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“The Mantle Is Far, Far Greater Than the Intellect”

Elder Boyd K. Packer

The fact that I speak quite directly on a most important subject will, I hope, be regarded as something of a tribute to you who are our loyal, devoted, and inspired associates.

I have come to believe that it is the tendency for many members of the Church who spend a great deal of time in academic research to begin to judge the Church, its doctrine, organization, and leadership, present and past, by the principles of their own profession. Oftentimes this is done unwittingly, and some of it, perhaps, is not harmful.

It is an easy thing for a man with extensive academic training to measure the Church using the principles he has been taught in his professional training as his standard. In my mind it ought to be the other way around. A member of the Church ought always, particularly if he is pursuing extensive academic studies, to judge the professions of man against the revealed word of the Lord.

Many disciplines are subject to this danger. Over the years I have seen many members of the Church lose their testimonies and yield their faith as the price for academic achievement. Many others have been sorely tested. Let me illustrate.

During my last year as one of the supervisors of seminaries and institutes of religion, a seminary teacher went to a large university in the East to complete a doctorate in counseling and guidance. The ranking authority in that field was there and quickly took an interest in this personable, clean-cut, very intelligent young Latter-day Saint.

Our teacher attracted attention as he moved through the course work with comparative ease, and his future looked bright indeed—that is, until he came to the dissertation. He chose to study the ward bishop as a counselor.

Elder Boyd K. Packer is a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He presented this address at the Fifth Annual Church Educational System Religious Educators’ Symposium, 22 August 1981, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
At that time I was called as one of the General Authorities and helped him obtain authorization to interview and send questionnaires to a cross-section of bishops.

In the dissertation he described the calling and ordination of a bishop, described the power of discernment, the right of a bishop to receive revelation, and his right to spiritual guidance. His doctoral committee did not understand this. They felt it had no place in a scholarly paper and insisted that he take it out.

He came to see me. I read his dissertation and suggested that he satisfy their concern by introducing the discussion on spiritual matters with a statement such as “the Latter-day Saints believe the bishop has spiritual power,” or “they claim that there is inspiration from God attending the bishop in his calling.”

But the committee denied him even this. It was obvious that they would be quite embarrassed to have this ingredient included in a scholarly dissertation.

It is as Paul said: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

He was reminded of his very great potential and was told that with some little accommodation—specifically, leaving out all the spiritual references—his dissertation would be published and his reputation established. They predicted that he would become an authority in the field.

He was tempted. Perhaps, once established, he could then insert this spiritual ingredient back into his work. Then, as an established authority, he could really help the Church.

But something stood in the way: his faith, his integrity. So, he did the best he could with his dissertation. It did not contain enough of the Spirit to satisfy him, and too much to have been fully accepted by his worldly professors. But he received his degree.

His dissertation is not truly the scholarly document it might have been, because the most essential ingredient is missing. Revelation is so central a part of a bishop’s experience in counseling that any study which ignores it cannot be regarded as a scholarly work.

He returned to the modest income and to the relative obscurity of the Church Educational System.

I talked to this teacher a day or two ago. We talked about his dissertation and the fact that it was never published. He has been a great influence among the youth of the Church. He did the right thing. He summed up his experience this way: “The mantle is far,
far greater than the intellect; the priesthood is the guiding power.'" His statement becomes the title for this talk and embodies what I hope to convey to you.

I must not be too critical of those professors. They do not know of the things of the Spirit. One can understand their position. It is another thing, however, when we consider members of the Church, particularly those who hold the priesthood and have made covenants in the temple. Many do not do as my associate did; rather, they capitulate, cross over the line, and forsake the things of the Spirit. Thereafter they judge the Church, the doctrine, and the leadership by the standards of their academic profession.

This problem has affected some of those who have taught and have written about the history of the Church. These professors say of themselves that religious faith has little influence on Mormon scholars. They say this because, obviously, they are not simply Latter-day Saints but are also intellectuals trained, for the most part, in secular institutions. They would that some historians who are Latter-day Saints write history as they were taught in graduate school, rather than as Mormons.

If we are not careful, very careful, and if we are not wise, very wise, we first leave out of our professional study the things of the Spirit. The next step soon follows: we leave the spiritual things out of our lives.

I want to read to you a most significant statement by President Joseph F. Smith, a statement that you would do well to keep in mind in your teaching and research, and one which will serve as somewhat of a text for my remarks to you:

It has not been by the wisdom of man that this people have been directed in their course until the present; it has been by the wisdom of Him who is above man and whose knowledge is greater than that of man, and whose power is above the power of man. . . . The hand of the Lord may not be visible to all. There may be many who can not discern the workings of God's will in the progress and development of this great latter-day work, but there are those who see in every hour and in every moment of the existence of the Church, from its beginning until now, the overruling, almighty hand of Him who sent His Only Begotten Son to the world to become a sacrifice for the sin of the world.¹

If we do not keep this constantly in mind—that the Lord directs this Church—we may lose our way in the world of intellectual and scholarly research.

¹Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1904, p. 2; emphasis added.
You seminary teachers and some of you institute and BYU men
will be teaching the history of the Church this school year. This is an
unparalleled opportunity in the lives of your students to increase their
faith and testimony of the divinity of this work. Your objective
should be that they will see the hand of the Lord in every hour and
every moment of the Church from its beginning till now.

As one who has taken the journey a number of times, I offer four
cautions before you begin.

FIRST CAUTION

There is no such thing as an accurate, objective history of the
Church without consideration of the spiritual powers that attend this
work.

There is no such thing as a scholarly, objective study of the office
of bishop without consideration of spiritual guidance, of discern-
ment, and of revelation. That is not scholarship. Accordingly, I
repeat, there is no such thing as an accurate or objective history of the
Church which ignores the Spirit.

You might as well try to write the biography of Mendelssohn
without hearing or mentioning his music, or write the life of Rem-
brandt without mentioning light or canvas or color.

If someone who knew very little about music should write a
biography of Mendelssohn, one who had been trained to have a feel-
ing for music would recognize that very quickly. That reader would
not be many pages into the manuscript before he would know that a
most essential ingredient had been left out.

Mendelssohn no doubt would emerge as an ordinary man,
perhaps not an impressive man at all. That which makes him most
worth remembering would be gone. Without it he would appear, at
best, eccentric. Certainly, controversy would develop over why a
biography at all. Whoever should read the biography would not
know, really know, Mendelssohn at all—this, even though the
biographer might have invested exhaustive research in his project and
might have been accurate in every other detail.

And, if you viewed Rembrandt only in black and white, you
would miss most of his inspiration.

Those of us who are extensively engaged in researching the
wisdom of man, including those who write and those who teach
Church history, are not immune from these dangers. I have walked
that road of scholarly research and study and know something of the
dangers. If anything, we are more vulnerable than those in some of
the other disciplines. Church history can be so interesting and so inspiring as to be a very powerful tool indeed for building faith. If not properly written or properly taught, it may be a faith destroyer.

President Brigham Young admonished Karl G. Maeser not to teach even the times table without the Spirit of the Lord. How much more essential is that Spirit in the research, the writing, and the teaching of Church history.

If we who research, write, and teach the history of the Church ignore the spiritual on the pretext that the world may not understand it, our work will not be objective. And if, for the same reason, we keep it quite secular, we will produce a history that is not accurate and not scholarly—this, in spite of the extent of research or the nature of the individual statements or the incidents which are included as part of it, and notwithstanding the training or scholarly reputation of the one who writes or teaches it. We would end up with a history with the one most essential ingredient left out.

Those who have the Spirit can recognize very quickly whether something is missing in a written Church history—this in spite of the fact that the author may be a highly trained historian and the reader is not. And, I might add, we have been getting a great deal of experience in this regard in the past few years.

President Wilford Woodruff warned: ‘I will here say God has inspired me to keep a Journal and History of this Church, and I warn the future Historians to give Credence to my History of this Church and Kingdom; for my Testimony is true, and the truth of its record will be manifest in the world to come.’

SECOND CAUTION

There is a temptation for the writer or the teacher of Church history to want to tell everything, whether it is worthy or faith promoting or not.

Some things that are true are not very useful.

Historians seem to take great pride in publishing something new, particularly if it illustrates a weakness or mistake of a prominent historical figure. For some reason, historians and novelists seem to savor such things. If it related to a living person, it would come under

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1 Wilford Woodruff Journal, 6 July 1877, microfilm of holograph, Wilford Woodruff Collection, Library–Archives of the Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; emphasis added. Spelling and punctuation have been standardized.
the heading of gossip. History can be as misleading as gossip and much more difficult—often impossible—to verify.

The writer or the teacher who has an exaggerated loyalty to the theory that everything must be told is laying a foundation for his own judgment. He should not complain if one day he himself receives as he has given. Perhaps that is what is contemplated in having one’s sins preached from the housetops.

Some time ago a historian gave a lecture to an audience of college students on one of the past Presidents of the Church. It seemed to be his purpose to show that that President was a man subject to the foibles of men. He introduced many so-called facts that put that President in a very unfavorable light, particularly when they were taken out of the context of the historical period in which he lived.

Someone who was not theretofore acquainted with this historical figure (particularly someone not mature) must have come away very negatively affected. Those who were unsteady in their convictions surely must have had their faith weakened or destroyed.

I began teaching seminary under Abel S. Rich, principal. He was the second seminary teacher employed by the Church and a man of maturity, wisdom, and experience. Among the lessons I learned from him was this: when I want to know about a man, I seek out those who know him best. I do not go to his enemies but to his friends. He would not confide in his enemy. You could not know the innermost thoughts of his heart by consulting those who would injure him.

We are teachers and should know the importance of the principle of prerequisites. It is easily illustrated with the subject of chemistry. No responsible chemist would advise, and no reputable school would permit, a beginning student to register for advanced chemistry without a knowledge of the fundamental principles of chemistry. The advanced course would be a destructive mistake, even for a very brilliant beginning student. Even that brilliant student would need some knowledge of the elements, of atoms and molecules, of electrons, of valence, of compounds and properties. To let a student proceed without the knowledge of fundamentals would surely destroy his interest in, and his future with, the field of chemistry.

The same point may be made with reference to so-called sex education. There are many things that are factual, even elevating, about this subject. There are other aspects of this subject that are so perverted and ugly it does little good to talk of them at all. Some things cannot be safely taught to little children or to those who are not eligible by virtue of age or maturity or authorizing ordinance to understand them.
Teaching some things that are true, prematurely or at the wrong time, can invite sorrow and heartbreak instead of the joy intended to accompany learning.

What is true with these two subjects is, if anything, doubly true in the field of religion. The scriptures teach emphatically that we must give milk before meat. The Lord made it very clear that some things are to be taught selectively and some things are to be given only to those who are worthy.

It matters very much not only what we are told but when we are told it. Be careful that you build faith rather than destroy it.

President William E. Berrett has told us how grateful he is that a testimony that the past leaders of the Church were prophets of God was firmly fixed in his mind before he was exposed to some of the so-called facts that historians have put in their published writings.

This principle of prerequisites is so fundamental to all education that I have never been quite able to understand why historians are so willing to ignore it. And, if those outside the Church have little to guide them but the tenets of their profession, those inside the Church should know better.

Some historians write and speak as though the only ones to read or listen are mature, experienced historians. They write and speak to a very narrow audience. Unfortunately, many of the things they tell one another are not uplifting, go far beyond the audience they may have intended, and destroy faith.

What that historian did with the reputation of the President of the Church was not worth doing. He seemed determined to convince everyone that the prophet was a man. We knew that already. All of the prophets and all of the Apostles have been men. It would have been much more worthwhile for him to have convinced us that the man was a prophet, a fact quite as true as the fact that he was a man.

He has taken something away from the memory of a prophet. He has destroyed faith. I remind you of the truth Shakespeare taught, ironically spoken by Iago:

Who steals my purse steals trash—'tis something, nothing,
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands—
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.3

The sad thing is that he may have, in years past, taken great interest in those who led the Church and desired to draw close to them.

3Othello. act 3, sc. 3, lines 157–61.
But instead of following that long, steep, discouraging, and occasionally dangerous path to spiritual achievement, instead of going up to where they were, he devised a way of collecting mistakes and weaknesses and limitations to compare with his own. In that sense he has attempted to bring a historical figure down to his level and in that way feel close to him and perhaps justify his own weaknesses.

I agree with President Stephen L Richards, who stated:

If a man of history has secured over the years a high place in the esteem of his countrymen and fellow men and has become imbedded in their affections, it has seemingly become a pleasing pastime for researchers and scholars to delve into the past of such a man, discover, if may be, some of his weaknesses, and then write a book exposing hither-to unpublished alleged factual findings, all of which tends to rob the historic character of the idealistic esteem and veneration in which he may have been held through the years.

This "debunking," we are told, is in the interest of realism, that the facts should be known. If an historic character has made a great contribution to country and society, and if his name and his deeds have been used over the generations to foster high ideals of character and service, what good is to be accomplished by digging out of the past and exploiting weaknesses, which perhaps a generous contemporary public forgave and subdued?4

That historian or scholar who delights in pointing out the weaknesses and frailties of present or past leaders destroys faith. A destroyer of faith—particularly one within the Church, and more particularly one who is employed specifically to build faith—places himself in great spiritual jeopardy. He is serving the wrong master, and unless he repents, he will not be among the faithful in the eternities.

One who chooses to follow the tenets of his profession, regardless of how they may injure the Church or destroy the faith of those not ready for "advanced history," is himself in spiritual jeopardy. If that one is a member of the Church, he has broken his covenants and will be accountable. After all of the tomorrows of mortality have been finished, he will not stand where he might have stood.

I recall a conversation with President Henry D. Moyle. We were driving back from Arizona and were talking about a man who destroyed the faith of young people from the vantage point of a teaching position. Someone asked President Moyle why this man was still a member of the Church when he did things like that. "He is

not a member of the Church," President Moyle answered firmly. Another replied that he had not heard of his excommunication. "He has excommunicated himself," President Moyle responded. "He has cut himself off from the Spirit of God. Whether or not we get around to holding a court doesn't matter that much; he has cut himself off from the Spirit of the Lord."

THIRD CAUTION

In an effort to be objective, impartial, and scholarly, a writer or a teacher may unwittingly be giving equal time to the adversary.

Someone told of the man who entitled his book An Unbiased History of the Civil War from the Southern Point of View. While we chuckle at that, there is something to be said about presenting Church history from the viewpoint of those who have righteously lived it. The idea that we must be neutral and argue quite as much in favor of the adversary as we do in favor of righteousness is neither reasonable nor safe.

In the Church we are not neutral. We are one-sided. There is a war going on, and we are engaged in it. It is the war between good and evil, and we are belligerents defending the good. We are therefore obliged to give preference to and protect all that is represented in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we have made covenants to do it.

Some of our scholars establish for themselves a posture of neutrality. They call it "sympathetic detachment." Historians are particularly wont to do that. If they make a complimentary statement about the Church, they seem to have to counter it with something that is uncomplimentary.

Some of them, since they are members of the Church, are quite embarrassed with the thought that they might be accused of being partial. They care very much what the world thinks and are very careful to include in their writings criticism of the Church leaders of the past.

They particularly strive to be acclaimed as historians as measured by the world's standard. They would do well to read Nephi's vision of the iron rod and ponder verses 24–28.

And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.
And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed. [Notice the word after. He is talking of those who are partakers of the goodness of God—of Church members.]

And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth.

And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceeding fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit.

And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost. [1 Nephi 8:24–28; emphasis added]

And I want to say in all seriousness that there is a limit to the patience of the Lord with respect to those who are under covenant to bless and protect His Church and kingdom upon the earth but do not do it.

Particularly are we in danger if we are out to make a name for ourselves, if our hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that we do not learn this one lesson—

That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.

Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. [D&C 121:35–38]

There is much in the scriptures and in our Church literature to convince us that we are at war with the adversary. We are not obliged as a church, nor are we as members obliged, to accommodate the enemy in this battle.

President Joseph Fielding Smith pointed out that it would be a foolish general who would give access to all of his intelligence to his enemy. It is neither expected nor necessary for us to accommodate those who seek to retrieve references from our sources, distort them, and use them against us.

Suppose that a well-managed business corporation is threatened by takeover from another corporation. Suppose that the corporation
bent on the takeover is determined to drain off all its assets and then
dissolve this company. You can rest assured that the threatened com-
pany would hire legal counsel to protect itself.

Can you imagine that attorney, under contract to protect the
company having fixed in his mind that he must not really take sides,
that he must be impartial?

Suppose that when the records of the company he has been
employed to protect are opened for him to prepare his brief he col-
llects evidence and passes some of it to the attorneys of the enemy
company. His own firm may then be in great jeopardy because of his
disloyal conduct.

Do you not recognize a breach of ethics, or integrity, or morality?
I think you can see the point I am making. Those of you who are
employed by the Church have a special responsibility to build faith,
not destroy it. If you do not do that, but in fact accommodate the
enemy, who is the destroyer of faith, you become in that sense a
traitor to the cause you have made covenants to protect.

Those who have carefully purged their work of any religious faith
in the name of academic freedom or so-called honesty ought not ex-
pect to be accommodated in their researches or to be paid by the
Church to do it.

Rest assured, also, that you will get little truth, and less benefit,
from those who steal documents or those who deal in stolen goods.
There have always been, and we have among us today, those who seek
entrance to restricted libraries and files to secretly copy material and
steal it away in hopes of finding some detail that has not as yet been
published—this in order that they may sell it for money or profit in
some way from its publication or inflate an ego by being first to
publish it.

In some cases the motive is to destroy faith, if they can, and the
Church, if they are able. The Church will move forward, and their
efforts will be of little moment. But such conduct does not go un-
noticed in the eternal scheme of things.

We should not be ashamed to be committed, to be converted, to
be biased in favor of the Lord.

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith pointed out the fallacy of trying to
work both sides of the street: ‘‘You may as well say that the Book of
Mormon is not true because it does not give credence to the story the
Lamanites told of the Nephites.’’

Joseph Fielding Smith, ‘‘History and History Recorders,’’ Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine 16
(April 1925): 55.
A number of years ago, professors from Harvard University who were members of the Church invited me to lunch over at the Harvard Business School faculty dining room. They wanted to know if I would join them in participating in a new publication; they wanted me to contribute to it.

They were generous in their compliments, saying that because I had a doctorate a number of people in the Church would listen to me, and being a General Authority (at that time I was an Assistant to the Twelve), I could have some very useful influence.

I listened to them very attentively but indicated at the close of the conversation that I would not join them. I asked to be excused from responding to their request. When they asked why, I told them this: "When your associates announced the project, they described how useful it would be to the Church—a niche that needed to be filled. And then the spokesman said, 'We are all active and faithful members of the Church; however, . . .'"

I told my two hosts that if the announcement had read, "We are active and faithful members of the Church; therefore, . . ." I would have joined their organization. I had serious questions about a "however" organization. I have little worry over a "therefore" organization.

That however meant that they put a condition upon their Church membership and their faith. It meant that they put something else first. It meant that they were to judge the Church and gospel and the leaders of it against their own backgrounds and training. It meant that their commitment was partial, and that partial commitment is not enough to qualify one for full spiritual light.

I would not contribute to publications, nor would I belong to organizations, that by spirit or inclination are faith destroying. There are plenty of scholars in the world determined to find all secular truth. There are so few of us, relatively speaking, striving to convey the spiritual truths, who are protecting the Church. We cannot safely be neutral.

Many years ago Elder Widtsoe made reference to a foolish teacher in the Mutual Improvement Association who sponsored some debate with the intent of improving the abilities of the young members of the Church. He chose as a subject "Resolved: Joseph Smith was a prophet of God." Unfortunately, the con side won.

The youngsters speaking in favor of the proposition were not as clever and their arguments were not as carefully prepared as those of the opposing side. The fact that Joseph Smith remained a prophet after the debate was over did not protect some of the participants
from suffering the destruction of their faith and thereafter conducting their lives as though Joseph Smith were not a prophet and as though the church he founded and the gospel he restored were not true.

FOURTH CAUTION

The final caution concerns the idea that so long as something is already in print, so long as it is available from another source, there is nothing out of order in using it in writing or speaking or teaching. Surely you can see the fallacy in that.

I have on occasion been disappointed when I have read statements that tend to belittle or degrade the Church or past leaders of the Church in writings of those who are supposed to be worthy members of the Church. When I have commented on my disappointment to see that in print, the answer has been, "It was printed before, and it's available, and therefore I saw no reason not to publish it again."

You do not do well to see that it is disseminated. It may be read by those not mature enough for "advanced history," and a testimony in seedling stage may be crushed.

Several years ago President Ezra Taft Benson spoke to you and said:

It has come to our attention that some of our teachers, particularly in our university programs, are purchasing writings from known apostates . . . in an effort to become informed about certain points of view or to glean from their research. You must realize that when you purchase their writings or subscribe to their periodicals, you help sustain their cause. We would hope that their writings not be on your seminary or institute or personal bookshelves. We are entrusting you to represent the Lord and the First Presidency to your students, not the views of the detractors of the Church.6

I endorse that sound counsel to you.

Remember: when you see the bitter apostate, you do not see only an absence of light; you see also the presence of darkness.

Do not spread disease germs!

I learned a great lesson years ago when I interviewed a young man then in the mission home. He was disqualified from serving a mission. He confessed to a transgression that you would think would never enter the mind of a normal human being.

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“Where on earth did you ever get an idea to do something like that?” I asked.

To my great surprise, he said, “From my bishop.”

He said the bishop in the interview said, ‘Have you ever done this? Have you ever done that? Have you ever done this other?’ and described in detail things that the young man had never thought of. They preyed upon his mind until, under perverse inspiration, the opportunity presented itself, and he fell.

Don’t perpetuate the unworthy, the unsavory, or the sensational.

Some things that are in print go out of print, and the old statement ‘good riddance to bad rubbish’ might apply.

Elder G. Homer Durham of the First Quorum of the Seventy told of counsel he had received from one of his professors who was an eminent historian: ‘You don’t write [and, I might add, you don’t teach] history out of the garbage pails.’

Moroni gave an excellent rule for historians to follow:

For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.

[Moroni 7:16-17]

It makes a great deal of difference whether we regard mortality as the conclusion and fulfillment of our existence or as a preparation for an eternal existence as well.

Those are the cautions I give to you who teach and write Church history.

There are qualifications to teach or to write the history of this church. If one is lacking in any one of these qualifications, he cannot properly teach the history of the Church. He can recite facts and give a point of view, but he cannot properly teach the history of the Church.

I will state these qualifications in the form of questions so that you can assess your own qualifications.

Do you believe that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ personally appeared to the boy prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr., in the year 1820?
Do you have personal witness that the Father and the Son appeared in all their glory and stood above that young man and instructed him according to the testimony that he gave to the world in his published history?

Do you know that the Prophet Joseph Smith's testimony is true because you have received a spiritual witness of its truth?

Do you believe that the church that was restored through him is, in the Lord's words, "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased" (D&C 1:30)? Do you know by the Holy Ghost that this is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints restored by heavenly messengers in this modern era; that the Church constitutes the kingdom of God on earth, not just an institution fabricated by human agency?

Do you believe that the successors to the Prophet Joseph Smith were and are prophets, seers, and revelators; that revelation from heaven directs the decisions, policies, and pronouncements that come from the headquarters of the Church? Have you come to the settled conviction, by the Spirit, that these prophets truly represent the Lord?

Now, you obviously noted that I did not talk about academic qualifications. Facts, understanding, and scholarship can be attained by personal study and essential course work. The three qualifications I have named come by the Spirit, to the individual. You can't receive them by secular training or study, by academic inquiry or scientific investigation.

I repeat: if there is a deficiency in any of these, then, regardless of what other training an individual possesses, he cannot comprehend and write or teach the true history of this church. The things of God are understood only by one who possesses the Spirit of God.

Now, what about that historian who defamed the early President of the Church and may well have weakened or destroyed faith in the process? What about other members of the Church who have in their writings or in their teaching been guilty of something similar?

I want to say something that may surprise you. I know of a man who did something quite as destructive as that who later became the prophet of the Church. I refer to Alma the Younger. I learned about him from reading the Book of Mormon, which in reality is a very reliable history of the Church in ancient times.

You are acquainted with the record of Alma as a young man. He followed his father, the prophet Alma, about, and ridiculed what his father preached. He was, in that period of his life, a destroyer of faith. Then came a turning point. Because his father had prayed for
it, he came to himself. He changed. He became one of the great men in religious history.

I want to say something to that historian and to others who may have placed higher value on intellect than upon the mantle.

The Brethren then and now are men, very ordinary men, who have come for the most part from very humble beginnings. We need your help! We desperately need it. We cannot research and organize the history of the Church. We do not have the time to do it. And we do not have the training that you possess. But we do know the Spirit and how essential a part of our history it is. Ours is the duty to organize the Church, to set it in order, to confer the keys of authority, to perform the ordinances, to watch the borders of the kingdom and carry burdens, heavy burdens, for others and for ourselves that you can know little about.

Do you know how inadequate we really are compared to the callings we have received? Can you feel in a measure the weight, the overwhelming weight, of responsibility that is ours? If you look for inadequacy and imperfections, you can find them quite easily. But you may not feel as we feel the enormous weight of responsibility associated with the callings that have come to us. We are not free to do some of the things that scholars think would be so reasonable, for the Lord will not permit us to do them, and it is His church. He presides over it.

There is another part of the on-going history of the Church that you may not be acquainted with. Perhaps I can illustrate it for you.

A few years ago it was my sad privilege to accompany President Kimball, then President of the Twelve, to a distant stake to replace a stake leader who had been excommunicated for a transgression. Our hearts went out to this good man who had done such an unworthy thing. His sorrow and anguish and suffering brought to my mind the phrase "gall of bitterness."

Thereafter, on intermittent occasions, I would receive a call from President Kimball: "Have you heard from this brother? How is he doing? Have you been in touch with him?" After Brother Kimball became President of the Church, the calls did not cease. They increased in frequency.

One day I received a call from the President. "I have been thinking of this brother. Do you think it is too soon to have him baptized?" (Always a question, never a command.) I responded with my feelings, and he said, "Why don't you see if he could come here to see you? If you feel good about it after an interview, we could proceed."
A short time later, I arrived very early at the office. As I left my car I saw President Kimball enter his. He was going to the airport on his way to Europe. He rolled down the window to greet me, and I told him I had good news about our brother. "He was baptized last night," I said.

He motioned for me to get into the car and sit beside him and asked me to tell him all about it. I told him of the interview and that I had concluded by telling our brother very plainly that his baptism must not be a signal that his priesthood blessings would be restored in the foreseeable future. I told him that it would be a long, long time before that would happen.

President Kimball patted me on the knee in a gentle gesture of correction and said, "Well, maybe not so long...." Soon thereafter the intermittent phone calls began again.

