerson and Whit-

³Richard Lyman Bushman, *On the Road with Joseph Smith: An Author’s Diary* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 60–61.

⁴David Van Biema, S. C. Gwynne, and Richard N. Ostling, “Kingdom Come,” *Time Magazine*, August 4, 1997, 56.

⁵Bushman, *On the Road with Joseph Smith*, 62.

⁶Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New

man, who so moves and alters my own imagination.”⁷ After almost 170 years I doubt that Mormons have been able to completely digest it.

It begins with a bombshell. Bushman quotes Joseph Smith’s claim that he would “refute the Idea that God was God from all eternity.” Bushman writes that this concept was so radical that some of the audience couldn’t take it in. In fact, the statement so astounded Thomas Bullock, one of the sermon’s four clerks, that he recorded the reverse: “He was God from the begin of all Eternity.” But the other manuscripts concur in the opposite: Joseph wanted to say that God had a history. “We suppose that God was God from eternity I will refute that Idea,” Wilford Woodruff recorded Joseph’s declaration. “It is the first principle to know that we may converse with him and that he once was a man like us.” The scriptural basis for the doctrine was Jesus’s statement about doing nothing but what he saw the Father do (John 14:6–12). God “was once as one of us and was on a planet as Jesus was in the flesh.” It was so obvious, Joseph asserted, “I defy Hell and earth to refute it.”⁸

Bushman says the point of Joseph’s declaration is that God was once one of the “free intelligences who were to take the same path.” He quotes Joseph Smith: “You have got to learn how to make yourselves God, king and priest, by going from a small capacity to a great capacity to the resurrection of the dead to dwelling in everlasting burnings,” and “You have got to learn how to be a god yourself in order to save yourself—to be priests and kings as all Gods has done—by going from a small degree to another—from exaltation to ex[altation]—till they are able to sit in glory as with those who sit enthroned.”⁹ Christ is the model for us and Joseph Smith presses this point by alluding to commonly quoted passages but giving them radical readings: “I do the things that I saw the father do when worlds came into existence, I saw the father work out a kingdom with fear & trembling & I can do the same & when I get my K[ingdom] work[ed out] I will

York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 533.

⁷Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 102, 127.

⁸Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 534. See also Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 355, 341, 357, 350, 344, 345 (April 7, 1844).

⁹Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 534.

present [it] to the father & it will exalt his glory and Jesus steps into his tracks to inherit what God did before.”¹⁰ Jesus is following His Father in moving from human to divine being, and He calls us to join Him in the project.

Bushman points out that this is not the traditional pattern of polytheism—not Zeus and Thor. They are not willful personalities each pulling in its own direction. Bushman strikingly asserts that the Christian trinity is Smith’s model, but it is a unity of will, not being. The Gods in council are one as Christ and the Father are one, but key here is that it is a welding of wills rather than substance:

The Christian Trinity was Joseph’s model; the gods are one as Christ and the Father are one, distinct personalities unified in purpose and will. A free intelligence had to become one with God in order to become as God. The Gods had formed an eternal alliance, welding their will into one. The idea of earth life was to join that alliance and participate in the glory and power of the gods. The way to become a god was to conform to the order of heaven and receive light and truth. The unity and order Joseph strove to instill in the Church was a type of the higher unity among the gods in their heavens.¹¹

According to Bushman, this “dramaturgical theology” shows a “Grand Council” of Gods who, again quoting Joseph, “came together & concocted the plan of making the world & the inhabitants.” The world is organized out of the chaos. Intelligences like God existed eternally. Joseph continues: “God never had power to create the spirit of man, God himself could not create himself. Intelligence is eternal and it is self-existing.” God is the most intelligent of the free intelligences. Bushman continues quoting Joseph: “God has the power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences that they may be exalted with himself.”¹² Thus, Bushman makes what may be his central point: that God “is their teacher not their maker.” Each is free to choose and can decide whether or not to ally himself or herself with God and with the other gods.¹³ Thus, priesthood is the covenant with God that brings all of us into the council.

This idea of God(s) as our teacher(s) inspired generations of

¹⁰Joseph Smith, quoted in *ibid.*, 534–35.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 535.

¹²Joseph Smith, quoted in *ibid.*, 535.

¹³*Ibid.*, 536.

Mormons. Joseph preached: "All mind is susceptible of improvement," for we and even God become capable of limitless growth or "eternal progression."¹⁴ In 1889, Orson F. Whitney quoted this statement and commented: "So says Joseph Smith. Intelligence is the glory of God. It is his superior intelligence that makes him God. The Gospel . . . is nothing more or less than a ladder of light, of intelligence, or principle, by which man, the child of god, may mount step by step to become eventually like his Father."¹⁵ Brigham Young praised education "in every useful branch of learning" and urged his people "to excel the nations of the earth in religion, science, and philosophy."¹⁶

PROVISIONAL THEOLOGIES

But how do we think about this kind of radical thought on the divine? Where does it fit—if it fits at all? When Harold Bloom says that no other American thinker except Whitman and Emerson so radically alter his imagination, does this mean that we have yet, theologically at least, to work out the implications of Joseph's vision? While I think this is true and I agree with Bloom that religious genius resembles artistic genius—at least insofar as we are going to be eternally digesting it, eternally trying to figure out all its implications—we can at least be "on the way." This is what James Faulconer means when he allows for "provisional theologies" which would never be finished and asserts that "adequate" theologies that would exhaust the religious vision are out of the question.¹⁷ Thus, we have to modify the title of Sterling McMurrin's little classic *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*. It would be better to say there are theological possibilities or implications of the Mormon religion rather than theological foundations that determine it. Richard Bushman is profoundly right to say that to discard Joseph's teaching in the King Follett Discourse and in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century expansions and reflections on it would be to lose an important cultural resource. It is one that, for many of us, makes more sense of the world we encounter

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Orson F. Whitney, quoted in O. Kendall White, *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 83.

¹⁶Brigham Young, quoted in *ibid.*, 79.

¹⁷Faulconer, "Why a Mormon Won't Drink Coffee But Might Have a Coke," 21–37.

“here below” than the kind of absolutist monarchical God claimed as necessary by creedal Christians or more absolutist Mormons. Such an all-powerful entity is also all-controlling, and with such a being comes the difficulties of determining how human beings are free and how God is not responsible for the horrible suffering of all His creatures.

In the remainder of this article, I wish to hint at one of these “provisional” theologies, one that I hope is close to Joseph Smith’s vision and to the gospel that was revealed to him. I want to use Richard Bushman’s reading of the theology of the King Follett Discourse and relate it to German romantic idealism. I think to do theology is to use the intellectual and spiritual resources available to us in our attempt to understand the revelation of God. By its nature, such an enterprise is provisional; but I think one of the advantages in using the resources of romantic idealism to read the King Follett Discourse is that we don’t have to separate the discourse from the Book of Mormon, seeing it as a radical departure from the more traditionally creedal Christian theology of the Book of Mormon. Thus, the gospel revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith might appear to us as more inter-related than a slow development toward a radical vision that can easily be excised from the vision of the Book of Mormon.

EARLY MORMON THEOLOGY AND GERMAN ROMANTIC IDEALISM

One of the advantages of looking at Joseph Smith and early Mormon theology through the lens of German romantic idealism is that it is easier to see a greater consistency between certain themes in the Book of Mormon and Smith’s later theology.¹⁸ Various scholars have attempted to situate the Book of Mormon in the Christian tradition in various ways. For example, Dan Vogel, in his “Earliest Mormon Con-

¹⁸I am not the first to relate Mormonism and Romanticism. Against Klaus Hansen’s claim that Mormonism was an example of frontier enlightenment, Richard T. Hughes, in his 1993 Tanner Lecture, pointed to two types of restorationism in the nineteenth century: (1) a rationalist enlightenment strand through Alexander Campbell and the Churches of Christ movement, and (2) a Romantic one through Joseph Smith and the Mormons. The source of Hughes’s claim that Romanticism would be a much better way than enlightenment rationalism is the early Mormon emphasis on religious experience and entering into relation with the Divine. The Mormons hungered for communion with the Divine. The Restoration is not simply a restoration of the structure of the primitive church but a resto-

cept of God" has claimed that early Mormonism was Modalist.¹⁹ Thomas Alexander, among others, has discussed what he sees as a Calvinist emphasis on human depravity in the Book of Mormon.²⁰ Melody Moench Charles and Mark Thomas have remarked on the Trinitarian character of early Mormonism.²¹ Mormons taking a more absolutist view of God desire to return to the theology of the Book of Mormon.²² This list could continue, but the prevalent opinion has seemed at times to say that the only view of God and humanity not expressed in earliest Mormonism is anything related to Smith's final statements in the King Follett Discourse. Yet Smith himself claimed, "I have always—& in all congregat[ion]s when I have preached it has been the plurality of Gods."²³ If we are going to take Joseph Smith seriously, we must attempt to see what he could have meant by this statement. For even given the faultiness of memory and the development of thought, he, at least, must have seen some kind of consistency in the

ration of communion with the divine. Hughes says the Mormons never viewed the Bible as data but rather as a story—and a story in which they themselves participated. Richard T. Hughes, "Two Restoration Traditions: Mormons and Churches of Christ in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 48. Jared Hickman, "No Creed Can Circumscribe My Mind: Joseph Smith, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Romantic Theology" in *Archive of the Restoration Summer Fellows Papers: 2000-2002* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2005), 83.

¹⁹Dan Vogel, "The Earliest Mormon Concept of God" in *Line upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine*, edited by Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 17–34.

²⁰Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine," in *Line upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine*, edited by Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 53–66.

²¹Melodie Moench Charles, "Book of Mormon Christology" in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, edited by Brent Lee Metcalf (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993); 58. Mark Thomas, "A Rhetorical Approach to the Book of Mormon: Rediscovering Nephite Sacramental Language" in Metcalf, *New Approaches*, 81.

²²Robert L. Millett, "Joseph Smith and Modern Mormonism: Orthodoxy, Neo-orthodoxy, Tension, and Tradition," *BYU Studies*, 29, no. 3 (1989): 49–68.

²³Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 379.

development of his ideas from his first revelations and the translation of the Book of Mormon to the King Follett Discourse. I think examining the structure of the type of theism found among certain idealist philosophers can help in this respect.

There is no question about any line of influence between German romantic idealists like Friedrich Schelling and G. W. F. Hegel on Joseph Smith. The three are roughly contemporaries so the idea that Joseph or anyone he knew was spending time slogging through the *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* and *The Phenomenology of Spirit* would be silly. But Schelling, in particular, and some of the philosophical thinkers who followed this line of thought, which later in the nineteenth century traveled to Great Britain and the United States, developed a position that was congenial with Mormonism.

In the 1860s, German idealism laid its eggs in St. Louis among an eccentric group of philosophers who came to be called the St. Louis Hegelians. Among them George Holmes Howison and Thomas Davidson would eventually develop philosophical theories of the plurality of gods. Davidson's Apeirotheism claimed "a theory of Gods infinite in number."²⁴ Howison eventually taught philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley and developed a theory of a divine democracy he called personal idealism.²⁵ Idealist Josiah Royce taught the concept of a "blessed community" at Harvard. Edgar Brightman and Ralph Flewelling developed this kind of thought at Boston University and the University of Southern California. William H. Chamberlin studied with Howison at California and Royce at Harvard and brought idealism to Utah in the early twentieth century to influence a generation of Mormon thinkers.²⁶ Sterling McMurrin studied with Flewelling at the University of Southern California. So although there is no historical link between Mormonism and German

²⁴Thomas Davidson, Journal, 1884–98, Thomas Davidson Collection, Manuscript Group #169, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, quoted in Michael H. DeArmey, "Thomas Davidson's Apeirotheism and Its Influence on William James and John Dewey," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (October-December, 1987): 691–708, quotation on 692.

²⁵James M. McLachlan, "George Holmes Howison: 'The City of God' and Personal Idealism," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (2006): 224–42.

²⁶William Chamberlin was the first Mormon to do formal studies in

romantic idealism, the two positions converged in the minds of some Mormon thinkers in the twentieth century.

Smith and the German idealists may share a common ancestor in the seventeenth-century German mystic Jacob Boehme, whose influence on Schelling and Hegel is well documented.²⁷ In *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of the Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844*, John Brooke at

philosophy. He influenced an entire generation of Mormon educators and was still on the list of “most influential Mormon intellectuals” in 1969 when Leonard Arrington did a poll for *Dialogue*. Leonard Arrington, “The Intellectual Tradition of the Latter-day Saints,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 13–26. It says something about Chamberlin’s ability as a teacher that, forty-eight years after his death, a man who really published nothing beyond pamphlets for his classes and articles in the school newspapers that were out of print before his death would still be regarded as important. However, by the time the survey was redone in 1993, Chamberlin’s name had disappeared. I find that disappearance unfortunate. Mormon philosophers like Sterling McMurrin and E. E. Erickson thought Chamberlin was perhaps the best thinker the Mormons had produced but he is probably the least read. James M. McLachlan, “The Modernism Controversy: William Henry Chamberlin, His Teachers Howison and Royce, and the Conception of God Debate,” in *Discourses in Mormon Theology: Philosophical and Theological Possibilities*, edited by James McLachlan and Loyd Ericson (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2008), 39–83.

²⁷Hegel claimed Boehme was the founder of German Idealism. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by E. S. Haldane, 3 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), 3:188; Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001); Cyril O’Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Robert Brown, *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Jacob Boehme on the Writings of 1809–1815* (Bucknell, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1977); Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Boehme: Theosophy–Hagiography–Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999). Mayer saw Boehme as a significant Romantic influence only on Friedrich Schlegel and F.W.J. Schelling. Alexandre Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 506–8, calls attention to Boehme’s influence on Fichte, Hegel, of Schelling (“second philosophy”) and Franz von Baader, Boehme’s disciple. Koyré also points out that Boehme was read by such divergent minds as Newton, Comenius, Milton, Leibniz, Oetinger, and Blake. See also Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seven-*

tempted to make a historical connection between the hermetic traditions, including Boehme and his followers and early Mormonism.²⁸ I don't want to make an attempt to establish historical connections here but simply to discuss some of the similarities in the understanding of God and humanity. The structures of the ideas about God and humanity seem similar, although I believe the Mormon versions are ultimately more radical.

OPPOSITION IN ALL THINGS

To begin with, I want to examine a few statements by Jacob Boehme and cite what I see as similar statements in the Book of Mormon:

Secondly, the abyssal and divine understanding doth therefore introduce itself into an anxious fire-will and life, that its great love and joy, which is called God, might be manifest; for it all were only one, the one would not be manifest to itself; but by the manifestation the eternal good is known, and maketh a kingdom of joy; *if everything were only one, that one could not become manifest to itself* [emphasis mine]. If there were no anguish, joy could not be manifest unto itself; and there would be but one only will, which would do continually the same thing. But if it introduceth itself into the contrariety, then in the contest the lubet of joy becomes a desire and a love play to itself, in that it

teenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991); Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), and M. L. Bailey, *Milton and Jacob Boehme: A Study in German Mysticism in XVII Century England* (1914; rpt., New York: Haskell House, 1964).

²⁸John Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Brooke argues for this influence based on Smith's geographic proximity to the Ephrata community in Pennsylvania, whose eighteenth-century founder, Conrad Beissel, was a follower of Jacob Boehme (42–44). Brooke also claims that Smith may have been influenced by Emmanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century visionary who had read and was sympathetic to Boehme (206). See also Peter C. Erb, ed., *Johan Conrad Beissel and the Ephrata Community: Mystical and Historical Texts* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985). Schelling read both Swedenborg and Boehme. Friedemann Horn, *Schelling and Swedenborg: Mysticism and German Idealism*, translated by George Dole (West Chester, Penn.: Swedenborg Foundation, 1997).

has to work and act; to speak according to our human capacity.²⁹

For in the eternal speaking Word, which is beyond or without all nature or beginning, is only the divine understanding or sound; in it there is neither darkness nor light, neither thick nor thin, neither joy nor sorrow; moreover, no sensibility or perceivancy; but it is barely a power of the understanding in one source, will and dominion; there is neither friend nor foe unto it, for it is the eternal good, and nothing else.

But God would be unknowable to Himself, and there would be in Him no joy or perception, if it were not for the presence of the "No." The latter is the antithesis or the opposite to the positive or the truth; it causes the latter to become revealed, and this is only possible by its being the opposite wherein eternal love may become active and perceptible.

Joy enters the state of desire for the purpose of producing a fiery love, a realm of happiness, which could not exist in the tranquillity.³⁰

The theme that runs through all of the preceding statements from Boehme highlights the centrality of an idea important to Behemists (Boehmeans) that reemerge in an important way in the thought of romantics F.W.J. Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel and in that of the idealist Hegel. Hegel and Schelling explicitly acknowledged a debt to Boehme for his notion of the *Ungrund*, the idea of an absolute, undifferentiated chaos at the heart of God (and thus of reality). The *Ungrund* is the absolute, the One, Bliss, etc.

In Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions that include most of western theism, pantheism, and mysticism, the ideal is the absolute.³¹ It is the perfection beyond the imperfection of the world of change and

²⁹Jacob Boehme, *Mysterium Magnum or An Exposition of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, translated by John Sparrow (1623; rpt., N.p., Kessinger Publication, n.d.), chap. 3, 22, 13.

³⁰Jacob Boehme, *Theosophical Questions*, chap 3., p. 2; Jacob Boehme, *Signature of All Things*, chap. 6, p. 2, quoted in Franz Hartmann, *Personal Christianity: The Doctrines of Jacob Boehme The God-Taught Philosopher*, translated by B. Harding (New York: McCoy House, 1919), 80.

³¹In *Philosophers Speak of God*, Charles Hartshorne made the claim that, pragmatically, there is little difference between pantheism and theism whether talking about Eastern or Western religious thought. On the face of it, this statement seems to be flat wrong. Pantheism reduces all the multiplicity of reality to a single impersonal Being, whether Nirguna Brahman or Spinozan substance, where theism maintains a personal deity and the dual

finitude. It is eternal, infinite, and One. The problem with this concept from the romantic idealist point of view is that, as bliss, it is dead. It could not possibly even know itself because one does this through another. It could not love, for this would require a beloved. The perfect One knows nothing, feels nothing, loves nothing; it is without body, parts, or passions. In addition, religiously we should only be devoted to this perfection.

Thus, Plato writes in *The Symposium* that, if we had eyes to see this supreme beauty, we would flee the “pollutions of mortality” and the “vanities of human life” and commune with the “simple and divine.”³² Augustine Christianizes this idea saying that a vision of beauty would answer all our questions about the injustice and suffering of this world:

I shall say no more, except that to us is promised a vision of beauty—the beauty of whose imitation all other things are beautiful, and by comparison which all other things are unsightly. Whosoever will have glimpsed this beauty—and he will see it, who lives well, prays well, studies well—how will it ever trouble him why one man, desiring to have children, has them not, while another man casts out his own offspring as being unduly numerous; why one man hates children before they are born, and another man loves them after birth, or how it is not absurd that nothing will come to pass which is not with God—and therefore it is inevitable that all things come into being in accordance with order—and nevertheless God is not petitioned in vain?

Finally, how will any burdens, dangers, scorns, or smiles of fortune disturb a just man? In this world of sense, it is indeed necessary to examine carefully what time and place are, so that what delights in a por-

conception of God and the world. Hartshorne’s point was that there is no practical difference because, for both views, the worldly reality had no effect on either the impersonal perfect being that only manifested itself through either its playful creativity (Lila) for Shankara (Hinduism) or modes of the infinite substance for Spinoza (Western philosophy) or a personal perfect being that only manifested itself through its creative act for Thomas and Augustine. In either case, the world and all that is in it lack reality and has no effect whatsoever on the blissful perfection of the ultimate Being. Charles Hartshorne and William Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

³²Plato, *The Symposium* in *The Works of Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett (New York: Dial Press, 1936) 342–43.

tion of place or time, may be understood to be far less beautiful than the whole of which it is a portion. And furthermore, it is clear to a learned man that what displeases in a portion, displeases for no other reason than because the whole with which that portion harmonizes wonderfully, is not seen; but that in the intelligible world, every part is as beautiful and perfect as the whole.³³

Examples can be multiplied. Dante and Beatrice turn from each other to regard the perfection of God's oneness. Bunyan's Pilgrim covers his ears and runs from his family, calling out "eternal life, eternal life."³⁴ The tradition thinks we should emulate this kind of activity.

Boehme's and Schelling's point of departure is radically different. Such a perfection is "dead." For there to be any knowledge, feeling, experience, or love—in short, any life—there must be opposition, otherness. The aim of human existence should not be to return to a bliss beyond all totality and opposition. Such a move would be to return to the nothing. Schelling describes this nothing as the primal womb and primal longing. "Man is formed in his mother's womb; and only out of the darkness of unreason (out of feeling, out of longing, the sublime mother of understanding) grow clear thoughts."³⁵ The *Ungrund*, or the groundless is the unity that is prior to experience and concepts and makes both possible.

This idea appears in the Book of Mormon in Lehi's famous instructions to Jacob which, like Boehme and Schelling, rejects *creatio ex nihilo*. Rather, the world emerges from the "opposition in all things" (2 Ne. 2:11–12), an idea that runs from the Book of Mormon to the King Follett Discourse. God creates the world in relation to already existing, and perhaps eternal, chaos. This eschatology reflects a movement from an unconscious or dead unity of innocence and bliss—either in Eden or in the premortal existence. In the first act, we

³³Augustine, *De Ordine*, chap. 19 in Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, eds., *Philosophies of Art and Beauty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 184–85.

³⁴Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Vol. 3: Paradiso*, translated by Charles Singleton (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), Canto 33, 123, 379; John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 13–14.

³⁵Friedrich Wilhelm Josef von Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, translated by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 30.

are in the presence of God but nothing important is happening; it is as if there is no time. In the second act, we move from this meaningless bliss through a “fall” up into an alienated and conflicted multiplicity that characterizes the opposition and chaos of this world. In the final act with God, we create a freely chosen, conscious unity in a multiplicity or sociality of love (D&C 130:1–2) in both this world and the world to come. In this view, the plurality of the world, with all its conflicts, is clearly superior to the serenity of the One. Lehi describes the beginning in similar terms. Without “opposition in all things” (2 Ne. 2:11–12), all would remain as dead. Joy can emerge only in the experience of multiplicity. This is not simply the opposition of good and evil but of “all things.” Everything is known only in relation to another.

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.

Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. . . .

And after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit they were driven out of the garden of Eden, to till the earth. . . .

And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.

And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. . . .

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. (2 Ne. 2:11–12, 19, 22–23, 25)

The problem with the eternal bliss of the One is that it is dead. It may be unified, but it is not something to which one would want to return. It is the opposition in all things that makes joy—and, indeed, persons themselves—possible. This movement from the serenity of oneness to the difficulties and richness of the world is superior to a static, unchanging, eternity.

But the *Ungrund* always had the potential for dynamism; it could always break into the “opposition in all things.” It is the potentiality at

the heart of freedom. Schelling uses this same idea—this time called “the irreducible remainder”—to describe human freedom. After any explanation of human action there is always something left over, irreducible to concepts. Were it not so, freedom would be completely explicable. It would be reducible to prior causes and thus cease to exist. He writes: “The world as we now behold it, is all rule, order and form but the unruly lies ever in the depth as though it might again break through, and order and form nowhere appear to have been original, but it seems as though what had initially be unruly had been brought to order. *This is the incomprehensible basis of the reality of things, the irreducible remainder which cannot be resolved into reason by the greatest exertion but always remains in the depths. Out of this which is unreasonable, reason in the true sense is born.*”³⁶

Significantly, Schelling stresses: “Out of this which is unreasonable, reason in the true sense is born.” Out of the chaos, the groundless, the *ungrund*, the world is born, or, in Lehi’s terms, out of that which precedes the opposition in all things, reason and unreason, good and evil, joy and pain—all the oppositions are born.

Lehi concludes his sermon to his son: “Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Ne. 2:27).

The fall from Eden produces the possibility of a choice between the opposites of liberty and life on the one side and captivity and death on the other. This dichotomy opens up an eschatology of a very fortunate fall in which human beings become subjects capable of choice and eventually capable of becoming like God.

ESCHATOLOGY: ROMANTIC IDEALISM AND MORMONISM

Unlike absolutist versions of theism in which an omniscient and omnipotent being creates the world *ex nihilo* and exists in eternal perfection from which human beings are separated by an ontological gulf of infinite wideness, both Mormon and the Romantic eschatologies of the German idealists describe a developmental process which both God and humanity pursue toward an ultimate chosen unity. Christian absolutist and platonic eschatologies both posit a circular journey

³⁶Ibid., 29; emphasis mine.

that begins with a fall from an eternal perfection, passes through an alien world, and returns to eternal perfection. The end of the world is in no way an advance on Eden. God, the ground of everything, is certainly not further perfected by the end of things.

Romantic eschatologies resemble this basic structure in that they also follow a formula of exile and return, but the fall leads to the possibility of something superior. Here is the basic structure of the three-act play.

1. Primal unity (Groundless, *Ungrund*)
Unity without individuality (innocence)
2. Freedom and alienation
Individuality without unity: opposition (action and subjectivity)
3. Higher unity: love and sociality
Unity with individuality

Like Lehi, Schelling claims that all life exists only because of opposition. He appropriates the image of the *Ungrund* as a primal unity, a preexistential abyss which is the undifferentiated potential that logically, though not temporally, precedes existence and breaks its unity into the diversity of beings. Schelling claims that this is a logical not temporal succession. For Schelling there is no time when God was not God. Schelling posits the chaos of the *Ungrund* as the “irreducible remainder” at the basis of things. Thus, the world will never be finally rationalized.³⁷ In Mormon terms, one would talk about an “eternal progression” without a final eternal stasis coming at the end of celestial history. This break-up of unity into a plurality of separately existing individuals is an advance on the primitive unity of existence. The initial opposition, which is in God as well as all that God creates, Schelling calls the will of the ground (self-love and individuality), and the will of love (love of the other(s) and desire for unity). The will of the ground is the desire to be individual, to be something, to establish one’s own being, to stand out in the world, to survive as an individual. The will of love is the desire for unity with others.

This description of opposition as a tension between the particular (the individual) and the universal (social) is common in

³⁷Ibid., 30.

German idealism. It describes the relation of the individual who is both created by and who creates the universal and social. For example, we speak English. In one sense, we are created by it; we owe our being able to express ourselves to our ancestors. But the language is not a dead platonic perfection. We don't speak King James English. Since 1620 the language has been re-created by the millions of individual speakers. There is no eternal platonic form of English.

The two wills, self-love and love of others, are necessary, and it would be wrong to say that either is evil. For love and unity to exist, they must exist *between* individuals. The preexistential unity of the One is nothing or rather no-thing. For love to be there must be at least two beings, a self and another. For the other to be a real other, he or she must have some element of real choice and real independence. Otherwise, love is merely a mechanical relation—God talking to Himself or my pretending that my teddy bear is telling me how much he loves me, or the “love” bought from a prostitute or sycophant. In this tradition, the contemporary French Jewish thinker Emmanuel Levinas wrote: “It is certainly a great glory for the creator to have set up a being capable of atheism, a being which, without having been *causa sui*, has an independent view and word and is at home with itself.”³⁸ Real love would be a free response, not one commanded by omnipotent power. Real love must even run the risk that the other will reject its suit. There is thus a tension between these two wills. God and humanity must seek a balance. God has achieved this perfect balance of the forces where humanity has not. The imbalance results in evil.

