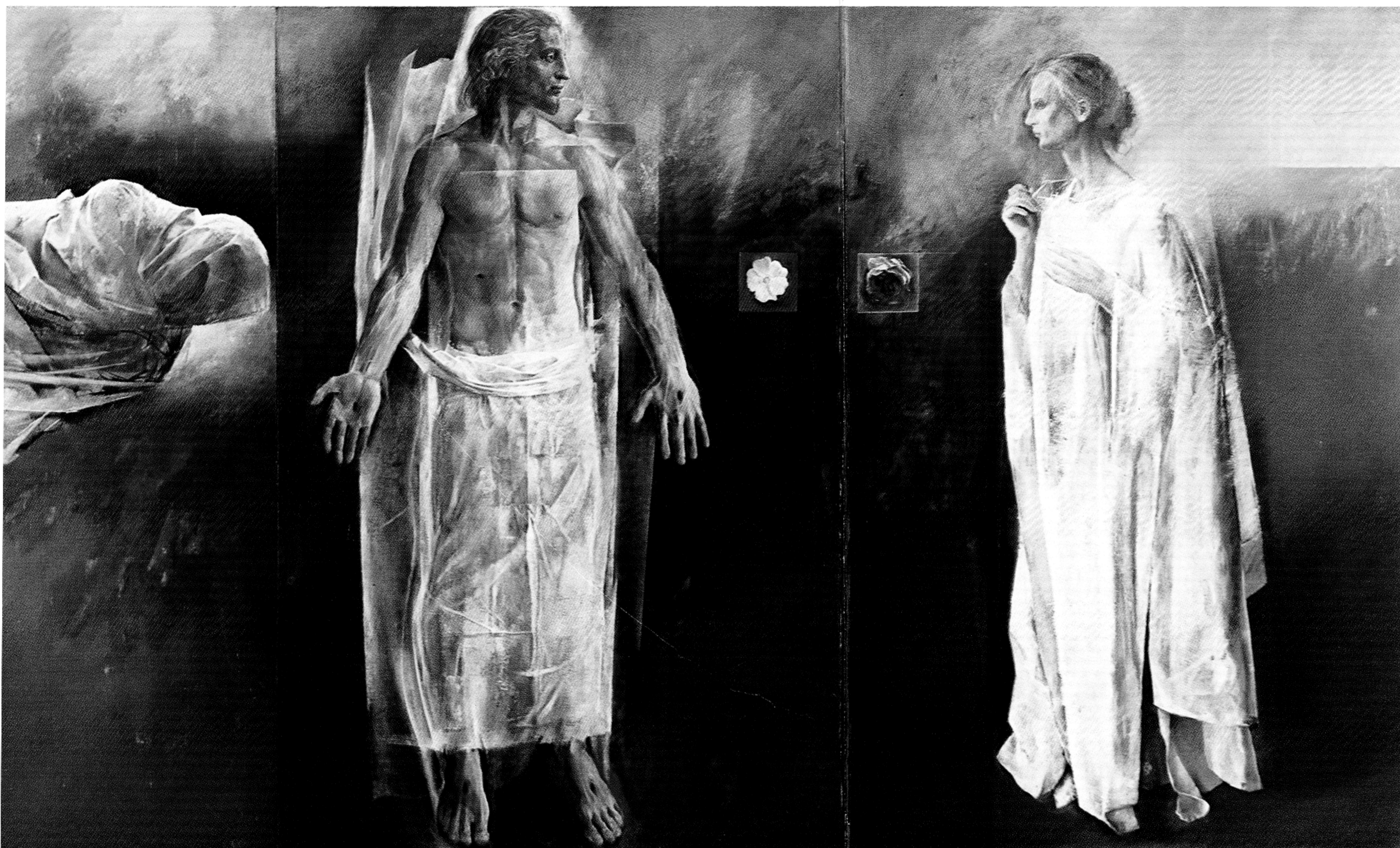


BYU studies

A Voice for the Community of LDS Scholars
Spring 1975 Brigham Young University



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The Meaning of Christ— The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Analysis of B. H. Roberts’ Unpublished Masterwork*

Truman G. Madsen**

“My latest and greatest work.” “The most important work that I have yet contributed to the Church, the six-volumed *Comprehensive History* of the Church not omitted.” So B. H. Roberts wrote to his friend and leader, President Heber J. Grant, and to a returned missionary in January and February

*The full title is “The Truth The Way The Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology.” Shortly after the completion of the manuscript in 1928, a committee chaired by Elder David O. McKay reviewed it as a manual for study in the MIA. The committee offered several critical suggestions and corrections, but recommended its use provided the speculative thesis—the idea of “Pre-Adamites”—be omitted. Roberts replied, “I will not change it if it has to sleep.”

Nearly three years later in March 1931, to bring the issue to the attention of all the Presiding Brethren, Roberts challenged some remarks of Joseph Fielding Smith (See “Faith Leads to a Fulness of Truth and Righteousness,” in *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* [October 1930]) which hold that there was no death on this earth before Adam. Roberts himself had earlier concluded that “Adam was the progenitor of all the races of men whose remains have yet been found” (See his *Gospel and Man’s Relationship to Deity* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1924], pp. 283-84).

In his pre-Adamite thesis Roberts does not argue that mankind emerged from non-human lower forms, but that whole races of men may have come and gone from this earth prior to the advent of Adam. He was here making room for his own kind of “catastrophism,” a position that Louis Agassiz and other scientists of the late nineteenth century advocated against Darwin and “uniformitarianism.” In this view man’s body is not a product of “uniform” natural selection from simple to complex. Instead, they argued, fossils and geological formations evidence sudden catastrophic interventions, both destructive and creative. Many took these to be the initiative of God. The Bible account of Genesis was often interpreted by catastrophists as an account of the period after the most recent great catastrophe. The word “replenish” in the charge to Adam was taken to mean “fill up again.”

Roberts defended this interpretation of “replenish” and speculated further that Adam was “transplanted” to this earth, both as a spirit and body, and was, using his own definition of the term, “translated.”

Lengthy discussion of the pre-Adamite question before the Twelve, with Elders Smith and Roberts presenting their materials, resulted in a decision of

1931.¹ These generous self-appraisals are the more remarkable since Brigham Henry Roberts² had by then authored thirty-two books, manuals, and study courses, and had published more than 300 articles and reviews in periodicals.

He was describing "The Truth, The Way, The Life," a 747-page, 55-chapter, three-volume, typewritten manuscript that he had more or less finished in 1928.

He intended the book to be the climax of his doctrinal writing as the *Comprehensive History* was the climax of a half-century of historical writing—"crystallizing practically all my thought, research and studies in the doctrinal line of the church." President Grant had given him a six-month commission after his release as president of the Eastern States Mission to remain in New York City and pull together all the strands of the project. In an apartment at 308 Riverside Drive, he worked at the book feverishly, defying age (he was 71), disease (he suffered all the debilitating effects of diabetes), loneliness (during his five-year mission he had lost his wife, Louisa, and his wife, Margaret), and the writhings that always attend serious writing.

the First Presidency (President Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley). The Church, they wrote in a letter to the Twelve, could not endorse as a doctrine either that there were or that there were not pre-Adamites. Since, they said, the question at issue did not bear on the salvation of men, they recommended against further discussion which would only lead to confusion, division, and misunderstanding. Elder James E. Talmage, a geologist and a member of the Council of the Twelve, was encouraged to show that "the Church does not refuse to recognize the discoveries and demonstrations of science." In an address delivered 9 August 1931 under the title "The Earth and Man," he fulfilled this charge. (See Journals of James E. Talmage, 9 August 1931.) Their letter concluded with a statement from an earlier First Presidency (President Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) "on which we should all be able to agree," namely, that "Adam was the primal parent of our race."

It is not clear how, as Roberts apparently continued to believe, the pre-Adamite thesis is important or even directly related to the theme of "The Truth, The Way, The Life," except as symbolic of scientific possibilities. President Heber J. Grant reiterated in personal discussion with Roberts the view of the Presidency that Roberts' prominence as President of the First Council of Seventy would give this view, if it were published, an unwarranted official sanction. Heavily pressured by other projects, Roberts chose not to revise the manuscript and later letters show that he did not expect the book to be published in his lifetime. He died in October 1933.

**Dr. Madsen, professor of philosophy, holds the Richard L. Evans Chair of Christian Understanding at Brigham Young University. He is also the Director of the Institute of Mormon Studies.

¹B.H. Roberts to Heber J. Grant, 9 February 1931, in the Heber J. Grant collection, Church Historical Department. Letter to Elizabeth Skolfield, 26 January 1931, now in possession of the author.

²He preferred "B. H. Roberts," due apparently to a dislike of the name "Henry" and a great reverence for the name "Brigham."

The title, "The Truth, The Way, The Life,"³ was chosen because through a lifetime of reflection he saw that the great system of "truth" that "gives unity to all history and proper relationship to all existing things; that fills life with a real meaning and makes existence desirable,"⁴ centers and is embodied in Jesus the Christ.

Although he was given time off as a General Authority to finish the work, he had actually been compiling it for fifty years. He was peculiarly qualified by his unique experience, which was the epitome of the unsheltered life, which in retrospect he sometimes called "a nightmare and a tragedy." It was a life of hand-to-hand combat with all the major world views, often in arenas of intense opposition—the pulpit, the platform, and national and international debate. Roberts was referred to as a Paul facing his own Gamaliels, Agrippas, and men of Mars Hill.

This last book was his deliberate effort to build bridges rather than walls both within and beyond the Church. In one of his rare intimate letters to missionaries, he spoke of the book as important because "it will affect the young and educated and the intellectual members of the Church and the standing of the Church before the world—shall we resolve ourselves into a narrow, encrusted sect of no moment, or shall we remain what we were intended to be—that is, Mormonism—a world movement."⁵

Some contemporary scholars esteem Roberts the outstanding Mormon intellectual of his time⁶ in preparation, in discipline, and in honest academic open-field running. However we rank him, his work was perceptive, adventurous, impressive as he tried to integrate all worlds. The essence of his genius and

great fact about him," William James had written. Roberts noted in the margin of his copy of James,⁷ "Apply Joseph Smith." He might have written, "Apply B. H. Roberts."

In his final doctrinal work, Roberts' motives were simply to communicate the distinctions of Mormonism from common ground. "What can we reason but from what we know?"⁸ he asks at the outset, and the antecedent of "we" is everyone—every citizen of planet earth. Repeatedly as he approaches his three main categories for the comprehension of Christ as (Vol. I) The Truth, (Vol. II) The Way, and (Vol. III) The Life, he moves from possibility to probability to assurance. All three volumes invoke analogies—the similarity of the present to the past and future; the similarity of what we know to what, by implication, we wish to know; the similarity of the discoverable in ancient religion to the core of truth in modern revelation—all in a compelling appeal to the whole man. "Let us not have the heart breathing defiance to the intellect!" he says. This is an attempt—bold, sometimes unwieldy, and at the end somewhat exhausted—to say, "I know that I can believe—I believe that I can know."

VOLUME I, CHRIST, THE TRUTH

Chapter I is titled a "Dissertation on Truth." Roberts begins with the question that Pilate raised, "What is truth?" and the answer that in the most profound ways Christ himself not only possesses, but *is* the truth. He analyzes anew the definition of D&C Section 93: "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." In his classic little volume, *Joseph Smith Prophet-Teacher*,⁹ he had shown how this definition can be interpreted to include "relative truth, absolute truth, and truth unfolding or becoming."¹⁰ And he placed a premium on the word "knowledge." Sometimes the word "truth" functions simply as a synonym for reality, but it can also function as the name for our Christ-illuminated judgments *about* reality. For Roberts, all compre-

⁷In his own copy of James' *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 20. B. H. Roberts Collection, Church Historical Department. Hereafter cited as BHRC.

⁸The quotation is from Pope (*The Essay on Man*, l. 18), who, Roberts believed, borrowed it from John Locke.

⁹B. H. Roberts, *Joseph Smith Prophet-Teacher* (1908; reprint ed., Princeton, New Jersey: Deseret Club, 1967), pp. 30-39.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 33. He saw a kernel of this definition in Jacob 4:13.

hension centers in Christ, in the sense that Christ is the light of truth, and in the sense that man's intelligence and spirit are, as Roberts puts it, "native to truth," and intuitively "leap toward it," as flame leaps to unite with flame. Thus, as Joseph Smith states,

Every word that proceedeth from the mouth of Jehovah has such an influence over the human mind—the logical mind—that it is convincing without other testimony. Faith cometh by hearing.¹¹

Faith in Christ, then, is not a leap in the dark. It is, instead, "trust in what the spirit learned aeons ago"; and religious recognition is just that—re-cognition, a re-knowing. Thus it is, as a Mormon hymn has it, "the sum of existence." Man's authentic response to truth requires a truthful—truth-full—nature: ". . . intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; . . . truth embraceth truth; . . . light cleaveth unto light" (D&C 88:40). If we thwart or suppress that instinctive response, we are responsible, and, to a degree, we condemn ourselves. We knew Christ before this life, we know him here, and we will know him hereafter. His sheep do indeed know his voice. And thus the impact of truth on man is a test of man as well as of truth.

CHRIST AND THE COSMOS

The next ten chapters of the first volume are the unfolding of his lifetime reflection on the cosmos and world systems. The audacity as well as the humility of this enterprise arises from Roberts' recognition that greater men than he had "wrecked their thought" on the consideration of Christ and the cosmos, but also from his recognition that in their efforts to clarify they were often simply multiplying mirrors and studying angles without increasing the light. The New Dispensation had brought a flood of light that did not simply replace the darkness but illumined elements and principles—and their relationships—that heretofore had been dimly perceived.

Using this "new light" of modern revelation, Roberts challenges and replaces many long-standing creedal assumptions about the substance and organization of the universe, and the nature and relationship of man and God, all in the frame-

¹¹Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 5:526.

work of what Roberts called "eternalism," the concept of universal coexistence.

Repeatedly he denies what has been said in many classical views, that only one reality in the universe is self-existent, namely God. He interprets Joseph Smith to mean that all reality, all the fundamental realities in this "multiverse" are self-existent. Man's intelligence, therefore, coexists with non-intelligence. In a handwritten note added to his manuscript, Roberts states:

Our prophet [Joseph Smith] also taught that "intelligence is the light of truth" or the power by which truth is cognized and absorbed; and which he holds forth as eternal, uncreated and uncreatable, therefore eternal as truth itself—a parallel existence with truth: intelligence—truth! [knowledge] the existence—truth; [reality] and the light which discerns it—intelligence.

All things else are likewise in their rudimental existence uncreate and eternal: space, time, matter, force, law. And on this point Roberts saw Mormonism paralleled in major world religions. His historical researches taught him that among rival world views, only darkened Christianity teaches creation from nothing or from God's will alone. "And welcome to the absurdity," he wrote in one of his notebooks.¹² Eternal identity and eternal becoming are for him inescapable realities. He sided neither with those "process philosophers" who deny any abiding reality nor again with the Platonic view that the "really real" is a static absolute beyond space and time. Time or duration and space or extension are infinite. Eternity is not non-temporality, but endless time. In no way can anyone, even God, transcend these.

Similar reflections apply to matter. Roberts' analysis makes the "materialism" of the new dispensation all-pervasive. There is no such thing as immaterial *substance*. (This is more than saying there is no such thing as immaterial matter, which is a tautology.) He wants to insist that everything that really *is*, is material. Subtler realities such as "thought," "love," "grace," are actually materiate, though of a finer quality than we can perceive with our five senses.

In his last years, Roberts clarified this extended position

¹²Roberts utilizes several of the popularizing scientists of his day: Einstein, Eddington, Jeans, Millikan. But in his notes he deals also with the major philosophers and theologians.

to include "radiant energy" and, partly through the work of Orson and Parley P. Pratt and John A. Widtsoe, compiled much data to support the thesis that mind as a form of matter is indeed the master power of the universe. Many of the confusions in Western thought that arise from the assumed radical separation of thought and matter—the so-called "mind-body problem"—are dissolved by Roberts' summary statement, "Intelligence is material. But it is also conscious. Matter is not. This is the ultimate dualism."¹³

Astronomical Splendor. Roberts then dwells on the vastness of the cosmos. From his boyhood he was dazzled by the incredible extent, the awesome grandeur of the heavens. He collected and probed a shelf full of books on astronomy and anticipated much that is now in scientific vogue. He rejoiced in the sacred secret of the Abrahamic record (Abraham 3) that the firmament is without beginning or end. Christ is, as Doctrine and Covenants 88:7-10 tells us, the creative power of the suns, the moons, the stars, "even all the earths in the heavens so broad"—beyond man's power to number. The double implication was breathtaking for Roberts: When man measures himself against the infinity of the cosmos he is almost *nothing*, "hardly a mote in the sunbeam."¹⁴ But when he measures himself against Christ, who overmasters all of these worlds and world systems, and realizes his kinship to Christ, all diminutives become superlatives.¹⁵ The more man comprehends the vastness of the universe, the more he recognizes his own dignity and worth. The cosmos is God's temple. But man is his offspring—a living temple, given dominion over the rest.¹⁶

Thus Roberts arrived at the religious-scientific-poetic conclusion that one who grasps any fragment of living-reality is on the way to grasping all of it, that when it says in the book of Moses, "All things bear record of me," it really means *all things*. And he took it to mean, even more, that "all things

¹³See, for example, his own notebooks on Spinoza, BHRC.

¹⁴See his comments in the *Deseret News*, 29 August 1901.

¹⁵If quantitatively man is nothing—qualitatively he is everything. Man may become an "avatar" of God.

¹⁶Preoccupied with the question of life on other worlds, Roberts found clues to it in Anaximander, Pythagoras, and Voltaire, as well as in a contemporary book by Maynard Shipley. But the strongest assurance came from the books of Moses and Abraham and D&C 76: ". . . The inhabitants thereof are sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:24).

bear record of *all* of me." Once again, Christ is the truth of the cosmos, "the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God . . ." (D&C 88:13).

Law and Change. Next Roberts considers eternal law. Modern revelation confirmed in him the view of many scientists that there are "laws beyond laws"; that is, that law itself, however we presently define it, is controlled or limited by still other laws. "To every law there are certain bounds and conditions."¹⁷ And because of Christ's mastery of eternal law, he initiates his own laws, not in an arbitrary, but in a lawful way.

Did the universe come into existence, and does it continue to operate by chance? "Inconceivable," Roberts answers. He reiterates his point that life and order do not require one life-source or Orderer, as many vitalists and theists claim. Instead, both order and orderers self-exist and coexist with disorder and disorderers, just as the processes of anabolism and catabolism can both be found in all organic beings. Life and non-life have existed side by side forever. Always there have been both. Creation, then, can only consist of certain lawful events or changes within and among existences.¹⁸

But religionists have supposed that such a position on law is incompatible with several cherished postulates of Christian religion: with the concept of a "one and one only" necessary being or absolute on which, they claim, all else absolutely depends, and with various notions of consciousness, freedom, miracle, and providence. So much the worse, Roberts says, for these misdefined postulates, for they too often reflect man's preference for shortcuts and magic rather than for truth. The conscious spiritual and ethical worlds are no less lawful than the realms of atoms, molecules and nucleic acids. And man's freedom is preserved, not violated, by law (D&C 88:34). Law does not compel action—it simply prescribes the inevitable results of free action. Man can forever oppose or cooperate with God. But nothing predates man's conscious freedom and therefore nothing totally controls him.¹⁹

¹⁷See D&C 88:36-47.

¹⁸Roberts cites many of the philosophers of nature of his time—Andrew D. White, John Fiske, John Draper—in support of the "reign of law."

¹⁹Because of the Aristotelian preoccupation with "First Cause" or "Unmoved Mover" and also because of the tremendous influence (and sometimes distortion) of the Darwinian thesis of simple to complex, many minds find the self-existence of man "unthinkable." For Roberts it is the opposite that

Does it then make sense to speak of the beginning or end of the universe or of man? Roberts again replies, "Inconceivable." There are worlds, galaxies, and local universes *ad infinitum*, systems within and beyond systems, and intelligences coexistent with these systems. If we shrink from this idea because it is mind-boggling, we must probe more deeply. The idea, he maintains, "is not as difficult as it is to form a conception of its [the universe's] having a beginning or of reaching an end." Here Roberts directly opposes the traditional arguments for the existence and nature of God and also the idea of a "dying universe." He finds them a form of intellectual idolatry, often circular and sometimes vacuous. Of the "First Cause" argument he says:

"First cause" implies a time²⁰ when there was no cause; when there was absolute inaction or absence of causation; but as the universe is eternal and includes in that eternal existence the existence of force and mind as well as of matter, there can be no "first." But there may be eternal cause.²¹

If any existent thing can be "self-existent," a rational mind asks, why not others?

Roberts offers similar objections to the traditional argument from "Design." "Doubtless if the designer of or the creator of man could be found he would yet be more wonderful than the man, and clamor more loudly than the man for an accounting for; and so on *ad infinitum*."²² He is not saying with Aquinas, stop the infinite regress with a Designer-God, nor does he join Hume in saying, stop it with man. He is saying, start with both in corelationship; abandon the idea of absolute beginnings and endings. A designing mind does not precede a structured reality any more than reality or mechanical matter-in-motion precede mind. Both are in coexistent and

is unthinkable. In his notes he acknowledges "one criticism of the doctrine of intelligence is that I represent the ego as too complexly and highly advanced mind—consider!" Consider he did. Only to return to a conclusion he insisted was inescapable: In actuality all the elemental realities, including intelligences, have existed forever.

It should be said here that not all of the official writers of the Church take this view of intelligence. And recently it has been urged that we exercise care in ascribing to intelligence more than the revelations themselves.

²⁰More precisely for its advocates it implies a non-temporal condition.

²¹"The Truth, the Way, the Life," Chapter VII, "Nature Of The Universe," p. 4. Hereafter cited as TWL.

²²TWL, Chapter VII, p. 7.

in eternal relationship. For Roberts this is another necessary truth; its denial leads sooner or later to contradiction.

Aware that he was twisting the nose of Dame Orthodoxy, he moves toward a plurality of worlds and Gods. Just as the greatest achievements of man occur not by singular builders, but by a kind of community-mind or group-harmonized intelligences, so also with the universe. Creation, innovation and construction of infinite extent and duration require more than one Intelligence.²³ "Mormonism rises to meet the grandeur of God's universe." Every noun in the religious vocabulary should have an "s" added to it: Gods, creators, worlds, eternities, lives, etc. Through all the eternities the Gods have been involved in organizing earths and earth systems with other coexistent, united and purposive intelligences. And Roberts clearly teaches that there are levels of infinity, levels of unfolding, ever beyond perfected Intelligences. God himself was not always God—nor were those before or after him in an infinite series. "Becoming" is a fundamental category of reality and of selfhood in a universe that is really a multiverse.

Returning to common ground, Roberts proceeds to further questions that move from possibilities to probabilities. "Are the fixed stars centers of solar systems?" Many astronomers say yes. "Is there life on other worlds than our own?" A high probability is widely acknowledged. "Is life in other worlds climaxed with the equivalent of human life?" Again, astronomers offer a tentative yes.²⁴ "Are there worlds and world systems older and more advanced than our own?" Likely. And now Roberts asks the questions that lead into the meaning and mission of Christ:

Have these higher intelligences of the stellar universe and planetary systems so developed in themselves the quality of love that makes it possible to think of them as being willing to sacrifice themselves—to empty themselves in sacrifice—to bring to pass the welfare of others whom they may esteem to be the undeveloped intelligences of the universe and may they not be capable of giving the last full measure of sacrifice to bring to pass the higher development of the "lowly" when no other means of uplift can be serviceable? Is the great truth operative among these untold millions of Intelligences that greater love hath no Intelligence for another than this,

²³TWL, Chapter IX, "Nature of the Universe: Monistic or Pluralistic."

²⁴Less tentative among astronomers today.

that he would give his life in the service of kindred intelligences when no other means of helpfulness is possible?²⁵

A REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

Next, Roberts thoroughly reviews classical religion. His conclusions are novel, sometimes based on assumptions which, only fifty years later, are somewhat obsolete. The prevailing theme of these chapters holds up, however, and that is that no matter how diverse and disjointed religions now are, one can see everywhere, even in the most incredible distortions and inversions, hints and traces of what may well have been an original source. Roberts refuses to yield to such reductive arguments as that all religions are at root the projection of man's fears or insecurities.

With almost reckless confidence he probes books and artifacts that define remote and primitive religions. Against Frazer, Freud, and cultural relativists, he saw through this unwieldy mass of data on comparative religion to a dispensation pattern or what, more recently, would be called "apocalyptic." He saw religious movements as revolutionary and devolutionary, not just evolutionary. "Natural religions" might well be the splinter remains of pristine revelations which, unless enlivened by continuing revelation, tended to grow dimmer and dimmer. Far from being disquieted by these ancient pre-Christian, non-Christian, and even anti-Christian fragments, he saw in them a hint of a single source.²⁶ The varieties of nature worship, of cosmic mysteries, ancient rites, brotherhoods and myths of transformation inspired him. In his increasingly erudite imagination, Roberts could walk into every shrine and temple of the ancient or the modern world and find traces of the great Christ-drama that is the key to the riddles of life. Even those religions which explicitly deny and replace the savior-redeemer patterns are, by their allegiance to substitutes, doing what Jesus said they would do, "bearing record of him."

Roberts tries to be resolute against the temptation to easy generalization, and also to claim for any dispensation total originality. For him there is nothing so false in the history of man's worship but that a sparkle of truth remains in it. He became sophisticated—more than his critics suppose—in his

²⁵TWL, Chapter X, "Of Knowledge: To the Point of Moral Certainty," pp. 10-11.

²⁶TWL, Chapter XII, "Seekers after God: Revelation."

analysis of influences. He notes, for example, that Plato (contrary to many interpreters) held that both God and matter existed in some form from all eternity, and wonders whether Plato's highest conception was not of Static Ideas or Pure Forms but of the active soul. And though Philo is often viewed as the one who introduced Greek ideas into Christian theology (and Roberts berates him for betraying his mission as a Jew who should have stood unflinchingly for the God of Abraham), he notes that Philo was interested in Orientalism as well as in Platonism and Judaism, and suggests that the merging of these three may have shown up in the different forms of gnosticism. "May it not be," he wrote of certain striking resemblances in the triple deities of Oriental and Egyptian vintage, "that this order of things may have been the distorted remains of the ancient gospel from Egypt or the false priesthood and gospel of Egypt."²⁷

Overall it seemed to him significant that types, structures, and recurrent root symbols permeate religion no matter how primitive or how recent.²⁸ Behind all these Roberts saw "broken rays of light, from some noble sun of truth."²⁹ He cherished the dream of a great university that would build on such a conception.

But historical conclusions about religious tradition are at best probable. What about present direct revelation? Again arguing by analogy from significant gains in interhuman communication, Roberts asks why there should not be communication among the higher intelligences. Is it not "very probable?" True to his heritage he insists that in the fullest sense "only God can reveal God." But he offers a careful rationale both for the need of continual revelation and for degrees of, and limitations on, that revelation. The capacity and growth of the seeker are at the center of divine concern. Deep reaches to deep. Hence, to a mind and soul content with little, little is manifest. Since man must be helped to self-awareness and Divine awareness without being hindered, "the present order of things as to revelation and other things has been devised in the wisdom of higher intelligences to impart to man a self-

²⁷See his own notebook, BHRC.

²⁸See TWL, Chapter XII, pp. 12-13. All this is elaborated in Chapter XIII, "A Review of Ancient Religions I," through Chapter XXIII, "Revelation: Abrahamic Fragment."

²⁹TWL, Chapters XIII-XVI, "A Review of Ancient Religions."

culture and development that has been planned in the highest wisdom—planned in the wisdom of those who have more extensive knowledge than we can fathom by our partial vision of things.”³⁰

Development of intelligences—which may be called education—results not so much from acquiring a mere knowledge of things, as from the development within the mind of powers to seek, and find things each for himself.³¹

“Success to you” he says to every method and approach to truth and truth-seeking. But revelation crowns all other efforts—and revelation must be sought in the manner of seers and prophets.

MODES OF CREATION

In his most controversial chapters³² Roberts follows the analogy of intercontinental transportation to the possibility of interplanetary travel. From that premise he conjectures that life or life forms may have been brought³³ from other worlds to ours. (His private opinion was that this world is only one of many previous worlds inhabited by myriads of forms of life and controlled by superior intelligences and that whole races may have come and gone in these earlier stages from the elements that comprise these earths.)³⁴ His was a “migration theory,” and the question “When did life begin on this earth?” seems, in his view, extremely local, myopic, and insignificant. After the bringing of “a few forms of life” to this earth came development of a greater variety. Such development, Roberts believes is real, but only within certain limits. Clearly recognizing that this is contrary to many views of evolution, he insists on “orders, families, genera, classes.”³⁵ He calls his own posture “the development theory” and opposes it to mechanical, agnostic, and theistic evolution.³⁶

³⁰TWL, Chapter XII, p. 5.

