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President Alder, distinguished guests, members and friends of the Mormon History Association and John Whitmer Historical Association, critics: This evening I feel a good deal like General Sherman’s mule: he had been present at a good many battles, but did not know very much about war. I have attended a number of Mormon History meetings, but I am reluctant to suggest that I know very much about Mormonism. Fortunately, a presidential address is an essay of reflection. It is provided by an involved person who, at the culmination of his time in office, feels enough at home to speak freely to those he has come to know and to love.

My intent is to voice some reflections from a lifetime of homesickness amidst the Mormon community. It is my hope to continue the remarks made last year by Charles Peterson. His was a journey back to his home where, he hinted, some answers to our contemporary concerns may well lie hidden on the dusty streets of those villages born of commitment. His message was beautifully and simply stated.¹ My journey is less easily identified but, like his, is a journey filled with dusty roads, blind alleys, and complicated relationships and is a story born of commitment.

I wish to begin this evening with a brief comment about the secular Smiths — comments reflecting on the community which spawned me and which has allowed me an intuitive, as well as a rational look at a common problem. As a stranger, I have had access to your community through an outdated passport, and I have wandered in your midst. I do not understand much

of what I see. But I recognize a tragic heritage and find I can speak from a tradition. The heritage is tragic because it is a heritage of a sacred burden laid upon the shoulders of secular people. It is a tradition to which all are born but from which most must abdicate. I have identified Joseph Smith, whose genes I carry and whose vision I share, as a mystic, but also as a man. The family was, and is, under the greatest pressure to be a royal family. The family must account for, and maintain, the sacred mantle; to wear the royal robes. But the robes of prophetic vision are not the common garment, even of prophets; and men and women have carried those garments with them through six generations because they were not called to wear them and they had no place to lay them. Over the years this pressure led to internal disharmony, as well as dedicated support; to presidents seeking desperately to be prophets and struggling often to be leaders; to secular persons standing in the wings, haunted by the spectrum of greatness unachieved and potential unfulfilled. The waiting has been hard — the wings of the stage are a bad place from which to maintain an identity — and the ratio of insanity, human failure, and breakdown among the unchosen is too high to be ignored. And the service is hard: we witness their love and sacrifice, and we recognize the great toll imposed upon them by the need to do something that persons do not do — they can only be. There is a perpetual crisis between actual and potential. The need to be the prophetic spokesman is an awesome burden for a secular man; to forever be unheard is a devastating silence to be imposed on a royal person.

This family had a sacred event and has a secular history. The great myth that maintains the sacred leaves gigantic scars upon the secular. It was a family to which a vision came; it became a prophetic family by community decision. The Smith gentry have been raised to serve, but in the main have been called to wait. There is a message in the service, and that is perhaps better known to you; but there is a message in the waiting as well, and that is perhaps better known to me. This family crisis is a crisis for us all, and it rises from confusion between the sacred and the secular. It is this confusion that is the basis of my remarks.

While I would be a poet by preference, I am a philosopher by training and a historian by profession. As well, I am a Reorganite because my father was and a radical because my father wasn’t. From these multiple heritages I have chosen to be a rational man, to bounce my faith off the quest for a past, to seek to be my person as my past has given me guidance. I am anxious to live my life aware of, but undaunted by, an experience with which I have empathy, but that I cannot have.

Believing in and caring about my people, I am required to face the scary appropriations rising from the ruins of my old cracked world so that I might share convictions and give testimony. For I am no less involved, no less the fulfillment of my sixth generation, when responding in the secular rational community: an honorable Smith whose pulpit is Clio’s dream.

So, I am compelled to ask, What is the role of the rational scholar in a nonrational movement? Where does the homesick man find a home? These are not just my questions, they are yours and the church’s. They must be answered if we will have a legacy for our children and as our payment for the legacy which has given us meaning for today.
My thesis for this evening is this: As historians, we have a long record of perpetuating the confusion which it is our responsibility to control. We confuse Joseph Smith with Mormonism and Mormonism with the Mormon church. These three distinct phenomena, while forever joined in our hearts and minds, have historical and philosophical identities that cry for investigation. Further, I hold these three contentions:

First, Joseph Smith was a mystic. He was a secular man who saw religion as a meaningful part of everyday life, not as an isolated experience. And yet, his primary understanding was an isolated experience. Joseph’s views were different before 1830 than they were after. After 1830 they appear more and more reflective of the needs of an institution than they were the expressions of the divine. The contribution of Joseph Smith was a mystical participation of a predominantly Eastern persuasion.

Second, Mormonism is a semi-systematic set of theological arguments. These emerged from some preconceived concepts that were actualized by Joseph’s mystical experience. This “theology” was born full-grown through the minds and talents of some Burned-Over District supernaturalists of whom Parley P. Pratt was a prime example, if not the actual culprit.

Third, the Mormon church, in all its diverse institutions, is a bureaucracy designed to sustain ritual arising from the mystical experience. It is a product of the organizational mind of Hyrum Smith and a host of inspired secular leaders.

This thesis suggests a bevy of questions which cry for answers:

1. What is intelligence? How does soul material differ from all other materials in the theology of Mormonism? The connections between Joseph and Plato’s Timaeus are almost beyond speculation.

2. Why have we systematically ignored the Vision as event and the Book of Mormon as literature?

3. Why have we developed a sect based on Joseph Smith’s hatred for sects?

4. Why are we so frightened by the masonic model?

5. How do we deal with the conflict between the passionate, mystical god of Joseph, and the personal, supervising, natural god of current doctrine? Why have we no theology?

6. What is the answer to the exclusively Mormon paradox of universal salvation?

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3A. O. Lovejoy’s view of The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936) presents a world picture hypothesis that certainly needs to be looked at. It appeared in 1933 and gives considerable style to what appears to be Mormon explanations.

4Mario D. Pillis, in his article, “The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 1 (Spring 1966): 88, suggests that “the Prophet hated the contentions and contradictions of sectarianism and hoped in a sense, to establish a sect to end all sects.” This sounds a little like fighting for peace. Joseph Smith may well have hated sectarianism and hoped to do something about it; but the evidence I see is inclined to suggest that he wished to end it, not replace it. Such an idea may be worthy of attention if we ever get back to questioning the essential message.
and perfectibility on the one hand and a deep-guilt, blood atonement requirement on the other?

7. How has the church dealt with the change from legend to myth: we were asking, What has in fact taken place? Now we must ask, How must the present order of things have been originated?

It is the last of these questions I wish to address.

Since I wish to talk about secular history, let me briefly define my terms. By sacred I refer to a confrontation between man and God in whatever form. A sacred event is that moment of confrontation. A sacred study is the study of the event, the artifacts involved in the event, and the source of the event. The Vision of Joseph is considered to be a sacred one. Questions about the confrontation, inasmuch as we are dealing with the source, are sacred. On the other hand, the daily activities of a movement which tries to deal with the reality of the sacred event are secular. By secular I mean only that they are not sacred. They are, instead, lives lived with the awareness of the sacred confrontation and in expectation of its meaning. To be profane would be to suggest that our lives are ones of immediacy, that there is no ritual meaning to the events of our lives, and that we do not need to deal with a confrontation between ourselves and our Creator.

It seems to me we have misinterpreted the role of the institutional church and have studied it as sacred. The Vision may well have been sacred. But the church and the lives of its people are not; they are secular. The study of the church then is not a study of the sources of the sacred event, nor of the sacred event itself, but the story of those who have led their lives in the shadow of the event. The church as an institution is not a confrontation with God, and to study it as such makes the failures of men, God's failures; the inconsistencies of men, God's inconsistencies. We would not be nearly as afraid to open old closets if we did not fear that the ghosts were wearing royal robes. We have made sacred the secular story and in doing so have confused the rational and emotional inquiry. To study the church as secular is to study human beings living with the awareness of the sacred as they try to recapture it in symbolic ways. The lives, the awareness, the ritual are not God, and cannot be studied faithfully or faithlessly, only rationally.

II

In the next few moments, I would like to discuss my thesis. I do not pretend that these comments are definitive. If the ideas stand starkly like dormant trees in

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5This thesis is a complicated one that I do not wish to make irrelevant by making it too simple. The author realized that mysticism and sacred history convey experiences of authority and of ultimacy and that these are located in the timelessness of the cosmos both inside and outside of space. The secular inquiry assumed a pseudo-theological assumption that human purpose and divine purpose are not irrationally discovered in the sacred located in time and particular space. But the latter inquiry does assume that the secular discovery is not producing sacred answers; answers only to the meaning of sacredness in time and space. Further study of these points are in order and I would suggest Rudolph Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1976); Michael Novak, *Ascent of the Mountain, Flight of the Dove* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (London: Oxford Press, 1974); and Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God* (Richmond: John Know Press, 1965).
the midst of winter they may, for that reason, offer a better opportunity to see what lies at the roots.

The suggestion of Joseph Smith's mysticism is certainly not new, having been raised by Leonard Arrington and Jan Shipps, among others. We have been receptive to the idea, I believe, because we assume this mysticism to be Christian and affirmative. My comment deals with the nature of that mysticism.

Thomas Alexander, in a delightful paper on Wilford Woodruff, accepts the mystical tradition by assuming two primary forms of the Western Christian view: one is the affirmative Christian in which the revelator learns of God's will via a spiritual experience and passes it on through the written and spoken word to those prepared to accept it. The second, the Hellenistic, is more a negative statement in that the revelator tells us what God is not. This second tradition presents an interesting case of semantic trauma, if not pure theological terror. Characteristically, Alexander places Mormonism under the umbrella of the Christian affirmative, "placing God's dealings with man in time and collectivistic, including all within the fellowship in the knowledge of God's will."8

Alexander addresses Woodruff's continuing experiences as mystical and describes how Woodruff and the church passed through two important periods as the "basic nature of mystical experience changed from open supernatural experiences," during the Nauvoo years, to a period of "personal revelation, dreams, inspiration, and to insights connected with missionary work, church ritual, healings, and the dealings of God with man."9 While appreciating his position, I would pursue it just a little further. First, neither of these stages is actually mystical. Second, we may have been too quick to fit Joseph into the Christian rather than the Eastern mystical tradition. And third, Alexander does not deal with the one really mystic period involved, that of the pre-1830s.

Supernaturalism is any phenomenon which is expanded beyond the exactive powers of nature. Spiritualism, on the other hand, is used to mean either a direct or medium-induced influence of Spirit on the human soul. Mysticism, however, is an ascent of inner growth. The events seek to accommodate themselves to the forms that time and place provide them and "while the experience is one and the same, the forms in which it [mysticism] is experienced are so many and varied."11

The assumption that Joseph was a Western mystic is challenged by the fact that he differed from the Neoplatonic concept that the mystic has undergone

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8Ibid., p. 61.
9Ibid., p. 69. This second phase is not as clearly cut at the Nauvoo period as it may appear and is more obviously spiritualism. See the excellent work by Davis Bitton, "Mormonism's Encounter with Spiritualism," Journal of Mormon History 1 (1974): 39.
instruction and has been introduced into the knowledge of divine things. Joseph differs as well from the Hellenistic view of the mystic as an initiate into new life by the ascent of contemplation and communication. Joseph’s mysticism fits neither the affirmative nor the negative assumption of Alexander’s discussion as much as it does a participatory one. The participatory mystic is one who has realized the presence of the living God and is swallowed up by the experience, seeing it from the inside out rather than the outside in. He is different from both the spiritualists and the supernaturalists in that the object of his experience is seen as ultimate and the experience is a direct and immediate confrontation.

It certainly is true that Joseph’s experiences followed what little patterns one can see in mysticism. Granting this, it is important to understand that the experience reported has no necessary correlation either to a heritage or the mystic’s personal position. It is often counter to it. Research supports the case that Joseph was representative of his New England heritage. But we owe it to ourselves as well to deal with Joseph’s views that are in contrast with his New England heritage: the nature of man, the concept of utopia, and the character of epistemology. To say that early Mormon teachings illustrate that Joseph opposed some of the New England heritage, thus suggesting a new theology, is not valid unless it is pointed out that Joseph’s view of God, of man, and of nature, is in no way out of keeping with the Eastern mystical heritage.

Just a few comparisons indicate the correlation between Joseph and the mystical tradition:

1. He arrived at his mystic experience as the representative of his time and as the focal point of his age and environment.
2. He was at the same time mystic and technician — combining the abstracting, soaring aspirations with subtle speculation.
3. He sought to present his teachings within the bounds of ancient scripture — in Joseph’s case, the Bible — often forcing the old text into his new conceptions.
4. He gathered his own teachings into a speculative work which invokes either the story of the experience or truths arrived from considerations of the experiences.
5. He shared a common mystic attitude toward the experience which was a primary working in the human soul totally unaffected by geographical, theological, and environmental lines.

While it is easy to assume that Joseph followed the theistic tradition and was thus a Christian mystic, there are good reasons to believe that this general assumption, if not wrong, is incomplete. Though I am not ready to climb too far out on the philosophical limb to suggest Joseph’s mysticism was Eastern — that is, in keeping with Sankara’s monism rather than Meister Eckehart’s theism — I do want to extend myself a little.

First, I wish to question the substance of the mystical event. The traditional theistic mystical view, and that of the Christian mystic, is one of the dualism of mind and body in which the mystic experience liberates one from the other.

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12De Pillis, “Quest for Religious Authority,” p. 84.
Inherent in this view is the assumption that the “world stuff” is composed of material, and that spirit resides therein in its transmigrative state. The Eastern position of the monistic mystic suggests instead that the phenomenal world is one of illusion. It recognizes a single substance in which the nature of God encompasses all that extends. On this subject, Mormonism is very different from fundamental Christianity and it is here that Joseph’s contribution encompasses the Eastern point of view in his use of the term material. Material is a single stuff, a total entity of which all things are constructed. Spirit, even God himself, is involved in the occupation of time and space. But the definition of this substance (still waiting a detailed investigation) is such that it “describes both spirit and matter by essentially the same categories. . . . spirit is described, somewhat loosely, as a type of refined matter. Spirit occupies space, has location, and is, in principle, not totally different in character from matter.”

Thus, while the Mormons prefer to deal with the substance in terms of natural matter and natural spirit, rather than Matter or Spirit, it is nevertheless a monistic mysticism that is being presented.

My second point deals with the idea of the pre-existence of the human soul. The idea is not unusual and is not limited to Christianity. What is of interest is the manner in which Joseph’s experiences and explanations deal with the philosophical difficulties created by the idea of pre-existence. The difficulty is this: If you start with the position (A) that God is pure, total, and absolute, then it follows (B) that being so, he cannot admit to being anything that is outside of himself. If we define human (C) as an “I in myself,” it would seem to follow that the I (C) in question must either be God, or that there must be more than one God.

There are two ways out of the logical dilemma: (1) To accept a pure monism in which we are extensions of God. This resounds of both pantheism and solipsism. (2) To identify God as event, thought, and spirit. Generally, Christian and theistic religions have taken this approach, even though it does not solve the problem, if those that accept it demand the oneness of trinity. The position that Joseph took was one in which the Creator, in a sense, created by proxy. In creation, he ceases to be one; if by one we mean infinitely one. The infinity of God, as described by Smith, was divisible. Pre-existent souls, rather than being the totality of God as the pure monists suggest, are separate from God in the Eastern tradition. The problem of separation is handled by recognition of a multiple nature to God, what the Mormon community calls the plurality of Gods.

In Christian mysticism the experience is not a liberation, for the Christian begins as a released man: but being released he cannot reach his goal which is to participate with God.

In the Eastern experience liberation is complete. When the soul has come home to the eternal ideas, a state of rest exists. The rest lies in the “being-becoming” argument in which the Mormons have affirmed that man is in process, even as is God, but that ultimate values move with him; freeing man from the necessity of being forever in search of home as he shares home with the growing, evolving cosmos. More than any other person, the Eastern mystic is

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acutely aware of his divine heritage, of his roaming the maze of matter, in search of a way home.

This latter view, which can be defined as either Mormon or Personalism, reflects—not the 1830s into which Joseph expressed it, nor the 1820s of the New England from which it is all supposed to come. It does add credit to De Pillis's point:

One must do more than take into account the religious milieu of the 1830's, and the extraordinarily direct testimony of Joseph Smith. One must examine in detail, painful detail, for the non-theologically inclined, the subsequent development of Mormon policy and doctrine.¹⁴

One comment remains to fulfill my earlier promise. What happened to cause this first change in "religious thought?" Both William James's The Varieties of Religious Experience and Evelyn Underhill's Mysticism provide us with evidence that suggests when consciousness is raised to a state of communication with the spirit, and this is not curtailed, or in fact culminated, there are frequently created states of unstable physical and mental conditions. Joseph, I would suggest, fell like so many others to the great tragic flaw so well documented by Underhill: the ill health of the mystic is not so much the natural result of pathological causes, but the result of the character of the activity; he who has seen with his own eye and who has been called upon to explain, seeks to see too often as reassurance. It is not the mystic who is ill, but his mysticism.

Several attempts have been made to get Joseph Smith on the couch and figure him out.¹⁵ I. W. Riley's pseudo-psychological analysis used epilepsy in its standard nineteenth-century role as the cause of genius, both evil and creative.¹⁶ Bernard De Voto, himself just a little paranoid, found young Joseph to be suffering from extreme paranoia. T. L. Brink, writing recently in the Journal of Mormon History, suggests that Ego Psychology cannot comment on the truth of Smith's prophetic works, but that it can be used to remove the pathological stigma. I am pleased to report that he gave Joseph a clean bill of health. I have no basis to argue Brink's assumptions that imposters and con artists have tendencies toward impotency, nor dare I disagree that "this pattern cannot, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, be applied to Joseph Smith."¹⁷ (If potency is the true test of a man's prophetic reliability then there are 250,000 Reorganites who better give Brigham Young a second hearing.)

Few of us would claim that Joseph Smith of post-1831 was the same man, or represented the same position as he did before. So while I am not doubting his later expressions, I am suggesting that he was weary, tired, and, in fact, mystically (not mentally) ill. Rest could be found among the secular made sacred. There he could repeat again, in new and different words and phrases, the

¹⁴DePillis, "Quest for Religious Authority," p. 76.
same story, the same vision, and could urge for a community to help them understand.

III

I earlier suggested that a second step in the rational quest was identification of Mormonism. Now I wish to discuss this point. Mormonism is the theological and philosophical ism that emerged in explanation of the singular mystical experience of Joseph Smith. Obviously, this ism does not lie in the Book of Mormon. Clifton Olmstead suggests the Book of Mormon may well be fully explained by Smith's experiences, his Vision, and the prevailing attitudes of his time.\textsuperscript{18} I would rather suggest that Joseph, seeking expression for his experience, imitated but did not originate or innovate his experience through words. If that is what the Book of Mormon is, then it is a valid statement that demands our understanding. But the Book of Mormon itself does little to establish the ground rules of the church and few if any of the isms can be found there.\textsuperscript{19}

I would be inclined to support Richard D. Poll when he points out that the story of humanity is not already written and that we are involved in a drama in which God may be the producer and Christ the prime actor, but what is to happen on the stage is very much dependent on those of us who will play a variety of supporting roles.\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, ancient records inspire us but the essential inquiry must deal with what the past has meant to our people. Understanding the Book of Mormon as a document of, not foundational to, Mormonism is a first step toward a mythology of the future. The whole concept of the prearranged sacred unfolding of history, as against the secular discovery, is out of the question. When Joseph tried to express this in terms of his vision, he could not. The explanation of such an experience relies on language — language that we do not have. He could not tell them what he knew; he could only let them feel what he had felt. As they began to feel, and because they had not seen — but had only heard — they tried to capture the feeling, but generally systemized the explanation. The response was two-fold. On the one hand Hyrum, the natural organizer and publicist, tried to help Joseph explain what could not be explained by organizing what could only be an organization. On the other hand, Parley P. Pratt — metaphysician, poet, theologian — felt something of Joseph's expression, and thought he recognized it. And, because he was a poet and a metaphysician, he said it. But he spoke only of Pratt's understanding of the message. For Joseph, the dialectician, the one message that lies behind all variations and interpretations is this: "Loved Ones, You Do Not Die!"

Both the RLDS and the LDS have sought to free themselves from the radicalism of Joseph Smith and in doing so have not done justice to his philosophical base. I agree with Sterling McMurrin that the philosophical foundations of what is optimistically called theology were born nearly full-


\textsuperscript{19}DePillis, "Quest for Religious Authority," p. 78.

grown; and that the evolutionary situation that has followed has been directed toward establishing a sacred history, not toward understanding the metaphysical foundations. Richard L. Anderson challenges McMurrin's study: "The opening section raises what I consider to be a question without meaning in Mormon theology: whether 'priesthood' and the 'church' are universals." In this view Dr. Anderson misses the point. Universals like priesthood and the church *are* without meaning in Mormon theology and that is why Mormon theology *is* basically without meaning. Theology is not ritual, nor is it behavior motivation; it is a systematic means of presenting the sacred so that it is meaningful in the needs of people to understand themselves, their God, their universe, and the promise of immortality. Our churches have become expert in ignoring the theological and in doing so have lost two important concepts: (1) The advantage of Joseph's unique message and epistemology, and (2) an awareness of how far the evolutionary development of our doctrines — so influenced by environments and immediacies — has gone without the aid of a theological rudder. We have used our history as a theology and in doing so have been denied the value of our theology and the heritage of an honest history.

For some years I have tried to write a biographical sketch of Hyrum Smith for a proposed work on "The Followers of the Prophet." I was unable to do it, for inquiry led me to realize that Hyrum was not a follower of Joseph Smith: he was a secular Smith. Parley Pratt took the sacred event and formed a sacred history through the creation of a theological language. Hyrum, on the other hand, was concerned with how Joseph's dream could be implemented. I would suggest to you that Hyrum Smith was the first member of the Mormon church. Joseph was a prophetic voice, but no more the first Mormon than Christ was the first Christian. Hyrum was a churchman by inclination, a religious man by conviction rather than experience. It was he who was to suffer the cultural shock of an antihistorical history, and who recognized that his contribution was to change a culture rather than to share the mystical experiences of his brother. The loving and sustaining sibling, the cool mind, the natural man; he saw the importance of his brother's mystical experience and the impossibility of translating it into anything but secular events with a sacred mantle. Therefore, he institutionalized it. That he saw in masonry a model for the construction of a religious body based on a sacred event is so well investigated as to be beyond any need for discussion. To a very large extent Hyrum made the religious experience historical.

Parley Parker Pratt's role was different. From his early years he loved books, read deeply, conversed widely, and gave much consideration to spiritual and mysterious matters. He reports visions, dreams, holy insights, seekings, and

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beliefs. And while it is wise to remember that he wrote considerably after the fact, his autobiography does give every indication that he already held much of what he would later write as his discovery of this new gospel. He was Hyrum’s convert, but he was Joseph’s metaphysical companion. In 1830 he wrote: “I felt drawn out in an extraordinary manner to search the prophets, and to pray for an understanding of the same. My prayers were soon answered, even beyond my expectations; the prophecies of the holy prophets were opened to my view.” He was swallowed up in these things and found in Joseph a dream upon which to rest his words — words which expressed a lifetime of searching.

This natural man, archetype of Thoreau, envisioned, saw, heard, felt, sensed, revealed, the message. His writings were immense, and a great lesson can be learned from them. The extent to which these writings have been ignored as formation concepts for the theology of Mormonism tells us more about our limitations than about his. His attitude was clear: man learns God’s message by listening to the sounds of his soul — the message on the wings of the eagle, and the vision in the heart of goodness. Pratt sought a theme for his message, a vision around which to build a dream, and he met Joseph: Joseph, who had a theme and who knew a vision, but who was not understood.

IV

The last step on this intuitive, rational journey concerns the writing of the history of the church. Ephraim Erickson warns us against Mormon Scholasticism, which if we take seriously cautions the Mormon History Association against becoming less temporal and more spiritual in the sense that our “group introspection . . . would prove to be essentially sterile.” Much of our historical work dealing with the church is a theodicy. There have been one or two great exceptions to prove the rule, but the argument about the faithful-faithless historian seems to be less and less a discourse and more and more a test.

The historian, church or otherwise, moves within two spheres. The first is what Elmer O’Brien calls the “generic intuition of categories.” This is an alluring activity and historians are tempted to rest there too long. Here the historian perceives realistic themes and affirmations that appear in his study. He may term these concepts philosophy or élan vital; he may see them as the outpouring of God or the fulfillment of mystery. But such perceptions are only a

24A Voice of Warning (1837), Immortality and Eternal Life of the Material Body (1880), and Key to the Science to Theology (1855) are the major ones.
25Dale Morgan suggested years ago that we will understand Mormonism far better when we understand Parley P. Pratt.
26Ephraim E. Ericksen, The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922), p. 91. After the writing of this paper I heard Mark P. Leone of the University of Maryland comment on Paul L. Anderson’s “Joseph Smith’s Temples: A Study in the Creation of Sacred Space.” His comments, given at the Mormon History Association meeting in Kirtland in April 1977, apply directly to this concept and I would recommend his work to you.
step toward a more difficult stage. For it is when these themes become true in some particular case that the generic is achieved. Historical thought is often neither inductive (from particular to general) nor deductive (from general to particular). It is more often adductive reasoning: questions and answers fitted together in the "complex process of mutual adjustment." But it is always articulated in the form of a rational argument.\(^{28}\) Much of our writing and thinking concerning Mormon history is blatantly generic and suffers from necrophilia which, if we can ignore any sexual overtones, is meant to say that we have a passionate attraction to the dead.

There is a new term used in the historical arena lately. The word \textit{faction} is used to describe the popular combination of careful historical research and fictionalized characters acting within these situations. These works are often more accurate and always more readable than textual accounts written by historians who illustrate a basic dislike for the poetry of language. Faction plays a vital role in the popular learning process because people are inclined to pick up such works and read them for pleasure — a practice usually characterizing only the most devoted scholar and the person trapped in the bathroom with nothing else to read.

It seems to me that Mormon historians have been involved in the reverse of this procedure, producing a product for which I have invented a word — \textit{fictory}. Fictory describes works with carefully researched characterizations that are presented through fictionalized historical information. These works are read because of their interesting characters and because they inspire us, through one-to-one relations of man and divinity. But we must be careful not to take too seriously the environment supporting the characters. The Mormon movement has been in love with the brethren and we have told their story well, numerous times, and have analyzed and identified their every motivation. But it is for your consideration that I suggest that our preoccupation with the brethren lies to some very real extent with our apathetic attitude toward the events.

Part of the difficulty lies in what is often called anti-intellectualism. This is nowhere better discussed than by Davis Bitton in \textit{Dialogue}, and I see no need to discuss it further other than to emphasize one point. Bitton has said that it is more difficult for the twentieth century Mormon to be intellectual about his church and his surroundings than it was for the nineteenth century Mormon.\(^{29}\)

I would like to be sure we understand that anti-intellectualism is not simply opposition to reason, but includes the idea that reason is \textit{the limit} of our intelligence. That is, the super-rational experience — as I have suggested was the case of Joseph Smith's vision — has somehow to be held into a rational framework. A major portion of the anti-intellectualism of the church lies in an unwillingness to accept that one may approach the divine through reason and, that reason — often in the form of scholarship — leads beyond reason to understanding.


Most of our histories look at the Mormon church, not at Mormonism. The theory and the practice have long remained distinct. As well, until 1830 there was no church, and until 1832 Joseph Smith did not have organizational revelation about an authoritative structure to replace him. The whole concept of "follower" was democratized by the universal nature of the experience and the lack, until 1835, of designations such as "first" or "presiding" elders. Michael Quinn addresses an important point: the term "the First Presidency," in recent editions of Doctrine and Covenants (68: 22-23, Utah), is a retroactive phrase inserted in a revised edition. The point of this digression is two-fold. First, that Mormonism is not the same as the Mormon church, and secondly, that the mystic experience was not organizational, or involved in evaluations of position or function. The church was a bureaucratic supernaturalism, perhaps confirmed by Joseph, not experienced by him. For the church is secular, it has always been so, and will only be understood if understood from this framework.

In a very real sense, my search for a rational community within my heritage is a symbolic mission, much like those sent to Snowflake or St. George. Concerned as a Smith and a secular man, I have been compelled to build my home in the dusty, though beautiful grotesqueness, of the desert. I must build my dream from the ground and let it, like the land around me, bloom from the sweat of my brow and the depth of my convictions. I am exiled — not by hatred or vindictiveness — perhaps from necessity, but for a reason: a rational, often radical, inquiry. This search called me, as any missionary, from the complex streets of my City on a Hill to build a new home among the crags and the valleys. There I must build my heritage: I leave my children to carry-on, hoping that whether they choose to build in exile, or return to the City, they will nevertheless build; and that they will have a heritage — not a myth, not a sacred burden, but a secular dream. This is my vision, my legacy.

My rational community came alive, not in 1830, but in December of 1965, with the foundation of this association. Leonard Arrington defined the endeavor: "the Mormon religion and its history are subject to discussion, if not to argument, and . . . any particular feature of Mormon life is fair game for detached examination and clarification." But he also injected this comment of concern: "Is it really possible to humanize all phases of Mormon history without destroying church doctrines regarding historical events? Can doctrine be examined and explained without losing its very qualities of 'doctrine?' " My answer is yes. We can humanize our human past. Doctrine cannot be examined unless we are willing to alter its meaning. We must be willing to deal with the church as a secular event, with its creation as the secular development of a sacred experience, and with the ism of Mormonism as a self-contained study, subject to its own inquiry. If we do not, we merely continue the theodicy Joseph began.

32Ibid., p. 28 and p. 28 n. 44.
We have not manipulated history, as Marvin Hill has pointed out; but we have, in our own way, betrayed it. We will never be at home in our history until we understand Joseph Smith's vision and the incredible distinction between the man and his followers; between the experience and the church. We have, in part, avoided the crisis by adopting a sacred view — and with it a sacred family. I, for one, need a rational, secular inquiry dealing explicitly with the myth, explicitly with the episodes, explicitly with the difference; and it is my dream that it can be so done.

You see, a very subtle problem lies hidden for the mystic and his eager followers. The mystic representative needs a time and a space for his performance. He becomes the incarnate of the sacred center. He extends his experience by a combination of taboos and rituals, and these activities develop into sacred event; his life becomes a life devoted to acting out the dream, providing the ritual, and for himself and his heritage the immortality of the personification of the order.

But history may rise to take this dream from the royal person to the public square! And when public dreaming is no longer confined to sacred places and over sacred things, then ritual and myth and families of royalty are historicized. History becomes the performance of the ritual on an open secular stage, and it becomes the property of us all. Such an action frees all, including the royal giant, who has been dwarfed so long by the limitations of space and time.33

In case I have failed to make myself clear, let me conclude with a brief summary. The study of the Mormon movement is composed of three parts: Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and the various Mormon churches. While the faithful may wonder at this sort of inquiry, I have identified a rational community that demands the inquiry; and I have no fear of the outcome. As a minor member of the royal family — with all the symbolic heritage that implies — I have discovered the secular world of meaning and seek to understand my past as a rational man.

So from a heritage of family and of discipline, I present a secular vision: be wary of the untouchable; look to your institution and with historian's eyes see it for what it is, a secular place; visit your theology with the philosopher's stone and be not enraptured by either its idealism nor discouraged by its pantheism. Discover that you are not called to be faithful or faithless to an unknown grail, but loyal to a heritage based on a revelation of honesty. The Vision, the Grove, the Book of Mormon, are all subject to our search. The theological assumptions are fair targets for analysis, and the church is yet a shell waiting to be opened in search of a pearl. If the shell turns out to be empty, and nothing other than a shell, remember that it has drawn us together at this hour; it has given us a community, and the roots to be the growing things we wish to be. Do not look for sacred men and women, royal families, golden answers, but be prophetic persons — in the Biblical sense — that you understand your age and can explain it to your community.

33This idea is primarily the thinking of Norman O. Brown, and I would suggest his work, Love's Body (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), for your consideration. I am particularly indebted to a comment on page 115.
Perhaps then our children will someday come upon the Psalmist and will read without pretension nor false modesty, but with a reverence that we have so nearly lost:

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.\(^{34}\)

\(^{34}\)Psalms 39:12–13.
MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION
AWARDS FOR 1977

Special Citations:

ROBERT B. FLANDERS, for path-breaking scholarship dealing with the history of Nauvoo; for continued interest in promoting responsible scholarship in Mormon history; for active leadership in the Mormon History Association from its inception; and for broad-gauged ecumenism.

THE EDITOR AND AUTHORS OF MORMON SISTERS, for making a signal contribution in the neglected area of Mormon women's studies; for exemplifying what interested, dedicated women can accomplish on their own; and for initiative in pushing their project to completion, publishing it, and distributing it to an appreciative audience.

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY OF THE REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS, for their generosity and cooperation in allowing sessions of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association to be held in the Kirtland Temple.

DUANE BUNNELL, for extraordinary service in making travel arrangements which made possible the holding of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association in Kirtland, Ohio.

Book and Article Awards on page 2.
When the successful biography of Brigham Young is finally written, it will penetrate to the inner man. It will tell what this child of Vermont's Green Mountains thought about himself. It will reveal his moods, attitudes, and aspirations. What transformed him into Mormonism's second prophet, seer, and revelator? How did he manage himself and his people?