Schelling speaks of the two types of evil that may result from the imbalance of the opposition between the two wills. If the *freedom from* others, the will for individuality, or the will of the basis is too strong, the result is rebellion. Satan loves no one, only himself, and sees himself as a completely self-made being. Cain asserts his independence from Abel because he can “murder to get gain” (Moses 5:31), the antichrist Korihor (the John Gault of the Book of Mormon) believes “therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man

³⁸Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, translated by Alfonzo Lingus (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 59.

did was no crime" (Alma 30:17).³⁹ Cain and Korihor see themselves as independent of their communities, as self-made men. Evil is defiance. It is rebellion against your place in the cosmos. "It is striving to make oneself, as particular creature, the center of the universe," comments Schelling, "the 'insolence of wanting to be everything.'"⁴⁰

The corruption of *freedom for* or the desire to create unity with the other results in the loss of self and the loss of love. Individuals are swallowed in the nothingness of the absolute. This would be the evil of crowds, of collectivist states, of the Nephites at the conclusion of the Book of Mormon who cannot think outside of their hatred of the Lamanites. In this last example, the collective is formed by its hatred

³⁹Boehme famously thought that Hell was the place where everybody blamed everyone else for his or her being there. Here a total "freedom from" relations to the other leads to complete self love and chaos. Consider these two passages from the Book of Moses and Boehme's *Six Theosophic Points*.

Moses

And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands, And all these things were done in secret.

And Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness.

And Cain went into the field, and Cain talked with Abel, his brother. And it came to pass that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother and slew him.

And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying: I am free. (Moses 5:30–33)

Boehme

In the Darkness there is in the essence only a perpetual stinging and breaking, each form being enemy to the other—a contrarious essence. Each form is a liar to itself, and one says to the other, that it is evil and adverse to it, that it is a cause of its restlessness and fierceness. Each thinks in itself: If only the other form were not, thou wouldst have rest; and yet each of them is evil and false. Hence it is, that all that is born of the dark property of wrath is lying, and is always lying against the other forms, saying they are evil; and yet it is itself a cause thereof, it maketh them evil by its poisonous infection. Jacob Boehme, *Six Theosophic Points and Other Writings*, translator not identified (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), 89.

⁴⁰Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, 55.

of the other. Thus, the goal of creation is to find the balance of the opposition of the individual and the other, the community, the sociality of Doctrine and Covenants 130:1–2. Schelling writes that “this is the secret of love, that it unites such beings as could each exist in itself, and nonetheless neither is nor can be without the other.”⁴¹ Thus in King Benjamin’s terms we are not self-made men but all “beggars” before God (Mosiah 4:19) or in Moses’s terms, “nothing” (Moses 1:10); but God’s glory is to “bring about the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). The balance between the two freedoms is the heart of the relation to God and others.

What is interesting here for our story is that “opposition in all things” is really in *all* things, from humanity, to the earth and all creatures, to God Himself or Herself. If not, thinks Schelling, God could not reveal Himself. But for God to be a person requires other persons like Himself. “God can only reveal himself to himself in what is like him, in free beings acting on their own, for whose Being there is no ground other than God but who are as God is. He speaks, and they are there.”⁴² The statement “He speaks and they are there” is interesting. It is obviously an allusion to Genesis 1 and John 1; but Joseph Smith’s rereading of Jesus’s statement that He does only what He has seen the Father do, is a stunning rereading of those oft-quoted texts (John 14:6–12).⁴³ All speech demands another person, the one who is spoken to. All language is between persons, so for God to speak there must be another.

⁴¹Ibid., 68.

⁴²Ibid., 18.

⁴³ The relevant text from the King Follett Discourse reads:

These are the first principles of consolation. How consoling to the mourners, when they are called to part with a husband, wife, father, mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly tabernacle is laid down and dissolved, they shall rise again, to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die any more; but they shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory, and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before. What did Jesus do? Why I do the things I saw my Father do when worlds come rolling into existence. My Father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory, He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself. So that Jesus treads in the track of his Father, and inherits what God did

There is thus a similarity here to Bushman's interpretation of Joseph Smith and the King Follett Discourse. God calls us, the little fish swimming in the sea, into a fuller communion. For Schelling, human beings have a structure similar to God's; and, like God's, their beginning is unclear. There does not seem to be a sense of eternally existing individual intelligences. Neither is there a vast "stew" of intelligence that God forms into persons. God rather calls us out of potential personality toward full personhood. What is interesting here is that the structure of Schelling's personalistic metaphysics provides a way to see possible links between the Book of Mormon and the King Follett Discourse.

The story is the difficult and dangerous journey from the innocence and unity of Eden, through the Fall into individuality and the choice of return or rebellion. As Lehi stated: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Ne. 2:25). Because of this fall, they are called to make a choice between freedom and slavery (2 Ne. 2:27). Becoming a full person, a subject capable of choice, is superior to the innocence of Eden. Alma preaches about the same journey:

Now, we see that the *man had become as God, knowing good and evil*; and lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever, the Lord God placed cherubim and the flaming sword, that he should not partake of the fruit. . . .

And now, ye see by this that our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord; and thus we see *they became subjects* to follow after their own will. (Alma 42:3, 7; emphasis mine)

That we become subjects, persons who follow their own wills, is essential to becoming more than creatures of an all-powerful being but necessary to becoming God's children, God's friends.

Reading the Book of Mormon through the type of romantic theological structure that emerges from Boehme and Schelling lessens the conceptual distance between the King Benjamin passages, which are often read as a Calvinist description of human depravity

before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children. It is plain beyond disputation; and you thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said. Joseph Smith, April 6 [actually, April 7], 1843, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot 1854–86), 6:1–11.

and dependence on God, and Joseph's Nauvoo theology. Consider the Schellingian way to read one of the "Calvinist" passages of the Book of Mormon: "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

This passage ceases to be simply an example of Calvin's ideas of human depravity and becomes instead an example of the struggle for balance between the two wills along the long road to divinity. The will of the basis (individuality) is the natural man who follows his own self-desires, who in his overweening egoism will end, like Satan, Cain, and Korihor, an enemy to God unless he yields to the will to love or to the enticing of the Holy Spirit that makes him open to God and others—to sociality. Benjamin continues in this vein when he says that the rich man who turns from the supplication of the poor "hath great cause to repent" (Mosiah 4:17). Since sociality requires another, morality does not exist as some platonic principle but arises when the other, the poor wayfaring man of grief, asks for help. The rich man must yield to the enticing of the spirit who comes to him in the form of the supplicant calling him to remember that he, too, is a beggar before God (Mosiah 4:17–18).

There is a sense of finitude and fallibility in all this. The opposition is in all beings, including God. Even God needs human action to fulfill His divine purpose of creating order from the chaos. Mormon philosopher William Chamberlin, after studying with Howison and Royce, saw this need in his own tradition. Mormons don't see their scriptures as infallible. From the Book of Mormon, to Joseph's King Follett Discourse, to Brigham Young, Charles W. Penrose, and B. H. Roberts, Mormons tended to a progressive metaphysics of becoming—of building the kingdom out of chaos—over a metaphysics of being and perfection. Chamberlin expressed this concept quite radically in 1912 when he wrote:

Even if Mormonism were not true, inspired by our love for our fathers we could make the cause they loved true, and bend it to the service of our God: for his work in this world is infinite and He yearns for our cooperation. . . . Our Father has founded our faith, needs it, and will use it in bringing to pass the freedom and happiness of his chil-

dren. We are certainly children of opportunity. We may cooperate with our great parents and even share the life and glory of God in aiding to bring in the ideal social and heavenly state for the establishment of which He has been striving from of old, even from before the foundations of the earth.⁴⁴

Chamberlin's statement is not a repudiation of the tradition but a sense of the unfinished character of the world that is created out of the chaos and which demands the ethical action of each member of the tradition.

CONCLUSION

It has not been my intention in this paper to show any kind of historical connection between the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, early Mormonism, and German romantic idealism or even Jacob Boehme. What I have wanted to show is that Mormonism can be read through different theological lenses that might be more or less compatible with the revelation. It's inevitable that we do this; we all bring our cultural and theological prejudices to the understanding of any religious texts even our own. Our past attempts to place Mormonism in the greater Christian tradition illustrate our efforts to make sense of its radicality, to understand its innovations. The lens provided by the romantic idealist tradition that leads from Boehme to Schelling and beyond allows us to imagine greater consistency in the development of the doctrine of the humanity of God and the divinity of human beings than many of the other lenses available to us. Such an approach points toward the unity and sociality that Joseph Smith claimed he always taught and that Richard Bushman sketches in his musings on the priesthood as God.

But Smith's plurality of gods and Bushman's interpretation of it are a yet more radical divergence from most types of western theism than anything in Boehme, Hegel, or Schelling. Though their positions are quite heterodox, the romantic idealists do not venture toward the kind of divine democratic communities described in Joseph Smith's heavenly councils. For although God is, in the senses described above, dependent on a community of beings, God still is their creator and ruler. The others don't share divinity with God in the

⁴⁴W. H. Chamberlin, "A Christmas Sentiment," *The White and the Blue* 16, no. 7 (December 12, 1912): 133.

fashion described by Richard Bushman's description of the priesthood formation of divine councils. In this theological development, Mormonism has been unique.

EARLY MORMONISM AND THE RE-ENCHANTMENT OF ANTEBELLUM HISTORICAL THOUGHT

Jordan T. Watkins

ANTEBELLUM AMERICANS VIEWED THE PAST from a unique vantage point. Having won political independence from a monarchy perceived as looking backward, this forward-looking republic sensed a need for usable histories to validate its democratic experiment. The period's "Party of Hope" renounced the past and advanced an American Adamic myth that embraced atemporal innocence.¹ Other thinkers envisioned the new nation as the culmination of Old World history, designating the past as prefatory and, in this way, compensating for shallow historical roots. Within these frameworks, or per-

JORDAN T. WATKINS {jordantwatkins@gmail.com} is a Ph.D. candidate in American intellectual history at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is writing a dissertation on the diverse forms of historical expression and the uneven development of historical consciousness in antebellum America.

¹The phrase "Party of Hope" is Emerson's, though R.W.B. Lewis applies the term to a group of antebellum figures, including Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, who in his view advanced an American Adamic myth. Lewis posits that the innocence fostered by the Adamic myth eventually led to a nostalgia for the past, resulting in a "Party of Memory" (also Emerson's phrase) that included historians such as William H. Prescott, George Bancroft, and Francis Parkman, and religious thinkers like Orestes Brownson. R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

haps because of them, millennial and utopian projections had to be buttressed with legitimizing histories. During the country's first half-century, historiographers and artists of all stripes used the American Revolution to construct an origin myth and authoritative historical narratives.² Though often providentialist, antebellum understandings of historical progress increasingly belied secularized, post-millennial ideas; Americans and their European counterparts came to believe that the end of history would occur within history itself.

Mormon approaches to the past can be understood as radically re-enchanting and re-theologizing some of these ideas. I use "re-enchant" and "re-theologize" in reference to the religious revision of orthodox positions on the experiential and ontological relationship between the human and the divine. The early Mormon reconceptualization of this relationship carried profound implications for thinking about history and temporality, and for envisioning past, present, and future interactions among time-bound beings. Still, this re-enchantment occurred in a specific place and time and can only be understood historically. The radicalism of early Mormon historical consciousness developed in dialogue with vari-

²On memory and the Revolution in antebellum culture and politics, see Michael Kammen, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978); Alfred Fabian Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), and Margot Minardi, *Making Slavery History: Abolitionism and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). On the legitimizing role of history and histories during this period, see, for example, William Raymond Smith, *History as Argument: Three Patriot Historians of the American Revolution* (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co, 1966); Arthur H. Shaffer, *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution, 1783–1815* (Chicago: Precedent Publications, 1975); Lester Cohen, *The Revolutionary Histories: Contemporary Narratives of the American Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980); Peter C. Messer, *Stories of Independence: Identity, Ideology, and History in Eighteenth-Century America* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005); and Eran Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

ous antebellum ideational currents.³

Early Mormon historical consciousness developed dialectically, and the most important dialectic informing this evolution was between Latter-day Saints and their sometimes antagonistic contemporaries.⁴ Joseph Smith's presentation of the Book of Mormon as historical object and text, along with his expansive restorationism, comprehensive teleology, radical providentialism, all-encompassing temporalism, and robust materialism both muted and intensified early Mormon historical sensibilities. Because it emerged within Jacksonian America and re-enchanted certain of the era's influential ideas about history and time, early Mormonism's varied and often implicit approaches to the past serves as an ideal window through which we can better view the shape of wider antebellum historical consciousness.

THE BOOK OF MORMON'S (POSSIBLE) HISTORICAL MEANINGS

Early Mormons understood their founding text as, first and foremost, New World history. In his narrative of the Book of Mormon's provenance, Joseph Smith depicted Moroni as an ancient American

³It should be clear that my use of "enchantment" is different from the familiar uses in studies like Morris Berman's *The Reenchantment of the World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), and that it refers to something related to but distinct from the developments outlined in works such as Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) and John L. Brooke's *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of the Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Still, the idea of "re-enchantment" as I use it here refers to religious re-enchantment. Though the enchanted worldview of early Mormonism exhibited unique theological views, including an all-encompassing materialism, it differed markedly from the "thoroughly secular" strategies of re-enchantment traced in *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age*, edited by Joshua Landy and Michael Saler (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1.

⁴The dialectical development of early Mormon thought has led scholars to offer seemingly contrasting conclusions on the relationship between early Mormon and non-Mormon conceptions of time and history. See Thomas O'Dea, "Mormonism and the American Experience of Time," *Western Humanities Review* 8 (Summer 1954): 184; and Robert B. Flanders, "To Transform History: Early Mormon Culture and the Concept of Time and Space," *Church History* 40, no. 1 (March 1971): 109.

historian who appeared in bodily form to explain that his people's history was buried in the New York hillside and had to be brought forth in a language Americans could read. The golden plates were both a historical object and a historical record from the pre-Columbian past. Unlike the Bible, a sacred account that gained historical value over time, the Book of Mormon was a historical record that gained theological value over time.⁵ In Smith's hands, ancientness itself had great spiritual power: The record was a sacred text because it was a divinely revealed ancient text. As with this new scripture, much of the spiritual appeal of Smith's subsequent canonical productions was bound up in a sense of pastness. Christopher C. Smith argues, for example, that Mormon leaders attempted to increase the spiritual potency of the Kirtland United Firm revelations by using archaic names and rhetoric to ground teachings in ancient settings.⁶ The Book of Mormon sparked Smith's interest in the sacralizing power of the past and set a precedent for his subsequent attempts to locate texts, ideas, and practices in ancient history. Even seemingly quotidian recordkeeping harnessed power from the distant past (D&C 20:81–83, 85:1–2, 127:6, 128:6–18; all D&C quotations from the 1981 LDS edition).

Richard Bushman, in demonstrating the centrality of historical records in the Book of Mormon world, describes Nephi and Mormon as participants in a rich record-making and recordkeeping tradition that spiritually sustains and revives civilizations. The account itself provided a unique alternative to the era's other universal histories, many of which aimed to embrace all of human experience albeit from a European perspective. It envisions peoples scattered across time and space creating records of God's localized dealings, to be revealed and gathered in a final, world-historical dispensation. This process required a translator, and Bushman follows the text in connecting this office to Joseph Smith.⁷ A further connection can be made between the Book of Mormon and the early Mormon preoccupation with recordkeeping. The Book of Mormon may have spurred Smith's al-

⁵Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. chaps. 1 and 4.

⁶Christopher C. Smith, "The Inspired Fictionalization of the 1835 United Firm Revelations," *The Claremont Journal of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (April 2011): 15–31.

⁷Richard L. Bushman, "The Book of Mormon in Early Mormon His-

most obsessive interest in creating and preserving ecclesiastical licenses and memberships, meeting minutes, patriarchal blessings, histories, correspondences, and diaries.⁸

While largely bracketing questions of the Book of Mormon's historicity, Grant Hardy approaches the record as a "history-like" text and describes the book's central narrators—Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni—as editor/historians. Nephi places his civilization within an expansive world history, but his emphasis on moral didacticism seriously constrains his historical efforts. Like Nephi, Mormon attempts to balance historiographical, aesthetic, and ideological aims, but he believes God's plan is most successfully revealed through a primarily factual account of prophecy and fulfillment and a sacred chronology of specific dates, names, and places. He readily acknowledges the necessarily selective nature of his text; because he self-identifies as a historian rather than a prophet, however, Mormon seems to struggle when God directs him to omit certain details from his historical record (3 Ne. 26:11–12). Mormon's son Moroni, on the other hand, displays little interest in convincing his readers through careful historical exposition and relies instead primarily on redactions of the doctrinal teachings of prior Book of Mormon prophets, especially Nephi, Benjamin, and his own father. Of the three main editor/historians in the Book of Mormon, Mormon himself displays the clearest methodological affinities with antebellum America's most widely read historians, including William H. Prescott and George Bancroft, who used literary conventions in their attempts to relate universal truths through objective histories.⁹ Even so, the link between religious truth claims and historicity in the Book of Mormon worked

tory," in *New Views of Mormon History: Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington*, edited by Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 3–18.

⁸Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormon Record Keeping," in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, edited by Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 138–60.

⁹On the use of literary conventions by Bancroft, Prescott, and other Romantic historians of the period, see David Levin, *History As Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959). See also Eileen K. Cheng, *The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth:*

against its reception as a text with historical value.¹⁰

The American reading public largely rejected the Book of Mormon and with it the origin myth the book might have supplied. Still, a number of readings allow us to speculate on the book's unfulfilled potential in a new nation searching for a past at a time when European political convulsions prompted the West to reconsider its relationship to history. Reacting against the excesses of the French Revolution and its perceived ahistorical agenda, British statesman Edmund Burke attacked what he saw as France's fateful rejection of tradition.¹¹ In the wake of the Terror, France's own Thermidorian leaders revalued historical knowledge as essential to stable governance.¹² German historians such as Wilhelm von Humboldt and Leopold von Ranke, reflecting on the Terror and the subsequent Napoleonic wars, replaced the Enlightenment's perceived faith in universally applicable natural law with historically and nationally determined values—ideals they saw most fully represented, not coincidentally, in the modern German state.¹³

In this way, the deep historical consciousness that empowered nineteenth-century nationalism became a coveted prize that undermined American attempts to disclaim history and replace it with weaker surrogates like nature or primeval innocence.¹⁴ As it was, the young republic had to make do with its brief history, the nearness of

Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784–1860 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

¹⁰Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For Hardy's description of the phrase "history-like narrative," which he borrows from historian and theologian Hans Frei, see xvii and 26.

¹¹Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France," in *The Collective Memory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65–67.

¹²Andrew Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008), 31–35.

¹³Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), 3–89.

¹⁴On nature as a replacement for history, see Lewis, *American Adam*,

which triggered commemorative and ideological standoffs between rival parties and diverse peoples, each staking its claims as rightful legatees of the Revolution.¹⁵ Put forth as a historical account of a temporally distant but locally grounded epoch, the Book of Mormon offered a more expansive view of American history, which the new republic might have used as a legitimizing historical text to help in overcoming its cultural insecurities. The text also designated America as a choice land, demonstrating its capacity to validate mythic associations about the New World and its special role in sacred and secular history.¹⁶ But threatening to undermine as much as it affirmed, the book made no register on the historical consciousness of the larger public.

The equation that early Mormons made between Lamanites and American Indians suggested that the Book of Mormon's history belonged to non-white Natives, some of whom used historical arguments to challenge European assertions that the Indian would either climb the ladder of civilization or disappear from space and time.¹⁷ From the mid-1820s to the late 1830s, Cherokee leaders like Elias Boudinot dismantled allegations that Native peoples were somehow atemporal. In his "Address to the Whites" (1826), Boudinot dismissed Anglo-Americans' irrational perceptions of Natives, including the view that they existed out of time, and proceeded to situate American Indians within modern European history.¹⁸ As Euro-Americans became increasingly convinced that the apparently atemporal Natives

and Fred Somkin, *Unquiet Eagle: Memory and Desire in the Idea of American Freedom, 1815–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), 55–90.

¹⁵David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), chap. 2; Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*, esp. chap. 5; Minardi, *Making Slavery History*, esp. chaps. 3, 5; and Harlow Sheidley, *Sectional Nationalism: Massachusetts Conservative Leaders and the Transformation of America, 1815–1836* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), esp. chap. 5.

¹⁶Flanders, "To Transform History," 108–17.

¹⁷On early Mormon views of Native Americans and the Book of Mormon's role in shaping those views, see Ronald W. Walker, "Seeking the 'Remnant': The Native American during the Joseph Smith Period," *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 1–33.

¹⁸Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the*

had no future, American Indians such as Boudinot presented histories that suggested otherwise.¹⁹ The Book of Mormon seemed to support and enhance his position in both directions; not only did the Natives possess a deep and tragic past, but they were also promised a bright and glorious future, one that spelled trouble for corrupt Gentile kingdoms (3 Ne. 21).

Presented as a record of Native American ancestry, the Book of Mormon seemed to affirm arguments for Indian temporality and historicity while unveiling a vision of a unique and promising future. But it could also undermine Native sovereignty and legitimate Indian removal. The book's prophecies gave the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples a vital role in a millennial drama; and while this conception might be interpreted as promoting a "multicultural form of Manifest Destiny," Parley P. Pratt used it to confirm theories of Indian-Israelitism.²⁰ Natives were immigrants, not aboriginal inhabitants, and Jackson's Removal Act provided impetus to a Mormon-Indian coalition that would emerge to overthrow tyrannical government.²¹ This new American scripture, then, possessed the potential to simultaneously bolster and weaken both Euro-American and Native American political visions.

Politics of Historiography, 1827–1863 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 50–60. See also Claudio Saunt, "Telling Stories: The Political Uses of Myth and History in the Cherokee and Creek Nations," *Journal of American History* 93 (December 2006): 673–96.

¹⁹On the rhetoric of Natives as a "vanishing race" in American culture and the associated lament, see John Hausdoerffer, *Catlin's Lament: Indians, Manifest Destiny, and the Ethics of Nature* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), esp. chap. 3.

²⁰R. John Williams, "A Marvelous Work and a Possession: Book of Mormon Historicity as Postcolonialism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 37–55, quotation on 49–50 note 25.

²¹Parley P. Pratt, *Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People, Containing a Declaration of Faith and Doctrine of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, Commonly Called Mormons* (New York: W. Sandford, 1837), 185–92. Responding to proponents of the Bering Strait theory, Vine Deloria Jr. noted that "by making us immigrants to North America they are able to deny the fact that we were the full, complete, and total owners of this continent." Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997), 69–70.

If the Book of Mormon could not provide the nation with a legitimizing history, its subject matter seemed ideal for epic American fiction, another genre used in claiming cultural legitimacy. During the 1820s, James Fenimore Cooper concluded that the American past was too short, too plain, and too recent, and its customs too simple for the purposes of a historical novel. Cooper partially overcame these problems by situating his scenes on the boundless ocean or the unsettled frontier, thus creating spatial and temporal distance.²² The Book of Mormon, purportedly set in an ancient and unknown American past, contained a number of Romantic associations that the recent history lacked. But, as with other potential uses, the religious truth claims disallowed contemporaries from reading the Book of Mormon as an American historical romance. These truth claims even delimited the readings of early Mormons, for whom the book functioned as a sacred sign of the restoration more than a history of ancient America.²³

WORLD HISTORY AS MORMON HISTORY

The restorationist and Christian primitivist thinking that percolated throughout the Western world in the three centuries after the Protestant Reformation contributed much to the antebellum imagination, informing, for example, Edenic and millenarian nationalistic formulations.²⁴ Mormonism appropriated but also inverted these formulations.²⁵ Mormon Zionism, for example, redirected Protestant notions of Manifest Destiny, providing a vision that foresaw the

²²For examples of James Fenimore Cooper on the American past as an unsuitable subject for historical novels, see *The Spy: A Tale of the Neutral Ground*, edited by James P. Elliott et al. (New York: AMS Press, 2002), 2–5, 9–10; *Lionel Lincoln: or The Leaguer of Boston*, edited by Donald A. and Lucy B. Ringe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 6–7; and *The Pioneers, or the Sources of the Susquehanna; A Descriptive Tale*, edited by James Franklin Beard, Lance Schachterle, and Kenneth M. Anderson Jr. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 6–10.

²³Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, esp. chap 3.

²⁴Richard T. Hughes and Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

²⁵Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The*

fall of the American republic and the rise of a Mormon theocracy.²⁶

Mormonism compared with restorationist movements along strictly religious lines as well. A number of groups expressed the need for new revelation, but Mormonism combined this imperative with an interest in the return of charismata, a prelapsarian pure language, priesthood authority, and the production of new scripture.²⁷ Richard Bushman argues that “nothing less than the restoration of world history was the charge given to Joseph Smith when he accepted the responsibilities of seer and translator prophesied of him in the Book of Mormon.”²⁸ Terryl Givens similarly describes Smith as “an explorer, a discoverer, and a revealer of past worlds.”²⁹ The process of restoration was an ambitious historical endeavor; and in providing a new vision of human history, Smith imposed on the past a framework that emphasized universal similarities and downplayed temporal differences.³⁰

Informed by this long millenarian tradition, early Mormons envisioned their church as the ecclesiastical culmination of a sacred *telos* that stretched back to a primordial Eden. Indeed, past and future would be brought together when Christ returned and the earth re-

Ancestry of Churches of Christ (Abilene, Tex.: ACU Press, 1988), 94–97.

²⁶On the development of a Mormon Zionism, see Mark R. Ashurst-McGee, “Zion Rising: Joseph Smith’s Early Social and Political Thought” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2008). For an example of Mormon Zionism, see Parley P. Pratt, *The Angel of the Prairies; A Dream of the Future*, by Elder Parley Parker Pratt, *One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Printing and Publishing Establishment, 1880).

²⁷See Samuel Brown, “Mormonism as Restoration,” in *Mormonism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by W. Paul Reeve and Ardis E. Parshall (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 365–71.

²⁸Bushman, “The Book of Mormon in Early Mormon History,” 16.

²⁹Givens, “Joseph Smith: Prophecy, Process, and Plenitude” in *Joseph Smith Jr.: Reappraisals after Two Centuries*, edited by Reid L. Neilson and Terryl L. Givens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 108.

³⁰On the complexity of the Mormon Restoration as it relates to ideas of time, see Philip L. Barlow, “Toward a Mormon Sense of Time,” *Journal of Mormon History* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 22–29; and Jan Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 292–96.

ceived its “paradisiacal glory” (Tenth Article of Faith). The past’s importance depended on the identification of the present and immediate future as the “fulness of times.”³¹ The phrase was the Mormon version of Enlightenment thinkers’ measurement of all past eras against the unparalleled “enlightened” age of the eighteenth century. Both views posited the universality of human nature; but whereas some Enlightenment thinkers stressed what they perceived to be the “irrational” state of past peoples, Smith frequently extolled the “inspired” state of past prophets. Though both the division of history into stages and the division of history into dispensations required some sense of discrete temporal epochs, Enlightenment historians’ emphasis on the differences between past and present often served to condemn the past, while early Mormons’ interest in the similarities between past and present often served to revalue the past.³² Neither view valued the past for itself, however. In fact, Smith’s expansive at-

³¹Smith borrowed “fulness of times” from Ephesians 1:10 and used it, for example, in Doctrine and Covenants 27:13; 112:30; 121:31; 124:41; 128:18–20. See also Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 10, 39, 79, 346.