³¹Ibid.

³²Chapters XXIV and XXV, “Creation: The Time and Manner of the Earth’s Creation, I and II.”

³³Note that he says “brought,” not “sent.”

³⁴He was following the suggestion in Joseph Smith’s writings that this earth was made out of fragments of other earths. And one may ask what about them, in turn?

³⁵This was a slight revision of his earlier defense of a “fixity of species.” See B. H. Roberts, *The Gospel*, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1913), pp. 282-83.

³⁶Roberts carefully studied Darwin, Spencer, Fiske, Haeckel, Lord Kelvin, J. Arthur Thomson and other geologists and biologists. Spencer had been the

He denies, then, that everything began with "an homogenous substance or protoplasm which was then differentiated." Revelation, he insists, requires us to affirm the eternity of life and the life-force and of *some* life forms. The embryos of these are transplantable to newly created worlds to be developed "each after its kind" to its highest possibilities. He finds clues to this in Genesis —creation both by propagation and by development-process. He allows the possibility that the dust of the earth³⁷ may, even if it were strictly nonliving, have given rise to certain elemental living things. But as for man, he was "no doubt transplanted from some of the older and more highly developed worlds."³⁸ Of all life forms, he goes on to say, "Man's unquestionably is the most excellent in all things; most beautiful, most convenient, most noble. He is 'the crowning glory of the creation'—because he is begotten after *his* kind—a son of God!"³⁹ Christ is once more "the truth," the undergirding prototype for the creation of man.⁴⁰

GOD, CHRIST, AND MAN

The God in Christ. And now we reach the heart of Roberts' treatise—that Christ is more than the light of the cosmos—he is the light and revelation of the ultimate nature of both God and man. The ill-willed stereotype had haunted him for a lifetime: Mormons do not believe in Jesus Christ. Keenly he felt the irony! In his last work he wanted to testify once and for all that not only do Mormons affirm the divinity, the worthiness, the worshipability of Jesus Christ, but they insist, quite alone, on his Deity—not only that he is one manifestation of the Godhead, but that he became the full, complete, super-

first to systematize evolutionary ideas in biology that had a wide popularity in the late nineteenth century. But Roberts considered Alfred North Whitehead, Samuel Alexander, and Henri Bergson greater in their interpretive scope than any of the scientists.

³⁷The distinction between life and nonlife is blurred in modern revelation. In some senses the earth itself is alive and filling the measure of its creation (D&C 88). Some astronomers are now saying, contrary to earlier theory, that space is filled with organic matter.

³⁸TWL, Chapter XXV, p. 10. Cf. Chapter XXVI, "Man: Pre-Existence of Spirits, Eternal Existence of Intelligence."

³⁹TWL, Chapter XXV, p. 13.

⁴⁰Here Roberts broadens the definition of "intelligence" to provide a foundation for understanding the Holy Ghost. Either intelligence exists as individual persons, or proceeds from such persons as a power or force such as the Spirit of God when it "moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). But this spirit of God is never separated from its source any more than the rays of light are separated from the sun. Each is indispensable to the other.

lative revelation—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—of the nature and attributes of God, the Father.

Henceforth when men shall dispute about the “being” and “nature” of God, it shall be a perfect answer to uphold Jesus Christ as the complete and perfect revelation and manifestation of God; and through all the ages it shall be so—eternally so. For there shall be no excuse for men saying that they know not God, for all may know Him from the least to the greatest, so tangible, so real a revelation has God given of himself in the person, character, and attributes of Jesus Christ. . . .⁴¹

This is not the revelation of God ridiculed by those who have a scorn of anthropomorphic notions of God, and who they claim is represented as “an old man with a gray beard” and whom they scornfully reject as God. But the revelation of God presented here is the immortal and eternal, youthful Christ; resurrected at the age of thirty-three years; the height of gloriously developed manhood, and caught at that age and made eternal, by a union of a perfect body with a perfect spirit in eternal youth and youthfulness. God as perfected man, and manifested in the flesh for all time as the God-type of the universe, God blessed forever more!⁴²

Roberts was thoroughly aware of how this witness clashed with certain Greek, Patristic, and Latin creeds, with trinitarianism and the paradoxes of incarnation. He had confronted them in public debate.⁴³ But Roberts became more not less steeped in the sublimity of Christ. Christ is not only an anthropomorphic being. He is anthropopathic and anthropocentric—one who feels all and more than man can feel and who cares more than the sons of men can care. Mormon writers, he felt, invite misunderstanding by saying, “God is like man.” The truth is more glorious. God is like Christ, like the Christ who *became* the express image of his glory and person.

In his discussion of this insight, Roberts anticipated and answered four classic criticisms. First, that the Mormon view

⁴¹TWL, Chapter XIX, “The Revelation of God in Jesus Christ,” pp. 8-10.

⁴²TWL, Chapter XX, “Departure of the Church from the True Doctrine of God,” p. 1.

⁴³With Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox conceptions through a competent Jesuit in the “Roberts Van der Donckt Discussion,” later supplemented and published as *Mormon Doctrine of Deity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1903). With Protestant authorities in his four-hour answer to the Ministerial Association, published in *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1912). (Actual newspaper coverage began 4 June 1907.) And with Jewish scholars in *Rasha the Jew* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932), published in New York, November 1925, in *The Redeemed Hebrew*, monthly, and then in tract form.

betrays Jewish-Christian monotheism—leading to tri-theism instead of trinitarianism. Roberts replies that the revelation of God in Christ is the only genuine monotheism—namely, that there is only one *kind* of being who deserves the full title, “God.”⁴⁴ When Christ said “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9), he was not affirming a metaphysical identity, he was saying that two persons, the Father and the Son, are exactly alike, and that there is no kind of being “higher” than that.

The second objection is that the Mormon view is a proud and blasphemous rejection of the “mystery” of God—that a God understood is a God dethroned. Roberts answers that the actual blasphemy is the refusal to let God reveal himself as he is (as Christ is) and to prefer the death-dealing abstractions of the philosophers.

The third charge is that the Mormon view is “primitive” and “materialistic.” Roberts replies that the Mormon view is at once the oldest and newest understanding of God in the world. Various forms of pantheism—depersonalized gods in all their variations—have attracted theologies from the beginning. But it is only superstition that they are more intellectual. And as to the charge of materialism, there is here no more nor less than the resurrection requires—for Christ and therefore for man also, “the highest development of the spiritual is in its connection with the physical.”⁴⁵ Spirit and element combined “make one music as before, but vaster.” The body is a step up, a giant step up, in progress towards spiritual perfection.

The God in Man. But there is more: As Christ is the truth about and the truth of God, he is also the truth of man. It was Roberts’ joy to testify that man is not simply heir to a spark of the divine—he is potentially the full scintillating flame. Having reenthroned among the names of God *fieri* (becoming) with *esse* (being), he could lead all Christians to the staggering implication: “If God be made man—Jesus Christ; may not man be made God?”⁴⁶

Jesus himself, who “knew what was in man”—the worst and the best—was bitterly assailed for so teaching. But is it

⁴⁴Hence the Holy Ghost is not fully God, though a member of the God-head.

⁴⁵TWL, Chapter XXV, p. 13.

⁴⁶See his notes in the *Hibbert Journal*, 20 no. 3 (April 1922):410.



B. H. Roberts (1857-1933)

blasphemy to hope to become like God? Roberts cites Christ's reply in John 10:33-36:

. . . thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

Roberts wrote, "God's glory does not consist in his being solely intelligent [or solely anything else]—but in disseminating it—sharing it with others—the more he gives no less he has."⁴⁷ It is a blasphemous humility and a specious reverence that insists that God the Eternal Father wants less for his children! He found veins of gold on this theme in some of the ancient fathers. For example in Hippolytus 1.184:

For whatever hardships thou hast to suffer when a man, he gave them to thee because thou wast a man; but that which is proper to God, what pertains to God's state and condition, God has declared he will give thee when thou shalt be deified, being born again an immortal.

Roberts wrote in a marginal note, "This Mormonism among the fathers."⁴⁸

Christ, then, is the revelation of man's destiny. Nothing can be said about his present nature, attributes, and powers that cannot be said about man's potential. We, through Christ, are to receive, like Christ, grace for grace until we receive a fullness of the glory of the Father.

Roberts concludes this section with a chapter on joy, the purpose of earth life. It is a joy, he teaches, that can only arise from raw rudimental struggles and contrasts—with the living experience of mortality—of bitter and of sweet. He considers concepts of joy or well-being as taught by the ancient Epicureans, the Hedonists, and others down through the centuries, and distinguishes the inclusive joy promised in Christ from mere sensualism or from the joy of innocence "a negative sort of virtue, a virtue that is colorless, never quite sure of itself."⁴⁹ In a word, he describes joy as encompassing all the

⁴⁷See notations in his own Bible, BHRC.

⁴⁸See his copy of William G. T. Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 255, BHRC.

⁴⁹Modern revelation breaks the confining and paradoxical tradition that Christ was both fully human and fully divine. If Jesus was utterly divine,

levels of awareness in Christ,⁵⁰ "all heights and all depths" a joy in every way comparable to the joy of the Father, a joy that is itself a fullness.

VOLUME II, CHRIST, THE WAY

The second volume of Roberts' treatise centers in the atonement—Christ, the Way. The way, of course, may be described at its most inclusive as "at-one-ment"—the closing of the gaps that separate man from God the Father, from himself, and from others of the children of God. Through all his mature years Roberts had responded to the atonement through the ordinances of the sacrament and the temple, and felt in them great assurance. But then came patient, careful inquiry into the doctrine, especially Book of Mormon accounts of divine justice and mercy, and he wrote:

By deeper delving into the subject, my intellect [now] gives its full and complete assent to the soundness of the philosophy and absolute necessity for the atonement of Jesus Christ, that this atonement, the method and manner of it, is the only way by which there could be brought to pass an at-one-ment, a reuniting of soul of man with soul of God. I account it for myself a new conversion, an intellectual conversion, to the atonement of Jesus Christ and I have been rejoicing in it of late exceedingly.⁵¹

In his *Seventy's Yearbook*, Volume 4, Roberts printed the results of his studies of "the difficult doctrine of atonement," not, he taught, to be avoided because hard and challenging. "Truth," he repeated from Byron, "is a gem that loves the deep." "Mormonism is for thinkers!" Roberts added. Even though this yearbook is in outline form, there is not in Mormon literature a more sustained and interrelated presentation on the subject.⁵²

man cannot identify with him for he is unreachable and austere and such religion is bitter and cold. On the other hand, if Jesus was utterly man—no more in his inheritance than other men—then it follows that any man, without Jesus, can "self-actualize to the same degree." In either case the power of Christianity, which is to say of Christ himself, is vitiated. The truth revealed is that Christ became what he became by the same processes that, through him, we must follow. He "received not of the fullness of the Father" at first. He became what he became until the fullness was given. So, in his likeness and for his likeness, must we.

⁵⁰TWL, Chapter XXVII, "Purpose of God in the Earth Life of Man."

⁵¹*Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1911, p. 59.

⁵²To him it was almost reward enough that Heber J. Grant, his confidant and admirer wrote, "B. H. Roberts, in his line, is doing as great a work as any

He saw that most of the imponderables that arise in considering the mission of Christ result from faulty and foreign assumptions alien to "The Truth." Much of the mischief arises from the acceptance of the traditional "omni's"—the hard and fast Aristotelian definitions of God's omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnibenevolence. So defined, they lead to hopeless puzzles. Roberts saw the following contradictions arising from those stated definitions:

"The atonement was the divine response to man's need." But in the creedal view God created out of nothing all of man and all of his environment and therefore created the need!

"The atonement is God's reconciliation to man's abuse of his freedom in and after the fall of Adam." But in the creedal view God created all the circumstances that led to, and therefore required the Fall.

"It was God's way of tempering justice with mercy." But God supposedly created and defined the laws of justice and the limits of mercy. Could he not, then, reorder or abandon these demands?

"The atonement was Christ's voluntary rescue or ransom effort." But in the creedal view God could have forgiven man (Is he not omnipotent?) and dispensed his grace without requiring the awful sacrifice of his Son.

"It was God's setting a moving example through his Son." But might not that example have been set without innocent, not to say infinite, suffering?

"It was God's conquering death." But is God not able to transmit life without the suffering of his "Most Beloved" Son?

"It was God's thwarting the influence of the Devil's powers of darkness." But the creeds say God created the Devil and all his hosts. Had he no alternative?

All in all, would not Christ himself have wondered why the Father did not in his infinite wisdom plan a better, or prevent this worst, alternative? One is led back to the very "why?" of creation. Why did God permit the knots to be tied that only Christ could untie? Roberts fundamental response is that there is something eternal and inexorable about

man among us" (Heber J. Grant to Mathias Cowley, 18 January 1895, Grant Letterbook, Church Archives), and stood in the Assembly Hall, his face covered with tears, and said, "This is the most beautiful statement on the atonement I have ever read."

law. If God made all laws, he can surely revoke them. But if there are some laws which even God did not originate, then he cannot. He can only find ways to master their consequences. On the other hand, mercy that is born of genuine caring and love cannot obliterate law, but may somehow lawfully transform the effects of law. Christ's power is founded on this balance between justice and mercy.

Thus, Roberts returns to a discussion of the coeternality of God, man, and law. In his view, the "noble doctrine" of the eternal nature of individuality and freedom "affects in a very vital way" every other question about the meaning of Christ as "The Way."

Under the conception of the existence of independent, uncreated, self-existent intelligences, who by the inherent nature of them are of various degrees of intelligence, and moral quality, differing from each other in many ways, yet alike in their eternity and their freedom—how stands it under this conception of things?⁵³

He answers:

[It] relieves God of the responsibility for the nature and status of intelligences in all stages of their development [because] their inherent nature and their volition make them primarily what they are. . . . The only way God affects these self-existent beings is favorably; he creates not their inherent nature; he is not responsible for the use they make of their freedom to choose good or evil—their free moral agency; nor is he the author of their sufferings when they fall into sin.⁵⁴

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

This fundamental insight not only resolves the mystery of the suffering of Christ, but the mysteries of all suffering. "Men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens," Joseph Smith had said.⁵⁵ Is that "have to" eternal? Roberts answers with Lehi's "There must needs be opposition in all things" and recognizes evil as among "the eternal things." He finds it a necessary truth that even the existence of God is interrelated with the existence of things in duality, that is, in opposition:

⁵³TWL, Chapter XXVI, pp. 17-18.

⁵⁴Ibid, p. 18.

⁵⁵Joseph Fielding Smith, compiler, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 1973), p. 323.

Evil is not a created quality. It has always existed as the background of good. It is as eternal as goodness; it is as eternal as law; it is as eternal as the agency of intelligences. Sin, which is evil active, is transgression of law, and so long as the agency of intelligences and law have existed [i.e., forever], the possibility of the transgression of law has existed.⁵⁶

Evil-disposed persons tend to embody evil. Hence for Roberts "there is no more mystery about the existence of devils, than there is about the existence of evil men."⁵⁷

This then becomes the answer to the haunting dilemma of the ages: Since there is evil and suffering God must be impotent or malevolent, for if he cannot prevent evil he is not all-powerful and if he does not, though able, he is not all-good. Robert replies:

God is not able to prevent evil and destroy the source of it, but he is not impotent, for he guides intelligences, notwithstanding evil, to kingdoms of peace and security. Evil is a means of progress, for progress is overcoming evil.

On the other hand God is not able, nor willing if he were able, to prevent [all] evil, and yet he is not malevolent. For knowing that evil exists in the whole scheme of things as the necessary antithesis of good, and that one may not be destroyed without destroying both, why wreck the universe in order to prevent evil? This [the utter destruction of evil] would be the greatest of evils, since all things else would go with it.⁵⁸

Why, then, is there evil?

The answer is, that it is a necessary and eternal part of "the dramatic whole" and the kingdom of righteousness wherein dwelleth peace—the beatific vision and hope of the faithful—is the kingdom to be won by the conquest over evil; and which never may be realized but by that conquest.⁵⁹

THE AFFAIR IN EDEN

All this is background to Roberts' analysis of the heroic descent of Adam and Eve, the Fall, the resultant penalties,

⁵⁶TWL, Chapter XXVI, p. 6.

⁵⁷"All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it . . . as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence" (D&C 93:30). To Roberts this means there is no place and never was or will be where these conditions do not obtain. The freedom of man ranges within certain limits but it is not destructible; not even under the power of God.

⁵⁸TWL, Chapter XXXIII, "The Problem of Evil."

⁵⁹TWL, Chapter XXVI, p. 14.

the divine decrees, the veil of forgetfulness, the world under the curse, the meaning of the law of sacrifice, the first revelations, and the rejoicing.

Four implications challenge negative and "original sin" theologies:

1. The penalties imposed on Adam and Eve were not "vindictive cruelties" but announced consequences, designed in the wisdom of God "for thy sake."

2. The veil of forgetfulness was not quite complete, "shutting out most but not all." Adam "perhaps remembered some little of the glory and splendor of the Lord God."⁶⁰

3. Two deaths were resultant: (a.) the broken union with God, and (b.) the eventual inevitable separation of spirit and body. Adam was to realize both in his experience.

4. Sacrifice was introduced as the herald of Christ.⁶¹

When "the morning broke," Adam and Eve were commanded to worship the Lord their God by sacrifice without explanation of why. But revelation brought renewal of contact and therefore of life, the new beginning of the way. Adam learned that he should do all that he did in the name of the Son of God (Moses 5:8) and that thus *he* could become a son of God. Filled with enlightenment and rejoicing, he prophesied concerning his life and posterity. And thus, "The gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost."⁶² This is the definitive answer to those who suppose that the knowledge of the gospel came first into the world in the meridian of time.⁶³

All this leads up⁶⁴ to Roberts' crucial recognition of certain inexorable conditions:

1. The growth of man's soul requires (as it required even

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 3.

⁶¹Though Roberts shows that there is no direct biblical evidence that the command to sacrifice was given by God.

⁶²See Moses 5:6.

⁶³TWL, Chapter XXIX, "The Way of Eternal Life—the Everlasting Gospel"; Chapter XXX, "The Earth—Life of Man Opened"; Chapter XXXI, "An Adamic Dispensation."

⁶⁴There are five intervening and preparatory chapters that are primarily historical. Chapters XXXV to XXXIX on the First Dispensation, the Adamic Era, The Patriarchal Ages, the Post-Diluvian Dispensations, and the Meridian Dispensation.

for Christ) exposure to the contrasts—the law of opposite existences in mortality.

2. Experience is indispensable to that growth and there are no heights without depths.

3. Joy comes in its fullest intensity only to those who care about—who sacrificially love—others.

4. Love cannot be forced; it can only be appealed to, matched, elicited.

5. To “bring about” the “bowels of mercy which overpowereth justice” Christ had to suffer and we through that suffering may be “lifted up.” Christ will draw (not force) all men unto him.

These insights permeate Roberts’ analysis of the attributes of God and of man, of the council (and war!) in heaven, of Christ’s premortal voluntary acceptance of the role of “the Lamb,” of the initial developments of life on this planet, of the Old Testament messiah-redeemer prototypes ranging from the Paschal Lamb to the temple sacrifice, and of the successive dispensations and the coming of Christ in the flesh.

So seriously does Roberts take these interrelationships that he notes that all his six chapters on the atonement should be read together or not at all.⁶⁵ Here again, he lamented the fact that because of our mortal limitations “we can only preach the gospel in fragments.” But if we can hold in our consciousness the revealed attributes of God and the “givens” that surround him and us, all else falls into place. Thus the atonement of Christ “makes sense”—it makes reason—it makes power. It is no longer only *a* way—but THE way.

THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

But for Roberts mysteries remain. Why so *much* suffering? So much for Christ? And even after renewal through him, so much for man? How in the light of the agonies that surround and sometimes swallow us, can we be reconciled to an overall meaning and purpose?

⁶⁵TWL, Chapter XL, “The Atonement I: The Revealed Fact of the Atonement,” p. 1. “Knowledge of the whole, I am sure, will be necessary to the complete understanding of the parts.” These six chapters are: “The Atonement as Revealed,” “As Harmonic with the Reign of Law,” “As Related to the Attributes of God,” “As Indispensable,” “As of Broader Scope Than Satisfaction for Adam’s Sin,” and “As Efficacious Though Vicarious.” TWL, Volume II, Chapters XL through XLV.

Here, instead of beginning with God, Roberts begins with man—with introspective, intimate experience. We suffer in many ways: in ourselves and in our minds no less than in our bodies. Because of our involvement in each other's lives, he points out, we suffer. Even in our efforts to serve we are wounded and scarred. The flagrantly prodigal child pulls at the heartstrings of the parents. We suffer also *with each other*, even with those who are virtually beyond our immediate care, bound to us only by distant kinship. We suffer with them through the reaches of human sympathy and empathy. And finally we suffer—and willingly—for *each other*, as David yearned to suffer for his son Absalom. "Would to God I had died for thee." All this, Roberts writes, "is the chief glory of the human race."

But if it is our chief glory, what an infinite pity if there should be no means among the divine intelligences for a like—and even greater—expression of self-sacrificing love.⁶⁶ If on our level love and suffering are inextricable, how inconsistent to deny the power of voluntary—and even involuntary—sacrificial suffering to God and his Christ. Here Roberts is elated with divine intimations and imitations. As John the Beloved wrote, "We love him because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). Even after all this, Roberts acknowledges that both our human weakness and our nobility shrink, as Christ himself shrank, and we may cry out under the awful burden—No! Let this cup pass! The atonement is too severe! To this Roberts replies at three levels:

First, it is inconceivable that either God's justice or his mercy would require more suffering in the sensitive soul of the Redeemer—or of the redeemed—than was absolutely necessary to accomplish the glorious end envisioned. However we may recoil from it, all of it is required. And surely we may apprehend in experience one clear reason: suffering is one of the few things we cannot ignore. Through suffering and pain men are most powerfully moved and influenced. Christ yielded himself to his mission with full awareness of this. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Crowns of roses fade; crowns of thorns endure.

⁶⁶Roberts honored as a masterpiece of thought and composition Browning's story of David's love for Saul (Robert Browning, "Saul" 1845, 1855). "Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!" (He says one must read it at least six times to grasp its richness.)

And so the reaching power of the atonement endures when all other attempts at motivation fail.

Second, as Alma puts it, out of Christ's "suffering according to the flesh" came "bowels filled with mercy" (Alma 7: 12-13). But out of both came, and will yet come, Christ's capacity for and realization of infinite joy. Likewise we, in lesser degree, as we experience grief in his name at its deeper levels, are made more capable for more inclusive, intense joy, gratitude, and love. If Christ himself could have known the fullness of the joy of the Father in an easier way, that might well have been provided. The same is true of us. And in the contemplation of his life, if we are not moved profoundly, if the mercy in us does not have compassion on the mercy in him, if we will not respond, then one day we too will have to suffer even as he. And once again the phrase is "have to." Only thus may we become capable of coming to his likeness and his quality of life.

But third, we have a glimpse of what an unmeasurable premium all this places upon the envisioned end. If by suffering, power came to Christ to achieve this end—and if no one could do more—then, says Roberts boldly, shame on God and his Christ if they did not undertake it. And, if we do not respond to such a matchless sacrifice, shame on us.

If it be true that men value things in proportion to what they cost how dear to them must be the atonement, since it cost the Christ so much in suffering that he may be said to have been baptized by bloodsweat in Gethsemane, before he reached the climax of his passion on Calvary.⁶⁷

One who comprehends, even if only vaguely, all that Christ went through must be led inevitably to ask, "Was it worth it?" And Roberts witnesses that in light of the incredibly glorious outcome, it was and indeed is worth it. The achievement is to be more than man's renewal, more than a bright example, more than salvation from physical and spiritual death for all living things, more than the vindication of all the attributes of God. Beyond all these it is a perpetual union and reunion of the soul of man with the soul of God, the making of divine men, the bringing of man to life like unto God's, fullness of life. For all those who will (and both the Father and the Son are help-

⁶⁷TWL, Chapter XLIII, "The Atonement IV: Could Other Means Than the Atonement Have Brought to Pass Man's Salvation?"

less in uplifting those who will not), it is the glorious infinite becoming unto godliness.⁶⁸

VOLUME III, CHRIST, THE LIFE

Roberts' culminating volume is Christ, the Life. In these chapters the question becomes—What is the source of life? the quantity, the quality, the intensity of life? How is it that we cannot speak of any creative act in the universe without in the end saying that Christ is the undergirding of that creation? Such were Roberts' final preoccupations and at this point he was really at his best. Yet because of declining health, and his advancing age, he was tired, and his book is less coherent here than elsewhere. Nevertheless, one can grasp and appreciate the essence of his message.

LIFE AND LOVE

To begin with, he tends to identify life and love. For many, he says, love is defined as an evanescent and changing phenomenon, that makes it one of the *least* reliable things in life. His testimony is that because of Christ, love is the *most* reliable thing in life. Christ is the actual connecting tissue of life and love.

[Love] is immanent and . . . is an indestructible presence. It is because love reigns in harmony with law that we mortals can be so sure of it; and rest so secure in it. Whereas it was not born of caprice, so, too, it will not depart from the world nor from individuals on caprice; but will endure as space itself endures—from the very nature of it; as truth abides; as law itself subsists; as God lives; for it is of the Eternal Things—the things that do not pass away.⁶⁹

In his fifth *Seventy's Yearbook*, "Divine Immanence and the Holy Ghost,"⁷⁰ Roberts had developed the claim that authentic Christianity alone is in the fullest sense a religion of life, life-affirmation, life-enhancement, life-transmission. Stimulated by the work of Henry Drummond, Roberts expanded the idea of "biogenesis," the theme of "Life from Life—Spiritual Life from Spirit," and traced its roots, both in ancient and

⁶⁸Two more historical chapters are placed here at the end of Volume II which recapitulate Roberts' book, *The Falling Away* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1931). They are, Chapter XLVI, "Departure From 'The Way'," and Chapter XLVII, "Renewal of 'The Way'."

⁶⁹TWL, Chapter XXVII, "Purpose of God in Earth Life of Man," p. 10.

⁷⁰*Seventy's Course in Theology*, "Divine Immanence and the Holy Ghost," vol. 5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1912), chapter 20.

modern scripture. Thus, he insists, improvement in action and conduct is not enough to bring into man the fullness of Christ's powers. Instead, there must be an infusion, a new—and continual—creation from above.⁷¹ "The difference between a spiritual man and a natural man is not a difference of development, but of generation," Drummond had written.⁷² This law which has analogues throughout the biological and social worlds is, so far as can be known, exceptionless. "He that has not spiritually been born of Christ," Roberts summarizes, "is not spiritually alive."⁷³ But as we have seen, he takes the type farther. Man is not simply to be regenerated in a delimited sphere and element to a partial wholeness or holiness or salvation. He is to unfold into the exact likeness of his Redeemer. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . ." (Romans 8:29).⁷⁴

As Roberts seasoned in continued study, he saw ever deeper implications in these ideas. What is life? How is Christ the life? What is it to beget? What is the vital union with Christ that brings to pass "eternal lives"? The more he pursued these questions the more he became convinced that Christ is the power that attends and undergirds all life, all life-giving, all love, all love-giving. Man is not—not yet—a creator of life. He is an instrument for its transmission, an agent through whom creative living power descends, and, as it were, distills, bringing about birth and growth.⁷⁵ Hence when Christ said "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18), that included the power of life. Hence we have the modern statements of Christ that "he is the light which giveth life to all things" (D&C 88:13), that "quickeneth all things" and "maketh alive all things" (Moses 6:61).

THE ROLE OF ORDINANCES

Further Roberts was intrigued with the accumulating evidence that the action of mind on the physical body depends,

⁷¹Roberts did not live to read the more technical efforts of Teilhard de Chardin who tried to combine paleontology and Catholic theology conceiving the whole universe as an upthrust toward the making of Christ-like beings.

⁷²Quoted by Roberts in *Seventy's Course in Theology*, 5:101.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 5:102.

⁷⁴See also 2 Corinthians 3:18.

⁷⁵TWL, Chapter XLVIII, "The Life, Manifested in the Christ." ("Manifested in the Christ" is written in pencil in Roberts' handwriting.)

without exception, on some material intervention. He rejoiced in this evidence for it pointed to that union of spirit and element, that mutual interdependence that provides an eternal foundation to the need for channels of life-transmission, that is, ordinances. "Being born again, comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances."⁷⁶ So Joseph Smith had testified to the Twelve. Then the influx to us of those more-fully-alive worlds is the extension through material conductors of life power.⁷⁷ Ordinances bring us in touch with this life power, conveying it into man's very cells and soul. All the fundamental life processes have an exact parallel in Christian life. Hence the richness of meaning in baptism—water, blood, and spirit recapitulating the elements of birth—and the sacrament. Hence, also, the indispensability of the higher ordinances of the temple sanctuary. These all vindicate the expression of Christ, "I am the vine; ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). As John has said, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12). And Christ gives us a modern assurance: "Otherwise ye could not abound" (D&C 88:50). In participating in the sacrament, we do literally partake not only of emanating powers, but of what Peter calls "the divine nature," by inviting into our systems through the tokens or emblems of broken bread and water or wine, the elements of higher life, higher spirit, higher power—the powers of godliness⁷⁸—which by his own life-victory Christ now embodies and diffuses.