I want to tell you of another lesson I received. Many years ago, when I was a new General Authority and not very experienced, I was called to the office of the First Counselor in the First Presidency. "We find you are going to the West Coast for conference this weekend. We wonder if you would leave a day or so early to help with a problem at a mission headquarters in another city."

A missionary had confessed to transgression, and the mission president was reluctant to take action. I was instructed to see that a court was convened and that the missionary was excommunicated.

I went, and I interviewed the elder at great length. I then went to a park to think and pray about it. It was an unusual case, most unusual. After two hours, I telephoned the member of the First Presidency from a pay telephone and told him a little of what I had learned and of how I felt about the matter. He asked what I wanted to do. Hesitantly I told him I wanted to delay, to take no action now. Then I said, "But, President, tell me to do it, again, and I will do it."

His voice came over the telephone and seemed like thunder to me: "Don't you go against the voice of the Spirit!"

I had learned a great lesson. I have never forgotten it, and the inspiration greatly affected the outcome when final action was taken.

Do not yield your faith in payment for an advanced degree or for the recognition and acclaim of the world. Do not turn away from the Lord nor from his Church nor from his servants. You are needed—oh, how you are needed!

It may be that you will lay your scholarly reputation and the acclaim of your colleagues in the world as a sacrifice upon the altar of
service. They may never understand the things of the Spirit as you have a right to do. They may not regard you as an authority or as a scholar. Just remember, when the test came to Abraham, he didn’t really have to sacrifice Isaac. He just had to be willing to.

Now a final lesson from Church history, one that illustrates the kind of thing from the past that builds faith and increases testimony.

William W. Phelps had been a trusted associate of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Then, in an hour of crisis when the Prophet needed him most, he turned against him and joined the apostates and oppressors who sought the Prophet’s life.

Later, Brother Phelps came to himself. He repented of what he had done and wrote to the Prophet Joseph Smith, asking for his forgiveness. I want to read you the letter the Prophet Joseph wrote to Brother Phelps in reply.

I confess also that many times I have moaned in agony when I have thought of the many incidents of this kind that researchers have discovered when they have pored over the records of our history but have left them out of their writings for fear they would be regarded as not worthy of a scholarly review of Church history.

Now the letter:

Dear Brother Phelps: . . .

You may in some measure realize what my feelings, as well as Elder Rigdon’s and Brother Hyrum’s were, when we read your letter—truly our hearts were melted into tenderness and compassion when we ascertained your resolves, &c. I can assure you I feel a disposition to act on your case in a manner that will meet the approbation of Jehovah, (whose servant I am), and agreeable to the principles of truth and righteousness which have been revealed; and inasmuch as long-suffering, patience, and mercy have ever characterized the dealings of our heavenly Father towards the humble and penitent, I feel disposed to copy the example, cherish the same principles, and by so doing be a savior of my fellow men.

It is true, that we have suffered much in consequence of your behavior—the cup of gall, already full enough for mortals to drink, was indeed filled to overflowing when you turned against us. One with whom we had oft taken sweet counsel together, and enjoyed many refreshing seasons from the Lord—‘‘had it been an enemy we could have borne it.’’ . . .

However, the cup has been drunk, the will of our Father has been done, and we are yet alive, for which we thank the Lord. And having been delivered from the hands of wicked men by the mercy of our God, we say it is your privilege to be delivered from the powers of the adversary, be brought into the liberty of God’s dear children, and again take your stand among the Saints of the Most High, and by diligence, humility, and love unfeigned, commend yourself to our God, and your God, and to the Church of Jesus Christ.
Believing your confession to be real, and your repentance genuine,
I shall be happy once again to give you the right hand of fellowship, and
rejoice over the returning prodigal . . .

"Come on, dear brother, since the war is past,
For friends at first, are friends again at last."

Yours as ever,
Joseph Smith, Jun.⁷

Brother Phelps did return to full fellowship. He was a writer of
hymns. The one we sang to open this meeting, "Praise to the Man,"
was written by Brother Phelps, as were "O God, the Eternal Father,"
"Now Let Us Rejoice," "Gently Raise the Sacred Strain," "The
Spirit of God Like a Fire"—to mention but a few.

Oh, how great the loss to the Church if Brother Phelps had not
returned. And how great would have been the tragedy for him.

When I read about our Brethren of the past, I am overwhelmed
with humility. Consider the Prophet Joseph Smith and the little op-
portunity he had for formal schooling. Read the letters written in his
own hand, and you will know that he could not spell correctly. Oh,
how grateful he must have been for a scribe. I have wept when I have
contemplated what they accomplished with what little they had. I
sense how grateful they were to those who stood by them.

To you who may have lost your way, come back! We know how
that can happen; we have walked that path of research and study.
Come help us!—you with your scholarship and your training, you
with your bright, intelligent minds, you with your experience and
with your academic degrees.

How grateful we are today for the many members who have
special gifts and special training that they devote to the building up
of the Church and kingdom of God and to the protecting of it.

May God bless you who so faithfully compile and teach the
history of the Church and build the faith of those you teach. I bear
witness that the gospel is true. The Church is His church. I pray that
you may be inspired as you write and as you teach. May His Spirit be
with you in rich abundance.

As you take your students over the trails of Church history in this
dispensation, yours is the privilege to help them to see the miracle of
the Restoration, the mantle that belongs to His servants, and to "see
in every hour and in every moment of the existence of the Church
. . . the overruling, almighty hand of [God]."⁸

⁷Joseph Smith, Jr., History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed.

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As you write and as you teach Church history under the influence of His Spirit, one day you will come to know that you were not only spectators but a central part of it, for you are His Saints.

This testimony I leave, with my blessings, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.
The Moral Measure of Literature

Stephen L. Tanner

What does morality have to do with literature? In an essay on "The Idea of Moral Criticism,"1 and in his book On Moral Fiction,2 John Gardner asserts that moral affirmation is the most fundamental artistic value. In his view, most criticism in our century evades the real task of criticism, which is the evaluation or assessment of literary works. He singles out the New Criticism as the most influential of such evasions3 and asserts that "true art treats ideals, affirming and clarifying the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Ideals are art's ends; the rest is mere methodology. True criticism, what I am calling 'moral criticism,' may speak of technique, but its ultimate concern is with ends."4 He thinks the schools of criticism in our age are "too neat, too intellectual, too 'scientific' to deal with so lively and unpredictable a creature as art' and "they ignore the very essence of art, which is emotional affirmation."5 He explains that "a man writes a novel to find out what he can honestly maintain, not just with his head but with all his nature. He gives it to readers not only to delight them and instruct them but also to support them if they are the right kind of people already, and stir doubts if they're not."6 For these reasons, "true criticism is, at least some of the time, morally judgmental."7 To avoid such judgments, Gardner insists, is to treat art as a mere plaything. "It may not really legislate for humanity but whether it is heard or not, it is civilization's single most significant device for learning what must be affirmed and what denied."8 He concludes by saying, "It is precisely because it affirms values that art is important. The trouble with our present criticism is that it is, for

3Ibid., p. 98.
4Ibid., p. 91.
5Ibid., p. 98.
6Ibid., p. 109.
7Ibid.
8Ibid.
the most part, not important. It treats the only true magic in the world as though it were done with wires.'''

In one sense, there is nothing original in these statements. They simply reiterate Matthew Arnold's assertion 'that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life—to the question: How to live.''' And Arnold, of course, speaks from within what is probably the oldest and most influential tradition in criticism. But in another sense, Gardner's assertions are novel and unorthodox. In recent criticism, the moral approach has not been fashionable. Gardner himself is a successful contemporary novelist, and we hardly expect a contemporary novelist to come to the defense of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

That Gardner's opinions, taken within the context of recent criticism, have a radical flavor tells us something about the diminished role of the moral approach in contemporary literary criticism.11 But by the same token, that a contemporary novelist fully conversant with existing schools of criticism should reassert the prime value of moral affirmation in art confirms that moral criticism is fundamental and enduring.

The following statement by Northrop Frye expresses a position all but universally accepted in the past few decades: 'The fundamental act of criticism is a disinterested response to a work of literature in which all one's beliefs, engagements, commitments, prejudices, stampedings of pity and terror, are ordered to be quiet. We are now dealing with the imaginative, not the existential, with 'let this be,' not with 'this is,' and no work of literature is better by virtue of what it says than any other work.''' Literature cannot be lifelike; it can only be 'literature-like.''' Like the disciples of the New Criticism, Frye is saying that the important thing about literature is not what it says or affirms or promulgates, but only how well it works as a self-contained, organic whole doing whatever it does. There is truth in

9Ibid.
11Most of the reviews of On Moral Fiction were antagonistic to the idea of a moral approach to criticizing fiction. Gerald Graff, in Literature against Itself (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), provides an excellent survey and critique of recent anti-mimetic (and consequently anti-moral) theories of criticism.
12Northrop Frye, The Well-Tempered Critic (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 140. The extent of Frye's influence is indicated by a recent editor's column in MLA (93 January 1980): 3). A member of the editorial board proposed acceptance of an essay on the basis of 'its boldly unconventional approach: 'It does not,' he pointed out, 'contain a single reference to Northrop Frye!''' An earlier editor remarked that at times 'it seems that authors feel their articles would not be given serious consideration without a quotation from Frye, preferably in the opening paragraph.
this, but it leaves out the primary business of literature, which is
direct or indirect (ironic) affirmation. According to Gardner, a pos-
tion like Frye’s shrugs off the question of evaluation because it thinks
it knows the answer: “Beauty is Truth and Truth is Relative.”

It is interesting to speculate about the causes of the reluctance of
modern critics to take evaluation seriously. The broad causes un-
doubtedly include the relativistic temper of the modern mind, cur-
cent philosophical concern with description and methodology rather
than with the ascertainment of order and value, the subjectivist in-
clination furthered by some branches of psychology, and the attempt
to emulate the dispassionate objectivity of science. Any one or any
combination of these might influence an individual critic, and each
may lead to the conclusion that evaluation is neither meaningful nor
possible.

From some research I have been doing in American criticism of
the 20s and 30s, I would suggest one specific cause. The moral critics
of that period were discredited by the creation of a myth—a
caricature. It was the Myth of the Nasty, Mean, Horrid Old Man.
According to this stereotype, moral critics such as Irving Babbitt and
Paul Elmer More were narrow-minded and hard-hearted old men
determined to maintain their authority against aspiring youth; they
were fixed in ancient ways and petulantly annoyed with novelty; and
they were trying to elevate their own narrow preoccupations into
universal edicts. Pairs such as the following were set up: critical-
creative; repressive-liberating; intellectual-emotional; old-new; cold-
warm; realism-imagination; business-art; dogma-choice; reaction-
progress; authority-individualism; tradition-experiment. The moral
critics were always left with what was considered the negative in each
of these pairs. This myth has been pervasive and long-lived.

Another important cause is the changes wrought by literary
modernism. Modernism no longer finds in the literal reproduction of
actuality, in the system of social mimesis that was the motive impulse
for realistic fiction, an adequate means of representation. Not
finding in nature itself an adequate subject for the expression of ar-
tistic intention, the modernist novelist uses it as the raw material out
of which, through method of presentation, distortion, and rearrange-
ment, he creates meanings individual to himself. In The Novel and
the Modern World, David Daiches suggests that such individualized
meanings and the turning away from mimesis are connected with the
breakdown of communal standards and values in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries: "The modern novelist is born when that publicly shared principle of selection and significance is no longer felt to exist, can no longer be depended on." He implies that if a culture can no longer provide a standard for what is important and valuable in life (and, therefore, in fiction, which "imitates" life), the artist is forced to replace cultural values in his works with literary or "formal" values. In Character and the Novel, W. J. Harvey discusses this same shift: The individual feels insecure in a time of contingency and flux, when "man's relation to his world [is no longer] given stability by being part of a divinely-ordered cosmos." Harvey suggests that the novelists early in our century were trying to salvage a sense of stability in the work of art itself: "Because the work of art—viewed as a self-sufficient artefact—is a necessary and not a contingent thing. It is a thing wrenched from the chaotic flux of the experienced world; it has its own laws and its own firm structure of relationships; it can, like a system of geometry, be held to be absolutely true within its own conventionally established terms." The novelist is thus presenting an ordered world in contrast to, not in imitation of, the world of experience. Criticism's response to this has been to focus its attention away from moral concerns and toward aesthetic concerns.

In a recent issue of College English, Jerome Klinkowitz complains of teaching and criticism that is practiced on the assumption that literature imitates life and consequently concerns itself with ethical questions.

The heroic models and ideals which the moralist professors prefer "have been made outmoded by changes in the nature of the modern world and in the nature of man's relation to it," argues Larry McCaffery. A universe which is now seen as "indeterminate, uncertain, chaotic, or relative" simply will not support the "optimistic or humanistic premises" which underlie traditionalist art and ways of teaching it. Instead, literature has kept pace with science and philosophy, to the point of agreeing that all fictions are primarily systems of meaning which owe the standards of their success to internal consistency and not to the way in which they mimetically represent the outside world.

Obviously, such anti-mimetic theories of literature view the moral approach as obsolete.

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17Ibid., p. 45.
Whatever its causes, the reluctance of modern criticism to take moral evaluation seriously creates tension within the Mormon critic. Becoming skilled in the methods of twentieth-century criticism and at the same time devoutly maintaining one’s religious beliefs can be an unsettling process. I have found myself at times feeling a little embarrassed and apologetic about my moral preoccupations when responding to literature as a teacher or critic. I suspect that others of my generation who were trained under the influence of the New Criticism have experienced the same ambivalence.

Questions concerning the role of evaluation in criticism (what is good and bad, right and wrong) are extremely complicated and will never be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. But a Mormon critic can and should resolve them to his satisfaction. I do not see, for example, how a Mormon critic can avoid subscribing to some kind of edification theory. His world view necessarily causes him to see literature as a criticism of life and to value it according to what it affirms or promulgates. This does not mean he must reject modern critical theories and methods, but he must complete or supplement them so that ends as well as means are assessed.

If there be any conclusion to be drawn from the history of literature, it is that the writer of stories must teach whether he wishes to teach or not; his very denial of the pertinence of the moral law to literature becomes, in practice, inevitably a form of teaching. The fact is that ethics and aesthetics are inseparable in literature. Or, more precisely, just in proportion as the practice or criticism of literary art becomes superficial, ethics and aesthetics tend to fall apart, whereas just in proportion as such practice or criticism strikes deeper, ethics and aesthetics are more and more implicated one in the other until they lose their distinction in a common root. What I wish to assert is summarized in this fundamental syllogism: Literature cannot be separated from life, and life cannot be separated from moral concerns; therefore, moral concerns must have a primary role in the understanding and appreciation of literature.

Consider this group of statements:

Henry James:

The great question as to a poet or a novelist is, How does he feel about life? What, in the last analysis, is his philosophy? When vigorous writers have reached maturity, we are at liberty to gather from their works some expression of a total view of the world they have been so actively observing. This is the most interesting thing their works offer us. Details are interesting in proportion as they contribute to make it clear.19

Leo Tolstoy:

The cement which binds together every work of art into a whole and produces the effect of life-like illusion, is not the unity of persons and places, but that of the author's independent moral relation to the subject. . . . Whatever the artist depicts, whether it be saints or robbers, kings or lackeys, we see and see only the soul of the artist himself.20

T. S. Eliot:

The "greatness" of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards.21

Flannery O'Conon:

For him [the novelist], judgment is implicit in the act of seeing. His vision cannot be detached from his moral sense.22

Ralph Ellison:

Still I believe that fiction does help create value, and I regard this as a very serious—I almost said "sacred"—function of the writer.23

Such statements by distinguished writers could be multiplied to fill volumes. The point I wish to make is that we must not be intimidated or misguided by prevailing attitudes in recent criticism. Realizing we have on our side the weight of a tradition tested for centuries, we should espouse unashamedly and unhesitatingly an edification theory of literature and then strive for a moral approach of criticism that is perceptive and wise. Let us stop fretting over the legitimacy of moral criticism and get on with the business of learning to do it well.

It is not easy to do it well. To assume that it is, is a common error that has discredited moral criticism. Formalistic criticism is often easy to do; the glut of articles in scholarly journals is evidence of this. One often encounters graduate students who can effortlessly do a slick job of pointing out patterns of images, archetypes, or phallic symbols. This kind of analysis is a skill that can be taught and learned with relative ease. But to determine exactly what a work of literature affirms and then perceptively examine the full moral implications of that affirmation is a difficult task requiring maturity and wisdom in addition to formalistic skill.

I want now to make some observations and suggestions regarding moral criticism. What I say has most direct application to modern fiction. I have chosen this focus because the fiction of our age is the most widely read and most morally problematical kind of literature. Wise and discerning criticism is much needed to guide readers through the moral labyrinth of the contemporary novel, where the danger—particularly for immature readers—is very real indeed.

Behind every character in fiction is a world view. What a character says and does depends ultimately upon the author's fundamental attitudes and values. How do novelists embody their ethical beliefs, opinions, and prejudices in novels? What must the novelist have believed in order to disclose and portray as he did such characters, actions, and thoughts in such a work? These are the most important questions the moral critic must answer. And notice that they are literary questions, not moral ones. The moral critic translates aesthetic signals into ethical statements. This is the hard part. Judging the ethical statements is fairly easy for anyone possessing moral convictions. Certainly any member of the Church should be able to handle that part, but being able to do it does not make him a literary critic. The first part of the process, the translation part, is where training, skill, experience, creativity, and gifts are required. The more precise our knowledge of how the writer accomplished his artistic ends, the more accurate will be our inferences about his ethical beliefs.

Discerning the values expressed in a novel is difficult because the artist is deliberately subtle in disclosing them. He is trying to recreate life, but life that is ordered and in which ethical beliefs are tested in a complexity of human action corresponding to actual life. The value of ethical statements in good art is that they are not abstract; they always come embodied in concrete human situations. And in addition to the subtlety of disclosure, we must also take into consideration the complexity of the creative process. The writer cannot know in advance the exact nature of the values he will portray. The process of writing itself, involving both the conscious and unconscious mind, creates values or shadings of values the author cannot foresee and sometimes does not recognize even after the fact. That is part of the mystery of the creative process. The critic must reconstruct intention implicit in the work, which frequently transcends the author's conscious intention.

Since perceptive moral criticism is difficult, a satisfactory Mormon criticism will be difficult. A knowledge of the restored gospel is of great value, but its usefulness to the critic is confined largely to the
easiest part of his task: judging ethical statements after they have been translated or identified. Besides this, we must realize that although the principles of the gospel are fairly simple, recognizing and applying them in concrete situations is not at all easy. Fiction resembles those concrete situations, and consequently even the critic with a good understanding of gospel principles must struggle in perceiving and interpreting moral elements in fiction.

More often than not, Mormon standards get in the way of good criticism because they are applied too narrowly. We do not like foul language nor adultery; therefore a novel that uses foul language and treats adultery is bad. This approach shuts one off from most of contemporary fiction. A few years ago, One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest is banned from the schools in an Idaho community because it contained objectionable language. The most recent novels of Bellow, Malamud, and Updike, to take three respected contemporary writers, contain language and situations as bad as or worse than those of Cuckoo's Nest. If we apply superficial standards, or even if we apply the most significant moral standards in the wrong way, we will be unable to do justice to the fiction of our time. I think there are moral objections to be made to Kesey's novel, but they have nothing to do with the language or the explicit description; and even granting those objections, there are still pleasure and profit to be gained from reading the novel. Reading contemporary writing requires a good deal of intelligent sifting and winnowing.

It is unreasonable to expect or require writers with no appreciation of or commitment to Christian doctrine—let alone Mormon doctrine—to reflect overtly and specifically such doctrine in their novels. We must be willing to examine their work on its own terms. In order to convert the world, we must know something about it. How do people with beliefs and values different from ours think and act? Are all differences real or only apparent? The Light of Christ influences all men, after all, and the Mormon critic should penetrate to the moral core of a work; that is where the Light of Christ will reveal itself. A serious novelist, one who is successful, will capture life truly: and any true portrayal of life, regardless of superficial trappings, will reveal the centrality of moral law. Thus, paradoxically, a novel focusing on sexual promiscuity can reflect important ethical truths. As Latter-day Saints, we should be pleased to have our basic moral values confirmed in the writings of those who perhaps do not consciously subscribe to all of them. That is, if a writer with no religious scruples

*Ken Kesey, One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (New York: Viking, 1962).*

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about adultery shows in his portrayal of life that adultery cannot bring happiness, the principle of chastity is confirmed, on empirical grounds, as it were. There are, of course, authors who portray sin as generating happiness, but they are not the ones who recreate life truly. They are often seeking in their fiction to confirm their faulty morality and cheat to do so. When a literary work cheats or lies or achieves its right or wrong ends unfairly, or celebrates what ought to be scorned, or mocks what should be praised, the critic should announce what has gone wrong and point out why. But this can only be done by a person having thorough knowledge of how literature works and tolerant patience in getting beneath surface appearances as well as having clear moral vision.

How does a critic go about penetrating to the moral core of a novel? Is it possible to deal with ethical values with any degree of objectivity? To what extent are value assertions cognitive and to what extent are they emotive? I think some answers to these questions are supplied by the concept of value objects. There are certain things (I will call them objects for the sake of simplicity) that we have to make judgments about. We have to make assumptions concerning their existence and characteristics in order to function within a social world. A novelist will necessarily treat them and consciously or unconsciously assert or imply his attitudes concerning them. If in interpretation we focus our attention on them, we are most likely to recognize and identify the values expressed in a particular literary work.

Here are some basic value objects:

1. **The Self.** What is the nature of the human person? Is he distinguishable from other animals? Does he have a soul? Does he have intrinsic worth and, if so, on what grounds? What is or should be the basis for his choices and the standards for his behavior?

2. **Nature.** What is or should be man’s relation to nature? Is nature benign, hostile, or indifferent toward man? Is harmony with nature possible and, if so, on what basis and for what reasons? Is there any connection between nature and spirit? Should man’s ecological sense produce a feeling of obligation or reverence toward other life?

3. **Other minds.** What is or should be a man’s relationship with other individuals? What kind of communion is possible or desirable? Does man have obligations towards others and, if so, on what grounds?
4. *Time.* What meaning does history have? What bearing does the past have on the present? What should man’s attitude be toward the future? How is the present moment to be valued in relation to past and future?

5. *Society.* What is or should be the nature of human community? What is or should be the relationship between the individual and society? Is social reform possible or even desirable? On what grounds?

The human mind responds to these value objects by cognitive knowledge and emotion. It is the combination of cognition and emotion that produces meaning, and meaning invested in the object is a value. The task of the critic in considering value objects is to determine the author’s cognitive knowledge of them—how he perceives and understands them—and then to determine what emotions he attaches to that cognition. This combination of cognition and emotional commitment reveals the meaning the objects have for him, what he affirms about them. It is possible to attach unethical meaning to value objects, and it is here that the critic makes moral judgments. It is in the process of determining cognition and emotional commitment that questions of technique are important. In that process we can use all that modern schools of criticism can teach us about artistic means, the techniques of artistic disclosure.

Analysis of value objects can be directed toward three fundamental aspects of a literary work:

1. Individual value claims and direct expressions of value commitments made by the narrator or characters.
2. The behavior of characters as a reflection of underlying values.
3. The symbolic expression of value commitments in objects, events, and characterization.

Directing attention to basic value objects is the best means for getting at the moral core of a novel and thus avoiding being misdirected or mired down by less basic elements (e.g., profanity and explicit sexual description), elements in which values are only partially expressed and consequently cannot be assessed very objectively.

To summarize what I have said, although the moral approach has a diminished role in contemporary criticism, and the Mormon critic who practices it may feel a little insecure, a little like a second-class citizen in the modern community of literary criticism, it is nevertheless the most fundamental and enduring approach. We should be
unequivocal in our commitment to it and should strive to revitalize it. It is a demanding method because it requires maturity and wisdom in treating ends and encompasses methods such as the formalistic, psychological, and archetypal that primarily treat means. It had better not be practiced at all than practiced narrowly or incompletely. To practice it tolerantly and perceptively and wisely involves penetrating to the ethical core of a work of literature, and this can best be done by setting aside superficial characteristics and focusing on fundamental and unchanging value objects.
Phoenix

by Karen Mikkelsen

Out from the rubble of imagined dreams,
Conversations with myself, unheard,
And fragmented hopes from flabby trust
In fitful human strength, I salvage,
Fragilely, the smashed ceramic sherds
Of misplaced faith, sift the dust
For remnants of a base to build, not cage
Upon, but temple dedicate to Him.

And from the ashes of a soul quenched
By searing conscience-fires I finally rise,
The humbled child, a sorrowing penitent.
And wanton winds which once me, buffeting,
Broke, now upswelling skyward wing
And song. A golden surge delivering
to God: the Phoenix flies.

Karen Mikkelsen is a poet residing in New Haven, Connecticut.
The Shotgun Marriage of Psychological Therapy and the Gospel of Repentance

A. D. Sorensen

INTRODUCTION

When Elder Neal Maxwell gave the inaugural address that opened this Gospel and Behaviorial Science Conference, I thought he suggested that behavioral science might do well to court the gospel under, of course, the puritanical eyes of proper chaperones. Now I felt that it was about time someone should make this suggestion, since I had seen the two brought together at times quite compromis-ingly. But then, when Dr. Allen Bergin arose and praised Elder Maxwell's remarks as he did, I received the distinct impression that the courtship had already occurred, that the gospel and behavioral science, or at least the gospel and psychology, had actually been married by Elder Maxwell, and that without anyone's being asked whether he cared to protest the marriage! Then, as the day wore on, I began to perceive that some participants in the conference seemed assured that the marriage antedated Brother Maxwell and had been consummated long ago. Well, being well acquainted with the profane nature of the groom, I was not surprised at that and, besides, some observers said that we need not worry about offspring from the union since the groom was sterile and had been since he was born. But by the time we were halfway through the last session of the conference, I began to worry lest the bride might already be pregnant and might soon give birth to quintuplets! Therefore, as the last participant in this conference, I would like to express a few of the concerns I have about this whole affair before any possible children from this questionable union are born and are given gospel names and sent on missions among members of the Church.

A. D. Sorensen, a professor of political science at Brigham Young University, presented an earlier version of this paper at the first Conference on the Gospel and Behavioral Science, held at BYU.
I would like to raise three questions about the union of psychology and the gospel and then discuss briefly why they concern me. The questions are (1) Can psychological therapies serve as means to gospel ends? (2) Can psychological and gospel concepts and principles be integrated to engineer a more effective process of personal growth? (3) Can a unique therapeutic psychology be built within a gospel framework?

**CAN PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES SERVE AS MEANS TO GOSPEL ENDS?**

Perhaps therapeutic psychology and the gospel can be joined in a means/end relationship in which the gospel provides the ends to be achieved and psychology helps provide the means for achieving them. Perhaps, for example, psychoanalytical ideas and techniques could help a person overcome certain personality disorders which prevent him from living as full a life as he might here on earth and which could keep him from making progress toward achieving salvation and exaltation. This sort of union between psychology and the gospel seems especially appropriate when both therapist and patient are members of the Church. As believers, they can form a working alliance within a shared gospel framework. When this sort of alliance is formed, many questions about a union between psychological therapy and the gospel that might otherwise concern us are automatically answered. But this view of the matter is unjustified, and we need to see why.