³²This brief discussion of the relationship between “the Enlightenment” and history obscures the complexity of eighteenth-century thought and culture and fails to nuance how various thinkers engaged with the past on different levels. Some understood history as a narrative of inevitable progress and others approached history as cyclical in nature, with alternating periods of rationality and irrationality. On Enlightenment historiography, see J.G.A. Pocock, “Historiography and Enlightenment: A View of Their History,” *Modern Intellectual History* 5, no. 1 (2008): 83–96. On the historical narratives of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French thinkers and on the relationship between Enlightenment and scholarship on “the Enlightenment,” see Daniel Brewer, *The Enlightenment Past: Reconstructing Eighteenth-Century French Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); J. B. Shank, *The Newton Wars and the Beginning of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008); and Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010). See also Roger Chartier, “Enlightenment and Revolution; Revolution and Enlightenment,” in *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991).

tempt to locate LDS ideas and beliefs in world history resulted in a radical conflation of time.³³ From one perspective, early Mormons viewed history as cyclical, with repeating periods of apostasy and restoration. From another perspective, historical development was linear and progressive, a kind of Hegelian dialectic to be culminated in the final dispensation. More fundamentally, this history was Mormon.

While Sacvan Bercovitch emphasizes New England Puritans' typological reading of the past and how their millennial mindset enabled them to "recast the whole dead secular world in their own image," Theodore Dwight Bozeman argues that the Puritan mentality depended on a much more important biblical primitivism, in which they thoroughly engaged with the biblical past before addressing the problems and promises of the present and future.³⁴ These arguments, though, are not mutually exclusive, and it seems that subsequent generations inherited aspects of both the primitivist and millennialist strains of Puritan thought. In the antebellum period, primitivism found proponents among many religious groups, including the Christian Movement, and millennialism had an even broader appeal, as many read the past through the lens of the American present. Diverging from nationalistic millennial visions, Joseph Smith, who sought to restore the past in light of the Mormon present, imposed Mormon beliefs and practices upon world history, thus recasting the human experience in a Mormon image. This historical imposition informed canonical comparisons between Smith and past prophets such as Moses.³⁵ Smith re-enchanted and re-narrowed what had been secularized and broadened. History was invoked to emphasize the universality of Mormon ideas, which not only legitimized the Mormon present but also revalorized the earth's distant past.

Smith's typological reading of the past combined with his primi-

³³Flanders, "To Transform History," 111–12.

³⁴Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), 113; Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

³⁵Comparisons between Smith and Moses occur in the Book of Mormon, Smith's revisions to the Bible, and the Doctrine and Covenants. See 2 Nephi 3:7–9; JST Genesis 50:27–29; and Doctrine and Covenants 28:2, 103:16–18, 110:11.

tivist proclivities. He called on the past and its personalities to assert authority over the present. During the mid-1830s he added further hierarchical layers to Church government just as other antebellum religions were becoming more democratized.³⁶ These ecclesiastical changes begged for validation. While Protestant Americans relied on the Bible to advance priesthoods of all believers and to renounce Church government, Smith turned to biblical figures to authorize a ranked religious organization. Mormon scripture compared Smith to biblical figures but he also claimed to know them personally.³⁷ As Charles L. Cohen wrote of the Puritans, Smith “could address Moses and Paul as contemporaries with whom [he] shared common assumptions and beliefs.”³⁸ He asserted that prophets from the past, including John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, and Elijah, had returned in angelic form to restore priesthood keys, structures, and procedures that had been established in “ancient councils” and according to “ancient orders.”³⁹ *Ancient orders, ancient councils, ancient prophets, ancient priesthoods*: ancientness was a key component to Smith’s restoration; and increasingly, it took on a pre-prelapsarian dimension.

³⁶On the democratization of religion during this period, see Nathan O. Hatch, “The Christian Movement and the Demand for the Theology of a People,” *The Journal of American History* 67, no. 3 (December 1980): 545–67; Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), which includes a discussion of Mormonism; and John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), which also attends to a subsequent backlash. See also Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 253.

³⁷For statements on Smith’s relationship with figures from biblical and Book of Mormon pasts, see Alexander L. Baugh, “Parting the Veil: Joseph Smith’s Seventy-Six Documented Visionary Experiences,” in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, edited by John W. Welch with Erick B. Carlson (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press/Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 271, 298 note 13–15.

³⁸Charles L. Cohen, *God’s Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 35.

³⁹Smith, Sermon, February 17, 1834, in *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, edited by Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell (Salt Lake City: Collier’s Publishing, 1996). Smith first used the phrases “ancient councils” and “ancient orders” during the Kirtland period. On Smith’s appeal to

The early Mormon belief in premortal existence developed slowly and quietly, but in Nauvoo Smith made the teaching an important feature of LDS thought.⁴⁰ The idea developed in conjunction with a materialism and a temporalism (outlined below) which dictated that all existence, including premortal existence, occurs within time and space. The concept of preexistence allowed Smith to retroject people and powers further back in time, a process that granted them greater religious legitimacy. In an August 1839 sermon, Smith explained that “the Priesthood was, first given to Adam . . . he obtained it in the creation before the world was formed.” Priesthood, Smith continued, “existed with God from Eternity & will to Eternity.” Smith associated the priesthood with the first human, according to the Genesis narrative, and affirmed that both predated the creation. He proceeded to assert the premortal existence—and thus the eternal temporality—of all humans when he stated that “the Spirit of Man is not a created being; it existed from Eternity & will exist to eternity.”⁴¹ This was not an attempt to claim special atemporal status. Again, because the idea of premortal existence developed alongside a temporalism in which all existence (including pre- and postmortal existence) enfolds in time, Smith’s placement of priesthood and people within the premortal sphere was, at least in part, another attempt to claim the power of past times. An interest in pastness and ancientness contributed to Smith’s retrojection, not only of restored powers, but also of restored practices.

figures from the past for authority, see Benjamin E. Park, “‘A Uniformity So Complete’: Early Mormon Angelology,” *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 2, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 17–24. See also John W. Welch, “Joseph Smith and the Past,” in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress*, edited by John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2006), 105–17.

⁴⁰On the development of preexistence in early Mormon thought, see Blake T. Ostler, “The Idea of Pre-existence in the Development of Mormon Thought,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Spring 1982): 59–78; and Charles R. Harrell, “The Development of the Doctrine of Preexistence, 1830–1844,” *BYU Studies* 28 (Winter 1989): 75–96.

⁴¹Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 8, 9. Smith’s language on priesthood echoes a passage in Alma 13:7, which corresponds to Hebrews 7:3. Alma 13 foreshadowed Nauvoo-period developments on premortal existence.

The powers restored to Smith resulted in the reinstitution of sacred ordinances, such as baptism and the developing endowment. Like the texts Smith produced and the powers he claimed, the spiritual potency of these ordinances relied on ancientness. Baptism appeared throughout the Book of Mormon, and Smith's additions to the Old Testament narrated Adam's baptism (Moses 6:59–66). In the Nauvoo period, Smith referred to Peter's "endowment" and implied that Moses received at least a partial endowment "on the Mountain top."⁴² Smith not only positioned beliefs and rituals in the postlapsarian past, but, as with prophets and priesthood, also posited their premortal existence. In the August 1839 sermon cited above and in a later June 1843 sermon, Smith tied authority to sacraments, stating that "if there is no change of ordinances there is no change of Priesthood." He explained that "ordinances were instituted in heaven before the foundation of the world."⁴³ Smith seemed to believe that the further back in time he could situate texts, ideas, powers, and practices, the more legitimate his present religious claims became. This, of course, resulted in a further conflation of time that, in turn, increased the historical significance of contemporary experience.

THE HISTORICAL PRESENT AND A TIME-BOUND GOD

Smith altered his restoration narrative according to the understanding he gradually gained from revelatory experiences. In 1835, his association of priesthood restoration shifted from Moroni to John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John, and then, in 1840, to Elijah. This chronology followed Smith's reconceptualizing of Church government rather than the timing of reported angelic appearance.⁴⁴ Alongside this evolving narrative of priesthood restoration, Smith's accounts of what became known as the First Vision changed in relation to events that he interpreted as positive identification of his position as the leading prophet of the final dispensation.⁴⁵ Just as antebellum Americans employed the Revolutionary past to legitimize

⁴²Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 120, 331.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 9, 210.

⁴⁴Gregory A. Prince, *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995).

⁴⁵James B. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 3 (Au-

their visions of the new republic, early Mormons used their own founding events to buttress their religious claims. Smith read human history and revised individual history as his understanding of the restoration framework that he oversaw unfolded. This restorationist reading and writing of history displayed a radical providentialism, which further inspired an interest in maintaining historical records of recent events.

The radicalism of early Mormon providentialism rested on the claim that God communicated to Smith in the same way that he had communicated with Moses. Much of the early republic's citizenry believed that Deity, in some form or another, continued to guide history; and some, including Emerson, went so far as to propose that "it is the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was; that He speaketh, not spake."⁴⁶ In affirming God's continued intervention, both Emerson and Smith valued the present as historical and historic.⁴⁷ This providentialism informed early Mormon efforts to keep and preserve records and histories, not only of the recent past, but also of the present.⁴⁸ Smith's religion-making provided a new vision of human history, but most Mormon historical writing undertook more modest aims centered on chronicling a Deity-directed latter-day

turn 1966): 29–46; and James B. Allen, "Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Religious Thought," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 43–61.

⁴⁶Ralph Waldo Emerson, "An Address Delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 5 vols., edited by Robert E. Spiller and Alfred R. Ferguson (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971–94): 1:89. The LDS Church has employed this quotation to support the principle of continuing revelation: Jeffrey R. Holland, "Prophets, Seers, and Revelators," *Ensign*, November 2004, 8; and the LDS-produced film, *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* (2005).

⁴⁷For a discussion on how Smith's claims inspired an emphasis on the contextual and temporal limitations of revelation, see David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 141–57.

⁴⁸On Mormon recordkeeping and history writing, see Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History," *BYU Studies* 11 (Summer 1971): 329–73; Jessee, "The Reliability of Joseph Smith's History," *Journal of Mormon History* 3 (1976): 23–46; Howard C. Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography

restoration. Though both Emerson and Smith valued the present as it revealed divine presence, Emerson's understanding of divinity differed sharply from Smith's.⁴⁹ While the Transcendentalist conceived of all as mind or dead mind, the restorationist posited that all existed as matter or refined matter. Transcendentalists were idealists and monists; Mormons were physicalists and pluralists. Though others spelled out the radical implications of this materiality only after his death, Smith's early assertion that an embodied being with a name and a history had directed him to unearth a historical object from a distant past prefigured the development of a more expansive sacred drama in which an embodied God and divine-historical beings intervene in very personal, material, and temporal ways.⁵⁰

Along with his King Follett Discourse, a number of Smith's reve-

raphy: *Writing the History of the Mormons, 1830–1858* (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1979); David J. Whittaker, "Historians and the Mormon Experience: A Sesquicentennial Perspective," in *The Eighth Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium Papers* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1980), 293–327; Jessee, "Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormon Record Keeping"; Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, *Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); and Richard E. Turley Jr. and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Preserving the History of the Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2010).

⁴⁹From nearly beginning to end, Emerson's writings demonstrate his belief in God as a self-dependent Mind, thus complicating his idealism. On Emerson's pantheism, see, for example, Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by William H. Gilman, et al., 16 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960–82): 5:270–71; Emerson, *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Albert J. von Frank et al., 4 vols. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989–92), 3:125, 4:175; Emerson, *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Stephen E. Whicher, Robert E. Spiller, and Wallace E. Williams, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, The Belknap Press, 1964), 2:17; Emerson, "An Address Delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College," 123; Emerson, "Natural History of the Intellect," in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Edward Waldo Emerson, 12 vols., Centenary Edition (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1903–4), 12:17.

⁵⁰For Smith's statements that introduced a radical new materialism, see Doctrine and Covenants 93:33; 131:7; Smith, "Try the Spirits," *Times*

lations acted as starting points from which others, including the Pratt brothers, Parley and Orson, formulated a Mormon temporalism and materialism.⁵¹ In a number of writings, Parley advanced Smith's teachings in developing a robust concept of human divinization, one

and Seasons 3, no. 11 (April 1, 1842): 745; and Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 203.

⁵¹For extant manuscripts of the King Follett Discourse, see Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 340–62; and Stan Larson, “The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 193–208. For Parley's writings, see, for example, *Millennium, and Other Poems: To Which Is Annexed, a Treatise on the Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter* (New York: W. Molineux, 1840), “Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body,” in *An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York, Letter to Queen Victoria (Reprinted from the Tenth European Edition,) the Fountain of Knowledge; Immortality of the Body, and Intelligence and Affection* (Nauvoo, Ill.: John Taylor, 1844), “Materiality,” *The Prophet*, May 24, 1845, and *Key to the Science of Theology: Designed as an Introduction to the First Principles of Spiritual Philosophy; Religion; Law and Government; as Delivered by the Ancients, and as Restored in This Age, for the Final Development of Universal Peace, Truth, and Knowledge* (Liverpool, England: F. D. Richards, 1855). For Orson's writings, see, for example, “Mormon Philosophy: Space, Duration, and Matter” (1845), in *The Essential Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books), 31–36, *Absurdities of Immaterialism, or, A Reply to T.W.P. Taylder's Pamphlet, Entitled, “The Materialism of the Mormons or Latter-day Saints, Examined and Exposed”* (1849), in *The Essential Orson Pratt*, 61–108; and “Great First Cause, or the Self-Moving Forces of the Universe” (1851), in *The Essential Orson Pratt*, 173–97. On the evolution of early Mormon ideas of materiality and divinization, see Benjamin E. Park and Jordan T. Watkins, “The Riches of Mormon Materialism: Parley P. Pratt's ‘Materiality’ and Early Mormon Theology,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 11, no. 2. (Fall 2010): 159–72; and Jordan Watkins, “‘All of One Species’: Parley P. Pratt and the Dialectical Development of Early Mormon Conceptions of Theosis,” in *Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism*, edited by Gregory K. Armstrong, Matthew J. Grow, and Dennis J. Siler (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2011), 201–18. See also Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 125–26, 212; and Benjamin E. Park, “Salvation through a Tabernacle: Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and Early Mormon Theologies of Embodiment,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 1–44. On Orson Pratt's intelligent-mat-

of a host of antebellum perfectionist formulations that spanned from the optimistic postmillennialism of Christian reformers like Charles Grandison Finney to more radical utopian schemes like Brook Farm. In comparing aristocratic and democratic nations, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that “the idea of perfectibility is as old as the world itself. Equality did not invent it but it gave it a new quality.” While “aristocratic nations are by nature liable to restrict too much the bounds of human perfectibility,” he opined “democratic nations stretch them sometimes to excess.”⁵² In antebellum America, bold perfectionism was everywhere: the Wesleyan-based holiness movement, John Humphrey Noyes’s social theory of perfectionism, Emerson’s gods in ruins, and Melville’s god-like man. Melville, was of course, critiquing the period’s anthropocentrism; but while some perfectionist movements and ideas seemed to displace God, others either maintained a strict ontological distinction between Creator and creature, or, as with Emerson’s view of the Divine Mind, reinforced Deity’s self-dependence.

Joseph Smith’s perfectionism, on the other hand, neither negated God nor affirmed any essential ontological differences between divine and human. Rather, it posited an expansive, though hierarchical anthropology, wherein God as an exalted human collaborates with unredeemed but co-eternal and ontologically equal humans in a temporal, though unending, drama.⁵³ Orson Pratt, who thought Smith’s materialism conformed to temporal law, wrote that Christ and His Father exist “both in time and in space, and [have] as

ter theory, see Jordan T. Watkins, “The Great God, the Divine Mind, and the Ideal Absolute: Orson Pratt’s Intelligent-Matter Theory and the Gods of Emerson and James,” *The Claremont Journal of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (April 2011): 33–51.

⁵²Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 522, 523.

⁵³Margarita Mathiopoulos asserts that America’s revolution propelled ideas of progress and that the tension between reality and utopia in America “aspired to unconditional progress for humankind while knowing that the chiliastic endpoint of history would never be reached.” Mathiopoulos, *History and Progress: In Search of the European and American Mind*, translated by Jessie Lenagh (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989), 382.

much relation to them as man or any other being.”⁵⁴ In collapsing divine distance, Smith integrated the divine into the historical. He not only recast secular history in a Mormon image, but he also projected humanity and human temporality into the cosmos and onto eternity. What had been a radical providentialism gave way to the more heterodox proposition that God acted in time as humanity’s ontological equal. If, as Terryl Givens argues, “*all we have* is historical time” with Smith, then, *all we have* are historical actors as well: human and divine agents performing on a vast temporal stage.⁵⁵

While the drama Smith described unfolds in time, it aims to explode the bounds of history. Thomas O’Dea, explaining how Mormonism emerged during a period when spiritual millenniums became secularized utopias, interpreted the new religion as a “re-theologizing of much that had already been quietly and perhaps imperceptibly secularized.” Noting that Pelagianism in America often led antebellum thinkers to define Christian salvation in temporal terms, O’Dea argues that the idea of progress, often defined materially, replaced or at least complicated the Christian hope in millennial fulfillment. Some began to envision the end of history as occurring within history itself. America embodied this utopian sensibility, and Mormonism, as “a distillation of what is peculiarly American in America,” provided, through its sense of sacred time, “a transcendentalism within the context of time itself” and through its materialism, temporalism, and notions of eternal progress, “an eschatological conception without an end.”⁵⁶

Early Mormon materialism, temporalism, and finitism broke sharply from American Protestant theology, while early Mormon mil-

⁵⁴Orson Pratt, “The Kingdom of God, Part I,” in *The Essential Orson Pratt*, 52.

⁵⁵Givens, “Joseph Smith: Prophecy, Process, and Plenitude,” 112; emphasis Givens’s. William Clayton recorded an 1843 sermon in which Joseph Smith said: “There is no angel [that] ministers to this earth only what either does belong or has belonged to this earth.” Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 169. All of Smith’s divine visitors had lived on this earth. See D&C 130:5.

⁵⁶O’Dea, “Mormonism and the American Experience of Time,” 189, 190. On time and sacred time in Mormonism, see Kathleen Flake, “‘Not to Be Riten’: The Mormon Temple Rite as Oral Canon,” *Journal of Ritual Studies* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 1–21, and Barlow, “Toward a Mormon Sense of

lenarianism served to re-theologize American utopianism. Mormonism was simultaneously too radical and too traditional, but in both cases, it took cues from contemporary thought. Sterling McMurrin may be correct when he writes that Mormon finitistic conceptions make the faith “conducive to a highly sensitized temporal consciousness.”⁵⁷ If this is true, we shouldn’t be surprised to find Mormonism intimately related, and in complicated ways, to antebellum American historical consciousness.

CONCLUSION

This contextualization of Mormonism’s radical views of history and time can exceptionalize antebellum America at the expense of de-exceptionalizing early Mormonism, but it can also highlight the affinities between nineteenth-century American and European historical thought. Dorothy Ross argues that, after the successful American Revolution, a religiously tinged republicanism and a politicized millennialism combined to ensure the persistence of providentialist interpretations of the past and delayed America’s incorporation of historicist thinking until late in the nineteenth century.⁵⁸ This brief survey of early Mormon thought supports but also problematizes this traditional narrative. For example, Smith’s use of a myopic restorationist lens to make expansive historical claims resulted in a complete conflation of time, subjecting the past to the proclivities of a tyrannizing present.

But by retrojecting Mormon beliefs and practices back through time and asserting God’s continuous intervention, Smith revalued

Time,” 26–27. On time in Mormon theology, see Blake T. Ostler, *Exploring Mormon Thought: The Attributes of God* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2001), 331–63.

⁵⁷Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (1965; rpt. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 39; see pp. 36–40 on the radicalism of Mormon finitism. See also Paul M. Edwards, “Time in Mormon History,” in *New Views of Mormon History: Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington*, edited by Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 391–93.

⁵⁸Dorothy Ross, “Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth Century America,” *American Historical Review* 89 (October, 1984): 909–28. Ross follows and nuances the argument of Morton White’s *Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism* (New York: Viking, 1949).

historical periods or dispensations, which, though more selective and inventive, compares with Ranke's idealist- and panentheist-informed historicism, in which "every epoch is immediate to God, and its worth is not at all based on what derives from it but rests in its own existence, in its own self."⁵⁹ This suggests that, at least in their implications for thinking about the past, the forces directing the development of European historical thought, including Idealism and Romanticism, did not diverge from those forces directing American historical thought, such as millennialism, as much as Ross's analysis implies.

It also questions the assumption that nineteenth-century historical understandings developed almost exclusively along secular lines by evidencing ways in which religious ideas encouraged greater historical consciousness. The Book of Mormon, similar to Cooper's novels, precipitated calls for greater historical accuracy by directing both believers and detractors to turn to the past in attempts to confirm or disprove the book's historical claims; Mormonism's founding events, similar to the French Revolution, inspired the need to collect, preserve, and use historical documents; and Mormon finitism, similar to developing humanisms, designated mortal (and immortal) humans as the central actors in history, though it maintained a belief in God and conceived of the end of history as occurring in time.⁶⁰ Mormonism may have re-theologized American utopianism, and perhaps Am-

⁵⁹Leopold von Ranke, "On Progress in History" in *The Theory and Practice of History*, edited by George G. Iggers and Konrad von Moltke (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 53. On the incorporation of Ranke's thought by American historians, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 21–46.

⁶⁰On the impact of the French Revolution in encouraging the collection, preservation, and use of historical documents, see Tom Stammers, "The Refuse of the Revolution: Autograph Collecting in France, 1789–1860," in *Historicising the French Revolution*, edited by Carolina Armenteros et al. (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2008), 39–63. On the development in Hegelianism toward a humanism that displaced the ideal in its emphasis on the human, see John Edward Toewes, *Hegelianism: The Path toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805–1841* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980). A number of French thinkers understood attempts to end the French Revolution, which continued throughout the nineteenth century, as contemporaneous with attempts to end history, associated with violence

erica's providentialisms remained influential in shaping historical thought throughout the nineteenth century; but while both Mormonism and American providentialism checked the advances of secular historical understandings, they also demonstrated the potential to complicate and nuance antebellum historical thinking.

and political crisis. See, for example, Carolina Armenteros, "Revolutionary Violence and the End of History: The Divided Self in Francophone Thought, 1762–1914," in *Historicising the French Revolution*, edited by Caroline Armenteros et al. (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2008), 2–33.

“REASONINGS SUFFICIENT”: JOSEPH SMITH, THOMAS DICK, AND THE CONTEXT(S) OF EARLY MORMONISM

Benjamin E. Park

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF MORMON THOUGHT has long been a topic of deep interest. Indeed, the very concept of “development” and the idea of tracing “intellectual shifts” and “contemporary influences” enlivened many academic works during the period now referred to as the New Mormon History, as historians sought to determine Mormonism’s progression and relationship to its broader context. Ideas were treated as organizational structures, by which a rigid linear development could be traced from one point of classification to the next. Examinations of the broader culture were, for the first time, emphasized, as contemporaries of Joseph Smith were discovered to be making similar theological claims. Utilizing the tools of the New Social History that emphasized facts, categories, and otherwise objective measures of examination, many historians of the 1980s and 1990s often highlighted these new-found parallels to contemporary intellectual sources, no matter how tenuous, and then used these connections to draw conclusions about intellectual dependence and the theological

BENJAMIN E. PARK {benjamin.e.park@gmail.com} has a master’s degree in historical theology from the University of Edinburgh and a master’s degree in intellectual history from the University of Cambridge, where he is currently a doctoral candidate in history.

concepts that Mormonism subscribed to.¹

This article will revisit the issue of theological development by focusing on the question of religious influence. Using the example of Thomas Dick, I will briefly outline how the issue of intellectual dependence has been dealt with in past historiography, present the limits and potential pitfalls of these previous approaches, and finally posit what another framework for understanding these issues might be. I will then turn to a demonstration of how this framework may appear when looking at the relationship between Dick and early Mormonism. And finally, I will argue that this new approach will not only help situate early Mormonism within its broader context, but also place emergent Mormon studies within larger and more pertinent academic conversations.

THOMAS DICK IN MORMON HISTORIOGRAPHY

There are few demonstrable facts when examining the relationship between Thomas Dick and Joseph Smith. Dick was a contemporary of Smith, a Common Sense quasi-philosopher in Scotland and someone whose theology became demonstrably popular in antebellum America. He was especially useful to religionists who sought a rational defense for their supernatural theologies.² Some of Dick's ideas make for interesting comparisons to Smith's theology, specifically with regard to the immortality of the soul, the transitioning nature of matter, and the plurality of worlds. The Mormon Kirtland-era periodical, *Messenger and Advocate*, published three lengthy excerpts of Dick's most important works, *Philosophy of a Future State* and *Philoso-*

¹See Kendall O. White, Jr., "The Transformation of Mormon Theology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5 (Summer 1970): 9–24; Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5, no. 4 (July–August 1980): 24–33; Dan Vogel, "The Earliest Mormon Concept of God," in Gary James Bergera, ed., *Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 17–33; Kurt Widmer, *Mormonism and the Nature of God: A Theological Evolution* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2000); Charles R. Harrell, *This Is My Doctrine: The Development of Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011).

²The only scholarly book on Dick thus far is William J. Astore, *Observing God: Thomas Dick, Evangelicalism, and Popular Science in Victorian Britain and America* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2001).

phy of Religion, primarily to lend credence to Mormonism's belief in premortal existence.³ Similarly, several phrases of Joseph Smith (like "economy of God") and Parley Pratt (like "the thinking principle of man" or "spiritual fluid") seem to closely mirror Dick's own terminology.⁴ And finally, some of the Scottish philosopher's ideas, such as his notion of an expanding cosmos and the absurdity of annihilation, also find echoes in early LDS literature.⁵

But determining what these similarities mean is a more difficult task. Prefacing the inclusion of Dick's writings, Oliver Cowdery, editor of the *Messenger and Advocate*, explained, "There are reasonings sufficient, we think, to commend it to the attention of the reader." Indeed, there was much in the excerpts of Dick's philosophy for Mormons to embrace. Dick provided a rational defense for the immortality of the soul and a couching of supernatural beliefs in Enlightenment reasoning. His works included references to sophisticated and respected works like Bacon's *Novum Organum* and Newton's *Principia*. Such apologia armed the early Saints with a defense for Joseph Smith's revelations concerning the human spirit, for as much as the early Saints cherished their revelatory doctrines, they were still aware of a surrounding culture that demanded a rational foundation.⁶ Merely invoking Dick rhetorically vindicated aspects of their theology as not only coherent but also as shared by one of the period's prominent religionists. Further, Dick's work provided a language of

³"Extracts from Dick's Philosophy," *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 3 (December 1836): 423–25; "The Philosophy of Religion," *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 5 (February 1837): 461–63; "The Philosophy of Religion (Concluded from Our Last)," *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 6 (March 1837): 468–69.

⁴For example, Dick's phrase "economy of the universe" is similar to the "economy of God" that Joseph Smith's scribes used when describing the revelation that came to be known as "The Vision" (1981 LDS D&C 76). Revelation, February 16, 1832, Book of Commandments and Revelations, in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books: Facsimile Edition*, Vol. 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of the *Joseph Smith Papers*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 243.

⁵For comparisons, see Erich Robert Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 89–92.

⁶For more on early Mormon notions of epistemology and common

progression and transformation that was later employed in describing Mormonism's radical doctrine of theosis.⁷ While numerous other intellectual connections have been posited for early Mormonism, Thomas Dick's connection is one of the most substantial due to shared language, familiar themes, and, most importantly, the fact that the early Saints were both well aware of his writings and also willing to use his texts as a defense for their own doctrines.