In other vivifying ways Christ is the "life." Many Christian interpreters, Roberts observed, tend to condemn and mortify the virile qualities of human nature and to commend instead servility and even cowardice. They recognize in Christ a certain mellow forgiveness and compassion but ignore his masterfulness and his involvement in the whole spectrum of earth experience. Likewise some conceive the Christian enterprise

⁷⁶Smith, *Teachings*, p. 162.

⁷⁷See his notes on Haldane and Huxley, BHRC.

⁷⁸Those who suppose that love and joy and peace emerge in man by fiat or happenstance or even by "grace" as traditionally defined, or that a "good life" self-conceived assures them salvation, are missing this vital thread. Life power comes down to and into and up through our natures as through a fruit tree. And seeds must precede stem, trunk and branches, and blossoms must precede fruit, and we must be planted "in a goodly land, by a pure stream . . ." (D&C 97:9).

as the attempt to escape from or "live above" the earth rather than to transform it. Roberts wrote with rare penetration that if religion is worth anything it must take account of and work through the whole life, and with the needs of this earth, not by secularizing the sacred but by sanctifying the secular—for this very planet is to become heaven. To those who ignored the pressing tangible problems of civilization, Roberts responded, "A holy man is a citizen of the here and now."

On the other hand, if the New Dispensation contributed nothing else it claimed the indispensability of Christ in this wider concern, a mode of living that does not arise from teaching alone, but from his glorifying life. Man is as dependent upon divine nourishment as he is upon air. That makes religion more than an ethical, political, or social scheme.

Religion is more than mere morality; it is a new birth, a spiritual power, it is conformity to his will, and a careful performance of all that he has ordained as necessary to the completion of "the life." Let no one therefore attempt to displace God's gospel plan by a substitution of humanitarianism, by which is here meant a system of morals based upon what is recognized as contributing to human welfare, the basis merely of social relations and individual well-being. Truly the gospel is expressed in a Life. But it is a life in harmony with God's purposes, with fellowship, and with complete union with God established through spiritual birth and consciousness of a one-ness with God's life.⁷⁹

LIFE, LIGHT, SPIRIT POWER

Here Roberts holds up the key to the ancient either-or controversy: God's personal transcendence or God's immanence. Classical and contemporary theologians often obscure or eliminate personality from their concept of God in order to make way for "a universal spirit." Assuming the "everywhereness of God," they are led to assume that in the end they must deny him particularized personality, physical resurrection, even spatial-temporal location.⁸⁰ To this Roberts answers with "one of the sweetest messages of God unto man,"⁸¹ Doctrine and

⁷⁹TWL, Chapter XLVIII, p. 13.

⁸⁰See Roberts' discussion of this problem in *The Seventy's Course in Theology*, vol. 5, Part I, "Divine Immanence," pp. 1-35.

⁸¹Conference address delivered in April 1916, *Conference Report*, pp. 134-39.

Covenants 88, which affirms, clarifies and personalizes what Roberts called "divine immanence."⁸²

His elaboration of the doctrine must be read in the context of his entire book, and each term must be defined not in the traditional sense, but in the New Dispensation sense.

This Light then, the Light of Truth and named for us men "the Light of Christ"—"which proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space,"—is also God, even the Spirit of God, or of the Gods, for it proceeds forth or vibrates, or radiates from all the Gods—from all who have partaken of the One Divine Nature—hence "the God of all other Gods"—mentioned by our Prophet of the New Dispensation (Doc. and Cov. sec. cxxi) "the God of Gods," "the Lord of Lords," proceeding from MANY yet ONE! Incarnated in all personal Deities, yet proceeding forth from them, to extend the one God into all space that He might be in and through all things; bearing all the powers in earth and sun and stars; world-sustaining power and guiding force. Bearing all the mind and spiritual attributes of God into the immensity of space, becoming God everywhere present—omni-present; and everywhere present with power—omnipotent; extending everywhere the power of God; also All-Knowing; All-Seeing; All-Hearing—Omniscient! Bearing forth in fact all the attributes of Deity: Knowledge, Wisdom, Judgment, Truth, Holiness, Mercy—every characteristic or quality of all Divine Intelligences—since they are one; and this Divine Essence of spirit becoming "the Light which is in all things, *that giveth life to all things* which is the law by which all things are governed, even the POWER of God, who sitteth upon His throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." United in this Divine Essence, or Spirit is the mind of all Gods; and all the Gods being incarnations of this Spirit, become God in unity; and by the incarnation of this Spirit in Divine Personages, they become the Divine Brotherhood of the Universe, the ONE GOD, though made of many.⁸³

Christ's life may envelope all of man's life. And thus all of man's life, even its most secular details, may be sacramental.

⁸²For Roberts this had much to do with prayer. He penned in a notebook, "Prayer is not a mechanical function. One may not always pray when one chooses. Something more than words are needed. Prayer is soul of man communing with soul of God—the infinite in man reaching upward to touch the infinite of God. God must be a party to the blending of souls, else there is no prayer."

He spoke of this during his last year (1933) as his "greatest personal treasure in the gospel"—the sense of the nearness of Christ—more than the spirit or light of Christ, Christ himself.

⁸³B. H. Roberts, *Last Seven Discourses of B. H. Roberts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1947), pp. 99-100.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

What difference follows such awareness? Roberts answers: Consult the Sermon on the Mount. As the Master taught the Sermon on the Mount, he *was* that Sermon. Two chapters compare the accounts of the Sermon in the Gospels and in 3 Nephi (which Roberts called the "Fifth Gospel") and interlace them with certain insights of the prophets.⁸⁴ Again the hallmark of Roberts' analysis is inclusive harmony. He sees that the prime Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity, must be combined with wisdom, courage, temperance, and others. He sees that when Christianity denies the expressive beauties of art, the gains of scientific control, the manifestations of culture, the lyrical and refined joys of marriage and family—when it shows contempt for any phase of man or woman or of any phase of life—it is false to itself and gone astray. But to be beneficial all elements of life must not only be used properly, but *infused* properly.

Thus, the Sermon on the Mount is enveloped in life-affirming symbols.⁸⁵ The Beatitudes are more than a list of independent virtues to be willed and aspired to; they are the outcome of the coming in of Christ, the description of the fruit of rebirth. Roberts deals with the commandments regarding anger, hatred, and lust, performance without oaths, almsgiving, and prayer ("the Christian's vital breath"). He teaches the 3 Nephi clarification that the way to cope with temptation is, like the Master, to take up our cross in the vision of righteous fulfillment. He corrects Matthew's "Lead us not into temptation," with "Suffer us not to be led into temptation," and advocates fasting as spiritual feasting and the eye-single service as transcending the "two masters."

In a related chapter he analyses the epistles of Peter on the spirit of the Christian ministry and the Christian virtues, supplementing them with Paul. The result is the familiar outline of faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, and patience in Peter, and Paul's masterful discourse on the crucial need of charity.⁸⁶

Roberts saw the New Dispensation, the downward dispensing of truth, the way, and the life as the amplification,

⁸⁴TWL, Chapters L and LI, "The Life: The Sermon on the Mount, I and II."

⁸⁵Not just, as much commentary suggests, instruction in a "social Gospel." (See Roberts' notes on Rausehenbusch and his allies, BHRC.)

⁸⁶TWL, Chapters LII and LIII, "The Christian Character: The Teachings of the Apostles, I and II."

the expansion, and intensification of all former commands. He taught that the "healing power of Christ" relates to every sin and sickness of mind and heart and body.⁸⁷ He touches on the great social implications of the gospel, its provisions for the poor, its Law of Consecration and stewardship, its foundation for the kingdom that is statesmanship more than politics.⁸⁸ He says in summary:

This dispensation is characterized by a fullness of the law of righteousness, as it is by a fullness of ordinances, of authority from God, or priesthood, of a fullness of events that will restore all things to the order that God has decreed for them, completing both the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth itself to the status of a celestial world, a habitat of immortal and glorified Intelligences.⁸⁹

THE RESURRECTION

He concludes his book with a chapter on resurrection, teaching without qualification that Christ's resurrection "is a proto-type of the resurrection of all men, the actual, physical resurrection of the body of all men," the restoration and re-awakening of all life—all life-power—all lives. This he calls the "covenant of eternal life" made before the foundation of the world.⁹⁰

We shall be like Him—conformed to the divine image. That is the end, then, for the spiritually born man—he will be conformed into the image of God—conformed to the type of the Spirit-life that has taken up his abode in him. How long shall it take? Who knows? And what shall it matter? The important thing is that it shall be done. The important thing for us men is that the spirit-birth takes place; that union with God be formed; the ages may wait upon a man, longer to make Super-man; but the eternal years are his who is born of the Spirit; and again I say the important thing for us men is to have that Spirit-birth and then are we sons of God; and while it doth not appear what we shall be, for the height and glory of that is beyond our human vision, ultimately we shall be like him, and see him as he is, and be conformed to the Christ image, that is to say, to the divine nature—unless one shall sin against the Holy Ghost.⁹¹

⁸⁷These all—and more—are interrelated with the whole, healthy person who is Christ. "I am the law and the light. Look unto me . . ." (3 Nephi 15:9).

⁸⁸TWL, Chapter LIV, "The Ethic of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times."

⁸⁹Ibid, p. 15.

⁹⁰See Titus 1:2.

⁹¹This is his final quotation in the *Seventy's Course in Theology*, 5:109.

MEANING THAT LASTS

Of B. H. Roberts' role in the New Dispensation, opposite appraisals are often urged. One, that he was an original, independent, and audacious innovator who tried everyone's patience, including those closest to him. At the other end, it is claimed that he was delimited by discipleship, so intertwined with the modern revelation of Jesus Christ that he did not create his own individuality or his own meaning. If there is perspective in either judgment, there is deeper insight in both, and they become the burden and also the glory of his life.

His teaching and writing were centered in the consuming desire to breathe all he could of the fresh air of Christ's New Dispensation. Of course, he had to measure and magnify the Master, as we all have to, through his own raw experience and his own gifts. But what he was and what he saw and felt required him to ponder and pray on a grand scale—to stretch "as high as the utmost heavens and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity."⁹² In that, as no one knew better than he, he was reaching for the ever-receding whole, for what is both ancient and modern, for what is eternal. In that term "eternalism"—his own word for the uniqueness of the New Dispensation—he discovered and recovered the Temple of God, which is also the temple of man.

Called often to make war in defense of the gospel of peace he was, in the image of his Master, deprived, denied, despised, and afflicted, but likewise blessed with resilient joy and a sense of life stronger than death. In his own life Roberts was tormented actually—as Christ could only be tormented vicariously—with giant frailties, more, not less visible, because they were the frailties of a giant. Because of all that, rather than in spite of it, he made The Truth his truth. Christ became his one Way, and in the final reckoning, his one Life. And one thing will ever be said of him: He kept the Vision.

⁹²From Joseph Smith's "Epistle to the Church," written from Liberty Jail, 25 March 1839, in Smith, *Teachings*, p. 137.

Rey L. Pratt and the Mexican Mission

Dale F. Beecher*

I enjoy my work [in Mexico]. True it is I have seen some horrible things during my stay there. For months in the City of Mexico we awakened every morning to the music of cannons. Day after day we saw houses and even people burning in the streets. And yet I am ready to go back and stay as long as the servants of the Lord shall desire it.¹

Rey Lucero Pratt said this of revolution-ridden Mexico in the October 1913 general conference, showing at once the spirit in which he led the Mexican Mission through its most critical quarter century and why his name is still linked inseparably to the success of the Church in Latin America.

When Elder Pratt was called to labor in the Mexican Mission in 1906, he found it a small and struggling operation. It had been first opened in 1879, just a month after he was born, but due to political problems and a shortage of missionaries it had been closed down from 1889 to 1901. During that period, the only contact southern Mexican converts had with the Church was an occasional visitor from the Mormon colonies in Chihuahua and Sonora, in the capital for some business reason. This obviously was not sufficient guidance to support a young and essentially foreign institution, and it deteriorated badly. Many of the Saints slipped away from Church doctrines and practices, some whole branches falling into apostasy.

Even after the mission was reopened, its new president, Ammon Tenney, served for over a year as its only elder. Three years later his successor, Hyrum Harris, noted that the mission was growing but that "the people are very weak and full of

*Dale F. Beecher is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Utah and wrote this article while a research fellow with the Church Historical Department.

¹Rey L. Pratt, *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1913, p. 47.

transgressions.”² By 1906 there were still fewer than twenty missionaries who with the members of the Church there, now over 400 in number, were yet in the process of putting branch organizations into functioning order.

One of the principal reasons for this confusion and struggle was a lack of stability in the leadership of the mission. Mexicans have a psychological commitment to a system of *personalismo* whose antecedents date back to pre-Columbian times. Hugh M. Hamill, Jr. summarizes the thinking of many scholars in saying that the common people had developed an attitude of submission to authority under the Aztec Empire, then accepted its replacement by a paternalistic Spanish hierarchy that laid “the foundations for the social order which would evolve through the next several centuries.”³ This is an order in which personalities take precedence over organizational structure and often over principle. The leader becomes “the personification or incarnation of authority, where he who governs acts with an extraordinary charismatic moral ascendancy over his people: advising them, guiding them, leading them paternally.”⁴ In spite of the 1928 declaration of President Calles that archaic personalist rule had been replaced by the government of law, the guidelines and fixed procedures of an “establishment” simply do not mean much in the Mexican tradition.

The Mexican Saints, most of them recent converts, needed strength and continuity in their leadership—a man in whom they could place a complete trust. On 29 September 1907 they had their leader when Rey Pratt was set apart as president of the mission. He was never released.

The choice was a wise one. Although Pratt was born in Salt Lake City, he had grown up in Mexico. His father, Helaman Pratt, had been with the epic 1875-76 expedition that explored and proselyted in Mexico, and later he had served there as missionary and mission president. In 1887 the family was called to settle in Colonia Dublán, one of the LDS colonies in Chihuahua.

Thus at the age of nine, Rey became a pioneer. He later spoke of “those things that I had to do as a boy, for I went into

²Hyrum Harris to Heber J. Grant, 16 November 1905, as published in the *Millennial Star* 67:779.

³Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., *Dictatorship in Spanish America* (New York: Knopf, 1966), p. 19.

⁴Fernando N. A. Cusvillas, “A Case for Caudillaje” in *ibid.*, p. 205.

a new land and had to make fences, build ditch, kill snakes, ride the cattle range, and do many things that neither I nor my children are called upon to do now."⁵ The Pratts were closer to the local Mexicans than many of the other colonists were, and Rey learned to speak Spanish like a native. Perhaps even more importantly, he also grew to understand the history and culture of the Mexican people.

At the same time he learned a standard for religious and secular living. In 1898 young Mary (May) Stark, visiting in Dublán, was impressed that "everyone in the colonies lived their religion to the letter."⁶ She was especially impressed by Rey Pratt and they were married in 1900, eventually becoming the parents of thirteen children. The young couple settled on a ranch outside Dublán, isolated from the bustle of an industrializing world. They lived in a log house under a big oak tree, cooked over a fireplace, raised beef and dairy cattle, hunted deer and turkeys, and rode their ponies over the range together. At the time of the mission call, they were making plans to expand their herd and install an electric generator.⁷ For years they had dreamed of returning to that idyllic setting when the mission was over, but that time never came.

Thus grounded in language, culture, and the goals to be pursued, Pratt was the right man to lead the Mexican Mission through the most turbulent years of that nation's history. The story of his presidency is a succession of seemingly crushing difficulties which he had to overcome that the mission might succeed. In the words of his daughter, "It just seems like they were tried in fire such as you can't believe."⁸

From the first President Pratt was beset by knotty organizational problems. In a unique and somewhat cumbersome arrangement, the mission was set up under the Juárez Stake which was comprized of the colonies in the North. At least until 1912 the members were considered part of the stake, and the mission reported both to the stake presidency and to the General Authorities of the Church.

There was also a question of authority, since Pratt presided over the mission for four years as an elder. During this time

⁵*Conference Report*, October 1928, p. 21.

⁶Mary S. Pratt, unpublished MS, p. 4, Church Archives, Church Historical Department.

⁷Rey L. Pratt, *Diary*, vol. 1. This quotation is included in an appendix to the diary, apparently written by Mrs. Pratt. Church Archives.

⁸Mary Pratt Parish, recorded interview, 5 June 1973, Church Archives.

he ordained at least one seventy, Manuel C. Naegle, saying that, "my calling as president gives me that authority."⁹ The procedure was irregular but the ordination was evidently accepted as valid by the Church.

Pratt had to contend with Church bureaucracy. He would come back from Salt Lake City almost in tears, having failed to get needed support because of a condescending and vaguely suspicious attitude toward "things Spanish and Catholic."¹⁰ Apparently the brethren were reluctant to allocate much of the scant available resources to an area they believed to have little potential. This attitude changed rapidly, largely due to Pratt's efforts.

Elder Ernest Young recalls from personal observation that Pratt "visited the sick a good deal."¹¹ Indeed, sickness harassed the mission. Typhoid was common, two elders having died from it in the 1880s. In 1904 Apostle Abraham O. Woodruff and his wife, while visiting Mexico, both contracted smallpox and died. Pratt's year-old daughter Mary came down with a severe case of smallpox in 1909, but survived. His son, Carl Lee, survived scarlet fever in 1911, but died of "intestinal infection" in 1925 when attending school in Mexico City. Others had cases, some serious, of malaria, pneumonia, and influenza. Pratt himself nearly died of typhoid in 1909, and was incapacitated for several months. The next year he was down with appendicitis, then in 1913 with influenza.

In spite of these hindrances during its early years, the mission continued to grow. The missionary force was increased, giving President Pratt an office staff and allowing expansion into new areas. Conversions accelerated, more than doubling the membership in his first six years, and several new branches were organized.

EXODUS

The Revolution of 1910-1911 seemed not to cause a great stir in Mexico City, at least as far as the mission was concerned. In small towns outside the capital it was another matter. The power struggle surrounding the abdication of President Porfirio Díaz in May 1911 brought fighting close to home. A battle in Cuautla, Morelos, left one Mormon home scarred by

⁹W. Ernest Young, recorded interview, 23 February 1973, Church Archives.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

hundreds of bullets, the trembling family inside counting the marks of 150 which came through one door.¹² The missionaries did not dare travel in outlying areas, nor the members to hold meetings after dark.¹³

The inauguration of President Francisco Madero calmed the countryside. In September, though, there was a renewal of activity south of the capital due to what the mission record refers to as "depredations" by Zapata, "the southern bandit,"¹⁴ but few regarded this as being of a revolutionary character. Fewer still thought of the overthrow of Díaz as more than a coup d'état, or of the relative peace as a calm before the storm. Even a protest march of 15,000 people shouting "Down with the clergy and the Catholic party!" was misread by the missionaries, who thought the social revolution was a protestant religious revival.¹⁵

In September 1911, President Pratt traveled to Salt Lake City to see if the trickle of missionaries being assigned to Mexico could not be increased. There were also discussions of a plan to settle Mexican Mormons in colonies close to those of the American Saints, a scheme tried unsuccessfully in 1887 by his father. A little later he wrote an article for the *Improvement Era* telling an optimistic story of the Mexican Mission: "Prospects were never brighter for the spread of the gospel in this land, and we look forward to a bright and prosperous future for the Mexican Mission."¹⁶

But by the time this article was published in April 1912, the Revolution had broken out again. On the 16th of that month Pratt received a telegram from President Joseph F. Smith instructing him to use whatever precaution he thought proper for the protection of the missionaries and to act in harmony with the United States Embassy. Elders were registered with the embassy's protection committee and told not to stay away from their quarters overnight in case a quick recall should be necessary. In June, Pratt visited the branches in the state of Morelos, "this being the first trip into the country for several months on account of the revolution."¹⁷ He found the

¹²Mexican Mission Historical Report, MS, vol. A, pp. 368-69, 377. Church Archives.

¹³Arthur Haymore, "La Misión Mexicana," *Liabona* 8:767.

¹⁴Mexican Mission, vol. A, p. 432.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Rey L. Pratt, "History of the Mexican Mission," *Improvement Era* 15:498.

¹⁷Mexican Mission, vol. A, p. 432.

Saints generally safe and well, but often they had not been able to hold meetings and in some instances people had fled to Mexico City.

Still, the mission had always known difficulties and was unwilling to view this new hardship as especially onerous. For an item in the July *Liabona*, Pratt wrote that unsettled conditions were a hindrance to missionary work, but that the work continued and prospered.¹⁸ The village of Tepeitic, near Cuernavaca, was totally burned out and the members there scattered. But at the same time, the elders were opening up Puebla and establishing a branch in Cholula. As the fighting flared here and there, the missionaries were withdrawn from the southern lowlands in August, a new branch was organized near Toluca in September, and in November all of the elders and many of the Saints of the Toluca Valley retreated to Mexico City.¹⁹

From this time on, contact with the outlying branches was sporadic. Missionaries would pull out of a town for a few days, or a few months, while it served as a battleground, then return to it when the hostilities moved on. Since midsummer they had been aware that Zapata was a revolutionary, not a bandit, and that they were in the middle of a civil war.

By August the situation in the North, too, had deteriorated to such an extent that the Mormon colonists were leaving their homes for safety in the United States. On hearing this, Pratt went to the colonies and to El Paso to ascertain the colonists' state of affairs. It was indeed pitiable, and after consultation with President Smith and Apostle Anthony Ivins, he decided to release those missionaries whose parents, or perhaps their own children, were now refugees and in need.

In September, Pratt went to Utah to attend general conference and to talk with the General Authorities concerning the future of the mission. Only twelve missionaries now remained in central Mexico, and it was concluded that they might remain and continue their work as best they could. The October *Improvement Era* carried this news item:

Most of the Elders in the Mexican Mission have been released owing to the political troubles in that country which resulted in the Mexican exodus of the Latter-day Saints. The situation is still critical and it is not safe to return to the colonies.²⁰

¹⁸*Liabona* 10:78.

¹⁹Mexican Mission, vol. A, pp. 459-62.

²⁰*Improvement Era* 15:1141.

For three months there was a respite from major violence and the missionaries were again optimistic. However, at this time Félix Díaz and Victoriano Huerta were plotting their overthrow of the Madero government. On 13 February 1913 fighting exploded in Mexico City, the mission home itself being hit by many bullets. Pratt's daughter remembers her mother having to stay in the kitchen to cook where at least one stray shot narrowly missed her. The rest of the family and all of the elders stayed in the stairwell where they were protected by an extra wall, Pratt being armed with a baseball bat and others with knives and hatpins. They later picked up three unexploded artillery shells just outside the house.²¹

For eight days the battle raged in the city while Zapata's forces attacked the skeleton garrisons left in the countryside. On the 19th the fighting stopped after Madero's resignation and the missionaries spent the day "sightseeing" the aftermath. Pratt wrote, a detailed account of his observations:

Part of the city was found to be in a terrible condition from the effects of the battle, and the streets were in a horrible condition with dead men and horses, many of them being burned in the streets.²²

Throughout the Revolution the Church in general and American Mormons in particular maintained a very careful neutrality, never taking sides for or against any of the warring factions.²³ The Mexican Saints followed suit, on the advice of their leader, and very few were ever involved unless they were conscripted by one or another of the armies.

Still, in those unstable times there were bound to be eruptions affecting even the most pacifistic neutralists. In May four brethren from Cuautla were mistakenly accused of Zapatistic sympathies and drafted into the federal army. Pratt strenuously interceded on their behalf, but they were taken anyway, and one of them shortly died of illness. In June a brother was falsely denounced as a Zapatista and with no chance for a hearing was executed on the spot. In July some Mormon girls in Tecalco were threatened with rape, and while Pratt was arranging for their safety he found another sister accused of pro-Zapata activity. She was shipped off to slave

²¹Parrish interview.

²²Mexican Mission, vol. A, pp. 473-74.

²³Brigham H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Provo: BYU Press, 1965), 6:265.

labor in Quintana Roó, in spite of all he could do.²⁴ In August Brother Pérez of San Vicente received an anonymous letter warning him to renounce Mormonism and get rid of the elders or be killed along with them and his family. Pratt took the letter to the governor of the State of Mexico with the result that armed guards stood nightly watch at the Pérez home until the danger passed.²⁵

The missionaries themselves were never molested in their work, either by political factions or bandits.²⁶ Nevertheless, the First Presidency of the Church recognized the potential danger and authorized Pratt to leave with his family and the remaining seven elders, should conditions warrant it. Pratt still refused to admit he was licked, so rather than abandon Mexico altogether, he decided to move the missionaries to Vera Cruz and await developments there.

While they were arranging this move, packing and appointing local brethren to take over the leadership of the branches, etc., the mission was advised by the Consul General to evacuate all United States nationals. Taking this as an order from the State Department, the Pratts and the elders hurried their preparations and left for Vera Cruz the next day. On 5 September they boarded the American steamer *Mexico* with the other refugees, and the country was again left with no direct contact with the Church.²⁷

EXILE

In September 1913, with the Revolution nearing its peak, there were over 1600 Latter-day Saints in Mexico, some 1150 of them in the area of the capital. With a few scattered exceptions in the colonies, these were "all natives and mostly Indians,"²⁸ without much leadership experience of their own and without their shepherd.

That shepherd was like a tiger in a cage. At the October general conference of the Church he said,

I have the spirit of that mission running through my veins to such an extent that it is almost impossible for me to talk

²⁴Mexican Mission, vol. B, pp. 8-16.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 22-23.

²⁶*Deseret Evening News*, 17 September 1913.

²⁷Mexican Mission, vol. B, pp. 28-29.

²⁸*Deseret Evening News*, 17 September 1913.

to the people here except I speak in regard to the Mexican Mission.²⁹

He affirmed that the day of the Mexican Indians had come and that he was ready to go back and continue the work under any conditions.

At a meeting for mission presidents following the close of conference Pratt offered to return to Mexico alone and do what he could to hold the Church there together for the interim. The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve discussed the matter, decided that he should not go back, and instructed him to guide the mission by correspondence until the situation settled down.³⁰ This he did, devoting himself almost exclusively to the task for the next twenty months—sending letters of encouragement and instruction to the Mexican Saints.

The reports he received were alternately heartening and distressing. The Mexican Saints, along with many other people, often went hungry. Some were reduced to scavenging in the streets and eating perhaps once in twenty-four hours. Some of the men had been conscripted into military service, were ill-clothed and poorly paid, their families left to fend for themselves. In 1916 Pratt received a pathetic letter from Señora de Monroy of San Marcos, whose son Rafael had been left in charge of the little branch there, telling of the execution of Rafael and his counselor by a Villista detachment for refusing to renounce Mormonism.³¹ In spite of such hardships, these humble people remained faithful. They kept the branches running with the long-range instructions from Pratt, and they scrupulously saved a tenth of their income for tithing, even when it meant going without food.³²

During his enforced exile, Pratt wrote much and spoke often to American Mormon audiences. He was recognized as having a more profound grasp of the Mexican scene than anyone else in the Church, and he felt it important that everyone gain some understanding. His style helped. Said his daughter, "He was an old-time orator. He wasn't this kind that

²⁹*Conference Report*, April 1913, p. 47. The *Conference Report* and the *Deseret Evening News* are at wide variance on the wording of this talk, but they agree on its substance.

³⁰Mexican Mission, vol. B, pp. 31-32.

³¹Jesús Mera de Monroy to Rey L. Pratt, 27 August 1915.

³²Rey L. Pratt, "Review of Mission Labor Among the Lamanites," *Liabona* 14:294-95.

got up and took you logically from one point to another, he just got up there and pounded the pulpit. But people listened to him."³³

He always spoke highly of the Indian people. His talks and writings constantly refer to Book of Mormon prophecies on the birthright of the Lamanites. In an especially incisive article for the *Young Woman's Journal* in 1914 and in a series for the *Improvement Era* in 1928, he interpreted the Revolution and other signs of the times as heralding the day of that birthright.³⁴ The Lamanites were ready to assume a position of leadership, and it was the duty of the Church to train them and place them there. He often chided the press and public opinion for their prejudiced view of the Indians, especially of those in Mexico, and declared to Church members that their missionary sons, far from working among the savages, were living among a courteous and gentle people. He openly admitted that his own prejudice ran against the Spanish and other European conquerors whose influence on native Mexicans had been one of corruption rather than enlightenment.

For two years, from 1913 to 1914, Pratt was only partially active in Mexican Mission affairs, until the Church called him to a different kind of mission. There were LDS missionaries in all of the states along the Mexican border, but they spoke only English; no one had ever worked with the many Mexican and Spanish-American residents in these areas. In June 1915 Pratt was asked to open a mission among these people.