Young's eleven days of formal schooling did not prepare him for an autobiography. But almost four hundred of his frank and extemporaneous public addresses recorded in the Journal of Discourses provide partial answers. These sermons carry the risks of any self-portrait. They include biographical details spoken years after the event and therefore subject to the caprice of memory. Selected and edited under Young's supervision, they also run the danger of self-justification. But these limitations can be overstated. The Mormon leader's memory was sound to the end. Nor was he overly concerned with creating a favorable public image. At the very least his approved sermons tell us of his view of himself and of his world. They suggest a man of introspection, complexity, and even contradiction, whose reproving voice was balanced by his equanimity and kindly indulgence. They also confirm that Young saw himself as a deeply religious person. And here he spoke convincingly. No one will understand Brigham without sensing his religious quest.
Throughout his life Young’s youthful influences never eased their hold. He found their power “perfectly astonishing” and almost “impossible . . . to get rid of.” (13: 252) One important influence was the school of honest poverty. I “have never found, in all my travels through these mountains [of Utah],” he recounted, “so rough a country as where I was born.” (4: 328) Soon after Brigham’s birth, the family moved from Vermont to upper New York state, where their improvidence continued. He remembered wearing his homemade “Jo Johnson” caps crafted by his sisters to neutralize the frigid New York winters, and working both summer and winter ill clad with “insufficient food until my stomach would ache,” and seeing his grandmother attired in her “company” dress — the dress in which she apparently had been married and the one fine garment of her lifetime. (5: 97; 12: 287; and 19: 74)

The struggle for subsistence did not promote the social graces. “When I meet ladies and gentlemen of high rank,” he later commented, “they must not expect from me the same formal ceremony and etiquette that are observed among the great in the courts of kings. In my youthful days, instead of going to school, I had to chop logs, to sow and plant, to plow in the midst of roots barefooted, and if I had on a pair of pants that would cover me I did pretty well. Seeing that this was the way I was brought up they cannot expect from me the same etiquette and ceremony as if I had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.” (14: 103)

Poverty was only a part of the harshness of Young’s early life. Although he often accorded to his parents the virtues of integrity, work, and love for children, clearly their ways were as stern as the Yankee countryside. Brigham characterized his father’s parental discipline as “a word and a blow, . . . but the blow came first.” (4: 112) “When I was young,” he recalled on another occasion, “I was kept within very strict bounds, and was not allowed to walk more than half-an-hour on Sunday for exercise. The proper and necessary gambols of youth having been denied me, makes me want active exercise and amusement now. I had not a chance to dance when I was young, and never heard the enchanting tones of the violin, until I was eleven years of age; and then I thought I was on the high way to hell, if I suffered myself to linger and listen to it.” (2: 94)

The severity of Brigham’s father, John Young, may have been partially the result of his unfulfilled ambition. “My father was a poor, honest, hard-working man,” Brigham remembered, “and his mind seemingly stretched from east to west, from north to south; and to the day of his death he wanted to command worlds; . . . He wanted to command all, and that too in righteousness.” (9: 104) But an even stronger influence for sternness was the Youngs’ brand of ascetic Methodism. “My father and grandfather,” the church leader believed, “were some of the most strict religionists that lived upon the earth.” He was taught to read and reverence the Bible, to return to neighbors objects as trifling as a pin, and to render good when injured by others. His parents even forbade in their home such expressions as “the Devil” and “I vow.” “I don’t say that we [children] did not say such things when out of the sight of father and mother,” Brigham confessed, but “if we had said . . . these words [in their presence], we should have been whipped for it.” (6: 290)
The Youngs eventually settled in western New York state — a hotbed of religious emotions during the first half of the nineteenth century. The enthusiasms of the time left an indelible imprint upon the maturing Brigham Young. “I will say from the day that I came upon the stage of action to act for myself,” he spoke revealingly of his own self-image, “there never was a boy, a man, either old or middle aged, that ever tried to live a life more pure and refined.” (1: 41) “I do not know that I had ever committed any crime, except it were in giving way to anger, and that I had not done more than two or three times. I never stole, lied, gambled, got drunk, or disobeyed my parents.” (8: 37-38; also see 6: 72) Indeed, he abandoned his early profession of painting when, as he phrased it, “I had either to be dishonest or quit; and I quit.” (9: 29) For a while his religious excitement led him to forsake the eating of meat, but his commitment to temperance proved more permanent. (16: 17) Although refusing as a breach of his independence his father’s request to take a formal temperance pledge, Brigham in fact avoided alcoholic beverages from the time of his youth. “What has preserved me?” he asked in life’s twilight. “Temperance. . . . [Because of it] I feel as though I could run through a troop and leap over a wall.” (14: 225)

Although the youthful Brigham became very much a believer in a literal Bible religion and accepted its corollaries of personal virtue and temperance, throughout his adolescence he delayed a formal religious commitment. “The priests were after me from the time I was eight years of age,” he remembered. (19: 65) “I used to think to myself, ‘Some one of you may be right, but hold on, wait awhile! when I reach the years of judgment and discretion I can judge for myself; and in the meanwhile [I will] take no course either with one party or the other.” (14: 112)

Young actively searched for a satisfying religion. He later remembered “many anxious hours” of religious quest. (5: 127) “I would have given worlds if I could have known the truth in my childhood. . . . I had a great desire to know it.” (19: 65; also see 13: 58) He tried. “I used to go to meetings,” he recalled. “I was well acquainted with the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, New Lights, Baptists, Freewill Baptists, Wesleyan and Reformed Methodists. . . . I was . . . more or less acquainted with almost every other religious ism.” (8: 38)

All this left the practical and thoughtful youth unmoved. “So I went to hear Lorenzo Dow,” he recalled after seeing the mighty Methodist revivalist. “He stood up some of the time, and he sat down some of the time; he was in this position and in that position, and talked two or three hours, and when he got through I asked myself, ‘What have you learned from Lorenzo Dow?’ and my answer was, ‘Nothing, nothing but morals.’ ” (14: 197) He found the emotional extremes of his neighborhood even more empty. “I have seen . . . [revivalism] from my youth up, working on the passions of the people, making them crazy. About what? Nothing at all. I have seen them lie, when under their religious excitement, for ten minutes to probably an hour without the least sign of life in their systems; not a pulse about them, and lay the slightest feather in the world to their nose and not the least sign of breathing could be discerned there, any more than any where else. After lying awhile they would get up all right. ‘What have you seen, sister or brother? . . . What have you to tell us that you have learned
while in this vision? ‘Nothing at all.’ It always wound up like the old song, ‘All about nothing at all.’” (14: 90)

Brigham wanted answers. “As I became acquainted with smart, intelligent, literary priests and professors of religion, I thought, Now I can obtain some intelligence from this or from that man; and I would begin to ask questions on certain texts of scripture; but they would always leave me as they found me, in the dark.” (5: 73) His disaffection with traditional Christianity seemed almost complete. “I would as leave go into a swamp at midnight to learn how to paint a picture,” he said, “as to go to the religious world to learn about God, heaven, hell or the faith of a Christian.” (14: 198) When he finally made a profession of Methodism at the age of twenty-three, it was with uncertainty and on his own terms. “I thought to myself I would try to break off my sins and lead a better life and be as moral as I possibly could,” he later explained concerning his Methodism. “Where I was going to [after this life] I did not know, but I would like to be as good as I know how while here.” (14: 197) At his express request he was baptized by immersion, although local Methodist church elders did not believe in the form and in fact sought to discourage him from using it. (13: 267)

The young man may have formally committed himself to Methodism, but in his heart he remained religiously at sea. He was distressed how far his Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist neighbors, with their “long, solid, sturdy faces,” missed the Christian mark in their everyday lives. (15: 164) He continued to ask theological questions for which he could find no satisfying answers. (5: 127-28) Above all, like many future Mormon converts, he sought a Bible Christianity with the ordinances, practices, and spiritual gifts of the pristine church. “Such a system answering the description given in the Bible I could not find on the earth,” he recalled, “and [consequently] I was not prepared to listen to the men who said ‘lo here’ and ‘lo there,’ and presented themselves as they said, as true ministers of heaven.” (11: 254)

His inability to satisfy his deep religious longings left him “feeling cast down, gloomy, and desponding; with everything wearing . . . a dreary aspect.” He remembered feeling “lonesome and bad,” with even the most beautiful scenery becoming veiled with “a shade of death.” (3: 320-21) His early business ventures added to his burden. “I soon became disgusted with the world as it was,” he recollected, “for I found that I could scarcely trust any one.” (12: 217) By thirty years of age he was ready to retreat into despair. “I had seen and heard enough to make me well acquainted with the people in their acts and dealings one towards another,” he revealed, “the result of which was to make me sick, tired, and disgusted with the world; and had it been possible, I would have withdrawn from all people, except [for] a few, who, like myself, would leave the vain, foolish, wicked, and unsatisfying customs and practices of the world.” (6: 39)

Brigham’s dissatisfaction with the religions of his neighborhood earned him the reputation of an unbeliever, especially prior to his nominal acceptance of Methodism. Such an epithet was undoubtedly painful for a man of Young’s deep longings, and in later years he repeatedly defended himself from these aspersions. “Christians called me an infidel,” he recalled, “because I could not swallow [their practices and doctrines] . . . but I would not if they had been greased over with fresh butter. I did not read the Bible as they read it; and as for
there being Bible Christians I knew there were none, and if their religion was the religion they liked, said I, 'Just go your own way, I want none of it.' " (15: 165)

Young's independent judgment came partially from his private meditations. Denied a formal education he tried to learn from observation and introspection. "I have a great many reflections, especially when alone," Young later said. "I converse with myself upon these eternal things, things which the frivolous, the vain, and those who are engaged only with the things of this world, never think of." (19: 6-7) Indeed Brigham claimed, "I sometimes feel that I have not a pound of strength left, just from sitting and thinking." (6: 147) His practice had begun early. He was from "boyhood a person of observation" with mankind his particular field of study. (19: 68) "When you see a person at a distance," he said on one occasion, "you can discern his spirit by the appearance of his countenance. This has been my experience from my younger days." (4: 21)

These early years also molded other personality traits. Brigham Young's poverty, lack of formal education, and failure to find a satisfying religion restrained his natural ability and made him uncertain and diffident to others. "I was brought up to treat everybody with that respect and courtesy that I could hardly allow myself to think aloud," he recalled, "and consequently [I] very seldom did so." (15: 165) During this period he consistently deferred in matters of judgment to his brother Joseph, a man whom Brigham would eventually far eclipse. Characteristically on one occasion he attributed his difficulty in understanding a local preacher's high-sounding discourse to his own ignorance and was surprised to overhear the deacons of the church privately admit that they comprehended no better. (8: 37; 14: 198)

But timidity long remained a challenge. It was not until after his succession to the Mormon leadership that he gained the confidence to deal with prominent men possessing the sheen of gentility. "I used to think, until I was forty-five years of age, that I had not knowledge, sense, or ability enough to enable me to associate with the men of the world," he related. Then "I learned that the inhabitants of the earth were groveling in darkness and ignorance, and that their professed knowledge contained but few correct principles." (3: 276) Yet even in later life he had not fully conquered his shyness. When speaking before the Mormon faithful, he frequently confessed his uneasiness. "Although I have been a public speaker for thirty-seven years," he once admitted, "it is seldom that I rise before a congregation without feeling a child-like timidity; if I live to the age of Methusaleh I do not know that I shall outgrow it." (13: 139)

Yet a fierce sense of personal independence and even combativeness was mixed with Young's timidity. "I am naturally opposed to being crowded," he conceded, "and am opposed to any person who undertakes to force me to do this, or not do that. . . . Should I be told that it is time to wash my face and eat my breakfast, I should be strongly inclined to notify my informant that I knew that as well as he did." (9: 248) For Young, liberty was wrapped in high emotions and principles. His father had enrolled in the American Revolution when only fourteen years old, and with patriotic fervor he declared, "I do not know how to do without the liberty that my father fought for." (13: 317) Another time, he said, "My independence is sacred to me." (10: 191)
Young’s temper added to his assertiveness. “I will say,” he once later conceded to a Mormon congregation, that “there is not a man in this house who has a more indomitable and unyielding temper than myself.” (11: 290) Thus when a fellow boarder made light of Young’s youthful vegetarianism and claimed that he could throw “any man that don’t eat meat,” Brigham angrily threw down the gauntlet. “I said to him,” he remembered, “‘Mr. Pratt, if you will step there into the middle of the floor I will show you how to dirty coats.’” But his tormentor “dared not try.” (16: 17) Young freely conceded his natural tendency to contend, although he believed he generally managed to control the impulse. (14: 149)

This, then, was the Brigham Young which Mormonism found. His deeply-felt but unfulfilled religious seeking brought inner tension and melancholy. His meditations intensified the effect. Here was a man who had thought deeply about himself and others and who had taken the measure of society and found it wanting. Yet could this rough-hewn man trust his own judgment? And could he find a cause which would give him the confidence to release and channel his latent talents? Young’s early craftsmanship indicated ability: he was a painter, glazier, furniture maker, and construction handyman. Yet for a man of thirty years of age there actually was very little to distinguish him. He had reached the beginning years of his prime without discovering the key for unloosing the torrent which lay within him.

Mormonism was part of the religious excitement of Brigham Young’s early years. The founding events of the new religion took place, he recalled, “as we might say, in our own neighbourhood.” (9: 1) Consequently young Brigham “knew something of the doings of the Saints.” (15: 135) He remembered the rumors of Joseph Smith’s buried golden treasure and the necromancer hired by local ministers to unearth the Book of Mormon golden plates before Joseph Smith could secure them. “I never heard a man who could swear like that astrologer,” he observed, “he swore scientifically, by rule, by note.” (2: 180–81) During the summer of 1827, the medium unsuccessfully sought the plates three times, although on the last effort, only days before Smith secured them, he claimed to have located their approximate location. (5: 55; 15: 35)

Familiarity with early Mormonism may not have bred contempt, but it certainly failed to bring immediate conversion. For one thing, Young heard reports of the Saints’ alleged lascivious behavior. Although he later learned to discount such rumors as the product of sectarian jealousy, for the moment they must have had a restraining effect. (16: 67) Nor was the deliberate Brigham to be hastened in making a decision. He had received a copy of the Book of Mormon in the spring of 1830 only weeks following its first printing. But he responded with caution both to the book and to the message of the new revelation of Mormonism. “‘Hold on,’ ” he remembered thinking to himself. “‘Wait a little while; what is the doctrine of the book, and of the revelations the Lord has given? Let me apply my heart to them.’” (3: 91)

He approached the task without expectation. “When I undertook to sound the doctrine of ‘Mormonism,’ ” he admitted, “I supposed I could handle it as I
could the Methodist, Presbyterian, and other creeds of Christendom.” But he found that he could not quickly master and dismiss it. “I found it impossible to take hold of either end of it; I found it was from eternity, passed through time, and into eternity again. When I discovered this, I said, ‘It is worthy of the notice of man.’” (2:125) He “thoroughly examined the Book of Mormon” and, growing excited, “sought to become acquainted with the people who professed to believe it.” (8:37-38)

The tempo of his conversion experience began to quicken. The practical-minded Young was not impressed by the outward appearance and talents of his Mormon missionaries, and he was not immediately stirred by their preaching. (8:37-38, 125) But gradually a fire began to kindle within him. “The brethren who came to preach the Gospel to me, I could easily out-talk them, though I had never preached,” he remembered, “but their testimony was like fire in my bones.” (9:141) Young’s religious interest with Mormonism occurred at the same time of renewed revivalism in his neighborhood. Recent Mormon converts occasionally spoke at these informal meetings and testified of their personal knowledge of godly things. Although their statements brought them derision from traditional Christians, Brigham after initial hesitation attempted to emulate their example. “If I permitted myself to speak in any of [these] meetings,” he recollected, “the spirit forbade me mentioning or referring to the testimony of Jesus, only in a superficial way. . . . I had to guard every word I uttered, lest I should offend those who professed to understand the gospel of life and salvation, but who did not. Gradually we broke through this fear, and ventured to utter the sentiments of our hearts, in faith before God, delivering that to the people which the Lord had revealed to us.” (12:99)

Young took the final steps toward Mormonism deliberately. “I could not more honestly and earnestly have prepared myself to go into eternity than I did to come into this Church,” he recalled, “and when I had ripened everything in my mind, I drank it in, and not till then.” (8:38) He was particularly attracted to the Saints’ claim of universality — their willingness to embrace truth wherever found. (11:213) He calculated the effect of his conversion upon family and friends and concluded that his new religion was worth the possible loss of both. Characteristically he failed to ask whether his wife intended to join Mormonism, although she later followed him into the faith. Each of their decisions had to be made independently. (4:281) But at baptism’s brink, he typically sought out his brother Joseph who was preaching Methodism in Canada. Brigham traveled by sleigh the 250 miles to reach his brother, related to him what he had “experienced of the power of God,” and together they returned to New York for their rendezvous with Mormonism. (8:37)

Conversion was a personal turning point. He was baptized 14 April 1832 in his own mill stream and later that same day ordained an elder. The week following he preached before a large congregation. “I was but a child, so far as public speaking and a knowledge of the world was concerned,” he related, “but the Spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I felt as though my bones would consume within me unless I spoke to the people and told them what I had seen, heard and learned — what I had experienced and rejoiced in; and the first discourse I ever delivered I occupied over an hour.” (13:211)
Almost immediately his despondency passed. His conversion cost him friends and reputation (12: 282; 16: 67-68), and several months later he experienced an even greater loss upon the death of his wife. But he had at long last found the key for personal happiness. “Since I have embraced the Gospel,” he affirmed, “not for one half minute . . . has anything worn to me a gloomy aspect.” (3: 321) He began to contract his business affairs and to give his few possessions to others. (16: 69) “I expected we should be one family [within the church],” he said, “each seeking to do his neighbour good.” (1: 314; also 18: 260) Mormonism meant a new life in which personal business and private property seemed incompatible with an ideal Christian community. Indeed he wanted to be free to do God’s will. Leaving his two daughters temporarily with friends, he set out to preach the word. “I traveled, toiled, labored and preached continually,” he remembered. (16: 69) It was a labor which ceased only with death.

IV

When Brigham Young accepted Mormonism, he was already a man of complexity. His new religion intensified this characteristic and made him, especially to the casual observer, something of a paradox. Formerly a religious Seeker, he had now found a cause. Once an ascetic by longstanding necessity and habit, he was now told that life was to be enjoyed. Thus despite his later handsome homes and broadcloth suits, which he reserved for public appearance, he decried luxury and fashion and urged a parsimonious diet. He fervently advocated vigorous mountain air, homemade cloth, thickly crusted bread, and drinking plain water. (12: 118; 14: 21; 19: 67-68; and 12: 122) Moreover, his religion required him to become a polygamist, although he admitted that “there are probably but few men in the world who care about the private society of women less than I do.” (5: 99)

There were additional contradictions. Mormonism deepened his ambivalence about occupying the center stage. He characterized his succession to the Mormon presidency as a duty rather than the result of desire and described himself simply as “a good hand to keep the dogs and wolves out of the flock” until another might be called forth. (18: 71; 8: 69) “I am just as far from . . . [wanting to dictate] as a man can be,” he maintained. “How glad I would be to be excused from this [role].” (11: 298-99) Moreover he claimed that the success of others failed to stir frustration within him. “I am not jealous of any body, though I know what the feeling is; but it never troubled me much, even in my younger days.” (4: 66)

Although he did not hunger for position and prominence, his religion taught him to be assertive. He was particularly forceful when occupying the pulpit. “I will tell you what this people need, with regard to preaching,” he declared on one occasion; “you need, figuratively, to have it rain pitchforks, tines downwards. . . . Instead of the smooth, beautiful, sweet, still, silk-velvet-lipped preaching, you should have sermons like peals of thunder.” (3: 222-23)

Young’s own preaching sometimes failed to answer such graphic demands, but his language was sufficiently strong to establish a national reputation for acid-tongued oratory. Actually his words were usually calculated for effect.
“When you speak to a people or person you must use language to represent your ideas, so that they will be remembered,” he revealingly said on one occasion. “When you wish the people to feel what you say, you have got to use language that they will remember, or else the ideas are lost to them. Consequently, in many instances we use language that we would rather not use.” (12: 298–99; also 14: 193) Indeed Young’s reproofs became a carefully crafted genre which Mormons alone seemed to understand. He claimed that malice was never intended. “If you are ever called upon to chasten a person, never chasten beyond the balm you have within you to bind up,” he advised. “There is not a soul that I chasten but what I feel as though I could take them and put them in my bosom and carry them with me day by day. . . . When you have the chastening rod in your hands, ask God to give you wisdom to use it, that you may not use it to the destruction of an individual, but to his salvation.” (9: 124–25; also 9: 123; 11: 113)

There was, then, a contrast between Brigham the lawgiver and Brigham the person. In the former role, there could be no compromise with Truth. Words should be spoken plainly and graphically. It was his duty. But had the visiting journalists from the East — those who were largely responsible for Young’s national stereotype as an iron-fisted dictator — listened more carefully, they would have perceived a more vulnerable, genial, and tolerant personality. Young himself clearly differentiated between his public and private voice. “I have told the Latter-day Saints from the beginning that I do not profess much righteousness,” he conceded, “but I profess to know the will of God concerning you, and I have boldness enough to tell it to you, fearless of your wrath, and I expect that it is on this account that the Lord has called me to occupy the place I do.” (3: 49) He maintained that particularly since his Mormon baptism he had “done the best I knew how,” but there was no self-righteousness in his pronouncements. (6: 353) He acknowledged that his perception of the weaknesses of others was derived from a lively sense of his own. (3: 44–45) Indeed, he comprehended how far even the best of men fall short of the mark. “There is no question but every person here who seriously reflects upon his own existence, his being here, and the hereafter which awaits him,” he once remarked, “must many times feel that he comes short of doing all the good for which our Father in Heaven has brought us forth. This I conclude from my own experience.” (12: 111)

To his frequently confessed humanity, Young added love and concern for his people. “I have never seen one moment but this people loved me,” he once said. “Although I may get up here and cuff them about, chastising them for their forgetfulness, their weaknesses and follies, yet I have not seen a moment when they did not love me. The reason is, because I love them so well.” (1: 33) Young believed that “there is not a father who feels more tenderly towards his offspring, and loves them better than I love this people.” Indeed he confessed a different personal exterior in his private moments. “My heart yearns over [the Saints] . . . with all the emotions of tenderness, so that I could weep like a child; but I am careful to keep my tears to myself.” (1: 49) His emotions at times presented difficulties. After only six years of pioneering, Young revealed that his flock were personally indebted to him for over thirty thousand dollars, none of
which he "ever distressed a man" to collect. (1: 340) Moreover, when organizing a private social gathering, he had difficulty in restraining the invitations. "I never know where to stop in my feelings until every Latter-day Saint is invited," he admitted. For his canyon party of 24 July 1857 more than two thousand tickets were eventually extended. (5: 56)

Doctrines of depravity and damnation had no appeal for the Mormon leader. Men were good. (10: 189) He believed that "the least, the most inferior spirit now upon the earth . . . is worth worlds" and that not even a mother realized the "real value of her offspring." (9: 124, 258) His discourses accentuated the positive. "From the day I commenced preaching the Gospel to this present moment," he noted, "I never had a feeling in my heart to occupy much time in preaching hell to the people, or in telling them much about being damned. . . . There are more beauty, glory, excellency, knowledge, power, and heavenly things than I have time to talk about, without spending my time talking about the hells prepared for the damned." (8: 42) He believed man was not a mere automaton, reacting mechanically to good and evil forces. Each of God's children possessed the dignity of making choices. That good and evil influences surround men Young did not doubt, "But is he always guided by those influences in every act? He is not. It is . . . the design of the Almighty that we should act independently." (9: 122)

Young knew from his own strivings prior to conversion that Mormons did not monopolize good intentions or even righteousness. He believed that there were "thousands and millions who are not in the church . . . just as good, morally, as we are." (11: 285) He gave high marks to many Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and even to the so-called "ignorant, dark, benighted" aborigines of the world, including American Indians. (6: 198–94, 292; 11: 279; 16: 108–9) Although imbued in varying degrees with false traditions which hindered their acceptance of the higher truth of Mormonism, humanity possessed "many very excellent and pure ideas, beliefs, faiths and sentiments . . . All have truth, all have good desires." (15: 121) Moreover Young had a generally positive view of man's course within history. "To believe that there has been no virtue, no truth, no good upon the earth for centuries, until the Lord revealed the Priesthood through Joseph the Prophet," he argued, "is wrong. There has been more or less virtue and righteousness upon the earth at all times, from the days of Adam until now." (6: 170)

The Prophet was as tolerant with his own followers. Deseret was not an open, pluralistic, and free-wheeling community in the style of contemporary Western society. It emphasized unity and Christian standards. Young himself could vigorously denounce Mormon apostates and refuse to allow missionaries from the Reorganized branch of Mormonism the use of the Saints' meeting houses. But for a religious community Deseret's standards of judgment were liberal. "How it floods my heart with sorrow to see so many Elders of Israel who wish everybody to come to their standard and be measured by their measure," Young often said. "Every man must be just so long, to fit their iron bedstead, or be cut off to the right length; if too short, he must be stretched, to fill the requirement." For those Mormons who secretly could not accept LDS theology but lived morally, charitably, and at least outwardly accepted the church's
teachings, he nevertheless promised that “the kingdom of God is theirs.” (8: 9, 14)

Young approved the occasional use of Protestant teachers and curriculum materials for the moral instruction of LDS youth and suggested that Mormon children be allowed to attend the very sectarian revivals which were attempting to undermine their faith. (14: 196–97) “To those of our Christian brethren who have come here . . . to see how many . . . they can induce to forsake the holy commandments of the Lord Jesus and to follow after phantoms,” he challenged, “I say the quicker this war of words commences and the fiercer it is carried on the better it will be for the Saints.” (14: 157) Young chose to overlook some of the doctrinal aberrations of his associates, urged the Saints to fellowship backsliders who probably would be severed from other denominations, and broadly held, “It is as much my right to differ from other men, as it is theirs to differ from me, in points of doctrine and principle.” (12: 66, 163; 2: 123)

Non-Mormons also found there was little bite accompanying Young’s celebrated bark. The church leader denounced Salt Lake’s “Whiskey-street” (now known more decorously as “Main Street”) for displaying “all the wickedness you can reasonably wish,” but urged only moral suasion as a counter policy. (7: 242; 18: 360–61) Steadfastly he urged religious toleration in the community whether a man “worshiped a white dog, the sun, moon, or a graven image” and claimed that Mormonism, unlike any other religious body, would never “command or force any man or woman to obey the Gospel.” (14: 97, 94–95) The question of how the Saints should deal with their longstanding enemies also brought equanimity. “What would you do . . . if the wicked, the ungodly, and those who have persecuted and driven us from our homes, and have consented to the death of the Prophets and the innocent, will still follow us, and will have a place among us?” he asked. “I would do, I think about as the Lord does; He lets them alone to take their own course.” (11: 348)

Young spoke for the abandonment of force, although he occasionally displayed his assertiveness. He remembered lying on the floor next to Joseph Smith “scores and scores of nights ready to receive the mob who sought his life.” (18: 361) His outrage at Smith’s murder seemed without bounds. “I have never yet talked as rough in these mountains as I did in the United States when they killed Joseph,” he recalled. “I there said boldly and aloud, ‘If ever a man should lay his hand on me and say, on account of my religion, ‘Thou art my prisoner,’ the Lord Almighty helping me, I would send that man to hell across lots.’ ” (2: 317; also 5: 78) He was equally outspoken when he thought federal army officers might interfere with his family while he was seeking a new homeland in the West. (1: 363) In later years he consistently maintained a guard in his home for self-defense. And especially during the emotionalism of the Mormon Reformation of 1856–57, he threatened that a higher law might someday require a sinner’s own atoning blood for his serious sins. (1: 107; 4: 53–54)

No doubt much of Young’s bellicosity was designed to forestall the aggressor and warn the unrepentant. In practice he was virtually a pacifist. He could think of no Christian justification for war save self-defense and believed that warfare was in reality only legalized murder which God himself never instituted. (17: 39; 7: 137; 13: 149) Rather it flowed from man’s pride — “to please a selfish, worldly, carnal, wicked heart” — and he saw the irony of men separated by
battle lines petitioning the same God for one another’s destruction. (7: 134) He
remembered during Zion’s Camp, when several hundred Mormons marched
from Ohio to Missouri to defend the dispossessed Jackson County Saints, there
were some who apostatized because they did not have the opportunity to use their
arms. “So far as I was concerned,” he recalled in contrast, “I did not wish to
fight.” (4: 370) Likewise in 1857 when a United States army approached Utah
with apparent hostility, Young at first advised that it might be necessary to “go
upon mount Moriah to sacrifice [in battle] a few of our Isaacs.” (4: 369) But when
actual bloodshed seemed possible, the word of the Lord through Young said,
“Rather than fight your enemies, go away.” (7: 46) Under Young’s leadership,
the Saints were prepared to abandon and burn their homes and move to an
unknown location instead of resisting.

The Mormon leader steadfastly denied ever wishing to take human life,
although he understood the need to control his own human instincts. “We are
now as free from . . . [our opponents] as is the mountain air we breathe,” he
noted in 1859 prior to the heavy influx of Easterners to Utah. “We could wipe
the few enemies now in our borders out of existence in a very short time, if I would
give the word to do so. . . . If it were left to me solely, under the guidance of the
spirit pertaining to man, probably I should have had them in eternity before
now. But the Lord dictates, governs, and controls; I do not neither do I wish to.”
(6: 351) Young described himself as praying “fervently” that he would “never be
brought into circumstances to be obliged to shed human blood.” (11: 281) “I
wish to save life,” he insisted, “and have no desire to destroy life. If I had my wish,
I should entirely stop the shedding of human blood. The people abroad do not
generally understand this.” (10: 108)

Young believed that the management of any community began with a
leader’s family, and he governed his own with love and even indulgence. There
was, however, occasional gruffness. Once he threatened his wives with divorce if
they didn’t end their fixation with fashion. (14: 19–20) His children were also
reminded who led the family. “When I undertake to conquer a child who wants
to conquer me,” he said with his usual hyperbole, “it shall be death to him before
I yield.” (1: 68) “My children must mind father.” (8: 74) There was something of
a modern ring to some of his statements, “Why if my boys, by the time they are
twenty, have not a horse and carriage to drive of their own,” he complained,
“they think they are very badly used.” (16: 11)

More often his words were softer. The chastening rod which Young
proposed for his family was “kindness, love, and affection.” He acknowledged
that he could “break the wills of my little children, and whip them to this, that,
and the other, but this I do not do. Let the child have a mild training until it has
judgment and sense to guide it.” (9: 195–96) He counseled parents to “always
sympathize with [children] . . . and soothe them. Be mild and pleasant.” He
himself went further. “I believe in indulging children, in a reasonable way,” he
confessed. “If the little girls want dolls, shall they have them? Yes.” (9: 69, 173)

Thus although he condemned novel reading as profitless, he admitted that
he and the other church authorities permitted the practice in their own
households. (15: 224) Likewise he consistently denounced manufactured goods
as a breach of territorial self-sufficiency, but he conceded buying more of them
than any man in the territory. His justification spoke volumes about managing a
large household — both as to the disruptive effects of prized commodities and
the need for occasional indulgence of female wants. " 'Why do you do so?' " he
ironically asked himself. "Shall I say, to keep peace out of the family, or to keep
peace in the family? Which is it? I will leave that for you to answer." (9: 187)

Brigham acknowledged that his family didn't achieve all the happiness that
he wished. "Where is the man who has wives, and all of them think he is doing
just right to them?" he asked. "I do not know such a man; I know it is not your
humble servant." (17: 160) Moreover he knew that there was probably not one of
his wives who didn't wish at times that the others might depart. (9: 195) Yet there
seemed to be genuine affection in his home with little contention. "Will I quarrel
with . . . [my wives]?" he asked. "No, I will not . . . They have found out they
cannot raise the breeze." (14: 162) He believed that the key for marital happiness
lay in righteous direction, but never compulsion. "I do not rule my family with
an iron hand, as many do," he claimed, "but in kindness and with pleasant
words; and if soft words would teach them, they would know as much as any
family on this earth." (9: 39)

Brigham had obviously turned his heel on his own harsh upbringing, and
he emphasized the point by encouraging activities which his father would
scarcely have approved. "Tight-laced religious professors of the present
generation have a horror at the sound of a fiddle," he declared. "There is no
music in hell, for all good music belongs to heaven." (9: 244) In addition to
sponsoring music within Deseret, Young vigorously danced pioneer cotillions
and quadrilles and became a patron of the Salt Lake Theatre. He attributed his
acceptance of recreation to Mormonism — a religion, be believed which "gives
food to the mind and exercise to the body." (8: 80) Moreover Young also
acknowledged a personal need. "My mind labors like a man logging, all the
time; and this is the reason why I am fond of pastimes — they give me the
privilege to throw every thing off, and shake myself, that my body may exercise,
and my mind rest." (1: 30; also 9: 218)

Young’s strong words and soft actions were not the only factor which
created his confusing public image. His attitude toward wealth did also. Many
contemporaries viewed him as an enterprising, mammon-oriented Yankee.
Brigham insisted otherwise. "There are those in this congregation who are so
short-sighted, and so destitute of eternal wisdom and knowledge, that they
believe that brother Brigham is after property," he once vigorously remarked.
"That is a false feeling, a false view, and a false faith." (8: 125) To be sure in later
years wealth flowed easily into his hands and he seemed to enjoy its comforts. But
he claimed that money never preoccupied him. "I own property, and I employ
the best men I can find to look after it . . . But as for spending my own time in
doing it, or letting my own mind dwell upon the affairs of this world, I will not
do it. I have no heart to look after my own individual advantage." (11: 297) He
denied praying for either wealth or fame, although he petitioned God for relief
when his early poverty seemed to threaten the very lives of his family members.
"Those who . . . [pray for] more than this," he believed, "are off more or less
from the track that leads to life eternal." (7: 132, 138)