Scholars have been divided on how to interpret these connections. On the one hand, historians as far back as Fawn Brodie have used Dick, not only as the source for Smith's belief in a premortal existence, but also as the measuring stick from which to understand early Mormonism's entire view of the cosmos.⁸ John Brooke continued this thesis in the 1990s, and grouped Dick together with Emmanuel Swedenborg and Andrew Ramsay to form a cadre of metaphysical thinkers who commenced a subtle yet influential shift in Joseph Smith's revelations during the 1830s. Though Brooke held that it was Sidney Rigdon, rather than Smith, who introduced this new obsession with spirits, souls, and cosmic orders, he still maintained an intellectual genealogy that positioned a tenuous link as central to understanding key features of Smith's developing thought.⁹ Brooke's framing has remained influential, as this line of identifying Dick as a primary influence on Smith has continued in several recent texts.¹⁰

On the other hand, historians skeptical of such connections

sense, see Benjamin E. Park, "A Uniformity So Complete': Early Mormon Angelology," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 2 (2010): 5–6.

⁷Jordan T. Watkins, "'All of One Species': Parley P. Pratt and the Dialectical Development of Early Mormons' Conceptions of Theosis," in *Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism*, edited by Gregory Armstrong, Dennis Siler, and Matthew J. Grow (Norman, Okla.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2011): 201–18.

⁸Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 171–72.

⁹John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 204–7.

¹⁰See, for example, George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy: ". . . but we called it celestial marriage* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2007), 6–8; Charles R. Harrell, *The Development of Mormon Theology*, 239–40; Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University

have tried to dismiss Dick as an influence on Smith because of the many differences between the two thinkers. The extreme of this reasoning includes an author dismissing any form of influence due to any perceived divergence, as is common in several works of apologetics, though more subtle examples are found in monographs that either downplay or ignore Dick's relationship with Smith.¹¹ In this framework, differences outweigh similarities, and the question of Dick's influence fails to match the resultingly narrow narrative. In the first approach, there is rarely any room to consider divergences; in the latter, there is little time spent exploring the possible connections.

There are at least two primary problems with the assumptions upon which these frameworks are predicated. First, they overlook the overall *modus operandi* of Joseph Smith as a thinker specifically and of early Mormonism in general. Smith did not accept or reject entire theological systems; rather, as Terryl Givens argues, Smith incorporated bits and pieces while ignoring others in his attempt to both gather "fragments" of truth as well as to buttress his religious vision.¹² While it is a mistake to identify Dick as the origin of Smith's theology of the soul—Mormon accounts of premortal existence were in print before their use of Dick's work—Dick still provided a larger theological framework in which to place the fragmentary concepts from Smith's early revelations, the very function Oliver Cowdery invoked by inserting Dick's extracts into the *Messenger and Advocate*. Regardless of whether Dick was the originator of many of these ideas generally traced to him, the Saints' familiarity with his writings strengthened, expanded, and provided a reasonable structure and defense for Mormonism's developing theology. A static understanding of Mormon intellectual history that requires an all-or-nothing mindset fails to accommodate the dialogic and dynamic environment of both early Mormonism and of antebellum America.

Second, these traditional scholarly frameworks transform the

Press, 2007), 160–69.

¹¹For apologetic accounts, see William J. Hamblin, Daniel S. Peterson, and George L. Mitton, "Mormon in the Fiery Furnace: Or, Loftes Tryk Goes to Cambridge," *FARMS Review of Books* 6, no. 2 (1994): 3–58; Edward T. Jones, "The Theology of Thomas Dick and Its Possible Relationship to That of Joseph Smith" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969).

¹²Terryl L. Givens, *Making Mormonism: The History of Mormon Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

question of influence into a red herring and distract us from equally important issues. Indeed, identifying points of intellectual similarity is only the first step in the process of interpreting and contextualizing early Mormon thought. When looking beyond the bifurcation of influence, more interesting—and significant—questions arise. How, for instance, did Mormonism's belief in the eternal nature of the soul lead to a unique form of embodiment, while Dick's retained a strict sense of dualism? Similarly, why did Mormon notions of premortal existence lead to a glorification of the mortal body, while Dick's led to the classic platonic yearning for a disembodied afterlife? In short, the question should not be limited only to where Mormonism got its ideas, but also, and perhaps more importantly, what Mormons did with them once they received those ideas.

RESPONDING TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Both Thomas Dick and Joseph Smith were reacting to a larger religious climate in which traditional supernatural ideas were under assault. The eighteenth century gave rise to a number of public figures that not only challenged but also attempted to deconstruct traditional religious belief. Thomas Paine, who trumpeted the popular belief that "the most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is Reason," argued that the political revolutions that saturated the Atlantic world were to "be followed by a revolution in the system of religion." His main target was the belief in an intervening God, which, he wrote, was nothing more than "human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit."¹³ Religious believers, then, were put on the defensive and forced to provide rational defenses for their beliefs. "A significant number of American Christians," historian Leigh Eric Schmidt has explained, sought "to absorb the mental habits and disciplines of the Scottish Common-Sense philosophy well into the nineteenth century," as many "scrambled to put themselves on respectable scientific footing."¹⁴ The dawn of the nineteenth century was a new age in religious thought, and supernatural beliefs could no longer be taken for granted.

¹³Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason*, in Eric Foner, ed., *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), 663–65.

¹⁴Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 11.

Thomas Dick's approach exemplified this response in many ways. Born shortly after the first major factions developed in the Church of Scotland, Dick was raised in a religious environment tinged with the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment. He searched from a young age for the correspondence between new scientific findings and religious truth. He later wrote of being "a boy of about seven or eight years" fascinated with how the natural cosmos demonstrated God's will and being.¹⁵ Educated in both Dundee and the University of Edinburgh, he was well read in the rational theology of thinkers like Thomas Chalmers. Dick's religious philosophy eventually came to encompass all ideas that could be rationally proven—ideas that he believed validated Christianity. "While we ought to recognize and appreciate every portion of divine truth, insofar as we perceive its evidence," he wrote, "it is nevertheless the dictate of an enlightened understanding, that those truths which are of the first importance demand our first and chief attention."¹⁶

Thomas Dick was especially successful at blending the revealed word found within scripture and the cosmos, an emphasis of many thinkers of the period. The true believer, he explained, must keep "his eye solely on the two Revelations which the Almighty has given to mankind,—THE SYSTEM OF NATURE, and the SACRED RECORDS, just as they stand."¹⁷ Within this framework, science was "nothing else than a rational inquiry into the arrangements and operations of the Almighty, in order to trace the perfections therein displayed."¹⁸ Such an approach sought to bring stability to religion after a century of intellectual challenge and upheaval. Instead of falling prey to the spread of Enlightenment thought, Dick embraced and adapted scientific and philosophical developments to buttress his own supernatural theology.

Because of his persuasive rhetoric and philosophical authority, Dick gained such fame in America that an advertisement boasted, "No foreign writer has been more generally read, on this side of the

¹⁵Thomas Dick, *Celestial Scenery; or, the Wonders of the Planetary System Explained; Illustrating the Perfections of Deity and the Plurality of Worlds* (Philadelphia: E. C. and J. Biddle, 1859), 18.

¹⁶Thomas Dick, *Diffusion of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: E. C. and J. Biddle, 1859), 294.

¹⁷Dick, *Philosophy of Religion*, 6.

¹⁸Dick, *Diffusion of Knowledge*, 164.

Atlantic, for the last twenty years, than Dr. Thomas Dick.”¹⁹ Dick’s earliest biographer wrote how “few authors in so important an aim, the enlistment of science and philosophy in the service of religion, have succeeded so well or acquired such popularity.”²⁰ American religionists were searching for a rationalist approach that could strengthen and defend their beliefs, and Dick provided such a standard. That his works were more influential in America, where religious upheaval and ecclesiastical disestablishment caused a need for authority, rather than his native Britain, where foundational divergences between established and dissent churches were well known, demonstrates how Dick’s philosophy served a specific and powerful purpose within certain cultural circumstances.

The fledgling LDS Church was among those who turned to Dick for a defense of its religious doctrines, primarily because it faced many of the same questions. By 1836, most of Joseph Smith’s revelation texts had already been written, but a majority of what became the distinctive doctrines of Mormonism remained fallow. Mormons were still part of the battle over American religious orthodoxy, defining and defending what authoritative Christian beliefs entailed. By invoking Dick in support of their belief in the soul’s eternal nature, they sought to validate their developing theology.

Yet even within the passages that the *Messenger and Advocate* quoted in 1836 are examples of where Thomas Dick and the Mormons diverged. For Dick, the natural and material world served primarily as an analogy—not as a direct correlation—of the eternal soul. Even though he claimed “there does not appear a single instance of annihilation throughout the material system,” he still maintained an *ex nihilo* creation that saw all matter and spirit originating with God.²¹ Following the tradition of Anglican scholar Joseph Butler, Dick used nature as a metaphor for spiritual meaning. Matter wasn’t *really* eternal, but the fact that it *seemed* eternal made it a persuasive rhetorical comparison to his belief in the soul’s eternal nature. Though Dick encompassed much

¹⁹Advertisement for *Webster’s Dictionary*, 5, found in the back pages of Joseph Chitty, *A Treatise on Pleading* (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam, 1951).

²⁰Robert Chambers, *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen* (London: Thompson’s Edition, 1868), 446.

²¹“Extracts from Dick’s Philosophy,” 423.

of his day's scientific developments, much of it was used only for analogy or metaphor, as he maintained a traditional Descartesean dualism. "The objects of human knowledge," he wrote, "may be reduced to two classes—the relations of *matter* and the relations of *mind*; or, in other words, the *material* and the *intellectual* universe," and the former was always subservient to and solely created for the latter.²²

Analogies and metaphors, however, held little authority in early Mormonism. When Joseph Smith spoke of there being no annihilation of matter, he not only meant the idea literally but also followed it to its logical conclusion: that matter had no definite origin, either. "That which has a beginning will surely have an end," Smith famously proclaimed in Nauvoo.²³ Mormonism's cosmos was a literalist—or, perhaps more precisely, a "selective literalist"²⁴—depiction of eternal laws, materials, and kingdoms. The earth, stars, and other physical objects were not relegated to figurative or rhetorical speech but were important pieces in understanding an eternal cosmos that existed outside of God's power. Matter was not merely meant as a metaphor for spirit but as an eternal substance with equal weight. "Matter and Spirit are the two great principles of all existence," Parley Pratt explained in the late 1830s, and "every thing animate and inanimate is composed of one or the other, or both of these eternal principles."²⁵ This belief led to a radical and in many ways unique form of materialism, especially when compared to Dick's primarily spiritual-centered cosmos.²⁶ Thus, it is ironic that many of Dick's passages, meant to be read as figurative, ended up serving as a defense for Mormonism's literalism.

²²Dick, "The Philosophy of Religion," 461; emphasis Dick's.

²³Joseph Smith, Sermon, January 5, 1841, in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 60.

²⁴For "selective literalism," see Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 32–36, 65.

²⁵Parley P. Pratt, "The Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter," in Parley P. Pratt, *The Millennium, and Other Poems: To Which Is Annexed, A Treatise on the Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter* (New York: W. Molineux, 1840), 105.

²⁶I discuss the development and importance of Mormon materialism

Further, for Thomas Dick, the ever-expanding cosmos was a potent image because it demonstrated the omnipotence of God and reminded astronomers that there was a divine origin to the cosmos. Nature *hinted* at divine glory, even if it never fully encapsulated it. As Dick explained, all materials in the world—even human souls—are in existence primarily as “the theatre of [God’s] Omnipotence.”²⁷ All was subsumed into the power and presence of God. “The material universe exists solely,” he wrote, “in order to afford a sensible manifestation of the great First Cause, and . . . a medium of enjoyment to subordinate intelligences.”²⁸ The implications of this focus on God’s omnipotence influenced much of Dick’s philosophy, for it constantly hedged the importance and potential of humankind. “We dwell in an obscure corner of God’s empire,” and thus our knowledge of God’s economy is limited.²⁹

For Joseph Smith and the first generation of Mormons, though, an extended knowledge of the cosmos brought an opposite result: It lessened the distance between God and humankind. Rather than emphasizing the ontological superiority of God, Smith’s theology came to emphasize their ontological sameness.³⁰ And rather than highlighting the limited nature of human knowledge, Smith placed the goal of complete and total knowledge at the center of human progression. God was God because He possessed all knowledge, and it was an emulatable trait, rather than an unbridgeable chasm.

But perhaps most importantly, Joseph Smith’s answer to the relationship of divine knowledge and rational truth took its most crucial departure with regard to the very nature of God. While Dick placed a premium on scientific and objective knowledge, he maintained a line between God’s works and God’s image. God “is a spiritual uncompound substance,” he wrote, “and consequently invis-

in “Salvation through a Tabernacle: Joseph Smith, Parley Pratt, and Early Mormon Theologies of Embodiment,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 1–44.

²⁷“Extracts from Dick’s Philosophy,” 425.

²⁸Dick, “The Philosophy of Religion,” 461.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 462.

³⁰For Joseph Smith’s ontology, see Samuel M. Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially chaps. 7–9.

ble to mortal eyes, and impalpable to every other organ of sensation.”³¹ An impenetrable gap still remained between human reason and divine being. No matter how powerful and important the human intellect was, to relegate Deity to the same status as human reason was to erase all element of transcendent glory. It was more important for God to be “present in every part of infinite space” than to be fully comprehensible.³² “Could we thoroughly comprehend the depths of his perfections and the grandeur of his empire,” Dick summarized in his book on finding “God” in everyday nature, “he would cease to be God, or we would cease to be limited and dependent beings.”³³ Dick could not fully embrace hermeticism or naturalism, no matter how tempting it was to elevate individual experience.

Joseph Smith, of course, felt that such concessions and boundaries degraded the human soul and weakened the crucial connection between humanity and Deity. “If men do not comprehend the character of God they do not comprehend themselves,” he trumpeted in his famous King Follett Discourse.³⁴ Certitude played such a crucial role in Smith’s theology that there was no room to leave a barrier between human knowledge and divine character. Indeed, salvation *depended* upon this linkage, and Smith’s temple rites only furthered the necessity of tangible knowledge. “No one can truly say he knows God,” he dictated days before introducing the temple endowment, “until he has handled something, and this can only be in the Holiest of Holies.”³⁵ Smith refused to limit human knowledge to the typical boundaries of metaphysics, he scoffed at degrading human rationality to mere analogies, and he dismissed any lingering conception that human experience was in any way less than fully divine. There would be no compromises in Joseph Smith’s religion, no matter what superficial boundaries were placed between rationalism and supernaturalism.

³¹Dick, *Philosophy of Religion*, 212.

³²*Ibid.*, 87.

³³Dick, *Celestial Scenery*, 215.

³⁴Joseph Smith, Sermon, April 7, 1844, in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 340.

³⁵“Book of the Law of the Lord,” May 1, 1842, in Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, comps. and eds., *Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in Association with the Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2005), 1.

Thus, in answering many of the same cultural and religious questions as Thomas Dick, Joseph Smith followed Dick in some ways but diverged in others. When confronted with a culture that challenged traditional supernatural beliefs, Smith pushed for *more* certainty, not less. Smith was willing to adopt scientific and philosophical theories but showed no interest in being bound by their perceived limitations. The Enlightenment's critiques of religion were to be dealt with directly, adapted, and consumed within the Mormon quest of conquering all knowledge and intelligence. And at the center of that quest was the fundamental linkage between humanity and Deity, a collapse of sacred distance that went beyond allegory and toward divinization. In reacting to a secular world that increasingly bound religion to the tools of rational inquiry, Joseph Smith subsumed all sources of knowledge under the celestialization of the earth and all those who lived therein.

But more importantly, both Smith and Dick represented, at least in part, a period of intellectual and religious tumult in the wake of the Enlightenment. Their responses reflect an environment that yearned for more supernatural certainty in a world of increased secularization. As the Atlantic world continued to take its tenuous steps into modernity, not all were as enthusiastic over the division between sacred and secular knowledge. Especially in America, where the line between "citizen" and "Christian" was still hazy and not clearly defined, questions concerning theological validity and religious epistemology remained of primary importance. That there were as many answers as there were answerers highlights the vibrancy of the era. Joseph Smith and Thomas Dick were merely two respondents, yet their presence helps to color the broader picture.

A NEW GENERATION OF MORMON SCHOLARSHIP

Mormon scholarship in recent decades has presented itself as increasingly aware of broader cultural contexts and trends, and in many ways it has succeeded. But while broader cultural trends are now often invoked, a persistent scholarly parochialism still frames much of the discussion. For example, Thomas Dick's theology is important only if it actually influenced Joseph Smith, folk magic is significant only if the Smith family's practices are meticulously documented, and freemasonry is useful only in determining whether Mormonism's temple rituals were counterfeited. Put simply, these traditional frameworks render contemporary influences essential *only if* a tangible and

explicit connection can be made. Mormonism, then, remains the central actor in these narratives, thus limiting the role and range of supporting characters.

But this solipsistic view of Mormon history limits our understanding of Mormonism itself as well as the larger culture from which it derived. While it is tempting—whether at a practical, ideological, or devotional level—to construct a framework in which Mormonism is the center of activity, such a picture distorts a reality in which Joseph Smith and his fellow Saints were only a few examples of a much larger population striving to interpret, incorporate, and react to their surrounding culture. A new framework would entail Mormons playing the role as “objects,” rather than “subjects,” in the scholarly narrative, thereby broadening the work’s relevance and reaching larger audiences. Indeed, this type of approach has started to trickle in of late, demonstrated in books by Patrick Mason on Southern identity, David Holland on canonicity in the Early Republic, Jared Farmer on ecohistory in America, and Terryl Givens on premortal existence in Western thought.³⁶

This subtle shift of perspective speaks volumes about the potential of Mormon historical studies. The question of whether Thomas Dick influenced Joseph Smith’s understanding of the cosmos becomes much less important than the question of how both thinkers were responding to a post-Enlightenment world that brought supernatural assumptions into doubt. The focus shifts from the unanswerable question of whether Joseph Smith borrowed the three-tiered heaven from Emmanuel Swedenborg to the cultural milieu that encouraged revisions to the traditional understanding of the afterlife. The issue is less whether early Mormonism “stole” elements of Freemasonry rites than in determining how both the Mormon temple and the Masonic lodge exemplify American constructions of communal

³⁶Patrick Q. Mason, *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Jared Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008); Terryl L. Givens, *When Souls Had Wings: Pre-Mortal Existence in Western Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). I borrow the use of “object” and “subject” from Mason, *The Mormon Menace*, 12.

identity. These types of frameworks may force Mormon scholars to read more, and more broadly, as well as rob LDS characters of their uniqueness and the preeminent position, but it will better illuminate both Mormonism itself and its surrounding culture.

And finally, this type of approach addresses issues that speak to a much broader academy, for until Mormon scholars are more willing to join those discussions, they will be circling the same questions while positing the same answers. Indeed, a framework that contextualizes early Mormon history in a way that illuminates its surrounding environment makes Mormon studies much more pertinent to broader scholarship. Now that Mormon studies is demanding a more prominent place at the larger academic table—which is most tangibly seen with the chairs of Mormon Studies at respectable universities—practitioners of Mormon history must make their work more relevant to related fields. To do this, we must cease framing debates over Thomas Dick's influence on Joseph Smith as if solely dependent upon a direct lineage, and begin treating both as representatives of larger issues.

Indeed, Thomas Dick provides a potent example of the issues at stake and serves as an example of a plausible way in which to view the idea of "intellectual influence" in early Mormonism. By being hesitant with wholesale associations as well as wholesale dismissals, and thus actually engaging what these similarities and divergences really meant within the predominantly give-and-take environment of antebellum America, the theological position of the LDS movement becomes increasingly clear. This does not mean presenting early Mormonism as merely another expression of systematic categories, though, or as an entirely unique religious movement created within a vacuum, but rather as part of a larger religious community struggling to answer many of the same questions, deal with a number of the same issues, and react to much of the same intellectual climate.

For the next generation of LDS scholarship, those who wish to explore Mormonism's developing theology must first understand the intellectual air which its early adherents breathed, recognizing the eclectic theological climate of varying degrees of adaptation and agreement, and then attempt to determine the significance of Mormonism's mesh of theological answers. And, once these answers are better understood, it is then crucial to apply them to larger cultural questions and issues, emphasizing how Mormonism related to and

diverged from their larger environment. Indeed, one of the great achievements of the New Mormon History was using broader contexts to better illuminate early Mormon thought. Now it is time to use early Mormon thought to further illuminate its broader contexts.

AFTER THE GOLDEN AGE

Richard Lyman Bushman

ALL OF US, AND I MORE THAN ANYONE, owe a great deal to the committee who organized this conference and to Vernon Swanson, director of the Springville Museum of Art, who generously offered this beautiful space. My heartfelt thanks to them and to each of you who prepared papers. I interpret your labors as acts of friendship, and I happily accept your good wishes in this form. Actually I think that all of the papers and books we produce are implicitly acts of friendship. All scholarship, in effect, says I wish to be part of the company of scholars. I want to join you. Historians are criticized for writing for each other rather than for the general public; but in trying to please one another, we are saying we would like to be friends. Through our books and articles we form ties with one another, and it is these invisible bonds among Mormon studies scholars that are celebrated today. Nothing makes me happier than to see the company of Mormon scholars flourish.

The event today has another significance. It manifests where we are in the evolution of Mormon studies. It is evidence, in my opinion, that we are living in a golden age. Leonard Arrington's era was Camelot—a glorious time but doomed to fade as Arthur's Camelot did. As the architect of the New Mormon History,

RICHARD LYMAN BUSHMAN {rlb7@columbia.edu} with his wife, Claudia, taught a course on contemporary Mormonism at Columbia University in the spring of 2012. He is currently working on a study of eighteenth-century American farming and a cultural history of Joseph Smith's gold plates.

Arrington laid the foundation for all history writing since his time; he surely would be immensely pleased with what is happening now. But history writing in our times is built on a much steadier foundation than his Camelot, with much better prospects for continuance. That is why I think of it as a golden age.

I cite as evidence the printed program of today's meeting. Look at the credits behind the title page.

The Church History Department

The Mormon Historic Sites Foundation

The Maxwell Institute

The BYU Religious Studies Center

The Springville Art Museum

I would name another: The Mormon Scholars Foundation. Without its contribution, I doubt very much that this event would have happened. The foundation sponsors the annual summer seminar at Brigham Young University that Terryl Givens, Claudia Bushman, and I have led since 1997. My own sense of a band of Mormon scholars grew out of those seminars. I doubt if I would have come to know many of you without the seminars, and this conference would likely have never occurred.

What do these institutions mean? They mean that Mormon historical scholarship is not the confined activity of scholars alone. It has an organic connection to the community. The Church, the university, and, just as critical, private foundations support the historical enterprise. There are people of means who care for history—who want it preserved and explored—and who are invested in the outcome.

This combination of the university scholars and outside sponsors made Harvard great. The collection of scholars in Cambridge could never have built a great institution alone. They needed the collaboration of merchants and bankers in Boston. It was the commitment of Boston to Cambridge that made Harvard possible. We could say the same for the Renaissance. Were it not for the patronage of the Florentine merchant princes, the flowering of art in fifteenth-century Italy would never have happened. Great art can never flourish without great patrons.

Great ages of art and scholarship depend on community backing; and at this moment in the development of Mormon history, we enjoy that kind of support. There would be no Joseph Smith Papers without Larry H. Miller. There would be no Mormon Scholars Foundation without David Davidson and Duane Zobrist, no Historic Sites

without Jeff Walker, Kim Wilson, and Richard Lambert and other generous donors. We can achieve the golden age only by cultivating this kind of collaboration.

We are in a golden age also because history has brought into existence a realm of independent inquiry where scholarship is no longer judged by its partisan conclusions but by its accuracy and insight. For decades, Mormon history was a kind of warfare where friends and enemies of the Church lined up to do battle. There was a sense that you could not do history without taking sides. Friends could not concede a single mistake on the part of the Church; enemies could not concede a single virtue. There was a concern that any enterprise—such as *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, and *Exponent II*—would inevitably take sides. The same for history. It either defended or maligned the Church. Anything in the independent zone was mistrusted.

Over the past half century, that stark division has broken down. We now have a realm of independent inquiry where historians of all makes and models do history together and the results are judged more by their accuracy than their ideological commitment. The formation of this space made possible my *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005). This space also offered room for Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, and Glen M. Leonard's *Masacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), and the Joseph Smith Papers. When I first wrote on Joseph Smith, the editors of the *Improvement Era* corrected every misspelling. Now the Joseph Smith Papers faithfully record every contorted word, every wayward punctuation mark, every breakdown in grammar. We want to know Joseph Smith as he really was in the historical record and not as idealized in our historical imaginations. We are confident the real Joseph Smith can stand up for himself. Our period is ruled by an ethic of full disclosure. We do not need to conceal our history. We believe it will be more convincing, more engaging, and more true if we tell it as it is.

Many historians are responsible for bringing about this change but I certainly want to credit Marlin Jensen and Richard Turley for developing this principle and embodying it in the Church Historical Department. They appear at the Mormon History Association and the American Historical Association where, from time to time, critical things are said. But they proceed on the conviction that the Church and its history can flourish in the realm of free and independent inquiry.

That is why we are in a golden age. We have a consensus among historians and many Church leaders that independent inquiry brings the best results. Just as the economy thrives when entrepreneurs are left free to pursue their own businesses, so history thrives if historians are free to pursue their own truth.

If the golden age is marked by the combination of community financial support and the emergence of a realm of independent inquiry, where does the future lie? Where will we go from here? After the golden age, what? I am prepared to venture the opinion that we are now entering the age of cultural power. By that I mean that Mormonism will be seen more and more as an intellectual and cultural force. It will be electric, dynamic, magnetic, perhaps even gravitational. Harold Bloom's assessment of Mormonism in his *American Religion: The Emergence of a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), will continue to seem excessive, but the awareness of Mormon power will only grow.

Let me give you some indicators of what I mean. They suggest that the accumulation of power will not always please Mormons—that the enhancement of Mormon influence will both please and disappoint us.

1. First, on the good side, universities are now showing increasing interest in Mormon studies. Courses on Mormonism are springing up all over the country. Laurie Maffly-Kipp has long offered a Mormon seminar at the University of North Carolina, and Randall Balmer from time to time does so at Columbia. Melissa Proctor was asked by the dean of the Harvard Divinity School to teach such a seminar during the presidential campaign in 2008. Robert A. Rees offered classes at Berkeley in 2010 and 2011. I know of other Mormon courses at Kenyon and California State University, Fullerton. There will be one at Bowdoin this fall, and doubtless many others.

Most of these result, not from Mormon prodding, but at the request of department chairs and program heads who have reason to think Mormonism should be studied in the university. To them, Mormonism has become a cultural and social power. The growth of the Church, our presidential candidates, the social, economic, and political power of the Church, the character and vitality of our members have all doubtless played a part. Whatever the cause, it is happening.

Moreover, a few religion departments are now taking the next step to create full-time professorial positions in Mormon studies. It began with Utah State University and Claremont Graduate University

which now have such positions in place. Approval has also been given for such a position at the General Theological Union in Berkeley and at the University of Virginia. The faculty and administration have accepted the idea, and the appointment of people to these positions awaits only the accumulation of funding—about three million dollars minimum for each post.

The financial component is critical. The Mormons' ulterior motive is to gain prestige and a platform for examining Mormon ideas in the university. The universities' ulterior motive is to increase their endowments as well as to investigate an emerging religious force. The two groups join forces to bring Mormonism to the forefront. Once again the collaboration of scholars and people of means is critical to the success of these measures.