It was an odd arrangement. The new field of labor, to open first in Colorado and New Mexico, came under the auspices and direction of the Western States Mission. At the same time, Pratt still presided over the Mexican Mission which was a separate entity.

The new mission was soon going strong, but he continued to worry about the old one. By autumn of 1917 the civil war in Mexico had wound down to a level where people could return to their homes and settle down to a more normal life style. Cutting through red tape at the border, Pratt went back to Mexico after an absence of four years.

His record of the train ride from Laredo to Mexico City describes a long panorama of destruction and hunger. The

³³Parrish interview.

³⁴Rey L. Pratt, "Book of Mormon Prophecies and the Mexican Situation," *Young Woman's Journal* 25:529. Pratt, "The Gospel to the Lamanites," *Improvement Era* 16:497, 577, 686, 796, 1021.

capital and surrounding area were in better shape than he had expected, but the people still suffered from a scarcity of just about everything, including food.³⁵ In spite of this and other problems in the wake of war, the Church and its members were in remarkably good condition. During his month-long visit, Pratt found nearly all of the branches functioning according to the instructions he had sent. Through keeping in touch with the man they had come to regard almost as a father-figure, the Saints had remained faithful; their own organizational abilities and even their numbers had gradually increased.

In the following spring Pratt made another trip, again visiting the branches. The main purpose of this trip, however, was to initiate a program of bringing Mexican Saints to Zion. Arrangements had been made for fifty families to work for the Church-controlled Utah-Idaho Sugar Company. As it turned out, the incompatibilities between Mexican and United States immigration laws were insurmountable and the project had to be scrapped.³⁶ Perhaps the failure was partly due to Pratt's difficulty in getting along with Mexican officials. His sister recalls that he always had trouble with customs inspectors and showed little patience with Latin bureaucracy.³⁷ This probably had something to do with his anti-Spanish bias as well.

Back in Salt Lake City for April conference, Pratt met with the Church officials who together decided to separate the Spanish-speaking people from the English-speaking missions. Accordingly, in May jurisdiction of all Spanish-speaking branches and missionaries was transferred to the Mexican Mission.³⁸ Pratt also expanded the proselyting into Texas. In November 1918 the mission headquarters was moved from Manassa, Colorado to El Paso, Texas, this being a more central location as missionaries moved into the Rio Grande border towns, and across the river into Mexico itself.

Crossing the border was still a bit risky. In June 1919 Elders Abel Páez and Victor Hancock went over to do some tracting in and around Ciudad Juárez. They suddenly found themselves in the midst of a pitched battle between Villistas and federal troops and could not get back to El Paso. While waiting for a chance to reach the river safely, they had an

³⁵Mexican Mission, vol. B, p. 42.

³⁶Ibid., p. 52.

³⁷Amy Pratt Romney, recorded interview, 31 May 1973.

³⁸*Liabona* 15:766.

opportunity to interview Villista general Felipe Angeles, and Elder Páez spoke with Pancho Villa himself. Both of the generals expressed friendliness toward the Mormons and approval of the missionary work being done in Mexico.³⁹

The rewards outweighed the risks, however, and in October a branch of the Church was opened near Ciudad Juárez. This was the first new one in Mexico since the exodus and the first in the northern part of the country outside the colonies. In 1920, as the elders moved down into southern Texas, some were also sent to Chihuahua City and Monterrey, the first regularly assigned to the interior of the country since 1913.

By 1921 the civil war was effectively over and the time was ripe to reopen the mission in the South. The first of March saw Pratt, a pair of elders, and Church Historian Andrew Jenson on a train headed toward Mexico City. Again they reported much evidence of the war along the route, and some towns in ruins.

During the next few weeks ten more elders arrived and all of the old branches were visited. For some places (Cuautla, Morelos, which was Zapata's home town, for example) this was the first visit by American elders in nine years. Working as a team to reorganize and to gather history, Pratt and Brother Jenson made a comprehensive tour of the branches and the capital.⁴⁰

At the conference of the Juárez Stake in November 1921, the Chihuahua Mission, which had functioned under stake authority, was transferred to the Mexican Mission. The local Saints had always supplied the area with missionaries, but due to colonial attrition in the Revolution, this was no longer possible.⁴¹ Now Pratt's elders took over all of the branches in Mexico except those in the colonies themselves, and he assumed the presidency of all Spanish-speaking organizations in the Church.

Their number grew over the next three years as Pratt moved missionaries into Querétaro, León, Guaymas, and Baja California. In 1924 he opened up work among Spanish speakers in southern California for the first time and established a branch in Los Angeles.

³⁹Mexican Mission, vol. B, p. 60.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 102.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 156-57.

Mission headquarters remained in El Paso, but much of the time Pratt was on the go to administer his far-flung and expanding constituency. His daughter says that he was "conscientious about attending every conference," including those in his mission, those of the Juárez Stake, and the general conferences in Salt Lake City. "He wasn't home any more than four or five days at a time," and when he was, there was "no time for anything" as he was always busy translating and revising Church literature. Then he was off again to Zion's Printing and Publishing Company in Independence, Missouri, to Utah, or to some part of the mission.⁴²

A NEW CALLING, A NEW MISSION, AND NEW TROUBLES

In January 1925, Pratt was called to Salt Lake City and given an added responsibility. At the April conference he was sustained and set apart as one of the First Seven Presidents of the Seventy. Contrary to his expectations, he retained his duties as mission president and so was seldom able to meet with that council, but he did bring to it the experience of a professional missionary. The authority he was given enabled him to perform greater service in the mission field.

Since Parley P. Pratt's abortive attempt to establish a Chilean mission in 1852, there had been no Church representation whatever in South America. Now in September 1925 Pratt was called, together with Apostle Melvin J. Ballard and fellow Seventies president Rulon S. Wells, to open a mission there; and they went to Buenos Aires, Argentina in November.

Although he was engaged in his favorite activity, Pratt regarded the next few months as the hardest of his entire life. Proselyting met considerable resistance among the Argentines and mission progress was slow. The recent death of his son Carl Lee weighed upon his spirits. His wife wrote of illness and other family problems at home. He himself was sick and only semi-active for a long period.⁴³ Although he accomplished much on that trip and never regretted going, he was very happy to return home in September 1926.

Meanwhile, back in Mexico, disaster had struck again. In order to prevent the Catholic church from regaining its former position of political dominance, the landmark Constitution of

⁴²Parrish interview.

⁴³Pratt, *Diary*, vol. 8.

1917 had placed tight restrictions upon ecclesiastical activity. An amendment dealing with the problem specified, among other things, that "To exercise within the territory of the Republic of Mexico the office of minister of any church, it is necessary to be a Mexican by birth," and "All religious ceremonies of public worship must always be under the direct supervision of the civil authorities."⁴⁴

Early in 1926 the government reacted to a pro-Catholic revolt with a stiff enforcement of these laws. It was aimed primarily at this "Cristero" movement, but of course it applied to all other churches as well. Kenneth Haymore, acting as provisional President of the mission in Pratt's absence, had no choice but to comply. By August all missionaries not born in Mexico were withdrawn to the United States.

Upon his return from South America Pratt found himself again directing the greater part of his mission by correspondence with local members. Work in Mexico was seriously handicapped, but he was optimistic. If the crackdown loosened the stranglehold of the Catholic church, he reasoned, the result should be greater religious freedom and growth in the mission.⁴⁵

Pratt told the 1927 October general conference of the Church that the mission in Mexico was struggling along with a skeleton crew of Mexican-born elders. The branches, some twenty of them, were being maintained in an operational, if not thriving condition, by the local priesthood holders.⁴⁶ It seems almost to have been a test of the members to see whether they were ready to give up some of the reliance on the paternalistic figure and handle things on their own.

By 1930 the Catholic church had capitulated to government demands and was functioning normally again. Hoping that this might mean a relaxation of restrictions, U.S. Ambassador J. Reuben Clark approached the government concerning foreign missionaries, but was unable to get permission for their return. At the same time, February and March, Pratt tried his own luck with local officials, north and south. Not only was he unsuccessful, but as he toured the branches he was prevented,

⁴⁴Pratt to B. H. Roberts, 9 December 1929, Church Archives. This letter includes a translation of those articles dealing with religious matters and a commentary on them.

⁴⁵Rey L. Pratt, "The Mexican Mission," *The Improvement Era* 31 (1928): 578-81.

⁴⁶*Conference Report*, April 1927, pp. 29-30.

as an alien minister, from speaking to the congregations during regular meetings.⁴⁷

In November and December he spent several weeks south of the border. He found the branches in good order, although still struggling under the restrictions. It was his last trip to Mexico.

Pratt spoke again in general conference on 6 April 1931. Inevitably, he talked optimistically about the Mexican Mission. The government of Mexico had recently interpreted the church control law to mean that religious services could be held only in buildings exclusively dedicated to that purpose. The Saints, who had been meeting in private homes or rented locales, had responded by building four chapels in and around Mexico City.⁴⁸ With spirit and initiative like that, they could not fail.

After the conference was over, on 9 April, Pratt entered the hospital to have a hernia corrected. It was not a serious operation, even for a man of fifty-three. But complications set in, and on the morning of 14 April 1931, Rey Pratt died.

Friends, relatives, General Authorities, and "several hundred" Mexican Saints, many from far away, packed the Assembly Hall on Temple Square for the funeral.⁴⁹ President Heber J. Grant, lifelong friend and confidant Apostle Anthony W. Ivins, and others of the Authorities who knew Pratt best spoke at the service. Their main theme was one of regret that he could not stay to see his work reach full fruition.

It is sad that he did not live a few years more. Although the restriction against foreign missionaries was imposed, to a greater or lesser degree, into the 1960s, native Mexicans carried on. Beginning in 1934 they were joined by a trickle of elders from the United States, and after World War II the few became a flood. The Mexican Mission that Rey Pratt left in 1931 has since been divided and redivided. In Mexico itself there were in 1974 five missions and eleven stakes. The greatest monument to Rey L. Pratt is the fact that there are now over 98,000 Mormons in Mexico, more than in any other country except the United States.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Mexican Mission, vol. B, 737-39.

⁴⁸*Deseret News*, 6 April 1931.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 17 April 1931.

⁵⁰*Church News*, 26 August 1972.

Poems

by Iris Corry*

ANOTHER HOME

Trees were our umbrellas—they sang of rain.
The dry weeds talked. I wanted to leave
The hot beet fields and sociable cows in the pasture.

After supper we visited late with Mother
In the kitchen. Small gray mice listened. Outside,
The rattlesnakes were coming streamward.

One Sunday a neighbor in his boots
Carried my brother's body home from the water.
My mother wept, her apron to her face.

MORMON SHADE

Trees were a trademark—any tree would do
As long as it cast a shadow. From the Big Horn
South, the people—then the trees—near the water.
Quick-growing and soft—boxelders, elms, cottonwoods
And Lombardy poplars like exclamation points!

Now shade for lopsided houses, roots in cesspools,
Peeled carcasses along forgotten ditches.
The trees are old, and the houses, and the children
Who put the cuttings in the soil they watered.

*Iris Parker Corry received her B.S. degree from Brigham Young University in 1941. She has published poetry in *Dialogue*, and was the first president of the Southern Utah Branch of the Utah State Poetry Society.

Moral Free Agency*

Daniel H. Ludlow**

The subject I should like to discuss is basic to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and yet I am not going to talk primarily of faith or of repentance or of the atonement. But faith, repentance, the atonement, and all the other principles, ordinances, and doctrines of the gospel are based on this principle—indeed, they would be virtually inoperative and non-existent were it not for the subject that we will discuss—moral free agency.

Concerning the principle of free agency, President David O. McKay has written:

Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct that life is God's greatest gift to man. . . . Freedom of choice is more treasured than any possession earth can give. It is inherent in the spirit of man. It is a divine gift to every normal being. . . . Everyone has this most precious of all life's endowments—the gift of free agency—man's inherited and inalienable right.¹

In discussing this topic, I would like to start at the beginning, but so far as I can tell there never was a beginning as far as the exercising of free agency is concerned. According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, our minds or intelligences—that part of our being with which we think and make choices and determine actions—have always existed. The Prophet said:

The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is co-equal with God himself. . . .

The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. . . . There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-equal [that is, co-eternal] with our Father in heaven. . . .

*Devotional address delivered at Brigham Young University, 2 July 1974.

**Dr. Ludlow is Director of Correlation for Church Internal Communications.

¹David O. McKay in *The Improvement Era* 65 (February 1962):86.

Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it.²

Thus the capacity of choice, which is a most essential element in free agency, has evidently always been part of our being.

In the process of time our intelligence was clothed with a spiritual body by heavenly parents and we became personages of spirit with bodies that had eyes and ears and hands and feet. All of us on this earth had the same Father of our spiritual bodies, and because he lives in heaven, we have been rightfully taught to refer to him as "our Father in Heaven."

Our spirit bodies were capable of tremendous accomplishments, but they also had some serious limitations. There were some laws that they could not obey, and therefore there were some blessings not available to them. Thus our Heavenly Father called us into a grand council in heaven where he proposed a plan that would give us further opportunities for growth and development by giving us further opportunities of choice. There the importance of moral free agency and its four necessary and essential conditions were explained to us: first, we must have the opportunity of choice—that is, the operation of law; second, there must be the possibility of the existence of opposites—good and evil, virtue and vice; these make possible the third, the freedom of choice—that is, free agency; then finally, a knowledge of the law and its consequences. All four of these conditions are necessary to accomplish the progression which would enable us to become as our Father in Heaven, which was the main purpose of this new earth plan that he proposed.

When we lived with our Father in Heaven, we did not need to exercise faith in whether or not he existed. We knew that he was because we saw him, we walked and talked with him. We knew he existed and were *convinced* of his existence, but were not necessarily *converted* to him or to his great principles because our knowledge of him had come from external sources with virtually no effort on our part. So that we would come to a knowledge of him in and of ourselves, our Heavenly Father proposed that when we came into this earth life a veil of forgetfulness would be placed over our minds so that we could not remember our pre-earthly existence with him. Only

²Joseph Fielding Smith, compiler, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), pp. 353-54.

then could the choices that we make here upon the earth truly come from within us. Our Father in Heaven then promised us that while we were here on the earth he would give us law and provide the possibility of opposites, give us free agency, and send angels and prophets to teach us and give us scriptures so we could learn the laws and understand why we should keep them. Thus he promised us the necessary conditions on this earth so that we could become morally free before him.

The nature of law was also explained in that pre-earthly council—that each law has consequences, opposite and equal. Whenever a law is obeyed, the consequence is a blessing which results in joy or happiness. Whenever a law is disobeyed, the consequence is a punishment which results in misery or unhappiness. This simple and perhaps overgeneralized explanation of the law of justice portrays how order is accomplished, for in the payment of the law of either obedience or disobedience, the law is brought back into a state of balance and thus order prevails. The law of justice then always requires a payment.

But another law also operates in the moral realm—the law of mercy, which in no way robs or violates the law of justice, but which makes possible the vicarious payment of broken law. For example, the law of mercy permits a person's disobedience to be atoned for by the obedience of the Savior, providing that the person who disobeyed the law will cease being disobedient—in other words, providing that the person repents.

The great plan of salvation and exaltation was then explained to us: why the possibility of opposition must exist upon the earth and how it would occur through the fall of man, how the law of justice would require a payment for the broken law, and how the law of mercy would make the atonement possible. The explanation of these things was later revealed to the prophet Lehi, and he taught it to his family in these words:

For it must need be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. . . .

There is a God, and he hath created both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon.

And to bring about his eternal purposes . . . the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Where-

fore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other. . . .

And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because . . . they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law. . . .

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death. . . . (2 Nephi 2:11, 14-16, 26-27)

It was then explained to us in this great pre-earthly council that as we would come to the earth the Spirit of Christ would be placed within each of us and another member of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost, would then be empowered to witness, reveal, and testify to our spirits. Then, even though we had a veil of mortality over our minds, the Holy Ghost would be able to bring all things to our remembrance *if* we would listen to the prophets, would read the scriptures, and would respond to the Spirit of Christ that is within each of us by praying to our Father in Heaven. This time, however, the knowledge would come to us by an act of will on our part. We would have internalized it; it would have become part of our very being, and therefore no one throughout all eternity could take this knowledge away from us unless we by an act of will would allow it to be taken away.

Now there were other purposes, of course, for earth life. We came here also to receive physical bodies capable of procreation. But the God-given power to have children would not be placed in our physical bodies until we had arrived at an age of accountability and had matured in experience so we could exercise our free agency in using these powers in righteousness.

It was soon evident when this great plan was presented to us that because of the atonement and the principle of free agency, this earth life could become a great testing and proving period where, if we proved faithful to all the laws given to us by our Heavenly Father, we would become even as he is and share with him his power and glory. Perhaps it was when we realized this that the "sons of God shouted for joy" as recorded in Job 38:7.

There were some, however, in that pre-earthly council who did not shout for joy. They either lacked faith in our Heavenly Father, in the Savior, in the gospel plan, or in their own ability or willingness to keep the law that would be given to them; thus they actively opposed the plan of our Heavenly Father. Their leader was called Lucifer, "the son of the morning"; he is also known as the devil or Satan.

Lucifer not only opposed the plan of our Heavenly Father, but he sought to change the terms of salvation by denying men their free agency and by dethroning our Heavenly Father. The exact words of Lucifer's boast are contained in the book of Moses: "I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1).

We do not know all the details of Lucifer's amended plan, but we do know from revelation that he "sought to destroy the agency of man" (Moses 4:3). This could be accomplished in many ways, including denying us either the opportunity or the freedom of choice. In either case, not "one soul" would have been lost. It is sin that causes a soul to be lost, but how can a person sin if he does not have the opportunity to sin? That is, how can a person disobey a law if he does not have a law?

Lucifer's plan appealed to some, but it did not appeal to any of us in this audience. We saw that under his plan we would lose the challenge of growth and progression. We did not want to live in a world where we would be on the same plane forever. We had enough faith in our Heavenly Father and in his plan, in Jesus Christ, and in ourselves that we wanted to live in a world where there would be opportunities for further development. At the same time I am sure we realized that if we were not faithful to these laws and opportunities we might be even worse off than we were before.

Thus there was a great war in heaven and a key issue in that war was whether or not man was to be a morally free agent while upon the earth. A vote was taken. (By the way, that in itself indicates that we had our free agency there; in a sense Lucifer exercised his free agency in an attempt to deny us the right to exercise our free agency.) Two-thirds of those present voted for the plan of our Heavenly Father; one-third voted against the plan and did not participate in it.

So the plan was put into operation. A physical earth was created. Physical bodies were prepared for Adam and Eve.

Their spirit bodies were placed in those physical bodies, and they became living souls. Then our Heavenly Father started to keep the promises that he had made to us by giving them the opportunity of choice. He did this by giving them law, by telling them what they should do and what they should not do: "Partake of the fruit of the tree of life." "Multiply." "Do not partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Through his selection of the laws, he also gave them the possibility of opposites.

Next he explained the consequences of those laws: "Partake of the fruit of the tree of life and you shall live forever." "Multiply, and you shall have joy and rejoicing in your posterity." "Partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and you shall surely die." Then our Heavenly Father did one other thing: he explained the consequences of their choices and also explained that they would have the freedom to choose under this great earth plan. Notice how all of these elements are present in one verse in the book of Moses:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
(Moses 3:17)

Well, you know the rest of the story. Lucifer and his followers were cast out of heaven. In order to make all of us subject to him, thus enabling him to put his throne above the throne of God, he needed to accomplish two things: first of all, to get sin into the world, and then to keep Jesus Christ from atoning for that sin.

Therefore, Lucifer tried to get Adam to disobey one of the laws. When he was unsuccessful in this, he concentrated on Eve and finally enticed her to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve then persuaded Adam to partake of that same fruit. Although Adam and Eve had great intellect and powers of reason in the Garden of Eden, they were without experience; although they had the opportunity of choice and the freedom of choice in the Garden of Eden, yet they were not morally free because they did not fully understand the consequences of their choice. Oh, they heard the words of our Heavenly Father, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," but what was death to Adam

and Eve? The veil of forgetfulness had already been placed over their minds—they had never seen death nor experienced it; they could not understand it. And because they did not fully comprehend the consequences of what they did, their disobedience of the law is referred to as “transgression,” not as “sin,” and consequently comes under the unconditional part of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

As a result of those transgressions, two deaths were introduced onto the earth: physical death, which resulted from their partaking of that particular fruit, and spiritual death, which resulted from their disobeying our Heavenly Father. Thus misery and suffering, which are the consequences of broken law, entered into the world.

Now because of limitation of time, let us skip 4,000 years of history and come down to the birth of Christ—a time which was a very important period so far as all mankind is concerned. Indeed, the prophet Jacob in the Book of Mormon said that if Jesus Christ did not atone, then all mankind must unavoidably perish and we would all “become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself” (2 Nephi 9:9). The plan was that Jesus Christ would be born into this earth as the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh and would have power over the physical death. The plan also required that Jesus Christ would be sinless while he lived upon the earth so that he would have power over all the laws and would be able to atone for the spiritual death introduced by the fall of Adam and Eve.

Lucifer knew these two essential and necessary characteristics which Christ must possess. He may have known this because of his pre-earthly experience; if not, then surely he knew it because of the words of the prophets of God here upon the earth. Therefore when the Savior was born, Lucifer tried in every way that he could think of to keep Jesus Christ from achieving his great divine destiny. He tried to get him to deny his divine Sonship, but the Savior replied, “I came into the world to do the will of my Father.” He tried to get Jesus Christ to break one of the laws, for he knew that if he could get him to break only one law—to commit only one sin—then the Savior would not have power over all of the laws and therefore could not atone for the sins of all mankind.

But Jesus completely resisted the enticements of Lucifer;

Jesus did not disobey any laws, and so he is referred to in the scriptures as the Sinless One. Jesus Christ was thus *able* to atone for both the physical and the spiritual death. He was *able* to atone for the *physical* death because of the power that he inherited from the Father as the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh; he was *able* to atone for the *spiritual* death because he was sinless.

The next crucial question was would he be *willing* to atone for those deaths? Would he be willing to endure the intense suffering and pain that would be required to pay for the sins of all mankind? Would he be willing to submit to the chains of physical death and thereby voluntarily break the bands of physical death for all mankind? The New Testament records the drama of the experiences of the Savior in Gethsemane, at Golgotha, and at the tomb, in which he fully atoned for the two deaths, conquering both the grave and hell and thus becoming the great Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. In remembrance of the two aspects of the atonement, we have been commanded that when we partake of the sacrament we partake of two emblems—bread in remembrance of the body of Christ, which he gave as a ransom for all, and a liquid in remembrance of the blood of Christ, which he shed for the remission of our sins. (See Matthew 26:22-25, Inspired Version)

As a result of the atonement of Jesus Christ, we are all freed from the bondage of the original transgression of Adam and Eve as well as from all those transgressions we committed before we arrived at the age of accountability. As the Savior himself has said, "I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free" (D&C 98:8). Therefore, because of the atonement the extent of our individual free agency today is in direct proportion to the number and kind of laws we know and keep. Likewise the loss of free agency today can be measured in direct proportion to the number and kind of laws we disobey. Perfect freedom is made possible to us through the atonement, but it can come only through perfect obedience to the law.

The atonement of Jesus Christ also meant that Lucifer could not obtain his goal. He cannot win all of us. He cannot win Christ; Christ is already beyond his power. He cannot win those who have already lived on the earth obedient to the laws of our Heavenly Father and who have now been resurrected.

But Lucifer is trying to run up as high a score as he can, and he does this by trying to keep us individually from achieving the great divine purposes for which we came here upon this earth, including the exercise of our free agency. He can do it by denying us any one of the four essential qualities of moral free agency. He can do it by denying us the opportunity of choice, and he tries to do this through governments, dictatorships, through anarchy, and so on. He tries to do this by destroying, in our minds at least, the idea that there is a necessity of opposition, and therefore he tries to teach us, "There is no sin. It mattereth not what a man does; whatsoever a man doeth is not sin. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Thus he destroys the role of opposition in our lives, or at least he attempts to do so.

He can also do it by destroying our freedom of choice by enticing us to give up our right of free agency to other persons or to other institutions and allow them to make our choices for us, resulting in the evil that presidents of the Church have seen in communism and socialism and other orders of this type.

He also does it by trying to encourage us not to come to a knowledge of our Heavenly Father by not listening to the prophets, by not studying the scriptures, and therefore not knowing of the consequences of our choices: "The scriptures are irrelevant today. They were written a long time ago. Don't pay any attention to them," he says. "There are no such thing as prophets upon the earth; they ceased at the time of Christ." Or he says that the heavens are sealed; there is no revelation today. He even says that God is dead!

Thus in one way or another he tries to entice us to become like him and to become subject to the misery and unhappiness that he now suffers. To achieve his devilish aims, Lucifer can and does work through many means: business combines, governments on all levels, military forces, educational institutions, secret combinations of all kinds, and even families, teachers, and churches. Wherever and whenever you find a person or an institution that seeks to destroy the free agency of man, there you will find the influence of Lucifer.

President Henry D. Moyle talked on this subject in these words:

All we have to do is . . . examine any movement that may be brought into our midst . . . and if it . . . attempt[s] to deprive us in the slightest respect of our free agency, we

should avoid it as we would avoid immorality or anything else that is vicious. . . . Free agency is as necessary for our eternal salvation as is our virtue. And . . . as we guard our virtue with our lives, so should we guard our free agency.³

President Marion G. Romney, when he was a member of the Council of the Twelve, in a 1957 baccalaureate address given here at BYU, gave this advice:

One of the fundamental doctrines of revealed truth is that . . . God endowed men with free agency (Moses 7:32). The preservation of this free agency is more important than the preservation of life itself. . . . Everything which militates against man's enjoyment of this endowment persuades not to believe in Christ, for He is the author of free agency.

Now the world today is in the throes of a great social and political revolution. In almost every department of society laws and practices are being daily proposed and adopted which greatly alter the course of our lives. Indeed, some of them are literally shaking the foundations of our political and social institutions. If you would know truth from error in this bitterly contested arena, apply Mormon's test to these innovations [as recorded in Moroni 7:16-18]. Do they facilitate or restrict the exercise of man's divine endowment of free agency? Tested by this standard, most of them will fall quickly into their proper category as between good and evil.⁴

As an example of how sin can put us into bondage, let us consider for a moment the Word of Wisdom, because this is a physical law that we can see and understand rather readily. The Lord has said tobacco is not good for man—that is the law. We have our free agency either to obey or disobey the law. If we obey the law and do not use tobacco, we enjoy better health than we would had we disobeyed the law. Also by keeping the law we still have our free agency as to whether or not we will continue to keep the law. However, as soon as we disobey the law—in this case, when we use tobacco—we not only suffer the penalty of poorer health, but we also practically lose our free agency in the matter. The broken law has a claim over us; we have become slaves to the drug, and the broken law will continue to have a claim over us until we stop breaking the law—that is, until we repent. And essen-

³Henry D. Moyle in *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 1947, p. 46.

⁴Marion G. Romney, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 30 May 1957, pp. 10-11.

tially the same principle is involved in all of the laws given to us by our Heavenly Father.

Now rather than interspersing this discussion with some scriptural quotations, I wanted to develop at least this much and then simply to quote a few scriptures pertaining to these principles:

(1) If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31-32)

(2) Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. (Hebrews 5:8-9)

(3) Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)

(4) Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward. (D&C 58:27-28)

(6) *And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet.* (D&C 29:39. Italics added)

(7) Whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, *ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves;* for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free.

He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you that ye might choose life or death; and ye can do good and be restored unto that which is good, or have that which is good restored unto you; or ye can do evil, and have that which is evil restored unto you (Helaman 14:30-31. Italics added)

(8) Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (Galatians 6:7)

(9) To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

(10) The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

(11) This is life eternal, that they might know thee the

only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3)

An atmosphere of freedom is necessary for the teaching and accepting of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The missionaries and the message of the restored gospel have been received by the nations of the earth in almost the same proportion as those nations have accepted the principles of freedom. So intertwined are the principles of the gospel and the principles of free agency that they have become almost as one. This characteristic was pointed out by President John Taylor as early as 1878:

Besides the preaching of the Gospel, we have another mission, namely, the perpetuation of the free agency of man and the maintenance of liberty, freedom, and the rights of man. . . . We have a right to liberty—that was a right that God gave to all men; and if there has been oppression, fraud or tyranny in the earth, has been the result of wickedness and corruptions of men and has always been opposed to God and the principles of truth.⁵

Now if what we have been saying here today is true, we as Latter-day Saints should be the most free of any people on the face of this earth. We have all the opportunities of choice that other people have—and more, because we have the additional laws and principles of the restored gospel. We have all the possibilities of opposites shared by other people—and more, because of the differences between the brightness of the noonday sun of the restored gospel as compared with the moonlight of Protestant and Catholic Christianity and the darkness of skepticism, agnosticism, and atheism. We have all the freedom of choice enjoyed by other people—and more, because we have modern scriptures and living prophets to guide us day by day. Thus if we as Latter-day Saints are not the most free people on the face of the earth, then we should be, because we have to a greater extent the necessary components of free agency.