Consider the following problem. Therapeutic psychologies are typically used for two purposes. One is to interpret and explain human behavior or some other aspect of human culture. The other purpose is to provide a basis for changing the nature of the individual or the society in which he lives. I will refer to the first purpose as the explanatory use of therapeutic psychology and the second purpose as its technological (or therapeutic) use.

Beginning with the first purpose then, what happens to the gospel as a way of life when it becomes the subject of psychological explanation? Certainly, religion has been and continues to be within the explanatory domain of psychological theories that have been and continue to be used to interpret and explain not only religious texts but also religion itself as a feature of society and culture, and the religious beliefs and actions of its adherents. I do not dispute the logical appropriateness of such explanations. But the effects of a psychological explanation on the gospel viewpoint are that the gospel is conceived of, and made intelligible, in the light of the concepts,
principles, and generalizations that constitute that particular psychological theory. The danger here is that such concepts, principles, and generalizations are external to the gospel way of life which they are trying to explain. They are external to those concepts and principles which are intrinsic to the gospel and which are used to give an internal account of the life the gospel makes possible. In any such application, different theories refocus and redirect an observer's attention and lead him to look for different things. The function of a theory is to enable one to pick out, as significant, certain elements in a subject of study and to direct a search for order among those elements. Too, some philosophers of science claim that observations are always "theory laden," that what a person observes depends to some extent on the theory he holds.\(^1\) If this be true, and we apply it to psychological explanations of the gospel way of life, then we should expect psychological explanations to refocus and redirect our attention, to lead us to look for things different from those the gospel itself leads us to look for. Life in accord with the gospel becomes, therefore, "laden" with that psychological theory, and psychological explanation does indeed throw a different light on the gospel as a way of life and on the meaning and significance of the gospel message. Given the ends of social science, a psychological explanation of the gospel as a way of life may seem appropriate.

But can psychological explanation be the viewpoint from which the gospel can be lived? We may think of a plan of life, or a way of life, as consisting of parts, of concepts, principles, and hypotheses, much as we think of psychological theories as so consisting. Actually, the parts which make up a psychological theory, especially a theory designed with therapeutic goals in mind, often exhibit the same characteristics as the parts which form a way of life.\(^2\) Therapeutic psychologies are cut from the same cloth as plans or ways of life, and understood from this point of view—as containing important dimensions of a way of life—they may differ radically from the gospel view of life. Ways of life give accounts of themselves; but they can, to some extent, account for or explain one another. Typically, the capacity that one life-view has to account for another life-view is

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\(^1\)For a discussion of this, see Frederick Suppe, ed., *The Structure of Scientific Theories* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), pp. 16–118.

developed in order to serve the first life-view's own special ends (as when prophets in the Book of Mormon interpret worldly ways of life from the gospel point of view in order to save souls). But when one life-view accounts for another one to serve its own ends, the results are not equivalent to that view's own self-understanding. This is true of the explanatory relation between a psychological theory and the gospel, when both are considered as views (or ways) of life, even as it is true with the explanatory relation between the gospel view and the worldly view.

Even so, must gospel ends be sought only from the internal point of view? Cannot an external account provide a viable perspective for living the gospel? Supposedly it is through technological use that therapeutic psychology can serve as means to gospel ends. A serious problem arises when we realize that because a psychological theory helps to constitute a psychological technology, that very theory which transforms the gospel in an explanatory way also helps form the means to gospel ends. Jerome Frank puts the point this way:

Every therapy is based on a set of concepts that explains the patient's distress and how to overcome it. In the course of therapy, the patient is implicitly or explicitly indoctrinated with these concepts, which, by enabling him to organize and label his inchoate feelings and experience, enhance his sense of control over them.³

In the words of another author:

Psychotherapy is "... an intensive training in the use of words to contain and convey a universe." It is completed when the descriptions of the patient are in substantial agreement with the descriptions of the therapist.⁴

The concepts and descriptions mentioned in these quotations are the concepts and descriptions of the particular psychological theory on which a given therapeutic process itself is based. That process includes both explanation or interpretation of the patient's problem and how it may be overcome. Furthermore, this explanation contains and conveys a life-view, or a way of life.

This does not mean, of course, that the patient must learn the technical jargon in which a psychological theory expresses a life-view. Lewis R. Wolberg points out that psychological ideas must be recast into simple words and phrases:

Many patients lack the sophistication necessary for the understanding of complex psychological ideas. It is essential to recast these into simple words and phrases which are readily comprehensible to the patient.5

Victor Frankl makes the same point:

As my oldest cofighter, Paul Polak, once put it, "Logotherapy translates the self-understanding of the man in the street into scientific language." If this be true, I would say why not help the man in the street to cope better with everyday life by retranslating logotherapy into his own language? Whatever I am teaching—I have learned it from my patients in the first place. Therefore it is only fitting to repay them—by preventing others from ever becoming patients at all.6

Thus, the explanatory use of the therapeutic theory is an integral part of its technological use. To paraphrase one of the above quotations, healing takes place when the patient consistently formulates his experience in agreement with the psychological theory. In this light then, how can a therapeutic technology serve as a means to gospel ends when that means contains a psychological theory (a life-view) that has a transforming effect on the gospel framework (another life-view) which it aims to serve?

A prominent characteristic of every established way of life (and many psychotherapeutic theories) is a hypothesis about the growth process of a person. I do not want to imply by the term hypothesis that we are necessarily dealing with a provisional conjecture. I use the term to suggest that the pattern of human growth which a theory presents may not be definitely fixed in human nature, and that different patterns of personal development are possible. Different ways of life have different human growth hypotheses; these hypotheses help distinguish ways of life, and the very existence of a distinctive growth hypothesis may help bring about its own realization, when that realization is possible.

One such hypothesis in psychotherapeutic theory which takes a religious form is explained by Otto Rank. He divides the human growth process into four major phases: familial, societal, artistic, and spiritual. Each phase involves major rebirth experiences in the form of separations from and major movements towards union with significant others or with the cosmos. The final stage—the spiritual phase of personality growth—may be described as a deeply religious rebirth in which the person is "now in touch with the eternal, the universal,

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6 Victor Frankl, quote file of author.
or, for some, the personified God.7 This phase may be summarized as follows:

To claim one's ethical ideal in a final form, one makes peace with the totality of existence, with one's life, with one's fate, and with death. Even the final separation by death has lost its pangs of fear; one has overcome the guilt for having lived because life was lived to its fullest. The fear of death is primarily the fear of failing to live.

Unions and separations are no longer in tension with each other. Man is in union with the ultimate, even as he experiences himself as distinctively separate.*

To these authors, the successful therapeutic process consists in the patient's moving through the phases of growth which culminate in this spiritual union.

Assuming that Rank's growth hypothesis is humanly possible, if it were introduced into a person's life and became established as part of a group's way of life, then he and others would move through Rank's phases of growth. In Rank's theory, the growth hypothesis plays an integral part in guiding the major rebirth experiences which aim toward union with "the cosmos" or "the eternal." If someone in this Rankian way of life became sidetracked, then a form of therapy in harmony with that way of life, one built around the Rankian growth hypothesis, might be employed to help him reach the spiritual phase of human existence.

But, what happens when a life-view that contains one growth hypothesis is applied to a way of life that is built around a different growth hypothesis?

Although Rank's growth hypothesis is very intriguing and probably within the capacity of some people to realize, it is not the growth hypothesis found in the gospel of repentance. Were Otto Rank's psychological theory applied therapeutically to persons who are living their lives within a gospel framework, their growth experiences, constituted by a gospel framework, would come to be understood ("laden") as instances of one or more phases of growth as set down by the Rankian theory. Can growth, in the gospel sense, take place then, in Rankian terms? Typically, therapeutic techniques, when used in intensive psychotherapy, try to achieve "emotional insights" and to "work through" these insights as a basic part of the healing process. These emotional insights arise from certain "understandings" produced by the therapeutic technique and the theory

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2Ibid.
embodied in it. In Rank’s case, his growth hypothesis would be an integral part of the therapeutic theory and the understandings generated by it. These understandings provide the material which can be worked through in bringing about “rebirth.”

From a gospel life-view, both insights and the process of working through them might be likened to Alma’s expansion of the mind and enlargement of the soul (Alma 32). That expansion and enlargement takes place through a relationship between the person and “the word.” Can, then, a therapeutic psychology (e.g., Rank’s theory with its growth hypothesis) produce and work through the soul-enlarging “insights” or “understandings,” given the nature of that theory and the explanatory impact it has on religious phenomena? Or can one life-view create the insights required by another life-view so that the latter can enlarge the soul in accord with its own ends? Even if a life-view could expand the mind and enlarge the soul along its own lines, it might be incapable of expanding the mind and enlarging the soul along lines required by a life-view different from itself. For example, one wouldn’t expect Luther’s religious framework to be used as a means to produce the spiritual insights required by Alma’s ends, although it most certainly might produce its own kind of rebirth experiences and personality changes. Therapeutic psychologies produce different rebirth experiences from “working through” the (theoretical) “understandings” which constitute the “emotional insights” produced by their particular therapeutic theories. But in the gospel, persons must be born again—must put off the old man and put on the new man. The question is whether a therapeutic theory can do this. Can therapeutic psychology actually help put on the new man, or can it simply renew or remodel only the old man?

CAN GOSPEL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IDEAS BE INTEGRATED TO FORM A MEANS TO GOSPEL ENDS?

Let us next consider whether psychological ideas and the gospel can be integrated to form a means to gospel ends. This question does not have to do with using an intact therapeutic technique separate from the gospel to achieve gospel ends. Rather the question concerns developing new therapeutic means by integrating gospel ideas and psychological theory. By integration, I do not mean that one’s favorite psychological theory is sanctified by laying on a few scriptures in a superficial way. By integration I mean arriving at a carefully worked out therapeutic theory which contains gospel concepts and
psychological concepts—a union of truths from both points of view. This union requires more than a superficial joining (as when one points out parallels in Abraham Maslow’s notion of self-realization and Alma the Younger’s idea of soul enlargement).

This possibility poses a problem in that the terms or ideas employed in the gospel and in psychology are “laden” with the theory (or life-view) of which they are a part. If the meaning of major psychological concepts is dependent upon the principles of the therapeutic theory they help form, then integrating them into the gospel may result in deep and important changes in the gospel itself, indeed possibly creating a new gospel or a new life-view. The depth and importance of these changes would depend on the impact of such integrations on the basic doctrines of the gospel. There are examples aplenty in the history of theology to make anyone wary of such an undertaking. In philosophy and social science, such integrations result in new philosophies and new theories which often significantly differ from the originals. Since when two views of life become integrated, the result is always a new view of life, can such integrations that involve the gospel be justified in light of the gospel’s claim to truth? Could the resulting therapeutic means actually attain gospel ends? Would not this new means transform the very nature of the ends it aims at?

Such moves to integrate the concepts and principles of different theories and methods are common in the social sciences. Some believe that such integrations are part of the advancement of the human sciences. But it is a different ball game when the subject matters to be integrated include the revealed gospel. Surely, such integrations cannot be undertaken with the same attitude with which they might be undertaken were the subject matters solely social science. Earlier dispensations lost their grasp of gospel truths by so integrating seemingly plausible theories.

CAN A UNIQUE THERAPEUTIC PSYCHOLOGY BE BUILT WITHIN A GOSPEL FRAMEWORK?

Perhaps a marriage between psychological therapies and the gospel is not required after all. Perhaps the gospel has its own psychological theory and technique which may be extracted if we only go at it in the right way. Perhaps, hidden within the gospel of repentance itself, there exists a therapeutic theory and technology—a truly gospel means for gospel ends.

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There are two directions in which this last approach might proceed. One direction is that our understanding of the gospel of repentance as set forth in the scriptures might be developed more fully than it has been up to now. The commonly understood concept of repentance, as simply consisting of the "four R's," would be replaced by a more complete account, a more deeply reaching method for healing the soul. Such a development might eliminate what are considered the inadequacies in the gospel of repentance as we now understand it, inadequacies which have led some psychologists in the Church to use therapeutic psychology for gospel ends. Were these inadequacies remedied, we might minimize reliance on external forms for healing the soul. There is much to be said for enriching our understanding of repentance and soul enlargement by searching and studying the scriptures and applying their precepts to psychotherapeutic experience.

A second direction is to develop a full-fledged psychological theory and therapeutic technique based on the gospel. Perhaps through scripture study and further revelation, we could discover a true therapeutic psychology which might enter the marketplace of ideas and gradually replace extant therapeutic psychologies which, in many cases, have proven themselves rather unsuccessful. This true theory would not only be a basis for enriching our understanding of the gospel of repentance in its own terms but would also be applicable to tough cases of psychological disorders which appear to be beyond the reach of present understanding of the repentance process.

Such efforts most certainly should not be discouraged any more than the disciplined pursuit of understanding in any field of social or physical science should be. But there is great danger. If we are not unpretentious and circumspect in such endeavors, we may develop different schools of thought which oppose one another in the name of the gospel. In science, we expect strong differences of opinion, and such differences often produce worthwhile results when kept within the bounds of responsible inquiry. But when the gospel becomes involved in differences of this kind, the bounds of responsible inquiry will more than likely be overstepped. The results will be schisms and dogmatisms. Both free inquiry and the gospel will suffer. If efforts to discover the true psychology behind the gospel ever bear fruit, they will probably do so only after much sacrifice and the passing of several generations. Perhaps the psychological theory and therapeutic technique which underlie the gospel are radically different from what we now think. Perhaps we ourselves may have to undergo extensive reeducation and change. This challenge could occupy psychologists.
for several generations. Meanwhile, should we not protect the gospel from our own efforts as well as preserve the conditions of free inquiry?

Within the context of the Church, it is curious that physics, our most advanced science, has never formally courted the gospel, let alone proposed marriage. It apparently feels no need to appear in public as her suitor or would-be husband. No doubt, its run-in with religious dogmatists in an earlier age made physics forever wary of making such advances. Perhaps, too, the respect physics holds for the gospel, plus the awareness it has of its own relative infancy within the eternal scheme, keeps it at arm’s length until it comes of age. Meanwhile it freely draws on inspiration from the gospel in carrying on its labor. Psychology might well imitate its older and wiser brother, drawing as much inspiration as it possibly can from the beauties of its would-be bride, but recognizing that it is not yet ready to assume the weighty responsibility of courtship and marriage. Indeed, the maturation of the groom, not to mention the integrity of the bride, may depend on such an arrangement.

CONCLUSION

Wisdom would dictate that we do not take too seriously any announcement that a science of psychology is being joined with, or developed within, a gospel framework. And, indeed, if a marriage between psychology and the gospel has actually already taken place, we should have it annulled immediately, declaring that it was only a practice run and that the prospective groom is prohibited from wooing the prospective bride until the groom comes of age.
Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve:  
A Succession of Continuity

Ronald K. Esplin

The tragic murder of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum in June 1844 sent shockwaves through Nauvoo. Thousands experienced a sense of deep personal loss; it was difficult to conceive of another filling Joseph’s shoes. Despair and bewilderment combined with pervasive sorrow as the reality of the calamity settled over the city. Some, fearing that the internal dissension that had contributed to the Prophet’s death would intensify, must have wondered whether the Church could survive.

A visitor to Nauvoo a few months later, however, would have encountered not chaos and confusion, but harmony and optimism. He would have seen the Saints, under new leadership, purposefully pushing forward the “measures” of their deceased prophet with more energy and intensity than ever before. What had happened to the crisis? How had potential disaster been avoided? For Nauvoo resident John Fullmer, the answer was that before his death Joseph Smith had succeeded

in completely organizing the Church, conferring keys, authority and endowments upon the Apostles and others, so that the work can go on as well as when he alone was propelling it; and better, because there are more now to push it, each holding all the power which he held in the priestly office.¹

In Fullmer’s view, Joseph Smith had prepared for his death.

¹John Fullmer to Uncle John, 27 September 1844, John S. Fullmer Letterbook, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives. In this and other quotations from manuscript materials, abbreviations have been expanded and minimum punctuation and capitalization supplied to improve readability.
What actually occurred in succession—and why—has been much discussed but little understood. This is true partly because the Nauvoo antecedents of succession have received inadequate attention. This study, a summary of a larger work, provides an overview of the entire process of succession, introducing and illustrating the themes and events that contribute to an understanding of what occurred after the Prophet’s death. It is appropriate to begin with an examination of how Joseph Smith understood his personal role and mission and how that understanding influenced the Nauvoo experience of the Saints.

I. NAUVOO AND THE MISSION OF JOSEPH SMITH

Joseph Smith saw himself as head of the dispensation of the fullness of times, presiding over the restoration of “all things” and charged with the establishment of a new Zion on earth in preparation for the eventual return of Christ. Zion, the new kingdom, was to be a theocracy, a community of the righteous centered on the temple and governed by revelation through God’s priesthood. Though this vision had helped shape Joseph’s community-building efforts in Kirtland and Missouri, only in Nauvoo did he have the security and the resources to embark on what historian Robert B. Flanders has called “the first full-scale model of the Mormon kingdom.”

Sustained by a personal sense of urgency, the Prophet in Nauvoo introduced a series of innovations aimed at completing the foundation for and implementing the full pattern of the kingdom of Zion.

For Joseph Smith, Mormonism had never been static. Changing circumstances provided challenges and new opportunities. Moreover, he preached continuous revelation and believed in a “line upon line, precept upon precept” unfolding of ancient patterns and eternal truths—both to himself as prophet and through him to his people as they were prepared. “I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifest to me,” he once remarked, “were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.” He had an expansive vision of the kingdom and worked to implement it and to prepare his people to accept it.


The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child,” the passage continued. “communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it.” This was a frequent theme in the Prophet’s teachings.
But many did not accept new teachings easily, some not at all. "Many seal up the door of heaven," complained Joseph, "by saying so far God may reveal and I will believe," but no further. He once compared the difficulty of getting "anything into the heads of this generation . . . Even the Saints were slow to understand," with trying to split a hemlock knot "with a Corn do[de]ger for a wedge and a pumkin for a beetle"; that is, it could not be done. "I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God, but we frequently see some of them after suffering all they have for the work of God will fly to peaces like glass as soon as any thing comes that is contrary to their traditions, they cannot stand the fire at all."5

Again, this concern was not new to Nauvoo. In connection with the Kirtland temple ordinances, according to George A. Smith, some apostatized because there was too much and some because there was too little. He felt that had the Lord "on that occasion revealed one sentiment further . . . He would have upset the whole of us."6 The resistance to change and the slowness to accept an expanding gospel were important factors in the Kirtland difficulties; in Nauvoo they became even more significant.

In Nauvoo the Prophet consciously labored to prepare the Saints for innovations and succeeded in introducing many. Where resistance was too great, he concluded to move ahead privately among those he felt would embrace the expanded teachings, preserve them, and eventually deliver them to the Church. While this commitment to private teachings greatly complicated Nauvoo society, it unburdened a prophet who felt the necessity of delivering the full plan to the Saints. In the spring of 1842, as regular private instruction increased, Heber C. Kimball understood the Prophet’s mood: "Brother Joseph feels as well as I Ever see him," he wrote to Parley P. Pratt. "One reason is he has got a Small company, that he feels safe in thare ha[n]ds. And that is not all, he can open his bosom to[o] and feel him Self safe."7

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4Joseph Smith Diary, 11 June 1843, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives. This resistance to innovation was in spite of the article of faith which proclaimed. "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things . . . ."

5Diary of Wilford Woodruff, 21 January 1844, Wilford Woodruff Papers, Church Archives.


7Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, 17 June 1842, Parley P. Pratt Papers, Church Archives. While some private councils mainly involved the Twelve, others involved the "quorum" of those who had received temple ordinances and instruction under Joseph Smith. The "Small company" mentioned here was of the latter type.
Though comfortable for the Prophet, the private circle itself was not without difficulties. Even among those whom he selected to receive additional instruction were those who failed to keep confidences or who could not accept what he taught them. Consequently, Joseph moved cautiously even with those closest to him. To one of the Prophet’s characteristic warnings that if he told all he knew of the kingdom of God many would leave him or even rise up and kill him, Brigham Young is said to have replied, ‘‘[Then do not] tell me anything that I can’t bear, for I don’t want to apostatize.’’

In Nauvoo, then, there was a private gnosia, in this case an authorized private teaching under the direction of the Prophet. Joseph once said that he had taught all his ‘‘strongest doctrines’’ in public, and it may be true that existing accounts of public utterances reveal allusions to perhaps all the Prophet’s doctrines. But he did not develop and explain his teachings in public as he did in private. There were, in Nauvoo, different levels of understanding among the Saints.

Reading the Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith or The Words of Joseph Smith leaves the impression that we have essentially all that the Prophet taught. Such accounts do present his recorded teachings and words, but the original records in fact contain probably less than twenty percent of his known public discourses and almost nothing of his private amplifications. Wilford Woodruff, a man who expended much time and energy to preserve accounts of Joseph’s public teachings, characteristically reported of lengthy private sessions merely that ‘‘we received good instruction’’ or ‘‘we received some instructions concerning the Priesthood.’’ This was apparently so because of an explicit policy of not writing, even privately, the private teachings. Other examples illustrate this policy.

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8 See reminiscence of Robert Horro in Millennial Star 55 (4 September 1893): 585.
9A careful reading of Stan Larson, ‘‘The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text,’’ Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Winter 1978): 198–208, is instructive in this regard. While this carefully recorded sermon is thought to be one of the boldest and most explicit the Prophet ever preached, Wilford Woodruff apparently had from private instruction a fuller understanding of many of the concepts mentioned. The italicized portions of the amalgamated text are additions that only the Woodruff version provides. The explanation for these expansions by Wilford Woodruff is probably not that he heard what other recorders did not, but that he already understood and could therefore clarify what the Prophet only alluded to. The teachings of the King Follett Discourse were not new to Wilford Woodruff and others who had been privately taught by the Prophet.
10According to historian Dean Jessee, contemporary records mention more than 250 public sermons and there were no doubt others. No verbatim transcripts exist of any of those (clerks skilled in shorthand were not available in the Church until just after the Prophet’s death) and reasonably adequate summaries of only about fifty.
11Wilford Woodruff Diary, 17 and 24 December 1843.
In the spring of 1842, Apostle Parley P. Pratt presided over the British Mission while other Apostles in Nauvoo received vital private teachings. Excited to share the new developments with his colleague, Apostle Heber C. Kimball wrote his fellow-apostle Pratt that they had "received some pressious things through the Prophet on the priesthood that would caus your Soul to rejoice," but then had to note: "I can not give them to you on paper fore they are not to be riten."\(^\text{12}\)

A comment by Brigham Young in the September 1844 trial of Sidney Rigdon makes a similar point. To demonstrate Rigdon's standing in the Church, William Marks referred to written revelations. No man, he concluded, had been ordained to as much as President Rigdon. Brigham Young responded:

I have known that Brother Marks "had no evidence but the written word:" But if this people have no evidence but the written word, it is quite time to go to the river and be baptised for the remission of their sins. . . . Brother Marks . . . don't know all the ordinations, nor he wont till he knows something more than the written word.

Later Brigham added, "As to a person not knowing more than the written word, let me tell you that there are keys that the written word never spoke of, nor never will."\(^\text{13}\)

Private teachings continued to complicate Nauvoo society. Frequent private sessions involving an expanding group of intimates could not be entirely hidden.\(^\text{14}\) Furthermore, as part of his effort to prepare the Saints eventually to receive these things, the Prophet—and later Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, and others—alluded in public to these private teachings. As might be expected, Nauvoo rumor mills churned out speculation and distorted versions of supposed private teachings. Many learned of these things first in mutilated form through the grapevine. All of this occasioned the strong and repeated Nauvoo admonitions that "the mysteries of the kingdom" were not to be taught unless authorized, and certainly not by the elders when preaching abroad. They would be taught only in Nauvoo, Church leaders counseled, although in connection with the

\(^{12}\) Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, 17 June 1842, Pratt Papers.

\(^{13}\) *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 October 1844): 666.

\(^{14}\) For more information on Nauvoo private meetings, see D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1979): 88–96.
temple they would later become available to every Saint who prepared.15

Nauvoo innovations and the secrecy that surrounded some of them led to a doctrinal divergence of considerable proportions and to division and apostasy that eventually endangered the city and contributed to the Prophet's death. Many came to accept the plurality of gods, new temple ordinances, new theocratic practices, and even plural marriage, while others mistrusted and finally rejected the whole Nauvoo "package." Even among those privately taught by the Prophet, the new teachings appeared to some as the capstone on a finally completed edifice, while for others they became a stumbling block that could neither be ignored nor removed.

Why did Joseph Smith resolutely move ahead with such problematic innovations? Was this simply a case of misjudgment and mismanagement by a leader who, in the view of one historian, "was losing control of many affairs, and perhaps of himself"?216 Did Joseph become unbalanced by the pressures from enemies, on the one hand, and a growing sense of power and control in Nauvoo, on the other, or had he embarked fearlessly on a course he felt to be required whether or not it caused offense?

The Prophet clearly enjoyed his position at the head of a growing Nauvoo theocracy and found the trappings of his station to his liking. It is doubtful that these things unbalanced him, however, and they certainly do not explain his actions. What makes his actions comprehensible is an awareness of his internal agenda and personal timetable. Early in the Nauvoo period, Joseph Smith concluded that his own time was short and that he simply had to accomplish certain things regardless of the cost. Furthermore, there is evidence that, at least to some extent, he understood the probable cost.17 If Nauvoo, for the first time, provided the opportunity to develop new institutional and doctrinal patterns, it was also in Nauvoo that he felt a

15The official description of the first Nauvoo endowments in May 1842 included the explanation that "nothing was made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them" (History of the Church, 5:2). It is clear that public allusions created in the Saints a sense of anticipation about the new teachings to accompany the completion of the temple.

For examples of the emphasis on not teaching the mysteries abroad, see Hyrum Smith in Times and Seasons 5 (15 March 1844): 474, and Hyrum Smith and Heber Kimball in Thomas Bullock Conference Minutes, 8 April 1844, Church Archives. See also Wilford Woodruff Diary, 8–9 April 1844.


17According to Brigham Young, Joseph said on more than one occasion that he expected the introduction of plural marriage could lead to his death (Discourse by Brigham Young, 8 October 1866, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives).
growing sense of personal urgency to do so—a relentless feeling that he would not have another chance.