The church leader believed his motives were loftier than mere money-
making. "If I spend a minute that is not in some way devoted to building up the
Kingdom of God and promoting righteousness, I regret that minute," he
claimed, “and wish it had been otherwise spent. This proves to me that the Spirit of the Lord is with me.” (12: 217) The hope of a sharing and godly society which he possessed upon converting to Mormonism remained and deepened. When at Winter Quarters, prior to pushing westward to found the new Mormon commonwealth, he recalled having his mind opened to a vision of “the beauty, excellence, and glory” of the future community. (12: 94; also 18: 244) “I . . . beheld [the Saints] organized as one great family of heaven, each person performing his several duties in his line of industry, working for the good of the whole more than for individual aggrandizement; and in this I have beheld the most beautiful order that the mind of man can contemplate.” (12: 153)

During the remainder of his life, he dedicated his possessions to further God’s commonwealth. “I am a public hand,” he declared, “and myself and all I possess belong to the Lord . . . from the cap upon my head to the soles of the pumps upon my feet.” (1: 376) “I have not the slightest feeling in my heart that I own a single thing. What I am in possession of, the Lord has merely made me a steward over, to see what I will do with it.” (18: 261) He proved his point by donating several thousand dollars annually to the emigrating European Saints, freely giving of his means to charity, even dispensing his prized foodstuffs during famine — and during at least one point in his life placing personal surplus into the church’s general fund. (1: 340; 4: 357-58; 10: 205; and 16: 113)

It was perhaps expecting too much of the American public, removed from Brigham by both geography and sympathy, to measure accurately the heart of such a complex man. Here was a polygamist who eschewed sexual passion, a sharp-tongued orator with a kindly heart, a man of property and comfort who believed that wealth should not be used to further an individual’s narrow purposes. Young himself seemed philosophical in contrast to the tempest of misunderstanding surrounding him. “I am accused of a thousand evils,” he once reflected. But since “they cannot speak evil of me and tell the truth, it never harms me.” (10: 191) He was satisfied that most broadcasters of evil were “bosom companions of thieves, liars and murderers” (19: 63) but understood the futility of countering their canards. “Who will publish the truth from us?” he asked. “If it gets into one paper, it is slipped under the counter of somewhere else; but it never gets into a second. . . . The old adage is that a lie will creep through the keyhole and go a thousand miles while truth is getting out of doors . . . [has been proven by] our experience.” (13: 177)

With Mormonism as his ballast, he navigated life’s channels serenely. “I tremble not, I fear not, neither do I care for the insults of the world, for the Lord is my bulwark, my shield and my deliverer.” (19: 4) During his early years of leadership, he conceded that his duty pressed upon him like a “twenty-five ton weight.” (1: 166) But his anxieties passed. “I am full of peace by day and by night,” he said in later years, “in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, and from the evening until the morning.” (12: 151) With growing confidence, the older Brigham Young fell asleep within a minute of retiring and then rested as “soundly as a healthy child in the lap of its mother.” (7: 281)

His normal course was deliberate and unworried. To those who had proven unable to secure life’s success, he counseled, “You are in too much of a hurry; you do not go to meeting enough, you do not pray enough, you do not read the Scriptures enough, you do not meditate enough, you are all the time on the wing,
and in such a hurry that you do not know what to do first.” (15: 36) He claimed seldom to worry about anything, described his own life as “an even continuation,” and denied that he was “a visionary character . . . subject to excitement in my feelings.” (13: 308; 6: 353) He saw himself as “a minute-man,” who seldom took previous thought of “what I shall say or what I shall do” — whether arranging the business of the general conference of the church, speaking before the Saints, or settling his personal business affairs. (17: 114) If ever I am in the least bothered with anything that comes before me,” he confessed, “it is in some frivolous case, trying to give counsel and advice to an individual without doing any mischief.” (13: 308)

Life for Brigham became entirely positive. When Horace Greeley observed that the Mormon leader seemed in no hurry to secure his heavenly reward, Young agreed. “I wish to stay here and fight the Devil until he is bound,” he said with enthusiasm. (7: 338) “I feel happy; I feel at peace with all the inhabitants of the earth; I love my friends, and as for my enemies, I pray for them daily.” (11: 111) Brigham was sensitive to the change which had occurred in his own life. “I have learned enough to be happy when I am in the enjoyment of the blessings of the Lord,” he remarked twenty years after his conversion. “That is a great lesson for a man to learn.” (2: 94; also 6: 40, 77) It was a lesson which he never tired of preaching. Repeatedly he urged his followers “not to speak lightly of and undervalue the life we enjoy.” (9: 291) “There is no life more precious than the present. . . . there is no life that is worth anymore to us than this life is.” (10: 22)

In all this there were obvious and heavy dosages of his new religion. Mormonism made Brigham Young. It had transformed him from a self-doubting and unhappy under-achiever into the leonine prophet of the Lord. For this reason he scoffed at the supposed sacrifices which his new faith had required. “I hear people talk about their troubles, their sore privations, and the great sacrifices they have made for the Gospel’s sake,” he often said. “It never was a sacrifice to me. Anything I can do or suffer in the cause of the Gospel, is only like dropping a pin into the sea.” (1: 313)

He found it difficult to find language to clothe his feelings about his church. “Excuse me if I speak loud,” he exclaimed. “Were I to speak as I feel [about Mormonism], I should speak like a Methodist for a little while, and cry, ‘Hallelujah! — praise ye the Lord.’ ” (8: 43) He found that his religion “invigorates, buoys up, strengthens, and fills every power of my capacity with unspeakable joy.” (8: 8) He never tired in expressing admiration and discipleship to his predecessor Joseph Smith. (2: 126–27; 4: 77; 12: 269–70) And when one of his fellow Saints declared his intention to remain within the faith, he replied with passion, “What in the name of common sense is there to hang on to, if he does not hang on to the Church? I do not know of anything. You might as well take a lone straw in the midst of the ocean to save yourselves. . . . There is nothing but the Gospel to hang on to.” (15: 136)

Young’s tenacious hold upon Mormonism produced another seeming contradiction — a man of nuts-and-bolts practicality who had a towering faith in other-worldly experience. Mormonism appealed to him as a faith which affected everyday life. But it also unleashed the religious fervor which his early skepticism had suppressed. On occasion he prophesied, healed the sick, spoke in tongues, and avoided the serpent’s bite. (1: 132–33; 14: 72; and 17: 40) He
believed in guardian angels and never doubted their silent aid. (13: 76; 4: 7) He hoped for many years for a personal theophany. (7: 243; 10: 28) Whether such a goal was realized he never disclosed, but he did feel an intimacy with heavenly beings. "I like some of God's messengers, who travel about, to visit me," he said. "I am fond of their society." (13: 316)

Young frequently deprecated his own spiritual gifts, but his entire mode of operation was riveted to a faith in God's revelatory will. He taught that leaders must lead in harmony with the Spirit. "Never . . . give counsel, unless you have it to give," he advised his associates. "I have no counsel for a man unless I have the testimony of Jesus on the subject. (5: 100) Conversely the people must listen by the Spirit. "How easy it would be for your leaders to lead you to destruction," he counseled his flock, "unless you actually know the mind and will of the Spirit yourselves." (4: 368; also 3: 45) Such reciprocity made Young's task of governing "one of the simplest things in the world." (12: 257) We "teach the people true knowledge," he said in a slight paraphrase of Joseph Smith, "and they will govern themselves." (10: 190)

He believed that such a system had worked well for him and for the Saints. "I do not know that I could do better than I have done since I have been in this kingdom," he once said, "if I were to live my life over again, I should be afraid to try it, lest I might make the matter worse instead of better." (11: 44) His love for life led him to desire longevity: Perhaps, he hoped, he could live at least one hundred thirty years or maybe one hundred fifty. He certainly did not wish for any pomp to surround his passing. "When I die, let your flags remain in their proper places, omit your parade, and lay me away where I can rest. And I do not wish any of you to cry and feel badly, but" — and here his comments were especially characteristic — "prepare yourselves to fight the devils while you live." (4: 132) He certainly had attempted to do so himself.
Early Mormon Pamphleteering

David J. Whittaker

In attempting to explain American religious life to Europeans in 1843, Robert Baird noted that "no branch of religious enterprise had been more vigorously prosecuted in the United States than that of preparing, publishing, and circulating moral and religious writings in various forms." In the promotion of truth, he saw that the press could be a powerful weapon.\(^1\) Although the use of printed matter for religious purposes was not a purely American phenomenon, Baird did identify an important aspect of American religious history. Emerging in western Europe in the fifteenth century, tracts and pamphlets quickly proved their value as tools of dissent and argument.\(^2\) This influence increased in the centuries that followed, reaching great heights on the eve of the American Revolution. Recent studies by such scholars as Philip Davidson and Bernard Bailyn have documented the influence of pamphlet literature in the religious and political controversies of the eighteenth century.\(^3\)


\(^2\)A recent study having obvious parallels with the Mormons is by M. G. F. Bitterman, "‘Antidote for Poison’: A Study of Mormon Pamphleteering in the 1850s with Special Emphasis on South Africa, India, and Australia," *Church History* 42 (June 1973): 203-28.

It has been amply demonstrated that the American Revolution was fought with words before it was fought with deeds. Because of such studies no historian of that period can neglect the role of the printed word in the movement toward independence.

The “Second American Revolution” was also fought primarily with verbal and paper bullets. Because of this, the social and intellectual aspects of the religious life of the new nation can also be studied through the written literature produced by various religious groups. This includes Mormonism, the early pamphlets of which offer an index and a reservoir, as yet untapped, for the study of the intellectual history of the early Latter-day Saint movement. That which follows is a broad outline of Mormon pamphleteering, supported with a few specific examples.

The environment in which Mormonism took shape was especially pregnant with pamphlet literature and the numerous organizations responsible for its printing and distribution. The spread of printing presses in the new nation was dramatic. Encouraged by the arguments and debates of the American Revolution, colonial presses expanded from fewer than fifty in 1775 (most of them located on the eastern seaboard), to so many by 1783 that “not one important inland town lacked its own press.” Considering only newspapers, it is obvious that this trend continued into the nineteenth century: from 1801 to 1833 the total number of newspapers published simultaneously in the United States increased from an estimated two hundred to six times that number. This rapid growth continued until the Civil War, by which time the number had grown to about three thousand. This tremendous growth of publications and presses provided a rich literary environment for any social or religious group that felt the need to “publish glad tidings.”

Groups that were particularly active in the printing and distributing of religious literature were the American Bible Society, the New England Tract Society (which became the American Tract Society), and the American Sunday School Union. All were interdenominational groups, and were effective because they combined talent, organization, and finances to accomplish common goals. By 1820 the American Bible Society had distributed almost one hundred thousand Bibles, while the New England Tract Society by 1823 had printed and distributed nearly eight hundred thousand tracts and was publishing a bimonthly magazine, a Christian almanac, and a series of children’s books.

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6Frank L. Mott, American Journalism, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 216. The growth of magazines was as dramatic from a few hundred in 1830 to over a thousand by 1860.

These groups seemed to have copied the pattern of the London Tract Society, which had distributed by 1824 fifty-eight million tracts.⁸

All of these groups turned primarily to the pamphlet as the major vehicle for the expression of their programs and ideology. The New England Tract Society, more systematically than the others, listed the advantages of the use of pamphlets for religious purposes. It found them “an easy way of doing good” and “a cheap way of diffusing the knowledge of religion.” The society believed that tracts were less likely to give offense than other methods, such as public discourse, and could be “pursued at the leisure of the reader and thus will be remembered longer than the best sermon.”⁹ Although the early Latter-day Saints never articulated their philosophy about using printed literature in such detail, a study of their publishing suggests that they came to the same conclusions.

In a sense, Mormonism began with a book. The Book of Mormon, by giving direction and content to the new religion, provided the foundation and justification for proclaiming Christ’s message for the last time to a new generation. This printed beginning soon spawned a prolific amount of published material expounding and defending the early doctrines and history of the sect.

Though concerned with the production and distribution of the printed word, Joseph Smith directed most of his attention to other concerns. He left the publishing business to his associates.¹⁰ Early Mormons, like their Revolutionary forefathers and the leaders of contemporary tract societies, knew the value of the pamphlet. In the early 1830s they had experienced the devastating effect of the tracts and books written against them, but they had ignored them or sent the

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⁹The list is summarized from Tract No. 1 of the New England Tract Society, conveniently found in *Tracts Published by the New England Tract Society*, 1 (Anover, 1814), pp. 6-18. The essay was entitled “An Address to Christians, Recommending the Distribution of Cheap Religious Tracts.” The early Mormon press periodically took note of the activities and publications of these societies.

¹⁰In a technical sense, no “official” press existed until after January 1845. “Official” is used here to label those publications specially approved by church leaders to the discouragement and even exclusion of any others. I have traced this gradual centralization in another essay: “To Further the Cause of Righteousness: The Life and Contributions of Benjamin Winchester, Early Mormon Missionary,” (unpublished paper, 1973 Summer Research Fellowship, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), pp. 50-51. More will be said of this later in this essay. There were, however, several publications (in addition to the scriptures and Smith’s “Manuscript History”) before 1845 which, either because Joseph Smith was intimately connected with them or because they were published by key church leaders in the areas of church domination that could be (and have been) identified as “official” publications. These would include *The Evening and the Morning Star* (Independence, Mo., and Kirtland, Ohio), *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* (Kirtland, Ohio), *Elders’ Journal* (Kirtland, Ohio, and Far West, Mo.), *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Ill.), and *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* (Liverpool, England). A useful overview, with minor errors, is Monte McLaws, *Spokesman for the Kingdom: Early Mormon Journalism and the Deseret News, 1830–1898* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), pp. 3-22. The “unofficial” press is used here to designate all of the printed matter published between 1830 and 1857 except the scriptures and those items mentioned above and falling into these categories: newspapers, broadsides, pamphlets, hymnals, books, and published petitions of various sorts. Table 1 lists the major writers in these categories, mainly from 1836 to 1857. A recent and very good study dealing with the products of the Mormon press to 1839 is Peter Crawley, “A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 465-587.
missionaries as a "living word" to counter these attacks. Although the defense of their position was the primary intent, in time the use of printed matter was encouraged for a variety of reasons. Mormon millennialistic expectations and consequent concerns to "warn the wicked" assured that early members would turn to the pen. In addition, in-house communication was fostered by the regular printing of official notices, reports, and letters from missionaries and their families. Essays on the doctrine and history of the movement and editorials and policy statements on items of major concern guaranteed the increasing use of the press. Throughout this formative period their publishing activities can be traced as a movement from a free-lance and informal press to a period of centralization, where the production of pamphlets tended to concentrate in the hands of a few. This process had, and continues to have, important ramifications for the church.

The first clearly identifiable tract to appear within Mormonism was Orson Hyde’s *A Prophetic Warning to All the Churches of Every Sect and Denomination*. This one-page broadside appeared in the fall of 1836 and was

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<th>Early Mormon Authors, 1836-57</th>
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<td>George J. Adams</td>
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reprinted several times in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Almost a year later Parley P. Pratt produced his highly influential *A Voice of Warning.* From then on, Mormon writers produced various types of written works. The Illinois period saw the appearance of concordances, histories, systematic defenses, specific replies, and independent periodicals. This informal period of pamphleteering is perhaps best seen through the writings of Benjamin Winchester.

Between 1840 and 1843, Winchester published five single-volume works and twelve issues of a periodical. In many ways each of his publications is an example of the types of literature early Mormons produced. The majority of his energies were expended in the Philadelphia area, where it is said that he was influential in converting upwards of eight hundred people. Shortly after his initial thrust there he made a short visit to some friends in New Jersey. During this visit he attended a lecture given by Rev. Henry Perkins. The lecture turned out to be an anti-Mormon tirade, and Winchester’s first published work was an examination of it. Writing to deal with a specific and apparently influential criticism of the church, Winchester found the pamphlet format ideally suited to his need to answer quickly, directly, and forcefully.

Like Winchester, other Mormon missionaries felt the effect of anti-Mormon speeches and literature and they also took to the pen with spontaneous answers for their opponents. In many such works, recently revealed doctrines and positions of the church first surfaced. In addition, the scriptural proof texts that were offered by these early apologists offer the historian another important index to the theology of the formative period. It may be that these kinds of writings, produced as they were in the heat of battle and in a hurry, are thereby of limited utility for measuring the church’s position. But they surely offer an index to the writer’s position, education, and understanding of the early doctrines.

After a short trip to England, Winchester returned to Philadelphia and continued his reaction to the anti-Mormon press. His second published work

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11 For bibliographical information on Hyde’s work, see Crawley, “A Bibliography of the Church,” item no. 29 (pp. 510–11) and no. 47 (pp. 531–32). For Pratt’s, see item no. 36 (pp. 516–18).

12 Most of the following material is summarized from Whittaker, “Benjamin Winchester.”

13 See *An Examination of a Lecture Delivered by the Rev. H. Perkins, On the Religious Opinions and Faith of the Latter-Day Saints, and Some of His Most Prominent Errors and Misstatements Corrected* (n.p.: n.d.), original in Harvard University Library. The precise bibliographical definition of a pamphlet is a booklet formed by folding and stitching loosely together of between two and five printer’s sheets which gives to a pamphlet, in extreme, twenty pages when printed in folio, forty pages when printed in quarto, and eighty pages when printed in octavo. See Charles Evans, compiler, *American Bibliography*, 12 vols. (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 5:xv. Pamphlets were short booklets, usually smaller than one hundred pages which either attacked or defended a specific cause.

14 This is true with such doctrines as plural marriage and plurality of Gods. The quest for a creedal statement (i.e., “Articles of Faith”) is especially seen in the pamphlet literature. I have traced the “Articles of Faith” from 1834 to 1880 in “Antidote for Poison,” chap. 2, n. 18, primarily through pamphlet literature.

15 Gordon Irving has done for the periodicals what needs to be done for the pamphlet literature. See his “The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 13 (Summer 1973): 473–88. This kind of study would help correct what Leonard Arrington called “the centrifugal bias,” i.e., the notion that all the important influences and forces in Mormon history originated in the center and moved outward from there. See his “The Search for Truth and Meaning,” pp. 63–64.
probably grew directly out of the growing influence of the second printing of E. D. Howe’s *Mormonism Unvailed* [sic] published originally in 1834, but reprinted in 1840 under the title *History of Mormonism*. Popular in both America and England, Howe’s explanations of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon were becoming the cornerstone of anti-Mormon writing. More specifically, the Spaulding theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon had been repeated more and more and it was primarily to this thesis that Winchester addressed attention.¹⁶ In his *Origin of the Spaulding Story*, Winchester also claimed firsthand knowledge of the life and motives of Philastus Hurlbut, the man who had gathered much of the material credited to Howe. The detailed nature of the material presented makes it apparent that Winchester was an on-the-scene observer. He had been in Kirtland during the winter of 1834–35 when the first edition of Howe’s book appeared.

¹⁶The first printing appeared with the title, *The Origins of the Spaulding Story Concerning the Manuscript Found: With A Short Biography of D. P. Hulbert, . . .* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bickng, and Guilpert [sic.] Printers, 1840). It probably appeared in November or December. Excerpts from this edition can be found in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, 3 vols., rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co., 1959), 2: 276–89. The second edition was published by George J. Adams in Bedford, England, with the title, *Plain Facts, Showing the Origin of the Spaulding Story, Concerning the Manuscript Found. And Its Being Transformed Into the Book of Mormon; With a Short History of Dr. P. Hulbert, . . .* (Bedford: C. B. Merry, 1841). Other alterations included the deletion of about four pages of “Reflections” on the persecutions of the church by Winchester and the addition of several pages of material on the Spaulding theory from several sources plus two letters, the first from Sidney Ridgon dated Commerce (later Nauvoo), 27 May 1839, (which had appeared in P. P. Pratt, *Plain Facts*, pp. 14–16) and the second from Orson Hyde, dated London, 7 June 1841. Hyde’s letter is reprinted in Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ*, pp. 333–36, and it clearly gives the background of this second edition (his letter was addressed to George Adams): “As you were advised and directed by the Conference in Bedford to re-publish an edition of a certain tract written by Benjamin Winchester, of America, in reply to the gross and impious falsehood published by our enemies, that the Book of Mormon was manufactured by Sidney Ridgon out of the writings of one Solomon Spaulding.”

It is possible that either John Taylor’s tract, *An Answer to Some False Statements and Misrepresentations Made by the Rev. Robert Heys, . . . on the Subject of Mormonism* (Douglas: Printed by Penrice and Wallace, Museum, 1840) or Parley P. Pratt’s *Plain Facts Showing the Falseness of the Rev. C. S. Bush, Reply to His Tract Against the Latter-Day Saints* (Manchester: W. R. Thomas Printer, [1840]), were the inspiration for Winchester’s pamphlet, *The Origin of the Spaulding Story*. Both deal specifically with the “Manuscript Found.”


As late as 1878 E. D. Howe claimed he was responsible for the material collected in *Mormonism Unvailed* (1834); see his *Autobiography and Recollections of a Pioneer Printer*, p. 45. However, there is little doubt that the Spaulding Story and the many affidavits in his book originated with Hurlbut (or Hurlburt or Hurlbert). See the above noted sources, and also George A. Smith, discourse of 15 November 1864 in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1855–86), 4: 8–9, and *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* 44 (23 October 1882): 334–35. For information that Howe knew that Hurlbut was “an unreliable fellow,” see the interviews in Ellen E. Dickinson, *New Light of Mormonism* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1885), esp. p. 73.
After rehearsing his own conversion to the church, Winchester presented a detailed account of Hurlbut. Winchester had observed him as a missionary for the church (Hurlbut had in fact boarded in the Winchester home in Pennsylvania) and later as a debunker. Winchester then examined the development of the Spaulding theory with such effectiveness that his arguments were published a year later as part of the British missionary effort. It was also a telling enough criticism for a non-Mormon author to attempt to refute it. But his pamphlet is all but forgotten by historians today.

His third publishing venture, the *Gospel Reflector*, was an outgrowth of several forces, particularly the effectiveness of the *Millennial Star* in England and the continued appearance of anti-Mormon works. He specifically noted in the first issue his intention to refute the “enemies” of the church.

At least one other factor influenced Winchester. Like all Mormon missionaries he was expected to travel without purse or scrip, yet the debts he incurred through missionary and publishing activities left him in a serious financial situation. In a letter to Joseph Smith in September 1841 Winchester explained that he had published the *Gospel Reflector* and “other pamphlets” to pay his debts, but that he had not sold enough of them to realize any substantial benefit from their sale. This was a common problem of early Mormon missionaries that would reach epic proportions by the 1850s.

Although not monetarily rewarding, Winchester’s venture certainly had a measurable impact in the early church. The *Gospel Reflector* appeared biweekly from 1 January to 15 June 1841, making twelve total issues of twenty-four pages each. He borrowed material from other publications, as he had promised his readers in the first issue he would do. And many of his own articles were reprinted in church periodicals in New York and Nauvoo, where they reached a larger audience. In 1842 one of the many religious books of information used, as part of its section on the Mormons, Winchester’s summary of the Book of Mormon from the *Gospel Reflector*. Thus, Winchester continued his missionary labors in the Philadelphia area through the summer of 1841. But on 16 August, at a special missionary conference in Nauvoo, he and Erastus Snow were called to go on a special mission to Salem, Massachusetts. Neither wanted to go, but both

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18*Gospel Reflector* 1 (1 January 1841): 1-2. As with other early Mormon writings, it was unfortunate that Winchester, too, generally maintained a defensive pose that by its very nature limited both his subjects and what he could say about them. This defensive pattern was generally established in Mormon writing by 1841 and unfortunately still dominates much of Mormon writing. See Allen and Arrington, “Mormon Origins in New York,” pp. 255, 257, 271.

19Benjamin Winchester to Joseph Smith, 18 September 1841, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

20My “Benjamin Winchester,” pp. 96-100, lists the material he borrowed from other publications and his own material reproduced in other publications. The Book of Mormon material is in John Hayward, *The Book of Religions: Comprising the Views, Creeds, Sentiments, or Opinions, of all the Principal Religious Sects in the World, . . .* (Boston: John Hayward, 1842), pp. 266-69. This material had appeared in the *Gospel Reflector* 1 (15 March 1841): 124-26. The “books of information” tended to be fairer to the Mormons in the nineteenth century than most historians have suggested, perhaps because they tended to be documentary collections.
accepted the call. They arrived at their destination around 3 September. After securing a boarding house and a place to preach, they set about to advertise their presence in the city by publishing an eight-page pamphlet, *An Address to the Citizens of Salem and Vicinity*. Reprinted twice during the next four months, the *Address* was a typical means used by early missionaries to announce their preaching and meeting locations. In addition, it often contained a summons and introduction to their message and mission. This kind of publication offers historians clues to the motives and millennialistic expectations of early missionaries.21

Despite this promising start, Winchester stayed in Salem less than a week. Returning to Philadelphia, he wrote a letter to Joseph Smith giving him the particulars of the Salem mission and explaining his short stay. His abrupt departure and other factors all too complex to deal with here resulted in his being summoned to Nauvoo in October 1841. In addition to receiving a severe reproof from Joseph Smith, there is evidence that his talents as a writer and publisher were tapped by authorities in Nauvoo, for he worked as an editor on the *Times and Seasons* that winter.22

While in Nauvoo, notice was given in the *Times and Seasons* of Winchester's fifth publication “A Complete Concordance of the Bible.” A prospectus appeared in the 15 January issue, but by the time the work appeared in late July or early August, it contained references to all the scriptures. This concordance was one of three major scriptural guides to appear during the lifetime of Joseph Smith.23 These works have been referred to by one scholar as

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21Two thousand copies were made of this first printing, which was dated Salem, Mass., 9 September 1841. A second printing was made by Freeman Nickerson, dated Boston, Mass., 13 September 1841. Winchester may have provided Nickerson with a copy of this *Address* as he was returning to Pennsylvania through Boston. Winchester noted in his letter to Joseph Smith on 18 September that he was enclosing a copy of the *Address* with the letter. It was probably this copy that was used for the third printing which was published in two parts in the *Times and Seasons* 2 (15 October 1841): 574–76, and ibid., 3 (15 November 1841): 578–84. Andrew Jenson provides some information on the first printing in the *Historical Record* 6 (January 1887): 151, and LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901), 1: 108. Two studies provide introductions to the literature, life styles, and techniques of the early Mormon missionaries, S. George Ellsworth, “A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860” (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1951); and Barbara M. Higdon, “The Role of Preaching in the Early Latter-Day Saint Church, 1830–1846” (Ph. D. diss., University of Missouri, 1961).

22The letter is cited above, n. 19. His work with the *Times and Seasons*, in addition to his own testimony as published in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 22 September 1889, is established by an internal analysis of his material printed therein. Of the eight articles the *Times and Seasons* reprinted from the *Gospel Reflector*, six of them appeared in the issues between 1 December 1841 and 15 February 1842. In fact, at least one article from the *Reflector* appeared in each of the six issues between those dates.

23The three were L. D. Barnes, *References to Prove the Gospel in its Fulness...*, originally published in the last issue of the *Gospel Reflector* 1 (15 June 1841): 315–16. It was expanded later that year and published separately as advertised in *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 November 1841): 592. A copy of this expanded version (8 pages) is bound within an 1838 edition of the Bible (probably bound after 1841) in Church Archives (Res./M 221.05/B 582/1838/). There was another *References* circulated in the 1840s giving Daniel Shearer as the author (copy in Church Archives). At this point I have not decided which is the primary document, although it seems Barnes was ultimately responsible for it. The second scriptural aid was Charles Thompson’s *Evidences in Proof of the Book of Mormon* (Batavia, New York: D. P. Waite, 1841). The third was Winchester’s *Synopsis of the Holy Scriptures, and Concordance, in which the synonymous passages are arranged together...* (Philadelphia:
"prompters" for the early traveling elders; and despite the early admonitions that elders "speak by the spirit," the growing use of this type of aid suggests that a standardization and systematizing of doctrines and proof texts was occurring. This process needs further study by historians.24

Further proof of this tendency can be seen in Winchester's sixth and final work. It was nothing less than a 168-page "History of the Priesthood" (1843) which presented in a concise and ordered manner the main arguments the early church used to defend its position regarding the historicity of that power delegated by God to man. In addition to adding commentary to the many proof texts on the subject in his *Synopsis of the Holy Scriptures*, it is evident that Winchester borrowed, and in some cases reworded, several of his essays from the *Gospel Reflector*. If what Mario DePillis says about the quest for authority and the rise of Mormonism is correct, works like Winchester's priesthood history offer another index to the arguments offered by early Mormons, as well as the extent they reached by the 1840s.25

For a variety of reasons Winchester did not survive the succession crisis. His writings were not the reason for his excommunication in September 1844. Nevertheless, his works were singled out for censure in the early months of 1845. Winchester, then, serves also as a transitional figure, bridging as it were the early era of freelance efforts and the following period of centralization in Mormon publishing. Other Mormon authors besides Winchester had produced a variety of items by 1844, but until January 1845 no strong statement had been made governing publishing by church members.26 However, certain patterns had emerged to set the tone for the next decade. Like its counterpart in the United

Printed for the author at the "United States" Book and Job Printing Office, 1842). Winchester was responding to a common plea of the early Mormon leaders that members search the scriptures. The following articles are typical of this counsel: "Neglect of the Old Testament," *Millennial Star* (June 1840): 28–30; and "Search the Scriptures," ibid., 3 (December 1842): 127–30.

24 The three guides are mentioned as "prompters" for the early traveling elders in Higdon, "The Role of Preaching," p. 81. (This was the specific recommendation of the *Times and Seasons* 3 [15 September 1842]: 923–24). She does note that the actual use is very difficult to measure but that "their potential utility appears to be great."

Orthodoxy emerges when a religious movement attempts to defend itself against criticism both internal and external. This process in Mormonism needs much study yet, but the early pamphlet literature offers an important source for the study of this process. See David O. Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 346–47.

25 The full title was *A History of the Priesthood from the Beginning of the World to the Present Time, Written in Defence of the Doctrine and Position of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and also A Brief Treatise Upon the Fundamental Sentiments, Particularly Those Which Distinguish the Above Society From Others Now Extant* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking, and Guilbert, Printers, 1843). Although numerous essays had appeared in official church publications, Winchester's work was the first full-volume study on the priesthood. John Taylor's *The Government of God* (1852) was devoted less to history and more to the practical and theoretical application of the priesthood. It was as if he was building on the historical foundation laid by Winchester nine years before.


26 There was, in 1839, some brief correspondence between Parley P. Pratt and Joseph Smith (Hyrum Smith wrote the answer) relating to publishing the scriptures in the East. The decision was to keep the printing of these works close to church headquarters in the West. See Parley P. Pratt to Joseph Smith, 22 November 1839, and the reply by Hyrum Smith, 22 December 1839, in Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives.
States, the very successful missionary effort in England in the early 1840s was supported by a large publishing effort. The apostles were key figures in this work, and upon their return to Nauvoo they were given increased authority over the affairs of the church, including publishing. Their takeover of the *Times and Seasons* set the stage for their "tightening up" of church publications by the time Joseph Smith was killed.\(^\text{27}\)

It is within this context that Parley P. Pratt issued his "Regulations for the Publishing Department of the Latter-day Saints in the East" in January 1845, the first attempt to establish guidelines for publishing in the early church.\(^\text{28}\) Pratt noted that too many members were "turning authors" and that many of their works were badly written and often filled with error. He complained that they were reprinting items already available and were wasting money that was badly needed for the temple then being built in Nauvoo. Pratt, already an established writer, used his position to "tighten up" the literature issued by and for the church. All of this publishing, he wrote, was out of order because it was having an effect on the sales of those "whose business it is to write and publish the truth." Since Pratt specifically singled out the writings of Winchester, his statement reveals volumes about the state of writing in the church by 1845: for one thing, there were emerging professional pamphleteers who were trying to survive financially by the items they were printing. It was no coincidence that it was Parley P. Pratt who issued the "Regulations."\(^\text{29}\) Pratt's statement announced that henceforth there would be only three "great emporiums of light, truth, and news," approved by the Twelve Apostles. Henceforth, only Nauvoo's *Times and Seasons*, Liverpool's *Millennial Star*, and Pratt's *New York Prophet* were authorized to issue works to be considered "as a standard by the Saints concerning their principles."

The immediate impact of such a statement was to censor and condemn the growing opposition to the leadership of the apostles following Joseph Smith's death. Its long-range effect was to further centralize the interpretation and writing of Mormon theology in the hands of these same men. Few works appeared on Mormon topics thereafter that had not first been approved by church leaders.\(^\text{30}\)

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\(^{28}\)New York Prophet 1 (4 January 1845): 2. This was reprinted in *Times and Seasons* 6 (15 January 1845): 778, with this note attached, "We shall second the 'regulations' of Elder Pratt: there is nothing like order in the Kingdom of God."

\(^{29}\)See, for example, P. P. Pratt's letter to his wife, Mary Ann, dated Liverpool, 6 April 1840, where he reveals his awareness of the saleability of his works to church members. Copy in Church Archives.