Now essentially that is the message that I wanted to give today, and I hope that you will agree with me now that the theme could apply as well at a Fourth of July celebration or at a political rally as in sacrament meeting. However, before I finish I should like to share with you a statement by the late

⁵John Taylor in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1878), 23:63.

Elder Richard L. Evans pertaining to this topic which he gave in conjunction with an Independence Day celebration. The title of Elder Evans' brief address is "Thank God for Freedom":

May we take a moment from some of the side issues and from some of the irrelevant celebration, and clear our thoughts and humble our hearts and get down on our knees and simply, fervently, thank God for freedom—and then get on our feet with a firm resolve to preserve it against all who secretly or openly would set it aside.

Thank God for freedom—and for the Founding Fathers who reaffirmed to a new nation, an eternal, timeless truth: that the right of choice—that the free agency of man—is a God-given inalienable right, and is essential to the peace and growth and progress and salvation of the very soul.

This truth has been challenged again and again, and will yet be challenged again and again. It was challenged in the heavens before time began, by the brilliant but rebellious Lucifer. There was war in heaven—for freedom. And anyone who seeks to enslave men in any sense, in mind, in spirit, in thought—anyone who seeks to enslave the minds, the hearts, the spirits of men is essentially in league with Satan himself—for "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" [2 Corinthians 3:17].

Thank God for the Constitution of our country, which was brought into being "by the hands of wise men whom [the Lord God] raised up unto this very purpose" [D&C 101:80]. Thank God for the promise that in this choice land, men "shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve" God. [Ether 2:12]

Thank God for the right of choice, for the right to become whatever we can become in a free and provident land that, despite its imperfections, has proved to be more efficient for progress and human happiness than any society founded on the false philosophies that would seek to enslave the minds and souls of men.

God grant that we may repent wherever we have departed from the principles of freedom—that we may preserve the right to fail and the incentive to succeed, and live, as did the Founding Fathers, knowing that there are no acceptable substitutes for freedom.⁶

We teach our children that when they pray they should thank our Heavenly Father for the blessings that he has given to them. I hope that in our daily private and family prayers

⁶Richard L. Evans, *From the Crossroads* (New York: Harper & Bros., c1955), p. 45.

we will always thank our Heavenly Father for the great blessing that he has given us on this earth—the gift of moral free agency—and also for the right and opportunity to exercise this gift as members of his Church and kingdom and as citizens of this country.

I bear my personal witness to the fact that our Heavenly Father and his divine Son, Jesus Christ, are the fountainhead of all truth and freedom. By following their teachings we can be free indeed and can find the joy and happiness that “surpasseth all understanding.” This is their Church. President Spencer W. Kimball is their prophet on the earth. I bear witness and testimony to you this day of these things in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Religion and Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

Robert R. King*

The starting point for many a discussion of Communism and religion is the statement by Karl Marx (surely one of his most frequently quoted passages) that religion "is the opium of the people." The context in which this particular passage occurs, however, is less sarcastic:

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.¹

In this case Marx saw religion as a compensation to those who were deprived of happiness in this world and who therefore sought it in looking forward to better conditions in the life to come. While he was charitable toward those who, in his view, were forced to turn to religious fantasies in order to find satisfaction, he was harshly critical of the *bourgeoisie*, whom he considered to be cynically making use of religion—wittingly or unwittingly—as a tool in their suppression of the working class.

Marx's concept of historical materialism, which holds that the social and political systems determine phenomena in the

Dr. Robert R. King is Senior Analyst for Rumania and Bulgaria in the Research and Analysis Department of Radio Free Europe, Munich, West Germany. He has written a number of books and articles on Eastern Europe, including *Minorities Under Communism* (Harvard University Press, 1973). The author would like to express special thanks to Dennis Rasmussen and Stan A. Taylor for their very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

¹Karl Marx, "Contributions to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in *K. Marx and F. Engels on Religion* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957), p. 42.

sphere of consciousness and that the social and political orders are ultimately determined by the underlying economic base, provides the basis for atheism and criticism of religion in Communist ideology. In his writings on the alienation of man, he declared that man must create himself, must become what he essentially is, instead of losing himself in a religious dream. Religion provides pseudoself-realization; by accepting a religious view man accepts the shadow of self-realization rather than its substance, seeming rather than being. For Marx, then, religion was a delusion or an expression of false consciousness.

In his dialectics of nature Engels moved one step beyond historical materialism, creating the metaphysical system known as dialectical materialism, which is stronger yet in its implied atheism. Lenin was also more explicit than Marx in denying the existence of anything nonmaterial, and thus also in denying any basis for religion.

The philosophical and ideological foundations of Marxism-Leninism's atheistic and antireligious content, however, are only one aspect of the relationship between Communism and religion. Of no less significance is the political question of how these ideological prescriptions are interpreted and applied by Communist parties once they have come to exercise political power in a specific state. Ideologies of any type do not long survive as abstract philosophies; they seek to capture for themselves a power base—either a party, a social class, or, ultimately, a state. Such a conquest, however, results in a transformation of both the ideology and its power base. The demands of the ideology and the requirements of retaining political power force the creation of a symbiotic relationship. Constantine's decision to adopt Christianity profoundly influenced the Roman Empire, but at the same time this transformation could not have taken place if the church had not adapted itself to the demands inherent in serving as the official creed. Just as the state officials satisfied demands of the church, so the church acted to further goals of the state.

The ideas of Marx and Lenin as interpreted by the Communist parties of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have undergone a subtle process of transformation as they have confronted their national historical inheritances and contemporary realities. This does not mean that the atheism inherent in Communist doctrine has been abandoned. It does suggest, how-

ever, that in practice the Communist attitude toward religion has been subject to significant variation, and thus the relationship between Communism and religion is subject to dispassionate analysis, just as are other less emotional topics.

There are a number of aspects to the political relationship between religion and the Communist states in Eastern Europe, each of which has required a different type of response from the Communist regimes. Three main areas are particularly relevant in considering church-state relations. First are the ideological or philosophical differences which have resulted in party and church competition to influence the beliefs of the population. Second are state efforts to control the organizational or institutional elements associated with religion—the hierarchy, church schools and seminaries, property, the administrative organization. Third, and peculiar to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, is the effect upon the church-state relations of the close link between religion and national consciousness; religion is a major factor in determining nationality in this area of the world.

RELIGIOUS FAITH AND MILITANT ATHEISM

The first aspect of the relationship between religion and Communism in Eastern Europe is the struggle to influence the beliefs of the population. The ideological atheism of Marxism-Leninism and the obligation of the party to propagate this view conflict sharply with the religious concept of a supreme being and the consequences of this premise. Although there are a number of true nonbelievers in the party ranks who feel an obligation to convert the world to atheism, the campaigns against religious belief are conducted as much for political as for ideological reasons.

A primary consideration that lies behind the militant atheism of the party is the fact that religious belief challenges the ideological justification for Communist party rule. The official version of Marxism-Leninism casts the party in the role of the "vanguard of the working class"; it rules as the expression of the interests of the proletariat in the process of bringing about social, economic, political, and ideological revolution. Although most members of the working class may not yet have reached the point of recognizing their own true interests, the party seeks to educate the proletariat in this respect and claims to

act on behalf of this class. As Zbigniew Brzezinski phrases it, "Ideology has the important effect of transforming the party's power into authority."² If this justification for party rule is to be valid, however, one must accept the idea of class conflict advanced by Marx and Engels and the concepts of historical and dialectical materialism upon which it is based. Marxism-Leninism, therefore, presents itself not merely as an economic, political, or social theory, but as an integral *Weltanschauung* which seeks to explain the nature of the world. Since the party rules as the incarnation of official ideology, to admit the validity of any other world view opens the door to potential challenge of its position and power.

Another reason for propagating atheism is related to the party's compulsion to dominate all institutions in society and to eliminate any serious rivals for power. One of the fundamental sources of the influence wielded by the church as an institution is the allegiance the faithful give to it because of their belief in God and their conviction that the church is a means through which they can draw closer to him. In pre-Communist times the power of the churches was also based on the property they possessed and their connections with the ruling elite, but Communist rule has resulted in the seizure of church property and the imposition of severe restrictions on the church as an institution. As a result the spiritual allegiance of the faithful is now the most important source of the church's strength, and in seeking to destroy belief in God atheist propaganda seeks to undermine this remaining source of influence.

Communist authorities are very careful to make a distinction between state and party attitudes toward religion. The state, according to their view, must see that religious institutions are completely separated from the state and the school system, and that they restrict their activities to the performance of religious rites. Individuals, so long as they do not violate the laws of the state, should be permitted to follow any religion, but they must also be permitted to hold no religious belief if they so choose. In any case, personal beliefs should not be cause for discrimination, and all religious institutions should be treated equally. The Communist party, on the other hand, has an obligation to work actively to liberate the popu-

²Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*, rev. ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 80.

lation from religious prejudices, and to this end engages in extensive atheistic propaganda.

This distinction between state and party responsibilities, however, has not been strictly adhered to in practice. Although a separation of functions exists, the lines between party and state are blurred and it is often difficult to distinguish where party functions cease and state ones begin. The control of religious organizations is essentially a state function, but the motive for this control is to eliminate any competing center of power that might rival the party. Although waging the campaign against religion is primarily a party function, the state has actively assisted the party in this task through, among other things, the school system. The educational system is specifically commissioned to educate youth in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, and the state carefully limits or prohibits religious education of the young.

Despite this overlapping of functions with the state, the party has assumed the primary responsibility for combating "religious prejudice" among the masses. Party propaganda organizations have led the attack on religious belief, but since their responsibilities include the whole spectrum of party propaganda concerns, antireligious activity has received somewhat sporadic attention.

In most Communist countries special antireligious agencies have been set up under the party to deal primarily with the task of spreading atheism. In the Soviet Union, where atheistic propaganda has probably been the most vigorous, a party Commission on the Implementation of the Decree on the Separation of Church and State attached to the Central Committee was established in 1922 to guide antireligious policy. In 1925 a mass organization, the League of the Militant Godless, was created to foster the spread of atheism, and by 1932 its membership was said to be over five million. During the Second World War and until Stalin's death in 1953, a more tolerant attitude toward the churches led to the dissolution of the League and to a decline in antireligious propaganda. Although no new mass organization was established in 1954, when the antireligious campaign was renewed, the Znanie (Knowledge) Society, an organization designed to mobilize the intelligentsia to provide adult education and spread propaganda among the masses, was encouraged to take the lead. But

although its lecturers frequently deal with atheism, it has not become a purely antireligious institution.³

Generally speaking, there has been an attempt to link science with the campaign for atheism. In most cases the national scientific academies have sections that produce and disseminate "scientific knowledge" which discredits religious beliefs. The Slovak Academy of Sciences, for example, has among the numerous institutes attached to it an Institute of Scientific Atheism. The antireligious propaganda campaign has received a lower priority than other urgent problems facing the parties, and this aspect of party work has thus been allotted to or has attracted fanatical but less competent party cadres than have other areas.

There are certain elements of Communist ideology which make it a substitute for religion. A Communist must be converted, and once he is converted he is expected to convince others; and the ideology demands full devotion. There are prophets (Marx, Engels, Lenin) and sacred books (*Das Kapital*, the *Communist Manifesto*, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, to name only a few). In its antireligious campaign the party has gone still further and has sought to duplicate church ritual in order to fulfill the need for special celebrations at certain points in an individual's life. Secular naming and burial ceremonies are analogous to religious baptism (christening) and burial rites, and much effort has been made to add pomp and ceremony to civil marriage in order to discourage religious weddings.

Despite official restrictions on church activities and the party-sponsored propaganda campaign against religious belief, the number of believers in Communist states is still surprisingly large. Precise figures are not easily found, and are still more difficult to verify. Nevertheless, there are some indications. In Slovakia, the results of a survey published in 1970 showed that 73.4 per cent of the blue-collar workers, 91.2 per cent of the peasants and farmers, and 54.3 per cent of the white-collar workers are believers, and only 14 per cent of the total Slovak population could be classed as atheists. The published report of a similar sociological survey in Rumania did not give specific data but concluded that the study

³For a discussion of the main lines of Soviet atheist propaganda, see Joan Delaney Grossman, "Leadership of Anti-Religious Propaganda in the Soviet Union," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 12 (1972).

"provides proof of the persistence of religion." In Hungary the party has officially criticized party members for permitting their children to be baptized and to participate in religious instruction, and for participating themselves in religious ceremonies, including weddings and burials. It is frequently noted in reports on Eastern Europe that religious belief persists primarily among the older generation and that young people are less influenced by it. This is probably true, but nevertheless many young people are still believers. In Rumania the party leader criticized members of the Union of Communist Youth not only for attending church services on special holidays but for being "in the first rows bowing and praying."⁴

THE CHURCH AS A RIVAL FOR POWER

The system of governing which the Communist parties of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe sought to establish when they came to power included what Brzezinski calls "an organizational compulsion . . . to absorb and/or destroy all social groups that might even constitute passive obstructions to the movement's dynamic need to subordinate society totally to its power."⁵ This unwillingness to tolerate competing centers of power and the effort to eliminate any form of pluralism is one of the major characteristics of Communist political rule. This is not to say, however, that this end has been successfully achieved. Circumstances have required adjusting the goal of achieving monolithic power to the realities of politics. It must also be kept in mind that there are significant variations among the Communist states of Eastern Europe, and over time there are differences in the degree of control achieved within any single state.

The goal of eliminating all rival loci of power, although it has not been completely achieved, has brought the Communist regimes into conflict with church institutions, which in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union wielded considerable political and economic power prior to the establishment of the Communist governments. They claimed the allegiance of

⁴Radio Bucharest, 2 October 1972. Ceausescu's speech, which was broadcast live, contained very sharp comments on the attitude of youth to religion, but in the version published in the party daily, *Scinteia*, on the following day, these criticisms were considerably toned down. For information on the persistence of religious beliefs, see *Sociologia* (Bratislava) No. 1 (January-March 1970); *Viitorul social* (Bucharest) No. 1 (1973); and *Partelet* (Budapest), December 1972 and December 1973.

⁵Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power*, pp. 68-69.

sizable portions of the population; the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches exercised control over large amounts of property; extensive charitable activities increased their influence; and education was dominated or heavily influenced by the local established church.

Once the Communist parties succeeded in consolidating their authority, the pattern of action against religious institutions was much the same. Laws and constitutional provisions were adopted which granted freedom of religion, but at the same time the right to disbelieve was expressly specified. The Soviet Constitution of 1936, for example, provides: "Freedom of religious worship and freedom to engage in antireligious propaganda are recognized for all citizens."⁶ In most cases, however, the "freedom to engage in antireligious propaganda" was interpreted rather broadly, while the "freedom of religious worship" was rather narrowly circumscribed. Laws were enacted under which church-operated schools were nationalized and church property seized. In some cases buildings used for worship were ultimately returned, but since a large proportion of church revenues had come from other land holdings, charitable activities had to be curtailed, the clergy had to undergo considerable hardship, and the funds available for the upkeep of the buildings that were retained were limited. The nationalization of church-operated schools was a serious blow to religious influence. In Hungary, for example, some 60 per cent of the schools in the country were Roman Catholic. The activities of seminaries and other institutions for the training of clergy were restricted; severe limitations were placed on the number of students they could admit, and many were closed altogether. Church and state were legally separated, and each Communist government created an office of religious affairs to control church activity. These government agencies exercised considerable authority over all religious denominations. The state provided funds for the church, regulated appointments of the clergy, and approved the election of officials to the hierarchy. Church officials were required to proclaim loyalty to the state and its policies, and those who opposed these measures were brought to trial and imprisoned.

⁶Article 124. The provisions of this article are almost identical with Article 13 of the 1918 Soviet Constitution. For the texts of these documents, see Jan F. Triska, ed., *Constitutions of the Communist Party-States* (Stanford, California: The Hoover Institution, 1968).

Because the issue was one of control, churches that were willing to acknowledge the supremacy of Communist authority and reach accommodations with it fared better than those that resisted. Generally speaking, the Eastern Orthodox churches were more willing to cooperate than was the Roman Catholic. The Eastern Orthodox traditions of separate autonomous national churches having only superficial links with each other and with the ecumenical patriarch in Istanbul and of close cooperation with state officials—both of which long predated the Communist parties' acquisition of power—made such accommodation easier. Clergy who were willing to accept Communist demands were given preference, and those who opposed the new restraints were incarcerated.

In the Soviet Union, the process of bringing the Russian Orthodox church under state and party control was given high priority after the Bolshevik coup d'état of 1917. Because of the very close relationship between the church and the tsarist regime that had existed before the October Revolution, the Communist party regarded this as a particularly important task. In the period between 1917 and 1941 the church was subjected to three major campaigns involving persecution of the clergy and the placing of restraints on the right to worship coupled with antireligious propaganda. Each of these campaigns was in turn followed by a period of moderation, during which antireligious activities did not cease altogether but became less vigorous. Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 marked the beginning of a new period of toleration toward the Russian Orthodox church. As Soviet troops sought to hold back the invading *Wehrmacht*, the Orthodox hierarchy rallied to the defense of the motherland by issuing proclamations encouraging the war effort and making financial contributions. Faced with the task of defeating Germany Stalin altered his earlier approach and adopted policies favorable to both the Russian Orthodox church and Russian nationalism. The church benefited from this arrangement; there was a revival of religion, and the number of Orthodox congregations increased significantly. After the war the church was permitted to maintain and even improve the position it had achieved, in return for its support of Soviet foreign and domestic policies. But the relative tolerance of religion that marked Soviet policy under Stalin after 1941 did not continue long after the dictator's death. In 1954 an intensified campaign against the

church and religion was initiated, and has continued with varying degrees of vigor since then. The situation of the churches remains far from favorable, but the persecution to which they are subjected is relatively minor compared to that of the 1930s although it is still serious. Nevertheless, the size and influence of the Russian Orthodox community are significant. There are more functioning Orthodox congregations at present than there were in 1944. Statistics must be treated with caution, but the number of people actively practicing religion in the Soviet Union is in the realm of 40 million, with some estimates as high as 64 million.⁷ The Russian Orthodox church survives in the Soviet Union because it is no threat to the regime. Church dignitaries call upon the faithful to pray for their "God-protected country and its government."⁸ The government in return acknowledges the services of the church—for example, Patriarch Aleksei received the Order of the Red Banner of Socialist Labor three times.⁹

The process of achieving an accommodation between the Orthodox churches and the Communist governments after 1945 went more smoothly in Eastern Europe than it had in the Soviet Union. The Serbian Orthodox church in Yugoslavia and the Bulgarian and Rumanian Orthodox churches came to terms relatively quickly with the new governments, although the activities of all three were restricted and in all some members of the clergy were uncooperative. The Serbian church has retained somewhat greater autonomy because of the unique political situation in Yugoslavia. The Bulgarian and Rumanian

⁷David Powell, "The Effectiveness of Soviet Anti-Religious Propaganda," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 13 (Fall 1967).

⁸Telegram from Patriarch Pimen of the Russian Orthodox church to Chairman of the Council of Ministers Aleksei Kosygin on the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Union. (*Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, 1 [January], 1973).

⁹The following discuss the status of religion in the Soviet Union: Michael Bourdeaux, *Patriarch and Prophets: Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church Today* (London: Macmillan, 1969); Robert Conquest, *Religion in the USSR* (London: Bodley Head, 1968); Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher, eds., *Religion and the Soviet State: A Dilemma of Power* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969); Richard H. Marshall, Jr., ed., *Aspects of Religion in the Soviet Union 1917-1967* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Walter Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union* (London: Macmillan, 1961); William C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, "Religion in the USSR after Khrushchev," in John W. Strong, ed., *The Soviet Union Under Brezhnev and Kosygin: The Transition Years* (New York: Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1971); Joan DeLaney Grossman, "Khrushchev's Anti-Religious Policy and the Campaign of 1954," *Soviet Studies* 42:3 (January 1973); and Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, "The Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy," *Problems of Communism* 22:3 (May-June 1973).

churches, however, have become essentially instruments of state policy.

Dealing with the Roman Catholic church has been a more complex and difficult task for the East European Communist parties. The Catholic faithful and clergy acknowledge allegiance to and accept guidance from a supreme authority beyond the boundaries of all individual states. The Catholic church's strong international connections give it a resiliency that autonomous national denominations do not have. Also, the Catholic tradition in Western and Central Europe has not been one of subservience of church to state, as was the case with the Eastern Orthodox denominations. The resolve of the East European regimes to establish control over Catholic religious bodies within their boundaries was strengthened by the anti-Communist stance of the Vatican and its links with Catholics in Western Europe.

One of the actions taken by the Soviet and Rumanian governments was to force the merger of the Uniate or Greek Catholic churches with the predominant Eastern Orthodox church. The Uniate groups acknowledge the pope as supreme head of the church, but their liturgy and organization follow the Eastern Orthodox tradition, which they have observed since their conversion to Christianity before the ninth century. Uniates living in Transylvania (now western Rumania) accepted papal authority in the seventeenth century, when the area was a part of the Austrian Empire. The Uniates of the Soviet Union were ethnic Ukrainians who inhabited territories that were annexed from Poland and Czechoslovakia after World War II. They had likewise accepted papal authority in the seventeenth century, when they were under Austrian rule. When the Communist party came to power in Rumania and when the Soviet Union annexed Eastern Galicia from Poland and the Carpatho-Ukraine from Czechoslovakia during World War II, there were approximately one and a half million and three and a half million Uniates in the two states, respectively. Since these Christians observe the Byzantine rite, which the Orthodox churches also follow, it was considered simple for them to sever connections with Rome and "return to the fold" of Orthodoxy. This served two purposes—it broke the Uniate link with the Vatican, and it emphasized to the more compliant Orthodox hierarchy the value of cooperating with Communist officials, since the reconversion of the Uniates had been an

Orthodox aim for generations. The Ukrainian Uniate congregations were merged with the Russian Orthodox Church in 1946, and the Transylvanian Uniate congregations joined the Rumanian Orthodox church in 1948. These moves were accomplished under official pressure, and members of the clergy who opposed it were imprisoned.

The Roman Catholic Church in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and northern Yugoslavia, however, proved to be more of a problem to the new Communist regimes. Catholics made up the major portion of the local population, and since they were solidly Latin by tradition they could not easily be merged with the Orthodox Church. The leading Catholic clerics in all four countries became focal points of opposition to the new Communist regimes, and all were subsequently restricted to a greater or lesser degree in the performance of their pastoral duties. This was the fate of Archbishop Stepinac of Zagreb (Yugoslavia), Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary, Archbishop Beran of Czechoslovakia, and Cardinal Wyszynski of Poland. Communist authorities were more successful in ultimately securing the compliance of Catholic leaders in Czechoslovakia and Hungary than they were in Poland and Croatia, although in all areas resistance was vigorous. In Czechoslovakia and Hungary the Catholic population, while still substantial, represents a smaller proportion of the total. Calvinist Protestants make up a quarter of the population of Hungary, and there are Lutherans as well. Protestant groups are also to be found in Czech areas. In Hungary, Slovakia, and Croatia some of the Catholic hierarchy were tainted by association with the fascist governments of these areas during World War II, and in most cases at least some were found who were willing to cooperate on terms acceptable to the new regimes, and this in turn led to division within the church. Associations of Catholic laymen and clergy were formed which accepted Communist authority, but the more staunchly anti-Communist hierarchy supported the Vatican, refused cooperation and vigorously opposed any state encroachments upon church prerogatives.

By and large the parties in Hungary and Czechoslovakia succeeded in weakening Catholic influence and in undermining the church as a center of power outside party control. In Croatia, the break between Tito and Stalin in 1948 and the political and economic reforms that followed forced accommodation between the party and the Catholic church. Although

Archbishop Stepinac was not permitted to resume his duties, church officials acceptable to both the Vatican and the Yugoslav League of Communists were found. As Yugoslav society and the country's economy have evolved in the direction of greater pluralism, the Catholic church (as well as other religious groups in Yugoslavia) has been given greater latitude. The recent strengthening of the party and the concern for ideological revitalization that has been evident since 1971 have led to renewed conflict as the party has sought to limit church influence.

In Poland the Catholic church has been most successful in maintaining its power despite efforts of the Communist party to undermine it. The Catholic position in Poland is strengthened by the fact that, as a result of the boundary changes which resulted from World War II, the country is almost entirely Polish and overwhelmingly Catholic. Polish nationalism has been linked with Catholicism, and the church played a significant role in Polish life before the Communist-dominated government came to power. To a greater extent than in any other East European country, the Polish Catholic church has remained a strong, dynamic, alternative center of power.

The unique position of the church in Poland before World War II prepared the way for the continuation of its influence, but political developments since 1945 have also contributed to this. Throughout Eastern Europe, at times when the party clearly has the upper hand the campaign against religion is rigorously pressed; but when Communist control is threatened, the party relaxes its campaign against the church. In the wave of unrest that swept through Eastern Europe in 1956, Poland very nearly suffered the chaos and disaster that befell Hungary in its ill-fated revolution. As part of his program to stabilize the situation the new Polish party leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka, reached an unwritten *modus vivendi* with the church, in which the latter would support his efforts to avert chaos in Poland in return for full freedom of religious activity. Neither Gomulka nor Cardinal Wyszynski nurtured any illusions about the other's intentions, but it was in the interest of both to reach an agreement. Once the party had reestablished its control, it began a policy of petty harassment of the church whose power made the consequences of a frontal assault too costly. The church, for its part, used the temporary respite to strengthen its position in the struggle with the party. By the mid-1960s,

however, the party and state had again regained the initiative and attacks on the church were intensified. In the internal crisis that followed the Polish workers' riots of December 1970, the Polish regime again made conciliatory moves toward the church. Nevertheless, the underlying differences were not resolved and, following a period of improvement, their relationship is again strained.

On the question of relations between the Catholic church and the Communist governments, the Vatican is a significant issue. The appointment of bishops and higher church officials requires the approval of the Vatican, as well as that of secular authorities. At various times East European governments have sought to weaken and divide the national Catholic hierarchies by making direct approaches to the Vatican. This was encouraged by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, both of whom showed interest in reducing the hostility between the Catholic church and the East European governments. The Polish government approached the Vatican in the early 1960s and indicated interest in direct Warsaw-Vatican negotiations, in an attempt to undercut Cardinal Wyszynski's position in the Polish hierarchy and to encourage those elements who favored a more flexible approach to church-state relations. Rome, however, insisted that Cardinal Wyszynski must be involved in any Warsaw-Vatican negotiations, and little progress was made. In the aftermath of the events of December 1970 and the changes in government and party leadership that followed, the Polish government established official contacts with the Vatican for the first time, and other high-level negotiations have subsequently taken place. A limited agreement was reached to maintain permanent contact, but a number of important issues remain unresolved.

A limited agreement was also reached between the Hungarian government and the Vatican in 1964, under which a number of long-vacant sees were to be filled, although full resolution of all outstanding issues was precluded by the problem of the primate of Hungary, Cardinal Mindszenty, who had sought asylum in the American Legation in Budapest in 1956 and had remained there. In September 1971, however, the Hungarian government and the Vatican came to an accord under which Mindszenty eventually went into exile in Vienna and certain personnel changes were made in the administration of the church in Hungary. Although the Vatican formally con-

tinued to recognize Cardinal Mindszenty as primate until early 1974, the Hungarian government has not done so since his trial and imprisonment in 1949. The Vatican's desire to retire Mindszenty as archbishop and primate of Hungary—a decision with which the cardinal did not agree—led in January 1975 to agreement between the Vatican and the Hungarian government on the appointment of a series of new bishops.

In early 1973 Czechoslovakia also took a first step toward improving relations with the Vatican by working out an agreement on the appointment of four new bishops, though negotiations were difficult and protracted and both sides were required to compromise.

The efforts of the East European governments and the Vatican to reach compromises reflect a new attitude on the part of both. The Vatican has shown increasing willingness to come to terms with the political realities of Eastern Europe, in the interest of preserving what remains of the church's influence and of creating a climate in which it is hoped the clergy will be given more freedom to carry out their duties. This has produced certain conflicts of interest between rigidly anti-Communist elements in the East European clergy on the one hand, and other members of the clergy and Vatican officials who are more flexible on issues of church-state relations on the other. The East European governments also have their own reasons for permitting the churches greater latitude than in the past. In part this is because the regimes feel a good deal more self-confident today. The economic and social progress achieved in Eastern Europe has been in large measure responsible for an increasing degree of popular acceptance of Communist rule, and in response to the growing interest in détente the governments have been anxious to show good will and resolve outstanding East-West conflicts. Improving relations with the Vatican is part of a more conciliatory policy toward the West which has been emerging generally in Eastern Europe over the last few years.¹⁰

In their efforts to eliminate rivals for power, the Communist parties of Eastern Europe have had the greatest success in establishing dominance over the national Eastern Orthodox churches. As noted above, the Catholic church has

¹⁰On Vatican relations with Eastern Europe, see Knut Walf, "Die Ostpolitik des Vatikans," *Aussenpolitik*, 4th Quarter (1973); and Hansjakob Stehle, "Vatikanische Ostpolitik" *Europäische Rundschau* 74:1 (January-March 1974).

resisted far more vigorously owing to its stronger international ties with the Vatican and a tradition of greater assertiveness vis-à-vis the state. Communist success with Protestant groups has been mixed. Generally speaking the traditional Calvinist and Lutheran Protestants in Eastern Europe have close relations with similar foreign religious groups, but at the same time they are less numerous and less centrally organized. For the most part they have come under state control and receive state financial support, in return for which they have had to accept restrictions on their activities. The more radical sects have been perhaps the least willing to compromise, and as a result have suffered the greatest persecution and restriction. The Jehovah's Witnesses and certain Pentecostal groups have encountered the most severe penalties—in many countries in Eastern Europe, for example, they are legally prohibited—primarily because of their refusal to acknowledge loyalty to the state, to serve in the armed forces, to salute the flag, etc.