Many documents preserve this sense of foreboding and urgency. On the eve of the Nauvoo experience, for example, Lyman Wight witnessed Joseph Smith prophesy in Liberty Jail that he would never live to see his fortieth birthday. Immediately after the Prophet’s death, several of the Twelve testified he had frequently said, ‘‘Brethren, the Lord bids me hasten the work in which we are engaged,’’ or ‘‘I know not why; but for some reason I am constrained to hasten my preparations.’’ Such statements led one intimate of Joseph Smith to conclude that ‘‘the Lord had pushed things forward rather prematurely on account of the shortness [of] Joseph’s time.’’

There is also striking evidence during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. His April 1842 remarks to the Female Relief Society were especially revealing. The Church was not yet fully or properly organized, he told the sisters, something he could remedy only in connection with the temple and temple ordinances. He spoke of ‘‘Big Elders’’ who had caused difficulties because they spoke publicly of the things he taught them privately. Nonetheless, he told them, he intended to deliver vital keys to the Relief Society and to the Church, for ‘‘according to his prayers God had appointed him elsewhere.’’ Specifically, he continued, ‘‘he did not know as he should have many opportunities of teaching them—that they were going to be left to themselves . . . that the church would not have his instruction long, and the world would not be troubled with him a great while.’’

This sense of personal foreboding led him that spring to increase the tempo of his ‘‘preparations,’’ including a few days later the administration of the first temple-related endowments in Nauvoo. Other statements in the months of life remaining indicate Joseph Smith’s continuing awareness that his own time would be shortened. Far from his death’s catching him totally unprepared, this awareness drove the Prophet to actions and innovations that otherwise might have awaited a more propitious time.

18Wilford Woodruff Diary, 28 July 1844. Lyman Wight told this to his fellow-apostles as they traveled back to Nauvoo after the Martyrdom. He said Joseph warned him not to reveal it until after the Prophet’s death.

19Undated Certificate of the Twelve, ca. fall 1844 or winter 1845, Brigham Young Papers; and 1 January 1844 public proclamation of Parley P. Pratt, Millennial Star 5 (March 1845): 151. See also Orson Hyde’s remarks in Times and Seasons 5 (15 September 1844): 651.


21Minutes of the Nauvoo Female Relief Society, 28 April 1842, Church Archives.

II. THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE

A brief review of the history of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles under Joseph Smith is another essential preliminary to understanding succession. The Quorum of the Twelve was first organized February 1835 in Kirtland. A month later the new Apostles received a revealed charter, now known as section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants. It outlined, though not without ambiguities, the scope of their authority and their relationship to other quorums. From this beginning both the "theology" of the Twelve and scriptural precedent allowed for and suggested an exalted role for the new quorum.23

In practice, however, such a role never developed in Kirtland, much to the discomfiture of some of the Apostles. There the Prophet made it clear that the high councils had jurisdiction over the stakes of Zion, while the Apostles presided elsewhere only. As a result, the Apostles had perhaps less influence and certainly less public prominence than the high council or the stake presidencies. Nor were they as intimate with Joseph Smith or relied upon as heavily by him as were these other officials.24

Brigham Young came to believe that this "period of humiliation," a time when Joseph Smith occasionally seemed to snub the Apostles intentionally, was a necessary preparation for later expanded service. If it were a test, many did not pass, for partly due to the frustrations of their position, most of this first Twelve fell away within three years of their ordination, although some only temporarily, and the Twelve ceased to function as a quorum after the first fifteen months or so of its existence.25 Before that occurred, however, the Apostles forced the Prophet to clarify whether or not they were above the high council in authority. The Twelve, Joseph declared in January 1836, stood in authority next to the Presidency "and are not subject to any other than the first presidency."26

The Missouri and Kirtland difficulties of 1837–1838 gave opportunity for some of the Apostles, especially Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, to demonstrate their firm loyalty to the Prophet. It was

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23See, for example, Doctrine and Covenants 107:24. Before the Apostles had a central role in practice, other revelations also suggested this potential (see especially D&C 112:30 and 124:127–28).
26Joseph Smith Diary, 16 January 1836; see also the discussion in Esplin, "Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve," pp. 182–85. It should be noted that at this time such a clarification had no immediate implications for succession. As D. Michael Quinn carefully demonstrated in "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," BYU Studies 16 (Winter 1976): 187–201, had Joseph Smith died in 1836 there were several other potential modes of succession.
there that Joseph Smith first came to look towards Apostles Young, Kimball, and others to fill larger roles. He selected Heber C. Kimball to head the first mission abroad. And when David Whitmer and the Missouri presidency were removed in the spring of 1838, he installed Thomas Marsh, David Patten, and Brigham Young—the three senior Apostles—as the presidency pro tem of that stake of Zion.27 With Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and others in jail a few months later, the Presidency wrote an important letter to Apostles Kimball and Young, stating explicitly that inasmuch as the Presidency were unavailable, the leadership of the Church devolved "upon you, that is the twelve." Even before this formal delegation, the two Apostles had recognized their authority and their responsibility and had stepped forward to lead the beleaguered Saints.28

It was as temporary leaders during this time of crisis that the Twelve for the first time functioned effectively as an administrative unit. At first only Apostles Young, Kimball, and newly ordained John Taylor were available to assist in the Missouri migration.29 Soon, however, John E. Page, George A. Smith, and Wilford Woodruff—earlier named as Apostles by the Prophet—began to function with their brethren. Joseph Smith's release from jail in the spring of 1839 inaugurated for the Twelve a season of frequent councils with the Presidency, something earlier Apostles had only dreamed of, to instruct them as a quorum before their departure for England. And it was in England that the Twelve came into its own as a powerful and united entity, functioning with remarkable effectiveness both as a missionary cadre and as an administrative quorum.

Not all of the Twelve participated in their quorum mission to England, and it is notable that only those who did figured prominently in succession.30 Apparently this shared experience, especially the individual demonstration of faith and commitment to the mission under adverse conditions, was an almost necessary school for later leadership. The experience unified the Apostles and taught them to rely on each other and on the Lord. They left England with a greater sense of the power and responsibility of their office and with new

27See "History of Heber Chase Kimball by his own Dictation." Heber C. Kimball Papers, Church Archives; and Minutes, 6–8 April 1838, Far West Record, Church Archives.
28See President Heber C. Kimball's Journal, Seventh Book of the Faith-Promoting Series (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), pp. 66–67, for the full text of the letter. Esplin, "Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve," pp. 360–64, discusses the letter and provides the location of manuscript copies.
29Parley Pratt was in jail, Orson Pratt was unavailable, David Patten had been killed, Orson Hyde had apostatized with Thomas Marsh, and William Smith was looking out mainly for himself. Some appointed to fill vacancies had not yet been ordained.
30William Smith and John E. Page failed to obey the call; Lyman Wight was not named to the quorum until just before the Apostles returned to America.
confidence in themselves and in Brigham Young as their leader. It was more than coincidence that the nine of the Twelve who filled this mission were the same nine who later received ordinances and additional authority under the hands of the Prophet which the other three Apostles did not and that they were the ones who led the body of the Church to the West after his death.\footnote{Esplin, "Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve," pp. 427–29; the entire mission experience is detailed and its impact analyzed on pp. 427–98.}

Initially, seven of the Twelve traveled to England. In their first quorum meeting abroad, April 1840, Brigham Young ordained to the apostleship his cousin Willard Richards, named by the Prophet to that office in 1838 but unordained because of his absence in England. That ordination completed the cast of those Apostles important to succession. As the eight Apostles laboring in England prepared to leave in the spring of 1841, Orson Hyde, traveling alone on his special appointment to Jerusalem, joined them. That April in Manchester nine of the Twelve—Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, and Willard Richards, all of the Apostles who would later join with Brigham Young in leading the Saints—met as a quorum for the first time.

Enthusiastic and confident, the Apostles returned to a prophet who more than ever needed their assistance in the increasing labors of his office. The success, demonstrated maturity, and selfless dedication of the Apostles' English labors gave them new credibility among the Saints at home and satisfied Joseph Smith that finally he had a quorum he could fully rely upon. Consequently, only one month after their return to Nauvoo, Joseph Smith, in August 1841, formally and explicitly gave them an enduring grant of new authority. "The twelve should be authorized," he told a special conference, "to assist in managing the affairs of the Kingdom in this place," that is, in Nauvoo, an organized stake of Zion, indeed the headquarters stake. Henceforth, according to the minutes, the Apostles were to regulate and superintend "the affairs of the Church," not merely as a temporary expediency but as "the duties of their office." The time had come "when the twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the first presidency"—not only abroad but "at the stakes."\footnote{Minutes, 16 August 1841, General Minutes Collection, Church Archives; and a printed version in Times and Seasons 2 (1 September 1841): 521–22.} Willard Richards's terse diary notation following the meeting probably accurately expressed the sense of the occasion: "Conference—Business of the Church given to the 12." When Wilford
Woodruff returned to Nauvoo a short time later, he too preserved the essence of the new arrangement in a phrase: “The temporal business of the Church is laid upon the hands of the Twelve.”

While the new involvements of the Twelve extended considerably beyond “temporal affairs,” it is probable that the workaday realities of their enlarged assignment probably fit closely Elder Woodruff’s assessment. They became involved in both raising funds for and in constructing of the Nauvoo House and the temple, in aiding the poor, in managing land and other church temporalities. They directed the settlement of new emigrants into Nauvoo and participated in both political decisions and in decisions affecting Nauvoo business and economic development. In harmony with a February 1842 revelation, the Twelve soon controlled the Times and Seasons and eventually all Church publishing. The Quorum of the Twelve also directed the calling, assigning, and instructing of missionaries, presided over conferences both in the field and in Nauvoo, and regulated the branches abroad.

Unlike some of the earlier Apostles, impatient for additional prestige and authority, the Twelve in 1841 apparently accepted their new responsibilities as duty and, especially at first, exercised their expanded authority cautiously. Aware that the high council had previously exercised exclusive jurisdiction in the stakes, Brigham Young felt it necessary to deny explicitly in the August 1841 conference that he and his colleagues had ambitiously sought new authority. “Nothing could be farther from his wishes and that of his Quorum,” he assured his listeners, “than to interpose with church affairs at Zion and her stakes.” Nonetheless, he affirmed, he and the brethren would do whatever Joseph assigned.

While many of the Twelve’s Nauvoo involvements were public, available for all to see and to judge, the Prophet also made further private clarification of their authority. When it was suggested that the high council and not the Twelve should preside over a certain trial, the Prophet said that the high council had no jurisdiction in the

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33 Willard Richards Diary, 16 August 1841, Willard Richards Papers, Church Archives; and Wilford Woodruff Diary, 8 October 1841.
34 Wilford Woodruff Diary, 8 February 1842: “A Revelation was given a few days Since for the Twelve to obtain the printing establishment . . . and govern the printing of the Times and Seasons and all the church publications as they are directed by my Holy Spirit in the midst of their Councils saith the Lord.”
35 Although enough data about other involvements of the Twelve is now available to expand his analysis, T. Edgar Lyon in “Nauvoo and the Council of the Twelve,” The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History, pp. 167–205, still provides a useful overview of the Nauvoo activities of the Apostles. For examples of the scope of apostolic authority and of the relationship of the Twelve to the Presidency, see notices in Times and Seasons 3 (16 May 1842): 798.
36 Minutes, 16 August 1841, Times and Seasons 2 (1 September 1841): 521; see also Epistle of the Twelve, Times and Seasons 3 (1 April 1842): 736, 738.
matter, that "the twelve had [jurisdiction] over all places and this in all the world—he spoke of the dignified station of the twelve and wished them to arise and magnify their calling." As if they were still too cautious or timid, he then reproved the Apostles for lack of diligence. In contrast to Kirtland, from August 1841 on, the Twelve in Nauvoo were never overshadowed either publicly or privately by the high council or any other leadership quorum.

III. PREPARATIONS FOR SUCCESSION

The new involvements of the Twelve were not limited to the temporal. Concern with the teachings and ordinances of the temple—not just financing and construction—is one thread that runs throughout their Nauvoo experience, a thread of tremendous importance for succession. Almost immediately after their return from England they participated in baptisms for the dead, including assisting the Prophet in dedicating a temporary baptismal font for that purpose. As early as December 1841 the Apostles published a general epistle to the Saints titled "Baptism for the Dead" which stressed the importance of the temple and its ordinances. Once in Nauvoo they also resumed the council meetings and close personal relationship with Joseph Smith that they had first experienced in the summer of 1839. The Prophet manifested his "mighty power and wisdom and knowledge" more clearly in such councils "in the midst of his intimate friends" than in any other setting, thought Wilford Woodruff. "My soul has been much edified of late from time to time in hearing Joseph the Seer convers about the mysteries of the Kingdom of God." In the months ahead such meetings provided the Twelve a literal "school of the prophets." A December 1841 meeting, one of the few for which we have some detail, foreshadows later Nauvoo developments and was perhaps typical of such private discussions. The Apostles and a few others met at the Prophet's home on a Sunday evening. Heber Kimball's explanation of the parable of the potter, stressing that all must be pliable in the hands of God, received Joseph's approbation. Joseph followed with an acknowledgment that

37Levi Richards Diary, 27 May 1843, Church Archives; I appreciate Andrew Ehat for bringing this source to my attention.
38For a comprehensive treatment of the temple and succession, see the unpublished manuscript by Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question." A condensed version of this important study will appear in a future issue of BYU Studies.
40Wilford Woodruff Diary, 19 February 1842. For examples of earlier meetings, see Woodruff entries for 31 October, 28 and 30 November, and 27 December 1841.
some dissatisfaction existed in Nauvoo because he did not deliver to the Saints more of the word of God. The Saints, he said in defense, were not prepared to receive what he had, "No (says he) not one in this room." He then chastised those present for unbelief and further explained that one reason the Saints did not have the secrets of the Lord was their inability to maintain confidences. "I can keep a secret till doomsday," he added. Brigham Young followed with an admonition "to keep each commandment as it came from the Lord by the mouth of the prophet." Interestingly, this was one of the last occasions that Wilford Woodruff recorded in his diary the Prophet’s nonpublic teachings. The Lord and the Prophet had commanded that a temple be built, and "we should do it speedily," concluded Brigham Young. For their part, the Apostles determined to be pliable, obedient, and, where necessary, silent.

By the spring of 1842 Joseph Smith had concluded that the introduction of additional temple ordinances could not await the completion of the temple. On 4 May 1842, in the second story of his Red Brick Store, he introduced the first full temple endowments. Among the nine men involved that day were the three Apostles who later formed the First Presidency: Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards. From that beginning, Joseph Smith intimately involved the Twelve in each step as he unfolded all of the temple-related keys, ordinances, and teachings. Eventually, nine of the Twelve—the same nine who first met as a quorum in England—received the fulness of the priesthood ordinances in Nauvoo under the Prophet’s direction. After the Martyrdom, these Apostles mobilized the Saints to finish the temple and then administered to them the same ordinances.

During his final months Joseph Smith completed the introduction of all temple ordinances, the implementation of new institutional patterns, and the preparation of the Twelve to administer these things in his absence. As one close associate wrote soon after the Martyrdom:

All had been done. Joseph and Hyram had done all that they could have done and the Foundation of the great Work of the last Days was laid so that it could be finished by the 12 Apostles who had been instructed in all things pertaining to the Kingdom of God on the Earth.

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41Wilford Woodruff Diary, 19 December 1841.
42History of the Church, 5:1-2. See also Ehat’s discussion of this in “Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” p. 159, n. 77.
During this same period the Prophet also expressed concretely his feelings for the responsibilities and privileges of his own seed in continuing the work he had begun. Three propositions, amplified and discussed below, focus attention on themes central to these final preparations:

1. That because of the proven competence and loyalty of the Twelve, Joseph Smith privately prepared them and fully authorized them by priesthood keys and the knowledge of temple ordinances and doctrine to carry on his mission. No other quorum or group of men was similarly authorized, prepared, and charged.

2. That Joseph Smith anticipated later important leadership roles for his sons, and that birthright and lineal descent were significant concepts both to him and to Brigham Young and the Twelve.

3. That neither the Prophet nor the Twelve saw apostolic possession of the keys of the kingdom—with concomitant responsibility to bear off the kingdom in Joseph’s absence—and lineal priesthood rights as incompatible. During the last months of Joseph’s life the two were closely intertwined, and throughout the nineteenth century Brigham Young and the Apostles viewed the possibility of the Prophet’s sons fulfilling their birthright as complementary to their own responsibilities.

A chronological review of the Prophet’s essential actions in 1843–1844 illustrates the interrelationship of these concerns.

Full priesthood authority was not yet available in the Church, Brigham Young told the Philadelphia Saints as late as August 1843. For one to have the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, he “must be a king and a priest,’” he told them, and if any yet were, he was not aware of it. See Brigham Young here referred to a specific temple-related anointing that he anticipated but had not yet received. He probably understood what had so far prevented the introduction of the ordinance, and he no doubt would have agreed with the Prophet’s decision to move ahead as soon as the way opened, in spite of the absence of most of the Twelve.

On 27 August in Nauvoo Joseph Smith discussed the fulness of the priesthood publicly in more detail than at any other time. The ordinance imparted, he taught, “all that could be given to man on

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44Wilford Woodruff Diary, 6 August 1843. Later that month Joseph Smith alluded to the same things when he said publicly that “Abrahams Patriarchal power . . . is the greatest yet experienced in this church” (Franklin D. Richards, “Scriptural Items,” 27 August 1843, as quoted in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph [Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1980], p. 245).

45See Ehat, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances,” for analysis of the factors which influenced the Prophet’s timing.
the earth.'" One month later, Joseph Smith introduced for the first time the fulness of the priesthood anointing. Of the Apostles only John Taylor, who received his endowments on the same day, was present. In October, before the arrival of the other Apostles, the Prophet presided over the fulness ordinance for a handful of men, including his brother Hyrum and Stake President William Marks. Brigham Young received the same ordinance 22 November 1843, soon after his return from the East, and under his direction other members of his quorum soon followed.47

With the Apostles in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith in December launched a period of intensive private instruction and ordinance work. Sometimes he met only with the Quorum of the Twelve; more often during this period he convened all of those who had been endowed, a group also referred to as a ‘quorum.’ By early December this group included eight of the Twelve, with a ninth added 23 December.

Saturday, 2 December: Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Parley Pratt, and Orson Hyde ‘‘met with the quorum and conversed upon a variety of subjects’’ and were endowed ‘‘preparatory to further Blessings.’’48 From then throughout December and January, Joseph Smith continued his frequent private teaching. Sunday, 17 December: ‘‘Met with the quorum. . . . President Joseph Smith met with us also. We received good instruction.’’ Saturday, 23 December: ‘‘Met with the quorum through the day . . .’’—to conduct business, including the endowment of Orson Pratt. Sunday, 24 December: ‘‘In the evening I again met with the quorum. . . . We received some instructions concerning the Priesthood.’’ Saturday, 30 December: ‘‘Met in council in the afternoon and herd a lecture delivered . . . which was truly interesting and edifying.’’ Sunday, 7 January 1844: ‘‘Met with the quorum and we had an interesting time of instruction.’’ Sunday, 14 January: ‘‘Met with the quorum of the Twelve. Conversed upon a variety of subjects, building the Temple, the endowment etc. Some good ideas advanced.’’

Wednesday, 17 January: In the middle of this period of intensive temple-related ordinance work and instruction, the Prophet

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46Quotation is from Heber C. Kimball Diary, 26 December 1845. For information about ‘‘fulness of the priesthood’’ and the ordinance, see the Prophet’s discourse, 27 August 1843, in Ehat and Cook, eds., The Words of Joseph Smith, pp. 243–47, along with editorial notes on pp. 302–307, especially n. 30.

47Dates for individual ordinances have been drawn from Andrew F. Ehat, ‘‘A Summary of Data on the Individuals Who Received the Endowment before Ordinance Work Began in the Nauvoo Temple,’’ used by permission; copy in possession of the author. Ehat prepared this summary after extensive work in relevant primary materials.

48Wilford Woodruff Diary, 2 December 1843. Quotations from December and January that follow are also from the Woodruff diary.
blessed his oldest son Joseph that his own anointing “shall be upon the head of my son” and that “he shall be my successor . . . which appointment belongeth to him by blessing, and also by right.” Rather than a bestowal of authority, this was a conditional designation or call to later leadership. According to reminiscences, John Taylor was present on this occasion, and the other Apostles were probably soon informed. A few days later Joseph Smith directed that eight more of the Twelve receive their fulness-of-the-priesthood anointings.

In retrospect, the Twelve saw this period as essential in their own preparation to carry on Joseph Smith’s work after him. Would this blessing of young Joseph have surprised, disturbed, or confused them? Probably not. For one thing, they were not yet willing in January 1844 to acknowledge, even to themselves, that the Prophet had need for an immediate successor. Because of their love for him and their unwillingness to part with him, they had discounted his portentous remarks and refused to entertain thoughts of an imminent change in their relationship. That, along with the fact that young Joseph was not yet twelve, must have encouraged their propensity to relegate any question of succession to the future. In the meantime, intent on learning their own duties, they focused on the demands of the immediate future.

It should also be noted that a future role for Joseph’s sons was not a new idea for the Apostles. No doubt they knew of the statement in the important revelation of January 1841 that Joseph Smith’s blessing and anointing “shall also be put upon the head of his posterity after him” and that in him and his seed, as with Abraham before him, “shall the kindred of the earth be blessed.” It is also possible that part of the private instruction of this period included expression from the Prophet of his hopes for his sons, with explanations

49The Thomas Bullock text of the 17 January 1844 blessing is in the RLDS Library–Archives, The Auditorium, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri. Both the text and the memory of young Joseph confirm that this was a blessing or designation, not an ordination. “I was not ordained by my father as his successor,” he later declared, “according to my understanding of the word ordain, I was not. I was blessed and designated.” This constituted a conditional call, “a blessing conferred upon me, and by the act conferring certain privileges upon me, or to designate me to a certain work, depending as I understand it then, and understand it now, upon good behavior, and upon any subsequent call I might receive.” (Testimony of Joseph Smith III in “Temple Lot Suit,” Complainsant’s Abstract of Pleading and Evidence [Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1893]. p. 79; italics as in the original.) For scriptural use of “call” in this conditional sense, see Matthew 20:16 and D&C 121:34ff. For a treatment of the RLDS view of this designation, see W. Grant McMurray, “‘True Son of a True Father’: Joseph Smith III and the Succession Question,” Restoration Studies 1, Sesquicentennial Edition, ed. Maurice L. Draper and Clare D. Vlahos (Independence: Temple School, the Auditorium, 1980), pp. 151-41.

50See testimony of James Whitehead in “Temple Lot Suit,” Complainsant’s Abstract, pp. 32-33, 36–37. More than a half-century later, however, Wilford Woodruff expressly denied any specific memory of such a blessing.

51D&C 124:57–58.
of how their role would relate to the apostolic charge, and it is certain that bloodlines, chosen lineage, and priesthood rights were part of those temple-related private teachings.

On 20 January, the Saturday following Joseph's blessing of his son, Heber C. Kimball became the second of the Apostles to receive the fulness of the priesthood ordinances—this under the direction of Joseph Smith, but with Brigham Young, his quorum president, officiating. 52 During the next eleven days the remainder of the nine Apostles received those ordinances under the hands of, as Wilford Woodruff expressed it, "Apostles Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball by order of Joseph the prophet." 53

Sunday, 21 January, may have been the day that Joseph Smith, following his regular Sunday preaching, answered a question about who would be his successor by pointing out his young son Joseph seated with him on the stand. 54 Appropriately, in the midst of this period of intensive ordinance work and instruction, Joseph's sermon that day discussed temple ordinances: "My only trouble at the present," he told the Saints, "is concerning ourselves that the Saints will be divided and broken up and scattered before we get our Salvation Secure." He noted that many asked if it were not possible to be saved "without going through all these[ ] ordinances." The fulness of salvation, he answered, was not possible without them. 55 That evening Parley Pratt received the fulness of the priesthood. He and others in attendance with the Prophet received "many good exhortations . . . concerning the things of God." Between 25 January and 31 January, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Willard Richards, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, and George A. Smith received the same keys and blessings. Throughout this period "the Twelve and others" continued to meet "for instruction." 56

The story of Joseph Smith's concern for his lineage and their birthright does not end with the blessing of his young son Joseph. 57

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52This was the same order followed in the Kirtland Temple where Quorum President Thomas B. Marsh was appointed and authorized to officiate for his quorum.
53James Whitehead, whose several reminiscent accounts are not internally consistent and who sometimes included details that are demonstrably in error, insisted that this occurred on the Sunday meeting following the blessing (see Complainant's Abstract, pp. 32-33, 36-37). Here he was correct in saying that the blessing occurred in the winter of 1843[-1844] and in remembering a Wednesday. In another account, however, he thought it occurred soon after the Council of Fifty was organized, while other informants remembered an occasion shortly before Joseph Smith went to Carthage. It is possible some such public mention was made, perhaps on more than one occasion, as was the case with the Prophet's announcement that he had shifted the burden of the kingdom to the Twelve, but it seems unlikely any formal action was taken publicly and no record survives.
54Ehret and Cook, eds., The Words of Joseph Smith, p. 319.
55Wilford Woodruff Diary, 21 and 28 January 1844.
56For Brigham Young's understanding of this concern and of why it was appropriate, see his discourses on 9 October 1859, Journal of Discourses, 7:289, and 16 February 1847, Brigham Young Papers.
The same January 1841 revelation that spoke of the blessings upon his own seed also designated his brother Hyrum to share with him all the powers of the priesthood. Had Hyrum outlived Joseph, he would have had the authority to preside.58 However, in connection with premonitions about his own death, the Prophet might also have had presentiments about Hyrum, for he apparently told Newel K. Whitney that "if he and Hyrum were taken away" his younger brother Samuel H. Smith "would be his successor."59 At any rate, while Joseph felt his entire lineage had a special birthright, he was especially concerned about his own descendants. Not only did he bless his oldest son Joseph, several sources indicate he also left prophetic promises about his youngest son, David Hyrum Smith. "Unborn, yet blessed and prophetically announced ... to be at some future time the ruler of the Mormon Church" is how one nineteenth-century author phrased it, citing John M. Bernhisel, an intimate associate of the family, as his source.60 Born the November following the Prophet's death, David would have been conceived in February, after the blessing of young Joseph. Perhaps as the first son born to Joseph and Emma after their eternal marriage, the first-born in the covenant, he was considered to have a special birthright. The prophetic promises of future leadership were not forgotten.

During February, the Twelve continued frequent meetings with Joseph, many of them for planning a major Western expedition to search out possible locations for the Saints. Some plans for the West had been formulated at least as early as the winter of 1840–1841, while the Twelve were in England, and interest had continued, so the Twelve were likely neither unaware nor totally uninvolved before this. But now Joseph expressly delegated to the Apostles the overseeing and planning for this expedition. And in this context the Prophet told them that within five years the Saints would be "rid of" their

58D&C 124:94–95. That the Apostles understood this is clear from Times and Seasons 5 (15 October 1844): 683. See also Times and Seasons 5 (15 September 1844): 650–51.