\(^{30}\)This may have stifled independent creative works of history and doctrine during the nineteenth century. The lack of what Howard E. Jensen calls the "sectarian journal" also had ramifications that appeared later during the Godbeite apostasy. See Jensen, "The Rise of Religious Journalism in the United States" (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1920). A convenient summary of its major thrust is "American Religious Journalism to 1845: Its Role in the Organization of American Christianity," in *Abstracts of Theses, Humanities Series* (University of Chicago), 3: 253-61. In an important way, although Mormon millennialism is partly responsible, this centralization of the Mormon press accounts for the failure of the early church to confront directly the social issues of the day.
Despite the strength of Pratt’s statement, it was another decade before it fully took effect. In August of 1845 Parley’s brother Orson was encouraging the Saints to support the approved authors and publications of the church, adding,

The press, if rightly used, can be made a mighty engine of truth, more terrible to this guilty generation, than the hand writing on the wall was to Belshazzar. Open your purses, and stretch out the hand of assistance, and sustain us, and we will sustain you. Remember if the head falters for the want of proper nourishment and attention, the whole body will be feeble, sickly and faint.31

Centralization was delayed by the evacuation of Nauvoo and the early years of pioneering in the Great Basin.32

Our interest here suggests a closer look at Liverpool. The city’s important position in the European thrust of the church had been assured by the successful missionary effort in England in the 1840s. The Millennial Star had been established at that time as the official mission organ, and Parley Pratt’s 1845 “Regulations” reaffirmed the position of the periodical he had started. As headquarters for the British Mission and after 1849 for the Perpetual Emigration Fund, Liverpool was assured both the leadership and the capital for a successful place in the publishing business of the church. It was out of this position (occurring as both New York and Nauvoo were abandoned in favor of the isolation of the Great Basin) that Liverpool emerged as the book supply depot for LDS literature. At first for England and parts of the Continent, it gradually came to supply South Africa, India, and many parts of America, the Pacific Islands, and Australia. Since Liverpool functioned as mission headquarters during a time when the leadership and publications of the church were being centralized, it was a place where missionaries looked more for guidance; hence both the Millennial Star and the mission president assumed great influence in the centralizing process.33

In the years following Pratt’s “Regulations,” the demand for literature in missionary work increased. Yet the tendency clearly was for just a select few authors, mainly those who controlled the points of distribution, to produce the pamphlets. As this movement toward centralization was occurring, mission “calls” were becoming more regular and definite places of assignment were becoming more common. These all made free-lance production less feasible.


32 Ellsworth, “A History of Mormon Missions,” chap. 12, pp. 295–326. As he suggests, these years were “a time of transition” for the missionary effort. The developments of the 1850s must be seen in this context.


On the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company see Gustive O. Larson, Prelude to the Kingdom (Francistown, N. H.: Marshal Jones Co., 1947), pp. 106ff; and Larson, “Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund Co.,” Mississippi Valley Historical Review 18 (September 1931): 184–94. The mission presidents/editors of the Millennial Star were, with few exceptions, the more important pamphleteers of the period to 1857: Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, Orson Spencer, Orson Pratt, and Franklin D. Richards. The history of Mormon imprints shows that these men often used their positions to produce and distribute their own literature.
Maverick publications still appeared, but they tended to be in those mission areas far removed from the main centers of church leadership, such as India, Australia, and South Africa.

Centralization led to the production of large editions of approved tracts which were advertised and sold out of Liverpool. Their sponsors saw this as being much less expensive and much more preferable than the productions of an independent publisher or author. Besides, it seemed to assure a higher level of quality for printed work that represented the "official" viewpoint.

Throughout this period, the *Millennial Star* regularly offered counsel on the distribution of tracts and regularly advertised new works. As early as 1850 Orson Pratt was editorializing that as the church grew so must her publications. Franklin D. Richards reiterated the same counsel a year later, and it continued through the decade. Under Orson Pratt, advice on methods of tract distribution reached its extreme expression: his plan on "How to Warn the Whole British Nation in One Year" argued in 1856 for the placing of at least one pamphlet in the hands of every inhabitant of Great Britain.34

With this counsel came catalogues of church publications. At first they were separately printed, but eventually they were bound with other works then coming off the press. These catalogues regularly appeared in the *Star*, and occasionally instructions were even offered for their use. They attest to the course LDS publishing was then taking.35

At the same time a rather involved system for distributing church literature emerged. Using conference and mission divisions, book agencies were established, usually in the name of the conference or mission president. Beginning more systematically in the 1850s, a method was established whereby quantities of printed matter were given to various individuals on credit. These advances were accounted for in a regular accounting system published quarterly in the *Millennial Star*. This system offered several advantages: (1) it was an easy way for missionaries to get literature to assist them in their work; (2) those who still printed tracts on their own could distribute them on credit through a central clearing house; (3) it encouraged large printings which saved money on the cost of printing and binding; and (4) it provided a way for missionaries to earn money for their regular needs while on their missions.

There were, however, more disadvantages inherent in this system: (1) it tended to centralize the writing in the mission home, thus giving a virtual

34 *Millennial Star* 12 (1 February 1850): 40-41; ibid., 17 (19 May 1855): 315; ibid., 2 (15 May 1851): 153-56; and E. L. Sloan, "Publications of the Church," ibid., 20 (23 October 1858): 683-85. For samples of the advice on tract distribution see "Tract Distributing," ibid., 15 (29 October 1853): 713-14; ibid., 18 (1 February 1856): 40-41; and ibid., 18 (1 November 1856): 697-99. The advice was early accepted by the London conference which in January 1850 explained their plan and ordered a record 57,000 tracts in addition to various periodicals. This was in anticipation of the 1851 World's Fair. Eli B. Kelsey to [F. D.] Richards, 7 January 1850, in *Millennial Star* 13 (1 February 1851): 33-37.

Orson Pratt's counsel is in ibid., 18 (1 November 1856): 697, where the reader is told that with every order an equal number of catalogues will be sent, bound with the pamphlets ordered. Samples of these catalogues, in Church Archives, are helpful for historians and collectors of Mormon Americana.

35 See ibid., 17 (21 July 1855): 461; ibid., 18 (18 October 1856): 665; and ibid., 18 (1 November 1856): 697, where the reader is told that with every order an equal number of catalogues will be sent, bound with the pamphlets ordered. Samples of these catalogues, in Church Archives, are helpful for historians and collectors of Mormon Americana.
publishing monopoly to the leaders; (2) it increased Mormon dependence on non-Mormon publishers who demanded cash before the works could be obtained and sold; (3) it gradually encouraged a large debt, the payment of which took many pages of requests and undoubtedly many missionary hours spent in money collecting; (4) selling missionaries the pamphlets at cut-rate prices so that they could make a profit led to the practice of giving larger discounts to larger orders which encouraged many missionaries to become mere peddlers of tracts (colpateurs) rather than missionaries; (5) in countries such as India where the worth of the British pound was different, several problems could (and did) arise over the discount rates, selling price, etc.; (6) works deposited by missionaries for sale in the Liverpool office failed to sell as well as those of key leaders; (7) many missionaries found themselves trying to sell these pamphlets to people who had been given tracts by one of the score of missionary societies then working in every country where the Mormons were active; and finally, (8) very often one missionary would incur the debt but not stay long enough in one place, or not keep good enough records, to pay the debt. Despite disadvantages, Mormons continued to use the printed word in their missionary activities, and their leaders continued to encourage the use of tracts.

Under these circumstances it was inevitable that Mormons would, like their Protestant neighbors, form tract societies. There is evidence that a good percentage of the conferences created them and that "book business" was a regular part of the mission conference.36

The pressures of monopoly publishing were revealed in the gradual indebtedness that came to plague most of the missions and missionaries. Of course, the problem weighed upon the leaders, too, and they regularly editorialized about the need to pay off book debts. Their concerns were taken to heart by the missionaries, and reports of their attempts to pay these bills were a regular feature in the Millennial Star.57

It was inevitable that these problems would come to the attention of church leaders in Salt Lake City. Brigham Young, after the death of Parley Pratt in 1857, forced these problems to a conclusion. This is nowhere better revealed than in the correspondence between Young and George Q. Cannon. Cannon, ordained an

36 Few of the published minutes of these early conferences fail to mention this business. An interesting reference in the Millennial Star 17 (28 July 1855): 479, tells of a toast that was given to Mormon periodicals at a mission conference. As early as August 1837 missionaries in the field were encouraged to obtain subscribers for the church periodical, Elder’s Journal. This practice increased and expanded thereafter.

37 Two editorials are especially revealing: Millennial Star 13 (15 December 1851): 372 (F. D. Richards), and ibid., 14 (3 July 1852): 297 (S. W. Richards).

Although expanded through the 1850s, the instructions to the book agents remained about the same: see Millennial Star 12 (1 February 1850): 4-41; ibid., 14 (18 September 1852): 474-75; ibid., 17 (23 June 1855): 399. A sampling of the concern of missionaries over the debt can be seen in the following: ibid., 17 (12 May 1855): 298-300; ibid., 18 (5 January 1856): 12; ibid., 18 (16 August 1856): 526; ibid., 18 (6 September 1856): 546; ibid., 18 (15 November 1856): 734. This tightening up was especially related to events in the Salt Lake Valley. The Reformation surely encouraged house cleaning, and the rather severe economic problems (lack of printed money) brought on by the Utah War further increased the need in the 1850s to get the debts paid off. See L. J. Arrington’s Great Basin Kingdom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 161-94. In addition to these, money was needed for the Perpetual Emigration Fund and for the construction of the Salt Lake Temple.
apostle in 1860, was appointed to the presidency of the European Mission that same year, bringing to this task an extensive background in church publishing in Nauvoo, Utah, California, and Hawaii. Upon his arrival in Liverpool Cannon established a church printing office, in large measure to replace the rather troublesome contract arrangements with printers. This office was to handle all church printing. His initial evaluation of the situation is contained in a letter to Brigham Young on 30 March 1861. His letter summarized the printing problems of the previous decade. He gave a partial inventory of the works on hand (which can assist historians to evaluate the popular and most used works and authors) and noted, “There are editions of some works, which at the ratio they have been sold at during the past three years, will take half the Millennium to sell what are now on hand in this office.” Cannon listed most of the disadvantages we have noted above and then recommended that the church assume full control of all printing.

Brigham Young responded twice to this letter in 1861. Although he ordered many of the bound volumes sent to Salt Lake City where they could be sold “to better advantage,” the tracts on hand were ordered given away to members or sold as waste paper, and those filled with “error” were to be destroyed.

Actually, by the time of this decision several other factors were forcing church leaders to reevaluate the financial structure of the Liverpool office. Even with the book business mentioned above, elders were unable to survive financially. When the bills came due for their publishing ventures, tithing funds often had to be used to meet these obligations. It was estimated in 1860 that over fifty-three thousand dollars in tithing had been allotted to such debts for the previous two years. In addition to the printing of tracts, many missionaries had produced engravings of themselves, church leaders, and church buildings. These

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38A convenient summary of his life is in Jenson, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, 1: 42-51.
39The original is in the Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives. Ron Esplin of the Historical Department staff assisted in locating it. Relevant extracts are as follows: “The standard works . . . are with few exceptions the property of the Church. Most of those works which belong to individuals, are not saleable. . . .

... Were they mine, with my present feelings, I would think it better to sell them to the Saints those disposed to buy our works at the price of waste paper, or even give them away, than to have them lie year after year rotting on shelves or in boxes doing no good to anybody. The publishing of such large editions has been unfortunate; it was doubtless with the object of getting the works cheap. There are an immense number of Tracts, as you will see by the Miscellaneous Ac[account] which cannot be sold within any reasonable time, as the people have been sated with such works, and there is, therefore, but little demand for them; but they might be distributed and do good. Of books: there is the Harp of Zion, out of 3404 copies 21 have been sold in three years. Out of 2590 volumes of Sister E. R. Snow’s Poems, 19 have been sold during the same period. There are 454 bound volumes of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and 5611 copies in sheets; of this work there have been 732 copies sold during the three years past. Of the Compendium there have been 201 copies sold, out of 1861 bound volumes and 1455 copies in sheets. And of the Journal of Discourses 481 Numbers have been sold, leaving now on hand 2884 unbound Volumes and 108,716 odd numbers out of which a good number of perfect volumes can be made. Were these works in the Valley, they might very likely be sold, if not for money at least for provisions &c; but I think the prospect very dull here at present for their sale. Prospects may change; I hope they will now that the Church will do its own printing.”

40Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, 15 May and 12 November 1861, Brigham Young Collection. See also “Office Journal of Brigham Young,” 11 and 14 May and 12 November 1861, Church Archives.

were sold to the Liverpool office or directly to investigators or members. Such a course was bound to bring down the wrath of leaders in Utah.\textsuperscript{42}

It appears that the growing debts, the overabundance of products from the Mormon press, the Utah War, and the death of Parley P. Pratt combined to end the first period of Mormon pamphleteering. Perhaps because of the overabundance of titles, or for economic or other reasons, almost no other pamphlets were to appear until after Brigham Young's death in 1877.\textsuperscript{43}

In summary, the 1850s were a time of transition. Both missionary work and literature were formalized gradually from an institutional point-of-view. But until 1857 some independent publishing continued to exist especially in the regions further removed from church headquarters. Pamphleteers often borrowed from one another or combined their efforts to produce a joint work. Whatever the method employed, the products of their pens offer the historian a meaningful look into the Mormonism of their day and a view of one stage in the evolution of the church they loyally served and defended.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid. On 9 September 1860, Brigham Young warned a group of departing missionaries not to go out and turn "merchants." Elders, he said, had been like "blood-suckers," and the book debt "was the trouble that saints had had to contend with for 6 years." Young specifically blamed Orson Pratt for forcing books upon the Saints. See Wilford Woodruff, "Journal," 9 September 1860, Church Archives. The next day Young remarked that "Elders had sold many copies of their own likenesses to the Book and publishing agents, then they took their pay from those agents, at the time they deposited them, making the church Drs. to Artists and Printers[.] For these reasons the Elders have had to call continually upon the Saints to help them pay their Book, tract, and picture debts. Saints had been oppressed and many of them had left the Church in consequence." Regular advertisements for portraits and pictures appeared in the \textit{Millennial Star}. See, for example, 15 (8 January 1853): 27, and 18 (21 June 1856): 394. Brigham Young voiced concern with the Mormon press throughout the 1850s. See letter of George A. Smith to F. D. Richards, 19 April 1854, in 16 (16 September 1854): 583–84; and Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, 30 August 1856, Church Archives. Paul Peterson pointed this last mentioned letter out to me.

\textsuperscript{43}In addition to this (and I have not developed it here), was Brigham Young's growing concern that too much written analysis of Mormon theology would probably kill its spirit. Both Pratt brothers had been producing a series of tracts which might have threatened the importance of a living leader by finalizing Mormon beliefs. As authoritarian as Young was, he doesn't appear to have wanted a creedal statement of beliefs written once and for all. This may explain why no other formal theological works appeared until after his death. It might also explain why it wasn't until after 1880 that the "Articles of Faith" were canonized as part of the Peral of Great Price. Both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young refused to be bound by such creedal statements. My thinking on this has benefited from several conversations with Peter Crawley, who will develop this line of thought in a book-length study on the early Mormon press. With Young's death, a second period of pamphleteering began.
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The Religious Backgrounds of Mormon Converts in Britain, 1837–52

By Malcolm R. Thorp

Although some consideration has been given to those aspects of Mormon dogma that made the religion of the Latter-day Saints attractive to the working classes in Britain,¹ little attention has been given to the converts themselves. The only exception is P. A. M. Taylor's occupational analysis of converts who emigrated to America, in which he convincingly demonstrated the working class character of the Mormon movement.² With the rich source materials existing on individual emigrants, it is unfortunate that we have not explored beyond Taylor's initial study. Perhaps we would do well to emulate the work of Leslie F. Church on the early Methodists in England. In his study, Church attempted to "rediscover the first Methodist people, and to see them, not only in groups or as followers of John Wesley, but as individuals with definite personalities and lives of their own."³ Unfortunately, too often in Mormon history it is the institutions that really count, and little attention is paid to the rank and file.

No attempt is made here to present a comprehensive analysis of the early Mormons in Britain. This study will, however, examine the religious backgrounds of the converts during the period of the church's greatest success.

Malcolm R. Thorp, assistant professor of history at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, presented an earlier version of this paper at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association, 23 April 1977, at Kirtland, Ohio.


From surviving diaries, journals, reminiscences, as well as some of the more insightful family histories, I have assembled 298 case studies of individuals who joined the church during the period from 1837 to 1852. The intention here has been to both analyze the previous religious affiliations of this group and to explore the context of the conversion experience in order to determine what aspects of the Latter-day Saint faith appealed to these people.

Although certain categories of information have been quantified, no pretense is made that this is in any way a representative sample of all who joined the church in Britain. All that can be asserted is that some general indications of religious behavior can be observed. While religious conversion was a highly individualistic phenomenon, and the experience of no two converts was identical, it is nevertheless possible to isolate those common features of their backgrounds that help us to understand Mormonism as a religious movement.

II

The introduction of Mormonism to the British Isles occurred at a time when traditional religious loyalties were undergoing a process of transformation. By the early Victorian period, the forces of industrialization and urbanization had created a pluralistic society in which it was now possible for the individual believer to migrate from one sect to another, or even to adopt unconventional beliefs such as the frenzied doctrines of Joanna Southcott or the secular religion of the Owenites. In addition, according to the historian Harold Perkin, "the existence of numerous competing sects, which was more characteristic of Britain than any other European country, provided a sequence of stepping stones by which the emancipated individual could make his way from the Church to any position of Christian belief, or at last out into the great desert of unbelief on the other side of the Jordan." It is one of the ironies of the age that, amidst the fervid religious revivals and intensive chapel building, religious indifference and even hostility to organized religion had already made significant inroads amongst the laboring people.

The Mormons were one of the few denominations to experience success among the working classes. According to W. H. G. Armytage, the Mormon evangelists reaped "the most spectacular harvest of souls since Wesley's time."  

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4There are however, several problems implicit in such an approach. First, the sources used vary in quality. Many accounts were written as reminiscences years after the events and thus are perhaps more subject to distortions than those written at the time of conversion. Other accounts vary in content. Some are revealing for social circumstances, but no attention is given to previous religious experiences. Conversely, some accounts provide a wealth of evidence for religious background, but do not even mention the individual's occupation. Second, the sample contains only those converts who later emigrated to America. It might be argued that these converts were more faithful than those who remained in Britain, many of whom later left the church. The possibility exists that the religious background of converts who emigrated varied from those who remained. Unfortunately, no records exist for those who did not emigrate, and thus there is no way to test this variable. Despite these problems, the sample used does reveal a general pattern for religious background, and several cautious conclusions can be asserted.


Although the Mormons were rather late-comers to the revival scene — the first elders did not arrive until 1837 — within little more than a decade no less than fifty-four thousand souls were baptized into the church.\textsuperscript{7} The greatest successes came in the industrial cities, where Christianity was in retreat. P. A. M. Taylor has shown that 42 percent of the converts came from urban areas where the population was in excess of fifty thousand in the 1851 census, and that nearly 75 percent were from towns with a population larger than ten thousand inhabitants.\textsuperscript{8} Another significant factor is that the cities listed by Taylor as producing the largest numbers of Mormon emigrants to America were those which ranked among the lowest in percentage of inhabitants attending worship services on census Sunday, 1851. This suggests that the Mormons tended to attract converts from areas where the major denominations were indeed waning in strength and influence. It also indicates that Mormonism was strongest in areas where the pressures of religious conformity were the weakest.

What impressed the early Mormon missionaries, however, was the receptiveness of the working classes in Britain compared to their American counterparts. Brigham Young and Willard Richards wrote:

We find the people of this land much more ready to receive the gospel than those of America . . . for they have not that speculative intelligence, or prejudice, or prepossession, or false learning, call it what you please. . . . Consequently we have not to labor with a people month after month to break down their old notions.\textsuperscript{10}

While the Mormon apostles were searching for words to properly describe the inclinations which they encountered, it is clear that they realized that many who investigated this new religion already shared a wide range of religious beliefs with them. Indeed, those who eventually joined the Latter-day Saint movement tended to be Christian fundamentalists who were in search of an organization that conformed to their conception of Biblical truth.\textsuperscript{11}

Thus, it was not among the largest segment of working people, who were either indifferent or ignorant to organized religion, that Mormonism had its impact. Rather, it was among the dissidents of the sectarian congregations. These individuals were disturbed by growing secular trends, as well as the bitter sectarian conflicts that raged between the various denominations. Moreover, religious truths were increasingly called into question as the churches "met new

\textsuperscript{7}M. Hamlin Cannon, "Migration of English Mormons to America," \textit{American Historical Review} 52 (April 1947): 441. Cannon's figures are more reliable than those in Richard L. Evans, \textit{A Century of "Mormonism" in Great Britain} (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press 1937), p. 244.


\textsuperscript{10}Brigham Young and Willard Richards to the First Presidency, 5 September 1840, Church Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

\textsuperscript{11}For comparison with Christian fundamentalists in America, see Marvin S. Hill, "The Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom 1830-1844" (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1968), pp. 56-60.
ideas which threatened their dogmas and authority at source."  

Those who eventually joined the Saints reacted against these uncertainties, and were searching for new authority and new spiritual truths. Not the least of their concerns was the class differences that separated the working class believer from the clergy. As was asserted in the official 1851 religious census, "Working men . . . cannot enter our religious structures without having pressed upon their notice some memento of inferiority."  

Many of these fundamentalists can be described as primitivist seekers, that is, individuals who went from one church to another in search of religious truth. I have found no less than 104 converts who fit this description. But, because the sources are often vague concerning spiritual activities prior to conversion, it is not always possible to identify the seekers. Thus, this figure is probably too low, and a conservative approximation would be that at least 40 percent of the converts could be classified as seekers.

The experience of Daniel Williams is typical of this religious quest. Daniel was born into a family of humble circumstances in Pembrokeshire, South Wales, in 1806. He was raised in a religious atmosphere, and he recorded, "When I was very young I was taught to read the bible and was accustomed to seriously thinking about the state of my soul, and wished to know how I could please God and get deliverance from sin, which at that early period of my life, had become a great burden on my mind." When he was twelve, he began to attend Sunday School, which he continued to do for two years. About this time, the Independents and Methodists were preaching in the neighborhood, and Daniel attended their meetings frequently, but concluded that neither denomination conformed to the New Testament manner of baptism by immersion. At the age of sixteen, he decided to join the Baptists, and eventually he became a preacher. But around the year 1834 or 1835 Williams became disillusioned by the disunion among the various churches, and he decided to join with a group of seekers who were attempting to discover new truth. After several months, however, he concluded that this group had become a "sect of talkers," and he left in order to find a religion more compatible with his views. Unable to find what he was searching for, Williams returned to the Baptist church, but he remained disenchanted and concluded: "I could no longer be bound by their systems." While in a state of spiritual quandary, he read Parley P. Pratt's pamphlet, Remarkable Visions, and this eventually led to his joining the Latter-day Saints.

The story of Henry Savage is likewise revealing because of the extent of his religious inquiry and the frustrations that he encountered while searching for truth. While a young boy, Henry was taken by his mother to Methodist class meetings and love feasts. After serving in the navy, however, his religious perspectives had changed to the extent that he could no longer feel spiritually akin to fellow Methodists: "I would hear them get up and testify to the

14Daniel Williams, Journal, Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah.
pardonning love of God and how they knew their sins were forgiven, but I never could get excited as to testify as they did. . . . So I decided there was something wrong somewhere.” Thus he resolved to embark on a search for spiritual truth. But after investigating the doctrines of the Baptists, Calvinists, Spiritual Israelites, Trivinites, Millerites, as well as “other sects and parties,” Savage became disillusioned and attempted to find solace in Infidelity. He read Thomas Paine’s *Age of Reason*, the works of Voltaire, Lord Byron, and “many other ‘cure alls’ of the day,” but to no avail. In a state of despair, Henry heard two Mormon missionaries preaching, and, after reading the Book of Mormon “night and day,” he offered himself for baptism.\(^{15}\)

While primitivist seekers were searching for a religion that conformed to their personal interpretation of the Bible, invariably satisfaction was not found. Andrew Smith concluded from his reading of the Scriptures that modern religion was not structured in accordance to pristine Christianity. He wondered:

> How it was that these things were not made manifest now I was told Apostles &c were no longer needed that God has ceased to reveal his mind to the people. The Bible was to be our guide. I then thought I would rather have lived in the days of the Apostles & enjoyed the gifts of the spirit of God. . . . For the religion taught by modern “devines” was very doubtful instead of imparting light seemed to fill my mind with melancholy.\(^{16}\)

James Ure failed to join any religious body because of “such contention — Devision — Anerchy — & Corruption” in the existing churches. But the first time he heard Mormon elders preach, “I found two plain simple and apparently illiterate Men declaring and Testifying to the Truth of the . . . Gospel and of the Son of God as Taught and practised by Christ and his deciples in the Apostolic age.”\(^{17}\) This primitivist quest explains why so many like Ure joined the Saints spontaneously often without thoroughly investigating Mormon theology.

In addition to Biblical fundamentalism, the theological issue that was of major concern to many individuals was fear of eternal torment. As has been recently pointed out, “There were few issues which occurred more prominently in the nineteenth-century theological debate than those of everlasting punishment of the wicked and immortality of the soul.”\(^{18}\) To many, the traditional view of the horrible punishment awaiting the wicked in a hell of fire and brimstone could not be reconciled with Biblical passages that emphasized universal salvation. But, while hell was brought into question, the doctrine created considerable anxiety and doubt.

Sarah Layton stated that she was frightened away from the Independents because of a Calvinist preacher who claimed that “little children who were not born of parents who were elected were crawling over hell like frogs and toads.”\(^{19}\) Fredrick Weight related that his minister (also an Independent) preached that all men were going to hell if they did not believe the same doctrines he preached:

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\(^{16}\) Andrew Smith, Journal, Church Archives.

\(^{17}\) James Ure, *Diary*, 10 April 1840, Church Archives.


He [the minister] said if they did not believe in Christ, as soon as they were dead they would be in Hell torments forever and ever. He also said there were children in Hell not a span long, and that there was a clock there which said “Ever-Never, Ever-Never, Ever-Damnation, Never-Salvation.”

John Needham wrote that while in his youth “the name of Jesus used to strike me with terror.” This anxiety impelled him to investigate the Methodists, but they “preached so much hell and damnation” that he would “mourn” and “sigh” at work to the extent that he became a nuisance to his shopmates. "The Methodists," wrote another convert, "pictured hell in such a manner that I often wished I had never been born." George Whitaker wrote that he could not endure the prospect of spending as many years in hell as there were blades of grass, and another convert stated that fear of eternal torment disturbed him to the extent that he contemplated committing suicide. To these individuals, the Latter-day Saint's rejection of the traditional Calvinistic concept of hell was obviously an appealing feature.

To others, dissatisfaction with the existing Victorian churches was not entirely based on doctrinal issues, but was spawned by ant clerical sentiment. John Spiers stated that he left the Church of England because of the “character of her ministers [rather] than her doctrines.” William Long, a young farm laborer, asserted that he attended the Anglican church “about as much for fashion and form as anything else.” But when he first heard a Mormon elder preach, he reflected:

What a contrast! instead of long robed Gentleman preaching sprinkling of Infants, Hell and damnation &c I saw a man looked like a farmer in plain attire quoting from the Holy Scriptures and preaching the Gospel of Christ in its ancient purity. . .

To laborers such as Long, it was important that missionaries were plain looking and spoke on his level. In addition, he could identify with Mormon preachers because there were no obvious class barriers such as there were between himself and the Anglican clergyman.

Anticlerical hostility was not confined to the established church. Andrew Smith, a former Baptist, rejected all the churches because he “began to see that men taught for hire.” Samuel Wagstaff’s disaffection from the Independents stemmed from the exactions of the minister who raised the pew rents and told the poorer members of the congregation that they would have to bring their own stools and sit in the aisle if they could not pay.

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20Fredrick Weight, “A Short History of the Life of Fredrick Weight,” Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.
21John Needham, Journal, Brigham Young University Library.
22Biography of William Atkin, p. 1, Library of Congress Collection of Mormon Diaries, Reel no. 1, Brigham Young University Library.
23George Whitaker, Autobiography, Church Archives.
26Andrew Smith, Journal.
27Biographical Sketch of the Life of Samuel Wagstaff, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Collection, Brigham Young University Library.
On the other hand, Thomas Day, an Association Methodist, became embittered against that sect because of the disorders "which they have not the means of preventing." Presumably he was referring to spiritual excesses that were sometimes disruptive to Methodist meetings.

It was also common for those who eventually found satisfaction in Mormonism to experience a religious crisis prior to their conversion. In that the crisis experience has long been recognized as an antecedent to conversion, we need not dwell here on the nature of this phenomenon. While religious crisis can be precipitated by keen feelings of inadequacy, usually associated with the doctrine of the natural sinfulness of human nature, it can also result from such environmental factors as economic dislocation, war, and social turmoil.

We have been able to identify forty-two examples of those whose conversion was preceded by an identifiable crisis experience. There are several cases of converts such as George Harris, who suffered from what psychologists term an adolescent identity crisis. As a young lad, Harris was apprenticed on a coastal sailing vessel. While aboard ship the Methodist minister asked him if he had found peace with God, but George replied that he "could not say that God had sealed his pardoning love on my soul." The sense of guilt produced by this encounter stimulated him to search for spiritual satisfaction, but he could find "no tangible proof" that God had pardoned him. While in a state of anxiety caused by his failure to solve this dilemma, he was approached by Mormon missionaries and soon afterwards joined the new church.

In other instances crisis occurred as a result of death. In January 1840 George Morris married a young orphan girl. One year later his wife died, followed by their infant daughter: "These bereavements caused me to feel sorrowful, to reflect much about religion, to read the scriptures, and to pray for light that I might understand the principles of Salvation." In 1844 Mary Bathgate's eldest son was killed in a mining accident. This left her lonely, and to ease her sorrows she went to hear Mormon missionaries who were preaching in the district. As a result, both Mary and her youngest son were converted.

In other cases, individuals were turned to religion by disease or sickness, such as epidemics of "black measles or cholera. Prolonged illness also produced crisis. In 1842 John Freeman, a Christian Chartist, became afflicted with rheumatic fits, thus preventing him from working at his trade. For intervals over the next two years he was affected by this disease to the extent that he could "scarcely . . . get bread to eat." As a result, he visited the various sects in search of

28 Thomas Day, Jr., Journal and Reminiscences, Brigham Young University Library.
31 George Henry Abbot Harris, Diary, vol. 1, pp. 15–34, Brigham Young University Library.
32 George Morris, Autobiography, Brigham Young University Library.
33 Short History of Mary Bathgate Logan Adams, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Collection.
34 See Helen Richards Gardiner, Simon Noall (n. p., n. d.), pp. 5–6 (copy in the Brigham Young University Library); Life of William Grant, histories of the Utah Pioneers of Adams Camp, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Collection.
a spiritual cure. Finally, in January 1844, he visited the Mormons and found what he was searching for in the practice of the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick.\textsuperscript{35}

In the case of John Steele, however, crisis resulted from economic hardships. In 1840 his boot and shoe business in Belfast failed, causing him to move to Glasgow in search of employment. "About this time," he wrote, "I joined the Rachabite Club. Soon after I became a chartist and was very fond of hearing the Socialists and thought very strong of joining them." His condition also caused him to turn his thoughts to religion: "It [religion] occupied my time day and night. I did not think that any of the professing Christians were right." But while his mind was in this state of turmoil, he heard the Latter-day Saints and soon afterwards joined this sect.\textsuperscript{36} On the other hand, Steele's experience was not altogether typical, for few converts experienced hardships due to unemployment, although there were occasional complaints concerning inadequacy of wages. In addition, there was one individual whose hatred of the factory system led him to search for a better way of life in America. After a short stay in the New World, however, he decided to return, and while aboard ship sailing for England, he was converted.\textsuperscript{37}

According to J. F. C. Harrison, one of the major trends in nonconformist Christianity was toward the creation of a broad, latitudinarian base in religion: "The desire for a religion free from credal beliefs, conceding the right of private judgment, and unconnected with any ecclesiastical hierarchy, was widespread."\textsuperscript{38} It was these very trends that the Christian fundamentalists rejected. What they were seeking after were absolutes that would give order to the social and religious chaos which they envisioned as permeating society. Rather than the right of private judgment, they desired infallible channels of authority. This led them to accept prophets, new revelations, and even new sacred scripture.

III

The question of the previous religious affiliations of converts to Mormonism has been the subject of some controversy. Among contemporaries, Fanny Stenhouse, who converted from the Baptists, argued that there was a close resemblance between Primitive Methodist preachers and Mormon elders. She contended that a large number of the leading Mormons had been Methodist preachers and exhorters and "the greatest number of the new-born Saints had come from that denomination."\textsuperscript{39} Indeed, missionaries frequently commented on the Methodists who joined the church, and several historians have also noted how Methodists in particular found Mormonism "congenial and appealing."

The baptism and almost certain ordination of . . . [Methodist] lay leaders to the Mormon priesthood could mean the exchange of a Methodist for a Mormon cap with but little

\textsuperscript{35}John Freeman, Journal, Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{36}John Steele, Diary, Brigham Young University Library.
interruption to the convert’s relation to his former Methodist class or society, many members of which he would baptize into his new faith.40

P. A. M. Taylor, however, discounted the possibility of significant defections from Methodism because of the intense counter propaganda campaign waged by Methodist leaders against the Saints. Instead, Taylor emphasized the Mormon successes among the “splinter groups.”

During his work in Britain, Heber C. Kimball preached in the Baptist chapel of a Lancashire village, in a Methodist chapel at Eccleston, in the Shoreditch meeting place of some dissenters from Methodism, and in Aitkenite chapels. . . . At Doncaster, a preacher named Cordon converted most of an Aitkenite congregation. In the Ledbury district of Herefordshire, Wilford Woodruff scored the most striking success of all. He preached to a sect known as the United Brethren, who were seceders from Methodism, converted a high proportion of them, and took over their meeting place.41

In his study on Victorian religion, Owen Chadwick also contended that the Mormon converts were drawn from “splinter-Methodist” and “splinter-Baptist” groups.42

Now there is no doubt that some of the church’s most impressive early successes came among splinter groups such as those mentioned by Taylor. But Joseph Fielding, who labored with Kimball in 1837, asserted that the fifteen hundred people who joined the church during the first months of proselytizing came from “almost every society and many from the World.”43 In addition Wilford Woodruff noted that not all of the eight hundred converts in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire came from the United Brethren, a sect that had earlier broken from the Primitive Methodists. Woodruff recorded in his diary that the converts came from “the Church of England & all other Protestant churches.”44 What is apparently not realized is that word spread rapidly concerning Mormon beliefs, and consequently nonconformist chapels were closed to the missionaries. Thus the elders were forced to resort to traditional revival tactics, such as open air preaching. As Mormons began to appeal to wider audiences, obviously they began to attract converts from the mainstream of Protestantism.