The Communist parties have in general been successful in their attempts to dominate the churches of Eastern Europe. The weapons available to the state are formidable. Restrictions—including imprisonment of church members and clergy and the physical power to enforce state decisions—and inducements—financial support, control over buildings used for worship, and permission to train clergy—have been used in carrot-and-stick fashion to secure compliance and establish state control. There are, however, individual variations. The Polish Catholics have retained the greatest freedom of action, and the Rumanian Orthodox church represents perhaps the other end of the spectrum, at which the church accepts state control and cooperates with political authorities in achieving Communist goals.¹¹

NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND TRADITIONAL VALUES

An additional element which complicates the relationship between religion and Communism in Eastern Europe is the role

¹¹The situation of the churches in Eastern Europe is discussed in the following works: Vladimir Gsovski, ed., *Church and State Behind the Iron Curtain* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955); Hugh Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, 3rd ed. (London: Methuen, 1956), pp. 287-95; and the chapters on religion in the various volumes in the series "East-Central Europe Under the Communists," published by Frederick A. Praeger in 1957—L. A. D. Dellin, ed., *Bulgaria*; Vratislav Busek and Nicholas Spulber, eds., *Czechoslovakia*; Stavro Skendi, ed., *Albania*; Oscar Halecki, ed., *Poland*; and Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, ed., *Romania*. Two noteworthy articles are Stanislaw Staron,

of religion as a primary element in determining the nationality of the peoples of this region, particularly in the Balkan Peninsula and Poland. In the Balkans, nationalism developed even later than in Central Europe because the social conditions that foster its rise were less advanced in areas which had been part of the Turkish Empire. The Turks virtually eliminated the local nobility as they conquered the Balkans, and controlled their subjects indirectly through Greek religious leaders. Nationalism in the area was strongly influenced by religious identification, because the struggle against the Turks was linked to the struggle for church autonomy. The Serbian independence movement became a struggle to obtain a Serbian patriarchate. Greek national identity was maintained primarily through the Greek Orthodox church. Montenegrins, who were never officially subject to the Turks, were led by priest-princes who ruled in both secular and religious affairs. The real beginning of Bulgarian nationalism was the Sultan's recognition of the Bulgarian exarchate in 1870. Serbs and Croats have the same racial origins and the same language, but Serbs are Orthodox and Croats are Roman Catholics. The Serbo-Croatian-speaking Moslems of Bosnia-Herzegovina have preferred to call themselves Yugoslav Moslems rather than Serbs or Croats in post war Yugoslavia. (Albanians are the exception—about 70 per cent are Moslem, 20 per cent Orthodox, and 10 per cent Roman Catholic.) Hence national identity in the former Turkish territories is primarily determined not by territorial or ethnic considerations, but by religion.¹²

In Poland the Catholic Church and Polish nationalism became linked in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the failure of attempts to bring about national unity under the political leadership resulted in sentiment for unity shifting to the Polish Catholic church, and Poles outside it

"State-Church Relations in Poland," *World Politics*, July 1969, and Frank Dinka, "Sources of Conflict Between Church and State in Poland," *Review of Politics*, July 1966.

¹²For four interesting studies of this link between nationalism and religion in the Balkans, see George G. Arnakis, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism," in Charles and Barbara Jelavich, eds., *The Balkans in Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 115-44; Radu R. Florescu, "The Uniate Church: Catalyst of Rumanian National Consciousness," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 45, no. 105 (July 1967): 324-42; Emanuel Turczynsky, "Nationalism and Religion in Eastern Europe," *East European Quarterly* 5:4 (January 1972), pp. 468-86; and Asen G. Dimof, "George S. Rakovski in 'The Struggle for the Reestablishment of the Bulgarian Church,'" *East European Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (June 1974):177-202.

were considered to have doubtful national loyalties. This trend was strengthened as first parts and eventually all of Poland became annexed to Prussia, Russia, and Austria between 1772 and 1795. With the bulk of the Polish population and territory under Protestant Prussian and Orthodox Russian control from 1795 until 1918, a primary distinguishing feature of the Polish nation was its Catholic religion. Particularly in that part of the country dominated by Prussia (and later the German Empire), religious channels were used for the expression of Polish political views and the institutions of the church were utilized to preserve Polish culture. The church became the rallying point for Polish nationalism, and the struggle between German and Pole became, at least in part, one between Prussian Lutheranism and Polish Catholicism. Bismarck's policy of *Kulturkampf* against the Poles ultimately succeeded in strengthening Polish nationalism and tied it more closely to the Catholic church. In those parts of Poland under Russian domination the struggle to control the restless Poles likewise assumed many of the features of an Orthodox-Catholic conflict. This very close identification between Catholicism and Polish nationalism continued after the establishment of an independent Poland in 1918, and was one of the primary reasons for the strong position of the Catholic church even after the Communist party came to power in 1945.¹³

Because of the link between religion and national consciousness, Communist governments in Eastern Europe have on occasion made use of religion when it has served their goals. A classic instance was the creation of the Macedonian Orthodox church in Yugoslavia. The crux of the question is the nationality of the Slavic inhabitants of Macedonia—an area that has been the source of conflict between Serbia (Yugoslavia after 1918) and Bulgaria for the last century.

During the Second World War Tito, in line with his plan to solve the Yugoslav nationality problem by creating a federation of different national republics, recognized the existence of a "Macedonian" nationality which was neither Serb nor Bulgarian. Under Communist direction a Yugoslav People's Republic of Macedonia was founded in 1944; linguists and literati began the process of creating a separate Macedonian

¹³For a discussion of nationalism and Catholicism in Poland see Lech Trzeciakowski, "The Prussian State and the Catholic Church in Prussian Poland 1871-1914," *Slavic Review* 26:4 (December 1967).

literary language in 1945, historians began writing Macedonian histories, and a Macedonian culture was developed.

Initially the Bulgarian party accepted the existence of this Macedonian nationality, but in 1956 it reversed its stand. During a period of strained relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1958, Bulgarian leaders proclaimed the population of Macedonia to be Bulgarian. Concerned that the Bulgarian claims might find an echo among some of the Macedonian population, the Yugoslav League of Communists approved the convening of a church conference which proclaimed the establishment of an independent Macedonian Orthodox church. The League of Communists and the Yugoslav government were deeply involved in its creation, although the basic hostility to religion was not altered. The party, however, recognized the importance of religion as a means of affirming national existence and stimulating national consciousness. The independent Macedonian church was a means of emphasizing Macedonian nationality, and hence it was encouraged.¹⁴

In the Soviet Union as well religion and nationality have tended to reinforce each other. In both tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, however, the Russian Orthodox church—in the interest of preserving its own power—and the state—in the interest of furthering its nationality policy—have opposed autonomous Orthodox churches for the non-Russian nationalities. Particular objections were raised to the establishment of an autonomous Ukrainian church (a separate Ukrainian Orthodox church had been merged with the Russian Orthodox church in 1686). Because the Ukrainians are closest in culture and language to the Great Russians and represent the largest non-Great Russian nationality in the Soviet Union, the desire to integrate the Ukrainians into the Russian group has been an element of both tsarist and Soviet nationality policies. Similar considerations underlie the opposition to separate status for the Byelorussian Orthodox church, which was terminated by the Soviet government in the 1930s after a short-lived struggle for autonomy. Autocephalous Orthodox churches existed in Estonia (where about one fifth of the population are Orthodox) and Latvia (where only about 9 per cent of the popu-

¹⁴On the creation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church see Stephen E. Palmer, Jr., and Robert R. King, *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1971), pp. 165-73.

lation are Orthodox) during the period when these countries were independent after 1918, but they were merged with the Russian Orthodox church once the Soviet Union annexed these Baltic States during World War II.

The Georgian Orthodox church, which was absorbed by the Russian Orthodox church in 1811, shortly after the tsar acquired Georgia, declared itself autocephalous in 1917, in the confusion following the collapse of the tsarist government. A century of Russian domination, however, led to the russification of the church and to its estrangement from the Georgian population. Its independence was acknowledged by the Russian Orthodox church in 1943, shortly after Stalin had removed a number of restrictions on the hierarchy of the latter. Although there is no direct evidence linking him with the decision to acknowledge the Georgian church, in his youth Stalin, who was a Georgian, had studied at a seminary in Tiflis, and he had firsthand knowledge of the conflict between the Russian and Georgian churches.

The Armenian Apostolic church, which still retains certain historical distinctions from the Orthodox churches, has also succeeded in maintaining its independent status in the Soviet Union, although its activity has been restricted by the Soviet government and its membership has suffered as a result of antireligious campaigns conducted by the party. The church is a major factor in Armenian national consciousness. More Armenians live outside the Soviet Union than within its borders, and hence the Soviet government has found the church and its head, the Catholicos of All Armenians, useful adjuncts to Soviet foreign policy.¹⁵

The proportion of Roman Catholics in the Soviet Union is not large, particularly since the Uniate or Eastern rite Catholic groups were forcibly merged with the Russian Orthodox church after World War II. Nevertheless, the population of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania is about 80 per cent Latin rite Catholic, and Lithuanian nationalism has been linked with that religion. The Catholic hierarchy in Lithuania has been placed in a very awkward position. Soviet officials have demanded compliance with the government policy of discrediting dissident elements, but significant segments of the clergy and population are pushing the hierarchy to represent Lithuanian

¹⁵For a discussion of the Armenian and Orthodox Churches in the Soviet Union, see Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union*, pp. 95-127 and 150-75.

national interests more vigorously to Soviet authorities. The pressure on the hierarchy was particularly intense in May 1972, when a wave of national and religious unrest swept the republic after a Lithuanian student immolated himself in protest against Soviet policies vis-à-vis the church.

Mohammedans constitute the second largest religious community in the Soviet Union. Their primary influence is concentrated among the less-developed nationalities in the Caucasian region and Soviet central Asia. Here again culture and national consciousness are very closely tied to religion. Although the campaign against Islam is pursued along much the same lines as that against the Christian religions, Soviet foreign policy has occasionally required that the campaign against the Moslems be toned down. When the USSR has sought to establish good relations with the Moslem states in the Middle East and Asia, attempts have been made to soften the worst features of the anti-Islam policy. In the case of the Moslem groups, however, an additional element has conditioned Soviet policies. Their religion is seen as one of the major impediments to the social and economic modernization of the peoples of Islam. As a result Soviet policy vis-à-vis the Moslems is based on the assumption that Mohammedanism encourages adherence to "backward, reactionary customs" and is opposed to education and modern culture. In discussing the problem as it affects Soviet central Asia, a Soviet newspaper¹⁶ noted that "old and harmful traditions, customs, and ceremonies are as a rule linked with religious beliefs," but "our Soviet way of life demands new customs."

The Communist concern to eliminate traditional ways of life and induce social and economic modernization is a serious and sincere effort. Because religion, and particularly Islam and other non-Christian religions, tends to encourage and perpetuate traditionalism, the campaign against them in central Asia and the eastern Soviet Union is as much a function of the ideological drive for modernization as it is an effort to promote atheism. In their ideological activity the Communist parties have emphasized the link between ideological indoctrination and technical modernization, making "modernization seem like the consequence of ideologically inspired action." The "organizational compulsion of the party for ideology-ac-

¹⁶*Sovetskaya Kirgizia*, 11 November 1972.

tion thus becomes the source and means of modernization."¹⁷ Religion—particularly the non-Christian variety—is seen as an obstacle to economic and social progress, and the antireligious struggle becomes linked with the antitradition campaign.¹⁸

LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND EASTERN EUROPE

In light of the policies toward religious institutions in Communist Eastern Europe, the injunction to preach the restored gospel to "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" is at present difficult to obey. In most cases religious belief and worship are permitted within certain limits, but the collection and any disbursement of church funds are handled by the state, and the publication of religious literature is carefully controlled and censored by government agencies. These regulations would cause difficulty, but the church could probably live with them. The most serious obstacle is the general prohibition on proselyting. The problem is not just the difficulty of bringing missionaries into Eastern Europe from other countries, but the restriction on proselyting generally. As noted above, the Soviet Constitution of 1936, which is still in force, specifies that all citizens are entitled to "freedom of religious worship and freedom to engage in antireligious propaganda." The right to engage in "religious propaganda" is not guaranteed, and Soviet authorities have generally opposed or prohibited such activity. A representative of the Church was told that the Latter-day Saints could have a meetinghouse in the Soviet Union, but missionaries would not be permitted.¹⁹ The other East European states also generally restrict religious proselyting. In Rumania, for example, changing one's religion is made difficult by administrative measures. The Baptist Church there, whose situation is somewhat analogous to what the Latter-day Saints' situation would be, cannot baptize a new member without first receiving permission from a local official of the Department of Cults, and permission is generally given only for those who come from families that are already Baptist.²⁰

¹⁷Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁸One interesting study on the relationship between religion and social change is Ethel and Stephen P. Dunn, "Religion as an Instrument of Culture Change: The Problem of the Sects in the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review* 23:3 (September 1964).

¹⁹*Deseret News*, Church Section, 3 November 1973, p. 10.

²⁰Iosif Ton, *The Present Situation of the Baptist Church in Rumania*, Religion in Communist Lands, Supplementary Paper No. 1 (London: Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, November 1973), pp. 11-12.

A related problem that would face the Latter-day Saints in initiating activity in Eastern Europe would be the small number of local members of the Church. Most Communist governments permit existing religious groups to practice their faith, but they are reluctant to permit the introduction of new ones. Yugoslav government officials said, for instance, that an LDS Church would be given the same status as other churches in Yugoslavia, but that it would have to be founded and operated by Yugoslav citizens.²¹ The only area of Eastern Europe today with a sizable Latter-day Saint community is East Germany, where a number of prewar members of the church have remained. They are permitted to conduct services, and the Dresden Mission, headed by an East German citizen who is a member of the church, is currently supervising their organizations, but the church is subject to a number of restrictions, some of them severe.²² In the other countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union membership has never been large, and most Latter-day Saints have now left these areas.

The Latter-day Saints' connections with the United States would also make the initiation of missionary work in Eastern Europe more difficult. Although state-to-state relations between Moscow and Washington have improved considerably in the last few years, Western influence is still seen as a challenge to Communist ideology. Soviet attitudes have moved beyond the claim made in 1951 that Mormon missionaries in Finland were "engaged in war propaganda, kindling revanchist feelings, maintaining active liaison with representatives of outlawed fascist parties of Finland, etc."²³ Nevertheless, the fact that the Church headquarters are in the United States, that the bulk of the Church membership lives there, and that the Americas are considered to be the Promised Land would make the task of the Church more difficult.

In order to lessen the identification of the Church with America, if missionaries are eventually permitted to enter East European countries they probably should be citizens of countries other than the United States—particularly the neutral European states of Austria, Switzerland, Finland, and Sweden. Even more favorable would be the use of missionaries from other

²¹*Deseret News*, Church Section, 3 November 1973, p. 10.

²²For a brief comment on the Church in East Germany, see *BYU Today*, 28, no. 9 (December 1974):5.

²³*Izvestia*, 19 June 1951.

Communist states. If the opportunity for missionary work does develop, Church members from East Germany would be in the best position to gain permission to preach. The Catholic church and its current success in improving relations with the East European governments might help the Latter-day Saints. If agreement can be reached with the Vatican, which has extensive international influence, agreement with the Latter-day Saints is also possible, since Mormon connections with Salt Lake City would be seen as a threat of lower order.

Political conditions do not yet appear to be ripe for the Church to expand into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, however, although the current climate of *détente* may mark the beginning of a new period in which conditions may arise that will ultimately permit this. The process of improving Soviet-American relations has begun and promises certain improvements in terms of a reduction of international tension. The Soviet Union and the East European countries are anxiously taking steps to prevent Western ideas from influencing their internal development, as they improve interstate relations with the West. Nevertheless, it seems probable that as interstate relations improve, Western ideas will more easily reach Eastern Europe. As progress is made toward *détente*, increasing East-West contacts should provide an opportunity for citizens of Communist states to travel in the West and to meet Westerners who visit their countries, which will create opportunities for them to hear and accept the gospel. (Missionary work in Italy, for example, started among the Italian *Gastarbeiter* living in West Germany. In view of the large numbers of Croatian workers also in Germany, the way to begin missionary work directed toward Yugoslavia right now would be to develop a program for these people in West Germany.) The larger the number of Church members in Eastern Europe, the easier it will be to secure permission to expand Church activity and ultimately introduce missionaries.

Although the Communist party is currently the major obstacle to church activity in Eastern Europe, it is the party itself that is creating the conditions which may help the Church to be successful once the opportunity to proselyte presents itself. One of the more serious problems is the link between religion and nationality. In Poland and the Balkans, at least, changing one's religion is almost the equivalent of denying one's nationality. The Communist governments have set in motion

social and economic changes that are beginning to weaken this link, however, and the process of social and economic modernization, industrialization, and urbanization that is taking place under the Communist aegis is likewise weakening the traditional-minded rural population, which has been a primary source of strength to the established churches in Eastern Europe. The Latter-day Saints have had considerable missionary success among people who have found themselves separated from their traditional society, or who are searching for stability in a world from which their traditional values have disappeared. Hence missionary work in urban areas has been more successful than in rural areas; conversions in nineteenth century England, for instance, were particularly rapid among the Lancashire workers, who were among those most affected by the industrial revolution, and today Latin America, undergoing the upheaval of modernization, is one of the most rapidly expanding areas for the Church. And by encouraging social, political, and economic change the Communist parties in Eastern Europe are preparing the field for the harvest.

The Neophyte

Roger Ladd Memmott*

When you first came to me,
dovelike and impeccable,
on the ocean's mourning edge,
I bent obsequiously to your voice,
your call: some ancient memory,
a dream perhaps,
stranger than the past,
buried somewhere beyond.

Now,
fed by the shadow of your breath,
I become a paradox:
insatiate yet fulfilled;
and when addressed
I turn,
led by the invincible string of your voice,
a puppet:
suspended in time.

*Mr. Memmott teaches English and creative writing at the University of Cincinnati.

The Historians Corner

A NEWLY DISCOVERED 1838 WILFORD WOODRUFF LETTER

Robert H. Slover*

In 1838 Wilford Woodruff was thirty-one years old and had been a member of the Church five years. He had already completed three missions, one to the Southern States and two to the Fox Islands. In August of that year he was in Scarborough, Maine, at his in-laws' home. He was on a mission leading a group of Saints from the Fox Islands to the headquarters of the Church in Far West, Missouri.¹

During the month, Wilford had time to give some thought and attention to his family, both his own and his parents'. His full brother, Azmon, had accepted the gospel the same time he had in 1833. Only a month earlier he had happily baptized his own father and mother and his half-sister, Eunice, in his native home of Farmington, Connecticut, and had organized a branch of the Church for them and the other converts there.² But there were others of the family for whom he was concerned. One of these was his half-brother, Asahel, with whom he had already shared spiritual experiences.

Asahel was not a member of the Church, and in that August of 1838, Wilford wrote a letter to him hoping to touch his spirit in such a way that he might be convinced of the truth.

*Dr. Slover is associate professor of political science and Institute of Government Services at Brigham Young University.

¹The events of this period of time, from the baptism of Wilford and his brother Azmon on 31 December 1833 by Elder Ezra Pulsipher up to the period of his sojourn at Scarborough, in August 1838, where the letter to his half-brother, Asahel, was written, are recorded in Mathias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors As Recorded in His Daily Journals* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1909), pp. 32-98. A little-known source on Wilford Woodruff's mission in Arkansas is an article written by Mark E. Petersen, "A Mormon in Arkansas," *Arkansas Gazette Magazine* 9, no. 14 (2 December 1934). Reprints of this article are available.

²Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 91. This incident is also described in "Autobiography of Wilford Woodruff," *Tullidges Quarterly Magazine* 3, no. 1 (October 1838):22.

This letter gives us an interesting insight into the young man who some fifty years later would become the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.³

Besides showing concern for his family, the letter demonstrates Wilford's deep spiritual insight and clear understanding of the will of the Lord concerning his people, and particularly concerning Wilford Woodruff. It gives his moving testimony of the divinity of the Church, the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the recognition that each man must gain his own testimony through the influence of the Holy Ghost. It notes his hope that this influence would "enable me to reach the fountain of my brother's soul."

We know little about this half-brother, Asahel Hart Woodruff, to whom the letter was written. Born 11 April 1815 in Farmington, Connecticut, he was the second child of six born to Wilford's father, Aphek Woodruff, and his second wife, Azubah Hart. In 1838 Asahel was a twenty-three year old merchant living in Terre Haute, Indiana.⁴

As early as 1830 Asahel, then fifteen years old, was influenced by a religious revival and made a profession of religion to which he seemed devoted. Wilford, too, was concerned with religion, as he tells us,

I prayed night and day and the Lord blest me with much of His spirit. These began to be the happiest days of my life. I felt that the sun, moon, and stars; the mountains, hills, and valleys; and that all creation were united in the praise of the Lord.⁵

Asahel and Wilford were baptized on the same day, 5 May 1831, by a Baptist minister who finally agreed to perform the baptism even though Wilford refused to join the Baptist church because it did not "harmonize with the apostolic church which our Savior established."⁶

It is interesting to note that Wilford and Asahel also had

³These letters were recently found by this writer in Canada among his mother-in-law's papers. She, Norma Woodruff Wood, apparently got the letters from her father, Asahel Hart Woodruff, who apparently got them from his father, President Wilford Woodruff. They were found among other pertinent President Woodruff materials.

⁴Archibald F. Bennett, "The Lineage of Wilford Woodruff," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 22 (April 1931):60. In the "Autobiography of Wilford Woodruff," in *Tullidges Quarterly Magazine*, the birth date of Asahel Hart is given as 11 April 1814, one year earlier than in the Archibald Bennett lineage article.

⁵Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 27.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 29.



A little-known C. R. Savage photograph of Wilford Woodruff

other similar spiritual experiences. This is demonstrated in an incident in 1832. Wilford planned to go with his brother Azmon to western New York to buy a farm, but he said,

. . . The spirit that was upon me day and night said—"go to Rhode Island." My mind was greatly exercised over the matter for I could not comprehend what it meant. I went to live with my brother Azmon until our departure for New York. After saluting him I said: "I wonder what the Lord wants of me in Rhode Island; the spirit of the Lord has rested upon me for two weeks and said 'Go to Rhode Island.'" In about an hour after this my brother Asahel arrived on a visit. After shaking hands with him, almost the first words he spoke were: "I wonder what the Lord wants of me in Rhode Island! The spirit of the Lord has been upon me for two or three weeks and has told me to go to Rhode Island." This caused us to marvel exceedingly. We had not seen each other for several months.⁷

But they did not go to Rhode Island. At Azmon's insistence he and Wilford went to New York to buy their farm and Asahel went on west to Indiana. Later they learned that if they had gone to Rhode Island they would have met Elders Orson Hyde and Samuel H. Smith and could have heard the gospel from those powerful missionaries.

Asahel received Wilford's letter in Terre Haute, and on 10 September 1838 sent a reply, making no mention of any effect Wilford's powerful testimony and concern had had upon him, but letting Wilford know he was looking forward to seeing him.

Presumably Wilford received his brother's letter, for he did not leave Scarborough until 9 October. He wrote:

On the afternoon of the 9th of October we took leave of Father Carter and his family and started upon our journey of two thousand miles at this late season of the year, taking with me my wife, her nursing babe, to lead a company of fifty-three souls from Maine to Illinois. . . .⁸

After suffering hardship and sickness on the journey, the company arrived in the vicinity of Terre Haute the night of 11 December 1838, and Wilford looked forward to the long anticipated meeting with his brother the next day. But the meeting never took place, for on that night Wilford learned of his brother's sudden death on 18 October 1838. His sorrow

⁷Ibid., p. 30. See also "Autobiography of Wilford Woodruff," p. 2.

⁸Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 95.

and disappointment at not being able to see his brother and try once again to reach him must have been great. He wrote:

The weather being very cold on the night of the 11th I stopped for the night at an inn. I there learned of the sudden death of my brother, Asahel H. Woodruff, a merchant of Terre Haute, Indiana. I had anticipated that the following day I should have a joyful meeting with this brother; instead of this, I had only the privilege of visiting his grave, in company with my wife and of examining a little into his business. I was offered the position of administrator of his affairs, but I was leading a company of Saints to Zion, and could not stop to attend to his temporal business. Strangers settled his affairs and took possession of his property; his relatives obtained nothing from his effects but a few trifling mementoes.⁹

* * *

O thou God of Israel who holds the destiny of men and at whose command goes forth the issues of life and death and by whose permission the sun sheds its beams to illuminate the earth and gladden the face of nature, I implore thy assistance to inspire my pen while I address my absent Brother. O deliver me from error, drive me from falsehood, and save me from folly, and by the power of truth enable me to reach the fountain of my Brother's soul.¹

Scarborough Maine Aug 25 1838

My Dear Brother

Yours under date of Terre Haute July 22^d 1838 is now before me, and Believe me Brother Asahel when I say that it hath caused the most peculiar and interesting sensations to vibrate my bosom of any production of your pen that hath fallen before my inspection. it hath brought many tears of joy from the fountain of my soul and filled my mind with hours of pleasing meditations. If you ask the cause of this, I answer because it hath unlocked the secrets of your soul and spread before me the furniture of your mind, which hitherto in a measure was hid from me like gold in its bed concealed from human view. With what deep interest we watch every movement of our friend when we are anxiously wishing and seeking their good especially wher Eternal life

⁹Ibid., p. 98. See also "Autobiography of Wilford Woodruff," p. 25. It can be assumed that one of the "trifling mementoes" was this letter Asahel had received from his brother Wilford.

FOOTNOTES (letter)

¹This appeal for God to guide his pen appears at the top of the first page of the letter in small print enclosed by a box of several lines closely drawn together. It is part of the letter and would have been read by his brother. Original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been retained.

is at stake, again what a privilege we enjoy to be permitted to unbosom our feelings to each other in confidence with our pen while separated thousands of miles by hills and dales. I feel thankful for such blessings. I think I can say in truth that I never attempted to write to you when I had more matters crowding into my mind than I wish to communicate than at this time. I feel that I need the art of comprehending a volume in a page in order to fully pour out my feelings before you. The interest of your letter is so great, it contains such important questions, questions that involve Eternal consequences so much so that I cannot do justice to them on a sheet like this. There is many things I would like to say to you both in answer to your letter concerning you and myself and our friends of things past, present, and to come. I have long desired an intimate and unreserved correspondence with you. It is to late in the day to be reserved in our communications, the day is far spent the night is at hand. I believe a correspondence of this kind will be a benefit to us both. I have just returned to the bosom of my family from my last mission to the Fox Islands and I have something like 10 late letters from my correspondents which I am about answering and as I have just filled a sheet to *Sister Eunice* I concluded also to direct one to you at this time. The day of trifles with me are past, our youthful days are gone and with them their folly, then let them sleep, and let us like men pass through the urgent events of the last dispensation and fullness of times, which is now rolling upon the earth. I was edified with your remarks concerning your following me in my ministry (with your mind) as I have traveled through the country. I rejoice that I have got a Brother who feels an interest in my welfare while I am the reproach of my enemies and at times the ridicule of my² I have endeavored to give you a correct account of my proceedings during my pergrinations untill I have at times feared it was dry and uninteresting to you, thinking that you might desire to learn more upon temporal matters than the cause in which I was engaged. while at the same time the interest of temporal and worthy concerns fled (in my mind) before the spiritual things of the Kingdom of God like the sable shades of night before the King of day. But I rejoice to learn that this hath not been the case but that you have continued to feel a deep interest in these matters and in my welfare, and as I learn this is the case I shall still continue to give you an account of my travels in the earth (which have just begun) and inform you of the dealings of God with me and the sucess I meet with among the nations of the earth. I design dropping a few remarks here concerning my labours since I wrote you in Farmington. My

²In the letter this word is just a squiggle, so we have no indication who was ridiculing him.

visit was attended with more interest after I wrote than before. I preached several times at Father's house to the citizens of Farmington. Some of all classes attended and the Lord enabled me to set the truths of the everlasting gospel before the people and on the first day of July after setting forth the order of God I was blessed with the glorious privilege of leading our Father, Mother, and our only Sister,³ aunt Anna Cosett, cousin Seth Woodruff and also a methodist class leader into the waters of Baptism in Farmington river while solemnity and good order pervaded the congregation. Who can contemplate such a scenery with insensibility or suppose that I could have administered this solemn ordinance of the house of the Lord on this occasion with feelings of an ordinary kind. Had I room and opportunity I should be glad to set before you this whole Scenery with all its appendiges attached to my last visit with my friends, but as I have not, suffice it to say it was the most interesting visit I ever enjoyed at a Fathers house. After Baptism I attended to the ordinance of confirmation or laying on of hands and in the evening I organized this small branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and communed with them. I ordained Brother Dwight Webster (the Methodist class leader) to the office of a priest. Cousin Betsy and Ann Cossett was present at these meetings, Betsy's mind seemed much interested in the same. I truly rejoiced to Behold our Sister Eunice independent in maintaining the cause of truth and of God. I had many a pleasant walk with this dear Sister while with them. I never before knew what it was to enjoy the unlimited and unreserved embraces of a Sisters love. We mingled our joys, tears, sympathies, and prayers together before a throne of grace, I would to God dear Brother that you might enjoy the same and even more it is your right, your privilege. But duty called me to take the parting hand with those dear friends. I did it on the morn of the third day of July with a firm Belief that time would not erase from my memory the recollection of those days. Nothing worthy of note transpired while on my journey to maine excepting while going from Boston to Portland by water the Steem Boat in which I sailed picked up the wreck of a Spanish Brig and towed her into Portland. She had been wrecked 10 days at Sea all her crew was on board no lives lost. After spending a few days with my family and friends in Scarborough (during which time we were blessed with the birth of a daughter on the 14th of July Mother and babe doing well)⁴ I took the parting hand with the

³Wilford Woodruff's full brothers were Azmon and Thompson. His half brothers and sister were: Philo, Asahel Hart, Franklin, Newton, Julius, and Eunice.