59William Clayton Diary, 12 July 1844, typescript of entry in possession of author. Although the entry provides no clues as to when the remark occurred, it probably came months before. Had the Prophet in the spring of 1844 seriously considered a succession role for his brother Samuel, he no doubt would have involved him more in the instructions and ordinances given to the Twelve and others during that critical period. The Ehat Endowment Data Summary dates Samuel's initial ordinances in December 1843, about the time the last of the Apostles were initiated. However, Samuel continued to reside in Plymouth settlement, outside Nauvoo, and was not involved in private preparation or general church affairs. Nonetheless, unlike his volatile brother William, Samuel was steadfast and faithful to the Prophet and might have played a larger role had he not died soon after his brothers' murder in Carthage Jail. His obituary entitled him as "this worthy man... If ever there lived a good man upon the earth, Samuel H. Smith was that person." (Times and Seasons 5 [1 August 1844]: 606.)

60T. B. H. Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints: A Full and Complete History of the Mormons... (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873), p. 213. See also W. W. Blair Diary, 17 June 1874, RLDS Library–Archives, where he recorded that James Whitehead "Says D[avi]d will yet be a Prince so it was predicted by J. S." As noted on p. 357, Brigham Young made similar statements on several occasions.
old enemies "whether they were Apostates or of the world" and asked them to record it as a prophecy.\textsuperscript{61} For the Twelve this was fulfilled precisely on schedule in the move to the Great Basin, leaving behind both apostates and old enemies.

In late February Joseph concluded to defer further discussion of the West until he organized a long-contemplated new council, the now well-known Council of Fifty. With assistance of the Apostles, who were involved in every facet of its organization and deliberations, the Prophet began in early March 1844 to organize and instruct this forum. Although a revelation relating to the Council dates from that same spring of 1842 that saw the organization of the Relief Society and the first endowments, it became in the spring of 1844 the last of the institutional models that Joseph Smith would introduce.\textsuperscript{62}

Although the Council of Fifty had no opportunity to mature into a vital institution under Joseph Smith, its organization was of great symbolic importance. Its members thought of it as a government in embryo, one that would in the millennial kingdom have full power. "The Kingdom is organized," wrote Apostles Young and Richards a few weeks later, "and although it is as yet no bigger than a grain of Mustard seed the little plant is in a flourishing condition and our prospects brighter than ever."

In another letter Brigham Young noted Joseph had told them "the kingdom is set up, and you have the perfect pattern, and you can go and build up the kingdom."\textsuperscript{63}

Shortly after the organization of this council, Joseph Smith convened the Twelve and others for a solemn, yet dramatic meeting. The men met above Joseph’s store in the same room where nearly two years earlier endowments were first given. Reminiscent dating of the meeting as 23 March 1844 may be in error; more likely it occurred between 24–26 March and certainly before 4 April when Orson Hyde left Nauvoo for his Eastern mission.\textsuperscript{65}

In this extraordinary council, a depressed Joseph Smith again expressed forebodings about his own life. One thing remained undone, he told those assembled, before he could go "with all pleasure and satisfaction, knowing my work is done, and the foundation

\textsuperscript{61}Wilford Woodruff Diary, 25 February 1844.
\textsuperscript{63}Brigham Young and Willard Richards to Reuben Hedlock, 3 May 1844, Brigham Young Papers; see also \textit{History of the Church}, 6:391–94.
\textsuperscript{65}Brigham Young to Orson Spencer, 23 January 1848, \textit{Millennial Star} 10 (15 April 1848): 115.
laid upon which the Kingdom of God is to be reared’’: ‘‘Upon the shoulders of the Twelve must the responsibility of leading this Church henceforth rest until,’’ he admonished the Apostles, ‘‘you shall appoint others to succeed you.’’ Concerned that ‘‘this power and these Keys’’ be perpetuated, he noted that since all the Apostles present held the same keys, should some be killed others could be ordained to the same calling. After this ‘‘appointment,’’ ‘‘confirmed by the holy anointing under the hands of Joseph and Hyrum,’’ the Prophet charged them: ‘‘I roll the burden and responsibility of leading this Church off from my shoulders on to yours. Now, round up your shoulders and stand under it like men; for the Lord is going to let me rest a while.’’66 The Twelve now stood accountable, wrote one of the Apostles a few months later, ‘‘to lead this church, and to take the entire responsibility of all its affairs.’’67

On this same occasion, according to Parley P. Pratt, Joseph conferred ‘‘the keys of the sealing power’’ on Brigham Young, President of the Twelve. The Prophet taught them that it was the ‘‘last key,’’ the ‘‘most sacred of all,’’ and that it pertained ‘‘exclusively to the first presidency.’’68 All of this left an indelible imprint on those present. ‘‘Never shall we forget [Joseph’s] feelings or his words,’’69 attested the certificate of the Twelve, and their subsequent actions and statements lend credence to the proposition that they did not forget. After the event, Joseph Smith on several occasions publicly affirmed that he had given the Twelve full authority and rolled the burden of the kingdom onto them. Many not present at the dramatic meeting itself later testified that they heard Joseph so remark.70 The preparations were now complete. Barely three months later, Joseph Smith was dead.

66Undated Certificate of the Twelve, ca. fall 1844 or winter 1845, Brigham Young Papers. This is an early and detailed account of the ‘‘last charge,’’ including Joseph Smith’s ‘‘own language to us on that occasion, as nearly as we can recollect.’’ The Apostles first discussed this charge with the Nauvoo Saints in August–September 1844. Later they left dozens of descriptions and testimonies of this event. For early printed accounts see Times and Seasons 5 (15 September 1844): 650–51, and 5 (1 November 1844): 698; also Millennial Star 5 (March 1845): 151. The first detailed public discussion was probably Orson Hyde’s August address reported in Samuel W. Richards to Franklin D. Richards, letter begun 25 August 1844, Franklin D. Richards Papers, Church Archives.

67Times and Seasons 5 (15 December 1844): 740.

68Proclamation of Parley P. Pratt, 1 January 1845, Millennial Star 5 (March 1845): 151.

69Undated Certificate of the Twelve, ca. fall 1844 or winter 1845, Brigham Young Papers.

70Heber C. Kimball testified that hundreds had heard the Prophet proclaim the Apostles had ‘‘all the power, Priesthood, and authority that God ever conferred on me’’ (Discourse by Heber C. Kimball, 8 October 1852, Journal of Discourses, 2:206). For other examples, see the letter to Preston Nibley copied in the Lorenzo Hill Hatch Journal, 14 July 1906, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and the statement of James W. Phippen, The Young Woman’s Journal 17 (December 1906): 54. Bathsheba W. Smith, wife of Apostle George A. Smith, remembered hearing Joseph Smith make such a statement publicly and in a private meeting (Affidavit, 19 November 1903, Church Archives).
IV. SUCCESSION AS IT OCCURRED

The initial reaction in Nauvoo to news of the murders was profound shock, disbelief, confusion. Emotions overwhelmed, the Patriarch and Prophet gone, most of the Twelve in the East, many of the Saints indeed felt as sheep without a shepherd. As William Clayton, clerk to Joseph Smith and intimate of the Twelve, wrote in early July:

The greatest danger that no[w] threatens us is dissensions and strifes amongst the Church. There are already 4 or 5 men pointed out as successors to the Trustee & President & there is danger of feelings being manifest. All the brethren who stand at the head seem to feel the delicacy of the business.71

For a time in July many must have wondered what would become of the Church and who could possibly lead them in the Prophet’s absence. Nevertheless, once the initial shock had passed, this period of uncertainty was probably less traumatic and undoubtedly shorter than we have usually thought. The wounded John Taylor and his fellow-apostle Willard Richards, private secretary to Joseph Smith, helped maintain order in Nauvoo and encourage patience throughout this period. Under their direction work immediately resumed on the temple—a visible demonstration that the martyred leader’s labors would live after him. Prompted in late June to leave his Eastern mission, Parley Pratt soon joined Elders Taylor and Richards in Nauvoo. The three Apostles, meeting daily at the bedside of Elder Taylor and united in council to the Saints, brought a measure of calm to replace initial confusion. As Parley Pratt later described July, they “were enabled to baffle all the designs of aspiring men . . . (who strove to reorganize and lead the Church, or divide them), and to keep the

71William Clayton Diary, 6 July 1844, as quoted in James B. Allen, “One Man’s Nauvoo: William Clayton’s Experience in Mormon Illinois,” Journal of Mormon History 6 (1979): 58. As mentioned previously, one of those “pointed out as successors” might have been Samuel H. Smith. However, Lucy Smith, mother of Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel, thought it Samuel’s right to succeed Hyrum in the patriarchal office rather than Joseph as head of the Church. William Clayton recorded on 2 July 1844 that “Mother Smith wants Samuel to move into Nauvoo and take the Patriarchs office,” an office that ultimately went to younger brother William Smith after Samuel’s untimely death in late July.

Another of those “pointed out” during those post-Martyrdom speculations might have been William Marks, a man briefly considered as a possible successor to Joseph Smith as Trustee for the Church. But Newel K. Whitney argued that Marks’s “opposition to Joseph and the quorum” in the “most important matters” disqualified him from further service (see Clayton, 12 July 1844, typescript of entry in possession of author). Moreover, William Marks could boast neither of lineage, designation, nor superior ecclesiastical position. Those who later argued that William Marks, as president of Nauvoo Stake, should have succeeded Joseph Smith, instead of the Apostles doing so, engaged in wishful thinking sparked by their intense need to find some acceptable alternative to the Twelve and the continuity they represented with the Prophet’s Nauvoo measures. Emma Smith’s similar argument in favor of William Marks as recorded by James Monroe, 24 April 1845 (copy, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City), simply does not fit the facts. (See Joseph Smith Diary, 16 January 1836, Joseph Smith Papers, and also the discussion on pp. 308, 310–12 for the Prophet’s clear designation of the Apostles as superior.)

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Church in a measure of union, peace and quiet’’ until the rest of the Apostles returned.72

Whatever confusion lingered through July ended in early August. The 8 August vote to sustain the Twelve firmly determined the direction of the Church: the Twelve would lead and their agenda would be that prepared by the martyred prophet. For reasons that we shall review, not all could accept that decision. The decision, nonetheless, was made; confusion ended. After 8 August those not responsive to the program of Joseph and the appeal of the Twelve faced a clear choice: adjust to a continuation under the new leaders or leave the body of the Church. Only those who made the latter choice faced confusion about a new leader. This becomes more clear as we examine the events of August and September.

Though the broad outlines of Sidney Rigdon’s confrontation with the Twelve are well known, there are little-known but important aspects of the story worth reviewing. First is the frequent assumption that Sidney Rigdon had resided in Pittsburgh for some time before the Prophet’s death. His virtual absence from the Nauvoo records the winter and spring of 1842–1843 can be traced, however, to his almost total lack of involvement in the life of the Church rather than to his removal from Nauvoo. He did not finally leave Nauvoo for Pittsburgh until within ten days of the Martyrdom.73

Second, it is important that Sidney Rigdon broke his self-imposed isolation in April 1844 with a major public address, his first in months. This speech appears to have been in part a challenge to Joseph Smith, a straw in the wind to measure the mounting dissatisfaction with Nauvoo developments, a testing of his own strength and influence. Rigdon’s impressive performance, which included many allusions to “the mysteries,” undoubtedly entered into the Prophet’s decision to preach the King Follett discourse.74 The experience likely


73Orson Hyde testified at Rigdon’s trial that Sidney was in Nauvoo “all the time, but he did not attend our councils” (Times and Seasons 5 [15 September 1844]: 653). Heber C. Kimball made similar reference, and Rigdon’s defender, William Marks, confirmed that Sidney was in Nauvoo during this period and had brief connection with the Prophet’s inner circle before finally departing for Pittsburgh (Times and Seasons 5 [1 October 1844]: 664–65). Without Joseph’s authorization, W. W. Phelps introduced Sidney Rigdon to the circle; according to the Ehst Endowment Data Summary, that was on 11 May 1844. He attended few, if any, additional meetings and just over a month later left Nauvoo. (For a Nauvoo-postmarked letter confirming Rigdon’s presence, see Sidney Rigdon to Thomas Ford, 14 June 1844, Church Archives. See also the reminiscences of John W. Rigdon, as well as Ehst, ed., ‘‘Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,’’ p. 155, n. 63.)

74Rigdon’s address began 6 April and was continued the morning of 7 April. Times and Seasons 5 (1 May 1844): 522–24 published only the first part. See Conference Minutes, 6–7 April 1844, Church Archives, for the remainder. It seems clear that the Prophet’s preliminary remarks of the King Follett Discourse the afternoon of 7 April were calculated to contrast with Rigdon’s powerful oratory that morning. According to the minutes, Joseph told the audience he intended to edify them “with simple truths from Heaven” rather than please their ears “with oratory with much learning.”
persuaded Sidney Rigdon that he had little influence, and he quietly retreated once again from the public scene until his mid-June departure for Pittsburgh. Convinced that developing events would result in Joseph's death, he awaited word that would bring him hurrying back.

Although Sidney Rigdon returned ahead of Brigham Young and most of the other Apostles, his appeals were ineffective. The Prophet's attempt to remove him as a counselor in 1843 as well as his long estrangement from church affairs was well known. Even the great orator's lengthy discourse of 8 August fell largely on deaf ears; he simply had little remaining credibility with the Saints.  

Compare this to Brigham Young. When he addressed the Saints that 8 August, he spoke in every respect from a position of strength. He stood as the president of the quorum that had for years proved its loyalty to the Prophet and its effective dedication to the Saints. Once before when the Saints faced disaster in Missouri, their prophet imprisoned, the Twelve had stepped forward. In Nauvoo the Saints had learned to rely further on them and to trust them. Church members also understood the Twelve's relationship to Joseph Smith, and in some measure many were aware of the private training as well as the public responsibilities. Finally, the church administrative structure was already firmly in the hands of the Twelve. Under the circumstances there was little reason to look beyond the Twelve, and certainly no realistic expectation that anyone else could lead the body of the Church without their cooperation.

When the Apostles returned to Nauvoo in early August, they encountered not chaos but discouragement and grief. Though they were "hailed with joy by all the Citizens," the relief at the return of the Twelve did not mask deep hurt and foreboding. "A deep gloom seemed to rest over the City of Nauvoo," thought Wilford Woodruff.  

Brigham Young similarly assessed the scene. "The Brethren were overjoyed to see us come home," he wrote, "for they were little Children without a Father, and they felt so you may be sure." In the East, Brigham Young had concealed his own pain and deep sense of loss to buoy up the Saints. "Be of good cheer," he comforted when they learned of the Martyrdom. "When God sends a man to do a work all the devils in hell cannot kill him until he gets through his work. So with Joseph. He prepared all things gave the..."
keys to men on the earth and said I may be soon taken from you.'

In Nauvoo Brigham faced the larger task of dispelling the gloom and reanimating thousands for whom the Prophet had been a daily strength. While the meeting on 8 August was to determine the leadership and direction of the Church, it was also to revive the Saints, to replace despair with renewed confidence and purpose.

"The Saints looked as though they had lost a friend," wrote Brigham Young of that day, one "able and willing to counsel them in all thing[s]. . . . In this time of sorrow," he continued, "I arose and spoke to the people. My heart was swollen with compassion towards them and by the power of the Holy Ghost even the spirit of the Prophets I was enabled to comfort the hearts of the Saints." 79

"When it touches the salvation of the people, I am the man that walks to the line," said Brigham Young in September 1844. 80 That sense of concern and duty, not ambition, best describes Brigham's motivation as he addressed the Saints on 8 August. A close reading of his remarks then reveals allusions to specific events and understandings associated with the months of private instruction climaxed by the Prophet's dramatic charge to the Twelve. It was shown, wrote one observer, "that Joseph had told the 12 after he had instructed them in all things that on them would rest the Responsibility and the Care of the Church in Case he should be taken away." 81 Confident in his authority and in the necessity of stepping out, Brigham Young presented the Apostles as men "ordained and anointed to bear off the keys of the Kingdom of God in all the world." The Church has a head, he told the assembled Saints, "and that head is the Apostle-ship. . . . If you let the Twelve remain and act in their place the keys of the Kingdom are with them, and they can manage the affairs of the Church and direct all things aright." 82

To those who would seek to divide the Church, "Let [them] try it," Brigham challenged, "and they will find out that there is power with the apostles." Those who want President Rigdon might have him, he added, "but I say unto you that the quorum of the Twelve have the keys." Could not another be appointed to lead? some wondered. "If one was to be chosen," Brigham explained, the Apostles would have to ordain him "unto that appointment," for they had the keys.

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78 Wilford Woodruff Diary, 18 July 1844.
79 Brigham Young Diary, 8 August 1844, Brigham Young Papers.
80 Times and Seasons 3 (15 September 1844): 648.
82 Minutes, 8 August 1844, Church Archives.

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Brigham concluded, "take him, and we will go our way to build up the kingdom in all the world." 85

Many of the Saints no doubt accepted the Twelve without hesitation and without reservation. An awareness of the relationship the Twelve shared with Joseph and long experience with them prepared many Nauvoo residents to trust the Apostles as capable men properly in place to lead. For others Brigham Young's review of the apostleship must have brought home the meaning of things they had heard or witnessed during the Prophet's lifetime. Also, dozens later testified that Joseph's spirit or mantle seemed to rest on Brigham, transforming him to look or sound like the deceased leader. 84 "The Saints soon began to see how things were," wrote Joseph Fielding, "and that the 12 must now hold the Keys of Power and Authority according to the Revelation which says the 12 are equal with the first Presidency. . . . It was now no hard thing determining who should lead the Church." 85

The results of the 8 August meeting were not ambiguous. The Saints, wrote Brigham Young in his diary, "wanted the twelve to lead the church as Brother Joseph had dun in his day. . . and . . . with one hart and voice lifted up their hands for the twelve to preside." That day, according to the diary of Willard Richards, the Twelve were "unanimously voted. . . to stand as the first presidency of the church." "The church chose the Twelve to be thare Leaders," penned Heber C. Kimball, by "unanimous vote, all seemed please." Wilford Woodruff recorded a "sea of hands, a universal vote" for the "Twelve to Stand as the head, the first Presidency of the Church and at the head of this Kingdom in all the world." 86 "The power of the Preisthood was explained and the order there off [sic]," Brigham Young summarized a few days later, "on which the hol Church lifted up there voises and hands for the twelve to moove forward and organize the Church and lead it as

83Minutes, 8 August 1844, Church Archives, and Wilford Woodruff Diary, 8 August 1844. This statement was more tactful than that of Parley Pratt, who publicly declared that since the Apostles held the keys "if the people choose to be benefited by them, it is their own blessing; if not, it is their own neglect." Parley Pratt stressed that the Saints could neither add to nor diminish the Apostles' authority, for it came from God, that He could bless their labors with success with or without the aid of the people. "And, in either case," he concluded, "the result of our labours will be the restoration of the kingdom and government of God." (Proclamation, 1 January 1845, Millennial Star 5 [March 1845]: 131).

84Though there is no contemporary diary account, the number of later retellings, many in remarkable detail, argues for the reality of some such experience. While it may have convinced some who wavered, it would have functioned more importantly, it seems, to comfort and provide confirmation to all who witnessed it—a sign that the Lord was still with the Church and that the Apostles had the powers claimed from Joseph.


86From the 8 August 1844 entries in the diaries of Brigham Young, Willard Richards, Heber C. Kimball, and Wilford Woodruff. Although the diaries use the term unanimous to stress the overwhelming vote in favor of the Twelve, there were some dissenters.

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Joseph lead it," which, he added, it is "our indespencable duty to due." 87

It was, indeed, a matter of duty. If the Apostles were to be faithful to the charge given them by the Prophet in March, they had no choice but to step forward and shoulder the burden. Once they had the sustaining vote of the Saints, Brigham and the Twelve immediately proceeded to business. Would the people consent to be tithed until the temple was complete? they asked that same afternoon. Would they let the Twelve regulate the financial concerns of the Church? Would they let the Twelve designate a patriarch from the Smith family? And the questions continued. In each instance the Twelve received "a Universal vote" of support. 88

The ascendancy of Brigham Young and the Twelve can in part be seen as a natural culmination of the process set in motion by the Prophet in 1841. Because of long preparation and the full support of most of the Saints, they could now lead firmly without vacillation or delay. There would be no spinning of wheels or period of confusion. The day following the meeting in the grove, the Twelve met with other Church leaders to "right up" the quorums and give "every one his place." 89 Within ten days they had prepared detailed plans and had explained the priorities by epistle to the Church abroad and in conference to the Saints at home. About one priority there was little doubt. The Saints wanted their endowments, Brigham wrote the Sunday following the crucial meeting; consequently, work on the temple "is going ahead faster than ever, we shall push it with all our might." "All things," he could further report, "are now reviving up aga[i]n." 90

The Saints had needed renewed courage and uplifted spirits, and the enthusiasm and energy of the Twelve helped provide that. It seems likely that the "mantle of Joseph upon Brigham" experience associated with the meeting in the grove—a confirmation that the Lord remained with the Saints—also contributed to renewal. Along with confidence in the Apostles, that feeling of assurance released energy and optimism. "I never attended a better Conference for union and Business. . . . A good feeling prevailed," wrote one participant in the first general conference under the Twelve. By October Nauvoo had regained full momentum and by the April 1845 conference, less than a year after the Martyrdom, observers commented

87 Brigham Young to Vilate Young, 11 August 1844, photocopy, Church Archives.
88 Wilford Woodruff Diary, 8 August 1844.
89 Willard Richards Diary, 9 August 1844.
90 Willard Richards Diary, 9 August 1844; Brigham Young to Vilate Young, 11 August 1844, photocopy, Church Archives.
on the strength, energy, unity, and record numbers of Saints attending, while noting that more had been accomplished on the temple than during any other similar length of time.91

What happened to Sidney Rigdon after the 8 August meeting was merely postscript. Acknowledging his earlier years of faithful service, the Twelve fellowshipped him in spite of what they saw as his self-serving misrepresentations, but they would not allow him to mislead the Saints. "He shall not lead the innocent to destruction," vowed Brigham Young; "I say it in the name of Israel's God."92 When Sidney began privately to introduce things for which he had no authority, including secret ordinances and unauthorized temple-related ordinances, they moved to cut him off.93

Sidney Rigdon's trial, 8 September 1844, provided the most extensive public airing of the temple-related issues at the heart of succession and served as an important forum for making the Saints more aware of the private instructions, keys, and anticipated ordinances. Listening to the extended discussion, many must have felt as one man expressed two weeks earlier after a related address provided him a new perspective: "Orson Hyde told . . . what it was for, that they [the Twelve] were in Council with Joseph so much last spring. He said that Joseph was preparing them for the work that they have got to do."94 Sidney Rigdon had no such preparation.

V. A SUCCESSION OF CONFIDENCE AND CONTINUITY

Throughout the so-called succession crisis, the Twelve appeared unthreatened and fully confident of their authority before God and man. Whether firm and decisive (as in the case of James J. Strang) or patient (as with William Smith), they always seemed assured of their own position. Their reaction to the claims of James J. Strang illustrates this self-assurance. Local leaders in Wisconsin had excommunicated Strang even before the Twelve reached Nauvoo in early

92Times and Seasons 5 (1 October 1844): 667.
93Specifically, Sidney Rigdon was charged with pretending to have the fulness of the priesthood and giving it to others when he had never received it. As John Taylor explained, "He has been ordaining men to the offices of prophets, priests and kings; whereas he does not hold that office himself; who does not know that this is wrong?" Under the circumstances, thought John Taylor, "we have been as merciful as we could be in the fulfillment of our official duties." (Times and Seasons 5 [1 October 1844]: 661-62. See also comments by Brigham Young and Parley Pratt in Times and Seasons 5 [15 September 1844]: 648, 652-53.)
94Samuel W. Richards to Franklin D. Richards, 23 August 1844, Franklin D. Richards Papers. The published minutes of the Rigdon trial illustrate many of the issues and principles discussed here (see Times and Seasons 5 [15 September 1844]: 647-55, and 5 [1 October 1844]: 660-67). The "Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," pp. 153-58, provides a more condensed contemporary account from this same perspective.
August. In a 26 August council the Twelve upheld that action by cutting off Strang and an associate for "circulating a 'revelation' (falsely called) purporting to have been received by Joseph Smith." When James J. Strang demanded justification for their action, John Taylor and Orson Hyde answered for the Twelve. They knew of no record that God had conducted an investigation or debated authority with Lucifer after cutting him off, they wrote, nor would they. "Your case has been disposed of by the authorities of the Church. Being satisfied with our power and calling, we have no disposition to ask from whence yours came." 95

Throughout this period the Twelve acted in a way that showed they deeply believed all they said about authority and duty. 96 Perhaps the conviction upon which their bold leadership rested was best expressed in 1847. Soon after their first arrival in the Salt Lake Valley the Apostles testified that an "invisible agency" had buoyed them continually, making them cheerful in the face of danger, "stimulating them forward to accomplish the things required at their hands." They had, they declared, "enjoy[ed] the liberty of the Sons of Light, which is to be exempt from fear, from doubt, from anxiety about consequences, knowing—absolutely knowing—that all things shall work together for their good and for establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth." 97

Not only confidence but continuity rather than innovation characterized the leadership of the Twelve throughout this period. "I defy any man to show that we have adopted any measure, only what Joseph has directed us," Orson Hyde challenged during the September trial of Sidney Rigdon. Rather than offering new revelations, Parley Pratt affirmed, "we have spent all our time, early and late, to do the things the God of Heaven commanded us to do through brother Joseph." 98

In instance after instance it can be shown that without delay the Apostles continued the measures of the Prophet. They discussed the endowment "quorum" the day following their sustaining and three days later began presiding over the meetings of the group. They solemnized new plural marriages within weeks of the Martyrdom. They continued the Prophet's emphasis on the temple, the Nauvoo

96For a detailed examination of the leadership of the Twelve in 1845, see Esplin, "Brigham Young and the Power of the Apostleship," pp. 106ff.
97Norton Jacobs Diary, 8 August 1847, typescript, Church Archives.
98Times and Seasons 5 (15 September 1844): 651 and 653.
House, the gathering, and the West. Once the temple was sufficiently near completion, the Apostles administered to thousands of the Saints the same ordinances that they had received from Joseph.\textsuperscript{99} Under their direction, the Council of Fifty continued; they also emphasized the principles of priesthood theocracy the Prophet had practiced. All things, they stressed to the Saints, must be done “according to the pattern that has been commenced.” As Heber Kimball phrased it in October 1844, “We have got to carry out Joseph’s measures and you have got to assist us.”\textsuperscript{100}

As noted earlier, not all were equally comfortable with the Nauvoo innovations of the Prophet, and some critics of the Twelve now came out openly against them. This was not necessarily to the disadvantage of the Apostles, however, for often such a position served as an implicit demonstration that they followed the deceased Prophet.