That Mormonism attracted the majority of its adherents from the major religious denominations can be seen in Table 1, which lists the last religious affiliation prior to conversion to Mormonism. Unfortunately, the documents are not always precise concerning the actual church membership. For example, it was common for individuals to state that they formerly belonged to the Weslyan Methodists without indicating to which of the various Methodist connections they belonged. Despite such ambiguities, the sources nevertheless reveal a general pattern of previous religious affiliation.

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42 Chadwick, Victorian Church, 1: 436.
43 Diary of Joseph Fielding, typescript copy, p. 10, Brigham Young University Library.
44 Wilford Woodruff, Diary, 1 August 1840, Church Archives.
As might have been expected, the largest group was composed of former Methodists. There can be no question that Mormonism did indeed have a strong attractive power to dissidents of that faith. Such concepts as salvation by faith and good works, spiritual gifts, and lay participation were common to both religious groups; the former Methodist obviously found much that he was already familiar with in the new religion. On the other hand, the number of Methodists was not as appreciable as Fanny Stenhouse has led us to believe. Moreover, even though we do not know the precise number of Methodists who came from the Primitive sect, it does not appear to be substantial. This is only logical because the Primitive Methodists flourished in rural areas, whereas the Mormons tended to be strongest in the industrial cities.

An interesting paradox emerges from these figures. Nineteenth century Methodism in England was predominantly a middle class religion. This was also the case among the sects referred to as "Old Dissent" — the Baptists,
Presbyterians, and Independents. Yet those who left these groups for Mormonism were mostly from working class occupations. If we group former Methodists (excluding the Primitives) with those from congregations of Old Dissent, we find that 28.2 percent were from the middle class and the remaining 71.8 percent were working class. The above figures reflect the backgrounds of English Saints alone, for there were differences, for instance, between the Baptist church in England and Wales. If the other nationalities had been added, the totals would have reflected an even higher working class percentage. As it is, the figures suggest that the defectors to Mormonism were socially atypical for these churches.

This would suggest that perhaps class attitudes were important in influencing defection to Mormonism. While the sources used for this paper do not indicate a general pattern of disenchantment caused by class tensions or feelings of inferiority, this is not to say that such attitudes did not exist. Indeed, it is a well known fact that class attitudes did have strong bearings on patterns of religious belief during this period. In the case of working men, Hugh McLeod asserts that, "Conscious of an inferior status in the eyes of his social superiors," these individuals would likely react against those above him in social ranking by behaving in ways condemned by these superiors. Thus: "If . . . Nonconformity often represented a middle-class rejection of the politics and cultural values of the gentry, working men frequently signalled their rejection of both upper class and middle class values by Secularism or by simple indifference." We might also argue that the joining of a sect such as the Latter-day Saints could also be interpreted as a rejection of bourgeois religious values. Certainly this religion lacked "respectability" in the eyes of the middle class, and conversion to Mormonism oftentimes led to social ostracism or even loss of employment.

Class attitudes might also have influenced the decision of former Anglicans to join the church. The large percentage (73.1) of working class Anglicans makes this observation plausible. Indeed, we have already discussed examples of social cleavage between laborers and Anglican ministers, which was common among the Victorian working class. However, there appears to have been another ingredient affecting alienation. Former Anglicans appear to have experienced considerable internal mobility within the country; many individuals from this group had immigrated into the larger cities. As has long been recognized, the established church was indeed weakest in the industrial cities.

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46See appendix to this article. In determining class, I have used the categories established by P. A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward*, pp. 149-51.
48See p. 56
49Where mobility can be determined, we have found only 3 out of 25 who were immobile. The remaining 22 converts appear to have moved over considerable distances and with considerable frequency.
50McLeod, "Class, Community and Region," pp. 32-33; Inglis, *Churches*, p. 5.
Because the creation of new parishes lagged far behind urban growth, there might not have been a church within a reasonable distance for the newcomer to attend. Even where there were existing congregations, we might surmise that clerical pressure for conformity was for the most part lacking. Thus the new immigrant was relatively free to explore new religious options. The numbers who were attracted to Mormonism would suggest that this did happen. Indeed, historians have not previously realized the extent to which Mormonism attracted converts from the Church of England.

While most individuals were affiliated with a religious sect before their conversion to Mormonism, we have found 41 persons within our group who can best be described as unchurched Christians. Although these people were not members of a sect, they did profess adherence to Christian principles. Typical of these convictions was belief in the teachings of the Bible and the efficacy of prayer. In addition others professed belief in divine intervention into human affairs, and several indicated the conviction that new religious truths would soon be unveiled.

Few of the converts to Mormonism were Infidels, although there were several who conform to characterization of Horace Mann, who described the majority of uncommitted working people in the 1851 religious census as unconscious secularists — those who lacked philosophical grounds for rejecting Christianity, but who had no practical reason to associate themselves with a sect. In the case of James Farmer, he revealed a degree of hostility toward organized religions. Reflecting on his “heathen” days, he stated that he never “joined any religious sect but was wild and thoughtless and made all manner [of] sport of religion of all denominations.”

David West also revealed that he was a secularist prior to his conversion. He indicated his affiliation with the Odd Fellow’s Society, as well as his association with radical politics, but gave no indication of interest in religion until his conversion in 1848. “About this time,” he reflected, “none of us that worked in the shop, except my brother John, belonged to any religion. About May, Henry George started working in the shop. He was a Mormon and began preaching the gospel.” This resulted in the conversion of both David and his brother. What is interesting about this account is that it resembles many others in revealing an essentially secular life prior to conversion. Then, almost unexpectedly, the individual joined the Mormon church. In some instances, the conversion experience was so important to the individual that his previous religious activities became insignificant. In other cases, however, it could indeed reveal a secular orientation to one’s past life. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine how many converts were drawn in “from the World,” but it would seem that the numbers constituted a substratum much greater than we have been able to determine.

The question of why Mormonism appealed to the working classes has been frequently raised. It has been asserted that it was the Mormon emphasis on “prophecy, millennialism, progress, apostolic authority, religious ordinances,

51James Farmer, Diary, Brigham Young University Library.
and universal salvation” that made the religion attractive to working people.\textsuperscript{53} While all of these features, which have been gleaned from Mormon propaganda, undoubtedly had some influence on conversions, they do not all relate to the reasons given by the converts themselves. Table 2 lists the factors that converts thought to be influential in their conversion.

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Reasons Stated for LDS Conversion}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Reasons & Times Listed \\
\hline
Primitive simplicity & 36 \\
Plainness of doctrines & 9 \\
Spiritual manifestations & 24 \\
Concept of authority (prophets, apostles, priesthood, etc.) & 14 \\
Book of Mormon & 12 \\
Message of A Voice of Warning & 10 \\
Difference from other religions & 6 \\
Millennial teachings & 6 \\
\hline
Other reasons: & \textbf{23} \\
Baptism by immersion & 4 \\
First vision & 4 \\
Divine revelation & 1 \\
Love of members & 2 \\
Plan of Salvation & 2 \\
Impressed with missionaries & 10 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

This table suggests that converts considered the concept of a restoration of Biblical truth to be the most attractive feature of the religion. “Plainness of doctrines” and “primitive simplicity” essentially meant the same thing: Mormonism conformed to their image of pristine Christianity. With the emphasis given to millennial teachings by historians, it is interesting to note that few converts mentioned this doctrine as influencing their conversion, although Parley P. Pratt’s millennial pamphlet, \textit{A Voice of Warning},\textsuperscript{54} apparently was an important source of inspiration to many who joined the church. Indeed, this pamphlet was mentioned almost as often as the Book of Mormon in influencing conversion. It is also significant that no convert alluded to communitarian ideals. (Interestingly enough, however, a group of converts in 1839 attempted to establish a religious community shortly after baptism, but the experiment soon failed).\textsuperscript{55} Nor did either emigration to America or the building of Zion have any apparent influence on conversion.


\textsuperscript{54}Parley Parker Pratt, \textit{A Voice of Warning} (New York: J. E. Harrison, 1839).

\textsuperscript{55}Joseph Fielding, Diary, p. 41.
If Laurence M. Yorgason's study of American converts gives an accurate indication of the religious background of those who joined the church, then we can conclude that there was a striking parallel between British and American converts. Yorgason found that the religions from which Mormons were converted were the most prominent groups in America in the 1830s. Out of 93 converts studied, he found that 55 were from Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist churches. In my study, I have determined that the greater majority also came from the most prominent denominations in Britain. The most striking differences are in the number of unchurched Christians. Yorgason found 32 out of 93 to be within this category, whereas I discovered a ratio of only 41 out of 298. But in Britain, I found a much higher percentage of persons from the various splinter groups, although it has been shown that this was not the most prominent element, as has been contended.

IV

While theories relating conversion to social status, economic conditions, and social strife are not without some relevance in dealing with Mormon successes, to explain this phenomenon in strictly secular terms is misleading. For example, E. P. Thompson has argued that Mormonism was a "reflex of despair" that was triggered by the collapse of working class reform agitation in the 1840s. According to him, there was a relationship between the failure of radical agitation for political and social reform and outbreaks of chiliastic fervor. Confronted with failure in the real world, some working people, Thompson contends, turned to the dream world of messianic expectations. Thus, he related the final collapse of Chartism in 1848 to the impressive statistics for Mormon conversions in 1849.

However, if Mormonism was primarily a response to the unsettled conditions during the "hungry forties," then certainly there would be indications of this in the personal accounts used for this study. What is significant is how little evidence there is that relates to social conditions during this troubled decade. Excepting several atypical accounts of former chartists, trade unionists, and participants in radical politics, there is no evidence that Mormonism was a "reflex of despair" or even a movement that can be directly related to economics. Instead of uncovering conditions of impoverishment, I found that the converts analyzed were either prosperous or were at least "making ends meet." It is significant that only 8 converts out of the 298 here analyzed were unemployed at the time of baptism. When a reporter for the Liverpool Albion described Mormon emigrants in 1842 as "in appearance and worldly

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circumstances above the ordinary men of steerage passengers," he undoubtedly came close to the mark in describing these people.58

In the last analysis, it was the unsettled religious conditions in the 1840s that offer the key to understanding Mormon successes. The strength of the movement lay in its ability to appeal to the disaffected from the sectarian congregations, and to inculcate within them the desire to build the kingdom in the last days. Conversely, the major limitation of the movement appears to have been its inability to appeal to those outside the perimeter of Christian fundamentalism.

### Appendix

**Crosstabulation of Previous Religious Affiliation, Class, and Nationality of British Mormon Converts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Denomination</th>
<th>Middle Class</th>
<th>Lower Middle Class</th>
<th>Artisan</th>
<th>Working Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>7 (13.5)</td>
<td>7 (13.5)</td>
<td>6 (11.5)</td>
<td>32 (61.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>8 (13.5)</td>
<td>6 (10.2)</td>
<td>10 (17.0)</td>
<td>35 (59.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Methodist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (33.3)</td>
<td>2 (66.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>6 (40.0)</td>
<td>4 (26.7)</td>
<td>2 (13.3)</td>
<td>3 (20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>6 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously inclined</td>
<td>2 (7.4)</td>
<td>3 (11.1)</td>
<td>6 (22.2)</td>
<td>16 (59.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but not affiliated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other denominations</td>
<td>8 (21.1)</td>
<td>6 (15.8)</td>
<td>2 (5.3)</td>
<td>22 (57.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scottish</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1 (100.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1 (12.5)</td>
<td>2 (25.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (62.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously inclined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other denominations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welsh</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (50.0)</td>
<td>1 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (25.0)</td>
<td>3 (75.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>6 (54.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously inclined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (25.0)</td>
<td>3 (75.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irish</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>2 (100.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1 (33.3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (33.3)</td>
<td>1 (33.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other denominations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (100.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage is indicated in brackets along with total (read across).*
Although friends and relatives of Frederick Madison Smith, the second president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, considered him ahead of his time about a generation — an estimation with which he concurred — it is possible now to conclude from a study of his early life that he was less a visionary and more a derivative character in his social philosophy, religious beliefs, and intellectual analysis. If Sidney Hook's depiction of the role of the hero in history is a reliable schema, then "Fred M." — as he was called in the small Iowa pasturage of his youth to mark him from all the other Freds in town — was an "eventful" rather than an "eventmaking" person; he creatively reacted and responded to problems and dilemmas of his own historical milieu rather than breaking entirely new ground. While he cultivated an image of "visionary," in actuality he and his church looked backward, not forward to perfection; he reacted to the "acids of modernity" rather than confront them.¹

He sincerely embraced his faith and what he conceived to be its socially regenerative mission, and he changed little in his adult years after 1915. The church instituted by his grandfather, Joseph Smith, Jr., was the modular key that held the rest of his life in tune. The teachings of the church, its Hebraic sense of special mission of a chosen people, and its sectarian peculiarities became the ideological trunk upon which he could engraft supportive branches from his

educational and secular experience. His eclectic nature allowed him to select and accommodate from these experiences certain precepts, ideas, social analyses, and processes that he believed would enable his church to change the social order from one dominated by selfishness to one where altruism so saturated the populace that the kingdom of God would become a tangible reality. Social reform toward that end was to him the unique responsibility of God’s colony, and in trying to realize that goal he never lost sight of his Mormon grandfather’s nineteenth century vision of a literal Zion — an earthly city made heavenly by the individual and collective righteousness of its regenerated inhabitants.2

By the time he assumed the presidential chair vacated by his father in 1915, Fred M. had found abundant support for his views in the writings of “mugwump” social reformers, such as the more conservative social gospelers, and educators or social theorists best exemplified by Professor G. Stanley Hall, his mentor in psychology at Clark University. Mugwumpery represented the more conservative side of the many-faceted reform movement known as progressivism, the ethos of which suffused the formative years of Fred M.

These more orthodox reformers proposed that character was much more important to social change than any environmental variable and that character could be developed only by direct appeals to the individual. Said E. L. Godkin, a leading mugwump of Smith’s time: In order to make men more moral, “‘you must not legislate, but teach.’”3 The melioristic reform was to be accomplished by the “best men,” a talented elite possessing vision and authority — an aristocracy who despised the corrupted rich as well as the democratic masses, who had caught the vision of their stewardship of social regeneration.4 Among these Paladins, Fred M. was a kindred spirit.

On 21 January 1874, in Plano, Illinois, Frederick Madison was born to Joseph Smith III and Bertha Madison. Seven years later, Joseph and his family moved to Lamoni, Iowa, the small town being developed by his church as its new headquarters. It was there, in a community dominated by the Saints, that young Frederick spent his youth, attended school, married, and was cemented into his father’s version of the Mormon faith.

During the four years following graduation from high school in 1891, he worked with machinery and electricity, ambitious for a career in electrical engineering. More than half the money he earned in these years was spent buying books on electronics, mathematics, and gadgetry. As much the tinkerer as an Edison, he would use his basement shop in later years to repair delicate clocks


and radios, develop his own photographs, and make precision parts for farm
machinery as a brief respite from the demands of church work.\textsuperscript{5}

Enamored with technology and technological achievements, the young
man experienced one of the most exhilarating moments of his life when the
engineer of a freight locomotive permitted him to stoke the boiler and take the
controls for a hundred miles. From that point in his life he became a keen
observer of that form of transportation and praised its growing efficiency. Yet, as
he considered the vast amounts of coal the locomotive consumed, his enthusiasm
was qualified by a rare awareness of the conservation problems this portended for
the future. According to his figures, the steam engine used only one-twelfth of the
energy potential of coal as it hungrily devoured its twelve tons every one hundred
eighty miles. “What a waste!” he explained, “How we are robbing future
generations.” “Wasting eleven twelfths to get one!” Yet, waste or no waste, the
coal thrown into the fireboxes of the big engines moved the trains over the road,
and that was the greater value; even on the fairest of skin an occasional blemish
appeared to taunt perfection.\textsuperscript{6}

Despite ambitions leading him in technical directions, his position as the
oldest living son of the “Prophet Joseph” seemed to indicate that young Fred M.
was the heir apparent to his father’s office as prophet, seer, revelator, and
president of the church. Even as a “chubby, barefooted boy, padding through the
hot dust of a country town’s Main Street, he was frequently reminded of the
responsibility which overshadowed his future.” All about him were reminders
that he was inexorably locked into a commitment and a structure that
determined the course of his life. He accepted his lot with grace, but always
ritualistically protested that he would rather have been a teacher or scientist than
a religious leader.\textsuperscript{7}

In July 1887, he was called to the office of elder and ordained by his father,
albeit ubiquitous critics in the church protested the act as one showing
favoritism to youth, inexperience, and first families. He preached his first sermon
in Shenandoah, Iowa, while on his wedding trip. The discourse on faith
consisted of eleven tense moments within which his wife concluded that “he was
able to bring out several good points . . . pounded them down with his fists, and
without comment or elucidation laid them on the table as it were, for the
congregation to take undiluted or leave tabled.”\textsuperscript{8} The content of his sermons
improved with age, but his delivery technique changed little.

\textsuperscript{5}Ruth Smith, \textit{Concerning the Prophet}, pp. 117-22, 126-27, 176, 179, 182; F. M. Smith, “One of
My Hobbies,” \textit{Autumn Leaves} 59 (October 1926): 422-23; Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, “Some
Memories of the Presidents,” \textit{SH} 107 (28 March 1960): 316; F. M. Smith, “Memories of President
Decided Fredrick M. Smith’s Turning Point,” \textit{Kansas City Star}, undated clipping in the Department
of History, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Mo. (cited
hereafter as RLDS Archives); Interview with Lois Larsen, 15 November 1972; Joseph H. Anthony,

\textsuperscript{6}Ruth Smith, \textit{Concerning the Prophet}, pp. 111-12; F. M. Smith, “Our Utah Trip,” \textit{SH} 51 (16
March 1904): 242-43, 266.

\textsuperscript{7}Ruth Smith, \textit{Concerning the Prophet}, pp. 17, 65, 73-75; Charles Cousins, “Impressions of
President Frederick M. Smith,” \textit{SH} 68 (22 November 1921): 1123; and Interview with Lois Larsen, 15
November 1972.

\textsuperscript{8}Ruth Smith, \textit{Concerning the Prophet}, p. 91.
During the last half of the 1890s he worked in his father’s office as a member of the editorial staff of the Saints' Herald and as an assistant to the church historian. While in these positions he gave reverent respect to the “traditions of the elders” that would later astonish him, but he also learned to resent these older men who overruled his decisions and disparaged his efforts.9

His father was particularly anxious to avoid the trauma and confusion over succession to the presidency that plagued the early church after 1844. He sincerely believed that Frederick Madison, as eldest living son, was entitled to inherit the birthright, which in this case was the presidency of the church. But he categorically put the question to his son in 1900: “‘My boy, if you do not think you wish to stand . . . the trials and disappointments that you have had to see me endure, now is the time for you to withdraw.’” Resigned to his fate, feeling destined to serve, the son answered that he could find no better place to assist humanity than in the church.10 He confessed “that in taking up this life’s work, I have given up anything that I might have in the way of ambition in making something for myself like most young men do; but I gladly do it for the sake of the work.”11 In order to insure an orderly succession, Smith declared on several occasions that his son Frederick was to succeed to his office in the event of his death or removal from that position, and the younger man continued to prepare for his future responsibilities.12

Both his father and grandfather craved an academic education, and Fred M. was possessed by this same desire to learn; but he differed from both of his predecessors in that he was able to fulfill his wish. In 1894–95 he attended the State University of Iowa, but at the end of the school year, out of his sense of propriety and obligation, he transferred to Graceland College, newly founded and sponsored by his church in Lamoni as a nonsectarian institution of higher learning. During his tenure there Fred M. was an honor student, president of the Shakespeare Club, and founder of the Athenian Literary Society. In other ways, however, his independence irritated the administration to such an extent that he was placed on probation for six weeks for “improprieties.” Impatient with the tedium of protracted morning chapel, Fred M. and some of his friends had started alternative services in the room below the official sanctuary, intending to abbreviate the length of their prayers, sermons, and songs. But their psalms of praise, floating upward through the ceiling, ruffled the pious dignity of the presiding elder’s introductory prayer. His compatriots publicly apologized for their breach of propriety, but Fred M., scornful of public confession for a deed he

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did not consider sinful and rarely apologetic, did not recant and proceeded to take his punishment.\textsuperscript{13}

In the spring of 1898 he completed his degree at Graceland, the school's first graduate and the only member of his class. He remained the following year to teach mathematics, and proved to be a rigorous instructor. After resigning from the Graceland staff to more actively assist his aging father, he accepted an appointment as a trustee at his alma mater.\textsuperscript{14}

Fred M. was not satisfied, however, to terminate his own formal education with a bachelor's degree. He appreciated and enjoyed the systematic discipline of college level work, and believed that any leader must be at least as well educated as his learned followers.\textsuperscript{15} Soon after the church again moved its headquarters to its traditional center place at Independence, Missouri, in 1906, he began work toward a master's degree in sociology at the University of Missouri. There he became personally acquainted with Dr. Charles Ellwood, a sociologist who served as his mentor and casual friend. Ellwood later defended him not as a "ravening Mormon," but the head of "an important religious denomination" whose "plan of Zion" was conceptually a viable instrument for social reform.\textsuperscript{16}

Late in 1909 Smith transferred from Missouri to the University of Kansas because of the latter's proximity to Independence. Through his studies he hoped to develop a detailed, articulate, and practical formulation of the social message of his grandfather for his own church and the world at large. Pressured by his church responsibilities as counselor to his father in the presidency and his studies as an M.A. candidate, he learned to work far into the night at home in a cluttered little room full of papers, and commuted from his church office to the university at Lawrence, Kansas, and home again with briefcases packed with study materials, church documents, and articles to be edited for church publications. For relaxation he read the books on calculus and trigonometry which he kept carefully stashed under his bedroom pillow, or he worked on expanding his English vocabulary.\textsuperscript{17}

His father was elated with Fred's educational progress, and upon his receipt of the M.A. degree, made the epigrammatic explanation, " 'I am proud, and I know, my son, that you will not let them make of you a learned incapable.' "\textsuperscript{18}

That he was no educated cripple was evident shortly following his graduation by his persistent advocacy of the benefits of education for church membership.

\textsuperscript{13}Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, pp. 27-28.


\textsuperscript{15}Samuel A. Burgess, "President Frederick M. Smith," SH 64 (11 April 1917): 337.


\textsuperscript{17}Cheville, They Made a Difference, pp. 303-4; Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, pp. 142, 144-45, 155-56; F. M. Smith, "Preparation," p. 784; Elbert A. Smith, "Some Memories of President Frederick M. Smith," part 1, SH 104 (13 May 1957): 440; Interview with Garland E. Tickemyer, 25 November 1973.

\textsuperscript{18}Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, p. 157.
generally and for its leaders particularly. In a closed meeting of the church leaders in 1912, Smith made a ringing defense for education against its critics within the institution:

A good many of our people have put a premium on ignorance. That has come from an inaccurate application of the statement that 'the Lord shall choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.' I do not believe we are justified in permitting ourselves to remain in ignorance.

He did not disparage the spiritual development of man, but believed that when isolated from the intellect, it bred fanatics, bigots, and abnormal personalities. To Fred M. the prodigious defenders of the Christian faith had always been educated, informed individuals who interpreted their faith in terms of their own Zeitgeist, and nothing less was expected of the contemporary church. He bristled with indignation and his “cheeks burned with shame” when he heard people refer to his grandfather as an “ignoramus.” “Can a lazy man,” he retorted, read “Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and German?” In a snorting challenge he declared:

The Lord has told us to acquaint ourselves with languages, histories, and peoples, and a good many of our people have seemed to suppose that the Lord would teach them the languages without any effort on their part. We . . . are commanded to study. How many men are making the effort?

The church needed an educated corps of bright young men who understood other men of the world on their own terms, who were capable of communicating with them in a sympathetic, nonderisive manner, and whose acceptance would be reciprocated respectfully.19 Beyond that wider goal, this educated elite could assist the church eliminate the errors which had crept into its doctrines and teachings due to ignorance, superstition, the inadequacy of language, or premeditated malevolence. To Fred M. this educated man he sought in the church coincided with the measure provided by the sophist Isocrates in Panathenaicus: one who managed his daily circumstance with perspicacity and sensitive, humane judgement; one who was decent, honorable, disciplined, and stoic in interactions with other men and in life’s pleasures and misfortunes; one who was true to himself and was not spoiled by success; and lastly, one whose character was possessed by integrity and virtue.20

Further, he found the church loaded with dynamite of unused talent, and this salient neglect represented a constant “source of restlessness, dissatisfaction, discouragement . . . and failure.” To develop this unused potential and uplift the uneducated Saints, he made several attempts between 1911 and 1915 to share his own learning and to develop educational centers in Independence. He began with a series of lectures on sociology and social problems in the Stone Church, the central edifice of the faith in the community. It was these lectures that became

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19 Joint Council Minutes, 6 April 1912, pp. 21-24, as cited in Smith, Smith, and Edwards, History of the Reorganized Church, 6: 443 (These minutes have been closed to historical research); and Burgess, “President Frederick M. Smith,” p. 338.

20 F. M. Smith, “The Church and Scholarship,” SH 60 (10 September 1913): 882; F. M. Smith, “Isocrates in Panathenaicus”, undated manuscript, in the collection of Smith’s private papers in the possession of his grandson, Frederick Niels Larsen, Independence, Mo. (Hereafter referred to as Smith Papers.) Part of the collection is available on microfilm in the Mormon History Collection, Frederick Madison Smith Library, Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa.
the impetus for the Graceland Extension Institute and the Independence Institute of the Arts and Sciences.\(^{21}\)

As a Christian scholar, Fred M. saw little conflict between true science and true religion. The scientific attitude — the ability to detach oneself from prejudice, personal interest, and preconceived ideas — could do much to increase the reliability of the social sciences and the study of religion, and was a requisite of social progress and reform. For those who gained scientific knowledge and yet clung to their religion, apparent contradictions between these two paths to truth would eventually be harmonized by increasing research or divine revelation. Wholesome skepticism and higher criticism properly used had its place in the church, but it must "abide the time" until the apparent conflicts reached an Aristotelian resolution. Thereafter the character of God and His attributes would become "more brilliantly grand and imposing."\(^{22}\)

Although some church members criticized Fred M.'s concern for secular learning, he and his father were anxious for their religion to gain the respect of the larger Christian world and its educated, clerical leadership. One avenue toward that acceptance led the RLDS hierarchy in the way of formal schooling, and since this path coincided with his personal ambition, Fred M. decided that he should continue the preparation for his life's vocation by work toward the Ph. D. at Clark University. He would leave the routine tasks of the presidency in the hands of the second counselor Elbert A. Smith. His decision to attend Clark was influenced in part by Floyd M. McDowell, a Graceland faculty member, then on leave of absence to finish his master's degree at the institution, and by his own favorable assessment of its president, Dr. G. Stanley Hall.\(^{23}\)

Hall was one of the first American scientific psychologists. Together with William James, he helped to establish psychology as a professional, academic discipline in the United States. His theory of genetic psychology as stated in Adolescence particularly affected Fred M. The individual mind was perceived by Hall as a microcosm of the world's historical experience, a composite inheritance of the past, an "echo chamber reverberating with the whispers of ancestors" that could be studied as a historical realm in miniature. This thesis, and other Hallian attitudes (including a negative view of women, a dated concept of race, and the centrality of the "erethetic" state — a mental-emotional state of high, intense, inordinate enthusiasm and achievement) found a fertile seedbed in Fred M., who discretely appropriated them while he was Hall's protege from 1914 to 1917.\(^{24}\)

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\(^{23}\)Smith, Smith, and Edwards, History of the Reorganized Church, 6: 609; F. M. Smith to Floyd M. McDowell, 23 October 1913, in Frederick M. Smith Student File, Clark University Library, Worcester, Mass. (Cited hereafter as Student File.)

He began his career at Clark by sending Floyd M. McDowell to present his credentials to Hall, together with his request to engage in further work in sociology, with history and economics as minors. Hall responded positively to his inquiry, but he argued the case for psychology, rather than sociology, as better preparatory work for future clerics. Fred M. was swayed by Hall's suggestion, expressed a particular interest of his own in the psychology of primitivism as manifested in the Native American peyote cults, and made plans to take a two-year doctorate, spending the first in residence beginning in the fall of 1914.

In his first personal audience with Hall, Fred M. reconfirmed the conclusions of their correspondence and indicated that he felt the need for a broad education: "I am a church man and I came not to specialize particularly but to generalize." He would lament the decision as his comprehensive examinations approached: "My persistent efforts to generalize and cover over a large field has spread me out rather like a small piece of poor butter on a large piece of bread." During his year of residence, he became fast friends with Hall, often accompanying him on his late afternoon strolls around the small Massachusetts town as one of his "favorites." It was Fred M.'s advice during these informal sessions that influenced Hall to dismiss a Black Ph. D. candidate, one Bishop Perry, who had been allowed to dangle by his committee for years while they debated his mental powers and "traits of color" among themselves.

By February 1915 the teacher and student generally agreed on a thesis topic; that is, Hall outlined the scope, content, and sources for Fred M.'s research and writing, and overwhelmed by Hall, the latter did not dissent. The professor proposed that the study stress the innate power latent in the individual character to become energized to more elevated levels of consciousness and achievement. To expedite the topic Hall suggested, among other things, that he write some pages synopsizing the works of George E. Partridge and G. T. Patrick on alcoholism and explore the concept of erethism generally, beginning with a work by William James, "The Energies of Men."

Here Smith was challenged to fuse the world of his faith with his intellectual pretensions, and neither the death of his father in 1915, his own periodic bouts with illness, nor his increasing responsibilities in the church detracted from the mental and spiritual exhilaration he experienced as he pursued his subject.

25F. M. Smith to Floyd M. McDowell, 23 October 1913, and G. Stanley Hall to F. M. Smith, 15 November 1913, Student File; Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, p. 205.
26F. M. Smith to G. Stanley Hall, 4 January 1914, and Hall to Smith 20 January 1914, Student File.
27Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, pp. 204-5; F. M. Smith to G. Stanley Hall, 2 May 1916, Student File.
28Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, pp. 206, 211-12, 216-17.
29G. Stanley Hall to F. M. Smith, 17 February 1915, Student File. This action seems to belie the allegation by Hall's most recent biographer that he was extremely flexible in organizing graduate programs. See Ross, G. Stanley Hall, p. 425n.
However, the final draft of the dissertation, which he entitled “The Higher Powers of Man,” was rather apologetically submitted to Hall in February 1916. Fred M. did not feel satisfied with his efforts, but pled a case for its acceptance, citing the increasing pressures of his church responsibilities as the preempts of his time and energy. He asked Hall to arrange for his official examination as soon as possible, and since he had little time to cram, asked to be taken “just as I am, as Jesus is supposed to do with repentent sinners.” Suggestive of the usual graduate student syndrome, for the next month he fretted heavily over his impending comprehensive orals and continued to lament the study time importuned by his eccelesiastical duties.31

His wife shared Smith’s anxiety about the examination. In addition she wondered about the potential bias of Smith’s committee because of his religious convictions. She wrote Hall explaining that Smith “still eats, sleeps, and laughs quite like a normal man,” and implored, “don’t let your professionals think he is like a hysterical Mormon or look upon him as abnormal.”32

He passed his examination on 15 May with the reservations that he read a list of works treating psychology, Christianity, history, and economics prepared for him by his committee and that he revise the portions of his dissertation as requested by Hall. Curiously, the list of books and suggested revisions did not reach him until 19 June, four days after he received his diploma. There is no indication that he ever completed the reading or substantially revised his draft. In late 1917 he disingenuously wrote Hall that an “eastern publishing concern” [the RLDS Herald House] wanted to issue his paper, and knowing his effort had disappointed Hall, reticently asked his former mentor if he would write an introduction for the book. Even though Hall had declined to print the dissertation at Clark, he assented to Fred M.’s request, indicating that his work had some merit “even as it stands,” but also recommending more revision and reasearch.33

The central theme of Fred M.’s dissertation brought together the com-munitarian, sectarian thrust of his own religion and the psychological theory and social conservatism of G. Stanley Hall. It is an excellent index to the attitudes that would characterize Smith’s socially meliorative approach to reform and leadership.34

Faithful to the scope established by Hall, the dissertation held that the innate potential of the human being, the “resources of the race that slumber in him” enabled man to surpass his habitual mediocrity and energize to higher levels of achievement. Suffusing the work was Smith’s controlling assumption that individual character, innate ability, and the strength of one’s ancestors far outweighed environmental factors in determining the course of life and society. Both he and Hall recognized a deeper nature of man appearing “in such varied

31F. M. Smith to G. Stanley Hall, 18 February 1916, and Hall to Smith 9 March 1916, Student File.
32Ruth Lyman Smith to G. Stanley Hall, early May 1916, Student File.
33Note from the Clerk for the Jury of Examination, 15 May 1916; G. Stanley Hall to F. M. Smith, 19 June 1916 and 14 March 1917; and Smith to Hall, 8 February and 8 November 1917; all in Student File.
34F. M. Smith to G. Stanley Hall, 8 February 1917, Student File.
phenomena as inspiration" and evident "in all superlative achievements of man in every domain."35

The loosening of reserve psychic forces not only assisted man in climbing the ladder from barbarism to civilization, but also revealed that "nervous power" and "physical machinery" could be conserved and "waste of time, labor and motion" could be eliminated as services to humanity were simultaneously increased. Paraphrasing one of Hall's addresses at Clark in 1909, Fred M. attributed the emerging social efficiency of his own time to the process of conservation of energy through scientific management. One of the grossest of sins was the dissipation of energy and consequent diminution of accomplishment. "Today," he editorialized,

virtue is not enough; we must eliminate the inefficiency of good men. We live below our highest level and we must learn to energize up to our maximum — to break through at least the first fatigue barrier and in our second breath unlock the usually slumbering powers.36

Most of his narrative drew from the ideas of the scholars that Hall recommended as supportive to his thesis. After summarizing Partridge and Patrick on the effects of alcohol on man and its connection with erethism, he responded to Hall's charge to do some original thinking with a declaration that the drug contributed to a less abundant life. The use of alcohol, he said, constituted a release from tension, but it was achieved at the price of intellectual progress. Alcoholic intoxication was not erethism, but an artificially induced ecstatic state wherein the higher mental powers were depressed and the lower exaggerated. Erethism concentrated "nerve energy" from all areas of the mind and body upon a central point, sensation, or idea. Alcoholic ecstasy, on the other hand, inhibited the higher and sublime psychic energies of civilized man and unleashed primitive urges. Essentially, then, alcoholic ecstasy was antithetical to erethism and represented a counterproductive atavism necessitating stringent controls.37 In addition to Mormon prescriptions on the use of alcohol this view helped to rationalize Smith's adamant and lifelong support for prohibition.