⁴Wilford emphasizes this event in the letter by printing the words in parenthesis, whereas everything else in this portion of the letter is written in script.

friends to once more go to the Islands of the Sea. This mission was not so much to preach the gospel as it was to prepare the Saints to go out of Babylon and stand in Holy Places while judgments work in the earth. And by the assistance of God I accomplished my object in this thing in a good degree notwithstanding the malice and hatred of wicked men and devils. Although my enemies plotted for my destruction in secret chambers, threatened me with tar, feathers, and death, posted off a Sheriff at my beds: yet in spite of all their ungodly devices, I was enabled to assist in purchasing about fifteen hundred Dollars worth of horses, wagons harness and tents &c. to convey about fifty of the Saints to the land of Zion or City far west. This labour fell upon me in consequence of those Saints being Seamen and unacquainted in such matters. Thus you see my mission in this generation is diverse from the Sectarian priest with their high salaries. It is no small matter to have such a trust required at ones own hands, however. I was enabled to perform the task and return home without molestation from even my worst enemies. This camp of Saints will leave the Town of Camden on the Mainland the 10th day of Sept. Next month, we shall leave Father Carter's in Scarborough the 19th day of Sept. I shall lead this company of which I have been speaking to the far west Missouri. I should rejoice to have our Sister and parents and other friends in Connecticut go with us to that land yourself not excepted, but I suppose I shall not be thus favored at present, we shall pass through Albany; We shall also pass through Terre Haute Ia⁵ where you reside and if you are at home I shall calculate to have an interview with you, it will probably be about the last of October as we shall have about 1500 miles to journey before we reach you. The only aggravation of such a visit might be that the time might be limited to an hour or a night in consequence of the care of the camp upon my saints. however I will be thankful for even a few hours interview with my Brother. I have so many things resting upon my mind that when I close I may find that I have not touched upon the most important parts of your letter. But as you have manifested such interest in my welfare and the cause in which I am engaged, I feel disposed at the time to lay before you my calling in life and that unreservedly so that you may have a view of the road in which I shall walk in this day and generation. My Dear Brother what I have done since I became a member of the Church of Latter Day Saints I have done for myself and not another. I have done it to with my eyes open and not shut. I have done it in Knowledge and not Ignorance, and I know before the living and true God that the cause in

⁵The abbreviation for Indiana at that time was "Ia." On the letter Asahel sent in reply to Wilford's letter there is a stamped postmark bearing the words: "Terre Haute Ia Sept 11."

which I am engaged is eternal truth and the work of god and that it will stand while babylon falls to rise no more; it is the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands,⁶ it is the last covenant that God will make with Israel in pruning his vineyard for the last time and restoring unto them his Kingdom. If you ask how I know I answer by the word and spirit of God, by the open visions of heaven, and the revelations of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost and the gifts and graces of the same that follow the believer. if we have the spirit of Christ and the comforter we may know of the doctrine whether it be of God. if we lack wisdom ask of God and we'll obtain it. I despise the principle of being dependent alone upon the testimony of Adam, Moses, Abram, Daniel, Paul, or Joseph or any other man for my knowledge of a God, and God despises it to. If I am a saint of God, let me unlock the battles of heaven, and rend the veil of Eternity, let me feel after God and see if I cannot find him when he is not vary⁷ far from every one of us, this dear Brother is my religion and privilege, and anything short of this is folly. Is God unchangeable, are not his ways equal, then where are our privileges compared with the ancient Saints. O my soul mourns over the unbelief of man, and the ignorance of the Earth. We talk of deception, and truly there is a world of it, and why should their not be, when their is a whole generation worshipping they know not what,⁸ whether a God without mouth, eyes, ears, body parts or passions as he does not reveale himself unto them, but their is no deception with the Saints in any age of the world who worships the living and true God of revelation. You will say then that my assertions are no testimony⁹ to you or at least are not satisfactory evidences of the truth of the work, and probably this is the reason why you say that my admissions are not satisfactory to you not being as explicit as you could wish. I answer I do not wish you to lean upon my testimony alone or any other mans for your knowledge of the work. Yet, if God sends a man in any age of the world by revelation to preach the gospel or deliver a message and any man rejects that testimony he is under condemnation. What is to be done then, I answer let a man go before God for himself and ask the Father in the name of Jesus Christ if these things are not so

⁶See Daniel 2:34-35.

⁷Either for emphasis or clarity, "vary" is printed above the written word.

⁸The seal on the letter has torn a small portion of the letter off where the last word of the phrase would be. It is assumed the phrase should read: "they know not *what*."

⁹Beginning after the word "testimony," the writer resorts to very minute printing of his words to the end of the letter in order to get more on the remaining page. However, wishing to say more and to utilize every bit of paper he uses the folded portions of the back page also, resorting partly to script and partly to small printing.

and he may have the witness for himself. And I now say unto you Brother Asahel never receive the work in which I am engaged because I say it is true. But humble yourself before God and covenant with him with full purpose of heart to walk in the light and truth when he shows it unto you then ask the Lord in the name of Jesus Christ if these things are not true and he will manifest the truth of it unto you by his spirit, but see that you do not grieve the spirit by rejecting the light when shown you, search the scriptures daily for in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of all our doctrine, and if you receive no testimony or light upon the subject stand where you are untill you come before the bar of God. Then you shall know these things are true, thus to your own Master you must stand or fall. It is one of the greatest desires of my soul that you may see, understand, believe and imbrace the work. Brother I am sensible I have not taken a systematic course of citing you to passages of scripture in proof of all our doctrines as I have passed along from time to time but I am willing to do it as far as it is requested. Ask me any questions you please I will endeavor to answer them in meekness and humility for I feel a deep interest in the salvation of your soul and I beg the privilege of enjoying your society in a Celestial Kingdom. I said I write to show you the road in which I shall walk in this generation. When I first embraced this work (we profess to be led by revelation) I was ordained a teacher Jan. 2^d 1834—and a priest Nov 5 1834. June 28 1835 I was ordained an Elder. May 31 1836, also a member of the Second Seventy. On the 3^d of Jan. 1837 I was also ordained as a member of the first quorum of the Seventy Elders by revelation. And I have just received several lengthy letters from the Presidency in Zion in which I am informed there hath been some vary interesting and important revelations lately received of the Lord in which I am commanded in person to come immediately to that place via far west and also to take upon me the Bishopprick or Apostleship of one of the twelve which have fallen away and that I am to take the parting hand with the saints in Zion. And to leave this continent in company with the other eleven on the 26 day of April next and to cross the mighty deep to visit other climes to bear the keys of this last kingdom befor the kings and princes of the nations of the earth. Thus my Brother you see the path spread before me. I am ready to go, my heart and soul responds AMEN, I count not my life dear unto myself. Truly the Lord choseth weak things. Brother Asahel be reconciled to my calling, be not troubled about me. I worship a God of Power, Knowledge, and revelation. And he is with me By day and night. When I am sick he heals me when I am cast down he comforts me. When my enemies are upon me

he tells me of it and shows me the way to escape. He shows me by dreams, visions, and revelations all things that await me. I do not war as those that beat the air. I know in Whom I trust. Then Dear Brother go with us and you will say the half hath not been told you. The Lord hath had his eye upon you from your cradle. his unseen hand has mysteriously guided you from many dangers temporal and spiritual, your afflictions are governed for your good, then strive not against the providence of God. Keep his commandments and you shall one day understand the cause of ALL. Asahel H. Woodruff yours in the Love of God. Willford Woodruff.¹⁰

¹¹You will discover from my writings that I am about to go to the west consequently it would be improper for any of my friends to send any more letters to this eastern country to me. I was informed by Sister Eunice that you thought of visiting your friends in Connecticut this fall should this be the case I shall probably not see you as I pass through Terre Haute. I should be pleased to have you visit your friends in the east for they would all be happy to see you. I should also esteem it a great favor to have an interview with you but I would not wish you to defer your visit to the east on my account, for I know others wish to see you also. Should it so happen that I should not see you as I go west you will please direct your next communication to Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri. I wish you to answer your mind freely and ask me any questions you wish, and it will be with pleasure and cheerfulness that I shall endeavor to answer your every question according to the best of my abilities. I am sensible that there hath many things transpired with us as a people that may appear strange to one at a distance who has heard the report of these things, and not known the circumstances under which they have transpired. I should like to have you give the Book of Mormon and also the doctrine and covenants another reading and let it be accompanied with prayer before God that you may have a knowledge of their truths and while perusing those books consider the limited privilege of J. Smith Jr and then see if it appears rational that he or any other man could be the author of those things without the assistance of God. Again would the Son suffer any man to prosper to bring forth such a Book as the doctrine and covenants (even if he had power to do so) and then palm it upon the world for the revelations of God when they were his own make, judge ye. The 3^d No. of the

¹⁰Pres. Woodruff signs his name with two l's — "Willford," throughout the letter and in the printed notation on the letter, presumably written by Wilford Woodruff at a later time. It reads: "Willford Woodruff's last letter written to Asahel before his death in reply to his of July 22, 1838."

¹¹Here begin the inserts on the reverse side of the last page. Before the first sentence which begins "you will . . ." is what looks like a notation, "P. 3."

Elders Journal is now before the public printed in Missouri. I expect they will come regular and I trust you will obtain them. so as to know something what is going on with us. I pray the Lord that you may yet see the cause of Jew and Gentile in its true light, and I hope yet before you die you will be an instrument in the hands of God of sounding the glad tidings of salvation to some of the house of Israel in this generation yourself. O what tidings this would be to my soul, far more glorious to me than to hear that my Brother had obtained the riches of China or Perue, or the honours of the East.¹² I cannot yet believe that God hath bestowed upon you the mind you possess for *nought* and I trust it will yet be employed with all its forcible powers in a cause that will do honour to a Saint. I can't give it up, my vary soul shrinks at the idea, I am determin to plead with God for this desire of my heart to be granted while hope remains. But my paper is used up and my mind still pressed. The subject is as inexhaustible as the fountains of the Atlantic. Mrs. Woodruff remembers your complements with gratitutde and wishes to be remembered to you and ever share in your love and friendship. Excuses for poor paper and writing will not help you read this sheet.

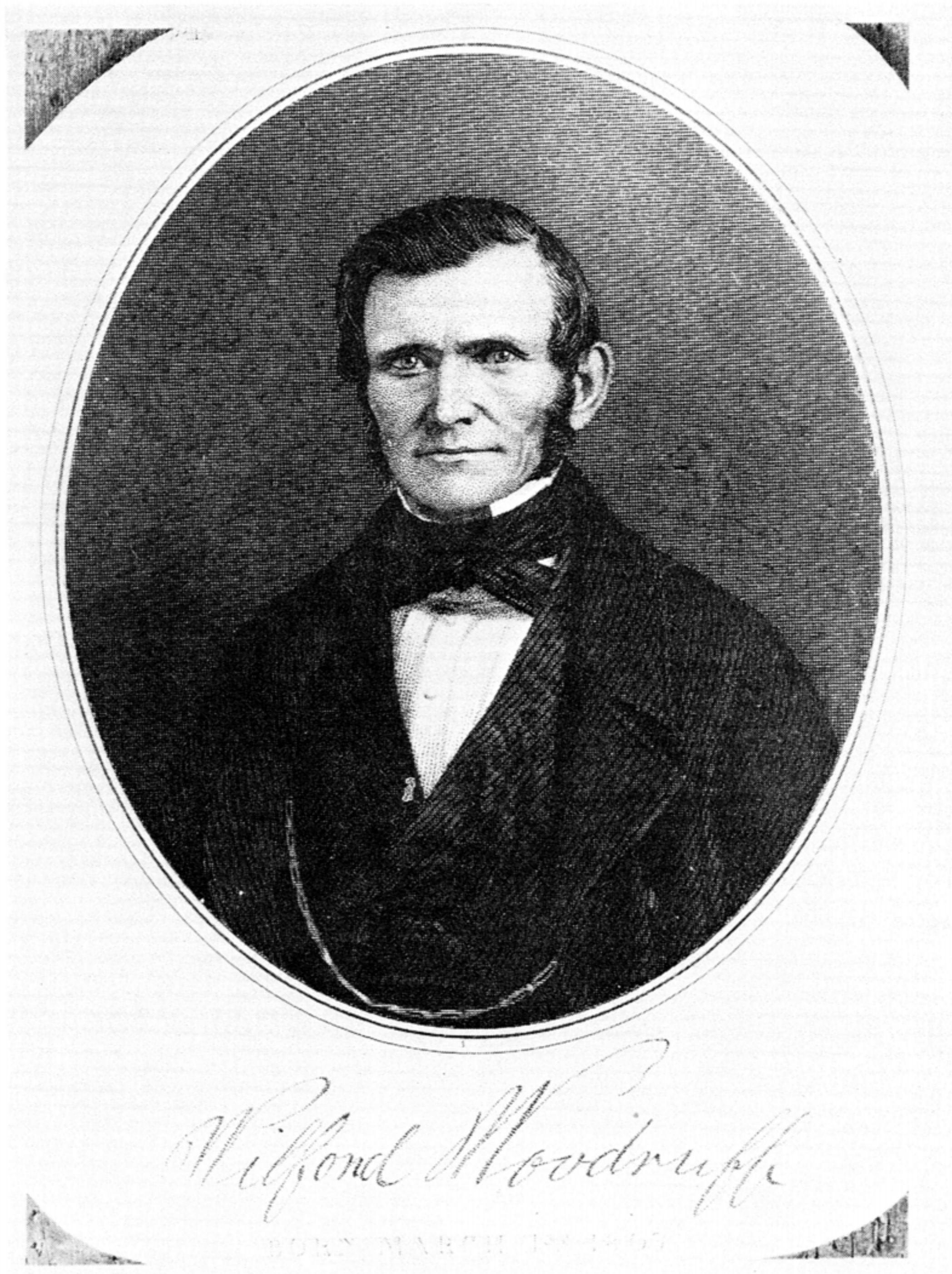
Asahel H. Woodruff

Willford Woodruff

¹³I am not so weak and unkind as for a moment to harbour the thought that anything in you letter is written in unkindness or hardness. Brother answer your feelings, speak plainly, it is your right and duty so to do, and if I have the Spirit of Christ I shall never be offended at your honest plainness. I say with yourself God forbid that we should be under the influence of Mormonism if it is not the work of God. I ask none of my friends to engage in it that have not the evidence and witness in and for themselves. I know the work to be of God and true for myself and not another and without this knowledge I never should have desired our father, Mother, Sister, and other friends to have engaged in it and if those of my friends who have not engaged in it do not find it to be the work of God they will be much troubled to find a work which is of God in this generation. You see Brother that I speak plain and pointed myself but bear with me in these things for I speak them all with the best of feelings under the consideration that I am accountable to God for all. I certainly have had a chance to know for myself whether the work be of God or the devil as five years experance with Joseph and the Church in all their councils

¹²This word crowded in at the end of a line on the page is difficult to read. It appears to be "East."

¹³Here Wilford Woodruff resorts to small printing again. This passage would have appeared across the back of the letter under the fold which was sealed down.



An 1853 photograph of Wilford Woodruff

etc must leave me without dubiety upon my mind. I have much I would like to say to you upon this subject which I must defer untill another time as you see I am in close quarters so farewell for the present. W.W.¹⁴

¹⁴The letter is then folded, sealed, and addressed on the outside to "Mr. Asahel H. Woodruff, Terre Haute, Indiana." In the upper right hand corner is the number "25," indicating the postage fee paid. In the upper left hand corner is the notation, "scarborough Aug 29."

Notes and Comments

JESSE GAUSE, COUNSELOR TO THE PROPHET

Robert J. Woodford*

As we restudy Church history there appears for a few brief moments in 1832 an unobtrusive character who might have become one of the leading authorities of the Church, but instead took his exit as silently as he had entered, never to be heard of again. This man, whose name should also be as well-known to the Latter-day Saints as are the names of Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith, Sen., and John Smith, was Jesse Gause (rhymes with house). Now a virtual unknown, Gause was the first of these men called to be a counselor to the Prophet Joseph Smith. How Jesse Gause came to such prominence and then faded into obscurity is not known among the pages of Church history. Unfortunately, there is so little recorded concerning him that forming a profile of the man is difficult.

Our earliest reference to Jesse Gause is as a member of the Shaker communities in Hancock near Pittsfield, and possibly in North Union, Ohio as well.¹ His conversion and baptism are not found in any of the records of the Church, but one writer has suggested that he was converted by Reynolds Cahoon in late 1830.² It was not until 8 March 1832, when Jesse Gause was called to be a counselor to Joseph Smith³ in the presidency of the high priesthood, that his name is even mentioned in sur-

*Robert J. Woodward is an instructor for Seminaries and Institutes and for the BYU Salt Lake Center.

¹Mario S. DePillis, "The Development of Mormon Communitarism 1826-1846" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1961), p. 171.

²Ibid.

³Joseph Smith received a revelation in November 1831 that gave him instructions concerning the organization of the presidency of the high priesthood. Most of that revelation is now found published as Section 107:59-100 in the Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph Smith was ordained president of the high priesthood on 25 January 1832 by Sidney Rigdon.

living Church records. The notation in the Kirtland Revelation Book is as follows:

March 8, 1832. Chose this day and ordained brother Jesse Gause and Broth Sidney to be my counsellors of the ministry of the presidency of the high Priesthood. . . .⁴

One week later, a revelation concerning Jesse Gause was received by Joseph Smith, confirming Jesse in his work and giving further direction in his office and calling. There are two manuscript copies of this revelation extant: one in the Kirtland Revelation Book, located in the Church Historical Department, and the other in the library of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In both of these Jesse Gause's name has been crossed out and Frederick G. Williams' name written above it.⁵ Since that time, all published copies of this revelation (Section 81 of the Doctrine and Covenants) list Frederick G. Williams as the one to whom it is directed. Since this revelation contains instructions, duties, and promised blessings to the one called as counselor to the Prophet, the revelation was just as appropriate for Frederick G. Williams as it was to Jesse Gause.

After Jesse Gause was ordained, he appeared in a leading role in the Church for only a short time. In April 1832, he accompanied Joseph Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and Peter Whitmer, Jr. on a trip to Missouri. They arrived 24 April and began holding conferences with the Saints in Zion on the 26th.⁶ In the minutes of a meeting of the Literary Firm held on Monday, 30 April, Jesse Gause was listed as a counselor to Joseph Smith.⁷ Joseph left Independence that day to return again to Kirtland, and Jesse Gause remained behind to conduct further business.⁸ On his return trip home he stopped at North Union, Ohio, to retrieve his wife from the society of the Shakers there.⁹ An elder of this Shaker community, Matthew Houston, wrote a letter to his friend, Seth Y. Wells, who was a member

⁴Kirtland Revelation Book, p. 10, located in the Church Historical Department.

⁵The author of this change remains unidentified.

⁶"Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 1, 24 April 1832, Church Historical Department. See also, *Far West Record* (typescript), p. 24, Church Historical Department.

⁷*Far West Record*, p. 27.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 27-34.

⁹The formal name of this church is: United Society of True Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. The church originated in England with Ann Lee as its founder.

of the Shaker bishopric at New Lebanon, about Jesse Gause's vain attempt to reunite with his wife. Part of this letter reads as follows:

And sure enough I presume you was acquainted with Jesse Gause from Hancock he was here a few days since after his wife Minerva—she utterly refused being his slave any longer—he had to go away without her. altho he tryed what the law could do for him he was very much intraged threatened to take away Minerva's child—she presented it to him but he went away without it and her—he is yet a Mormon—& and is second to the Prophet or Seer—Joseph Smith—this state of exaltation may tend to steady him or keep him away from us a little longer—for which I am heartily glad for he is certainly the meanest of men.—

But Minerva certainly conducts herself cleverly so far We find no fault with her—at any rate she cut off Old Jesse verry handsomely—& he felt it to his gizzard.¹⁰

One important item in the letter is the reference to Jesse Gause's being "second to the Prophet or Seer—Joseph Smith."

Upon his return to Kirtland, Jesse was called to serve a mission with Zebedee Coltrin. They began their journey on 1 August 1832, and traveled until the 19th, at which time Coltrin decided to return to Kirtland because of severe pains in his head. After praying with and for each other, they parted. Jesse Gause continued east and walked right out of the history of the Church, never again to return.¹¹ There appears to be no other record of the man either in or out of the Church.¹²

Some months after the departure of Jesse Gause, the presidency of the high priesthood was reorganized with Frederick G. Williams replacing him as counselor. This reorganization was commanded in Section 90 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and actually took place in 18 March 1833.¹³

¹⁰Matthew Houston to Seth Y. Wells, North Union, 10 August 1832, WHRS, as quoted in DePillis' dissertation, p. 184. Spelling errors are in the original.

¹¹Zebedee Coltrin, Journal, pp. 29-35, Church Historical Department.

¹²Under the date of December 3, 1832, Joseph Smith recorded: "Br Jese and Mogan and William McColen was excommunicated from the Church &C." D. Michael Quinn feels Jesse Gause is one of these three men excommunicated on that date. See D. Michael Quinn, "The Evolution of the Presiding Quorums of the LDS Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974):24.

¹³Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1959-60), 1:334.

Book Reviews

Cracroft, Richard H. and Neal E. Lambert, editors. *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974. 495 pages. Hardback, \$10.95. Paperback, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Eugene England, assistant professor of English and tutor in the Paracollege at Saint Olaf College in Minnesota, and one of the founding editors of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*.

When I was an undergraduate at the University of Utah, in the 1950s, it was already fashionable there to condemn the LDS Church as invincibly anti-intellectual and the "local culture" as a wasteland. I remember one barrage of letters in the student newspaper about Mormon literature, music, etc. A proudly disaffected graduate student, after a caustic but actually quite accurate description of Mormon artistic achievement, said the deficiencies resulted from our theology and Church practice—our emphasis on opportunity for expression and development for all members as part of the very process of salvation; he then, with effective sarcasm, described the prototypical Mormon artistic offering as a rather sentimental Christmas cantata, sung in sacrament meeting by a large but somewhat unbalanced and unsteady choir made up of and led by volunteers and even joined in the climactic chorus by all the rest of the congregation, including the leaders on the stand, to form an unbroken ring of what he saw as mere enthusiastic mediocrity. Recently I participated in just such a Mormon artistic endeavor—one of the dedication sessions in the Solemn Assembly Room of the Washington Temple. At the climax of the service, after we had all stood to express our joy in that unique Mormon ritual of celebration, the "Hosanna Shout" following the dedicatory prayer, a volunteer choir, which like nine others for the other sessions had traveled by bus hundreds of miles from one of the various regions in the Temple District, remained standing in their places to the side of the room,

facing at an angle both the audience on the main floor and the General Authorities and other leaders on the stand, and sang the "Hosanna Anthem." We, our leaders, and the choir, all still standing and facing each other, then joined in singing at the Anthem's close, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning" while the choir voices soared above us in a descant, welding us together in one unbroken ring of—not aesthetically great art, perhaps, but what is much more important—unparalleled spiritual unity and power and beauty, which the musical quality of the choir (diminished partly by the emotion they felt along with all of us) did not create but did in fact contribute to. I've heard and deeply appreciate some great music, written and performed by great musicians, including some great religious music by people of sincere faith, but I have never experienced any other music nearly as moving—or pleasing—or "worthwhile" as that singing in the Temple.

And I have come, gradually I must confess, to a similar conviction about literature. I know much of the world's "great" literature well—well enough to teach it and write about it and love it and to be continually refreshed and strengthened and challenged by it as I engage in the lonely task of working out my salvation. And I know that we have not yet produced in "Mormon culture"—nor are we likely to produce, I think—any literature that can be called "great" by the general standards that I refer to in using the term. Yet I feel absolutely no need to apologize for Mormon literature—nor (a more subtle form of apology) to make extravagant claims for its future. My main criticism of *A Believing People*, which is the first significant anthology of the literature of the Latter-day Saints, is that the editors, Richard Cracroft and Neal Lambert of Brigham Young University, still appear a bit too defensive, too apologetic (including claiming too much for the future), though they are certainly better in this respect than those who have preceded them in critical attention to our literature.

The editors introduce their volume with a quote from Orson F. Whitney that we must assume expresses their own perspective and hope:

We shall yet have Miltons and Shakespears of our own. God's ammunition is not yet exhausted. His highest spirits are held in reserve for the latter times. In God's name and by his help we will build up a literature whose top shall

touch heaven, though its foundation may now be low on earth.

But, if I may differ with Brother Whitney, I don't believe God held his highest spirits in reserve that they might come forth in the latter days as our great writers, certainly not as Ernest Hemingways or Norman Mailers, but not even as Miltons or Shakespeares, who, whatever they may have contributed to the aesthetic pleasure and sensitivity or even moral and philosophical insight of us all, most likely have brought few, if any, souls to Christ. That, after all, is God's first concern and would seem to be his primary mission for his "highest spirits." Yes, I believe God held in reserve the sensitive and articulate Apostle, Parley P. Pratt—and also the plain-spoken and stubbornly courageous handcart pioneer, Mary Goble Pay—both of whom produced good (not "great") literature that is included in this anthology; but the reason they were sent to us in these latter days, and the reason I most value them, is not for the greatness of their writing, but for the greatness of their lives.

Why should anyone be anxious about a great Mormon literature? In fact, given that, at least in America "great" literature has almost invariably grown out of the religious failure of a group (e.g., *The Scarlet Letter*) or the religious despair of an individual (e.g., *Moby Dick*)—and more, given that, at least in the twentieth century, "great" literature (meaning usually that it is commercially or aesthetically successful) has itself most often been shot through with serious moral or philosophical error, should we not better be pleased to have been spared such greatness? This point was made profoundly clear by an independent observer, Robert Scholes, the fine critic from Brown University. Speaking here at St. Olaf College, he reviewed the work of four major figures in the "great tradition" of Midwestern writing, Ole Rolvaag, Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, and William Gass; he explored the influence on that literature of a particular social and religious vision (the pioneers, "prairie consciousness," which he saw as "deeply and tragically wrong" because full of the arrogant delusion that the land offered them limitless resources to be exploited), and he then examined the literature's satirization of that vision's inevitable heritage of materialism and Babbitttry in the Midwestern society of the second and third generations. He admired the literature but was forcefully critical both of the

original vision and its social aftermath. In later conversation, Scholes and I discussed the less materialistic and exploitive pioneering vision of certain mountain people, particularly, the Mormons. (The humbling physical constraints of mountain and desert seemed to us an important cause, though of course the Mormon consecration to an ideal of salvation through personal and group development was also crucial.) Then he ventured the startling conjecture that those other pioneer enterprises did not produce such a successful literature as the Midwestern, at least by orthodox criteria, precisely because they were more successful religiously! *Deja vu*: I thought how often I had heard (though they were offered *condescendingly* by Gentiles and *apologetically* by Mormons—obviously thought to be a kind of cop-out) similar explanations for the lack of great Mormon literature, that Mormonism answers well so many basic questions and provides such a satisfying way of life for most of its people that there is not sufficient tension or tragedy—and besides, Mormons have been too busy doing more important things. *But there is no need to apologize*. Religious success is certainly preferable to literary success, and Scholes frankly said he would choose great religion over great literature every time.