At least as early as November 1844, for example, Sidney Rigdon taught that Joseph Smith had fallen because of polygamy. In Kirtland, Rigdon’s principal lieutenant preached that “Brother Joseph was Cut off for transgression, and the twelve are Carrying out his principles” and, with all who follow them, are also in transgression.\textsuperscript{101} He himself rejected the entire Nauvoo experience. Before his excommunication he threatened to write a history of the Saints, exposing “all of their iniquity” “since they came to Nauvoo.”\textsuperscript{102} Later in reply to a request that he write a history of the Mormons, he stated there would have to be two histories, for from 1830 to 1840 historical developments “created an unbroken chain of history” which then ended. From 1840 on the history of the Saints “trended in a different direction and found its level in the order of things which now exist in Utah,” he concluded.\textsuperscript{103} Brigham Young and the Twelve, in other words, had followed the Nauvoo program of the Prophet. It is

\textsuperscript{99}As one who had received the endowment “in the Days of Joseph and Hyram” testified, in the Nauvoo Temple the Apostles were “very strict in attending to the true and proper form” learned from the Prophet (Ehat, ed., “Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” p. 159).

\textsuperscript{100}Epistle of the Twelve, \textit{Times and Seasons} 5 (15 August 1844): 619; and Kimball address reported in \textit{Times and Seasons} 5 (1 November 1844): 693–94. The epistle also stressed the keys and power the Apostles had received from the Prophet so they could “build up the kingdom upon the foundation that the prophet Joseph has laid” (p. 618).

\textsuperscript{101}Phineas H. Young et al. to Beloved Brethren, 31 December 1844, Brigham Young Papers; see also Thomas J. Gregory, “Sidney Rigdon: Post Nauvoo,” \textit{BYU Studies} 21 (Winter 1981): 57. In his August 1844 bid for support in Nauvoo, Sidney Rigdon publicly professed confidence in the Prophet. However, privately he said that Joseph had not been led by God for a long time. As the Apostles recognized and made an issue at his trial, this was an implicit argument that the Prophet’s Nauvoo program need not be followed. Those who had confidence in Sidney Rigdon, they argued, “say they believe in Joseph Smith, and at the same time all their operations are to destroy and tear down what he has built up.” (\textit{Times and Seasons} 5 [1 October 1844]: 667; see also pp. 655, 661, 666, and 686.)

\textsuperscript{102}Minutes, 8 September 1844, General Minutes Collection.

\textsuperscript{103}Sidney Rigdon to William Payne, 9 July 1858, Sidney Rigdon Collection, Church Archives.
also noteworthy that those who eventually joined the Reorganization under Joseph Smith III similarly rejected Nauvoo developments; the new doctrines, ordinances, and institutions of Nauvoo are not evident in that movement.

Recognizing the basic issue, the Twelve made the temple a central symbol of their commitment. "God, the Temple and the Twelve" became a rallying cry as they pledged to carry out "all the plans of Joseph." Joseph lived and died a prophet, they affirmed. "I don't want any one to fellowship the Twelve who says that Joseph is fallen," Brigham Young announced. That is what the dissenters intimated even when they did not openly proclaim it. The "Brighamites" or "Twelvites" were in truth the real "Josephites," a title by which those loyal to the Twelve in Kirtland were known by members of the Rigdon faction who proclaimed Joseph fallen.

Like Sidney Rigdon, some others who rejected the Twelve eventually acknowledged that the Apostles continued what Joseph Smith had been about in Nauvoo. Perhaps the most interesting analysis of this continuity appeared in the Whitmerite publication The Return. After careful investigation and comparison, Charles W. Lamb concluded, "We have seen that the two"—the Nauvoo temple ordinances and the Utah practices—

run parallel all the way through, and that the evidence is undeniable, that the two are one and the same. And thus "Brigham and associates," were truly, as they always claimed, "carrying out Joseph's measures," in finishing the temple and giving the kind of endowment they did. In fact I believe they have been "carrying out the measures of our martyred prophet" all the time, and in every other particular.

Why, then, did not this author and those to whom he wrote follow the Twelve? It was not because they disbelieved the Twelve were carrying out Joseph's program, but because they had concluded that Joseph and his Nauvoo program were not of God. As another writer in The Return wrote of the Twelve's declarations that the Prophet had prepared and charged them to continue his work:

We verily believe they thought they were doing the will of God in carrying out the measures they knew he introduced with them. . . . But we never believed those measures were God's work, or we should have gone with them instead of opposing them.

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104 Times and Seasons 5 (15 October 1844): 683. See also Times and Seasons 5 (15 September 1844): 647. Earlier Brigham Young admitted that it made him mad enough to fight "to hear any one heap charges on Brother Joseph who is dead" (Times and Seasons 5 [1 October 1844]: 664).
105 The Return 3 (February 1891): 24.
106 Ibid., 2 (April 1890): 253-54.
That analysis focuses on the central issue of the succession period: Was Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo program of God? Such concerns over program complicated succession, of course, but were not limited to the succession period. They neither began with the death of the Prophet nor ended with the ascendency of the Twelve. Instead, the Prophet’s death can be seen as a result of this ongoing split that had its roots in Kirtland and continued at least through the exodus period.107 Throughout the years of removal from Nauvoo and the trek to Utah, 1846–1852, those less committed to the program—to the gathering and a theocratic community, to the temple and its ordinances, and, above all, to plural marriage—continued to leave the Church. Strictly speaking, then, this was not a succession crisis, for most of the dissenters were less concerned about the ability or authority of the Apostles than about the propriety and inspiration of measures that had, in fact, originated with Joseph.

An examination of dissenters from the Twelve demonstrates that authority was not the central issue. As long as his “kingdom” was perceived as moderate, James J. Strang, for example, enjoyed considerable success in attracting those who sought an alternative to the program and direction of the Twelve. But when he introduced his own version of the mysteries, including plural marriage, he lost adherents as precipitously as he had earlier gained them. Celebrated dissenters like William Smith and George J. Adams initially accepted the authority of Brigham Young and the Twelve, parting later mainly because the Apostles, exercising that authority, frustrated the dissenters’ desires.108 Following confrontations, both men concluded that it was not to their personal advantage to remain with the Twelve. During this period some branches in the East experienced major

107Kirtland problems—to a large extent occasioned by disagreements with Joseph Smith’s directions—and the subsequent removal to Missouri offer an instructive parallel to Nauvoo problems and the removal to the Great Basin. Even without the complications of a succession question, losses to the Church during 1836–1839 were high. Indeed, the percentage who drifted away in that earlier crisis may have been larger than the percentage lost during 1844–1849.

108In letters to Brigham Young, William Smith demonstrated his agreement with the position the Twelve had taken and acknowledged Brigham Young as the highest authority in the Church. As late as January 1845, he wrote a letter expressing his support for “the quorum of the Twelve as the presidency over the whole church” and even endowing Parley P. Pratt’s major statement about the preparation, authority, and duty of the Twelve (see Times and Seasons 6 [15 February 1845]: 814).

When George J. Adams was called before the Twelve in March of 1845 to be tried for his misconduct, he acknowledged their authority in his plea “to be saved by those who have the power and authority to do it” (Undated minutes [15 March 1845], Brigham Young Papers). At this trial he confessed his sins and begged for mercy, agreeing to repent and “be one with the Twelve” thereafter. Only after failing to receive their approval did he proclaim “I cant support the twelve as the first presidency I cant do it when I know it belongs to Josephs Son—Young Joseph who was ordained by his father before his Death [and was still only twelve years old]—Brigham Young is a Userper a tyrant and an Apostate” (George J. Adams to A. R. Tewkesbury, 14 June 1845, Church Archives).
defections. Generally, however, this occurred only where earlier abuses by William Smith, George J. Adams, and Sam Brannan had divided the branches even before the death of the Prophet, precipitating a mistrust of the leadership and the program. The privations and hardships of the exodus also contributed to losses. It was no small task to live for several years in temporary homes and makeshift communities and then with inadequate equipment and insufficient provisions to move a family across plains and mountains to an unsettled region. Many who started out with the Twelve simply did not last the course. In this context, concerns about authority, if mentioned at all, were more of an excuse than a cause for leaving.

This is not to say that some, believing that there should have been a different outcome, did not reject the leadership of Brigham Young and the Twelve over the issue of authority and succession itself. It seems clear, however, that other things—personal discouragement, disagreement with the specific actions of individuals, or concerns over direction—motivated so-called succession losses far more frequently than did any quarrel over the right and authority of the Twelve to preside. And those who raised the latter issue often first experienced other difficulties. On the issues of preparation and authority the Twelve were virtually unassailable and few dissenters ever attempted to make that case against them.

Several additional things should be noted about succession-period losses. First, to a certain degree, especially initially, the losses were beneficial. During the last months of the Prophet's life, Nauvoo was anything but united. Some, like William Law and his associates, actively opposed the Prophet, while others who resisted some measures could not bring themselves to break personally with him. Their departure following Joseph's murder left Nauvoo more unified. Had those most opposed to the program not left, the Church could not have experienced the renewal of energy and harmony that saw the rapid completion of the temple and the successful preparation for the move west. As one anonymous letter-writer expressed in the fall of 1844, "We need not wonder that the atmosphere feels more pure and more wholesome, for much of the unfruitful and corrupt matter is purged"—those not in agreement, in other words, had left—"and consequently we may expect to be more healthy."\footnote{\textit{Times and Seasons} 5 (15 October 1844): 673.}
Second, aside from the specific need for greater unity, theology suggested that a continual sifting was a necessary part of the process of perfecting the Saints; always there would be some who from weakness or inclination would not stay, but their place would be filled by others. Although specific losses caused pain and there was grief over those misled, the Twelve seem not to have felt threatened or unduly troubled by this sifting. They saw it partly as desirable and, at any rate, inevitable. By acting boldly, they “saved the sheep and none but the Goats have gone,” Heber Kimball proclaimed in 1845. Now unified, the sheep “like the salt they get from the Shepherds.”110

Finally, it appears that approximately half of those who were members of the Church at the death of Joseph Smith did follow the Twelve through all the difficulties of the succession—exodus period.111 Because the Prophet had carefully prepared the Twelve to provide continuity and the majority of the Saints recognized their leadership, institutional damage to the Church was minimal. Given the circumstances, one is impressed not by how many remained behind or were “sifted” out but by how many traveled west. Neither the 1844 succession of the Twelve to leadership nor the 1846–1852 exodus to the West resulted in the breaking up of the Church.

VI. THE APOSTLES AND THE SONS OF JOSEPH

The sons of the Prophet were in 1844 too young to have voice in or direct influence on succession.112 Nonetheless the Prophet had prophesied concerning them, and a few dissatisfied with the Twelve or their program may have remained behind with the hope that the sons would eventually provide an alternative. More important, some, and perhaps many, of those who remained firmly committed to the Twelve and “the measures of Joseph” also expected that in

110Thomas Bullock Minutes, 1 June 1845, Church Archives.

111Although more work needs to be done and no incontrovertible figures are yet available, current data suggest that in 1844 there were between 35,000 and 40,000 members and certainly less than 50,000. This estimate is based on the actual membership “represented” in each conference in England; on census figures for Nauvoo; on other vital records that help estimate Mormon populations of Hancock County, Illinois, and Lee County, Iowa; and on a comprehensive survey of branches for the rest of the United States and Canada. Thanks to Donald L. Enders of the Church Arts and Sites Division and James L. Kimball of the Church Archives Search Room for sharing preliminary results of work still in progress, and to Glen M. Leonard of the Church Arts and Sites Division for sharing the estimates of historian T. Edgar Lyon. Lyon’s earlier estimates suggested a total membership of not more than 34,500.

112When his father was killed, young Joseph was only eleven and David was yet unborn. Their mother Emma did have influence, however, and was among those who hoped for an alternative to the Apostles and the measures she espoused. Although she knew her brother-in-law William Smith too well to support him, she did briefly consider Sidney Rigdon and William Marks.
time one or the other of the Prophet’s sons would step forward as leader in the Church.113

Brigham Young and the Twelve, for their part, genuinely hoped—even if they knew enough about Emma Smith’s antipathy to plural marriage not to immediately expect—that the sons would join them in the West. Throughout the period of succession and exodus Brigham Young responded to questions about young Joseph by cautioning that little should be said, for if the enemies of the Church learned of the promises upon his head it would endanger the boy’s life.114 Critics turned such remarks into sinister, self-serving assertions manufactured merely to blunt talk of a potential rival. It seems more likely that Brigham genuinely felt there was danger to the boy and was sincere in his concern.115 The records preserve no evidence Brigham Young feared the potential influence of young Joseph or tried to dissuade him from joining the Saints in the West. On the contrary, for a decade and more he continued to acknowledge openly the possibility, indeed to invite it, and young Joseph received many invitations from those associated with the Apostles, urging him to join them.

It should be noted that although the Twelve were sustained in August 1844 as the Presidency over the whole Church and Brigham Young was early acknowledged as President of the Church, the Apostles employed no language in reference to themselves or to succession that precluded a future leadership role for Joseph’s sons. Even Brigham Young’s affirmation of the authority of the Twelve before the 8 August vote expressly acknowledged at least a theoretical possibility of another head. The Apostles were the Presidency of the Church, he declared; they stood next to Joseph and held the keys from him “and would have to ordain any man unto that appointment that should be chosen ie if one was to be

113 The stories about young Joseph’s designation circulated widely enough to be preserved in an 1844 publication (see Henry Brown, History of Illinois [New York: New York Press, 1844], p. 489), as quoted in D. Michael Quinn, “Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1937: A Prosopographical Study,” [M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1973], p. 72). One who followed the Twelve to the West but later became disenchanted insisted it had been “the understanding of the people generally” that the Prophet’s son would one day preside (Testimony of John H. Carter, Complainant’s Abstract, p. 181).

114 For examples, see Testimony of John H. Thomas, Complainant’s Abstract, p. 255; and William Smith, “A Proclamation,” Warren Signal, 29 October 1845.

115 In Nauvoo following the Martyrdom there were, it appears, substantial rumors that all those who held the highest priesthood keys were in danger (see Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, 30 June 1844, quoted in Ronald K. Esplin, “Life in Nauvoo, June 1844: Vilate Kimball’s Martyrdom Letters,” BYU Studies 19 [Winter 1979]: 238–39); and Sally Randall to Dear Friends, 1 July 1844, typescript, Church Archives). Similarly, in September 1844 Heber C. Kimball told a public audience there were present others who held authority in addition to the Twelve “but we dont want to mention their names for the enemy will try to kill them” (Times and Seasons 5 [1 October 1844]: 664). If those threats were taken seriously, it would not be difficult to credit Brigham Young’s expressed concern that the prophesied heir to the birthright of the Prophet might also be in danger.

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chosen.’”\(^{116}\) Brigham Young here suggested that not only did the Apostles have authority from the Prophet, but they also had the power to convey that authority to others, including in time the Prophet’s sons.

Presumably it was John Taylor who editorialized soon after the Martyrdom in reply to the question “‘Who shall be the successor of Joseph Smith?’” Be patient, he urged his readers, “‘be patient a little, till the proper time comes, and we will tell you all.’” After reporting the vote “that the ‘Twelve’ should preside over the whole church,” he then promised “‘when any alteration in the presidency shall be required, seasonable notice will be given.’”\(^{117}\) The editorial did not shut the door on future alternatives or claim that succession was now forever established. As Brigham Young declared in a 7 August meeting with Sidney Rigdon, he with the Twelve had the keys and through those keys could learn the mind and will of God.\(^{118}\) Then and in the future they would do with those keys whatever the Lord directed for the leadership of His Church.

Given this apparent flexibility, one wonders if the Apostles declined to organize a new First Presidency in Nauvoo partly in deference to the Prophet’s sons. While that may have been a factor, it is clear that other circumstances more directly influenced their timing.

Independent of young Joseph, it may have been more difficult for the Saints to accept immediately Brigham Young’s leadership over the Church as the President of a new First Presidency replacing the Martyrs than it was to sustain him and his colleagues in their familiar calling as Apostles. But if that were the only reason for delay they would probably have moved ahead with the organization of a presidency in 1845 or 1846 when critics carped about the “‘defect’ in the ‘present organization,’” i.e., the absence of a First Presidency, a quorum that all the Saints expected and only Sidney Rigdon and James Strang provided. There is no evidence that the Twelve ever doubted their authority to organize the First Presidency and Brigham Young later emphasized on several occasions that he had known in August 1844 they eventually would do so. That the Apostles failed to correct the “‘defect’” even when it became problematical may have been due to their interpretation of the charge they received from the Prophet. Not just Brigham Young (or Brigham and counselors) but the Twelve as a quorum were charged to complete the temple, assist

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\(^{116}\) Wilford Woodruff Diary, 8 August 1844.
\(^{117}\) Times and Seasons 5 (2 September 1844): 632.
\(^{118}\) Minutes, 7 August 1844, Brigham Young Papers.
the Saints in obtaining their endowments, and find a new home for the Church in the West. Not until these tasks were accomplished did the Twelve move in December of 1847 to form a new presidency.

Aware that lengthy discussion and some disagreement preceded the 1847 decision to organize the First Presidency, some have felt that not all the Apostles agreed with Brigham Young’s right to move ahead even then. The minutes demonstrate, however, that none of the Twelve questioned Brigham Young’s authority to organize a presidency or his right to preside over it. At issue was the expediency of organizing then, with the Twelve functioning so successfully as a quorum. There was hesitancy to change the shape of administration when no exigency seemed to demand it. Part of this involved a realistic anticipation that Brigham Young, as President of the new First Presidency, would not involve individual quorum members as fully in administration as he had as President of the Twelve. The Apostles had enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity of sharing administrative responsibilities and were reluctant to give that up. These personal feelings along with queries about the necessity for change prompted the deliberations, not differences over doctrine or authority. Since young Joseph had just turned fifteen, it is not surprising that a potential future role for him was not part of the lengthy discussions.119

This is not to suggest that by 1847 the Apostles had forgotten young Joseph, rather that he still had to come of age, prove himself, and enter in “at the gate” to receive authority. Later statements of the Apostles confirm this attitude. In 1856 Heber Kimball noted that the Prophet’s boys “lay apparently in a state of slumber,” though “by and by,” he thought, “God will wake them up, and they will roar like the thunders of mount Sinai.”120 In early 1860 Brigham Young remarked that young Joseph would in time be a good Latter-day Saint. It was President Young’s faith that “blessings will rest on the posterity of Joseph Smith the Prophet; and the spirit of the Lord will probably rest upon Joseph that he will be constrained to enquire of the Lord what he would have him to do.” There can be no doubt that Brigham Young was greatly disappointed to learn soon after this that young Joseph had joined with the Reorganization, “those apostates,” in Brigham’s view. Realizing that the Prophet’s eldest son had made his choice, Brigham Young concluded “that Joseph might be a prophet and do a good work, but he never would

119Minutes, November and December 1847, Brigham Young Papers.

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[now] be leader of this people. David would be the leader of the Church.'" \(^{121}\)

For many years that became the theme of Brigham Young’s comments on the sons of Joseph Smith, as the following example illustrates:

I have already said that young Joseph Smith will never be the leader of the Latter day Saints; to put your minds at rest, I will say it again; while the sun shines, the water runs, the grass grows, and the earth remains, young Joseph Smith will never be the leader of the Latterday Saints! But if [David] the one that Joseph the prophet predicted, should step forth to become the leader of this Church, he will come to us like a little child.\(^{122}\)

For Brigham Young, the problem with Joseph’s sons was clear: they were following Emma Bidamon and not Joseph the Prophet. ‘‘I am sorry for them, and I have my own faith regarding them,’’ Brigham Young told the Saints.

I think the Lord will find them by and by—not Joseph, I have told the people times enough, they never may depend on Joseph Smith who is now living; but David, who was born after the death of his father, I still look for the day to come when the Lord will touch his eyes. But I do not look for it while his mother lives. The Lord would do it now if David were willing; but he is not, he places his mother first.\(^{123}\)

It is significant that Brigham Young did not call himself the successor to Joseph Smith. For one thing, he believed the Prophet held the keys of presidency over this dispensation for eternity and no one would or could replace him. But more than that, he thought of himself as Joseph’s disciple, as an apostle of the martyred prophet authorized and charged to carry on his work, more than as his successor.\(^{124}\) In 1860 when news of Joseph III’s joining the Reorganization began to make a stir in Utah, Heber Kimball testified that no matter how many potential heirs to the priesthood arise, ‘‘I know that Brigham Young will lead this people till the time comes for a change. If the Lord wants another man to take oversight of this people,’’ he continued, He will ‘‘in due time make it manifest’’ to

\(^{121}\)Remarks by Brigham Young, Brigham Young Office Journal, 28 February and 15 August 1860, Brigham Young Papers.

\(^{122}\)Discourse by Brigham Young, 7 October 1863, Brigham Young Papers.

\(^{123}\)Discourse by Brigham Young, 27 August 1874, Journal of Discourses, 15:136.

\(^{124}\)Brigham Young indicated he was uncomfortable, personally, being sustained as the Prophet, Seer and Revelator. While he often claimed to receive revelation, he said the title itself ‘‘always made me feel as though I am called more than I am deserving of. I am Brigham Young, an Apostle of Joseph Smith, and also of Jesus Christ.’’ (Discourse by Brigham Young, 6 October 1857, Journal of Discourses, 5:296.) He called himself ‘‘an Apostle of Joseph Smith’’ and a witness that Joseph was ‘‘a man of God and had the revelations of Jesus Christ’’ (Discourse by Brigham Young, 17 February 1856, Journal of Discourses, 3:212).
President Young. In the meantime, the Saints could rest assured that Brigham Young was the man to lead and that he would ‘lead them aright.’ President Young, said Heber Kimball, was the ‘legal administrator and successor . . . the legal successor of Joseph Smith.’” In responding, Brigham Young once again left open the door:

The brethren testify that brother Brigham is brother Joseph’s legal successor. You never heard me say so. I say that I am a good hand to keep the dogs and wolves out of the flock. . . . I do not think anything about being Joseph’s successor . . . [but concern myself with] Father, what do you require of me, and what can I do to promote your kingdom on the earth, and save myself and brethren?

As to the sons of the Prophet, Brigham remained certain that they were in the hands of God and that if ever they made an appearance before the Saints ‘full of his power, there are none but what will say—‘Amen! we are ready to receive you.’ ‘1125

The sons, Brigham Young emphasized, must come in through the gate. By that he meant they must qualify themselves by obedience and worthiness and then receive the keys from those who received them from their father before they could have a place in the kingdom.126 “Young Joseph does not possess one particle of . . . priesthood,” Brigham reminded the Saints in 1866; he had made another choice. But still President Young had hope for the other son of promise. “I am looking for the time when the Lord will speak to David,” he continued, “but let him pursue the course he is now pursuing, and he will never preside over the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in time or in eternity. He has got to repent . . . embrace the gospel of life and salvation, and be an obedient son of God, or he never can walk up to possess his right.” If he would walk “in the true path of duty,” concluded Brigham, it would be his right to preside. “I hope and pray that he and the whole family will repent.”127

“What might have been if the son of the Prophet had taken the only legitimate course to obtain the keys and powers of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood is not for us to say,” concluded one nineteenth-century writer. “But the facts are that he holds neither

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121Discourse by Heber C. Kimball, 3 June 1860, Journal of Discourses, 8:274, 275; and discourse by Brigham Young, 5 June 1860, Journal of Discourses, 8:60.
122Joseph Smith III disagreed with Brigham Young on where to find the proper gate, not on the necessity of entering the gate. “It is not necessarily a birthright to be President of the Church,” Joseph III said, noting that such leadership comes “by virtue of the fitness and qualification, I may say good behavior and the choice of the people, recognizing a call or right.” Seeing the need for ordination as well as birthright and designation, he claimed authority through Zenas Gurley and William Marks. (See Complainant’s Abstract, pp. 78–79 and 81.)
123Discourse by Brigham Young, 7 October 1866, Brigham Young Papers.
Priesthood nor presidency to-day.’’ Could Brigham Young and the Twelve have harmonized apostolic succession with lineal rights had the sons of Joseph come to them? This same author argued that even had they been worthy and ordained “to the fullness of the Priesthood held by the Prophet’’ it would not automatically follow they would preside over the Church. Heirship relates to priesthood but not necessarily to presidency, he thought.  

While it is not possible to know ‘‘what might have been,’’ it is clear that Brigham Young’s perspective allowed for presidency. The experience of Joseph F. Smith may provide the best guide as to how. As a son of Hyrum Smith, Joseph F. also had a birthright relating to priesthood and to office. He had first to demonstrate worthiness and commitment, but the fact that he was ordained to the apostleship at an early age was not unrelated to his lineage. And though he was a man of ability, it was similarly not unrelated to his lineage that there were several discussions about placing him at the head independent of his ‘‘turn’’ by apostolic seniority. However, in each instance the apostolic order was maintained. It was believed, nonetheless, that the senior Apostle held the keys to know the mind and will of God and had the right, if God directed, to designate another. If a son of the martyred prophet had come into the Church, it is possible he would have been so designated. Otherwise he might, as did Joseph F. Smith, son of the martyred patriarch, eventually have presided over the Church as senior Apostle.

And what was the thinking of Joseph III through these years? Why did he not claim his station? In his memoirs he wrote of an 1856 visit by his cousin George A. Smith and Erastus Snow, who urged him to go to Utah, ‘‘for they really thought that my place.’’ The principal reason he declined the invitation, he told them, was his disbelief in what they taught and practiced. Polygamy? they asked. ‘‘Yes; I could never accept or countenance that doctrine,’’ he replied. To join the Utah Mormons, he thought, ‘‘would have been tantamount to admitting’’ that his father was ‘‘responsible for, and the human author of’’ that system which he did not and would not believe. ‘‘To admit that my father was the author of such false theories . . . or that he practiced them in any form, was not only repulsive in itself to my feelings and strongly condemned by my judgment, but it was contrary to my knowledge of, and belief in him.’’

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He published these feelings in 1860 as he took the helm of the Reorganization. "I know that many stories are now being circulated in reference to what will be the result of the step I have taken," he wrote. Acknowledging that many believed he would emigrate to Salt Lake, he concluded:

To those who know me, it is needless for me to say that I am not going to do any such thing while the doctrine of polygamy and disobedience to the laws are countenanced there. . . . Numbers of my readers . . . know my sentiments in regards to those obnoxious features of Utah Mormonism.130

It was the program and not the authority of the Apostles that Joseph III rejected. Indeed, there is evidence that he saw the Twelve as the proper authority to succeed the Prophet in 1844. Even as late as 1865 he argued that the Apostles had properly rejected Sidney Rigdon and legally excommunicated him.131 Nonetheless, he felt justified in refusing to follow them because, in his view, they introduced new doctrines and practices.132 He never accepted that these measures of Brigham Young and the Twelve had originated with his father.