Continuing his essay, Fred M. argued that ecstatic states were the central experience of mystically inclined religion — an affirmation with which another source, Paolo Mantegazza, totally concurred. A variation of erethism, ecstasy derived first of all from concentrating on a single thought or sensation to the point of "gushing confluence" and "a single, thrilling sensation" into which all other feelings fused. The person thus transformed attains "the outermost border of human limitation," and upon reaching this state, the energy released from the nerve centers could either be expended in the ecstasy itself or transformed into a tangible work of art, pen, or chisel. In the case of women or "weak men" the energies of ecstasy terminated in that state; in "real men," however, it became incarnate in "useful work." In the artistic, scientific, and literary achievements of

36Ibid., pp. 9-10, 23-27.
37G. Stanley Hall to F. M. Smith, 17 February and 10 July 1915, Student File; F. M. Smith, Higher Powers of Man, pp. 34-57, 75.
the human race were found monuments to genius thus derived from this rhapsodical insight.  

After perusing the *Annual Reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, he concluded that the American Indian was religious and contemplative to the point that virtually every act was regulated by beliefs. His ecstatic, animistic religion was permeated by “a conscious attitude toward, unseen powers or beings believed to have influence, benign or malignant, upon the believer.” True to his own conception that innate faculties predetermined man’s attitudes and character, Fred M. found the locus for the similarity of primitive religions not in any historical connections, but in “the uniformity with which the human mind works under similar conditions.” This “cardinal and basic truth” was also applicable to the arts, law, and social institutions, a proposition which to himself and Hall could be validated through a study of evolving primitive cults.

Further, as a more original corollary to his earlier summary of Paolo Mantegazza’s mid-nineteenth century treatise on ecstatic states he explored the “chemical ecstasy” of the peyote religion of Southwestern Indians. He became originally interested in this topic when two Cheyenne members of the RLDS church informed him of the extended use of the plant among their people in Oklahoma tribes. His interest thus stimulated, he found that the study of peyote meshed into the larger pattern of “The Higher Powers of Man.” The visions experienced in the peyote tepee had a “softening mystic effect” upon its users, while the psychic power of suggestion performed “wonders fascinating to the Indian minds.” If the mental attitude of the participant was centered in the Great Spirit through ceremonious preparation, then the ritual and consumption of the peyote ceremony produced an ecstatic state in which visions were experienced and various therapeutic effects were derived.

Considering the popularity of the cult among Southwestern Indians, he surmised that the “Indian childlike propensity to do the thing prohibited” accounted for it in part. But the more important reason for its spread lay in the ecstasy that filled the vacuum left by forced abandonment of older religious forms. He detected among those tribes whose customs had changed upon contact with white civilization a decay of their community interest because “they were too poorly endowed for success” in the individualistic struggles of the external world. Since ecstasy encouraged the development of the best that was in them, its demise left them without virtue, circumscribed by tribal tabus, and completely subject to their own “natural vices.” Hence the origins of the lazy, drunken, and dependent Indian was ascribed to white intrusion into the aboriginal state of nature. His interest in peyote continued in the ensuing years, and, in response to invitations from Indian members he would later “‘go in and pray to God in Heaven’” with them in the peyote tepees of Oklahoma and Nebraska.

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38 These ideas are discussed in F. M. Smith, *Higher Powers of Man*, pp. 67-68; 81-85; 69-70, 219; and 220, 72-105, *passim*.

39 Ibid., 115-39.

40 Ibid., pp. 65, 106-13, 221; and F. M. Smith, “Preparation,” p. 784. Hall had suggested the summary of Mantegazza’s *Des Ekstasen des Menschen*.

41 F. M. Smith, *Higher Powers of Man*, pp. 112, 114, 221-25. In the fall of 1919 Smith participated
Again in response to Hall’s suggestion, he found in controlled, sublimated anger the means for overcoming adversity and for realizing personal ambitions and altruistic community ideals. This type of anger was not mere pique or petty annoyance, but a dynamogenic burst of energy that aroused a primitive fighting instinct due to encroachment on liberties, resentment against injustice, or enmity toward evil. Few men of historical or public note had been free from this type of positive anger, a safety valve releasing pressure in socially meliorative acts. Such a positive, healthy force, under the discipline of education should be encouraged and never repressed:

It is the development of the fighting spirit which always had played and always will play so important a role in life’s game. If the fight instinct is repressed and eliminated we get the coward; if overdeveloped, the bully; if controlled and directed, the virile man.

To Fred M. the crux of the matter was that sublimated, controlled, intellectualized, and spiritualized anger channeled energies into the higher regions of the mind, converting it from egoistic, “soul-consuming destructive fire,” into an altruistically motivated, enriched character. Anger was thus socialized as a basis for reform as the individual responded with a wholesome, virulent indignation.\(^\text{42}\)

In the life and ministry of the founder of Christianity he found the sublime example of a human being who lived almost constantly in the erethetic state during the three years of his public ministry. Jesus, in the “habiliments of humanity,” lived at a higher level of consciousness because he was totally motivated by the righteousness and justice of the Kingdom of God, collectivist altruism. The power of his own elevated consciousness lifted him above the normal limits of fatigue, suffering, and trial; enabled him to overcome opposition; and stirred in him an unlimited compassion for his fellow beings — a compassion reflected in service to their individual and social needs\(^\text{43}\).

Yet, Fred M. was never clear in his paper whether or not the higher powers he attributed to Jesus in particular, and potentially to mankind in general, were natural or supernatural in origin. Although Jesus was vaguely aware of some impelling force in his being before his baptism, his forty-day withdrawal into the wilderness to fast, pray, and meditate primed a nascent inkling of his great powers. He emerged from the wilderness endowed with the magnetism and competence of one having authority and power, commanding neurotic disorders to yield, healing the sick, raising the dead, and teaching that wealth was a trust for the relief of the suffering of poverty. But daily retreat and communion with the Father through prayer were necessary to maintain his spiritual power.\(^\text{44}\)

\(^{42}\text{F. M. Smith, \textit{Higher Powers of Man}, pp. 162-64, 167-71, 226, 230; the quotation is from p. 167.}\)

\(^{43}\text{Ibid., pp. 179, 228.}\)

\(^{44}\text{Ibid., pp. 182-85, 187, 190.}\)
The Victorian moralism of Hall and the late nineteenth century of Fred M.'s youth expressed themselves clearly and consistently throughout his work. Adolescence, with its intoxicating sexual fires and intense impulses, required direction and sublimation lest the youthful nervous energies culminate in physical and moral illness. In addition, he saw women as more contemplative and passive, while men had energetic natures that transformed mere contemplation into practical, useful work. Women and “men of the feminine type,” however, possessed a particularly deep sensitivity to the divine impulse that inspired reverence and worship: “The woman loves God with more carnality, tenderness, passion; the man with devotion, reverence, with more intelligence than love.” Ignoring the most obvious example of Lord Byron, Smith went on to state that it was “a law of fate that high sensitivity hinders activity, and seldom are poets men of action.”

Directly and indirectly through the work of others, Hallian ideas — or those to which Hall ascribed — were written large through Smith's dissertation. Hall's Victorianism, his emphasis on human efficiency, his stress on the erethetic state, his glorification of Jesus as a “superman,” and his genetic psychology were uncritically accepted by Fred M. and pervade his work to the point it became a mere pastiche. Similar to Hall and typical of many of the writers of his age, his writing was didactic and discursive, plagued by redundancy, more derivative than creative, a moralistic exposition hidden under a facade of learning. His method of synopsizing, devoid of citation, made it difficult to ascertain whether the sentiments or allegations he attributed to his sources reflected them accurately, were his own corollary to them, or represented his own uncritical acceptance. Even in his infrequent sorties into originality, inconsistency accompanied his efforts. Both alcohol and peyote produced a chemical form of ecstasy, for instance, but the ecstasy of the former became a social atavism while the latter represented a cohesive and integrative force. Too, while he praised the life of Jesus as exemplary of the erethetic potential of all men actualized, he was never really clear as to His real nature. Did the erethism of Jesus suggest that the appellation “supernatural” was simply man’s attempt to cope with the inexplicable he confronted in the universe, given his meagre use of his innate power? Was the supernatural really “natural” and consequently available to all humanity, subject to the limitations of desire or discipline? Or, was Jesus substantially different from other men, a divine being in the

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"Comments on adolescence are found in ibid., pp. 230-31, and on women, pp. 70, 83-84.


4F. M. Smith, Higher Powers of Man, pp. 23-29, 212-13, 229-30; G. Stanley Hall to F. M. Smith, 17 February 1915, Student File.

4F. M. Smith, Higher Powers of Man, pp. 16-59, 211, 219-21; G. Stanley Hall to F. M. Smith, 17 February 1915, Student File.


45F. M. Smith, Higher Powers of Man, pp. 56-58, 66, 72, 75, 118, 168, 213, 217; Hall, Adolescence, 2:54, 61.
"habiliments of humanity," establishing an inachievable facsimile of man to eternally frustrate believers? To none of these questions did Fred M. approximate a consistent response in his essay.

Although his old friend and mentor Charles Ellwood wrote Fred M. that his work was "timely, because . . . in our present crisis people in general need to know how to tap the higher levels of human energy," not all reviewers of his book received it with such magnanimity. B. L. McKim, a bishop in the RLDS church and Fred M.'s future antagonist, assumed that he had written the book as a testimony of his own belief for the "instruction and edification" of its readers. Given that assumption, McKim was profoundly shocked when he read the author's digest of Mantegazza on ecstasy. McKim was forced to conclude that Fred M. relegated the spiritual revelations of Mormonism to biological and mental origins. Compared with the prophets of old who "saw more than mental pictures" and "knew" what they saw and heard, Fred M. was a niggardly substitute, not to be taken seriously unless the revelations of opium smokers were afforded equal credence.51

Such criticism notwithstanding, by the time the Higher Powers of Man was published in 1918 and available for members of his faith to read, Fred M. was quite proud of his achievement. He was the first formally educated leader of the RLDS church, and now moved in his institution to win his administrative spurs and the confidence of his followers.

As a leader of an unabashedly pietistic religious institution, Fred M. was personally and morally beyond reproach, undemonstrative of religious affection, nontheological, and more interested in social and practical application of the Christian faith as it was believed and practiced by the church. He attended few of the midweek prayer and testimony services offered by the local congregations, and manifested even fewer of the outward forms of more introspective religion.52 Yet, enigmatic and inconsistent, he believed in a personal although inscrutable God who worked with man throughout history to develop the right relations — man to man and man to God — that would eventually catalyze His Kingdom. When he repeated the Lord's Prayer, he always felt he was praying to a personal God who presided over history, but he never acted in the role of a Jeremiah who anticipated the end of that historical experience as imminent or immediate. Quite to the contrary, he was displeased that many of the Saints and their clerical leaders indulged themselves in the eschatological, esoteric, and speculative ramifications of their faith at the expense of solving social problems.53 Moreover, dogmas of the past required

51 Charles Ellwood to F. M. Smith, as cited in Zion's Ensign 29 (8 August 1918): 14; B. L. McKim, Where Does the Church Stand? (Ogden, Utah: privately published, 1920), pp. 1-7, 10; F. M. Smith, Higher Powers of Man, pp. 81-82, 86.


53 Joint Council Minutes, 6 April 1912, pp. 21-24, as cited in Smith, Smith, and Edwards, History of the Reorganized Church, 6: 443; Elbert A. Smith, "Some Memories of President Frederick M. Smith," pp. 465-67; F. M. Smith, "Assisting the Creator," SH 74 (29 June 1927): 737; Ruth Lyman Smith to G. Stanley Hall, late April 1916, Student File.
constant restatement in modern frameworks, even as Paul reinterpreted the
gospel to the Greco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{54}

A sampling of his sermons, lectures, and writings in these early years attests
to his familiarity with some of the basic tenets of the social gospel. He was a
fellow traveler with many of the exponents of its more conservative wing,
carrying their diagnoses and prescriptions with him in his Latter Day Saint
baggage until his death. But the significance of his allusions to Walter
Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden, Shailer Matthews, and Richard T. Ely
must be qualified by his literal utopian and exemplary communitarian
expectations from his sectarian heritage and his complete reliance upon the
individual, regenerated Christian as the instrument of reform. He did not favor
collective action nor advocate reliance upon the power of the state.

Concurring with Gladden and Ely that the ultimate foundation of society
was in religion, he charged his followers to forsake their insularity, spiritualize
material society, and carry the banner of a new, Christian ethos to a benighted
world. The Jesus who lived in contact with all classes found a faith that
transcended the inherent egoism of the Mosaic code and provided a different
basis for human interaction by making service, not power or wealth, the criteria
of greatness.\textsuperscript{55} Now, Fred M. affirmed, it was the duty of the church to develop and
promote a new social consciousness and to demonstrate the ideal. For this end
Jesus renounced the role of political reformer and its attendant honors in order to
become a moral teacher "sacrificing apparent present good . . . that his fellow
men might enjoy a better future"; for these reasons his disciples forsook their nets
and businesses to follow him.\textsuperscript{56}

In his preaching Jesus anticipated a future Kingdom of God and
bequeathed to Christianity its Magna Charta in the Sermon on the Mount. Fred
M. admitted that men differed in their interpretation of this kingdom. At one
extreme, they saw it as a peculiarly invisible and nonmaterial state in their
hearts; at the other pole advocates emphasized its sovereignty over industrial and
economic environments. These extremes and all the degrees between them were
merely phases of the "one great kingdom." He noted, however, that its
constitution as portrayed in the Beatitudes represented a challenge to
individuals to become aware of their social responsibility. He assumed that the
community mind was no less than a collection of individual minds and could be
plumbed only through direct appeal to individuals. Christ, he declared, "taught
community progress by teaching that individual progress in its aggregate makes
up the progress of humanity as a whole." Humility, mercy, and the desire to do
good were individual virtues that found their most complete expression in

\textsuperscript{54}F. M. Smith, "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, SH 60 (15 October 1913): 1001; F. M. Smith,
undated notes for a lecture on Joseph Smith, Jr., at Nauvoo, Ill., Smith Papers.

\textsuperscript{55}F. M. Smith, "The Constitution of the Kingdom, SH 55 (26 August 1908): 822, 827; F. M.
Smith, "Zion," undated sermon notes, Smith Papers; F. M. Smith, "The Great Ethical Law," SH 55
(23 December 1908): 1232-33; Roy A. Cheville to the author, October 1972; F. M. Smith, "Service,"

\textsuperscript{56}F. M. Smith, "The Ethical Teacher," SH 60 (19 November 1915): 1121; F. M. Smith, "Choose
brotherly love and service to mankind as the primary requisites of kingdom building.\textsuperscript{57}

To this end he urged the Saints to scrutinize their present social and economic situation and discern the "growing shadows cast upon the screen to today" by unemployment, poverty, and suffering at one social extreme, and selfish opulence at the other, both of them evidence of social disintegration. The church must now "readjust itself to changed conditions and reform its ranks in order to make a different attack on the forces of the enemy than we have ever made before."\textsuperscript{58} For this purpose he tried to nurture a reform consciousness among faithful members and the hierarchy as they attended his Stone Church lectures, and among the citizenry at large as he moved among their elite.

In his reach for broader, more effusive social reform, Fred M. found little value in Marxian socialism, including its Manichaean way of dividing socioeconomic forces into capitalist versus laboring classes. Further, in a statement to a Joint Council of church authorities he observed,

I cannot conceive why some of our men because they have gotten into this social question lose their interest in the work [of the church] and devote their zeal to Socialism. I have always admired the zeal of the Socialists, but I have discovered this, that when Socialism gets into a man's blood it seems to spoil him for anything else.\textsuperscript{59}

In lieu of revolutionary socialism, he brandished his own sectarian genre of individualistic, utopian socialism as the one able to salvage the world. In 1912 he ascertained that

the time is near when we [the church] shall be called upon to put in practice as a demonstration the peculiar social views that we hold; views not identified in any way with the Socialist movement only in so far as we have included in our economy some of the principles of the Socialist movement. I do not believe there is any principle of truth in the economy of Socialism but what we have in our books and with that we are freed from the errors of politics. It is not so much political as religious reform that is needed.\textsuperscript{60}

He defined one of the most important tasks of the church as that of isolating, preserving, and vitalizing the positive attributes of communism, capitalism, and socialism through social reform. Government regulation of business, minimum wage laws, social welfare programs, and panaceas such as Henry George's single tax were merely palliative and did not surgically probe into the core of the corrupt and unjust social order.

Responding to social need as he understood it, he developed his own unique reform synthesis. Individual, regenerated Saints, whether they be capitalists, laborers, or consumers, were responsible for the godly, disciplined use of their resources, talents, time, and energy. Because they had caught a vision of the Kingdom of God, the true Saints voluntarily consecrated their economic


\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., p. 444.
surpluses — earnings or assets above individual basic needs and legitimate, Christian wants — for the benefit of the commonweal community or the cooperative commonwealth. The ultimate result of this process of Christian voluntarism, or stewardship, was a literal Kingdom of God. Economic and social justice would prevail as the church used these resources to meet the needs of all.61 Wealth was not intrinsically evil; nor was “wealth per se a handicap to a man’s attaining a religious and spiritual excellence. It is the man’s attitude towards his wealth that stands in his way.” The test of one’s stewardship was the same challenge hurled by Jesus to the rich young man as he traveled the road to Galilee: sell your possessions, impart to the poor, and follow.62

The prime duty of individuals in this ideal society was to serve the group, and the benefits of the resources and efforts they contributed returned to them through the common uplift. Success, as such, was measured by the amount and quality of resources contributed to the public welfare. Ever eclectic, Fred M. adopted a Marxian aphorism to encapsulate the stewardship process: “‘From every man according to his capacity; to every man according to his needs.’” Essentially a form of Christian cooperation, he found this principle as old as the Eden of the Bible and as ancient as prehistoric man when he began to collectivize for survival.63 Indeed, cooperation was one of Fred M.’s measures of social and intellectual progress throughout history, and in the industrial crisis of his own times it was the precursor of the Kingdom of God. All that was required to change the course of the present generation was the cooperation of a few consecrated men and women “blessed and enthused and fired by the Spirit of God.”64

As president of the RLDS church from 1915, he considered his primary mission to be a visionary for the imminent kingdom and the educator of his people toward that goal. In those years his social analysis both broadened and sharpened, his amalgam of the social gospel, social theory, and the utopianism of his sect was more clearly expressed, and his efforts to gather his people together as stewards under the institutional auspices of the Order of Enoch occupied a large amount of his time and energy.

One of the best descriptions of Fred M.’s personality at this transitional instance of his life came from the pen of his own grandson:

He accented the paradoxical attributes of being infinitely patient and impulsively stubborn. . . .


Harsh and businesslike at times he was soft and conciliatory when necessary. Decisive and sometimes stubborn he could nevertheless be charming and charismatic as well. Complex, moody, powerful in mind and body, strong in his convictions, sure in his faith, metallic in will, he could compel respect as well as generate antipathy among his followers. Of his own volition he admitted he lost many actual or potential friends because he was blunt as a sledgehammer, as gentle as a rhinoceros and simply "too tactless and too frank in expressing my views." He possessed no habit of apology for the injured feelings of his associates in the "rough and tumble" eye-gouging and knee-groining of official transactions, or for the "dour and brusque" demeanor that often accompanied his preoccupation with problems. Real enough, these peccadilloes were reinforced by a near-sightedness that caused many a visitor to feel uncomfortable in his presence as he squinted, frowned, and strained to see through his thick, wire-rimmed glasses. As the years passed, his stern appearance worsened and his petulance increased as his face twisted with pain from severe attacks of tic douloureux.

Never patient with trivia or small talk, "Fred the Sphinx," as he was called by some, could be as silent as that stone beast sitting in the sands of Egypt rather than exchange inanities with others. Even when he was interested in a given topic or listening to a personal problem or grievance, he would read or perform mechanical tasks such as signing papers while listening — a habit that was disconcerting despite his assurances that he could give equal and competent attention to both. Apostle Gomer T. Griffiths overcame his consternation with Fred M.'s method by approaching him when standing, grasping his coat lapels in each hand, and commanding nose to nose attention. Others, however, were simply alienated by his mannerisms or felt he was not interested in them or their common concern, the church. As he became more consciously aware of the often negative effects of his personality on others, he tried to mellow, but only grudgingly and with meagre success. As he complained to his cousin, " 'When I get through making myself over to please my friends I fear there will not be much of the old Fred M. Smith left.' "

Yet, those who knew him more intimately were aware of the deeper substance of "old Fred M." His wife remarked that "man-like, he has hidden his heart from the most of the world, and even those who are nearest him . . . have been baffled so often by some freak of matter-of-factness or almost cold-blooded humor." But she knew the man behind the facade, the Fred M. that forgave easily, was generous to the needy, and who would humbly go to the bedside of a dying child to comfort and to pray. Others found him tolerant of dissenting opinion, fair to all who sought counsel, and always willing to reconcile with any
former adversary. If Smith erred at all, said one protege, it was on the side of leniency, not severity in judgment. 68

In 1902, Fred M. began a thirteen-year apprenticeship for the presidency of the church when he was ordained as first counselor to his father. As time passed and the older Smith succumbed to blindness and the ravages of ill health, he learned to rely heavily on the young man he had designated as his successor, while the son, listening closely to his father’s judgment, assumed that responsibility with both confidence and candor. 69 By the end of the first decade of the century, he presided over the conferences of the church in his father’s stead, attended to mundane administrative matters as well as to those involving interpretation of church law, and became thoroughly familiar with the legislative structure of the institution. 70

The administrative milieu in which he served his internship was fragmented, lacked a clearly defined and generally accepted organizational integrity, and thus facilitated the autonomy of the various competitive bureaucracies. 71 While the older Smith strove for a balance of power through the restraint inherent in his more democratic and patient nature, the younger one preferred tight reins for restless steeds in the church who chose to gallop in their own directions and at their own pace without the signals or whip from the driver’s seat. 72 On occasion, the father would exert the authority of the presidency to preserve the unity of the church or its evolving patterns of belief; 73 with the son that exertion became his modus operandi in attempting to rationalize its organizational structure. Given the history and tradition of the Mormon movement, the son’s position was not untenable. Long before the disruptive events of 1844 fundamental church law bequeathed broad power to the office of the presidency. That grant was reaffirmed in the subsequent history of the Reorganized church. 74

68 Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, pp. 24, 200; Anderson, “Some Memories of the Presidents,” p. 316 (See also 1920s correspondence between F. M. Smith and his brother Israel A. Smith, in Smith Papers); and Garland E. Tickemyer, “Pastor’s Notes,” Stone Church Bulletin, 24 March 1946.


74 Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 87: 5, 104: 42, and 122: 2; Resolution no. 386, par. 7, as cited in Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Rules and Resolutions (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1952), p. 49.
Trying to establish the principle of presidential leadership firmly in the corporate mentality of his religious constituency, Fred M. addressed them on the topic of obedience as early as 1903. When God had given a commission to any person to do a particular work, he asserted, “so long as that person is in discharge of that work, his voice should be obeyed ... as though it was from the Deity himself.” In the army of the Lord, as in any army, policies and decisions were not made by the rank and file, but by the commander-in-chief, and valiant soldiers obeyed their commander without question. Adamant in conclusion, he declared that you can talk of intelligent obedience all you please; but there comes a time in the life of every man, when he can not rely one moment on his intelligence, nor on his mental force, nor on his reason. There are times in the life of every man when he must be led absolutely by faith, blind faith; and it is then that he renders obedience that makes him truly great in the eyes of the redeemer. And I would to God that the time would hasten when we, as a people ... would realize the lessons to be learned form the obedience of Abraham ... so ... that we can express the sentiment: ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’

The identity quest of the early years of the RLDS church vis-a-vis Utah Mormonism continued well into the twentieth century and provoked a dilemma for Fred M. as he developed his authoritarian rationale. Debates between the two churches focused on the nature of authority, the theological teachings of Joseph Smith, and the divinity — or the lack of it — of polygamy. When Reed Smoot, a nonpolygamous Mormon apostle, was sent by the Utah legislature to the United States Senate, the public protest over his seating generated an opportunity for the Saints of the Reorganization to declare themselves and their faith as separate and distinct from Utah Mormonism. On the Smoot issue, his father found a dangerous principle in “the making of any man’s religion a cause of war against him when no overt act of outrage against the laws ... is alleged or proved.” But Fred M. himself was less sanguine about the symbolic value of the senator’s plight to the nation. Ironic in the perspective of his 1903 sermon on obedience, he saw Smoot “as supine as a dead body, to be moved at the will of his ecclesiastical superiors ... and [who] cannot truthfully take the oath of office.”

He arrived at these conclusions regarding the Utah senator and his church from his research into the Mormon movement and his personal observations during a visit to Utah in the early spring of 1904 and a residency there for most of the year between the conferences of 1905 and 1906. His first trip to the Mormon state was ostensibly motivated by his desire to attend the family reunion scheduled there for early February, but the second was undertaken by direction of his father to become acquainted with theological and sociological conditions and to “testify to the truth” before the misled sheep of the flock.

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76 A summary of the Herald articles to this effect may be found in Smith, Smith, and Edwards, History of the Reorganized Church, 6: 107–9. See also F. M. Smith to Miss V. A. L. Jones of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, 27 February 1907, RLDS Archives.
78 F. M. Smith, “Report from the First Presidency,” General Conference Minutes (9 April 1906),
His first visit was consumed by exchanges of amenities with his Mormon cousins and in establishing a measure of official courtesy. On Sunday, 14 February, he was invited to address the Utah Saints assembled in their famed tabernacle. Unwilling to offend his hosts at this juncture, he spoke about the great worth of the truth contained in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants, and urged all to seek these precious jewels.79

By the summer of 1905, at the beginning of his mission of reconnaissance and kerygma, he had adopted the arguments of his father and the Saints of the early Reorganization that his grandfather had never taught or practiced polygamy and that Brigham Young usurped the leadership of the church from its rightful heir, Joseph Smith III. Further, he proclaimed in the Salt Lake Tribune,

The mission work of my life will be, as has been the mission work of my father before me, to save the good in Mormonism, to eradicate what has crept in because of the lusts of the flesh and the weaknesses of mankind, and to make the name of Joseph Smith honorable.

He recognized that his mission was undertaken in the face of tremendous odds, especially the “superstition” of the Mormon people. Members of his own faith were also superstitious, but he cursorily and inaccurately limited their indulgences only to the extent that they “recognized an eternal Father and a martyred Christ.”80

His initial sortie in the battle against apostasy was an open letter from “the Seed of Joseph the Seer” to the people of the Mormon church. Accusations to the effect that the Mormon hierarchy had broken the laws of the country and transgressed the revelations of God filled the document. The bishops, for instance, collected tithes and rendered no accounting to their people; the law of common consent was nullified by high-handed practices; and oddly, in light of his own solipsistic protestations of presidential authority, he condemned the president of the church for his exercise of supreme power over the quorums. He warned that they stood on dangerous ground, and, “Unless they shall heed the warning voice calling them to repentance, woe shall come upon them and they shall be scourged.”81

To President Joseph Fielding Smith he wrote another letter of admonition and at the same time requested that his distant relative open the churches of Utah to himself as the chosen instrument of the Lord, to deliver a message “which is made a duty upon me.” Refusal to respond positively would

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80F. M. Smith “President Frederick M. Smith Protests,” SH 52 (19 July 1905): 699-700 (reprinting his open letter from The Salt Lake Tribune, 1 July 1905); F. M. Smith to Israel A. Smith, 25 November 1905, RLDS Archives. This statement is strange in light of Smith’s own lapses into superstition. While in Utah, for instance, he attempted to cure his “appendicitis” by drinking olive oil consecrated by the elders of his church; see Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, pp. 162-63.

ensure “dire consequences” to follow; “beware how you reject the call.” The Mormon Smith was singularly unimpressed with his Independence cousin’s fulminations and refused his demand. The ancestry of an “apostate” meant little to the Mormon leader, and he, in turn, called on Fred M. to repent for misrepresenting and betraying the faith of his grandfather by his own refusal to unite with the true church in Utah.

Rankled and self-righteously indignant because of this rejection, and either unconscious of his own self-contradiction or acutely aware of the Emersonian dictum that “foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds”; or, momentarily repelled by the absolutism he observed in the Utah hierarchy, the seeds of which he ignored in himself; or, in recognition that absolute power must have its absolute limits, Fred M. proceeded to flail the Utah leaders for their undemocratic and theocratic practices. He found it inconceivable that the Mormon people could bow to domination and accept the excommunication of dissidents or those who candidly expressed an opinion contrary to leadership. Mormon leaders, he said, “have for years been assiduously drilling their people into a state of complete submission to the priesthood of the church, a submission that penetrates into every phase of the lives of their people.” Forced to justify his own authoritarian utterances while simultaneously anathematizing those of the Utah church, Fred M. qualified his concept of obedience for his Herald readers. The RLDS church, he explained, had never demanded unquestioning obedience to any directive coming through human agents with purportedly divine unction. Through common consent members possessed the inherent right to weigh, evaluate, or measure against past revelations any priestly statement that might become binding upon them, and accept or reject it through the voice of the people in conference action. As a leader and member of the Reorganized church, he affirmed he had never sworn away the right to question anything or anyone who presumed to act or speak in the name of God. God, not man, was sovereign: “Obedience to God always; but ‘unquestioning’ obedience to men, even though they hold the priesthood, never.” And, as Thomas Jefferson would ideally and ostensibly find quantitative value in the multitudes of people, Fred M. carefully alluded to the “wisdom, and perhaps safety . . . in awaiting the impulse which must necessarily come from the weight of unanimous opinion.” But his ensuing career would demonstrate that his appreciation of that unanimous opinion lessened while the substantive and procedural temper of his administration became more akin to that of his Mormon rivals than he would ever care to admit.

Cognizant of Fred M.’s talents and abilities, his authoritarian proclivities, and the insuperable tasks that were possible before him, Joseph Smith III imparted to him what would be his last words of counsel from his deathbed on

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82F. M. Smith to Joseph Fielding Smith, 21 August 1905, RLDS Archives; Joseph Fielding Smith to F. M. Smith, as cited in Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Appeal of Frederick M. Smith . . . to President Joseph F. Smith for Unlimited Use of the Meeting Houses of the Latter-day Saints and His Reply (Salt Lake City: n. p., 1905), n. p.

Sunday, 29 November 1915. He praised his son's strength, thankful that God had provided for the church "one whose hands will not slip on the rein, nor tremble in the emergency." At the same time he urged him to exercise patience and restraint in his relationship with the membership and his fellow workers:

If the people are heady, if the church is heady, the eldership are heady and the reins in their hands as they have done a little, especially on the rules and regulations . . . don't worry . . . let it pass, let the church take the consequences and they will after a while grow out of it . . . It's better that way than to undertake to force them and coerce. That would bring bad trouble.84

Smith listened to his father, nodded his assent, but did not hear; to "let it pass" was to acknowledge defeat, lose the initiative, and dissipate his vision of the kingdom. Great men, after all, were those who not only rode the crest of the determinate forces of their own times; they were also those who imposed their personalities and will on their political, social, or economic environments with an indelible stamp, and redirected them into newer, perhaps improved, channels. Never a personality given to self-abnegation or defeatism, in the ensuing years he would create circumstances in which he would put himself, and the church, to the test: would the church accept the rationalized, authoritarian, bureaucratic system he appropriated from social theorists, with himself at the helm, trimming the sails to the winds that he felt gusting toward the kingdom, or would it be content to flounder in uncertain seas while the mutinous crew haggled over direction? For Fred M. the answer was clear, and for the next eleven years the "bad trouble" foreseen by his father plagued his administration, fragmented while it also streamlined the institution, and confirmed his anticipation that duty was his "relentless taskmaster."85

84 "Statement of President Joseph Smith to His Son Frederick M. Smith, Sunday, 29 November 1914," Zion's Ensign 26 (11 February 1915): 1.

85 F. M. Smith to the Church, 21 January 1915, in Smith, Smith, and Edwards, History of the Reorganized Church, 6: 585.
JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

Editorial Policy

The *Journal of Mormon History*, annual publication of the Mormon History Association, reflects the purposes of the association, "to foster scholarly research and publication in the field of Mormon history."

Manuscripts dealing with all aspects of Mormon history are invited. First consideration will be given to those which make a strong contribution to knowledge through new interpretations or new information. A panel of readers will also consider general interest of the paper, extent and accuracy of research, and literary quality.

For matters of style, consult *A Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press, 1969) and a recent issue of the *Journal*. Specific guidelines are available upon request from the editor.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should be typed, double-spaced, with footnotes, also double-spaced, in a separate section at the end. Preferred length is fifteen to twenty-five pages, including footnotes.