A second marker of Mormon cultural power is one we are ambivalent about: the exploitation of Mormon themes in all kinds of cultural productions. The point need only be mentioned for the evidence to be obvious. We need only think of the highly popular *Big Love*, the Pulitzer Prize winning play *Angels in America*, and the Tony Award winning Broadway hit *The Book of Mormon*. Would Joseph Smith have ever thought there would be a Broadway play named *The Book of Mormon*?

We are ambivalent about these shows because the Church is not portrayed in ways Mormons prefer. None of them is as bad as we might think, but the important point is not whether Mormons are favorably portrayed but that these works show that Mormonism is a cultural resource within the American imagination. Mormonism intrudes on artistic minds. They sense its resonance and want to introduce Mormonism into their work to draw on Mormonism's power.

If I had the opportunity to interview Trey Parker or Tony Kushner, I would want to know why they chose Mormon stories as the framework for their plays. Why is Mormonism a vehicle for expressing the issues of our time? How is it that Mormonism has become emblematic? Why did Kushner build his saga of American corruption, gay sorrows, and the hope for human reconciliation around Mormon characters with the Angel Moroni hovering in the background? American authors can choose from innumerable national myths. Why did Mormonism strike Kushner as salient? With all the material the *South Park* authors have accumulated over the years, why did Trey Parker and Matt Stone fix upon Mormon missionaries for their musical? Moreover, why did the critics love it? It implies that Mormon mis-

sionaries are part of national lore, elements in a great depository upon which writers and artists can draw to express their sense of where we are as a people. Authors are not attacking Mormons as most writers did for a century; they are using Mormonism for their own larger purposes.

Smaller signs of the Mormon presence in the cultural imagination turn up everywhere. Donald S. Lopez Jr., eminent scholar of Asian religion, begins his *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: A Biography* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), by comparing it to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Malise Ruthven, distinguished scholar of Islam, has announced that his next book will be on Mormonism.¹ Mormonism is achieving iconic status in the American mind. Whether Mormonism is admired or despised, it is acknowledged. It is a mythic presence in the national imagination.

Finally as a sign of Mormonism's cultural power, I point to the scholars who presented in the conference today and who are laboring on theses and books all over the country. The corps of Mormon scholars is growing exponentially—many of them from Mormon backgrounds, others who are simply fascinated by what Mormonism represents. They are operating at every level from the mature scholarship of Armand Mauss, Jan Shipps, Terryl Givens, Grant Hardy, Kathleen Flake, and Sally Gordon to promising young scholars like Adam Miller, Jared Hickman, Samuel Brown, Matthew Bowman, Jonathan Stapley, Ben Park, and Patrick Mason, along with all those on the program today and many others not here.

They are turning out excellent work that will find an audience composed of Mormon history and culture fans and scholars and students across the nation and around the world. This coming scholarship builds on the achievements of the past. It takes for granted the existence of a realm of free inquiry. It is uninhibited in its pursuit of truth—freely opening itself to methods and information from every source without regard to partisan inclinations. Moreover, it writes for a broader world, not just for Mormons. It presents a Mormonism that can be taught in university courses without appearing partisan or defensive.

These younger scholars have a new attitude toward Mormon apologetics. They are no longer so interested in defending the faith in

¹Ruthven published a preliminary article, "The Mormons' Progress," in the spring 1991 issue of the *Wilson Quarterly*.

the old sense. In the time of Nibley, the aim of scholarship was to prove Mormonism true. In the new age, the aim of Mormon scholarship is to find the truth about Mormonism. Among the scholars writing today are many who are as proud of the Church, as interested in its flourishing, and as committed to its mission as the previous age, but they follow a new maxim, voiced tellingly by James Faulconer: Richness is the new proof. Rather than attempting scientific proofs of Mormonism as a previous age tried to do, they point to its cultural depth, its scope, its usefulness, in short, its richness. The unspoken assumption of this rising group is that Mormonism will flourish best if its true nature is uncovered and investigated, not if it is proven perfect and infallible.

This generation will have to be fast on its feet. They will have to grasp theory and be conversant with the major currents of modern scholarship as well as master their fields of study within Mormonism. They will have to encompass American and world culture not merely Mormonism. Kushner and Parker use Mormonism in their plays because they felt Mormonism gave them access to the human condition. Mormonism illuminates the way people are. Future scholars of Mormonism will contribute to an understanding of the broader world, not of Mormonism alone. They will address the issues of Mormon historiography to be sure, but also the broader issues of Western and world society. The best Mormon studies will be case studies of topics of larger significance. Terryl Givens has shown us the way in *Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), which is as much about America as it is about Mormonism. Jared Farmer in *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), and Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), have done the same. All of us will have to follow in the paths these scholars have blazed. The subtitle of our conference today, "Cultural Contexts," points to this new standard for Mormon history writing. We are to write about Mormonism with the world in mind.

I am confident that our rising generation of intellectuals will meet the demands of this new season of cultural power. Fortunately, we have all the right ingredients to face this broader challenge. We have the training, the talent, and the ambition. Looking back, we may decide ours was not the golden age itself but only a prelude.

REVIEWS

Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer, eds. *Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*. Volume 2 of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman, general eds. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011. 726 pp. Notes, maps, photographs, illustration, timeline, appendices, tables. Hardback: \$69.95. ISBN: 978-1-60641-942-7

Reviewed by Joe Geisner

The Church Historian's Press and Joseph Smith Papers Project produced an exceptional volume in September 2009, *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*¹ which published many of the earliest manuscripts of Joseph Smith's revelations. In Volume 2 of this series, which appeared in March 2011, they have provided students and scholars of early Mormonism with a new volume containing many of Smith's revelations in their earliest published form.

As the editors explain, this volume reproduces "the most significant printed versions of the revelations that were published or in the process of being published during Joseph Smith's lifetime." They further explain that "this volume is a companion to the first volume," the facsimile volume, and that together they "provide the most important primary sources needed to study the revelation texts and their development during Joseph Smith's lifetime" (xix-xx). The facsimile volume covers revelations received by Joseph Smith from 1828 to 1834. This volume also starts with Smith's earliest 1828 revelation but continues through to September 1842. Both volumes are mainly made up of

¹See my review, "Closer to the Source," *Irreantum* 12, no. 1 (2010): 142-48, and H. Michael Marquardt's review in *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 30 (2010): 275-78, <http://user.xmission.com/~research/mormonpdf/index.htm> (accessed February 2, 2012).

Smith's revelations but also include other items like the "Testimony of Witnesses" in the facsimile volume. With slight modifications, it then becomes "the written Testimony of the Twelve" in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (566). The facsimile volume has 109 entries in Revelation Book 1 and fifty-three entries in Revelation Book 2. This volume has all sixty-five chapters in the Book of Commandments, the fourteen revelations for the Proposed Sixth Gathering, the twenty-five revelations published in *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the seven Lectures on Faith, and the 102 Sections in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the fifty-eight Sections in Oliver Cowdery's Book of Commandments with his markings, and finally the seven Sections first published in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants. With these two volumes the reader is able to follow the development of every word change for all the revelations published during Joseph Smith's lifetime.

Our current Doctrine and Covenants 8:6–8 has Oliver Cowdery's gift designated as the "gift of Aaron"; but in 1832 in Revelation Book 1, the gift is "the gift of working with the sprout,"² a term then changed in the 1833 Book of Commandments to "the gift of working with the rod" (31), and finally to the reading in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (still current) to "the gift of Aaron" (471).

This volume begins with a "Detailed Contents" table that "lists all revelations and other items in this volume" (ix–xvi). This "Detailed Contents" is divided into five sections: (1) The Book of Commandments, (2) Appendix 1: The Proposed Sixth Gathering of the Book of Commandments, (3) *Evening and the Morning Star*, (4) Doctrine and Covenants, 1835, and (5) Doctrine and Covenants 1844. There is a section for the "Selections from Oliver Cowdery's copy of the Book of Commandments," but as the editors point out, they do not list the revelations because these selections are "incomplete."

The editors identify each revelation with the chapter (Book of Commandments), section (Doctrine and Covenants), or date published (newspapers) along with a "standard date." The editors explain that this "standard date" is "based on careful study of original sources" and "is the date a revelation or other item was originally dictated or recorded. If that date is ambiguous or unknown" then the "best approximation" is given. "A bracketed 'D&C' reference to the 1981" edition of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants is also provided (ix–xvi). This exclusiveness to the Utah Church will make this volume a bit more difficult for those of other Restoration faiths in their research and study. A five-page table at the end of the volume, "Corresponding Published Ver-

²*The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, edited by Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press and Deseret Book, 2009), 16–17.

sions of Revelations” (719–24), includes the Community of Christ Doctrine and Covenants section numbers. The editors explain that this section “is designed to help readers refer from one published version of a revelation or similar item to other published versions of that same item.”

The data compiled in the table include the date published in *The Evening and the Morning Star* (1832–33), the chapter numbers of the Book of Commandments, the section numbers of the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants respectively, the section numbers of the LDS 1981 Doctrine and Covenants and finally the section numbers of the Community of Christ 2004 Doctrine and Covenants. I found this table somewhat awkward and easy to overlook because of its placement. It would have been much more useful to have had the 2004 Community of Christ section numbers in the “Detailed Contents” section, and not in the back of the book.

The introductions to this volume are first rate. The editors explain important developments that occurred with the publication of these revelations. For example, Oliver Cowdery wrote in September 1834³ that the *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which was to reprint in Kirtland the issues first printed in Missouri, would correct “errors, typographical and others” found in the revelations published in the Missouri printings. However, this Kirtland newspaper version “actually contained significant changes to the revelation texts” and “very few of the changes in the reprint represent a restoration back to the earliest text” (198–99).

Doctrinal developments and Church organization also changed the body of revelations, as the editors explain. For example, the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, Section 2 (now LDS 1981 D&C 20) was “greatly expanded” from what it had been in Chapter 24 of the Book of Commandments by adding the “office of ‘president of the high priesthood, bishop, high counselor, and high priest’.” The material added to the 1835 version included updated and expanded doctrine on priesthood keys that was not known at the time the revelation was originally dictated.” To explain the changes, the editors suggest that “the Doctrine and Covenants was intended as a living handbook, containing up-to-date instructions” (xxxi).

The main body of this volume contains “photographic” images of the 1833 Book of Commandments (xx, 13–172); the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (311–593); selected pages from Oliver Cowdery’s Book of Commandments (Appendix 2, 600–635) with his markings on pages, made in preparation for the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants; and seven revelations from the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants (643–91) that are not in the 1835 first edition. The editors provide a thorough introduction and notes for each section

³“Prospectus,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, September 1834, 192.

of images, which are “printed in duotone, a format that combines two colors (in this case, Pantone brown 1545 and Pantone yellow 123). While these duotone images do not precisely match the colors of the original pages, they are an approximate match and convey the richness and depth of the original documents much better than black-and-white images” (xxxix). The images used for the Book of Commandments section are photographed from Wilford Woodruff’s personal copy.

The introductions provide such interesting and informative information as when the editors explain that the binding of Wilford Woodruff’s Book of Commandments “is similar to that of Woodruff’s first journal . . . suggesting both books were bound at the same time” (3). The source notes are equally interesting. For example, the editors explain that “two versions of the Book of Commandments title page are extant: a version without an ornamental border and a more common version with an ornamental border.” As the editors point out, “The original version was the borderless one and . . . printing was interrupted at some point to insert the border” (13). This kind of detail about the printing shows how much the editors appreciate the publication of these sacred books.

Other significant parts of the book include Appendix 1, which is the editors’ “proposed sixth gathering of the Book of Commandments” and an introduction that explains why they believe these chapters should have been included in the Book of Commandments. Much of the evidence for the proposed gathering comes from the Book of Commandments and Revelations manuscript (which the Joseph Smith Papers project designates Revelation Book 1), which was published in its facsimile edition after it became available to the project in 2005⁴ (8–9). This appendix is followed by a section showing in parallel columns the revelations printed in the Independence (1832–33) and Kirtland (1835) editions of the *Star* (202–99) allowing the reader to see the changes between the two editions. It was in the reprinted *Evening and Morning Star* where “substantive changes to the revelation texts” first appeared (xxviii).

One area that I found particularly interesting was the editors’ chronology of the publication of the Book of Commandments and the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. They explain with the Book of Commandments that “through textual and other sources,” they are able to “suggest time frames in which the individual gatherings . . . were likely typeset and printed” (9–10). This ability to create the chronology is made possible because of relation-

⁴John W. Welch and Dallin T. Morrow, Review of *The Book of Commandments and Revelations*, *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 238, “The discovery of the Book of Commandments and Revelations came shortly before 2005, when the manuscript was turned over to the LDS Church History Library.”

ships between the manuscript Book of Commandments and Revelations (Revelation Book 1 in this series), the Book of Commandments, and *The Evening and the Morning Star*. The editors determined that the printing for the first gathering began as early as November 1832 but no later than December of that year. The second gathering was printed after the first gathering and before the third. They also dated the third gathering as “sometime after January 1833 and before circa May 1833.” The fourth and fifth gatherings were printed after May 1833 but before the printing office was destroyed in July 1833 (9–10).

The chronology for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants is equally detailed and rich with sources. The editors use the copyright registration, the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, a letter from W. W. Phelps to his wife, Sally, an editorial in the *Messenger and Advocate*, a letter from Joseph Smith to members in Missouri, his letter to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, and the Kirtland Council Minute Book (designated Minute Book 1 in the JS Papers project). From these sources, they reconstruct the details for the printing of the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (306–7).

As with the facsimile edition, this volume is an essential tool in understanding the evolutionary process of Smith’s revelations. As I quoted at the beginning of the review, this volume is a “companion” to the facsimile volume. The source notes, images, and introductions make this companionship perfectly clear. The editors’ work is informative and scholarly, even when dealing with the difficult subject of men changing God’s words. The editors boldly begin with William W. Phelps’s declaration, “The commandments of the Lord are sacred, and above the invention of men” (xix). Every student of Mormonism will be pleased with the work of the Joseph Smith Papers project as they search this volume for a better understanding of how a modern-day prophet communed with his God and how the followers of this new religious movement sought to publish these revelations. I highly recommend this volume to readers of the *Journal of Mormon History*.

JOSEPH GEISNER {rbssman@gmail.com} and his wife, Susan, provide residential services for the developmentally disabled in California. He is a lover of books and history.

Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds. *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*. Volume 2 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. Series editors: Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman. Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011. xl + 558 pp. Appendices, chronology, maps, geograph-

ical and biographical directories, editorial notes, bibliography, photographs, charts, index to be included in Volume 3. Cloth; \$54.95; ISBN 978-1-60908-737-1

Reviewed by Brian C. Hales

Journals, Volume 2 is the second book in a three-volume set that will contain transcriptions of all known journals kept for Joseph Smith by his scribes and secretaries. *Volume 1*, released in 2008, covered the span of 1832–39 and was reviewed earlier by H. Michael Marquardt. Comparing *Journals, Volume 1* to *Volume 2* demonstrates that the high scholarly and publishing standards of the first volume have been maintained in the second. Indeed, the positive observations expressed by Marquardt concerning the first volume can also be applied here: “The paper and binding are library quality, designed for long use. . . . *Journals, Volume 1* is a beautifully bound volume with high-quality paper. The typeface is easy to read. . . . This is a scholarly work but simple enough for a general audience.”¹

Readers will notice a gap in Joseph Smith’s journal keeping between October 15, 1839, and December 13, 1841. Unfortunately, no diaries or other daily records were kept during that interval. The Smith family moved to Commerce, Illinois, later renamed Nauvoo, on May 10, 1839, but Joseph’s consistent journal recording did not begin there until over two years later, which is where *Journals, Volume 2* picks up.

Journals, Volume 2 contains much more than just a new transcription of Joseph Smith’s journals. Readers are provided with several impressive tools that provide context for the journal entries. Included are sixty-one illustrations, visuals, maps, and charts (viii–ix) along with a chronology (409–13). A thirteen-page “Geographical Directory” (414–26) “provides geographical descriptions of most of the places mentioned” (414) in the volume. In addition, two appendices contain transcripts from twelve important associated documents and excerpts from William Clayton’s journals. Also, a robust “Biographical Directory” is provided (440–504) containing “brief biographical sketches for most of the persons mentioned” in the book (439).

Journals, Volume 2 is transcribed from two primary sources. The first document, titled “The Book of the Law of the Lord,” contains the handwriting of Willard Richards, William Clayton, Eliza R. Snow, and Erastus Derby (3) and covers the span from December 13, 1841, to December 17, 1842. Willard Richards was called as the primary scribe: “On 11 December 1841, following

¹H. Michael Marquardt, Review of Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journal Volume 1: 1832–1839*, *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 233, 239.

his election as 'sole Trustee in Trust for the Church' earlier in the year, JS [Joseph Smith] instructed that all donations for building the Nauvoo temple be received directly through his office rather than through the committee overseeing construction of the temple. Two days later, he appointed Willard Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as recorder for the temple and as his personal scribe" (5). The Book of the Law of the Lord contains both journal and tithing donation entries:

Journal entries and donations were kept concurrently in the book, alternating sometimes every other page and chronologically leapfrogging each other. This pattern was especially pronounced near the beginning of the book, where donations and journal entries occasionally appear together on a single page. Over time, however, larger and larger blocks of text were dedicated to either donations or journal entries until eventually, in December 1842, the journal was transferred to another book. . . . Only 90 of the volume's 478 pages include journal entries, and all of these are within the first 215 pages. (7)

Richards kept the journal until leaving for Richmond, Massachusetts, on June 29, 1842. At that time, his assistant, William Clayton, continued the record until Richards was reinstated on December 21, 1842 (8–9).

Comprising pages 10–183 of the *Volume 2*, the transcription of Joseph Smith's journal entries from "The Book of the Law of the Lord," are complete with 580 footnotes. On numerous pages throughout the book, the words in the footnotes exceed those in the transcription above (e.g., 19–20, 29, 45–51) adding useful biographical, historical, and original textual details. For example, the December 27, 1841, journal entry discusses a meeting with Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and John Taylor where Joseph Smith instructed "them in the principles of the kingdom." Footnote 48 also mentions: "Wilford Woodruff, who was also present at this meeting [recorded], 'I had the privilege of seeing for the first time in my day the URIM & THUMMIM'" (18; emphasis Woodruff's).

Many readers will recall Dean C. Jessee's transcription of same material with 241 footnotes found in *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Volume 2, Journal, 1832–1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 334–506. Comparing the two transcriptions shows few differences in interpretations, but numerous changes in style and presentation conventions. For example, Jesse rendered underlined words in the manuscript as italicized while *Volume 2* editors replicate the original underlining. For example, "false" in Jesse (385) is rendered "*false*" while in *Volume 2* it appears as "false" (60). Overall, *Volume 2* is a nice upgrade to Jesse's earlier work.

The second historical source was penned exclusively by Willard Richards. Upon his return to Nauvoo, he accepted responsibility as Joseph Smith's private secretary and began keeping a new journal in a small memorandum book (9). "Although the ledger-size Book of the Law of the Lord likely re-

mained in the recorder's office, and most journal entries were probably made there, each of the memorandum books was small enough that Richards could easily carry it with him, allowing him to record many of JS's activities closer to the actual event—both temporally and spatially—than was possible earlier" (188).

A total of Richards's four small memorandum books would eventually contain the remainder of the Prophet's Nauvoo diaries. However, *Volume 2* includes transcriptions of only the first and part of the second. *Journals, Volume 3*, will transcribe the remaining memorandum books (projected publication date 2014).

For many years, researchers have been grateful for the very useable transcription of the four memorandum books made by Scott H. Faulring and published by Signature Books in 1989 as part of *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*. Faulring's work was a huge service to history readers everywhere, but like any first edition of translated or transcribed material, subsequent versions will likely reflect fewer problems.

Comparing the transcriptions of the first and (part of) the second memorandum books as found in *An American Prophet's Record* (257–375) and *Volume 2* (189–375) displays numerous differences. *Volume 2* provides a more user-friendly format with dates inserted above each entry. *Volume 2* also includes 969 footnotes while *An American Prophet's Record* has none. In addition, *Volume 2* corrects some faulty manuscript pagination notations in *An American Prophet's Record*.²

On a textual level, Faulring silently corrected some misspellings and changed some ampersands "&" to "and." *Volume 2* retains the original spelling and characters as much as possible. For example, *An American Prophet's Record* for April 8, 1843, reads: "God always holds himself responsible to give revelations of his visions and /if/ he does it not, we are not responsible" (356). In contrast, *Volume 2* renders the sentence: "God always holds himself respons[i]ble to give revelati[o]ns of his visions & <if> he does it not. we are not responsible" (346).

Differences in transcription between the two volumes also affect word meanings. For example, the January 8, 1843, entry describing Joseph Smith's visit with Uriah Brown shows numerous significant differences:

²Faulring provided page numbering from the original memorandum books, but in his transcription of Book 1, he appears to have missed blank page 134 (*An American Record*, p. 292), making him a page short between 135 and 144, which he counted as 143 (p. 294). Hence, after page 143, his numbering is reduced by two. In Memorandum Book 2, Faulring skips page 25 (pp. 336–37) so that his pagination thereafter is decreased by one.

An American Prophet's Record, p. 290

Volume 2, 241:

Mr. Brown repeated his incertion [asser-
tion?] for national defence [but said
there was] poor prospect of the nation
adopting [blank [his invention. He elabo-
rated on his]] vessel [and] investment.
[blank [In his]] speech [be]fore [blank [he
had showed the protection]] against the
destruction instantly sealed [blank [in a
rival design. He]] turned my attention to
Land operation confection [liquid fire,
invented] by him as steam engine [blank
[to revolutionize war for the next]] 300
y[ea]rs. {page 117} Some plans and dia-
grams [showed forces] behind movable
batteries [with] cutters and on wheels
[driven] by steam if level. [Double brack-
ets are Faulring's.]

Mr. Brown repo[r]ted his invention for
nation dfenc[defense] — no pro-
spect of the nation adopting
virul invulnerable
greek fire
agai[n]st the dstruin [destruction] in-
stantly seald.—turned my attention to
Land operatin composite[o]n by min-
eral 100 ft f[l]ame or steam — engins
300 yr—[p.[117]]
Some plans & diagrams behind mov-
able battris [batteries] cutters & on
Wheels — by steam if level

While this passage undoubtedly represents a more extreme but brief com-
parison, the following words are transcribed differently: “repeated”/“re-
po[r]ted,” “incertion [assertion?]”/“invention,” “poor prospect”/“no pro-
spect,” “vessel [and] investment”/“virul invulnerable,” “speech [be]fore”/
“greek fire,” “confection”/“compositi[o]n,” “by him as steam engine”/“by
mineral 100 ft f[l]ame or steam — engins.” In addition, in the December 29,
1842, entry describing a town that Joseph Smith and company visited on their
way to Springfield, Illinois, *An American Prophet's Record* (259) transcribes the
word as “Lomour,” when in fact, the town is John Dutch’s settlement of
“Lancas[t]er” (196). These improvements will make *Volume 2* a valuable addi-
tion to every personal and public library.

The journals themselves provide a fascinating, although uneven account of
Joseph Smith’s activities, thoughts, and teachings during the periods they
chronicle. Included are a few personal reflections such as that found in his
January 6, 1842, record:

The New Year has been ushered in and continued thus far under the
most favorable auspices. And the Saints seem to be influenced by a kind
and indulgent Providence in their disposition & means; to rear the Tem-
ple of the most High God, anxiously looking forth to the completion
thereof, as an event of the greatest importance to the Church & world,
Making the Saint of Zion to rejoice, and the Hypocrite & Sinner to trem-
ble, Truly this is a day long to be remembered. By. The saints of the Last
Days; A day in which the God of heaven has began to restore the ancient
<order> of his Kingdom (25–26).

Several pages are devoted to issues associated with John C. Bennett, who

played a large role in Nauvoo public life as mayor, general in the Nauvoo Legion, and assistant to the First Presidency. His private interactions with Joseph Smith, however, were very limited, according to the journals, which mention him only four times (on January 18 and 25, and March 9 and 11, pp. 27, 30, 42, 43). A fifth time is the May 19, 1842, entry, which records: "Mayor John C. Bennet[t] having resigned his office . . ." (58). Other Church leaders are mentioned many times during that span³ suggesting that, if Bennett were Joseph Smith's confidant, such interactions were not visible to his scribes or corroborated in his journal. The April 29, 1842, entry reads: ". . . was made manifest a conspiracy again[s]t the peace of his household" with "The initials 'J. C. B.' later inserted lightly in the journal by Willard Richard" (53 note 196).

An insightful April 28, 1842, entry discusses women and the priesthood: "Gave a lecture on the pries[t]hood shewing how the Sisters would come in possession of the privileges & blessings & gifts of the priesthood — & that the signs should follow them, such as healing the sick casting out devils &c. & that they might attain unto, these blessings, by a virtuous life & conversation & diligence in keeping all the commandments" (52).

On May 6, 1842, ex-Governor Lilburn W. Boggs was wounded in his home in Independence, Missouri. Boggs swore an affidavit that Orrin Porter Rockwell was the perpetrator and Joseph Smith an accomplice. Missouri Governor Thomas Carlin issued a warrant for their arrest, and Missouri lawmen attempted to serve the warrant in Nauvoo. On Monday, August 8, 1842, "the Deputy Sheriff of Adams county in company with two other officers came with a warrant from Governor [Thomas] Carlin" (81). Joseph sought a writ of habeas corpus and went into hiding, first at the home of his Uncle John Smith (83) and then on August 11 at the home of nonmember Edward Sayers (84), whose wife, Ruth, was a member (488). On August 17, fearing that his "retreat" had been discovered and that "it was no longer safe for him to remain at brother [Edward] Sayers . . . [Joseph] went to Carlos Grangers" (96). Two days later he "concluded to tarry at home until something further transpired with regard to the designs of his persecutors" (96).

A letter Joseph penned on August 16 while in hiding described his emotions in response to a late night visit of friends and Emma: "How glorious were my feelings when I met that faithful and friendly band, on the night of the eleventh on Thursday, on the Island, at the mouth of the slough, between Zarahemla and Nauvoo. With what unspeakable delight, and what transports of

³By comparison, *Journals, Volume 2* between December 13, 1841, and May 18, 1842, shows eighteen references to Brigham Young, fifteen to Heber C. Kimball, fourteen to Willard Richards, eight to John Taylor, seven to Hyrum Smith and Wilford Woodruff, five to Newel K. Whitney, and three to Orson Pratt and William Law.

joy swelled my bosom, when I took by the hand on that night, my beloved Emma, she that was my wife, even the wife of my youth; and the choice of my heart” (93–94). Two months later Emma was again the focus of a string of entries, of which relevant excerpts are:

September 29 Sister Emma began to be sick with fever; consequently president Joseph kept in the house and with her all day.

30 Sister Emma no better. President Joseph was with her all day.

October 1 Sister Emma about as usual

2 Sister Emma continues very sick today: the President was with her all day

3 Sister Emma a little better. The president with her all day.

4 Sister E. [Emma Smith] is very sick again to day. President Joseph attended with her all the day, himself being somewhat poorly.

5 Sister E. [Emma Smith] is worse, many fears are entertained that she will not recover. She was baptized twice in the river which evidently did her much good. She grew worse again at night and continues very sick indeed. President Joseph does not feel well, and is much troubled on account of Sister E's sickness.

6 This day sister Emma is better

7 Sister E. [Emma Smith] is some better—Pres Joseph is cheerful and well. (159–62)

At this point, Joseph Smith had been sealed to perhaps fourteen plural wives, but journal entries such as the passages quoted above indicate that Emma held a special place in his affections.⁴ It is probable that his polygamous spouses would have seen little of him during this period.