Once Joseph III made his choice, the hopes of Brigham Young and others for the posterity of Joseph centered on David. When it became evident that David, too, declined to lend his talents to his father's work, anticipations shifted to a more remote future time for the fulfillment of the Prophet's predictions. Apostle John Henry Smith wrote to his cousin Joseph III in 1886:

The promise made to your father, "that in him and his seed all of the families of the earth should be blessed cannot fail; If, you and your brothers fail to come forward and perform your part, God will raise up through your children, or, children's children seed that will yet honor all of His laws, sustain every principle, being mighty among the Saints; for, your father's words will not fail.133

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131Joseph Smith III supported the authority of the Twelve in a debate with Rigdon-follower Stephen Post (see Stephen Post to James Post, 25 December 1865, quoted by Gregory, "Sidney Rigdon," pp. 63-66). Questioned many years later about the possibility that the Prophet had left "the Apostles at the head" even as had Jesus, Joseph Smith III is said to have replied, "Yes, they were the proper persons to take the lead at fathers death" (Interview with Joseph Smith III, 18 March 1896, Independence, Mo., photocopy, Church Archives). It appears he believed the Apostles possessed proper authority until they introduced doctrines and practices "subversive of the faith of the church," causing God to reject the Church "in its organized quorum capacity" (Complainant's Abstract, p. 83).

132Complainant's Abstract, p. 70.

Earlier George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency had publicly expressed a similar opinion. Faithful men might have less faithful sons, he taught, but

faithful posterity will come, just as I believe it will be the case with the Prophet Joseph's seed. . . . Just as sure as God lives, just as sure as God had made promises, so sure will some one of Joseph Smith's posterity rise up and be numbered with this Church and bear the everlasting Priesthood that Joseph himself had. It may be delayed in the wise providence of our God . . . but these promises are unalterable. 134

Progress in the kingdom did not, however, depend on that timetable. Able men stood steadfast, exercising that fulness of priesthood authority they had received directly from the Prophet. As Brigham Young assured the people many years before, although "Joseph Smith lived and died a prophet," sealing his testimony with his blood, "the voice of the Lord is still heard for this people. . . . I never pretended to be Joseph Smith," he continued, nor the man who brought forth the Book of Mormon, "but I do testify of the truth of it." Instructed, prepared, authorized of Joseph, "I am an apostle to bear testimony." 135 While Brigham Young and the Apostles stood ready to make room for the seed of Joseph, they resolutely pursued the goals and managed the stewardship left them by their martyred prophet.

135Discourse by Brigham Young, 7 April 1850, General Minutes Collection.
Anniversary

Jim Walker

Brain blisters,
Subtle thoughts of my neglect
Looking through the flawed pane
Of our comfortable years,
Realizing in these small hours
I might lose you forever.

How then could I whisper to repair
Those empty spaces where
I turned away, silent,
Rather than tell my anger, thanks,
Or, least forgivable,
Love?

Jim Walker is a poet residing in Salt Lake City, Utah.
An Elder among the Rabbis

Dennis Rasmussen

I

Why should a Mormon be interested in Judaism?¹ I can speak only for myself. In Judaism I have found a part of my religious heritage, handed down from the ancient prophets of Israel, through the Rabbis of the Greco–Roman Era, to the Jews of today.² This essay is an account of my experience among the teachings and teachers of Judaism—how my interest began, what brought me to a Jewish theological seminary, who my teachers were, and what I learned about Rabbinic history and teaching, together with some reflections and comments about these, and about the Talmud, the great compendium of Rabbinic law and lore which we studied so diligently.

My interest in Judaism began at the Institute of Religion in Salt Lake City. I went there every Wednesday evening to hear Elder Marion D. Hanks teach two courses, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. For three hours I rejoiced in the opportunity to study the scriptures under his guidance. On one occasion Elder Hanks read to us segments from a radio script called “The Song of Berditchev.” It had been presented on an NBC weekly series, “The Eternal Light,” produced in New York City by The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The script was the story of Rabbi Levi Yitzhak, an eighteenth-century leader of Ukrainian Jews. Surnamed “the Compassionate,” he is still remembered by his people as one of their kindest and most beloved rabbis.³ The story of this man touched me deeply. My thoughts returned to it often in the years that followed, and it was, eventually, to lead me to its source.

¹This paper was presented in the November 1980 Flea Market of Ideas lecture series, sponsored by the BYU Honors Program, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
²For a fascinating account of Joseph Smith’s study of Hebrew with Professor Joshua Seixas, see Louis C. Zucker, Mormon and Jew: A Meeting on the American Frontier (n.p., n.d.), Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.
About three and a half years ago I learned of a special institute which was to be held at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, entitled, "Institute for the Teaching of the Post-Biblical Foundations of Western Civilization." It was to last for eight weeks during the summer of 1978 (with one additional week the following summer) and would be taught by five rabbis on the faculty. College teachers in the humanities and social sciences were invited to apply. Twenty would be selected as fellows of the Institute. Their studies would concern the contributions of the Rabbinic or Post-Biblical Period of Judaism to Western civilization. The hope was that greater awareness of the Jewish tradition would help the fellows to be better teachers of Western civilization in general. I labored diligently on my application. Six weeks later I was notified that I had been accepted.

The Seminary’s primary purpose is to train rabbis for synagogues in the Conservative branch of present-day Judaism. But it offers the doctor’s degree as well and is dedicated to the vision of its first president, Solomon Schechter, who hoped to bring together the best in both sacred and secular scholarship. Over the years some of the world’s most distinguished Jewish scholars have taught at the Seminary, including President Schechter, Louis Ginzberg, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Saul Lieberman. Located on 122nd Street and Broadway, the Seminary is just two blocks from Columbia University and Barnard College. Across the street is Union Theological Seminary where Reinhold Niebuhr, the distinguished Protestant theologian, taught. A few blocks further is Grant’s Tomb, overlooking the Hudson River. Surrounded by such a setting, I was exhilarated at the prospects before me.

II

Our schedule called for two-hour sessions, morning and afternoon, Monday through Friday (except that there was no class on Friday afternoon). At the beginning of the first session we were told that in order for us to become acquainted more quickly with at least one member of the faculty, we would be divided into groups of four, each of which would accompany one of the teachers to his office where the group could get to know one another. With three of my colleagues, I soon found myself in the office of Rabbi Yochanan Muffs, a wonderful man with sparkling eyes and an expansive love for people which he communicated with every word and gesture. Think of Elder LeGrand Richards fifty years ago, and you will have some idea of the presence of Rabbi Muffs. We sat in a row in front of his
desk and he talked to us, one by one. He asked such questions as why we had come, what we hoped to learn, what courses we usually taught, and so on.

He finally turned to me. I was third in line. I told him my name and university. "You're the Mormon!" he boomed.

"Yes."

"Do you wear the garment?"

"Yes."

He turned and pointed out his window. Against the blue sky we could see, framed in the window, the spire of the chapel at Union Theological Seminary. On the top was a figure, blowing a trumpet. "People around here think that's Gabriel," he said. "You and I know who it really is, don't we? That's Moroni."

You can imagine how I was beginning to feel. As Rabbi Muffs continued, the others seemed somehow to fade from my consciousness so that there were only two in the room—the elder and the rabbi.

"Do you pay your tithing?" Here I almost became confused. Was this a dream? Was I being interviewed for a temple recommend? Was it Bishop Muffs, or Rabbi Muffs?

"Do you pay your tithing?"

"Yes."

"Do you pay it with a joyful heart?"

"Yes."

He leaned back in his chair and spoke more softly, but with even greater intensity. "I believe," he said, "that joy is the essence of religion. There is nothing more fundamental to religious living than joy. That is its heart. I am working on a book about joy. I want to trace it not only through the Bible, but through the literatures of the ancient Near East generally."

Now I had decided before I left Provo that I would be discreet about discussing Mormonism; my purpose in coming was to learn. But I had also resolved that if a good opportunity presented itself, I would not be shy. Here was this good man, telling me about the importance of joy. What verse do you think was racing through my mind? Then I heard myself speaking: "You know, there's a passage in the Book of Mormon about joy that you might like. It says, 'Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy'" (2 Nephi 2:25).

"Oh, my God," whispered the rabbi. "I've found the text I've searched for all my life . . . in the Book of Mormon. I can teach from the Book of Mormon." Turning to me, he said, "Say it again, but not so fast."
As I repeated the familiar words, phrase by phrase, his eyes glowed. When I had finished, he offered to provide a midrash, which is an imaginative and frequently extended interpretation of a text. He said something like this:

‘According to the Rabbis, when the Holy One, blessed be he, decided to create the world, the angels became jealous, and said to him, ‘Why do you want to create man when you have us? We are always with you. Why, then, do you need man?’ The Holy One replied, ‘Yes, you are always with me; hence, when you obey me, I never know if you obey me because you love me or because you see me watching you. But if I create man, it will be different. Adam will fall, for only by being outside my presence can man exist as man, making choices in freedom. I will give him my Torah; if he obeys it he will have joy, and I will know that he obeys because he loves me, and not because he sees me watching him.’”

Then Rabbi Muffs asked, “How do Mormons interpret the verse?” I replied that I saw little to add.

“You must sit by me at lunch,” he said.

It was, in fact, getting close to noon, and there was still one other person for him to talk to. For the moment, our dialogue was over, and the presence of the others in the room demanded his attention. Soon, however, we were seated at a long table talking in each other’s ear about everything from the Word of Wisdom to higher criticism of the Bible. At the end of the meal, the person in charge called us all to order and announced that each one of the five teachers would now stand and introduce himself to the entire group. When Rabbi Muffs arose, he uttered the following words: “Ladies and gentlemen, I have had a shattering experience this morning.” All eyes became more intent. He continued, betraying a smile, “My colleague to my left, from Brigham Young University, has given me a text from the Book of Mormon that I have searched for all my life.” Placing his hand upon my shoulder, he said, “Stand up and say it for them . . . and watch the Jews.”

And so on the first day of my experience at the Seminary, I stood and recited for all the fellows and the faculty a verse from the Book of Mormon. I would later learn to appreciate more fully why Rabbi Muffs had claimed it for his own.

Rabbi Muffs told me later that he had studied Mormonism as a history student. Needless to say, he was delighted to receive the Book of Mormon which I presented to him. On the concept of joy, see “The Joy of the Law” in Solomon Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (1909; reprint ed., New York: Schocken, 1961), pp. 148–69.
I cannot take the time to describe all the faculty who taught us. All were rabbis, all held doctor’s degrees as well, all were deeply committed Jews. But I must mention just one other, Rabbi David Weiss Halivni, a renowned Talmud scholar who was the director of our Institute. Perhaps less exuberant than Rabbi Muffs, more quiet, he was endowed with a gentle and profound spirit. Rabbi Muffs had been born in the United States, but not so Rabbi Halivni. He, like his childhood friend, Elie Wiesel, had entered the world in Sighet, Romania. A Talmud prodigy at five, at fifteen he had stepped out of a boxcar into Auschwitz. The last words which he heard from his family were those of his aunt, ‘May the Torah that you have studied protect you.’ All except him perished. He wrote his witness in the dedication to his first book on the Talmud. This witness was later reproduced near the entrance to the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem: ‘I survived alone, to tell, to remind, and to demand.’

How can I explain what it was like for me, born and reared in the safety of a small city in the American West, to look into eyes which had seen what his had seen? Or to feel the indomitable faith that inspired his teaching? Or to watch him, seated on the floor of the synagogue according to the tradition, chanting the Lamentations of Jeremiah on Tishah B’Av, the fast day which commemorates the destruction of the Temple?

Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation.
Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time?
Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. [Lamentations 5:19–21]

III

The theme of the Institute can be indicated by two statements: first, Judaism is not simply the religion of the Old Testament. I had once supposed that it was, and I was surprised to learn that Judaism, like Christianity, had an additional creative period after the time of the Old Testament (or, for the Jew, after the time of the Bible). In

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1The others were Rabbi David Wolf Silverman (philosophy); Rabbi Joseph S. Lukinsky (education); Rabbi Shaye J. D. Cohen (history). Rabbi Muffs taught Bible; Rabbi Halivni, Talmud. The Institute’s assistant director was Rabbi Gordon Tucker.

2Elie Wiesel survived the concentration camps and has written some of the most moving accounts of the Holocaust that one can read. He has also written works concerning the tradition of Hasidism, from which he is descended. Night, The Gates of the Forest, Souls on Fire, Messengers of God, Legends of Our Time are a few of his books.

fact, Christianity itself emerged during this same Post-Biblical Era. These considerations lead to the second statement: Judaism today is a product of the Rabbinic Period, roughly 200 B.C. to A.D. 500. Understanding these two statements led me to see a parallel between the two faiths. As Christianity is the Old Testament mediated by the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles, so Judaism is the Bible mediated by the teachings of the Rabbis. Jesus himself is called Rabbi in the Gospels (John 1:38, 49; 3:2, etc.). So, as a result of the Institute, I was able to find, between his teachings and those of the Rabbis, important similarities as well as the differences which before had tended to dominate my thinking.

Who were the Rabbis, and what was the nature of their teaching? How was it related to the teaching of the prophets? How did the Rabbis accomplish the task of creating the Judaism which would endure for two thousand years? I certainly cannot provide a fully adequate answer, but I can, at least, suggest a brief orientation. The Rabbis saw themselves as inheritors of an ancient tradition which they traced ultimately back to Moses. The tradition itself is called the Oral Torah or Oral Law. God gave to Moses his Torah or Teaching or Law (the word law, I learned, does not capture all that is implied by Torah). According to the Rabbis this Torah, given to Moses, had two divisions. The Written Torah is what is contained in the first five books of the Bible, the books of Moses. But in addition to the Written Torah, God gave to Moses the Oral Torah. This second Torah, by definition, was not written down but was transmitted orally from generation to generation.

What did the Oral Torah contain? Simply stated, it contained commentary, application, and interpretation of the Written Torah, as well as statutes, rituals, and teachings more or less independent of the Written Torah. Its basic role struck me as being similar, within the Jewish tradition, to the role of continuous revelation in the Mormon tradition. The purpose of each is to clarify, elaborate, and explain the commandments of written scriptures, and even, on occasion, to supplement them. The difference is that the Rabbis believed that such interpretation was given in advance. According to my own faith, it is given through the prophet, as the situation demands.


"In all religions which profess to be wholly and solely based on a revelation, fixed and final, embodied in certain books, tradition is necessarily called in to interpret and supplement the scriptures; the origin of this tradition must lie in the age of revelation itself; and to be authoritative it must ultimately derive from the fountain-head of revelation" (Moore, Judaism, 1:257).
There is a passage in the Book of Nehemiah that illustrates the kind of activity in which the Rabbis engaged. The time is the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. (When using the "Christian Calendar," Jews write B.C.E., or "before Common Era," instead of B.C. They write C.E., or "Common Era," instead of A.D.) Ezra, the priest and scribe, has returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity. In chapter 8 he appears as a prototype of Rabbinic procedure:

And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.

And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding.

And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

[Nehemiah 8:1–3, 8]

In this passage, the Written Law is read and then interpreted orally. In later Rabbinic practice, interpretation of the Law was most often based upon earlier interpretation or tradition. Innovation did occur, but it was guided by an elaborate set of rules and was usually regarded as a development of something already implicit in the established tradition, whether written or oral.

I had studied the passage from Nehemiah before I went to the Seminary, and I had studied something else, which immediately came to my mind. Half a world away, and more than a century earlier, a scene almost identical had occurred:

Now it came to pass that I, Nephi, did teach my brethren these things.

And I did read many things unto them which were written in the book of Moses . . . for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.

[1 Nephi 19:22–23]

In both cases, the teacher turned to the Torah of Moses in order to instruct the people of his own day. The purpose was not just to impart history, but the will of God to the present generation.

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10 “The re-establishment of normative Judaism after the Exile is connected by both Jewish tradition and modern scholarship with the name of Ezra, who restored the Law of Moses” (Elias Bickerman, From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees: Foundations of Postbiblical Judaism [New York: Schocken, 1962], p. 9).

The Rabbis were teachers and still are today. In addition to religious devotion and righteous living, what qualified one to be a rabbi was knowledge of the Torah, both Written and Oral. Such knowledge was to be obtained by study. The distinction between the rabbi and the prophet is, therefore, clear. Whereas the rabbi must study to gain his knowledge, the prophet receives it directly from God. While the rabbi takes his authority from the tradition which he studies and interprets, the prophet speaks as one having authority in himself. The Rabbis were fully aware of this difference. They said that when God took the Garden from Adam, he gave him instead the gift of children; when God took the prophets from Israel, he gave them instead the gift of the Talmud (the collection of Oral Law and Rabbinic teaching).

As the passage from Nehemiah makes clear, the role which the Rabbis played can be found in the Bible; nevertheless, the Rabbinic Period, as it is called, is essentially a post-biblical period. And while this segment of Jewish history includes two centuries before the Common Era, its essence can be captured in the Rabbinic reaction to a later event, the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. Here Judaism faced its supreme crisis. The Rabbis were responsible for its survival. In Israel’s golden age, Israel had had prophet, priest, and king—representing revelation, Temple, and land. In these terms the identity of Israel as a nation and as a religion had been largely expressed. But by the time the Temple was destroyed in the year 70, these had been lost. There was no prophetic revelation, no priestly service in the Temple, no independent kingdom. The Romans ruled all. Who, at the time, would have supposed that anything of this tiny, helpless people called the Jews could survive? Who would have supposed that long after Rome and all her gods had died, Israel and Israel’s God would yet live?

During the siege of Jerusalem, while David’s city and its people waited, an old man and his disciples devised an audacious plan. The Romans had surrounded the city; there was no way to get out alive. But if not alive, then dead. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai had his disciples place him in a coffin. They then appealed at the gate for permission to carry the dead beyond the city walls, in accordance with the requirements of their religion. They were allowed to do so. Later, under the cover of night, the old Rabbi, like a symbol of his faith, arose from the semblance of death and made his way, somehow, to the tent of the Roman general, Vespasian. Throwing himself upon

the Roman’s mercy, he begged permission to take his disciples to the small nearby community of Yavneh, in order to establish an academy of study. The general granted his request. He went and taught. There was no king, no prophet, no priest, only a Rabbi and a book. But they were enough.\footnote{Jacob Neusner, *A Life of Yochanan ben Zakkai*, ca. 1–80 C.E. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), pp. 157–66.}

In pondering this story I came to see new depths in the story of my beginnings. For my people, too, are the people of a book. They are named after a book. With my vision of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai hiding in his coffin, there merged the vision of Nephi and his brothers hiding in the cavity of a rock, hoping to obtain the plates (1 Nephi 3:27). How profound was the wisdom that guided both men! Facing ruin and loss, they knew what could be abandoned, but also what must be preserved: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8). This word, as Nephi later taught, is the rod of iron which leads to the tree of life (1 Nephi 11:25). Without it there can be no life. And therefore, wherever Israel may be found, the record, the account of the Covenant, will be with them.

How were the Rabbis able to preserve the heritage of Israel with just the means of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai? The answer may be stated simply: they transformed necessity into virtue. Or, to put the point in another way, they were already prepared, by their own tradition, to offer Israel what was needed. After the destruction of the Temple, the family table became the altar of Israel; the father became the priest. Instead of merely longing for what was gone, the Rabbis formed something in its place, a faith which could endure by being built upon the ultimate foundation of all human institutions, the family. In the days of the Temple, glorious as they were, the primary functions of Israel’s worship had been performed by a small minority, the priests. They held their office by heredity. The king and the prophet were single individuals. So the basis of Israel’s identity had been relatively narrow and, as history was to demonstrate, far from permanent. Without an independent land, there could be no king; without the Temple, no role for the priests; and the prophets had ceased to speak. But there were Jewish communities and families. They became the basis of Rabbinic Judaism.

The Rabbis strengthened past traditions and also built new structures, based on study, deeds, and hope.\footnote{They taught the adult members of their communities but received therefor neither salaries nor gifts. Instead of forming a separate professional class, the Rabbis were bound up with the life of the people as a whole, and members of every economic group were to be found among them.” (Max Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind*, 3d ed. [New York: Bloch Publishing Company 1972], p. 83.)} They took the holiness

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which the Temple represented and infused it into everyday life. They developed the synagogue as a place of teaching and worship for all.\footnote{Salo W. Baron, The Jewish Community, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1942), 1:55–156.} They created from the ancient Mosaic commandments one of the most glorious spiritual achievements of the human race, \textit{Shabbat}. For a people without a Temple in space, the Holy Sabbath became a Temple in time, into which Israel could enter each week. Sabbath delight, like the Sabbath candles kindled by Jewish mothers at sundown, would lighten Israel’s way for two thousand years. And what of the many kinds of labor that are forbidden on the Sabbath? What is the significance of these restrictions? I learned that according to the Rabbis, they are all those acts which were required to build and furnish the Tabernacle in the desert. But the Sabbath is itself a Tabernacle, sanctified by the Holy One himself as he ended his work of creation. The Rabbis taught that we turn from the acts needed to construct a physical Tabernacle to acts of joy and worship that will honor the Tabernacle in time, sanctified by God to surround all Israel everywhere.\footnote{Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1951), p. 29.}

As I sat at the Sabbath Eve table of my friends, a couple whom I had met in the Seminary library and who had invited me to share the Sabbath with them, I heard the husband chant the words of Proverbs 32 in honor of his wife: ‘‘Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.’’ Each week he does this, following the tradition set by the Rabbis. The entire poem is recited. If there are children, each one receives a blessing under the hand of the father, and then bestows a kiss upon the mother. The following night, as the Sabbath draws to a close, all members of the family in turn sniff from the Sabbath spice box. Its fragrance reminds them of the sweetness of the Sabbath which, though it is now departing, will come again. As I pondered these precious traditions, my mind turned to the words of William Butler Yeats in his poem, ‘‘A Prayer for My Daughter’’: ‘‘How but in custom and in ceremony / Are innocence and beauty born?’’

IV

The opening words of the Talmud are these: ‘‘From what time in the evening may the \textit{Shema} be recited?’’ The Shema is a prayer composed of passages taken from the Pentateuch which the Jew recites every day, morning and evening: ‘‘\textit{Shema Yisrael, Adonai}’’
**Elohe n u, Adonai echad . . .’’** These words have spanned millenia. They have spoken the faith and mission of Israel for countless faithful Jews. The first few verses of the Shema are from Deuteronomy:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

[Deuteronomy 6:4–7]

Under the Rabbis, the task of teaching and learning the Torah became an essential aspect of Judaism. Study became an act of worship. For a person like me, whose life is one of teaching and study, this was a profound idea. Possibly I should already have possessed it. I knew the familiar words, “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). And I believed study was an important means to an end; I believed that its purpose was to obtain knowledge, especially useful knowledge. The Rabbis did not deny this view. But they did supplement it. They taught that study, especially study of Torah or divine revelation, was itself an act of worship, or, as they often put it, “a sanctification of the Name of God.” I could now see why a book should be so important, not for its own sake, but for the sake of those who study it. The holy words were not given simply to be deposited in books: “These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.” To study sacred or edifying words is to turn the heart to God. The scholar’s task becomes a prayer.

Teaching was not to occur just in the synagogue and house of study, but in the home, and throughout all activities of life. The Shema thus embodies the central religious insight of Rabbinic Judaism: religion is a matter of daily teaching, daily study, daily living. It is to guide and nourish and strengthen and comfort human beings during every moment of their lives. Its ultimate purpose is expressed in Leviticus 19:2—“Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.” The Rabbis attempted to provide patterns for living that bridged all moments of time, leading each person to holiness. Humility, restraint, and discipline became for the Rabbis gates of love and peace. Of course they would have smiled with approval at the words, “Men are, that they might have joy.”

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For centuries the Rabbinic teaching remained oral to distinguish it carefully from the Written Torah. (The feats of memory implied by this fact are incredible, but real, even today.) But finally, intense persecution of the Jews led to the decision that the Oral Torah must be committed to writing or be lost, for if one generation of Rabbis were destroyed, the chain of the oral tradition would perish. The mammoth codification of Rabbinic teaching that resulted is called the Talmud. (The root of the word is Hebrew for ‘‘study.’’) Two versions were completed, the Jerusalem or Palestinian Talmud and the larger, more authoritative Babylonian Talmud. 17 Within what scholars call ‘‘the sea of the Talmud’’ are the records of ancient Rabbinic discussions on almost every imaginable topic. Statutes, stories, commentaries, and commentaries upon commentaries, all weave together the remarkable fabric of Rabbinic thought. The Talmud is not a book written by someone. It is a compilation of the teachings of many men, a record of a Rabbinic conversation continued over centuries. Most intriguing for me and for those who can follow them are the legal discussions. Countless young minds from Talmudic times to the present have been tempered and sharpened by Rabbinic logic and dialectic.

Without attempting to provide an account of the way in which the Talmud is organized (it has six basic divisions), I should note the basic distinction which sorts its contents into two kinds, legal and nonlegal. The legal portion is called halacha; the nonlegal portion, agada. (The first word suggests a way or a path; the second, a narration or a story.) Halacha, just because it is legal, does not have the same immediate appeal to the non-Jew that agada does. Perhaps it is too technical. I found halacha difficult, but I nevertheless came to appreciate its fundamental importance. Halacha constituted, within Rabbinic Judaism, the stability and order of Jewish life, for the Rabbis were judges as well as teachers. They had to decide cases relating to torts, contracts, criminal actions, and so on. Their legal discussions, therefore, frequently had practical purposes. (These were not always practical, however; the study was enjoyed for its own sake as well.) But in every case the purpose of the Rabbis was religious, for the law they discussed was the Law of God.

As opposed to halacha, agada has the power to captivate anyone. If halacha is the law of Israel, agada is its song. If halacha is the letter of the law, agada is its spirit. The two are ultimately inseparable. Within the riches of agada I found midrash, allegory, parable,

legend, tale, myth, poetry—all the creations of Israel's soul which helped to make life bearable and even beautiful. The teachings of Christ contain a large measure of agada. Wherever wisdom responds to human need in such words as these, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho . . ." (Luke 10:30), we find agada. And not only aspiration and admonition find utterance in agada, but also humor, without which Israel could hardly have borne its trials. For example:

R[abbi] Nehemiah said: When the Israelites did that wicked deed [built the golden calf], Moses sought to appease God, and he said, "Lord of the world, they have only made for thee an assistant; why shouldst thou be angry with them? This calf which they have made will assist thee; thou wilt cause the sun to shine, and the calf will cause the moon; thou wilt look after the stars, the calf after the zodiac; thou wilt cause the dew to fall, the calf will make the winds to blow; thou wilt bring down the rain, and the calf will cause the herbs to sprout." God said, "Moses, do you err like them? In this calf is there any reality?" Then Moses replied, "If not, why shouldst thou be angry with thy children?"21

Here are just a few further examples from the agada. The first is from Hillel, one of the most revered of the ancient sages:

If I am not for myself, who is for me? If I care only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?22

Everything is foreseen [by God], yet freedom of choice is given [to man]; and the world is judged by grace, yet all is according to the amount of the work.23

The Holy Spirit rests on him only who has a joyous heart.24

For me one of the most poignant teachings of the agada is the legend of the Lamed Vav, the Thirty-six.25 This tradition states that God always maintains upon earth thirty-six just men. Hidden in the silence of anonymity, known not even to themselves but only to God, these righteous few in every generation—by their deeds of goodness—protect the world from ruin. For their sake the Lord extends

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23Montefiore and Loewe, A Rabbincic Anthology, p. 36.
24Ibid., p. 203.
25Ibid., pp. 251–32. The idea recalls Abraham's search for a righteous remnant in Sodom (Genesis 18:32). It also appears in the Book of Mormon: "Yea, wo unto this great city of Zarahemla; for behold, it is because of those who are righteous that it is saved" (Helaman 13:12).
his mercy to all. Quietly, outside the centers of power and influence which the world recognizes, they perform the works which preserve the children of men. In these thirty-six just is embodied the heart of Jewish religion: holiness to the Lord. As the rivers are sent from the mountains to the valleys, from the high places to the low, so are these, bearing the waters of life, for holiness and life are one.