Submit manuscripts to Richard W. Sadler, Department of History, Weber State College, Ogden, Utah 84403.
As the Mormon colonization period came to an end, sons of earlier pioneers and numerous converts who immigrated to Utah could no longer look exclusively to agriculture for their income. In central Utah the profitable farmland in Sanpete and Utah valleys had long since been occupied, and in the new settlements at Castle Valley limited farmland would provide a relatively small population with a livelihood. However, the development of the eastern Utah coal fields offered alternative employment to those willing to face the uncertainty of coal mining. Three segments of the Mormon population found these opportunities attractive: converts from England and Wales who were coal miners before moving to Utah; sons of Mormon farmers who, for whatever reason, chose mining over farming; and Mormon farmers who worked in the mines during the busy winter months and returned to maintain their farms during the mines' slack spring and summer months.

For Utah Mormons, employment in the mines was not the only important factor associated with the Utah coal fields. Since the initial settlement of Utah, church leaders had sought a source of high quality coal. The failure to find a coal that would produce coke suitable for smelting purposes led to the demise of Utah's infant iron industry, which, in turn, gave little hope for the success of the Mormon home industry program. The belated discovery of the eastern Utah coal, which did produce a high quality of coke, came too late to be of use in developing a Mormon iron industry. Even so, church and business leaders realized that the location of smelters in Utah to process products from local metal mines could be of economic benefit to the region. By 1890, when the first coke ovens were erected at Castle Gate, much of the earlier opposition to metal
mining had disappeared and some church leaders were beginning to invest in Utah mining operations.

Completion of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad to Salt Lake City in 1883 promised Mormon communities along the Wasatch Front relief from the monopoly of the coal trade by the Union Pacific, a burden under which they had chafed since the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Finally, the large number of men who were to be employed in the mines would serve as a ready market for the produce of Mormon farms and ranches in Utah, Sanpete, and Castle valleys.

Given the importance of the eastern Utah coal fields to Utah Mormons, it could be expected that Mormon attitudes toward organized labor in these coal fields would be a primary factor in the outcome of management-labor conflicts. Although several attempts were made to organize the Utah coal miners for three decades beginning in 1903, it was not until 1933 that a coal miners’ union was officially recognized in Utah. The long process can be understood better if we examine Mormon attitudes toward these organizational attempts and assess the extent to which these sentiments delayed unionization.

Although various craft and trade associations had been established in Utah during the 1860s and '70s, it was not until the 1880s that organized labor’s importance was felt in the state and a church policy toward unions unfolded. During the mid-1880s the Knights of Labor entered Utah. This organization quickly became a competitor to the church in several key areas. The Knights of Labor, like The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, promoted its own cooperative movement, and it required prospective members to pass through a secret initiation ritual. To Mormon leaders the cooperative ideas and secrecy of the Knights threatened to compromise the loyalty of their own members. In addition, church authorities faulted the violent methods used by the union to eliminate the Chinese and the radical pleas of some union representatives urging the overthrow of the capitalist system.

The arrival of the Knights of Labor in Utah coincided with the first recorded labor dispute in the eastern Utah coal fields. A strike during the winter of 1883 at the Pleasant Valley coal mines was ended when Stake President Abraham O. Smoot journeyed from his Provo home to persuade the miners to return to work. Those who did not respond to this admonition were arrested by Sheriff J. W. Turner. Although the new union was present at the Pleasant Valley mines during the 1880s, it is not known if the strike was directed by the Knights of Labor.

The early experience of Mormon leaders with the Knights of Labor prompted the development of an extremely conservative policy towards organized labor. This policy had matured by the early 1900s and was an important change in attitude. Whereas earlier church leaders had supported or defended unions, “less and less was there to be seen positive support of unions and their leaders, and more and more were they to be derided.”

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At the beginning of the twentieth century, labor difficulties broke out in the eastern Utah coal fields, and the church became embroiled in the struggle as an enemy of unions. In January 1901, eight months after a tragic explosion at the Winter Quarters mine in Carbon County had killed more than two hundred men, miners employed at the Pleasant Valley coal mines at Winter Quarters and Clear Creek went out on strike to demand higher pay. The strike, which lasted six weeks, failed after miners at Castle Gate and Sunnyside refused to join. Those men who returned to work at Winter Quarters and Clear Creek were forced to sign a statement known as an "ironclad" which required them to renounce membership in any union and deny that they would join a union if one were organized in the future.

Although no recorded labor opposition among general authorities has been found, the church stand is evident in accounts of local bishops admonishing their members not to support the strike and a Deseret News editorial stating that the strike was not supported by Mormon miners but had been instigated by outsiders who had entered the mines to take the places of victims of the 1 May 1900 disaster.3

Unrest continued in the eastern Utah coal fields. In the fall of 1903 the Utah miners struck. They demanded higher wages, the abolishment of certain abuses by the company, and recognition of the United Mine Workers of America. As the strike continued neither the union nor the coal companies were willing to make acceptable concessions, and the struggle focused on whether the coal company would be successful in finding men to replace the strikers. It was this issue that brought the Mormon church and the miners' union into open contention and created animosity against the church until the United Mine Workers Union was finally recognized in 1933.

In late December 1903 Salt Lake Stake President Angus Cannon announced in the Salt Lake Tabernacle that employment in the coal fields of Carbon County was available to anyone who needed a job. Conrad Kelliher, organizer for the United Mine Workers, reacted with the declaration, "The Mormon church has commenced a fight to annihilate union labor in Utah."4 Kelliher sent letters to Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers, calling upon them to use their power to prevent the seating of Reed Smoot in the U. S. Senate. Kelliher reasoned that while Smoot was in the Senate he would be a dangerous and powerful foe to labor and his defeat would serve as a rebuke to the Mormon church for intervention in the Carbon County labor dispute. The United Mine Workers Journal immediately responded with a strong and vicious editorial denouncing the church:

The Mormon Church has arrayed itself against the United Mine Workers of America. Fortunate United Mine Workers! . . . The principles of the United Mine Workers collide at once with the tenets of that lascivious autocracy. The United Mine Workers stand for free men, pure womanhood and happy childhood. Mormonism in the concrete and abstract stands for blind, servile obedience to unnatural law, degraded and debased

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3Deseret News, 24 January and 9 February 1901.
4Salt Lake Tribune, 29 December 1903.
womanhood and childhood, spent amid surroundings beside which those of the slum child are happy indeed. The superstition and ignorance of the Mormons can no more bear the clear light of the education, freedom and decency of the Mine Workers than a moping owl can stand the glare of the noontide sun. If the grand achievements of the past did not entitle the United Mine Workers to the full confidence and high esteem of the American people, the attitude of this blanketed set of cutthroats and harlots will remove the last bar to that confidence and esteem.5

This editorial spawned a lively response from readers. Letters to the editor repeated the charge that the church was anti-union and criticized the church doctrine on polygamy. Utah strikers were convinced the Mormon church was in league with the coal companies to prevent success for the UMW in Utah. David Wilson, financial secretary for UMW Local 2630 at Sunnyside, reported to United Mine Workers Journal readers that the announcement in the Tabernacle and other Mormon meetinghouses had resulted in a large number of farmers requesting work in the mines.6 Miner Thomas Phelps declared, “Our Mormon people are raising scabs from the cradle. They have preached to them to go to the mines to take our places. They are under the impression that if the union comes to Utah, the corporations will close the mines.”7 In telegrams to John Mitchell and Samuel Gompers, the First Presidency emphatically denied “that the Mormon church had used its influence against organized labor . . . [or] had endeavored to fill the places of union strikers with non-union men.”8

If fears of adverse publicity — of the kind spawned by the Smoot hearings — prompted Joseph F. Smith and his counselors to shun an open admission of involvement, records of the First Presidency indicate that they nevertheless had instructed local church authorities to support the company’s strikebreaking activities. On 2 December 1903, H. G. Williams, president of the Utah Fuel Company, wrote to President Joseph F. Smith explaining that Bishop John Potter of Sunnyside had sent Brigham Gould to Emery County to recruit strikebreakers for the Utah Fuel Company. Gould’s efforts were nullified by Jack Coombs and David Wilson, two striking miners, who followed the company representative and argued that he was misrepresenting actual conditions. Williams went on to request that President Smith use his influence to reassure the people of Emery County of the good intentions of Bishop Potter and Brigham Gould.9 The request was honored. In a letter sent to Reuben G. Miller, president of Carbon Stake, the First Presidency clearly indicated their support of the company’s strikebreaking efforts. Miller was instructed to telephone or write the bishops of his stake at once to assure them that the statements of the Utah Fuel Company and its representatives could be relied upon and that those who wished to work “would do well to pay no attention whatever to the statements of Coombs and Wilson.”10

5*United Mine Workers Journal*, 31 December 1903.
6Ibid., 21 January 1904.
7Ibid., 8 September 1904.
8*Deseret News*, 4 January 1904.
9H. G. Williams to Joseph F. Smith, 2 December 1903, Joseph F. Smith Papers, Church Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
10Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund to Reuben G. Miller, 4 December 1903,
The strikebreaking effort was successful. In a confidential letter to H. G. Williams the First Presidency extended its congratulations to the Utah Fuel Company for its victory and offered advice on how to prevent further outbreaks of trouble. Williams was counseled to hire sufficient guards to protect the company's property and "keep the lawless element under control." In order not to be "obnoxious to the strikers," the guards were to be "discreet men" who were not to make arrests outside company property. The letter explained that this new advice was being offered because "you are aware how anxious we were that you should not be forced to yield to the demands, inspired by outside agitators, which the strikers made upon you, and we are still anxious that the victory won may be complete." 11

Because the church had been a staunch ally of the coal company, the United Mine Workers of America were convinced that unionization of the Utah coal fields was virtually impossible. Despite other opportunities the workers did not undertake a full-scale organizational campaign for another fourteen years. However, after 1904 the situation began to change. Mormon miners did not remain in sufficiently large numbers, and as coal mining operations in eastern Utah began to expand after 1907, the coal companies began increasingly to draw on immigrants from Greece, Austria, and Italy. In a short time the ratio of foreign-born to American-born miners increased. Nearly two to one before the 1903-4 strike, it became even more disproportionate, with a much higher non-Mormon than Mormon population. While undoubtedly there were faithful church members in the coal camps, records suggest that the church in eastern Utah faced a constant struggle to maintain religious activities on a par with those of other Utah communities. In 1912 G. A. Iverson responded to inquiries from the Presiding Bishopric regarding the mediocre record of the Castle Gate Ward. He noted that extensive improvements undertaken by the railroad and coal companies had required day and night shifts and work on Sundays. As a result, he said, "the unusually busy time has been made an excuse for failure to perform their duties by Brethren in the ward who ought to have shown more devotion to their callings." 12

Other correspondence indicates a low percentage of tithe payers in the Carbon Stake — including many local officers who had paid no tithing — failure to collect fast offerings, low attendance at church meetings, failure to hold regular priesthood meetings in some towns, problems with church member attendance at picture shows sponsored by the coal companies on the Sabbath, and in some cases a rapid turnover of branch officers. 13 Indicative of these conditions is a report of the Standardville Branch:

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12 G. A. Iverson to C. W. Nibley and counselors, 20 November 1912, Presiding Bishopric Stake Correspondence, Church Archives.

13 Presiding Bishopric to Arthur W. Horsley and counselors, 12 November, 7 December, and 27 April 1915; 22 July and 25 June 1925; 25 November 1921; 17 April and 17 October 1924; and 21 and 8 June 1922, Presiding Bishopric Stake Correspondence.
Members, particularly the male members, are very indifferent to church work; . . . the Presidency of the Branch are the only active members in the Branch; most of the male members belong to secret orders; and . . . there are only three persons in the branch who pay a full tithing. Conditions, generally, seem to to be bad.14

By 1917 conditions were ripe for another attempt at unionizing the Utah coal fields. The new immigrant miners had worked long enough in the mines to see the advantages of unionism and collective bargaining. Also the tremendous demand for coal created by World War I kept the mines at full production with coal companies searching continuously for more miners. Substantial pay increases were granted voluntarily to the miners, and when miners struck for higher wages, the strikes were shortlived because the coal companies were quick, in most cases, to agree to the miners’ demands. Under these conditions organizers for the United Mine Workers of America re-entered Utah and met with considerable success. The church attitude appeared different to union organizers, who reported, “The Mormon church . . . heretofore bitterly opposed to the labor movement, has changed its attitude and will no more oppose us.”15

The union organizational efforts which began in 1918 culminated in Utah’s participation in the nationwide coal miners’ strike of 1922. Utah miners joined the strike when coal companies sought to institute wage reductions of approximately 30 percent. Unlike the 1903–4 strike, union recognition was not a strike demand. United Mine Workers officials, whose policy was in harmony with the church stand for the open shop, asked only that miners be permitted to join the union and not be fired or discriminated against for their union membership.

The strike lasted from 1 April until 1 September 1922. The miners were successful in restoring the wage scale in effect prior to the walkout. As in 1903, the National Guard was called out after two men were killed and others suffered serious injury. Because the strike occurred during the summer months, the slow period in the coal industry, the need for men to replace the strikers was minimal and local church leaders did not become involved in supplying strikebreakers as they had done in 1903. As a result the church was not accused of actively seeking the defeat of the union. There was, in fact, little association of the church with the strike.

The miners’ success in 1922 was a hollow victory. The overexpansion of the coal industry during World War I left the industry with too many mines and miners to meet the more moderate demands of peacetime. As a result the number of work days was reduced, and as the decade continued coal companies were able to institute wage reductions. The hard times in the Utah coal fields greatly reduced union membership, and by 1929 the caretaker arrangement for Utah was dissolved as the United Mine Workers of America withdrew completely from Utah. Martin Cahill, president of District 22 of the United Mine Workers of America, believed unionization failed in Utah because American miners would

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14Presiding Bishopric to Arthur W. Horsley and counselors, 8 June 1922, Presiding Bishopric Stake Correspondence.

15John McLennan to William Green, 28 October 1918, International Executive Board Documents and Circulars File, United Mine Workers of America, Records, United Mine Workers of America Headquarters, Washington, D. C.
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not take an active part. "There is quite a bitter feeling existing between the American and Foreign Miner," he explained, "and on account of this feeling it is doubtful, in our opinion, if anything could be done along the lines of organization unless the American Miner would take the lead." Although he did not identify them specifically, there is little question that the American miners who were criticized by Cahill for refusing to take the leadership in organizing unions were Mormon miners. Later, when a group of Utah miners traveled to Cheyenne, Wyoming, to try and persuade District 22 officials to resume their work in Utah, they were told the union saw no hope for success because of the supposed reluctance of the Mormon miners to support the union.

The year 1933 brought a great change to the Utah coal fields. The stimulus for this change was the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his support of the right of laborers to organize and bargain collectively. By the summer of 1933 there was little question that the coal mines would be organized. Both Mormon and non-Mormon miners had suffered during the depression and both groups were convinced that their temporal salvation would come only through organized labor supported by Roosevelt's New Deal. The question for Utah miners was which of two rival organizations would emerge as their representative. When the United Mine Workers of America refused to acknowledge the request of Utah miners for assistance in organizing, the National Miners Union entered Carbon County and found considerable success in the Spring Canyon and Gordon Creek areas. The National Miners Union was founded in 1928 after a four-year struggle within the United Mine Workers which resulted in the expulsion of a number of communists from the union by its president, John L. Lewis. The arrival of the National Miners Union caused Lewis to reverse instructions to District 22 officers and direct them to begin the Utah campaign well in advance of the planned schedule.

Although the NMU did not advertise its communistic sympathies among the Utah miners, it was clear the union advocated a radical change. Union leaders felt that Roosevelt's concern for the workers was not sincere and that his programs were insufficient to meet the needs of the people. In the fundamental principles of the NMU, which were listed in each membership book, the ultimate aim of the union was described as being "to participate in the struggle for abolishing the capitalist system and replacing it by socialism."

Available records suggest that only a few Mormon miners joined the National Miners Union and most affiliated with the United Mine Workers of America. The coal companies were, for the most part, willing to accept the United Mine Workers as a moderate alternative to the National Miners Union. Instead of restricting the organizational efforts of the UMW, the coal companies gave direct support, in some cases giving men time off to attend union meetings.

When the National Miners Union called strikes during the summer of 1933 the United Mine Workers sent in members to serve as deputies in quelling the

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16 Martin Cahill and George Young to John L. Lewis, 13 May 1929, District 22 Correspondence, United Mine Workers of America Headquarters.

17 Interview with John J. Battagigliotti, by Allan Kent Powell, 20 February 1976, Ogden, Utah.

18 National Miners Union Membership Book, Women's Auxiliary, Book No. 2724, South Slavic Archives, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
strike. On two occasions reference to the church was made in connection with members serving as deputies. One of these was reported by Rolla West, mayor of Price and the official in charge of the deputies who forced the NMU strikers out of the Gordon Creek area and Spring Canyon. The incident involved Bill Staply, bishop at Castle Gate, who knocked down a young NMU sympathizer. This earned for Staply a reputation as the "fighting bishop." The other came later, when NMU members and sympathizers marched on the county courthouse in Price to protest the arrest of their leaders. Guards were recruited following rumors that the strikers intended to drive the Mormons from the county.

One church authority, Brigham H. Roberts of the First Council of Seventy, did become involved in the controversy much to the embarrassment of other church leaders. At a sympathetic meeting held at the First Congregational church in Salt Lake City on 15 September 1933, Roberts was chosen to serve on a committee to investigate the conditions in Carbon County. In a report written a few days before his death, Roberts found:

It is true that the difference among the miners arose out of controversy [sic] between the 2 unions in the field, but it must be added that the county authorities seemingly at least have joined in sympathy with one of these rival unions and apparently are administering the law rather partially in their favor, and to the denial of plain constitutional rights to the other faction.

There is an excessive use, and therefore an inexcusable use of power in their favor. Unboubtedly acts of terrorism have been perpetrated upon the least favored parties leading to denial and unwarranted conduct on the part of representatives of the town government that cry out for correction and discontinuance absolutely.

After the death of Roberts, Belle Taub, secretary of the Utah section of the International Labor Defense and the guiding influence behind the First Congregational church meeting and subsequent Carbon County visit of Roberts and the committee, requested that Mormon President Heber J. Grant "take the question up at conference of the impartial investigation made by the late Brigham H. Roberts." The issue was not publically discussed by President Grant who believed that Roberts's report was the result of "anything but an impartial investigation."

In retrospect it appears that Roberts's report was an accurate assessment of the situation in Carbon County. It was substantiated in a separate investigation by Alfred P. Reck, city editor for the Deseret News. In an editorial on 17 October 1933, the Deseret News reported that Roberts and the other investigators had discovered that sheriff's deputies and mine guards had struck women in the picket lines and that homes had been invaded without warrants by law enforcement officers. However, after a week-long "thorough and impartial investigation.

19Rolla West, The Carbon County Strike of 1933, photocopy of typewritten manuscript, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
21Progressive Independent (Salt Lake City), 22 September 1933.
22Heber J. Grant to Arthur W. Horsley, 19 October 1933, Church Archives.
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investigation,” Reck found much more. His findings, the editorial concluded, would “astound you with the gravity of the situation, stir you by the drab pathos of miners’ conditions and cause you to ponder over one of the most serious situations this state has faced.” Reck’s report was scheduled to appear in a series of articles beginning the next day. However, no articles appeared and no public explanation was offered. President Heber J. Grant, fearful that the articles would lead to more trouble in Carbon County, had ordered the articles not to be published until further investigation was made.

Had the Deseret News articles been published, the efforts of the National Miners Union might have attained a more legitimate position in the public’s eyes. As it was Grant’s action to stop publication of the articles reflected the church’s consistent policy to side with the more conservative element in a labor dispute. On this occasion, the United Mine Workers of America found themselves in a peculiar position. At other times the coal companies, local government officials, and the church had opposed the UMW efforts. Now, faced with the alternative of the more radical National Miners’ Union, these groups would support the UMW.

In conclusion, several observations can be made about the nature and extent of Mormon influences on unionization attempts in the eastern Utah coal fields. We have seen how general authorities of the Mormon church, reflecting their own backgrounds and ties to business, developed an anti-union position in the years after the 1880s as an increasing number of Latter-day Saints accepted nonagricultural jobs. We noted the church reaction against the threat of the Knights of Labor and then traced the decline of Mormon anti-union sentiment after strikebreaking efforts of 1903-4. We should also remember that as Mormons became a decreasing minority among miners the coal companies themselves lessened their expectations of church involvement. It remains to be stated that in many respects Utah’s coal fields were not unlike those of other western states where union organization had been successfully carried out. In nearby states, as in Utah, American miners were given preferential treatment over the numerous foreign-born miners who were also essential to the coal mining industry. They were given the first opportunities for employment and assignment to the best jobs and working places in the mines; they advanced most rapidly to supervisory positions, were given first consideration for the best company housing in the coal camps, and in general regarded themselves as superior to the foreign born. Unwillingness to support organized labor by both Mormon and non-Mormon American miners was more in response to a fear that the unions would destroy this favorable arrangement than (for Mormon miners) a willingness to follow the advice or sympathies of church leaders.

With some exceptions, the LDS church faced a constant struggle in the coal fields to carry out its religious programs and develop a respectable level of participation among the Mormon miners. Where church leaders were unable to consistently influence Mormon miners on church matters, it should not be expected that they could do so on economic questions. Although after 1904

23 Deseret News, 17 October 1933.
24 Heber J. Grant to Arthur W. Horsley, 19 October 1933, Church Archives.
church leaders maintained their anti-union outlook, there appears to be no evidence that they sought to influence the outcome of efforts to organize. When the United Mine Workers of America re-entered the Utah coal fields in 1918 they found little direct opposition by the church. Nevertheless, when the second major attempt to organize the Utah coal fields failed after the 1922 strike, the union felt the church was once again responsible. In 1933 the church supported the United Mine Workers of America by refusing to acknowledge the legitimate problems and questions to which the National Miners Union was directing its campaign. This was a consistent policy of siding with the position of the coal companies and local government officials, although it was not the overt action that had characterized church involvement in the 1903–4 strike. However, after 1904 the church role was of little significance in the failure of organized labor in the eastern Utah coal fields. Of primary importance was the unbending opposition by the coal companies, the inability of diverse ethnic and religious groups to unite under the banner of unionism, and the hesitant, conservative approach by the United Mine Workers of America evidenced, in part, by the organization's tendency to give undue importance to church influence on their activities after 1904.
In the nineteenth century when Mormon polygamy (or polygyny, or, as they preferred to call it, plural marriage) was in its heyday, the national reaction was one of outrage. The Reverend T. De Witt Talmage, for example, denounced Mormonism as "an organized filth built on polygamy." Despite a valiant rearguard action to defend their marriage code, the Mormons gradually were induced by national pressure and by the instruction of their prophet, Wilford Woodruff, to give up what the Republican platform of 1856 had called one of the "twin relics of barbarism." Official renunciation by the Mormon leaders came in 1890, and despite scattered exceptions the practice quickly dwindled. After 1904, to enforce the prohibitions and satisfy those who suspected them of bad faith, the Mormons became zealous in discouraging those suspected of attempting to revive polygamy. Anyone found guilty of this indiscretion was promptly excommunicated.

Today probably no modern people is more antipolygamous than the orthodox Mormons, though the larger community has experienced some ironic changes of attitude. In 1970 one author could write a serious article under the title "Has Monogamy Failed?" (Saturday Review, 25 April 1970). For pragmatic and purely secular reasons physician Victor Kassel recognized several advantages to "Polygyny after 60" in Geriatrics 21 (April 1966): 214-18. Experiments with group living and cohabiting without benefit of marriage were characteristic of the period. Part of the same loosening of traditional restrictions was the decision of some denominations to have special gay congregations. Even on the legal front old guidelines crumbled as many practices were allowed when participated in by freely consenting adults.

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In the midst of such churning the stance of moral superiority against the Mormons for their alternative life style became much harder to maintain than in the past. Not that anyone, least of all the Mormons themselves, advocated legalizing plural marriage, but there continued to be a scholarly interest in the historical experience of the Mormons with this unusual marriage relationship. The time seems ripe to survey what has been done, to make some comparisons, and to offer suggestions about possible future research.¹

Articles and books about polygamy go back to the nineteenth century. For purposes of the present review article, however, most of the works written at that time and during the first three decades of the present century can be dismissed as polemical attacks or defenses. They are part of the history of ideas and of clashing value systems but cannot properly be considered dispassionate scholarship. One partial exception, an interesting attempt to quantify the physical and intellectual result of polygamy on the offspring, is the master’s thesis prepared by Josiah Hickman, “A Critical Study of the Monogamic and Polygamic Offspring of the Mormon People” (M. A. thesis, Columbia University, 1907), later summarized in “The Offspring of the Mormon People,” Journal of Heredity 15 (February 1924): 55-68. Hickman, himself a polygamist, was attempting to disprove allegations that children of the Mormon plural families were physically and mentally handicapped.

In the late 1930s came the beginning of a more scholarly approach to the subject. Many of the valuable monographs were by sociologists. Working under Kimball Young, a sociologist of Mormon background at the University of Wisconsin, James Edward Hulett, Jr., finished a Ph. D. dissertation on “The Sociological and Psychological Aspects of the Mormon Polygamous Family” in 1939. The work was never published in its entirety, but in 1940 the American Journal of Sociology published some of the findings in “Social Role and Personal Security in Mormon Polygamy.” Not quantitative, the Hulett approach was one of “types,” setting forth different kinds of polygamous families and the experiences of first wives, second wives, etc. There were anonymous quotations collected from participants in the system — children of polygamous parents — who told of their recollections. The approach at least overturned any assumption that polygamous life was uniform. "There is no intention to suggest that all polygamous wives were involved in conflict situations," Hulett wrote; "for in every case of conflict there were parallel cases where conflict was either absent or directed into less divergent channels."

In June 1943 the American Sociological Review published Hulett’s “The Social Role of the Mormon Polygamous Male” (8:279-87). Far from reveling in his abundance of wives, Hulett wrote, the Mormon polygamist “experienced frustration and, in many cases, ego-insecurity because of the conflict between his

¹After writing this review article my attention was called to an unpublished bibliography compiled by David J. Whittaker, of the LDS seminaries and institutes system, entitled “Plural Marriage in the Mormon Context: A Selected Bibliography,” 3rd ed., April 1976. It is the most complete I have seen. It differs from the present treatment in two ways: first, in its rather loose standards of inclusion — popular articles, contemporary polemic, parallels in other cultures, and Mormon theological and inspirational writings are all included along with scholarly treatments — and, more importantly, in its lack of annotation or discussion.
monogamous pattern of expectancies and the actualities of the polygamous situation.”

Using the same data was Kimball Young’s “Variations in Personality Manifestations in Mormon Polygamous Families,” in Studies in Personality Contributed in Honor of Lewis M. Terman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1942). A section of the article deals with the role and status of wives and another section deals with the role and status of husbands. The approach is to classify different types within each group, citing case studies to give a sense of the range and variation. Anticipating later writers who dealt with the antipolygamy literature and its stereotypes, Young wrote:

Certainly there is little evidence to support the popular notion of the Mormon harem pictured in fiction and anti-Mormon literature. The configuration of a sense of shame, ineptitude in love-making, taboos of all sorts on undertaking variational practices of love-making — these plus the obligation of earning a living, the enforced secrecy of many of the plural marriages, and no end of other circumstances give the quietus to such literary fantasies. Such fictions very possibly reveal the unconscious wishful thinking of the writers rather than any facts obtained from polygamous practices.

Among Young’s insights was the recognition that if the husband failed to provide adequately for his plural families, he experienced “a distinct lowering of . . . sense of self-esteem and self-assurance,” this failure being “likely to be all the more painful because of the official anticipation that he would make good and because he was exposed to reactions of blame if he did not succeed. Both wives and children were often quick to seize upon these situations in order to enhance their own ego status at the expense of the father.”

Another student of Young’s was Paul Wilbur Tappan, whose “Mormon-Gentile Conflict: A Study of the Influence of Public Opinion on In-group versus Out-group Interaction with Special Reference to Polygamy” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1939), spent much space in retelling the history of Mormonism. That Tappan was aware of the complexity of his subject, however, is indicated by an intriguing spectrum of in-group and out-group types. Insight is clothed with jargon, as in the following: “The initial situation of a general antagonism based upon numerous specific and varying interests was altered by these agencies to a stronger general antagonism focused about a few more striking interests. The result was that in the course of conflict, the symbols of attack chosen by the out-groups were not all identical with the interests and values which motivated them, but rather were compromise foci selected by the opinion-focusing groups because of their wider appeal to these spectator publics which were potential allies in the conflict.”

Appearing about the same time, also a product of research of the 1930s, was Nels Anderson, Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942). It contains a chapter entitled “Social Implications of Polygamy,” based in large part on the census records for 1860, 1870, and 1880. Material from diaries and photographs of polygamous families add to the human interest. This chapter can still be recommended as a garden-variety introduction to the subject.

After a hiatus during and immediately after World War II, studies of polygamy with a sociological emphasis resumed in the fifties. In 1950 appeared
Chester Wendell Hartwig’s “Mormon Polygamy: A Study of Change in a Group’s Value System” (M. A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1950). Although the work has some interesting speculations — such as noting that absentee Mormon husbands would have created opportunities for loneliness beyond the ordinary as early as the 1830s — the thesis is thin. Hartwig tries to bring in concepts from Max Weber and Talcott Parsons (rather weakly and unconvincingly) but makes no reference to any previous scholarship.

On the periphery of polygamy was Louis O. Turley’s “The Affect [sic] of Plural Marriage upon the Present Membership of the Church” (M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1950). Using a questionnaire, Thrley studied returned missionaries and found that those who were descendants of polygamy were, in Turley’s words, “more willing to serve their Church, serve more often, longer, and are more constant in the service rendered; they are better educated, have more and higher degrees, and indicate a determination to achieve higher educational summits in the future; they are closer to their God in spirituality and demonstrate a closer affinity to certain tenets and doctrines of Mormonism.” This is in some ways the modern equivalent of Josiah Hickman’s earlier efforts to show that the children of polygamous families got higher marks in school. An inevitable question is whether or not the children of plural ancestors were not, in effect, the descendants of an elite.

In 1954 appeared Kimball Young’s long-awaited book-length study. Heavily indebted to Hulett but containing much more of value, the work is in most respects the single most important monograph on Mormon polygamy. The worst thing about it is its title: Isn’t One Wife Enough? (New York: Henry Holt, 1954). The first three chapters present different views of polygamy. “The Mormon Chamber of Horrors: The Gentile Looks at Polygamy” is followed by one on the official Mormon view and then a third chapter that tries to portray the institution factually. A chapter on the historical origins and development of the practice is then followed by one explaining theological background. A middle block of chapters deals with courtship, economics, relations of spouses, desertion and divorce, the children of polygamy, inheritance, and the psychology of men and women. The book concludes with an historical survey of the attack on polygamy, the “official liquidation” of polygamy, the underground and imprisonment, and “post-Manifesto” adjustments. It remains a serious work that cannot be ignored. Unfortunately it contains no bibliography.

Two years later appeared what is perhaps the best short treatment of the subject, Stanley S. Ivin’s “Notes on Mormon Polygamy,” Western Humanities Review 10 (Summer 1956): 229–39. Although not rigorously quantitative in its approach, this article used available figures in a sensible way to arrive at the conclusions about numbers. Pointing out the fallacy of setting heads of families against total church membership, Ivin estimated that the Mormons living in polygamous families — or the number of families with each plural wife regarded as head of household — was somewhere between 10 and 20 percent. But he recognized that it could vary from place and from year to year. “The story is rather one of sporadic outbursts of enthusiasm, followed by relapses, with the proportion of the Saints living in polygamy steadily falling. And it appears to be more than chance that each outbreak of fervor coincided with some
revivalist activity within the church or with some menace from without. . . Left alone, they [the Mormons] were prone to neglect it, and it always took some form of pressure to stir them to renewed zeal.” Dealing finally with the question of how many wives those men who were polygamists had, Ivins concluded that the great majority had only two wives. “Mormondom was not a society in which all men married many wives, but one in which a few men married two or more wives.” Because of its unpopularity among the Mormons themselves, polygamy, in Ivins’s opinion, would have died a natural death.

Most studies of polygamy during the next twenty years, as we shall see, emphasized non-quantitative, non-sociological aspects. Then came Vicky Burgess-Olson’s “Family Structure and Dynamics in Early Utah Mormon Families, 1847-1885” (Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1975). Prepared in the field of counseling psychology, this work uses an approach not previously utilized in polygamy studies — that of examining the source material by means of a questionnaire. The precariousness of the resulting data base might be suggested by such questions as “Husband’s general reasons for entering polygyny: dedication to the principle, spiritual confirmation, pressure by a third person (church authority and/or spouse), status and prestige, economic, sex, love.” Anyone familiar with the primary sources will realize the impossibility of assigning motives in this way. Other questions present similar problems.

The size of Burgess-Olson’s sample was also small. Starting with 222 women for whom she felt adequate information existed, the author found that 65 of the families were inadequately documented. The result is a study based on “157 early Utah Mormon families having children during the years of 1847-1885 with either a monogamous wife, first polygynous wife, middle polygynous wife, or last and youngest polygynous wife and judged to have enough public information on their family life to answer at least two-thirds of the questions [on the questionnaire].” The resulting tables set forth year of marriage, occupational status, number of wives, places of birth, spatial arrangements, sororal polygyny, economic conditions, and the like. A unique feature of the dissertation is its listing of primary and secondary sources according to the name of the family they deal with.