At the end of 1842, Joseph Smith journeyed to Springfield, Illinois, to discharge the warrant from the Missouri governor. This episode lasted from the party's departure on December 26, 1842, until their joyous return to Nauvoo on January 10, 1843, and comprises fifty pages of the volume (193–243). Joseph appeared in court in Springfield to show that “the Gov [Thomas Carlin] of Mo) [Missouri] has made a false statement as nothing appears in the affidavit to shew that said Smith ever was in Mo” (203). On January 2, “Joseph Prophecied in the name of the Lord God I shall not <go> to Missouri dead or alive” (209). Judge Nathaniel Pope heard the case on January 5, 1843, and ultimately determined that the affidavit and warrant were defective. The journal records: “J. Smith be dischar[ge]d & the entry be made so that <he shall be> to secure him from any <from any further> further arrests on this.... Joseph arose & bowed to the cou[r]t” (233) and left a free man.

Lengthy journal entries for March 2 and 3, 1843, are also found (41 journal pages and fourteen pages in *Volume 2*: 280–94) regarding a medical malprac-

⁴Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 4–7.

tice case before the Nauvoo Municipal Court over which Joseph Smith presided as mayor and chief magistrate. The editors explain: "The case grew out of events that occurred on 22–24 October 1842 involving . . . Dr. William Brink, a Thomsonian physician. . . . Willard Richards, a Thomsonian doctor himself, devoted over forty pages of the journal to recording the arguments and testimony presented in the case—probably because of his professional interest in the medical details" (280).

The case involved injuries to a pregnant Margaret Kennedy Dana, that were sustained when she was treated by Brink. Dana's husband, Charles, consulted Brink as the child's delivery date approached and Margaret had been experiencing excruciating abdominal pains for several weeks. Brink reportedly misdiagnosed the onset of labor, concluding that the fetus was dead and was out of position for delivery. At some point, he attempted to manipulate the unborn child to facilitate birth, causing great pain, "ruptures," and bleeding (293). Fortunately, a healthy boy was delivered days later (George Carlos Dana, b. October 25, 1842), but injuries incurred during Brink's treatment and the delivery persisted for weeks afterwards, prompting the medical malpractice suit.

During the two-day trial, multiple witnesses were called. Joseph Smith presided, asking questions (284, 285, 287) and ruling whether non-Thomsonian physicians could testify (288). On the evening after the first day, Joseph spent time investigating proper legal procedures by "looking out of Blackstone," likely a reference to William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.⁵ One week later, the mayor issued his opinion, "the whole included 12 pages written matter" (301) in favor of the plaintiff. Brink was required to refund "his bill \$99 & costs" (301). Regarding the proceedings, the editors note: "Richards's notes of the trial, although disjointed at times, also illustrate how JS and his associates understood and applied the law" (280).

Perhaps as noteworthy as the availability of new transcriptions of Joseph Smith's personal journals is the introductory essay found in the front matter of *Volume 2*. The "Introduction: Nauvoo Journals, December 1841–April 1843" is longer (thirty-two pages) than its predecessor in *Volume 1* (nine pages). Due to the lofty doctrinal teachings that emerged in Nauvoo, many of the daily notations in the Prophet's journal require historical context in order to be more fully understood. Accordingly, the "Introduction" dedicates separate paragraphs introducing projects such as the building of the Nauvoo Temple and Nauvoo House. New theological ideas like proxy work and "baptism for the dead" are briefly discussed. The involvement of Nauvoo Latter-day

⁵William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (Philadelphia: Robert Bill, 1771 printing).

Saints in Masonry, Joseph Smith's publishing of the Book of Abraham, and the introduction of the temple endowment are also mentioned.

Significantly, seven pages (xxiv–xxx) in the essay discuss Joseph Smith's plural marriages. In eight paragraphs and thirty-seven footnotes, editors Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, provide the most detailed look at Joseph Smith's personal polygamy ever published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or one of its organizations.

For example, the Institute manual *My Kingdom Shall Roll Forth: Readings in Church History* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), mentions polygamy but primarily in the context of the persecution it incited in the 1880s.⁶ Published two years later, the *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual*, designed for Institute students, includes instructions regarding eternal marriage when it discusses Section 132 but does not address how the revelation affected Joseph Smith.⁷ The 1989 one-volume *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, published for the Church Educational System, acknowledges "The law of celestial marriage, as outlined in this revelation, also included the principle of plurality of wives. . . . Joseph Smith and the Church were to accept the principle of plural marriage as part of the restoration of all things." However, very few details are mentioned.⁸ The 1992 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* was not published by the Church, but its articles were authored by BYU faculty and other LDS scholars. Its article on "Polygamy" by Danel W. Bachman and Ronald K. Esplin provides an overview without specifically addressing the Prophet's personal involvement.⁹ Four years later, the Church supplement to Sunday School classes, *Our Heritage: A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, briefly discussed plural marriage without mentioning that Joseph Smith was a participant.¹⁰ The 2007 *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* acknowledges that he established the principle and practice without identifying him as a pluralist.¹¹

In addition, during the past century, no *Improvement Era* or *Ensign* articles

⁶*My Kingdom Shall Roll Forth: Readings in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 53–60.

⁷*Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 327–34.

⁸*Church History in the Fulness of Times* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 255–56. A later section discusses how plural marriage in the Utah Territory brought persecution upon the Saints. See 424–29, 432–42.

⁹Danel W. Bachman and Ronald K. Esplin, "Polygamy," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 3:1091–95.

¹⁰*Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996), 97, 100.

¹¹*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of

or general conference sermons have directly addressed Joseph Smith's plural marriages. A search of lds.org reveals 146 hits for "plural marriage" and 98 for "polygamy," but they are all brief references, and the Prophet is seldom mentioned as participating.¹² None of these sources detail how he introduced and personally practiced the principle.

Some observers have been critical of the Church's official reticence to openly discuss plural marriage.¹³ However, because Joseph Smith's teachings about polygamy involve emotional topics like marriage, sexual relations, and gospel teachings, it constitutes "gospel meat." An 1830 revelation warned that some members "cannot bear meat now, but milk they must receive; wherefore, they must not know these things, lest they perish" (D&C 19:21–22; see also Heb. 5:12; 1 Pet. 2:2). By avoiding "meaty" teachings in publications and discourses designed for the general Church membership, gospel milk-drinkers are benefited. However, in recent years, lofty doctrines have been freely referenced by both believers and unbelievers on the internet and in books and pamphlets. In addition, declarations that are poorly documented or undocumentable regarding the Prophet's plural marrying have been publicized since the early 1840s.¹⁴

The Joseph Smith Papers Project will assist in transcribing and printing quality reproductions of historical manuscripts, some of which discuss celestial and plural marriage as taught by the Prophet. The publication of this introductory essay (accompanied by a few scattered entries in *Volume 2*) constitutes the first efforts in over a hundred years to officially address this meaty topic. It represents a new and important chapter in the history of plural marriage and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Although tucked into a footnote, the authors deftly identify the primary limitation confronted by all researchers who attempt to reconstruct the de-

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007), xii; manual for Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Society classes.

¹²I performed this search October 28, 2011. The Joseph Smith Papers Project website contains seventeen references to "plural marriage" including one in the introduction and in conjunction with the Relief Society minutes. The remaining fifteen references are in short biographies of relevant personalities.

¹³See B. Carmon Hardy, *Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy, Its Origin, Practice, and Demise* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 390–91; George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy: "... but we called it celestial marriage"* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008), 473, and his "The Forgotten Story of Nauvoo Celestial Marriage," *Journal of Mormon History* 36, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 163; Margaret and Paul Toscano, *Strangers in Paradox: Explorations in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 253.

¹⁴See <http://josephsmithspolygamy.com/JSMotives/GeneralAccusationsChart.html> (accessed November 28, 2011).

tails of Joseph Smith's polygamy:

Many accounts about plural marriage in Nauvoo during Joseph Smith's lifetime were recorded decades after the events they describe. Similarly, most of the affidavits about plural marriage that authors cite were collected decades after the church left Nauvoo. Given the selective and social nature of human memory and its susceptibility to being influenced by more recent events, such reminiscent accounts must be used with caution when attempting to reconstruct past events and practices. Moreover, most of these affidavits were fathered in response to a concerted effort by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to deny that Joseph Smith practiced plural marriage and to lay the practice at the feet of Brigham Young after Smith's death.¹⁵ In response, a number of women who had been sealed to Joseph Smith in Nauvoo prepared formal statements about their plural marriages. As with the affidavits, personal motives influenced the reports of disaffected members of the church in Nauvoo as well. (xxv note 51)

The authors also observe: "Given the sensitivity of the topic, it is no surprise that clear references to plural marriage are virtually absent from Joseph Smith's Nauvoo journals" (xxvi), a fact that has been criticized.¹⁶ Actually, the only contemporaneous historical sources dealing with plural marriage that are friendly to Joseph Smith are the revelation, now Doctrine and Covenants 132, and selected entries in William Clayton's journal (xxv).¹⁷ Contemporaneous accounts were recorded by several dissenters, including Oliver Olney, John C. Bennett, William Law, and Joseph H. Jackson, but their reports are problematic and contradictory.¹⁸

Notwithstanding these limitations, the essay discusses issues such as "conjugal-ity" (xxv) and "polyandrous marriages" (xxvii). Specific plural unions are also briefly addressed such as Joseph Smith's reported sealings to Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde (xxvi) and Sylvia Sessions Lyon (xxvii note 58). In addi-

¹⁵Don Bradley and Brian Hales, "LDS Joseph vs. RLDS Joseph: Records of Nauvoo Polygamy and the Conflict that Forged Them," in Newell G. Bringhurst and Craig L. Foster, eds., *The Persistence of Polygamy: Joseph Smith and the Origins of Mormon Polygamy*, Vol. 2 (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, forthcoming).

¹⁶George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 82, 88, 99, 117, 128–29.

¹⁷George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 94, 102, 105–6, 108, 110, 117–22.

¹⁸Oliver Olney, Journal and other documents, Oliver Olney Papers, Beineke Library, Yale University; microfilm at LDS Church History Library; John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints: Or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842); William Law, Affidavits, *Nauvoo Expositor*, June 7, 1844, 2; Lyndon W. Cook, *William Law: Biographical Essay–Nauvoo Diary–Correspondence–Interview* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994); Joseph H. Jackson, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Experiences of Joseph H. Jackson in Nauvoo, Exposing the Depths of Mormon Villainy* (N.p.: n.pub., 1844).

tion, controversial topics are mentioned such as purported plural proposals to Nancy Rigdon (xxix) and Sarah Bates Pratt (xxx). Also included is the important observation that “the practice was carefully controlled. . . . [T]hose who took plural wives on their own initiative faced serious consequences. . . . Plural relationships that were undertaken without Joseph Smith’s direct approval were unauthorized and adulterous” (xxiv–xxv).

Several paragraphs dispute John C. Bennett’s claims against the Prophet (xxvii–xxx). Previous writers have considered Bennett as one of Joseph Smith’s polygamy confidants, and he was undoubtedly positioned to hear rumors.¹⁹ However, multiple documents, including Bennett’s October 1843 admission that, while living in Nauvoo, he never learned of eternal marriage, indicate that Joseph Smith never taught him celestial marriage personally.²⁰ Available manuscripts show that the Prophet never taught plural marriage except in a context in which the union could be eternal.²¹ Such observations undermine Bennett’s claims to personal polygamy-related interactions with Joseph Smith and validate several of the essay’s concerns.

In addition, the introductory essay courageously references Joseph Smith’s sealings to legally married women, a form of “polyandry” (meaning that a woman has more than one husband) (xxvi–xxvii). Joseph Smith was clearly sealed to legally married women and thus participated in what I call “ceremonial polyandry” where the woman experienced two marriage ceremonies (one legal and the other religious). While many authors have portrayed Joseph as also practicing sexual polyandry, no solid evidence has been found.²² Regarding polyandry in general, the essay reports:

¹⁹T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873), 184; Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 267; Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 309; Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 23; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 239; Gary James Bergera, “John C. Bennett, Joseph Smith, and the Beginnings of Mormon Plural Marriage in Nauvoo,” *Journal of the John Whitmer Historical Association* 25 (2005): 52; George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 65.

²⁰John C. Bennett, “Letter from General Bennett,” October 28, 1843, *Hawk Eye* (Burlington, Iowa), December 7, 1843, 1. See also Brian C. Hales, “John C. Bennett and Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: Addressing the Question of Reliability,” *Journal of Mormon History*, forthcoming.

²¹See, for example, D&C 132:1–21; Joseph Bates Noble, Deposition, Temple Lot Transcript, Respondent’s Testimony (Part 3), pp. 432, 436, questions 793, 799, 861.

²²Brian C. Hales, “Joseph Smith and the Puzzlement of ‘Polyandry,’” in Newell G. Bringham and Craig L. Foster, eds., *The Persistence of Polygamy: Joseph Smith and the Origins of Mormon Polygamy* (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, 2010), 99–151.

Several later documents suggest that several women who were already married to other men were, like Marinda Hyde, married or sealed to Joseph Smith. Available evidence indicates that some of these apparent polygynous/polyandrous marriages took place during the years covered by this journal. At least three of the women reportedly involved in these marriages—Patty Bartlett Sessions, Ruth Vose Sayers, and Sylvia Porter [Sessions] Lyon—are mentioned in the journal, though in contexts very much removed from plural marriage. Even fewer sources are extant for these complex relationships than are available for Smith's marriages to unmarried women, and Smith's revelations are silent on them. Having surveyed the available sources, historian Richard L. Bushman concludes²³ that these polyandrous marriage—and perhaps other plural marriages of Joseph Smith—were primarily a means of binding other families to his for the spiritual benefit and mutual salvation of all involved. (xxvi–xxvii)

As the author of *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, Richard L. Bushman may be the most accomplished of all of Joseph Smith's biographers, so his views on "polyandry" are helpful. However, a year after the biography's publication, he was asked regarding Joseph Smith's "polyandrous" marriages and responded: "This is the single most puzzling part of Joseph Smith's life for Mormons. It's probably for non-Mormons too."²⁴ He also added: "There is just seemingly no answer. . . . How to explain it I think is very difficult. And probably you shouldn't even try. If you try to make up explanations, you get in more trouble."²⁵ Understanding Joseph Smith's plural sealings to civilly married women is difficult, and the Hedges, Smith, and Anderson introduction does not attempt to sort out all that happened, observing that "Smith's revelations are silent on them" (xxvii). This is true concerning the revelations given prior to April of 1843, when *Journals* 2 ends. However, several verses in the July 12, 1843, revelation (now D&C 132) refer to potentially polyandrous situations (vv. 41–42, 61–63) and will probably need to be dealt with in the introduction to *Journals* 3, including Joseph Smith's teaching that sexual polyandry as referenced in those verses is adultery. Historian Andrew Jenson documented that one of Joseph's sealings to a married woman was for "eternity only," so there could have been others in that category.²⁶ In addition, one of the Prophet's plural wives (Sarah Ann Whitney) entered into a civil "pretended marriage"

²³Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 437–46.

²⁴Richard L. Bushman, "A Historian's Perspective of Joseph Smith," *Joseph Smith's Relationship with God*, CD-2 (Salt Lake City: Covenant Communications, 2007), tracks 20–21.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶"Ruth Vose Sayers biographical sketch," in Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16, Document #5, LDS Church History Library. The identity of the

in order to protect Joseph Smith from suspicions about polygamy. She was legally married to Joseph C. Kingsbury and, by all accounts, did not experience connubial relations with him.²⁷ Thus, the question may be asked whether the sealings were for “eternity only” or whether other legal spouses served as “front husbands” in Joseph Smith’s polyandrous marriages. Lastly, an April 1830 revelation stated: “Behold, I say unto you that *all old covenants* have I caused to be *done away* in this thing; and this is *a new and an everlasting covenant*” (D&C 22:1; emphasis mine). The specific covenant then in question was baptism. Thirteen years later, Joseph Smith dictated a new revelation concerning eternal and plural marriage that was also called “a new and an everlasting covenant” (D&C 132:4). Whether Nauvoo plural marriages for “time and eternity” in the new and everlasting covenant caused legal marriage covenants to be “done away,” thereafter prohibiting sexual polyandry, is debated by historians and theologians.

The introductory essay also discusses one of Joseph Smith’s more controversial polyandrous marriages: his sealing to Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde. According to available documents, the priesthood sealing with Joseph occurred while her husband, Apostle Orson Hyde, was on his mission to Palestine. Details are frustratingly skimpy; but just months after his return, Orson asked Joseph to perform his own plural marriage to Martha Browitt.²⁸ A number of authors have accused the Prophet of sending men on missions so he could marry their wives.²⁹ However, of the eleven “polyandrous” husbands

Nauvoo polygamists who provided this information is unknown, but Jenson is known to have interviewed Joseph Smith’s plural wives Eliza R. Snow (twice) and Malissa Lott.

²⁷Joseph C. Kingsbury, “History of Joseph C. Kingsbury,” (photocopy of manuscript), in Ronald and Ilene Kingsbury Collection, MS 522, Box 3, fd. 2, p. 13, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. See also H. Michael Marquardt, *The Strange Marriages of Sarah Ann Whitney to Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, Joseph C. Kingsbury, and Heber C. Kimball* (1973; rev. ed., Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1982), 18; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 352.

²⁸Orson Hyde, Affidavit, September 15, 1869, MS 3423, LDS Church History Library; copied into Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books, 2:45; and published in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1905) 74.

²⁹John C. Bennett, Affidavit, *Pittsburgh Morning Chronicle*, July 29, 1842; Henry Caswall, *The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century, or, the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Mormons*. . . (London: J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1843), 226; F. B. Ashley, *Mormonism: An Exposure of the Impositions* (London: John Hatchard, 1851), 8; Benjamin Winchester, “Primitive Mormonism,” *Salt Lake Daily Tribune*, September 22, 1889, 2; Harry M. Beardsley, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 251.

identified by Todd Compton,³⁰ nine were not on missions at the time Joseph was sealed to their legal wives. Of the two possible exceptions, only Orson Hyde is documented as serving as a missionary at the time. The second possible case involves George Harris, who left on his fourteen-month mission in July 1840; however, the date of his legal wife's sealing to the Prophet is unavailable and is disputed.³¹

Regarding another of Joseph Smith's possible polyandrous wives, Sylvia Sessions Lyon, the editors state: "Evidence of a marriage or sealing between [Sylvia] Lyon (who had married Windsor Lyon in March 1838) and Joseph Smith is less compelling" (xxvii note 58). This conclusion may be too tentative. In 2008, researcher Don Bradley located a document in the Andrew Jenson collection at the LDS Church History Library that contains a list in the handwriting of Eliza R. Snow, one of Joseph Smith's best-informed plural spouses, identifying thirteen of his polygamous wives including "Sylvia Sessions."³² Additional documents strengthen this interpretation.³³

Regarding the possibility of offspring from the Prophet's plural marriages,

³⁰Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 49, 81, 123, 179, 185, 213, 239, 260, 278, 383, and 548.

³¹Fawn Brodie and Todd Compton speculate that a relationship or plural marriage occurred in 1838. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 335; Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 4. Brodie's chronological reconstruction placing the plural marriage in "1838?" (*No Man Knows My History*, 335) is based on speculation, not documentation. In addition, I argue that Joseph Smith would not have attempted a plural relationship at the peak of Oliver Cowdery's criticism of him in part for committing "adultery" with Fanny Alger in Kirtland, Ohio a few years previously.

³²"First List of Wives," Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16, Document #1, LDS Church History Library.

³³Josephine Rosetta Lyon Fisher, Affidavit, February 24, 1915, MS 3423, LDS Church History Library; unsigned, undated, and unnotarized documents in Joseph F. Smith, Affidavit Books 1:60, 4:62, LDS Church History Library; Angus Munn Cannon, "Statement of an interview with Joseph Smith, III, 1905," regarding conversation on October 12, 1905, MS 3166, LDS Church History Library; 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), 283, recording a Nauvoo Temple proxy marriage to Joseph Smith, January 26, 1846, and Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 4, an 1899 proxy sealing to Joseph Smith under the direction of President Lorenzo Snow, Salt Lake Temple Sealing Records, Book D, 243, GS film, 184, 590, LDS Family History Library; Thomas M. Tinney, "The Royal Family of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Junior: First President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," typescript, 1973, 41, 63; Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945), 419; "Sylvia Sessions Biographical Sheet," Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16, document #12; Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (July 1905): 234; Joseph Smith III to Bro. E. C. Brand, n.d., likely early 1880s, Letter Press Book, P6, Joseph

the introduction states: "Although Joseph Smith had many children with Emma, no progeny from any of his plural marriages have been identified" (xxv–xxvi). The editors cite the work of Ugo Perego, who eliminated via DNA testing several candidates as the Prophet's offspring.³⁴ However, two children to Joseph Smith's plural wives can be documented to some degree, although not positively "identified."

One is Sylvia Sessions Lyon's daughter, Josephine, who was conceived approximately May 18, 1843 (b. February 8, 1844).³⁵ While theories of sexual polyandry have been advanced to explain this birth,³⁶ my interpretation of the documents is that the Prophet and Sylvia were sealed after Sylvia's legal husband, Windsor Lyon, had been excommunicated and she had ceased conubial relations with him.³⁷ Perego has also examined DNA from both maternal and paternal lines that demonstrates a genetic correlation. However, genealogical data show cross-marrying in the generations prior to that of Sylvia and Joseph Smith. Perego explains: "The challenge that researchers face is to be able to distinguish the genetic contribution by Joseph Smith in the purported paternity of Josephine, from all the other related Smiths who married ancestors of Josephine's descendants before and after Joseph Smith's time."³⁸ He concludes: "It is possible that this paternity case may never be fully re-

Smith III Letterbook 4: 63–67, Community of Christ Archives; Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Mesa, Ariz.: 21st Century Printing, 1992 printing), 96.

³⁴Ugo A. Perego, Jayne E. Ekins, and Scott R. Woodward, "Resolving the Paternities of Oliver N. Buell and Mosiah L. Hancock through DNA," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 28 (2008): 128–36; Ugo A. Perego, Natalie M. Myres, and Scott R. Woodward, "Reconstructing the Y-Chromosome of Joseph Smith: Genealogical Applications," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 55–59.

³⁵Josephine R. Fisher, Affidavit, February 24, 1915, Ms 3423, fd. 1, images 48–49, LDS Church History Library; George H. Brimhall, *Diary of George H. Brimhall*, edited by Jennie H. Groberg, Volume 1, bound typescript (N.p., n.d.), not paginated; copy in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; George H. Brimhall, *Journal*, January 1, 1888, MS d 1902, LDS Church History Library; Angus Cannon, "Statement of an Interview with Joseph Smith III."

³⁶Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 179–83; Brian C. Hales, "The Joseph Smith–Sylvia Sessions Plural Sealing: Polyandry or Polygyny?" *Mormon Historical Studies* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 41–57.

³⁷"Sylvia Sessions biographical sheet," Andrew Jenson Papers, MS 17956, Box 49, fd. 16, document #12; also Andrew Jenson, undated notes in my possession, Andrew Jenson Collection, MS 17956, Box 10, fd. 81; Josephine R. Fisher, Certificate, February 24, 1915, Ms 3423.

³⁸Ugo A. Perego, "Joseph Smith, the Question of Polygamous Offspring, and DNA Analysis," in Bringham and Foster, *The Persistence of Polygamy*, 255.

solved by means of genetic testing.”³⁹

The second possible child is that of plural wife Olive Frost. This child either miscarried or died in infancy.⁴⁰ Joseph E. Robinson wrote: “During the afternoon I called on Aunt Lizzie.”⁴¹ . . . She knew Joseph Smith had more than two wives. Said he married . . . Olive Frost who had a child by him and that both died.” This recollection was corroborated in an 1885 interview of James Whitehead, a clerk to Joseph Smith in Nauvoo.⁴²

The introductory essay also mentions another possible plural marriage proposal to Nancy Rigdon, daughter of Sidney Rigdon, then a counselor in Joseph Smith’s First Presidency. The editors acknowledge the possibility that “Nancy had refused Joseph Smith’s invitation to become one of his plural wives” and that a “rejected proposal of marriage to Nancy” (xxix) may have occurred. Some of the available evidences, both supportive and contradictory, are then presented (xxix note 71). However, the editors point out that “it is not certain that such a proposal was even made in the first place” (xxix). This position is problematic because the data supporting a proposal seem quite reliable.⁴³ Indeed, one of the affidavits from Nancy’s brother, J. Wickliffe Rigdon, declared: “Joseph made the proposal of marriage to my sister. Nancy flatly refused him, saying if she ever got married she would marry a single man or none at all, and thereupon took her bonnet and went home, leaving Joseph.”⁴⁴ Although dictated in 1905, Wickliffe’s statement was apparently convincing to future Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith who published it in *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, which was printed on the Church’s own press.⁴⁴

Other observations also suggest that the interaction between Nancy and the Prophet should not be lightly dismissed. John C. Bennett claimed that, in order to convince Nancy that plural marriage was a correct principle, Joseph

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Joseph E. Robinson, Diary, October 26, 1902, MS 7866, LDS Church History Library. Olive Frost died October 6, 1845.

⁴¹“Lizzie” was probably Joseph E. Robinson’s aunt-in-law Mary Elizabeth Green Harris (1847–1911).

⁴²Robinson, Autobiography, recounting events of October 26, 1902, Ms 7866. See also James Whitehead, interviewed by Joseph Smith III, April 20, 1885; original in possession of John Hajicek.

⁴³John Wickliffe Rigdon, Affidavit, July 28, 1905, MS 3423, LDS Church History Library; Oliver H. Olney, *The Absurdities of Mormonism Portrayed: A Brief Sketch* (Hancock, Co., Ill., n.pub., March 3, 1843), 16.

⁴⁴John Wickliffe Rigdon, Affidavit, July 28, 1905, MS 3423, LDS Church History Library.

⁴⁵Joseph Fielding Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, 83–84.

Smith composed the well-known letter that begins: "Happiness is the object and design of our existence." The editors' introduction acknowledges this possibility but also suggests that the letter "may even have its origin in an issue altogether unrelated to plural marriage" (xxix note 71). Such skepticism is understandable. Accordingly, it will be interesting to see how the Joseph Smith Papers Project deals with the document itself because the original letter, assuming its existence, has been lost. The earliest version is quoted in John C. Bennett's letter to the *Sangamo Journal* August 19, 1842.⁴⁶ Despite these problems, numerous Church leaders, both past and present, have treated the letter as genuinely from the Prophet.⁴⁷

Despite these concerns, editors Hedges, Smith, and Anderson are to be highly commended for attempting the nearly impossible task of adequately introducing this controversial subject, with its multitude of controversial historical and doctrinal issues, within the space of seven pages. The introductory essay in *Journals, Volume 2* represents a milestone in LDS plural marriage historiography. It appears to signal a more open dialogue on this difficult topic as a plethora of antagonistic claims surrounding polygamy have been published in past decades without official response (D&C 123:12–14).

Even without this introductory essay, the book's usefulness to both dedicated scholars and casual inquirers is unparalleled. The new transcription is unequaled and the footnotes, maps, appendices, biological and genealogical guides, and other printed matter supply a treasure trove of contextualizing material. Doubtless it will become an indispensable resource for researchers and readers interested in understanding Joseph Smith's complex life.

BRIAN C. HALES {brianhales@msn.com} is an anesthesiologist in Layton, Utah. He is webmaster of www.JosephSmithsPolygamy.com and author of *Joseph Smith's Polygamy: History and Theology*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, forthcoming). In early 2009, Hales met with members of the Joseph Smith Paper Projects to discuss his research to that point. Since then, he has had no contact with them on this or any other topic and did not contribute to, or review, the introductory essay at any time.