Of course, we may not necessarily have to choose; it isn't always a simple either-or situation. But for me the insight Scholes was exploring about an almost inverse relation between "great" art and "great" religion and the experienced reality of my preference for that singing of the "Hosanna Anthem" in the Temple over a "greater" performance of Bach's "St. Matthew Passion" must be accounted for in our (still undefined) Mormon aesthetic and in any criticism of our literature. The central point would seem to be the need to responsibly include, in our evaluations of literature, a special consciousness that life is larger than art, that our assessment must include the literal truth of the religious and moral vision expressed and the rightness of the religious and moral response evoked. Mormon literature, in particular, must be approached with criteria that do not underestimate the special values of our best and naturally characteristic work, that is, certain autobiographical and confessional forms which give the sense of genuinely successful human life lived day by day. And our literature must not be subjected to the traps laid by various forms of cultural relativism—especially those rampant in

psychological and mythological criticism and in regionalism: I mean the tendency to create as writers, and then describe as critics, structures of thought and experience and perspectives of life which are implicitly valued mainly because complex or paradoxical or exotic—or for mere correspondence to archetypal (or Freudian, etc.) categories, without reference to any kind of ultimate or historical truth. As the editors of *A Believing People* point out, “readers must never forget that for the Latter-day Saint, his church, as the Doctrine and Covenants declares, is ‘The only true and living church on the face of the whole earth,’ and a literature, or criticism of a literature which fails to examine Mormonism on these terms is not only unfair, it is futile.” The Church makes such absolute (and unusual) truth claims (including claims about literal historical events) that it is impossible to merely ignore those claims as “interesting” ideas and focus on the “independent reality” and relativistic literary values of Mormon *culture*, in the way, for instance, that people can and do with Judaism or Norwegian Lutheranism. The Church’s claims are either essentially true or else the Church is a terrible fraud; if the latter, “Mormon culture” is built on sand, implicitly incapable of producing great literature or even of being taken very seriously. The editors seem to see this clearly and are clear in pointing out that “Mormon writing is outside the mainstream of modern literary fashion,” particularly heretical to adherents of the prevailing literary orthodoxy, humanistic existentialism. But they still seem somewhat too apologetic about this and don’t say (at least as clearly as I feel a need to hear) that when it becomes necessary, as it does sometimes and perhaps will increasingly, for the Church, or the individual Mormon writer or reader, to choose between great literature and great religion, there is no question where our commitments and greatest needs call us.

But let me be more optimistic. I realize that in fact the lives of Parley P. Pratt and Mary Goble Pay exert a good part of their saving power through what they wrote about those lives—his polished *Autobiography* and her unsophisticated “reminiscences.” And I know that a proper study of literature can hone our perceptions and deepen and broaden our sensibilities so that we can read those writings in a way that makes possible fuller response to the saving power of those lives. We do have a fine literary heritage as “a believing people,” and there is great value in knowing it well. As I have suggested,

that heritage shows to best advantage in various forms of personal witness to faith and experience, genres in which the truth of actual living, and of quite direct confession, is at least as important as aesthetic or metaphorical truth—I mean journals and diaries, letters, sermons, lyric poetry (including hymns), autobiography and autobiographical fiction, and increasingly, the personal essay. The editors give us a fine selection of these, well edited and attractively published. Most of the selections that I would have hoped to find are there, besides many valuable new “discoveries” (the poignant humor combined with unpretentious conviction in Dan Jones’ “Some Early Mormon ‘Fast Days’ ” give it a radiance nearly unparalleled in frontier literature). There are helpful, perceptive notes and introductions (if anything, too brief) to the genre sections. And one of those introductions has an important insight that particularly interests me here: “. . . as the Church finds itself increasingly at odds with the moral values of the encroaching world, the personal essay will undoubtedly assume a larger role as a vehicle for the expression of the values of a people as manifest in the individual life of a sensitive writer.” I hope the editors are right, because for our time and for the widest possible appreciation by readers and participation by writers I believe the personal essay is the form that best suits the particular needs and possibilities of a literature for “a believing people.” The editors give us some good examples and encouragement.

Because the editors recognize that their work is “tentative and growing and open to change and improvement,” I can’t resist making a few suggestions—perhaps for the second edition. (This first edition, which every literate Latter-day Saint should obtain for a source of delight and encouragement, of emotional sensitivity and moral and spiritual strength, should certainly sell out completely—25,000 right at BYU, I would hope.) I suspect a better selection of letters could be made from our rich resources, especially from the twentieth century, and that journals and diaries from, and history about, the modern, increasingly worldwide Church could be included. The whole volume tends to focus too much on the nineteenth century and to reflect the Utah Church syndrome. I missed some of our finest lyrics—Clinton Larson’s “To a Dying Girl,” from *The Lord of Experience*, Karl Keller’s “Manti Temple” (*BYU Studies*, Autumn 1959), and Sylvia Ruth’s “For Our Consummate Passover” (*Dialogue*, Spring 1968); and two of our

finest pieces of autobiographical fiction—Wayne Carver's "A Child's Christmas in Utah" (*Carleton Miscellany*, December 1965), and Carole Hansen's "The Death of a Son" (*Dialogue*, Autumn 1967). It would have been good to see (particularly examples that could be found that are literature rather than mere theology because the style and tone make them into moving expressions of personal faith) one of Lowell Bennion's fine essays of practical theology or one of Sterling McMurrin's or George Boyd's fine pieces of theoretical theology. And there should have been room for an example from the sermons of Elder Hugh B. Brown, with his unique combination of intellectual and literary with spiritual power, and from President Spencer W. Kimball, with his unique vigor and imagery, and from President Marion G. Romney, with his uniquely personal and moving power to witness concerning Christ. Finally, I guess I just don't understand what principles of selection would lead the editors to include May Swenson (yes, she is the most prestigious writer with a Mormon background and did in fact come from Utah, but she is fully expatriated and her writing and vision seem to have nothing at all to do with a believing people) and yet exclude Wallace Stegner (yes, he is not a Mormon and thinks our theology only a powerful myth, but he has adopted "Mormon country" as his own and has written with deep empathy, and more skillfully and movingly than anyone else in the twentieth century, about our pioneer experience, e.g., "Ordeal by Handcart," *Colliers* [6 July 1956]). Nor can I in conscience avoid mentioning the outrageous critical slip of giving over ten percent of the book (56 pages) to a decidedly inferior drama, "And They Shall Be Gathered" by Martin Kelly, while allowing us only four pages of what is probably our best piece of Mormon literature to date, Maureen Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*.

However, *A Believing People* is, as the editors hoped, "a good beginning." And I urge everyone within earshot (you and all the friends, relatives, colleagues, or fellow Saints you can influence) to buy a copy and to communicate reactions to each other and to the editors. I also urge you to support the work of Mormon writers, both those included in this volume and others, by buying and responding to their work and the publications in which they appear. Literature is important and valuable (though I have been at some pains to remind us of what is more valuable) and we have now a community large

and self-conscious enough to support our own literary traditions (3.5 million people, over 2 million English-speaking, certainly larger than Shakespeare's or Milton's audience) without worrying at all about "modern literary fashions." Our need is mainly to encourage the talent we have and keep it in good perspective by building a supportive literary community in the Church—of both writers and readers, speakers and hearers. To do this we must explore our heritage and articulate principles of criticism appropriate to that unique heritage and its modern possibilities. And especially must we build religious unity in that community: We must be *less* (rather than *more*, as has sometimes been the case) willing than our Gentile friends to excommunicate, verbally or in our hearts, the too orthodox or the too unorthodox, the apparent "egghead" or the "philistine" among us. We must cultivate both a Christ-like love of truth and a Christ-like humility and tolerance of those brothers and sisters who see some things differently from ourselves. We should not expect the Church to directly foster such a community, nor even in any decided way to foster good literature; its primary function is to help us with our primary task—that of using true principles to learn to love the Lord and thus each other; and the Church knows, even if we sometimes forget, that, despite Shelley and Matthew Arnold and even T. S. Eliot, literature is not a substitute for religion.

"Great" literature has helped prepare me to be more sensitive to certain spiritual experiences, and it has helped me see, and especially to feel, some important truths—and I am grateful. But conversations with my pioneer grandmother have done the same, and so have many good pieces of good Mormon literature from *A Believing People*, and these things (largely because of their power to convey lived, not merely imagined, religion) have also strengthened my faith—for which I am much more grateful.

McKiernan, F. Mark, Alma R. Blair, Paul M. Edwards, editors. *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*. Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973. \$10.00.

Reviewed by Chad J. Flake, Curator of Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

The Restoration Movement is a collection of essays on various facets of Mormon history, written by scholars of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS and RLDS). Following an introductory essay, Chapters 1-8 concern themselves with the early Church in New York, Kirtland, Missouri and Nauvoo, and with the movements arising just after the death of Joseph Smith. This covers the first 30 years of the restoration. The next 112 years are represented by the final four chapters, either as summary articles or as articles on some aspect of Mormon history subsequent to 1860.

Apparently the editors hoped for a work, with some continuity, which would provide in one volume a general outline of the restoration movement. The principal weakness of the book, however, lies in the absence of uniformity. Certain articles broadly survey a particular era, while others focus narrowly on a specific problem. More disconcerting than this, some of the essays were obviously written for the expert, while others appear to have been written for the novice. The editors explain that they did a minimum of editing in order to retain the flavor of the various backgrounds. A larger editorial role, however, would have improved the book.

The work begins with an introductory essay by Klaus J. Hansen. While one would expect an introductory essay to introduce the book, it is becoming more prevalent in scholarly books to have an introduction that only generally relates to the subject; but that doesn't make it less objectionable, particularly when the introduction is quite esoteric. Hansen's essay is a pretentious look at Mormonism and its relationship to other contemporary millenarian religions, which ends with the question whether Mormonism as a cultural entity even now exists. As John Sorenson has aptly commented on this essay: "Hardly a concept in the historian's and behavioral scientist's armamentarium is omitted, all somehow part of or related to 'Mormon culture.' Yet we never learn what that elusive thing is. When we reach the concluding query ('Is it possible that as a distinct cultural entity, Mormonism has more or less ceased to exist?') the vagueness of 'cultural' and 'Mormonism' has robbed the question of meaning" (*Dialogue* 8:2, p. 19).

The next two essays by Larry Porter and Max H. Parkin are summaries of the Church in New York and Ohio, distilled, respectively, from Porter's dissertation and Parkin's thesis. Dr.

Porter's essay leads one again to wonder if, except for the revival controversy, there is anything new to be found in the history of the Church in New York. Parkin provides a good introduction to the history of Kirtland, as well as a rather superficial discussion of the elements which eventually caused the expulsion of the Church from Ohio. This article and the recent Charles Redd Lecture on the economics of Kirtland by Marvin Hill, Larry Wimmer, and Keith Rooker (15 January 1975 at Brigham Young University) point up the need for considerable additional work on two aspects of Mormon Kirtland: economics and polygamy.

Following these are two essays on the Missouri period, both more restricted in scope. Warren Jennings discusses social conflict in Jackson County where, given the Mormon Zionism, its northern background, and its seeming willingness for the participation of blacks, there was bound to be conflict. In retrospect, the point seems so obvious that one hates to see the Jackson County episode so summarily dismissed.

F. Mark McKiernan does better for the last part of the Missouri phase, picking up the story with Smith and Rigdon coming into Far West and ending it with their arrest. As in his book *The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness*, Dr. McKiernan seems to place far too much emphasis on Sidney Rigdon. His reliance on Reed Peck for the Salt Sermon seems a bit risky, as does his uncritical acceptance of Corrill and Hunt. There are also some clear errors, for example, his assertion on page 125 that the entire Mormon hierarchy crumbled as a result of desertions.

Robert Flanders takes up the story of Nauvoo. As in his *Kingdom by the Mississippi*, Flanders' emphasis is on failure, and he misses the point of Nauvoo. Nauvoo, like the classic tragic character, should not be viewed by its final failure, but for what it almost accomplished.

T. Edgar Lyon's article on Nauvoo and the Council of Twelve and Alma Blair's essay on the beginnings of the RLDS Church constitute the highpoints of the volume. Lyon's Nauvoo expertise is apparent as he traces the evolution of the Council of Twelve as a ruling body, a theme that has been enlarged upon by Michael Quinn in the first issue of the *Journal of Mormon History*. Blair's treatment of the emergence of the RLDS Church is characterized by insight and candor, little touched by polemic.

William D. Russell follows with an essay on James J. Strang, whose story has been told elsewhere as ably. Russell's idea that Strang was a serious threat to Brigham Young is unjustifiable; Strang certainly took away some of the membership of the church, but there is scant evidence for the idea that Young's leadership with the majority was ever in doubt.

The next three essays are of little consequence. Leonard Arrington and Michael Quinn's essay on the Church in the far west is particularly disappointing in view of the high quality work Arrington has produced in the past. Davis Bitton's article on life styles states, in effect, that the Utah Mormons built homes with what was available, ate what was available (with due regard for the Word of Wisdom), and did what most other people on the frontier did for leisure activities. The value of the article lies in the quotes from various diaries. James Allen's essay is a pleasant summary of Mormonism in the twentieth century for those who do not have access to his *Mormonism in the Twentieth Century*, updated in *Dialogue* (Spring 1972).

The final essay by Paul M. Edwards concerns the supreme directional control battle within the RLDS Church after the ascendancy of Frederick M. Smith. His statement that the problem raged in the 1960s requires elaboration, and his concluding analogy between the RLDS Church and the nation seems rather dubious.

Finally a word should be said about bookmaking. In addition to containing numerous errors, the book is cheaply bound and poorly printed; the review copy, for instance, has a blank page 191. For the price, one would hope for a better job.

S. George Ellsworth, editor. *Dear Ellen: Two Mormon Women and Their Letters*. Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1974. 92 pp. \$12.00.

Agnes Just Reid. *Letters of Long Ago*. Brigham D. Madsen, editor. Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1974. 93 pp. \$9.50.

Reviewed by Thomas G. Alexander, Professor of History and Associate Director of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University.

Any reader is pleased to find more in a book than he bargained for, and this reviewer was pleasantly surprised that the *Dear Ellen* volume consisted of more than the edited letters of two Mormon women. Opening with a biographical sketch of Ellen Spencer Clawson and Ellen Pratt McGary, Professor Ellsworth tells of their early life in Nauvoo, their exodus to Winter Quarters and to Utah, and their separate lives in Salt Lake City and San Bernardino.

This sketch leads to the heart of the book which is a series of letters exchanged between the two women in 1856 and 1857. Offering perspectives on conditions in Salt Lake City and San Bernardino, the letters tell of the lives of women representing two social classes and two perspectives from within the Mormon community. Far from the center of Mormonism and daughter of a lower class family, Ellen Pratt endured two uneven marriages and divorces and a life which took her from California to various towns in Utah. Ellen Spencer, on the other hand, as the wife of Hyrum B. Clawson, a socially prominent businessman, ecclesiastical leader, and polygamist, saw Mormon society from the top. By focusing on social and family concerns, the letters tell much of life in the two Mormon communities.

The third section of this book consists of biographical sketches of the lives of the two women and their families until the deaths of the central figures.

Though the book focuses on the letters exchanged between the two women, the strength of the volume lies in the commentary found in the first and third sections. Here Professor Ellsworth has put the lives of the participants in perspective. One learns of Ellen Pratt's flirtation with Spiritualism, of the failure of her two marriages, and of life in Beaver during the 1870s and 1880s. He learns that Ellen Clawson's life centered on her family, the theatrical and business pursuits of her husband, and the concerns of a polygamous wife.

Though seemingly in the same form as the nineteenth century *Dear Ellen* letters, Professor Madsen's *Letters of Long Ago*, were, in fact, written in the early 1920s by Agnes Just Reid. Completed before the development of present oral history techniques, Mrs. Reid based the letters on the reminiscences of her mother, Emma Thompson Just, an early settler of the Blackfoot River Valley of southeastern Idaho.

Written in the form of letters to Emma's father, George Thompson, a Mormon convert who had returned to England after the bitter disappointment and horrors of the Morrisite War of 1862, the narrative tells of life near Fort Hall Reservation in the 1870s and 1880s. Married at the age of fifteen to George Bennett, one of the soldiers who helped escort the Morrisite refugees to Idaho, Emma was abandoned after several years of moving throughout the Mountain West. She returned to the Blackfoot River country in 1869, married Nels Just shortly thereafter, and began the life described in the letters.

The narrative conveys impressions of life and incidents on the Idaho frontier and includes such matters as relations with the Indians, the struggle for sufficient irrigation water, and the coming of the railroad. Haunted by extreme loneliness, Emma Just gave birth to ten children, feared for her life and theirs during the difficulties with the Nez Perce and Bannocks in the late 1870s and endured an unhappy life with a man she did not love. The letters end in 1891 when George Thompson decided to return to Idaho.

One particularly interesting passage tells of her return to Salt Lake City to testify in the trial of Robert Burton, accused of the murder of Joseph Morris and others. The trial resulted in Burton's acquittal because many of the witnesses, including Mrs. Just, could not identify him and were hazy about details of the events which had taken place nearly two decades before.

In general, the editorial work in both the Ellen and Emma volumes is well done. The letters are put in perspective through introductions, postscripts, and notes, and the identifications of those persons and places identified are adequate. Fortunately, a map supplied with the Reid letters helps to locate many of the places mentioned, but in the Ellen volume, a number of places are not identified.

It is usually impossible for the editor of any volume to identify all of the persons and places mentioned. Some simply defy identification because they cannot otherwise be located. In some cases, however, the failure to identify seems to have come because the unidentified person or place was not part of the central interest of the editor. In the Reid volume, for instance, an entire letter is devoted to the experiences of the Just family with an unidentified Captain Baker. The letter, however, gives enough information that a perusal of Francis

B. Heitman's *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington: GPO, 1903), makes it possible to identify the captain with a high degree of probability as Stephen Baker of Michigan, who served as a private, corporal, and sergeant during the Civil War and advanced to lieutenant and then to captain by June 1874.

One caveat should be raised about the Reid volume. Since, like many oral histories, it purports to relate emotional states and events thirty to fifty years removed in time, it must be used with caution. Did Emma Just, for instance, really have the continual death wishes portrayed in the volume, or is this a projection of her state of mind as an invalid septuagenarian at the time of the interview? Though many of the reminiscences can be compared with contemporary sources and thus add insight into the events, social historians particularly must be careful in using such material in the absence of contemporary evidence as an indication of the attitudes of a pioneer during the 1870s and 1880s.

Withal, the editors are to be complimented on the fine work they have done. Professor Ellsworth's volume adds considerable insight into the life and attitudes of nineteenth century Mormon women and Professor Madsen helps us to understand life on the Idaho frontier. In addition, the Tanner Trust Fund and the series editors should be congratulated for providing volumes of this quality.

Dean C. Jessee, ed. *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons*. Salt Lake City: Desert Book Company, 1974. xlv plus 375 pp. \$9.95.

Reviewed by Stanford J. Layton, coordinator of Publications and Research, Utah State Historical Society.

Writing to his son Willard in July 1877, Brigham Young expressed pleasure that no history was being made at that particular moment in Zion, since "history, as usually written, is principally filled with the wars, the troubles, and misfortunes of mankind. . . ." The observation is particularly interesting in relationship to this book of letters to his sons, since nothing better suggests just how completely the historical community has managed to burst the constraints of its nineteenth-century preoccupation with the tragic and the colossal than this hand-

some volume. These letters are generally low key, mild, concerned with family things, singularly devoid of those block-busting Brigham Young jeremiads which colored his public speeches, and generously laden with those precious details of everyday life that comprise the essence of historical understanding. It is appropriate that such a work be the inaugural volume in the new Mormon Heritage Series under the general editorship of LDS Church Historian Leonard Arrington, for no one has done more than he, in his many distinguished works, to coax such enriching detail to the surface of Utah and Mormon history.

The ninety-five letters in this volume were chosen to comprise a genre; those dealing exclusively with business or community matters were not included. This is not to say that such extrinsic material is entirely absent. Indeed, immediately after his comment that no history was being made, Brigham, apparently unaware of the irony, mentioned that twenty-three indictments had been handed down the previous evening by the grand jury investigating the Morrisite tragedy of 1862. His comments in that regard are brief but revealing. Here and there the reader also catches glimpses of such significant historical matters as the Godbeite apostasy, the mining activity of Patrick Connor, and corruption among appointed territorial officials. But the focus is strictly on the filial, and that is how the book must be approached. The letters are didactic—even evangelical at times—as the concerned and loving father coaches, cajoles, chastizes, encourages, and enjoins his attentive and admiring sons.

Though all the letters share a common tone, they do not become commonplace in the reading. This may be due less to the nature of the letters than to the acumen and careful scholarship of Dean C. Jessee. He has given each letter a meaningful historical context by setting it against a biographical sketch of the son to whom it was written and by explaining where that particular son was at the time and what had been the nature of his latest communication to his father. The result is actually a dialogue, and from it an entirely new appreciation of the Brigham Young family is possible. The dynamic and enigmatic John W., the charismatic Willard, the artistic Joseph Don Carlos, the cultured Alfaes, the ungifted Oscar, the tragic Phineas, and the eminently lovable Brigham, Jr.,—these and the rest of the seventeen sons who grew to maturity begin to

assume their historical identity. It is a heady trip for the historian, raising as many questions as it answers, particularly in regard to the sharply restricted scope of the Young influence in religious and political matters after Brigham's death. This dimension of the book notwithstanding, the reader's greatest reward will be the additional insight he gains into Brigham Young himself—sometimes a very complex man, sometimes remarkably simple, always interesting, and still eluding a capable biographer.

Three or four pages in the review copy of the book were irregularly inked, but there is no reason to suppose that this slight blemish persisted in other copies. Having Brigham Young's letters set with a ragged right margin adds a nice touch and serves to eliminate the intimidating effect produced by using smaller type for lengthy direct quotes. Jack Adamson's foreword is a literary delight. Dean Jessee's editorial work is especially well done—the introduction, the explanatory footnotes, the extensive biographical appendix and related back matter, and above all, the commentary on the sons and excerpts from their letters and diaries. He has set a most worthy standard of excellence for the entire series.

Thomas A. Curtis and Jeffrey Hill. *The Pearl of Great Price: Comprehensive Concordance*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Hawkes Publications, 1973. 190 pp. \$2.95.

Reviewed by James R. Harris, assistant professor of ancient scriptures at Brigham Young University.

Since the 1961 publication of Lynn M. Hilton's *Concordance of the Pearl of Great Price* went unnoticed by authors Curtis and Hill, they assumed that they were "writing a book which had never been written before." Hilton's *Concordance* not only predates the work of Curtis and Hill by thirteen years, but it is also a more accurate tool for scriptural study.

Inclusion of historical information on the whole Pearl of Great Price as well as each individual book therein is a valuable contribution of the Curtis-Hill publication; however, some areas of the narrative are misleading because vital bits of information were not included.

The authors discuss three major editions of the Pearl of Great Price, naming Elders Franklin D. Richards and James

E. Talmage as editors of the first and last (1902) edition but failing to identify Orson Pratt as the editor of the 1878 edition.

Their assigning specific dates to revelations received by ancient prophets is a precarious practice.

They made no attempt to identify the book of Moses as part of the Inspired Revision of the Bible. The absence of this information made it difficult for them to explain why the 1878 edition was more complete than the 1851 edition. In the process of revising the book of Genesis, Joseph Smith revised his revision, and revised his revised revision before he was satisfied with the results. The 1878 book of Moses was mainly a product of that third and "most complete" revision by the Prophet. Consequently, it was more complete than the 1851 edition. (See *BYU Studies* 8 [Summer 1968], pp. 361, 377, 382.) Curtis and Hill should have looked for a more current treatment of this problem than the 1955 pioneer publication of Dr. James R. Clark, *Story of the Pearl of Great Price*. While Clark's book is still a valuable source, several areas have been superseded by two decades of additional research.

The authors seem unaware that we do not have all of the book of Abraham. They also suggest that the 24th chapter of Matthew was not published until 1851 when it was a popular "broadside" prior to 1851, probably in 1835. (See *BYU Studies* 12 [Summer 1972], pp. 505-7).

The following errors in the concordance listings in the *Comprehensive Concordance* are illustrative, not exhaustive:

1. The most prevalent error was the many times a reference was listed two, three, or four times when it needed listing only once. For example, on page 27 under "beloved," Moses 4:2 was listed twice when it needed listing only once. (See also pages 13, 26, 52.)

2. There are numerous mistakes in references. Instead of Moses 5:26, the listing reads Moses 5:25. These errors are found as frequently as every four or five pages.

3. Several references are out of their proper order. For example, on page 27, under "being," JS 2:67 precedes JS 2:58, and JS 2:32 precedes the whole book of Abraham.

4. Added to these mistakes are a number of typographical errors in the words following the references.

On the positive side of the ledger, the Curtis and Hill concordance is readily available to the student of scripture, while

the better Hilton book is out of print. Their paragraphs are brief and to the point, so the reader's endurance is not taxed. Size-wise, the volume is a handy companion to the average Triple Combination. There are a number of references in Curtis and Hill that are not listed in Hilton's work, as on page 43, under "desire," JS 2:15. Unfortunately, there are also many references in Hilton completely left out of the Curtis-Hill publication.

Possibly the most redeeming characteristic of the Curtis-Hill work is an inclusion of specific leads to hyphenated forms, synonyms, and variations in tense, person, and so forth. For example, note the following:

"AFFECTION"-(See compassion, feeling for)

"AFTERWARDS"-(See after, afterward, following)

The inclusion of common words such as: *also, am, a, an, are, art, as, at, be*, etc., in the main concordance or in a special section in the back of the book may be considered an advantage or a nuisance according to personal preference.

The problems of this new volume point up the need of reprinting the Hilton concordance. If that is not forthcoming, the Curtis-Hill book is better than none.

Thomas E. Cheney. *The Golden Legacy: A Folk History of J. Golden Kimball*. Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974. xii, 155 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by Peter Crawley, professor of mathematics at Brigham Young University, and book review editor for *BYU Studies*.

The events surrounding the publication of *The Golden Legacy* well illustrate the controversy that followed J. Golden Kimball during much of his life: In 1973, Brigham Young University Press published the first edition and then recalled it after the sale of a few copies. The second edition, published by Peregrine Smith, Inc., is a reprint of the first except for two stories which are replaced by a single story not in the first edition.

In all, *The Golden Legacy* contains approximately 90 "J. Golden stories" and 100 extracts from Kimball's discourses, replete with damns and hells, and with earthy language that was less offensive two generations ago. Following an opening

biographical chapter that is largely built up from anecdotes and bits of Golden's sermons, the bulk of the stories and sermonettes are arranged more or less by genre in nine sections (e.g. Cuss Words and Coffee, Sermons, Salty Slips and Anachronisms), tied together by Cheney's running commentary that provides background and continuity. A concluding chapter succinctly assesses the strengths and uniqueness of Kimball's personality.

Probably the book will continue to generate disagreement among its readers. (Once when I attempted to purchase a copy I was told by the clerk that the book was "not factual"!) Most will find it very funny. And most will agree that the damns and hells properly belong there; a J. Golden Kimball story without an accompanying damn or hell is a contradiction in terms!

The Golden Legacy is not a folklore study in the usual academic sense. It does not concern itself (except at two points) with story variants or the story-telling situations; there is no clear effort to distinguish folk sources from edited secondary sources; and there is no systematic discussion of motifs or patterns in the stories themselves. It is also not a biography of Jonathan Golden Kimball. There is enough biographical detail to put the stories in context, but the principal questions raised by these stories go unanswered: How did a man like Golden come to be? How did these stories develop, and why do they continue to circulate? Nor is it strictly an explication of the wit and wisdom of J. Golden Kimball, since a number of the stories are obviously apocryphal. Cheney mentions that "The Dog and Pitchfork" also appears in the Abraham Lincoln tradition; and I have heard a "true" version of "A Small Stream" involving a local character from Parowan, Utah.

Yet this is an important book. First, it collects a large number of J. Golden stories, a basic component of the growing body of Mormon humor. But beyond this, it records, as the first part of the title suggests, J. Golden Kimball's legacy—the lessons that come from his extraordinary life. Appropriately these lessons are taught to us, not by a sermon, but by a collection of funny stories. What emerges from them is a picture of an earthy, honest man, reconciled to his humanness, who was exactly what he seemed, and who had enormous

concern for his fellow beings but little concern for what they thought of him. As Cheney comments, "his frankness freed him from suspicion." And he touched thousands of lives because the common Saints could see themselves reflected in the ungainly cowboy who rose to become a General Authority. It would seem to be a timely legacy for some of us in Mormonism who tend to mix an honest desire to be a light unto the world with the urge to create a public image. Hopefully, Golden's legacy will not be lost on us. At the very least, we can ease the burden of our public images by retelling J. Golden Kimball stories.

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