A year later appeared an important quantitative study by James E. Smith and Phillip R. Kunz, “Polygyny and Fertility in Nineteenth-century America,” Population Studies 30 (1976): 465-80, based on a sample of 4,425 monogamous men and 1,687 polygamists. One of the tables gives sex ratios for different age groups in Utah from 1850 through 1880. Generally speaking, as with most frontier communities, there were more males than females, the ratio of 113 in 1850 slipping to 101 in 1860 and then climbing to 102 in 1870 and 107 in 1880. However, these authors have recognized that total figures and ratios are less important than the figures for different ages. Thus, “the large number of females aged from 20 to 29 relative to males aged from 30 to 39 would permit a significant amount of polygyny among these males.” Smith and Kunz also provide new estimates of the “intensity” of polygamy: 70.2 percent of the polygamist males had two wives, 20.7 percent three wives, 9.3 percent had four or more wives. This is fairly close to the earlier estimates of Stanley Ivins although based on a
different sample. Obviously polygamy was not so attractive a proposition that those who decided to go into it did so over and over again. As for fertility, the number of children for monogamous wives was 7.82, whereas wives in polygamous unions averaged 7.46 births. This varied with the ordinal position of the wife, however. Men with two wives interestingly had more than twice the number of children as monogamists, but additional wives did not maintain the same rate. Although they recognize that conclusions from child spacing data are tenuous, Smith and Kunz conclude that polygamy produced no significant decline in coital frequency.

During the same generation stretching from the 1930s to the present several studies have dealt with the federal legislation against polygamy and the resulting prosecutions. This provided an attractive topic for thesis-length research, for the primary sources were essentially all in print, mainly in government documents. The theses vary in quality, starting with Myrtle C. Barnwell, “Polygamy among the Mormons up to 1896” (B. D. thesis, Duke University, 1933), a scissors-and-paste compilation that makes no contribution. At the end of the decade came Forrest B. Coulter, “Elimination of Polygamy among the Mormons” (M. A. thesis, University of California, 1939), whose main contribution is a handy listing of relevant government documents and a reproduction in the appendix of the most important legislation. After the war, Joseph R. Meservy completed “A History of Federal Legislation against Mormon Polygamy and Certain United States Supreme Court Decisions Supporting Such Legislation” (M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1947), the heart of which is found in chapters 4 through 8. It is a brief survey, not profound, and repeats the misleading statement that “at no time were more than three per cent of the families polygamous.” John William Orr, “Federal Anti-Polygamy Legislation” (M. A. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1951) treats in 100 pages the Morrill Act, post-Civil War legislative proposals, the antipolygamy crusade, the Edmunds Act, and the Edmunds-Tucker Act. There is every indication of haste and superficiality. Three years later Joseph T. Hatfield, “Congress, Polygamy, and the Mormons” (M. A. thesis, Ohio University, 1954) tried to put the question into a broader context by showing how closely Mormon polygamy was “associated with some of the national issues of the day.” It does not accomplish this stated purpose.

Fortunately there were treatments of the polygamy legislation and court cases that deserve study. Of particularly high quality was Richard D. Poll’s “The Twin Relic: A Study of Mormon Polygamy and the Campaign by the Government of the United States for Its Abolition, 1852-1890” (M. A. thesis, Texas Christian University, 1989). Most of this thesis is organized around the legislative enactments, but it has more than this. Two early chapters set the stage with discussion of plural marriage, and there is substantial discussion of the context for each major piece of legislation. Nor is it merely an extended term paper in length; not counting the 100 pages of documents printed in the appendixes, Poll’s thesis runs to over 300 pages.

More readily accessible is Orma Linford, “The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1964), most of which was reprinted in two installments in the Utah Law Review 9 (Winter 1964-
Bitton: Mormon Polygamy

Summer 1965): 308-70, 543-91. In the early chapters — in which the Morrill Act, the Edmunds Act, and the Edmunds-Tucker Act are summarized — she offers little beyond what Poll said. But she goes on to analyze a dozen polygamy cases. Finally, there are informative chapters on unlawful cohabitation, civil disabilities, and the church escheat cases.

A published article surveying the main lines of development is Ray Jay Davis, "The Polygamous Prelude," American Journal of Legal History 6 (January 1962): 1-27. Discussing in turn the Morrill Act, the Edmunds Act, the Edmunds-Tucker Act, the Idaho Test Oath Act, and the Mann Act, the piece could serve as a brief introduction to this body of material. More instructive because more narrowly focused is Ray Jay Davis, "Plural Marriage and Religious Freedom: The Impact of Reynolds v. United States," Arizona Law Review 15 (1973): 287-306, which, among other things, recognized the recent erosion of the belief-action dichotomy upon which the Reynolds decision had been based. Also exceptionally rewarding because of its attention to context is C. Peter Magrath's "Chief Justice Waite and the 'Twin Relic': Reynolds v. United States," Vanderbilt Law Review 18(1965): 507-43. Interestingly, it was historian George Bancroft who had supplied the Chief Justice with some of the crucial material on the history of religious freedom that led to the decision. For Magrath the Reynolds decision was "not illiberal": "While safeguarding broad social interests, it emphasizes with equal force the value of religious liberty which Jefferson and Madison represented, and it endorses their sensible insistence that church and state be separated." A recent, still unpublished paper by James L. Clayton of the University of Utah re-examines the Reynolds decision and finds it decidedly illiberal in that it punished a minority whose mores were harming no one else. In this evaluation Clayton adopts a distinction made by John Stuart Mill.

Treating the polygamy question from the external point of view, emphasizing the legislation and court cases within the larger political context, are many other studies of value. In fact, almost any general history of Utah or the Mormons will say something on this topic. The present article will not attempt to list all such treatments; the best general bibliography to which reference can be made is now found in James B. Allen's and Glen M. Leonard's The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976). As samples of the works available a few titles may be mentioned here. Avowedly partisan but not to be ignored is Brigham Henry Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930). For a limited but important fifteen-year period there is Richard D. Poll, "The Mormon Question, 1850-1865: A Study in Politics and Public Opinion" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1948). As the title indicates, this is much more than a study of Mormon marriage practices. Among other things, it points out that the defenses of polygamy written by some Mormons were not always greeted warmly by other Mormons. Generally, what Poll does in this work is to put into a political context the whole question of Mormon polygamy, explaining much of the give and take on the subject, including the rise of the Morrill Act of 1862. Interestingly, the linkage between polygamy and slavery in the minds of many


The period of the "Raid," mainly the 1880s, is well discussed by Gustive O. Larson, *The 'Americanization' of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1971). In some ways it makes the best single book to read on the subject, for in addition to a long chapter titled "Plural Marriage among the Mormons" it goes on to provide a detailed discussion of passive resistance, life on the underground, the penitentiary experience and the whole transition to the Manifesto, and the progress on to statehood. Larson provides a salutary alternative to Kimball Young's sociological approach. On a specific topic of interest see also Larson's "An Industrial Home for Polygamous Wives," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 38 (Summer 1970): 263-75.

A work in progress of obvious importance is the doctoral dissertation of Henry J. Wolfinger at Princeton University, which examines in minute detail the federal-territorial relations of the 1880s and early 1890s. Unfortunately this long-awaited study remains in its penultimate stage. One article by Wolfinger is "A Reexamination of the Woodruff Manifesto in the Light of Utah Constitutional History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39 (Fall 1971): 328-49, which argues that the Manifesto was not a sudden turning point. The surrender of polygamy "was a slow process of yielding up the practice of polygamy rather than a sudden moment of capitulation." Under pressure the church was already yielding its position in the late 1880s. Also on the Manifesto are the same author's "An Irrespressible Conflict," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (Autumn-Winter 1971): 124-32; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Coming of the Manifesto," ibid., 5 (Autumn 1970): 11-25; and Gordon J. Thomasson, "The Manifesto Was a Victory," ibid., 6 (Spring 1971): 37-45.

The attack against polygamy is in a sense easy to understand. The Mormon marriage system affronted established mores of the national community and was regarded as immoral. It was thought to be oppressive to plural wives, who were
deprived of the companionship associated with the nuclear monogamous home. Finally, it was said to be disadvantageous to the children in two ways: because of hereditary weaknesses these children were allegedly weak, unhealthy, often handicapped; and because of their number and the inability of the husband to provide, they allegedly suffered from privation.

The most interesting scholarly analyses of the antipolygamy attack have in common the point of view that the criticisms tell more about their authors and their values than about the Mormons. David Brion Davis's "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205–24, puts not only antipolygamy but other kinds of anti-Mormon writings into a broader context. Nativists saw all three groups — Masons, Catholics, Mormons — as led by "unscrupulous leaders plotting to subvert the American social order." Though rank-and-file members were not considered individually evil, continued Davis, "they were blinded and corrupted by a persuasive ideology that justified treason and gross immorality in the interest of the subversive group." This was the nativist perception, not the reality. Attacks on Mormon polygamy (and Catholic nunneries) were thus largely due to the psychological device of projection: "The sins of individuals, or of the nation as a whole, could be pushed off upon the shoulders of the enemy and there punished in righteous anger. . . . If [American nativists] were disturbed by the moral implications of divorce, they could point in horror at the Mormon elder who took his quota of wives all at once. The literature of countersubversion could thus serve the double purpose of vicariously fulfilling repressed desires, and of releasing the tension and guilt arising from rapid social change and conflicting values."

Also studying the anti-Mormon literature in general have been Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, especially in their "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22 (Summer 1968): 243–60, which analyzes some fifty novels. Arrington and Haupt found that the novelists simply adapted existing images or stereotypes in portraying the Mormons. Images relevant for polygamy — which played upon the way this institution was perceived by the American reading public — are the image of the drunken, abusive husband; the image of the white slave procurer; the image of the seducer; the image of the lustful Turk; and the image of the cruel, lustful, Southern slaveholder. None of these, of course, was original, but all were adapted in describing the Mormons and their peculiar marriage institution.

Similar in its approach is Charles A. Cannon, "The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign against Mormon Polygamy," *Pacific Historical Review* 43 (February 1974): 61–82. Fanciful discussions of sexual variety under Mormon polygamy suggest that "the anti-polygamists took some pleasure in describing this particular 'evil' of the system" and that "the line between disgust and envy in the literature is sometimes difficult to draw." The anti-Mormon novels were in part "vehicles of erotic fantasy." Cannon proposes the provocative idea that through "the frequent use of the language of liberation, often by female critics of polygamy, . . . some critics may have projected their own desire of greater social and sexual freedom onto the anti-polygamy
“rhetoric.” Fearful of sex and its power, the antipolygamists utilized Mormon polygamy as “an image of sexuality that was in large part fantasy.” A narrower yet useful study of polygamy as caricatured by its enemies is Richard H. Cracroft, “Distorting Polygamy for Fun and Profit: Artemus Ward and Mark Twain among the Mormons,” Brigham Young University Studies 14 (Winter 1974): 272-88.

Although the arguments in favor of polygamy are often assumed to be obvious and are alluded to in some of the treatments of the antipolygamy rhetoric, they have seldom been carefully analyzed. A preliminary attempt to set forth the pro-polygamy arguments was my “Polygamy Defended: A Study of 19th Century Polemic” (paper presented to the Western History Association, 1970). After listing eight major arguments used by the Mormons — the most important being religious but adding others that were allegedly social or physiological — I conclude that both the pro- and antipolygamy arguments were expressions of the same two-valued orientation that saw the opposing side as an unmitigated evil.

One of the most perceptive studies of its type is Gail Farr Casterline, “‘In the Toils’ or ‘Onward for Zion’: Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852–1890” (M. A. thesis, Utah State University, 1974). That it is essentially a study in opposing images and stereotypes is suggested by the titles of the five chapters: “The Non-Mormon Image of the Mormon Woman, 1852–1890”; “Antithesis of an Ideal”; “Other Potential Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852–1890”; “The Mormon Women’s Response”; and “Development and Change, 1852–1890.”

A similarly valuable though shorter study of the polemic was Kathleen Marquis, “Diamond Cut Diamond: Mormon Women and the Cult of Domesticity in the Nineteenth Century,” University of Michigan Papers in Women’s Studies 2 (1974): 105–23. Using the “cult of true womanhood” as her point of departure, Marquis points out that both the Mormon women and the anti-Mormon women subscribed to traditional sex roles; both were part of the same thought world; both “manifest a basic mistrust of social change.” Polygamy, says Marquis, was “merely a variation on the theme of woman’s value for society as reproducers and socializers. The furor over what form this role took (monogamy vs. polygamy) pales before the conviction that its content must never be altered.”

One rather neglected aspect of the subject is folklore, which of course focuses on a certain kind of image which may or may not reflect the actual practice. Three works can be mentioned. Austin E. Fife and Alta Fife, Saints of Sage and Saddle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956) contains a chapter on polygamy. Merilynne Rich Smith presented “Do You Take These Women? A Study of Mormon Polygamy Folklore” at the folklore session of the Utah State Historical Society convention in 1973. Finally, Linda Harris, a Brigham Young University folklorist, presented a paper on “The Polygamist Wife as Trickster” at the 1977 meeting of the California Folklore Society.

Image studies are the province not only of intellectual historians and folklorists but also of students of public opinion and the media. Not surprisingly Mormons have almost always been identified in the public consciousness as polygamists. Containing material on this aspect are two dissertations: Richard O. Cowan, “Mormonism in National Periodicals” (Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford
University, 1961); and Dennis L. Lythgoe, "The Changing Image of Mormonism in Periodical Literature" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1969). Cowan summarizes magazine articles but has only a few pages specifically on polygamy. Lythgoe’s chapter 2 is concerned entirely with polygamy. What has been lacking in this type of study until recently is the quantitative approach of content analysis. Cowan’s study offers some early work along these lines. A more recent effort to refine the quantitative approach is Jan Shipps’s “From Satyr to Saint: American Attitudes toward the Mormons, 1860-1960,” a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in 1973. Based on a careful analysis of magazine articles, this paper concludes that public attitudes towards the Mormons remained negative long after the Manifesto of 1890, but to my mind it is not enough to say that a treatment was negative. Gary Bunker and I have argued that at least one national periodical, _Puck_, became gentler and more spoofing in its cartoon treatment of Mormon polygamy after the turn of the century; the difference was not a change from positive to negative but a change of tone. Nevertheless the Shipps article represents a definite stride forward in its adaptation of content analysis techniques to a study of the way Mormons were perceived in the national media.

Polygamy was publicly acknowledged by the Mormons from 1852 to 1890. That was the period when ten to twenty percent of the Saints lived in polygamous families, depending on the year and the place. Before 1852 the institution was not openly admitted and in some instances was denied. Since some of these denials came from Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith before their deaths, it was easy to conclude that the institution was introduced by Brigham Young after the death of the Smith brothers in 1844. This has in fact been the official position of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints since its origin in the 1860s. A similar period of secrecy and innuendo came after the Manifesto. By this document the Mormons agreed to observe “the law of the land,” but not all of them renounced their belief in the principle. The assumption of some was that under circumstances which did not make plural marriage illegal it might very well be practiced. Between 1890 and 1904, in fact, a small number of new plural marriages was contracted in Mexico or on international waters. These did not violate “the laws of the land.” There is some evidence that a few others were secretly performed in Utah by two or three church leaders. None of these was publicized, information about them leaking out through rumor and then reluctantly through the Reed Smoot hearings. In 1904 President Joseph F. Smith issued a “second manifesto” that effectively put an end to any new plural marriages. By this time, however, a small group of Mormons was rationalizing and justifying a secret continuation of “the principle.” Eventually these became known as “Fundamentalists” (the term having quite a different meaning in the Mormon context from its general Protestant meaning) and were excommunicated when discovered.

The evidence on the origin of polygamy is not all one-sided, naturally, or it would not produce much of a controversy. Two early Mormon writers who compiled evidence to show that it was started by Joseph Smith were Andrew Jenson, whose articles on the subject appeared in the _Historical Record_ 6 (1887); and Joseph Fielding Smith, who authored _Blood Atonement and the Origin of
Plural Marriage (Salt Lake City: Deseret News) in 1905. From a different, less involved point of view Charles A. Shook, in The True Origin of Mormon Polygamy (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1914), quite decisively established Joseph Smith's responsibility for initiating the new marriage system. A historian of the Reorganized church who has recognized the prophet's role in this regard is Robert Bruce Flanders, author of Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965). More recently Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith" (M. A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975) finds the germ of polygamy as early as 1831 or even earlier. Rejecting lust as an adequate motive, Bachman explains the system in religious terms. Its results he sees as conflict on three levels: between husband and the first wife, between Mormons who accepted and those who rejected plurality of wives, and between Mormons and the surrounding community. A convenient listing of affidavits relating to the beginning of polygamy is found in the appendix.

One of the most astute recent investigators of Mormon polygamy is Lawrence Foster. His "A Little-Known Defense of Polygamy from the Mormon Press in 1842," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 9 (Winter 1974): 21-35, analyzes the Peace Maker, a pamphlet whose authorship is open to question. Foster finds it "an argument of astonishing intellectual and social sophistication, even though one easily may find the author's extreme stress on male dominance and prerogatives one-sided and disturbing." The pamphlet shows "a genuine concern for overcoming the existing alienation between men and women in marriage and reestablishing satisfying relations between the sexes." Although he does not really resolve the question of Joseph Smith's relationship to the pamphlet, Foster sees it as opening "a window of understanding into the values and felt social necessities underlying the remarkable Mormon effort to reestablish a distinctively American form of Biblical polygamy and the culture of the Hebrew patriarchs in mid-nineteenth century America."

Tangentially related to the origins of plural marriage is its impact on the general officers of the church. The most valuable study of this group is that of D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: An American Elite" (Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976). Chapter 2, "Family Relationships in the Hierarchy," clearly indicates that plural marriage reinforced kinship connections between the Mormon leaders. Fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, and brothers-in-law frequently exceeded one hundred persons. When the large numbers of one's children married, the "resulting labyrinth of marriage ties almost defies analysis." Quinn gives precise information for different periods from 1830 to 1930. Between 1852 and 1890 it is clear that if one was not a polygamist at the time of being elevated to the hierarchy, he almost inevitably soon succumbed to the pressure to take plural wives.

Personal experiences with plural marriage, the system as viewed from within, are not easy to come by. Many Mormons simply did not talk about it, while others put on a good face for the public that belied the anguish reflected in their diaries. Although not scholarly studies by historians of a later generation and thus different from the other works being considered here, two first-person accounts that tell much about some of the tensions of the system deserve
mention. Juliaetta Bateman Jensen, *Little Gold Pieces* (Salt Lake City: Stanway Printing Co., 1948), allows a look at different reactions to polygamy within the Bateman family. Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother* (1941; Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1973) reveals the disappointments of an articulate woman who became a plural wife in the 1880s. Another inside look, probably overstated for humorous effect, is Paul Bailey’s *Polygamy Was Better Than Monotony* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1972), dedicated “to my grandfathers and their plural wives.” Much remains to be done in bringing out the personal dimension of this experience; however, personal reactions must be evaluated very carefully before jumping to conclusions about an entire system. It would take no effort to compile long lists of negative statements from people participating in monogamy. How representative would they be? And the positive statements — those made by Mormon women for public consumption — are they purely window dressing? Or did some of them mean what they said?

Personal reactions of individual males participating in polygamy are equally scarce and difficult to interpret. I have read enough diary accounts to know that it was no bed of roses for the husband. As a minor eddy off the mainstream, a certain number of these husbands served prison terms. Ingress into this aspect of their experience can be gained by consulting William Mulder, “Prisoners for Conscience Sake,” in Thomas E. Cheney, Austin E. Fife, and Juanita Brooks, eds., *Lore of Faith and Folly* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971); George Q. Cannon, “The Prison Diary of a Mormon Apostle,” *Pacific Historical Review* 16 (November 1947): 393-409; and B. Carmon Hardy, “The American Siberia: Mormon Prisoners in Detroit in the 1880s,” *Michigan History* 50 (September 1966): 197-210.

The subject of polygamy after the Woodruff Manifesto is laden with controversy and sensitivity. The church has not been eager to say very much about it, recognizing that it could seem to be evidence of bad faith if in fact Mormons were continuing to practice plural marriage after they had officially agreed to renounce it. Those involved in the continuing plural relationship — the so-called Fundamentalists — have often preferred to remain silent on the subject in order to avoid prosecution. Nevertheless, a body of literature has built up over the years expressing the Fundamentalist claims. Since most of this material is ephemeral and partisan rather than scholarly, it will not be mentioned here. Although I personally agree with most of his conclusions, Paul E. Reimann, *Plural Marriage, Limited* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1974), which attempts to set forth the orthodox refutation of Mormon Fundamentalism, is flawed by its legalistic, one-sided approach. More scholarly and showing some awareness of circumstances is Dean C. Jessee’s “A Comparative Study and Evaluation of the Latter-day Saint and ‘Fundamentalist’ Views Pertaining to the Practice of Plural Marriage” (M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959). Even this well-researched thesis is largely in the realm of proof text. While examining the historical claims of the Fundamentalists and finding them wanting, it does not maintain a sense of distance.

It is clear enough that in the history of Mormon polygamy there is not merely the one official terminal date given by the official histories. The Woodruff
Manifesto of 1890 was one landmark, to be sure, but it did not end the contracting of all plural marriages. Apparently some saw it as a decision to maintain a low profile. A useful collection of data regarding Mormon leaders who officiated in plural marriages or took plural wives after 1890 is Victor W. Jorgensen, Jr.’s “Mormon Apostles Taylor and Cowley: Out of Harmony with Their Quorum,” a paper prepared for the Department of History at California State University at Fullerton in 1976. Another aspect of the question during the shadowy years around the turn of the century is the authority that was given to Anthony W. Ivins, then stake president in the Mormon colonies in Mexico, to perform plural marriages. Based on his father’s diaries and other materials, his son H. Grant Ivins has written “Polygamy in Mexico as Practiced by the Mormon Church, 1895-1905” (1970), a copy of which has been deposited in the Utah State Historical Society Library. Since this paper gives a precise enumeration of these Mexican plural marriages, we are at least helped to avoid the fallacy of assuming a magnitude of hundreds or thousands. Varying between two and eleven per year, these plural marriages totaled 52 in the eight years from 1897 to 1904. Also on this subject Utah Historical Quarterly in 1978 will publish Kenneth L. Cannon II’s “The Manifesto and After: The Continuance of Unlawful Polygamous Cohabitation among the General Authorities after the Manifesto of 1890.”

Another turning point came in 1904, during the hearings over the seating of Utah’s Senator-elect Reed Smoot, when President Joseph F. Smith issued another manifesto. Now the Mormon church was in dead earnest about stamping out new plural marriages. Those who continued to enter plural relationships were sharply reprimanded and, if necessary, excommunicated. These were the so-called Fundamentalists, actually a collective term for several small groups of die-hards, each with its own line of authority and claims to secret instructions. Since the groups continue in existence, it may be too early to expect objective scholarship. Of some help are two Brigham Young University theses. Tracing narratively how one of the groups came about is Lyle O. Wright’s “Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times” (M. S. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963). Full of fascinating, almost gossipy information, this thesis is based on personal interviews and correspondence. The reader is led into a never-never land of intrigue and a set of assumptions that would be very hard to explain to the nonbeliever. One fascinating chapter details the expansion of this faction in the French Mission during the 1950s. Jerold A. Hilton’s “Polygamy in Utah and Surrounding Area since the Manifesto of 1890” (M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1965) offers little further information on different groups within the Fundamentalist movement. Hilton cites two estimates of the numbers of Utahns living in polygamous families — two thousand and twenty thousand. He accepts the latter figure as more accurate. Generally speaking it is a very superficial thesis.

More personalized accounts of the experience of post-Manifesto polygamy, extending down to the present, are few. Samuel W. Taylor has written Family Kingdom (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951), a fictionalized yet largely authentic life of John W. Taylor, a member of the church’s Council of Twelve Apostles who was excommunicated for continuing the taking of new wives into the
twentieth century. The same author's *I Have Six Wives* (New York: Greenberg, 1956) gives a fascinating view of the problems and the dedication that characterized Mormon Fundamentalists in the mid-twentieth century. Providing the perspective of a contemporary plural wife, Melissa Merrill (pseud.) has published *Polygamist's Wife: The True Story of One Woman's Struggle with Modern-day Polygamy* (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Company, 1975), a pathetic soap opera full of jealousy and heartache. Is her experience typical? Or is she the modern equivalent of Fannie Stenhouse and Ann Eliza Young?

Because of the conflict of interpretation between mainline Latter-day Saints and the Fundamentalists, the publication of primary sources on Mormon polygamy is a venture full of the risks of partisanship. Nevertheless, there are collections that students of the subject can, if they are careful, find useful. One that would be easy to overlook is *The Most Holy Principle*, 4 vols. (Murray, Utah: Gems Publishing Co., ca. 1970-75), whose compiler is Gilbert A. Fulton. It is a strangely amateur work whose subtitle gives some idea of the content: "a chronological and historical compilation of selected testimonies and teachings of the Apostles and Prophets of the present dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as given from the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith through the third of March, 1887 pertaining to the laws, principles, and doctrines of Celestial Marriage, including a plurality of wives, together with other items related thereto." The second and third volumes continue the same material after 1887. Volume 4 contains summary and index. Despite its inadequacies and lack of scholarly apparatus or explanations of historical setting, the work is useful in its inclusion of many documents — sermons, letters, diary entries, newspaper editorials, etc. — that otherwise would have to be read in different places.

Those who have had first-hand experience as children in polygamous households (not counting Fundamentalists) are rapidly disappearing. One way of learning something of what it was like from those who remember is oral history. A few perspectives on the subject are found in individual interviews of the James Moyle Oral History Program of the Historical Department of the LDS church. A series of interviews deliberately focusing on this subject have been conducted by the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University.

An attempt to assess the state of polygamy in the 1950s was Jerry R. Andersen's "Polygamy in Utah," *Utah Law Review* 5 (Spring 1957): 381-89. It reviews the efforts to enforce the law against Fundamentalist cultists. There is an excerpt from an interesting address by Judge Robert S. Tuller of the Superior Court of Pima County, Arizona, delivered to a group of Fundamentalists who had pleaded guilty. Andersen concludes, "It is certainly open to argument whether the polygamists are hindered or helped by prosecution."

An interesting look at present attitudes — not the official church position of rejecting polygamy but the feelings of lay members — is John R. Christiansen's "Contemporary Mormons' Attitudes towards Polygynous Practices," *Marriage and Family Living* 25 (1963): 167-70. Using a questionnaire he found that the practice in former days was condoned by modern Mormons, that in the present it was rejected, and that in the future it was "anticipated by a minority only." Attitudes of males and females did not differ greatly, both giving as the principal
reason for practicing polygamy that it was a commandment from God. Even under circumstances when the practice would be legal and approved by the church, "only a minority wished to practice it." Christiansen concludes that feelings are much like what they were in the nineteenth century. Significantly, the population from which respondents were chosen was a small rural community in central Utah — "in order to control the socio-cultural factor as much as possible and to duplicate the agricultural-orientation of the early polygynous Mormons for comparative purposes." While one can understand reasons for this particular comparison, it is obvious that the study was set up so as to maximize the chances for concluding that present attitudes are much like those of the past. The author does not say and should not be interpreted to mean that attitudes of present Mormons in general — chosen at random from the entire church membership — would be the same. That would be another study. In a broader study still in progress Brigham Young University professor Phillip R. Kunz has introduced another variable — whether or not the ancestors of the respondents were polygamists.

Recently there have been several efforts to see Mormon polygamy in a larger comparative perspective. Raymond Lee Muncy's *Sex and Marriage in Utopian Communities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973) contains two chapters on Mormon plural marriage. Unfortunately Muncy's general understanding of Mormon history is unoriginal and derivative. Although much of his essentially narrative account is accurate, there are several points at which superficiality is obvious. Drawing from one sermon by Brigham Young, Muncy concludes that "the chief end of woman's existence was to bear all of the children God wanted her to," a partial truth to say the least. Muncy notes lectures in favor of polygamy during 1856-57 but ignores the contest of the Mormon Reformation and the Utah War. He sees polygamy as becoming "not merely an appendage to the Church, but its vital center." These and many other assertions deserve elaboration and qualification. There is little depth in this study and even the supposed value of the book as comparison is not fulfilled, for the different "utopian communities" are simply treated *seriatim*, with a thin conclusion devoid of special insights.

The following year appeared John Cairncross's *After Polygamy Was Made a Sin: The Social History of Christian Polygamy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), which sees Mormon polygamy in a different context. Instead of lining up various utopian communities in the nineteenth century, comparing them essentially across space, Cairncross looks at Christian advocates of polygamy across time. He starts with the Protestant radicals of Münster in the 1530s, goes on to consider the bigamy of Philip of Hesse, summarizes various little-known tracts written in favor of polygamy in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, and concludes with the Mormons and some later advocates. The two chapters on Mormon polygamy are a frustrating mixture of insights and inadequate information. Cairncross does not assert that the Mormons derived their belief in polygamy from the tradition he had described in earlier chapters, but he does recognize the similarity of many of the arguments. Although the uniqueness of Mormon theology taken as a whole is not given adequate recognition, this comparative approach is stimulating and suggestive.
By far the most impressive of the recent comparative studies is Lawrence Foster's "Between Two Worlds: The Origins of Shaker Celibacy, Oneida Community Complex Marriage, and Mormon Polygamy" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1976), which deserves publication as a book. Foster's research into all three communities is thorough. He is not satisfied with a quick recital based on secondary accounts. Further, he brings to his study the insights of cultural anthropology and the new social history. Although he does not speak as an insider with respect to any of these, he is respectful of his subjects and willing to exercise empathy in order to understand. His section on Mormon polygamy, which runs to over two hundred pages, must be regarded as the most substantial recent study of the subject.

During the same year appeared Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Emmeline Press, Ltd., 1976), edited by Claudia L. Bushman. Less ambitious than Foster's analytical work, this collection of articles is stimulating in the different perspectives it provides. What life was like under polygamy is examined by Stephanie Smith Goodson and Nancy Tate Dredge. The arguments against the institution are summarized by Carrel Hilton Sheldon in "Mormon Haters." Informative for its analysis of fictional stereotypes is "Fictional Sisters," a chapter by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich.

Not satisfied with the conventional expository article, Brent Barlow, of the University of Wisconsin at Stout, has produced a twenty-three minute film entitled "Alternative Life Styles: Mormon Polygamy," which arouses interest in the subject while at the same time overthrowing some of the common misconceptions.

What scholarly studies are still in progress? From the quantitative point of view the most promising project is the Mormon Historical Demography Project, whose chief investigators are Lee L. Bean, Dean L. May, and Mark Skolnick. Under grants from the National Institute of Health (and others) this project is moving ahead with a mammoth computer study of "all known Mormon families whose children were born in Utah (or along the pioneer trail) or whose family members experienced one demographic event in Utah or along the pioneer trail (marriage, divorce, death or birth)." Although polygamy is only one aspect of this ambitious project, there should be more precise information than ever before — based on an on-line data base of approximately 1.2 million individuals and 170,000 families — on the incidence of plural marriage, numbers of wives, and numbers of children per wife. Also in progress is the Great Basin Mormon Culture Area Project, an ambitious computer study based on the census of 1880, whose investigators are Melvyn Hammarberg (University of Pennsylvania), Dean L. May (University of Utah), and Lowell L. Bennion, Jr. (Humboldt State University). Still in its early stages, this study promises to provide precise information about many aspects of life in 1880, including the incidence of plural marriage. A third quantitative study expected to furnish such information is the study of Cache Valley communities between 1859 and 1884, "Family Wealth and Power in a Developing Mormon Society," now being completed by Charles M. Hatch at Utah State University.

As important as quantitative precision is, the present article should have made abundantly clear that counting is not the only approach to the subject. One
promising study now underway is by Russell Judkins, an anthropologist at the State University of New York at Geneseo, who is preparing a social anthropological analysis of Mormon polygyny from 1847 to 1890. Considering nearly all writing on the subject thus far to have been basically oriented to the structural perspective of the male, Judkins is attempting an analytical reconstruction of interactional patterns, decisionmaking, authority and resource allocation and interpersonal relations in individual domestic units of polygynous families (the mother and her children). Judkins notes that although these units are potentially matrifocal and matriarchal in their potential for female-centeredness, they occur in a strongly male-dominated, patrilineal society. His approach should illuminate aspects of the experience of polygamous living that have only been hinted at to the present.

Clearly, Mormon polygamy has been a lively subject for study. Full of human interest, it raises inevitable questions about clashing societal values as well as questions about theological adjustments within a religious movement. It has attracted the interest of scholars from history, anthropology, sociology, family studies, demography, medicine, and other fields; like most of the interesting and controversial problems, it presents challenges that are truly interdisciplinary. Nor has the work all been done. There is still room for thorough studies of folklore. The exploitation of diary references to polygamous experiences is also far from complete. Biographies can tell us a great deal. Examples of what such works can reveal about the inner workings of plural marriage are the biographies of Erastus Snow by A. Karl Larson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), of John Taylor by Samuel W. Taylor (New York: MacMillan, 1976), of Edwin D. Woolley by Leonard J. Arrington (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), of William Clayton by James B. Allen (forthcoming), and of Heber C. Kimball by Stanley B. Kimball (forthcoming). Some of the complexity of the actual life experience naturally comes through, and each of these works contains fascinating letters and other primary documents. There is room for more work along biographical lines.

The fact that many Mormon marriages ended in divorce is inescapable; one study has demonstrated that Brigham Young granted something like sixteen hundred divorces between 1847 and 1877. But we need to know how many of these were plural wives, how many children the divorcees had, what grounds (if any) were proposed, and how the success-failure ratio of polygynous marriages compares to monogamous marriages. A preliminary paper on this subject, still unpublished, has been prepared by Eugene E. Campbell, professor of history at Brigham Young University. There would also seem to be room for more quantitative studies using different samples or asking different questions as well as research using simulated models of the marriage market. In short, although we have learned much about Mormon polygamy during the past generation and although the 1970s have already produced several significant pieces of research, the subject is rich enough to challenge the efforts of scholars and writers for several years to come.
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