⁴⁶"Sixth letter from John C. Bennett," *Sangamo Journal* (Springfield, Ill.) August 19, 1842; Bennett, *The History of the Saints: Or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), 243–45.

⁴⁷*History of the Church*, 5:134; and Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. and ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976 printing), 256.

Devery Scott Anderson, ed. *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000: A Documentary History*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011. lii, 495 pp. Photographs, index. Cloth: \$49.95. ISBN 978–1–56085–211–7

Reviewed by John-Charles Duffy

Most of what we know about the historical development of LDS temple worship stems from the research that David John Buerger did for his *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994). Linger over that thought. Until the 1980s when Buerger began publishing his research, no scholarly survey of the history of temple ritual existed. Even endowed Latter-day Saints had no way of learning about the history of their own rites apart from (1) the memories of older Saints, assuming the latter would be comfortable sharing them, or (2) information sifted from exposés, which could be difficult to obtain and whose accuracy would naturally be suspect.

The problem Buerger faced when he set out to write the history of temple ritual was not a lack of surviving records from which to construct that history. The records exist; the challenge is getting the gatekeepers at the LDS Church archives to release them. Buerger was fortunate to be working during the “Arrington spring” of the 1970s and early 1980s, when researchers could gain access to archival materials that had formerly been, and are now once again, more tightly restricted. (Materials currently restricted at the archives include temple-related records, General Authority minutes, General Authority diaries, and records of Church discipline.) Typescripts that Buerger and others made of restricted materials during that period have remained available to researchers in photocopy; Buerger’s research notes, for instance, are archived in Special Collections at the University of Utah’s Marriott Library. Signature Books made some of these temple-related sources more conveniently available by including them on its *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM*, first released in 1998, with a re-release in 2009 compatible with more recent operating systems. However, since that CD-ROM was compiled, some additional primary texts illuminating the development of temple ritual have become available, such as the David O. McKay diary, which Gregory Prince has deposited in photocopy in the Marriott Library’s Special Collections.

Devery Anderson’s *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000* offers access to the various temple-related archival materials that Buerger, Prince, D. Michael Quinn, and other researchers have collected over the years. The volume is, in essence, 475 pages of research notes. The collection includes excerpts from the diaries of Wilford Woodruff, Heber J. Grant, David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson, as well as various apostles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; record books of the St. George, Manti, and Salt Lake temples; First Presidency

circulars and Church manuals, including editions of the *Church Handbook of Instructions* to 1998; correspondence of Church presidents to individual local leaders; and oral histories with individuals who helped produce filmed versions of the endowment or plan the automation of ordinance work for the dead. Without this volume, some of these sources would be difficult, if not impossible, for researchers to access currently.

Reflecting its origin as research notes, *The Development of LDS Temple Worship* also includes texts that are readily available elsewhere, such as excerpts from Church periodicals or the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. These materials are less exciting, of course, than an excerpt from the minutes of the Twelve, for example (in which President McKay informs the Twelve that children sealed to adoptive parents will belong in the hereafter to those parents, blood lineage notwithstanding), or the official record of Jane Manning James's vicarious sealing to Joseph Smith (pronouncing upon her the apparently unique status of eternal servant to Smith's household). Still, there is an obvious advantage for researchers in having the more pedestrian materials also gathered ready at hand.

The volume does not include transcripts or eyewitness narratives of the endowment—i.e., exposés—even though such texts are among the research materials Buerger and others compiled. In a “Note from the Editor” that appeared as unpaginated prefatory matter in advance copies of the book (but whose contents were not reproduced in the market edition), Anderson explains that he eschewed exposés in favor of “internally generated documents that discuss policies and give [official] interpretations” of the rites. Thus, Anderson's collection offers few direct glimpses of the temple rites themselves, emphasizing instead the norms and procedures that govern administration of the rites. These include regulations for temple worthiness and Church leaders' rulings about who may receive certain rites and under what circumstances. Can Native Americans be endowed? (In 1882, John Taylor was hesitant to give permission.) What about a woman with a nonmember husband? (Policy varied from the 1880s to the 1980s; generally the rule was no, though during some periods she could be endowed if her husband gave permission in writing.) Could tobacco users receive a temple recommend? (An elderly man addicted to tobacco could obtain a recommend in 1902, but he had to abstain on the days he attended the temple.) A member living in the mission field? (Not under Joseph F. Smith's presidency: in 1903, the First Presidency held that those who had not gathered to Zion had not yet proved their faithfulness.)

Anderson includes documentation of specific changes made to the temple ceremonies—for example, diaries or minutes in which we see Church leaders deliberating about proposed revisions. In such documents, Anderson has discreetly omitted, with ellipses, any descriptions of the signs, tokens, and keywords of the holy priesthood, the only information from the temple rites that

initiates specifically covenant not to disclose. In the “Note from the Editor” bound with advance copies, Anderson said that these omissions amounted to “about fifteen words” in the entire collection. This is important information that ought to have been communicated to readers in the market edition.

The Development of LDS Temple Worship contains hundreds of different texts, ranging in length from an excerpt of a few sentences to several pages. The material is organized chronologically, broken up into eight chapters that create somewhat artificial historical sub-periods, usually ending at a round decade: 1880, 1900, 1940, 1960, etc. Anderson’s chapter titles try to assign a thematic shift to each period, but the organization is decidedly not thematically driven. That is, the documents contained in each chapter have not been selected to highlight a specific theme: “Women,” let’s say, or “Garments.” Anderson has simply arranged hundreds of documents in chronological order, breaking them into chapters to make the result less overwhelming. This is something of a problem—more on that below.

First, however, I should highlight what works well about the editorial apparatus. The book begins with an introductory essay by Anderson that briefly surveys the entire history of LDS temple ritual from the exodus from Nauvoo (1846) to something very close to the present (2000). The Nauvoo period is covered in two previous document collections, both co-edited by Anderson with Gary James Bergera: *Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005) and *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005). Anderson’s introductory survey doesn’t tell us much beyond what we already knew from Buerger, with two exceptions. First, he drives home more emphatically than Buerger the influence of Apostle George F. Richards, who revised the endowment virtually single-handedly during the 1920s. Second, Anderson describes a fascinating proposal from the late 1960s to create a traveling temple ship that would have brought the ordinances to members in the far-flung missions. In comparison to Buerger’s work, Anderson’s essay has the virtue of brevity, and he places special focus on the status of blacks and women. Another helpful editorial feature of the collection is that Anderson provides biographies for people mentioned in the source documents. Paragraph-length biographies of recurring figures appear in the prefatory matter; brief biographical information for a number of singly mentioned figures is presented as footnotes.

The quantity of material Anderson has published here is simultaneously a great attraction and a source of frustration. Readers, be warned: The first time you happen on a text in the collection that interests you, mark it with a post-it, or you will have a hard time finding it again. To illustrate this problem, I have not provided you with page numbers for any of the texts to which I have referred in this review: if you want to see these texts, you will have to hunt for

them using Anderson's index, just as I do when I'm trying to relocate a document I remember seeing during an earlier pass through the book. I admit there is probably no fully satisfactory editorial solution to this problem. Organizing the documents thematically rather than chronologically might have helped—except, of course, that some documents could be categorized under multiple themes. A more heavily annotated or detailed index might have helped. Numbering the texts might have helped. Indeed, researchers might have been better served if, instead of a print edition, Signature Books had added the texts new to this collection to the *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM*, which already contains much (perhaps even most) of the contents of Anderson's book, with the advantage of keyword search capabilities.

Another difficulty with the collection is the uncertain provenance of some of the documents it contains. For example, a few years ago I published a historical study of the initiatory ordinances ("Concealing the Body, Concealing the Sacred: The Decline of Ritual Nudity in Mormon Temples," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 21, no. 2 [2007]: 1–21). Among my source materials was a set of instructions apparently written for women initiates during the 1920s by Zina Young Card, matron of the Salt Lake temple. The document was significant for my study because it was the earliest reference I could find to the use of a "shield" during the initiatory. I first encountered this document in the research notes on temple ritual that appeared in the *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM*; the CD-ROM provided no information about the document's provenance apart from implying that it came from LDS Church Archives. During a research trip to Salt Lake City from North Carolina, where I was attending graduate school, I located a typescript of the document in the H. Michael Marquardt papers in the Marriott Library's Special Collections. Unfortunately, the typescript turned out to contain no more information about the document's origins than had been reproduced on the CD-ROM—not even a date, although, from internal references, I knew that the text couldn't be older than 1923. Phone calls to Michael Marquardt and David Buerger didn't illuminate the matter. It was one of those restricted documents that had been anonymously "liberated" from the Church Archives during the 1970s and had been circulating, photocopy upon photocopy, ever since.

Anderson reproduces the same document in *The Development of LDS Temple Worship*. I hoped he might have found out more about the document's provenance, but he simply reproduced a variation on the sketchy citation that had appeared on the *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM*: "Zina Y. Card, 'Garments,' *Temple Instructions*"—plus, now, an estimated date of "ca. 1923" (207; I said I wasn't going to give you page numbers, but you lucked out here—the *JMH* editors insisted I provide that one). If I ever want to cite this document again, the fact I can now reference a published work instead of a mysterious typescript, as I had to do for the *Journal of Ritual Studies*, gives the citation a greater im-

pression of respectability. But in reality, the document's provenance remains as murky as ever. This difficulty is inherent to some of the collection's source materials.

In the unpaginated "Note from the Editor" that Anderson circulated with advance copies, he explains that the documents in this collection represent "what official sources have said about the temple—how general authorities themselves have interpreted the temple's meaning. These are not secondary sources—not commentaries or exposés." I have two reservations about that statement. First, it is not true, strictly speaking, that Anderson has confined himself to "official sources"—and for this readers should be grateful. He includes, for example, excerpts from the diaries of non-General Authorities, mostly, it seems, for the purpose of documenting the administration of the second anointing through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While documents produced by General Authorities represent *one* important kind of source material (and one difficult to obtain), part of what makes Anderson's collection useful for future research is the glimpses it provides of how Latter-day Saints outside the hierarchy made their own meanings out of temple ritual. We get echoes, at least, of those Saints' voices when Anderson provides us with letters or policy statements in which General Authorities rule for or against petitions from members. Can an unendowed loved one be buried in unmarked garments? Will Wilford Woodruff authorize a woman to be resealed to, and receive her second anointing with, a deceased husband from whom she was estranged in life but whom she is now prepared to forgive?

In cases like these, we glimpse different ways that Latter-day Saints attempted to use temple ritual to mediate their relationships with loved ones, even through death. These attempts sometimes occur outside the domain of official Church doctrine or policy, and Anderson's collection shows Church leaders moving to curtail practices of which they disapproved. Nevertheless, these "on the ground" engagements with temple ritual and its symbols are as much a part of the history of temple worship as Church leaders' pronouncements "from above." I regret that the researchers who copied excerpts from these archival materials were so focused on the discourse of Church leaders that they didn't pay more attention to what they might have learned from their sources about everyday members' experiences and interpretations of temple ritual.

Incidentally, it would be helpful to know what was said about temple ritual in arguably "official" materials produced by non-General Authorities: the publications of the Relief Society, the Primary, or the youth auxiliaries. *The Development of LDS Temple Worship* contains no excerpts from such sources. Readers have no way of knowing if that's because those sources contain nothing relevant or because the researchers who compiled these notes didn't think to look.

My second reservation about Anderson's stated preference for official sources, "not commentaries or exposés," is concern that he may be suggesting that exposés are a negligible, because unreliable, source for the history of temple ritual. As documentation of historical practice, exposés are certainly problematic: They sensationalize or even invent things, and they may represent recollections of an ex-member's single temple-going experience many years past. But those difficulties are hardly insurmountable; indeed, they are business-as-usual for historians. Cross-checking the claims of exposés against the LDS Church-produced sources in Anderson's collection, a historian can draw reasonable conclusions about which claims are plausible and which are incredible. Approached in this way, exposés offer another window into how everyday Mormons responded to temple ritual. And exposés are unquestionably valuable as a source for the study of *anti*-Mormonism—ergo, for understanding how Mormons were being represented to larger publics.

I was surprised, in fact, to discover that *The Development of LDS Temple Worship* is not a historical collection of temple exposés, because I had understood that Signature Books was producing such a collection. (In the interest of transparency: I knew this because I had declined an invitation to contribute to the project.) I hope that this project is still in the works because it would be useful to researchers in much the same way that Anderson's current collection is useful: It would make more conveniently available sources that are now difficult to access.

It should be frankly acknowledged that *The Development of LDS Temple Worship* has a sensational appeal, inasmuch as it provides access to materials that Church leadership would probably prefer to keep restricted. Whether the collection proves significant beyond that sensational appeal depends on what use future researchers make of these materials. In and of itself, Anderson's book adds little that is new to our understanding of the history of temple worship. But it provides certain resources that could be used to tease out new dimensions of that history, especially when used in tandem with other kinds of resources—exposés, or writings of non-General Authorities—beyond those collected here.

JOHN-CHARLES DUFFY {duffyjc@muohio.edu} is a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Comparative Religion, Miami University, in Oxford, Ohio.

Richard V. Francaviglia. *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2011. x, 360 pp. Color illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth: \$36.95; ISBN 978-0-87421-809-1

Reviewed by Christine Talbot

Richard V. Francaviglia's *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* is as imaginative as it is paradoxical. Francaviglia declares: "The paradoxical idea that the West can be East—that is, have a connection to what was once widely called 'the Orient'—is evident in the region's historical literature and modern day culture" (viii). In a series of readings of representations of Western landscapes and peoples, Francaviglia shows that the West was Orientalized from the sixteenth through the twenty-first century.

Francaviglia's Orientalism is not the same as that made familiar by Edward Said's renowned book, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). First, Francaviglia defines the Orient more broadly than Said, including not only the Middle or Near East but all of Asia from Morocco to Malaysia. Second, Francaviglia's Orientalism is also much more expansive. He argues that American Orientalism differed significantly from its European counterpart; it was fundamentally ambivalent, incorporating positive and/or negative perceptions of the Orient and serving functions beyond imperialism. His central thesis is "not only that Orientalism is part of Western culture's need to identify the exotic 'other' but also that it is an integral part of Western culture's own cultural construction. We imitate(d) or assimilate(d) the Orient because doing so helps our culture construct a more complete identity. In other words, the Orientalization of American culture—or in this case, the American West—brings fuller meaning to the people and places we encounter on American soil" (8). Scouring many varied sources and plumbing the meanings of the natural environment, Francaviglia examines the processes by which Americans encountered and understood the peoples and places of the American West in ways that transformed them into the Orient.

In Part 1, Francaviglia examines the Orientalization of the frontier West from 1810 to 1920, while Part 2 looks at the modern West. In Part 1, Francaviglia interrogates how the regions of the West were initially Orientalized. To many Americans raised on literature like *Arabian Nights* and the Bible, regions of the American West conjured up the deserts of the Middle East. Travel writers characterized the Great Plains as the "American Zahara." The Great Basin was also linked to the lands of the biblical world, particularly Egypt, as regional characteristics such as sand dunes and the general appearance of vegetation replicated Middle Eastern landscapes.

Perhaps most interesting to readers of the *Journal of Mormon History* is Francaviglia's chapter on Utah. In it, Francaviglia shows how Mormons Orientalized the landscape of Utah even as outsiders Orientalized the Mormons. The Mormon migration to Utah transformed Mormons into a chosen people, like the Jews of the Bible, searching for their promised land in the desert. The naming of the Jordan River capitalized on similarities between it and the

River Jordan in Israel, both of which run from freshwater lakes to a landlocked salt lake or sea. The Book of Mormon also worked to Orientalize Utah's natives, identifying them as lost descendants of the house of Israel. Moreover, as Mormons adopted the Oriental identity of the Israelites, anti-Mormons associated Mormons with the Oriental "other" because they practiced polygamy and political absolutism characteristic of Middle Eastern despots. Unfortunately, anti-Mormon Orientalism receives a surprisingly light touch in this chapter and readers seeking a solid analysis of the anti-Mormon Orientalization of Mormons will be disappointed.

According to Francaviglia, nineteenth-century Americans also Orientalized the peoples and landscapes of the Southwest. Americans were primed by literary and biblical texts to view the landscape through Orientalist lenses and found it easy to classify the Native American "other" as the Muslim "other." Francaviglia paints a picture of an exoticized, mystical, erotic landscape in the Southwest and peoples identified either as biblical "Good Samaritans of the desert" (132) or dangerous "Mongols, Tuaregs, or other Asian and Middle Eastern tribes" (133). California also doubled as "Syria on the Pacific" (176). Irrigation, of itself "Middle Eastern in origin and spirit," (183) transformed parts of California into a desert oasis that reminded observers of the Garden of Eden. Other more arid regions such as Death Valley and the Colorado Desert were compared to the deserts of the Holy Land.

The Far West, with large numbers of Chinese and Japanese immigrants, also proved particularly easy to Orientalize, especially given Francaviglia's expansive definition. The development of Chinatowns in many Far Western cities literally Orientalized parts of western urban landscapes. Some people valued the beauty and mysticism of the Far East while others feared more sinister Asian influences. These ambivalent perceptions "operated simultaneously as two sides of the same Orientalist coin. One side . . . was dark indeed in that it plumbed deep fears, while the other brighter side embraced the richness of the Orient, bringing it home" (217).

Part 2 of Francaviglia's work examines the modern West as both the Middle East and the Far East, reminding readers that the Orientalization of the West is as contemporary as it is historical. One chapter offers an inventive reading of the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas, expositions of more modern literary renditions of the Southwest as Middle Eastern landscape, and creative readings of films that link the West to the Middle East. A second chapter shows that western novels and films and contemporary Asian gardens in the Far West demonstrate the influence of the Far East, showing that "California's fascination with the Far East endures" (275) into the twenty-first century and that "the Pacific Northwest is oriented to the Orient" (279). Francaviglia's conclusion reverses the direction of his argument, suggesting that the Orientalization of the West helped Americans come full circle to imagine the

Orient as the American West and expand their interests there: "In a sense, effective American expansion into Asia depended in part on its well-established tradition of Orientalizing American soil itself. The Orient, after all, was subliminally part of the nation's own fabric now. In other words, the Orientalization of the western American frontier created and constituted a bridge . . . that facilitated the nation's expansion into the Orient" (290).

Francaviglia's book is well-written and accessible to general readers. However, his elegant writing sometimes sacrifices conciseness and organizational salience, and his regional organization lends itself to repetition across chapters. At times the work reads like a list of occurrences of Orientalism without sufficient glue to hold them together. The narrative also loses focus, and frequent flights of fancy left me wishing for more brevity.

Some of Francaviglia's readings flex the muscles of his readers' imaginations; at times the Orientalism he observes seems as illusory as a desert mirage. One example appears early in the book when Richard Irving Dodge describes a group of westward emigrants circling the wagons against a menacing band of Indians. Although Francaviglia presents no evidence that Dodge himself viewed the scene as Oriental, Francaviglia claims that Dodge's description is rooted in an "enduring trope—the ever-present, highly mobile, warlike warriors who plunder all travelers crossing the limitless steppe. This is as old and as Asian as Genghis Khan" (39). Readings as thin as this one are scattered throughout the book and distract from the power of Francaviglia's analysis. Nonetheless, the book is worth reading despite the need for a discerning eye on the lookout for Francaviglia's over-reaching interpretations of his sources.

CHRISTINE TALBOT {christine.talbot@unco.edu} received her degree in history from the University of Michigan in 2006 and is currently assistant professor of women's studies at the University of Northern Colorado. Her article, "'Turkey Is In Our Midst': Orientalism and Contagion in Nineteenth-Century Anti-Mormonism," appeared in the summer 2006 issue of the *Journal of Law and Family Studies*.

John S. Dinger, ed. *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011. lxxxi, 616 pp. Notes, biographical register, appendixes, index. Hardback: \$49.95; ISBN 978-1-56085-214-8

Reviewed by Robin Scott Jensen

As I survey Mormon documentary editing over the last several decades, Signature Book's important role is obvious. Numerous monographs and other Mormon history studies cite Signature Book's documentary editing works. Similarly, as I survey the past several decades of Mormon historiog-

raphy, I am conscious of recent developments: While uncovering the historical facts of Mormonism is still essential, uncovering the context of the greater American experience or taking an interdisciplinary approach is now just as important. Within Mormon studies, documentary editing should adapt to that shifting change and complement the historical scholarship by providing not just the historical but also the textual context of records, allowing scholars access to the manuscripts published by presses like Signature Books. Documentary editors should see themselves as arbiters of the archives.

Unfortunately, from a documentary editing perspective, Signature Book's most recent publication will not satisfy many scholars of Mormon studies who wish to understand the rich history of the Nauvoo City Council and Nauvoo Stake High Council. Though *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes* provides basic content of these manuscripts for interested readers, it does not fit the needs of professional scholars.

In his preface to *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, editor John S. Dinger correctly classifies the two sets of minutes from 1839 through 1846 as "two of the most important primary sources for the period" (xvi). However, the manner in which Dinger presents the manuscripts, emphasizing the importance of the history of these organizations, overshadows the more important task of providing researchers with an accurate transcription of the text and a careful explanation of the physical manuscript and its provenance. Dinger is to be commended for his enthusiasm and obvious efforts to bring this volume to publication. But just as someone wishing to write history must learn the language of historical scholarship, so too must anyone who wishes to engage in document editing engage in similar standards of scholarly concept and execution. One of the goals of the Association for Documentary Editing is to assist individuals to engage and meet standards of this scholarly training.¹

Each Nauvoo-era council—the twelve-man ecclesiastical body over the Nauvoo stake and the political body consisting (at the outset) of nine city councilors, four aldermen, a mayor, and vice-mayor—met and created reports of their meetings. The different appointed clerks recorded these minutes in varying detail and manner. It appears that many minutes were originally created on loose pages, only some of which have survived. Scribes then would collate these earlier minutes and place them in notebooks, or even at times record minutes directly into these "rough minutes." Using these rough minutes,

¹Besides the Association for Documentary Editing website (<http://www.documentaryediting.org/>) interested individuals should also consult, as a starting point, Mary-Jo Kline and Susan Holbrook Perdue, *A Guide to Documentary Editing*, 3rd ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

scribes at times recopied the rough minutes into larger books, although sometimes they copied the minutes directly from loose minutes into the final, larger books. These “clean” or “official” minutes were at times direct copies of the earlier minutes, but at other times they truncated the minutes, or at still other times only presented what was voted upon. In other words, each set of minutes deserve careful and individual treatment to gain a complete history of each council.

The Nauvoo City Council minutes are completely open for public research and have been since at least 2006.² In his introduction, Dinger unintentionally misinforms readers about the actual accessibility of the original Nauvoo City Council minutes, an unfortunate disservice to those using his volume and to the LDS Church History Library. As Dinger did not gain access to the original manuscripts, he clearly worked at a disadvantage by consulting typescripts, photographs, and photocopies of the manuscripts. It is virtually impossible to fully understand documents without actually seeing them.

As Dinger points out (xvi note 2), any archive has the right and obligation, depending on the records and administrative policy, to restrict access to some material. Private repositories in particular, can allow any degree of access to their records they deem appropriate. The LDS Church History Library policies regarding access to their records have evolved over the years. In recent years, the library has made great strides in providing more equitable and consistent access policies, although some records—for example, those containing information about Church disciplinary trials—are still restricted. As such, access to the Nauvoo Stake High Council minutes is currently restricted. However, when possible, library reference staff have assisted in confirming transcriptions, providing descriptions of manuscripts, or otherwise aiding in the presentation of manuscripts. There is no evidence from Dinger’s introduction that he sought such assistance. He could have worked more closely with library staff to fill in the gap caused by the restricted material. Restricted access to manuscripts is not the same as restricted access to the staff at the LDS Church History Library. Dinger was further disadvantaged, partly through misinformation given him, and partly through his own negligence, in believing that access to the majority of the records he published was restricted.

In addition to the difficulties Dinger faced with access to some manu-

²Through a cataloging oversight, the catalog listing of the official proceedings, or final minutes of the Nauvoo City Council Minutes (MS 3435) identified the record as both restricted and open for research. Had Dinger sought clarification from the library staff, not only would the catalog have been corrected, but he would have gained access to the minutes. The rough minute books (found in MS 16800) have been open for research for several years.

scripts, the volume still fails to present complete or fully accurate texts of the minutes. My biggest complaint with his approach is Dinger's failure to actually present a complete text anywhere in the volume. As mentioned above, each council created at least two sets of minutes that served different purposes and were produced for different audiences.

Rather than presenting the complete rough minutes of the Nauvoo City Council meetings, for instance, Dinger at times uses the rough minutes for one meeting and those from the final version for another meeting. The documentary "narrative" thus jumps from a rough draft to a final copy with no effort to maintain the integrity of the documents themselves. It appears that Dinger chose the most complete minute record whenever a meeting was held, although he does not explicitly describe his selection criteria.

This framework presents at least two significant problems: first, Dinger misses (or at least does not convey) important textual elements about the minutes. For example, Dinger reproduces only some of the loose minutes of the city council minutes for October 12, 1844 (294), not reproducing the final five paragraphs, which are not found in that state in any other set of minutes. As another example, the text may show unequal treatment of events at one meeting. When using the rough minutes, Dinger at times publishes in footnotes the full text of the city ordinances as it appears in the final minutes (see, e.g., 216–18). At other times, he switches within the same meeting from the rough minutes to the final minutes (224), while at other times, he cites the *History of the Church* for the full texts of the passed ordinances, even though the ordinances appear in the more contemporary final minutes (188–89). And at still other times, he does not transcribe or describe in footnotes any of the passed city laws, even though they appear in the final minutes or are contained in *History of the Church* version (187). This unequal presentation of the minutes would force scholars to check constantly the original minutes.

As a documents editor, my concern is that Dinger ignores the integrity of the original records and essentially creates, from at least two sets of records, an artificial record separated from the context and provenance of the originals. Each council's efforts to document its proceedings by making and preserving the rough and final minutes is lost by Dinger's inconsistent presentation. For scholars interested in the two councils' influence on Mormonism and how others perceived these councils, Dinger's framework is highly problematic. For instance, one could assume that access to the rough minutes was restricted to clerks and council members, an assumption based on Dinger's lack of a thorough discussion of the records themselves and how they were created. This assumption leaves unclear the question of access to the final version. Was this official copy accessible to individuals who did not serve on the respective council? In this scenario, a clear differentiation between and

presentation of the two sets of minutes for each council is paramount.

Besides occasionally publishing only partial minute entries, Dinger fails to publish some minutes at all. He apparently is unaware that rough draft minutes of the Nauvoo City Council for 1841 and the first half of 1843 are contained in the same collection as the later rough draft minutes. The absence of this fifty-page minute book and first nineteen pages of a second minute book is a significant oversight. Additionally, occasional minutes are inexplicably missing throughout the volume. For example, the volume does not publish the special meeting of the city council for May 31, 1843, found in the rough minutes (but not in the final minutes). And finally, Dinger presents at least one minute that was not actually created by the organizations he's presenting. The September 8, 1844, trial of Sidney Rigdon, while clearly important historically, is a record not produced by the high council but as a gathering of "the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."³

Dinger's symbols for identifying source material are also difficult to follow. A dagger (†) or double dagger (‡) serves as an icon for the rough minutes or the clean minutes respectively. But several problems arise with this approach. First and most problematic, Dinger missed a few identifications. The minutes on p. 331, for example, are identified with the double dagger, meaning that they came from the clean copy; actually, this entry is from the loose minutes. As a second difficulty, researchers must continually consult previous entries or the table at the beginning of the volume to identify the source for a particular entry. In other words, researchers who consult a specific entry may or may not be able to immediately identify its source. A documentary editing work that fails to clearly identify full bibliographic information, including measurements, repository, and scribes of the documents it publishes does not serve as arbiter of the archives.

Dinger heavily used brackets supplying some punctuation or minor corrective reading elements that do little to improve the readability to the text. For example, "[The High] Council met according to adjournment at the Lodge Room. [The] Prayer [was offered] by James Allred. . . . All the Council [were] present" (455) or "Present[:] (1) [Samuel] Bent[,] (2) [James] Allred[,] (3) [Lewis D.] Wilson[,] (4) [Alpheus] Cutler[,] etc. (460) It seems unlikely that the reader who would be attracted to this volume would need such basic aids, and I found the bracketing distracting. The heavy use of brackets may also introduce nuances of the text that may or may not have been the intent of the original manuscripts (see below for examples). Furthermore, my cur-

³"Minutes of a meeting of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day saints held on the meeting ground in the City of Nauvoo on Sunday September 8th 1844," General Church Minutes, LDS Church History Library. Dinger presented not the more historically useful first copy, but the secondary clean copy created from the rough minutes.

sory comparison of the original documents and Dinger's transcription revealed many minor transcription errors. For instance, for the January 11, 1845 meeting, the original reads "1/2 past 10" and "1/4 to 11" instead of "2 [minutes] past 10" and "3 [minutes to 11]" (309). Also from the same meeting, instead of "[A] Petition of Hosea Stout and 26 others [of the police force was submitted] for one half of the penalties recovered against parties for breaking the ordinances of the city" (309; terminal period removed for the sense of my sentence), it should read "Petition of Hosea Stout and 26 others for one half of the penalties recovered <against parties <for breaking the ordinances of the city> (where angle brackets represent a unique insertion). Also in the same meeting "[It was moved & seconded that [a cross-street be added] before you come to the burying ground" (310; terminal period removed) should read "Moved & seconded that an angle strike out before you come to the burying ground." Also in the same meeting, "The Mayor [is] instructed to call the Council together at the Recorder's Office on Monday at 10 A.M. [The council will stand] adjourned until [Monday] morning at 10 a.m. at the Recorders office to meet in [a] committee of the whole" (315) should read "The mayor be instructed to call the Council together at the Recorder's Office on Monday at 10 A.M. [¶] Adjourned until morning morning [sic] at 10 A.M at the Recorders office <to meet in committee of the whole->."

Dinger also follows the problematic pattern found in several other documentary editing volumes by providing carats ("^") to show above-the-line insertions. This editorial decision ignores the occasional instance when above-the-line insertions are actually not redactions but are instances when scribes simply insert words or characters above the line for want of room; they are not insertions of text at a later time. More seriously, these editorial symbols fail to capture the redactions found within or below the line, or other keyed-in passages. For instance, on p. 187 an entire line is inserted, but not indicated as such: "through block 124 . . . Parly to Kimball St."; and on p. 183 where "Counsellor" in "Counsellor John Taylor was appointed . . ." is inserted on the same line as the text, but is similarly not designated as an insertion.

As it is, Dinger attempts to show the physical location of redactions, without realizing the need for a comprehensive demonstration of these redactions regardless of their location on the manuscripts. Dinger also inconsistently represents the spatial elements of the text in typographical facsimile (mimicking the original text not just through a transcription of the words, but also representing the format, spacing, paragraphing, and indentions) or diplomatic formats (standardizing the placement of words and introducing paragraphing when necessary). Important elements of minutes are not captured unless they are noted through typographical facsimile or otherwise

described in footnotes, including the signing of minutes, the beginning of minutes, and the quotations of other documents within the minutes. Dinger's approach does not capture these nuances, so that a careful examination of the originals or scans of the originals is still necessary for a close reading of the manuscripts. Dinger's (silent) choice to bold the final date and signature of the minute entries is inconsistently applied and thus, in my opinion, serves no worthwhile purpose. Unfortunately, other silent editorial decisions diminish the value of the work including the choice to ignore catch words, ignore end or beginning of page breaks, to standardize—and therefore silently remove—datelines, inconsistently use block quotations, and inconsistently transcribe (or fail to transcribe) the endorsements found on loose minutes pages.

This review will not focus on the historical treatment of the minutes—although a few of the troubling issues include the silent use of sources like Wikipedia and the non-silent use of *History of Church*, and the emphasis on historical context without providing details of the actual organizational structure of the ecclesiastical and municipal entities. I hope other reviews will address these historical issues.

It is clear that Signature Books and the Smith-Pettit Foundation intend to continue to position themselves as a major force in Mormon documentary editing. Adopting stricter scholarly standards for documentary editing would enhance those efforts. Establishing an editorial board, employing systematic and consistent editorial guidelines within a series (the Significant Mormon Diaries Series, for instance), and instituting more oversight of single-volume productions would go a long way in improving their already important contribution to Mormon studies. It is my hope that works such as this latest publication will provide the catalyst to implement these and similar practices. Interested readers who peruse this latest volume will find it enlightening and informative. However, using it with confidence as a reliable representation of the actual original manuscripts is not recommended. Overall, I believe that it is time to raise Mormon documentary editing to the same caliber of scholarship taking place in other subfields of Mormon studies.

ROBIN SCOTT JENSEN {rsjensen12345@gmail.com} serves as project archivist for the Joseph Smith Papers Project.

Sherman L. Fleek. *Called to War: Dawn of the Mormon Battalion*. Salt Lake City: Digital Legend Press and Publishing, 2010. 552 pp. Map. Paper: \$24.95; ISBN 978-1934537-48-0

Sherman L. Fleek. *War in the Far West: The March of the Mormon Battalion*.

Salt Lake City: Digital Legend Press and Publishing, 2011. 525 pp., Maps. Paper: \$24.95; ISBN 978-1-934537-99-2

Reviewed by Paul A. Hoffman

Lieutenant Colonel Sherman L. Fleek, a twenty-five-year veteran of the U.S. Army, now retired, serves as the historian at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He has written two remarkable historical novels about the formation and long march of the famous Mormon Battalion within the larger context of surrounding events of the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-48). Anyone who has studied the historical documents relating to the Mormon Battalion knows that Fleek is a bona fide historian and proven scholar in military and LDS history.¹ Thus, the reader can rest assured that the author really knows the history of the battalion.

However, unlike most historians, Fleek's contribution in these two novels is his unique ability to blend authentic history with the prose of an engaging storyteller. His novels creatively balance entertaining fiction with the most compelling and realistic retelling of the actual history in a way that puts flesh on the bones of the Mormon Battalion history like no other books I have ever read. He brings the epic story of the battalion to life, both for average readers who have little to no knowledge of it and for those who are already well-versed in the details of the history and are looking for new insights.

To be sure, these novels are not LDS Sunday School level history. Their purpose is not to edify and enlighten; they are a very realistic portrayal of war, soldiering, life in the nineteenth century and frontier reality. In Fleek's preface, he comments that, through these books, "we learn what war and its reality does to people and families" (unpaginated). These volumes are nevertheless inspiring but not in the same way as other popular series of Mormon historical fiction.

Another innovation that Fleek introduces in these novels is that they are not just the story of the Mormon Battalion but are also the larger story of General Stephen Kearny's entire Army of the West that invaded and occupied New Mexico, Arizona, California, and parts of Mexico. For example, Fleek educates us about the expedition of Colonel Alexander Doniphan (yes, the same Doniphan, who, as a Missouri militia officer, saved Joseph Smith's life in 1838 by rejecting an illegal order to execute him). Doniphan led his contingent of Missourians south through Chihuahua, chalking up surprising successes against larger Mexican forces there (*Far West*, 372-88). Thus, the reader comes

¹Sherman L. Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain: A Military History of the Mormon Battalion* (Spokane, Wash.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 2008), 414 pp. Chronology, photographs, maps, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. Cloth: \$37.50; ISBN 978-0-87062-343-1.

away with a much greater understanding of the complex historical context of the battalion as part of the larger story of the Mexican War in the Far West.

Another example of Fleek's rich layering of historical context is the appalling, but almost unknown, bloody rebellion that occurred in Taos, New Mexico, in January and February 1847, against American authority. He builds the conspiracy brilliantly and laces together some elements almost like a murder mystery. To tell this turbulent story in a personal way, Fleek creates several period characters: Catholic priests, a brothel master, an assassin named Viera, an American of Spanish-French extraction named Pablo Vargas, and the wild, enchanting Isabelle. The narrative keeps the reader spellbound:

Viera steadied himself as he heard the noise of the latch. The door swung open and a figure stepped into the courtyard and moved toward him in the shadows and darkness. The light was dim and the darkness thick. Viera's heart raced. The figure had not come from the passageway door. He took the dagger from his sleeve and raised it high to throw. A slight flash of the knife blade reflected from the dim ambient light. Isabelle strode quickly and directly a few yards across the courtyard to the crevice where Viera hid. She raised the pistol at his chest. He saw the pistol. Then . . ." (*Far West*, 432)

As for plot and characters, Fleek follows the classic narrative style with straightforward polished prose, and dynamic and engaging dialogue among the historical and fictional characters. The story begins with the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo and crossing the Iowa plains in May 1846. Victoria Barlow, a British convert and widow, and her twin sons, Arthur and York, are learning to be pioneers like the rest of the Saints (*Called*, 29). The family background is essential to the historical story, which Fleek narrates to help establish two important conflicts in the minds of most Mormon pioneers. Richard Barlow, Victoria's deceased husband, was a major in the British army who fought against Napoleon; he had given up his profession and the sword to preach the gospel of peace as a Methodist minister. The two boys grew up with a disdain for all things military. So when the call comes to form the battalion, the boys resist; but Victoria persuades them to join the battalion because of the family's faith in Church leaders (*Called*, 254–58, 321–22).

The conflict grows and branches into an interesting but tragic chasm in the family when Arthur, the more timid of the two, embraces the martial profession and joins the regular U.S. Army at Santa Fe (*Called*, 521–23). By contrast, York opposes the enlistment in nearly every way. True to the historical record of many Mormon Battalion soldiers, York's motives were faith and honor rather than patriotic. Thus, the Barlow boys experience great conflict in their family circle. Fleek cleverly uses the Barlows to illustrate that the conflict of military discipline versus religious duty is not only the Barlow dilemma but the actual main conflict in the Mormon Battalion itself.

The second early conflict is the engagement of Victoria to Samuel

Knowles, a prosperous Mormon businessman. The twins think that their noble and virtuous mother, who belongs to the British gentry class, is too superior to marry a “shopkeeper” (*Called*, 30). This is an interesting twist and historically accurate fact, by which Fleek illustrates that many of the British converts were not eloquent, refined, and stalwart members like Apostle John Taylor or Victoria Barlow. The fictional Hitch family represents most English converts from the working class—diligent and faithful members but lacking education and refinement (*Called*, 93). Baptism did not wash away the social status, pride, and class envy entrenched by centuries. For Victoria to condescend to accept a merchant’s love was socially unacceptable to her sons—and even to herself. Not only do the novels address the pride with which English society was riddled from top to bottom, but Fleek helps us understand that it was a two-way street, with the working-class Hitches having equal pride and arrogance in their plebian roots. Thus, when war and military service comes, these elements and plots, among many other subplots, are woven into the story with skill and finesse.

Among other subplots, Fleek not only narrates much about LDS culture and history during this era, but he also constructs a detailed mosaic and employs compelling dialogue that captures the emotional intensity of contemporary nineteenth-century conflicts, such as the evils of slavery, the causes of the Mexican War, and the westward expansion of Manifest Destiny. Here is an example involving a runaway slave named Philip:

“We thaank ya must be a slave, boy!” said Penny as he took a step closer.

“Slave you say! An indentured servant, a common laborer or such, Heaven forbid,” Philip cried, yet his tone was serious.

“Ya can’t fool me with yer fancy talk,” Penny’s face reddened.

“Cease this right now,” interjected Cooke. “I will not tolerate this. Who gives you the right or authority to enter this house of healing, threaten this person and act as barbarians.” Cooke was angry.

“Doc, we know ya are a Virginian, ya folks may be a little soft on run-aways in Ol’ Dominion, but here in Kentucky and Missoura we are more serious,” Penny exclaimed. (*Called*, 164)

The subthemes, characters, scenes, and action are epic and panoramic—from the patriotic halls of Philadelphia to the verdant plains of Iowa, from the ageless Midlands of England to the rim-rock deserts of Arizona, from the chambers of power in Washington to a riverboat collision on the Ohio River. Like James Michener, Fleek paints landscapes and settings in exuberant detail in vistas that are worthy of the screen. The reader can almost feel the sweat rolling off Victoria’s slender neck in humid Iowa, the scorching sand under York’s blistered feet in New Mexico, and the wintry English countryside slowly freezing Samuel Knowles’s stricken body.

As the Barlows march farther west, the crushing power of national events, war, and the march to California exacerbates the growing family crisis. At Santa Fe, the first novel ends when the Barlow boys collide in a tragic family feud over their primary dilemma, loyalty to the Church versus patriotism to country (*Called*, 525–27). Adding to this conflict, Victoria not only struggles with the courtship of Samuel Knowles, a well-meaning but uninspiring and sometimes tragic figure, but she is also singled out by another more interesting suitor, Apostle John Taylor, who coincidentally had known her late husband, Richard, in England years before. He is an appealing character, and Victoria flirts with the possibility of becoming one of Taylor's polygamous wives (*Called*, 39–42, 286–87; *Far West*, 501–2).

One thing Fleek does not do in his novels, which is more of a Mormon literary tool not found in mainstream historical novels, is the addition of chapter endnotes or summaries. Their purpose is to explain what the author has changed or revised from actual history so the reader can differentiate fictional scenes from the real history. Why Mormons need these explanatory crutches at the end of each chapter is puzzling. Did Alex Haley, James Michener, John Jakes, or the great Herman Wouk use such tools to help educate readers who are not sufficiently well versed in history to know the difference?

However, Fleek still provides some supporting elements for non-historians. First, he acknowledges in his preface: “No facts, dates, people, places, situations or recorded events have been altered in any way to provide more dramatic qualities” (unpaginated). Second, to help the reader differentiate between fiction and fact, he provides a list of historical characters at the beginning of each novel. Since many of the historical characters are not “household names,” he lists more than sixty actual historical figures in each novel with the dates of their lives, if known.

Third, Fleek also uses a clever narrative device to provide deeper historical content for the reader. Perhaps in an attempt to attract non-LDS readers, he creates a narrator in the opening pages of *Called to War*. Major “Rip” Howard, a modern-day Army officer, is assigned by his advisor in a military school to research and write about the Barlows for his graduate school thesis (*Called*, 6–7). Not being a Mormon, Howard accepts the assignment only reluctantly but is soon captivated by the Barlow story, as any reader who opens these novels will be. In a way, Fleek has developed his own “literary determinism” through this device. Major Howard inserts himself into the chapters from time to time to provide direct narrative explanations about the historical episodes the readers have just witnessed or are about to experience. We can't help but hear the real voice of Sherman Fleek echo through Howard's short insertions.

These novels are sweeping historical epics in which, over the course of

1846–48, the Barlows and the historical characters surrounding them help us understand, in a more personal way, the ugly realities of nineteenth-century warfare, the battalion's torturous two-thousand-mile march, the harsh life of Native Americans, the bloody rebellion at Taos, the despair of Mormon pioneers crossing Iowa, the ingenuity of the Mississippi Saints in future Colorado, the short but deadly Battle of San Pasqual in California, the feud between General Stephen Kearny and Captain John C. Frémont, and the overarching politics of war in Washington, D.C. Included along the way are treacherous roadside conspirators, a riverboat wreck, a runaway slave, a pursuing bounty hunter, ponderous Mormon camp meetings, tender moments with sons and mother, intrigue, a romance and a marriage, tragic losses of family, friends, and comrades, and many other touching and dramatic scenes.

One is left yearning to learn the further fate of the Barlows and their comrades after they arrive in Utah. The only question to ask Colonel Fleek is: Are these first two novels the beginning of a new genre of authentic Mormon story-telling that will fill a much-needed niche in LDS literature and history?

PAUL A. HOFFMAN {pachoffman@cox.net} is co-founder of the law firm Greenwald & Hoffman, LLP, in Santa Ana, California. Three of his ancestors, Abraham Hunsaker, John S. White, and Henry Wells Jackson, were original members of the Mormon Battalion who completed the entire two-thousand-mile march.

BOOK NOTICES

Richard H. Bullock. *Ship Brooklyn's Saints*. (N.p.: Author, 2009. xv, 189 pp. photographs, maps, illustrations, appendices, bibliography. \$24.95 spiral bound. ISBN 978-1-933170-58-9. For purchasing information, contact {www.shipbrooklyn.com} or Richard H. Bullock, 9458 Quail Hollow Drive, Sandy, UT 84093-3357.

This book is an account of 238 Mormon pioneers who, rather than crossing the plains with the majority of the Saints, traveled by ship from New York City, rounding the tip of South America. They landed at Yerba Buena (now San Francisco) and made major contributions to the development of that area.

Richard H. Bullock, a descendant of *Brooklyn* pioneers, states that “this book is written especially for the descendants of the ship *Brooklyn* pioneers and those interested in our history” (xii). In addition to describing both the voyage and these pioneers’ California experiences, afterward, Bullock declares: “I felt that the real story of the ship *Brooklyn* lay within the lives of the individuals themselves, not just the journey they endured” (xii). Bullock became inter-

ested in the project as he and his wife, Erma, engaged in a long-term project to compile the records of the *Brooklyn* company. “As this went on over the years and I transcribed the information . . . I found that the passenger names took on personalities, becoming living beings. . . . I wanted to do more than research and archive. . . . I wanted to tell each of their stories and give real meaning to them as individuals” (xii).

Thus, this book gives the full story of the *Brooklyn* Saints, beginning with their gathering in New York City and following them to their final individual destinations in California, Utah, and even Hawaii. The first ten chapters cover the sea voyage, on which they embarked on February 4, 1845. After the Saints arrived on July 31, 1846, in the small settlement that would become San Francisco, Bullock described the region’s development, focusing on the Saints’ involvement and contribution. The discovery of gold in January of 1848 and the subsequent gold rush are related in Chapters 20–21. The book concludes with information in Chapters 22–25 about where each group finally settled and the

specific contributions the Saints made to the area. For example, "The third to leave was Sarah Kittleman. She married Elbert P. Jones, one-time editor of *The California Star*. Elbert made his fortune in real estate and he took his bride to Charleston, South Carolina, where they spent the rest of their lives. They were witnesses to the first guns and battle of the Civil War in Charleston harbor" (163).

The narrative quotes from journals and letters and is generously enriched with photographs and illustrations. As the purpose of the book is primarily to help descendants of these pioneers feel a connection with their ancestors, Bullock frequently includes details specific to individual members of the company and occasionally speculates on the probable feelings and situations of the Saints, basing his conclusions on related research. For example: "The very next day . . . Eliza Ensign, beautiful young daughter of Jerusha Taylor Ensign, died of the effects of consumption, or tuberculosis. She died at the age of twenty years. . . . Jerusha had now lost her husband and her only daughter, and must have felt heartbroken. She treasured her only remaining child Warren Ensign and might have wondered if he too would be taken from her. The burial ceremony heard the sound of the ship's bell once again as the girl with the beautiful locks, now sewn in canvas, slipped off the plank and into the sea to join her fellow passengers in Neptune's depths. At least she would finally be free from the pain and suffering of the wracking

coughs and bleeding lungs"(49).

Bullock also reconstructs life aboard the ship in interesting detail. For example, as the Saints embark in New York Harbor, Bullock uses sensory details to make the probable experience come alive: "The harsh cry of the gulls and occasional bells of the harbor buoys could be heard in the early morning mists, mixed with the calls of ships' captains demanding attention to their orders. Captain Abel W. Richardson, master of the *Brooklyn*, could probably be heard barking orders to his men on deck and the helpers on the dock to bring cargo and last-minute articles on board. He might have wrapped his coat tightly around him as the crisp morning air also promised a snow squall before they could get out of the port" (1).

A more light-hearted moment came when "the *Brooklyn* neared the Equator, and the Captain and crew upheld the tradition of all sailors who cross the Equator for the first time. They played many tricks and jokes on the passengers and even dunked some of the more athletic young men in the ocean, a standing tradition. Tales from other ship logs indicate the Captains would go so far as to place a hair across the far lens of the spyglass, so that when the passenger . . . would hold the glass to their eye they would see a line in the water and be amazed that the Equator showed so plainly" (49).

Of particular interest is Appendix 1, which provides a brief summary of the life of each member of the com-

pany. Further information on individuals is provided on a website, considered Volume 2 of the work. See www.shipbrooklyn.com.

James V. D'Arc. *When Hollywood Came to Town: A History of Movie-making in Utah*. Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2010. 304 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, chronology. Paper: \$30.00. ISBN-13: 978-1-4236-0587-4

In this book, James V. D'Arc, curator of the motion picture archives in the Harold B. Library Special Collections at Brigham Young University, describes how and why Hollywood came to Utah to film movies and television shows. The book is divided into six "scenes," each one representing a period of time where films were shot in certain parts of Utah. D'Arc explains each movie and gives an overview of the cast and crew and their feelings while filming in Utah.

Scene 1 is centered on Iron County from 1924 to 1958. The Parry Brothers, located in Cedar City, Utah, played a critical role in attracting the attention of movie producers. These brothers began their business by creating a tourist transportation system in Cedar Breaks National Monument and the national parks of Zions, Grand Canyon, and Bryce Canyon. Chauncey Parry made frequent trips to Hollywood to entice studios to make their way to Utah.

Reportedly, Zane Grey, a popular Western novelist, recommended the

Utah location to Tom Mix, the greatest cowboy of his time. Wrote one journalist in the 1940s, "Because Zane Grey had written his first successful novels in Kanab, Tom Mix . . . had asked the Parry brothers to arrange a few locations" (p. 34). The first movie to be filmed in Iron County was *Tom Mix and the Deadwood Coach* (1924). Mix was popular in Cedar City and reciprocated by announcing, at the end of filming, "To show my appreciation, sub-titles in *The Deadwood Coach* will tell theatre patrons throughout the world that the scenes were shot in Utah. Without question of doubt your state is a mecca of picturesque atmosphere" (38).

Scene 2 is focused on Washington County from 1927 to 1979. During this time, Utah was the setting for, among others, *In Old Arizona* (1929), *The Conqueror* (1956), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), and *Jeremiah Johnson* (1972). Robert Redford, who starred in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, loved the beauty of Utah so much that he bought land in addition to his Wildwood property to create Sundance, a Provo Canyon ski resort which also hosts the Sundance Institute for independent filmmakers.

Scene 3 concentrates on Kane County between 1929 and 1978. Some of the movies filmed during this time were *My Friend Flicka* (1943), *Smoky* (1946), *Buffalo Bill* (1944), and *Sargeants 3* (1962), featuring the Rat Pack. While staying at Whit Parry's home, Frank Sinatra

decided to remodel the house to better suit his tastes. He added a stereo system, cedar-lined closets, and other modifications that cost nearly \$60,000 (182). Many found him kind and generous. One evening proprietor Whit Parry asked Jackie Rife, a local resident, to help make dinner for the crew at Parry Lodge. Says Rife, "Frank came into the kitchen, I had my back turned and he reached into my [uniform] pocket. Well, hey, you don't do that to me! I just turned around and I was going to hit him and he said, 'Whoa!' So, when I went home and took my uniform off, I reached into my pocket and found that he'd put a hundred dollar bill in there just for helping that night" (183).

Scene 4 is centered on San Juan County from 1925 to 1995. This time period coincided with the "discovery" of Monument Valley, a favorite shooting location for director John Ford, perhaps best-known for his westerns. He directed such classics as *Stagecoach* (1939), *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *Fort Apache* (1948) and *The Searchers* (1956). John Ford loved Monument Valley so much that, when he died, actor Woody Strode said: "[Ford] should be buried in Monument Valley" (220).

In Scene 5, the movie hotspot is the shooting location for such movies as *Geronimo* (1993), *City Slickers II: The Search for Curly's Gold* (1994), and space movies such as *Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone* (1983), *RocketMan* (1997), and *Galaxy Quest* (1999).

The final chapter, Scene 6, focuses on northern Utah and spans from 1908 to 2003. One of the best-known movies in this chapter, *Footloose* (1984), starring Kevin Bacon, was filmed at Lehi Roller Mills, Payson, Provo, Orem, and American Fork. Although canceled after the first season, the TV series *Touched by an Angel*, filmed in Salt Lake City, came back for its second season due to a high demand of faithful fans and continued production for ten seasons.

Said Leigh vonder Esch, who headed the Utah Film Commission for two decades, "As film commissioner, I knew that we couldn't buy the exposure that came through the movies made in Utah and to have someone of Robert Redford's stature say, 'I made a movie here and it was easy, the people worked hard, and they were friendly, and you can get to the locations easily,' was a great calling card" (272).

D'Arc interviewed Billie Frei, a waitress at Dick's Café in St. George during the filming of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. She said, "They came in every night to eat, Paul Newman, Robert Redford, the director and some others. Paul Newman would make the salad for everyone. Even then, before Newman's Own, he would have the ingredients brought to him and he'd make the salad dressing. They would all eat in the dining room, right along with everyone else, but would be at a long table over to the side of the room. I knew that Paul Newman was such a

big name, but I really liked Robert Redford, who would often be off at another table being interviewed by the press" (105).

Andrew H. Hedges and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel. *Within These Prison Walls: Lorenzo Snow's Record Book, 1886–1897*. Salt Lake City: Sheridan Books 2010. 152 pp. Historical introduction, diaries, photographs, endnotes, biographical appendix, index. Hardcover: \$21.99. ISBN 978-0-8425-2762

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Andrew Hedges have compiled and edited a book that provides a biographical essay on Lorenzo Snow and focuses on his term of imprisonment in the federal penitentiary for his practice of polygamy. Holzapfel is a professor of Church history at Brigham Young University, and Hedges is a historian and a documentary editor on the Joseph Smith Papers Project.

The sixty-two-page introduction describes the anti-polygamy "crusade" that occurred in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1887, the Edmunds-Tucker Act gave the government grounds to "effectively arrest and prosecute those engaged in plural marriage" (xxii). This act made it possible for the government to prosecute any man "cohabitating" (xxiii) with two or more women.

Snow, who joined the Church in 1836, served several missions in the United States. At age thirty, he married two of his cousins on the same

day in 1844. He was the first Latter-day Saint "to leap directly from bachelorhood into plural marriage" (xxvii). He was married to ten women, three of whom died before him. A warrant for his arrest was issued on November 20, 1885. He was convicted and sentenced to serve eighteen months and pay a \$900 fine (xxxiv).

Then follows a complete transcription of Snow's "record" book. The book is printed on high-gloss paper and has photographic reproductions of Snow's actual record book and a complete transcription of its entries—consisting primarily of poems and letters to friends and family. He was imprisoned for eleven months, but the record book includes items covering up to 1897. An appendix names and identifies the people whom Snow mentions and to whom he wrote while in prison—his daughters, wives, other relatives, and friends. Most of the poems testified of God, expressed love for his correspondents, and articulated his belief in the eternal progression of the faithful until they achieved godhood. One example is: "T'will not be long we'll greet each other, / In realms on high where joys abound, / and then, as promised, Gods be crowned" (56).

Snow was respected by guards and inmates alike. He taught grammar classes and preached sermons and, in 1886, led the Latter-day Saint prisoners in the 'Hosanna Shout,' the only known time it was performed in a prison.