According to the Talmud, "All is in the hand of heaven except the fear of heaven." Man may grant or withhold his fear or worship as he chooses. The meaning and goal of his life depend upon this choice. And for me, as my experience at the Seminary reached its end, I began to see that the entire structure of Rabbinic Judaism rested, for the Rabbis as for Moses, upon the simple teaching which Christ himself reiterated, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37, 39; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18.) The Torah is a law of love. Obedience is a life of love. And always at the center of love, of peace, of joy, is the Holy One of Israel.

I came to see that the ultimate source of the closeness between Judaism and Mormonism is their common commitment to the covenant which they have received by revelation from God. Because the Jews have preserved and transmitted their covenant through the ages, it was possible for me, as a student at the Seminary, to feel that I had returned to an ancient and holy source of teachings which my own faith had taught me already to love. As I studied the Rabbinic books, attended the synagogue, and shared the Sabbath meal in the homes of my teachers and friends, I felt that I was not just a guest but a family member in "a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119). In my brief time there, modern Israel met and embraced ancient Israel. The stream which had flowed for thousands of years mingled with the spring which had burst forth anew just a hundred and fifty years ago.

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20Montefiore and Loewe, A Rabbinic Anthology, p. 291.
24If I were to read only three books about Judaism, I would recommend, in order: Milton Steinberg, Basic Judaism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1947); Abraham Joshua Heschel, God in Search of Man (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1953); and Chaim Potok, The Chosen (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967). Several of the works mentioned in these footnotes have helpful bibliographies for those who are interested.
The Psalm of Nephi: A Lyric Reading

Steven P. Sondrup

The Book of Mormon, like the Bible, is far from a generically unified work. Although the narratives, the epistles, the sermons, the exhortations, and the poems may well constitute a specialized encyclopedic form with a thoroughgoing figurative unity of the sort that Northrop Frye associates with the Bible, each section can profitably be read in terms of its own generic conventions in such a way that the understanding of the parts as well as the comprehension of the whole will be significantly enhanced.1 The question of specific generic types within sacred writ is not simply an academic exercise in literary taxonomy, but rather a problem at the very heart of scriptural exegesis. One of the reasons, for example, that Isaiah appears particularly difficult to many readers may derive from the rather futile attempt to read the book as a simple linear narrative rather than as a collection of thematically related oracles. Much of the meaning of the Song of Solomon, moreover, depends directly on the generic assumptions that are initially made about the book.2 Similarly, many passages from the Book of Mormon become more immediately and fully accessible when their study is guided by accurate generic inferences which facilitate interpretation in terms of appropriate conventions. To be sure, much can be said without any reference to the question of genre, but generic insights can heighten both the understanding and the appreciation of many passages. It might be argued that the use of generic concepts as a heuristic tool is tantamount to the inappropriate

application of profane categories to the study of sacred texts and consequently in itself a violation of generic norms. The genre of sacred text, though, is very general, and sacred texts consist demonstrably of many more specific literary types involving various conventions and norms. Surely texts held to be religious in nature should be read with an eye to religious values while at the same time admitting of study in terms of appropriate generic practices which in turn add new levels and dimensions of meaning.3

Because by far the greatest portion of the Book of Mormon is narrative—though admittedly in several different ways—other literary modes embedded in the narrative flow are less obvious and consequently less easily identified and read in terms of their own unique generic conventions. One such passage occurs in the fourth chapter of 2 Nephi, verses 16 through 35, a passage that is often referred to as the "Psalm of Nephi," at least since Sidney Sperry provided this formulation in his commentary on the Book of Mormon.4 The question to be discussed with reference to these verses is not whether they are a psalm in the biblical sense of the term but rather the nature and extent of their poetic qualities and some of the most central interpretive implications inextricably connected with their lyricism.

It may at first seem fatuous to argue for the presence of accomplished poetry in a volume identifying itself as a translation, particularly if one remembers Shelley’s caveat that it is impossible to translate poetry5 or Robert Frost’s quip that poetry is what gets lost in translation. Although Shelley’s and Frost’s objection may well apply to the lyric mode they knew best—that based in formal terms on acoustical patterning like rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration and that

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3See E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 68-126, for a detailed description of the importance of accurate generic definition in the process of interpretation. See also Hans Robert Jauss, Literaturgeschichte als Provokation (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), pp. 173-82.

4Book of Mormon Compendium (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), pp. 152-53. Although Professor Sperry may be right in his unsubstantiated argument that “this is a true psalm in both form and idea,” he seems to have misunderstood the basic poetic structure of this passage, at least insofar as his arrangement of lines and stanzas allows inference. Reynolds and Sjodahl in George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon, ed. Philip C. Reynolds, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1955), 1:264-71, describe the passage as “A Song of Nephi” and call attention to some of its poetic qualities. The proximity of the passage to Hebrew poetry is also emphasized. At times the analysis is rather superficial, and many of the central lyric elements seem to have been misunderstood.

5"It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as to seek to transfuse from one language to another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burden of the curse of Babel." ("A Defense of Poetry," The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, 10 vols. [New York: Gordian Press; London: Ernest Benn, 1965], 7:114.)
which relies heavily on subtle connotations and associations of individual words—it does not necessarily apply in general.

Poetry can be viewed more broadly and taken to include all those utterances in which language artfully and significantly draws attention to itself by the intensification of its own linguistic and formal properties; poetry, thus, celebrates language as its medium of communication and as at least part of its raison d'etre. While rhythm, meter, alliteration, assonance, and rhyme are some of the ways most familiar to modern readers in which the poet can foreground his language, they are by no means the only possibilities at his disposal. In other epochs and in other cultures many different linguistic devices have been used. In the "Psalm of Nephi," just as in Hebrew poetry, an intricately patterned system of ideational parallels is the essence of lyricism. Logical, formal, or conceptual units are set parallel to one another rather than acoustic properties as is the case with rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and assonance. Formal construction also survive, it should be noted, the process of translation far more readily than purely acoustic properties.7

This use of ideational parallelism in Hebrew poetry was first noticed by medieval Jewish biblical scholars and was given its technical name—"parallelismus membrorum"—during the eighteenth century by the Anglican bishop and scholar Robert Lowth. The basic principle is that "every verse must consist of at least two 'members,'

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6This view of poetry is based on insights of the Prague School aestheticians and structuralist approaches to poetry. Jan Mukarovský argues, for example, that "in poetic language foregrounding achieves maximum intensity to the extent of pushing communication into the background as the objective of expression and of being used for its own sake; it is not used in the services of communication, but in order to place in the foreground the act of expression, the act of speech itself" ("Standard Language and Poetic Language," A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style, ed. and trans. Paul L. Garvin [Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1964], p. 19). Roman Jakobson makes a similar point: "The set (Einstellung) toward the MESSAGE as such, focus on the message for its own sake, is the POETIC function of language. . . . Poetic function is not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant, determining function, whereas in all other verbal activities it acts as a subsidiary, accessory constituent. This function, by promoting the palpability of signs, deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects." ("Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," Style in Language, ed. Thomas Sebeok [Cambridge: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960], p. 356.)


And the effect of Hebrew poetry can be preserved and transferred in a foreign language, as the effect of other great poetry cannot. The effect of Homer, the effect of Dante, is and must be in great measure lost in a translation, because their poetry is a poetry of metre, or of rhyme, or both; and the effect of these is not really transferable. A man may make a good English poem with the matter and thoughts of Homer or Dante, may even try to reproduce their metre, or to reproduce their rhyme; but the metre and rhyme will be in truth his own, and the effect will be his, not the effect of Homer or Dante. Isaiah's, on the other hand, is a poetry, as is well known, of parallelism; it depends not on metre and rhyme, but on a balance of thought, conveyed by a corresponding balance of sentence; and the effect of this can be transferred to another language. ("Introduction to Isaiah of Jerusalem," The Works of Matthew Arnold, 15 vols. [New York: AMS Press, 1970], 11:333-34.)
the second of which must, more or less completely, satisfy the expectation raised by the first." A third member may on occasion be present, but if there are more than three, it is usually possible using some rationale to group the members into twos or threes. Parallelism may exist, though, in many forms. The first and simplest is synonymous parallelism which occurs when the first member states an idea that is restated with variation by the second member:

I am like a pelican of the wilderness; 
I have become like an owl of the ruins. 

[Psalm 102:7]

The second kind is antithetic parallelism in which the second member states the idea of the first but in negative or contrasting form:

A time to weep,  
And a time to laugh.  

[Ecclesiastes 3:4]

The third kind involves a certain parallelism of form but continuous rather than balanced thought. It remains questionable, though, whether this synthetic or formal parallelism should be counted as parallelism at all. Further subordinate and specialized forms of parallelism also are attested, the most important, perhaps, being that known as introverted in which the first member is parallel to the fourth and the second to the third.

The Bible, though, is by no means the only example of parallelism being used as an organizing poetic principle: parallel structural arrangements of varied kinds play an important role in the poetry of many folk traditions as well as in works of highly divergent modern poets. Walt Whitman, for example, frequently uses parallelism as a structural device as in Song of Myself.

I too am not a bit tamed. I too am untranslatable.  
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

Whitman is not alone in his interest in exploiting the poetic potential of formal parallelism: Charles Péguy, a French poet of the Third

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10All biblical quotations are from the King James Version.

Republic, also makes extensive use of poetic parallelism, as does Augusto Frederico Schmidt, a Brazilian modernist who frequently drew on Péguy’s stylistic innovations.\(^{11}\) The poetry of Dylan Thomas abounds in parallelism of a particularly subtle and refined sort, as the first stanza of the poem “A Process in the Weather of the Heart” illustrates.

A process in the weather of the heart  
Turns damp to dry; the golden shot  
Storms in the freezing tomb.  
A weather in the quarter of the veins  
Turns night to day; blood in their suns  
lights up the living worm.\(^{12}\)

Modern poets not only have used parallelism as a particularly effective poetic device but have also on occasion sought to explain its importance. Gerard Manley Hopkins, for example, in an early essay which seeks to define the essence of poetic expression suggests that it is ultimately the use of parallelism on many levels that distinguishes poetry from other modes of discourse.

But what the character of poetry is will be found best by looking at the structure of verse. The artificial part of poetry, perhaps we shall be right to say all artifice, reduces itself to the principle of parallelism. The structure of poetry is that of continuous parallelism, ranging from the technical so-called Parallelisms of Hebrew poetry and the antiphons of Church music up to the intricacy of Greek or Italian or English verse.

Now the force of this recurrence is to beget a recurrence or parallelism answering to it in the words or thought and, speaking roughly and rather for the tendency than the invariable result, the more marked parallelism in structure whether of elaboration or of emphasis begets more marked parallelism in the words and sense. And moreover parallelism in expression tends to beget or passes into parallelism in thought. This point reached we shall be able to see and account for the peculiarities of poetic diction.\(^{13}\)

Against the background of this assessment of the importance of parallelism as well as that of its rich and venerable tradition extending


at least from the Old Testament through Dylan Thomas, the arresting formal parallelism of the "Psalm of Nephi" invites particular attention. Although comparisons between this passage and other poems making use of parallelism—biblical psalms, for example—may help to isolate and identify the nature of the passage's lyric impact, the issue in question is emphatically not the proximity per se of Book of Mormon poetics to any other specific system but rather the inherent lyric qualities of the "Psalm of Nephi."

The basic characteristics of the parallelism of the "Psalm of Nephi" can easily be seen in what may well serve as the first of the four stanzas of the psalm. The parallelism here is introverted or chiastic: the first member is antithetically parallel to the fourth, and the second synonymously to the third. In the first and the fourth

\[
\text{Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and}
\]

\[
\text{My heart pondereth continually upon the things which}
\]

\[
\text{I have seen and heard.}
\]

\[
\text{Nevertheless; notwithstanding the great goodness of the}
\]

\[
\text{Lord in showing me his great and marvelous work}
\]

\[
\text{My heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am!}
\]

\[
\text{Yea my heart sorroweth because of my flesh;}
\]

\[
\text{My soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.}
\]

\[\text{14The stanza divisions used in this analysis are, of course, not in the printed text of the Book of Mormon, nor are they even suggested. They are, rather, divisions that the structure of the passage itself seems to dictate and have been used here to facilitate analysis. The line numbers refer to lines within the stanza. The terms line and member are used more or less synonymously. In the course of this discussion, several passages will be described as exhibiting introverted or chiastic parallelism. The term and concept of chiasmus have been widely discussed and have invited considerable speculation in certain circles; in the context of what follows, chiasmus is to be understood only in the sense of a rhetorical figure similar to antithese which has been used by writers—both religious and secular—since antiquity. The essential feature is an abba pattern in which the second part of the structure is balanced against the first but in reverse order as in the poetic line "Flowers are lovely, love is flowerlike." In the "Psalm of Nephi," it will be noted, chiastic structures are much more extended. (See the article on chiasmus in Alex Preminger, ed., \textit{Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics}, enlarged ed. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974], p. 116.)}\]
members, the soul of the lyric I expresses two emotional effects—
delight and grief respectively—and the source of the delight and grief
are the antithetical poles in the individual’s search for salvation, “the
things of the Lord” and “mine iniquities.” The parallelism of the
second and third elements is somewhat more complex: the heart of
the lyric I (in distinction to soul) engages in activities—pondering
and exclaiming—which directly involve activities of the lyric I: “my
heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and
heard” and “my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am.” The
second element of the chiastic pair is itself a synonymously parallel
couplet: “my heart exclaimeth” and “Yea my heart sorroweth.”
This sort of doubling of one element is found throughout the psalm
and has the effect of conceptual reinforcement or expansion. The
phrase in the middle of this stanza—“Nevertheless, notwithstanding
the great goodness of the Lord in showing me his great and marvelous
works”—is an introduction to the third member and the pivot at the
center of the introverted parallelism. The lines of this stanza may be
organized not only in this introverted parallelism but also in terms of
a secondary synonymous couplet and triplet. The delight of the soul
and the pondering of the heart are spiritual virtues that are extensions
of one another whereas the heart’s declaring its wretchedness, the
heart’s sorrowing because of the flesh, and the soul’s grieving because
of iniquity are linked by their common concern with sin. It should be
noted, moreover, that the soul, a relatively abstract notion, is ap-
propriately concerned with abstractions—“the things of the Lord”
and “mine iniquities,” whereas the heart, a metaphorical but more
concrete figure, deals with similarly concrete realities—“the things
which I have seen and heard,” “[the] wretched man that I am,” and
“my flesh.” The verbs of each parallel structure also function in a
telling way: the soul in delighting and grieving is engaging in essen-
tially emotional activities, while the heart in pondering and exclaim-
ing is performing more or less physical actions. The spiritual nature of
the soul is, thus, emphasized by its emotive properties, and the cor-
porality of the heart is suggested by its tendency toward action. The
second element of the inner chiastic pair, though, describes the heart
sorrowing, an obviously emotional quality. Rather than a contradic-
tion or an anomaly within the structure, this line is a synthesis of the
two poles and provides a carefully wrought transition from the inner
chiastic pair to the outer.

The lines constituting the second stanza of the psalm present a
far more complex but basically similar organization. Three chiastic
pairs surround a nucleus of two sets of six parallel members with each
set further divisible into sets of parallel couplets. The outermost
I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me.

And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth of my sins;

Nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted.

My God hath been my support;

He hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness;

And he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.

He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh.

He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me.

Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and

He hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime.

And by day, have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him;

Yea, my voice have I sent up on high;

And angels have come down and ministered unto me.

And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceeding high mountains.

And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man;

Therefore I was bidden that I should not write them.

O then, If I have seen so great things,

If the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath visited men in so much mercy,

Why should my heart weep and

my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and

my flesh waste away, and

my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?

And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh?

Yea, why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul?

Why am I angry because of mine enemy?
structure (1 / 23–25) is defined by the use of the first person singular pronoun *I* as the subject of the sentence. The second element of the pair consists of three parallel members all in the form of a rhetorical question: “Why should I yield to sin?” “Why should I give way to temptations?” and “Why am I angry?” While the lexical parallelism of this outer pair is synonymous, the grammatical parallelism is antithetic. The second pair (2–19) is defined by the use of the heart as the subject of the sentence: “my heart groaneth” and “my heart weeps.” The parallelism is further established by the conceptual proximity of “groaning” and “weeping.” As with the first pair, the second element of this pair is composed of multiple members (19–22) in the form of a question: here, though, two couplets replace the triplet of the first pair. The first of the two deals metaphorically with the afflictions of the heart and soul—the principal elements of the preceding stanza—while the second is concerned with the more concrete concepts of atrophying flesh and strength. In addition to this relatively obscure stanza—while the second is concerned with the more concrete concepts of atrophying flesh and strength. In addition to this relatively obscure introverted parallelism, the last seven members (19–25)—the couplets and the concluding triplet—are all parallel to one another in terms of their rhetorically interrogative form and their implied antipathy toward that which would detract from a rich relationship with God. Similarly, the first two lines of the stanza (1–2), which were respectively the first elements of the two chiastic pairs, are synonymously parallel in describing what alienates man from God. The inner nucleus of the stanza (5–16) is introduced by a couplet announcing the subject of the next six lines: “Nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. / My God hath been my support” (3–4). This introductory couplet is in turn balanced by another couplet which is a kind of summary of the last six lines and the bridge to what follows: “If I have seen so great things, / If the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath visited me in so much mercy” (17–18). The first six of the twelve-line nucleus are all parallel in that they specifically detail how God has been a support and in that all have parallel structures beginning, “He hath . . . .” (5–10). The first two of the six (5–6) are linked by their description of God’s protection from environmental dangers, “the wilderness” and “the waters of the great deep”; the second two (7–8) by detailing God’s love for the righteous and the confounding of the enemies of righteousness; and the third (9–10) by the play on the antithesis of day and night. The second set of six lines (11–16) turns from the actions of God to those of man but can similarly be divided into three couplets. The first (11–12) portrays the ways in which the poetic voice
has been raised to God; the second (13–14) discusses the ministrations of divine messengers; and the last (15–16) mentions the results of these ministrations. The parallelism of this last couplet, it must be admitted, is certainly not as marked as that of the others, but it is similar to the synthetic or formal parallelism common in Hebrew verse.

The third stanza is the simplest, yet, perhaps, the most elegant of the entire poem and parallels, moreover, as a stanza the first stanza of the psalm. The outer chiastic pair is defined by the awakening and rejoicing of the soul, while the inner pair is characterized by the rejoicing of the heart. The first member of the inner pair is supported by a subordinate couplet that expands the meaning of the line. The chiastic pairing of statements about the heart and the soul is, thus, the structural foundation of both stanzas and provides a formal parallelism of a new order.

Awake my soul! No longer droop in sin.
Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.

Do not anger again because of mine enemies.

Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions.

Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say: O Lord, I will praise thee forever;

Yea my soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation.

This strophic parallelism is continued in the fourth stanza in that it generally reflects the structure of the second stanza. The outer chiastic shell around the conceptual nucleus of the second stanza is missing in the fourth, but the structural pattern of the nucleus itself still obtains. The stanza consists of two parts, each introduced by the parallel exclamatory expressions, “O Lord.” As in the second stanza, the first part describes the actions of the Lord, albeit those for which the lyric I is praying, while in the second part the actions of the lyric I itself are evoked. In both sections the lines are even more intimately associated in conceptual couplets and triplets. In the first part, lines one and two are synonymously parallel, and line two forms an outer
chiastic pair with line eleven, both centering on the escape from enemies. Line three and line ten form the inner chiastic pair in that they deal with the antithesis of sin and righteousness. Lines four and seven are related by the opening or not opening of gates and are supported by a subordinate pair, lines eight and nine, based on the image of walking the path of life. This image is taken up again in the couplet consisting of lines twelve and thirteen and enlarged in another subordinate couplet also based on the same image.

In the second part, lines sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen constitute a triplet defined by the trust of the lyric I in the Lord and expanded by a subordinate couplet evincing the curse upon those who trust in the arm of flesh, lines nineteen and twenty. Lines twenty-one and twenty-two form a parallel couplet in their description of the manner in which God will give liberaly. The final three lines—twenty-three through twenty-five—are a triplet which enumerate the ways in which the lyric I will raise his voice to God. The second part is thus symmetrical in that the central couplet is surrounded by two triplets.15

The representation of this passage in poetic lines and stanzas rather than in the usual narrow, newspaper-like columns leads unavoidably to the insight that this passage is extraordinarily tightly structured in linguistic and conceptual terms and differs substantially from the surrounding narrative sections.16 Its balanced ideational

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15These embedded chiastic patterns could also well be considered in terms of the rhetorical principle associated with ring composition, a technique with a long and extensive history in which the final element in a series reflects or echoes the first in some way, the penultimate the second, and so on. This procedure was first investigated by W. A. A. van Otterlo in Untersuchungen über Begriff, Anwendung und Entstehung der griechischen Ringkomposition, Mededelingen der Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, NS 7, no. 3 (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1944): “Ein merkwürdige Kompositionen form der älteren griechischen Literatur,” Memesynse, 3d ser. 12 (1944); and De Ringkompositie als Opbouwprincipe in de epische Gedichten van Homerus, Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, NS 51, no. 1 (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1948). Cedric H. Whitman extends and amplifies this approach in Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958). (See especially the detailed foldout chart at the back of the book. See also Julia Haig Gaiser, “A Structural Analysis of the Digressions in the Iliad and the Odyssey,” Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 73 [1969]: 1-44.) This method of analysis has also been applied to literary traditions other than the ancient Greek (see David Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk [London: Routledge, 1972]; John D. Niles, “Ring-Composition in La Chanson de Roland and La Chanson de William,” Obit.f 1 [December 1973]: 4-12; John D. Niles, “Ring Composition and the Structure of Beowulf,” PMLA 94 [1979]: 924-35.) Of particular interest in conjunction with the “Psalm of Nephil” is Michael Fishbane, “Composition and Structure in the Jacob Cycle (Gen. 25:19-35:22),” Journal of Jewish Studies 26 (1975): 15-38.

16The present arrangement in poetic lines and stanzas does not alone create, determine, or define per se the lyricism of the passage but rather makes more obvious the inherent lyric elements obscured by printing conventions. For an exchange of letters concerning the implications of typographical rearrangements, see the TLS of 4 February 1965, p. 87, for the beginning of the controversy which continues in the issues of 11 February 1965, p. 108, and 18 February 1965, p. 127, the latter touching on the question of biblical poetry. Finally, in a brief article in the issue of 25 February 1965, p. 147, an earlier (27 September 1928) letter of T. S. Eliot discussing the question, published. The question is also discussed by Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation, pp. 94-98. Jonathan Culler raises the issue with regard to the generic expectations that typographical rearrangements can imply (see Structuralist Poetics [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973], pp. 161-62; see also Gérard Genette, Figures II [Paris: Seuil, 1969], pp. 150-51).
O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul?

-Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies?

-Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?

-May the gates of hell be shut continually before me,

Because that my heart is broken and

my spirit is contrite!

O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me,

That I may walk the path of the low valley,

That I may be strict in the plain road!

O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!

O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies!

Wilt thou make my path straight before me!

Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way—

But that thou wouldst clear my way before me,

And hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy.

O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and

I will trust in thee forever.

I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh;

For I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh.

Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm.

Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh.

Therefore, I will lift up my voice unto thee:

Yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness.

Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine

everlasting God. Amen.
patterns are unlike the exhortations, the prayers, the epistles, and the epic narrative that constitute most of the Book of Mormon. This careful and obviously intentional structuring certainly seems to invite—if not to demand—interpretation on its own terms, and the terms that the passages seem to suggest are those that easily accommodate the arresting emphasis given to language as language, to formal structure as structure. The poet—a designation entirely appropriate for the author of this passage—seems intent upon drawing the careful reader’s attention to the aesthetic fulfillment that intricate formal balance can provide and, in so doing, creates a text that is at least in part self-referential. Although debate continues on the definition of poetry and, indeed, whether a generic category as large as poetry can be defined in any meaningful way, many critics could agree that the extensive parallelism of the passage would warrant at least a tentative reading in terms of general poetic conventions.

A lyric convention which very significantly distinguishes a poetic reading of the passage from one determined by the norms and expectations of expository prose, for example, is the lyric practice of concentrating and symbolizing meaning. The delight of the soul in the things of the Lord is, thus, an animating and vivifying attitude rather than a prosaic report on psychic health; the grief because of iniquity is a soul-searing regret rather than a relatively passive evocation of guilt. And similarly, the final resolve to cry unto God eternally is heightened and amplified by the power of lyrical articulation to the level of an all-consuming passion. The joy in righteousness, the grief for sin, and the resolve to praise God are, moreover, all universalized and, within the poetic framework, all generally accessible. The text does not evince a historical time in the same sense as the ambient narrative with its specific temporal references, but rather evokes a heightened, eternal lyric present. The past events are only prior to the enduring poetic present and the future tenses suggest more a logical consequence than a chronological ordering. By recognizing the non-temporal lyric time, the reader engages the mind of the lyric I in a highly intimate yet universalizing way which is notably different from the reader’s contact with the epic narrator.

In all verbal structures identified as literary, or more especially as lyric, meaning and value ultimately depend not on descriptive accuracy but rather on conformity with the postulates implied by the work itself. The poem does not literally describe nor does it directly assert: as poetry, the “Psalm of Nephi” cannot necessarily be taken to provide reliable information about Nephi’s actions or
attitudes. The psalm rather evokes a lyric world responsive to its own internal rhythm and having only an indirect relationship with the world of externality. The inward striving for heightened reality must, perforce, take precedence over the outward motion toward empirical reality. In this rarified world of lyric intensity, truth becomes, at least in part, a question of poetic (poietic) coherence rather than referential veracity.

When the "Psalm of Nephi" is read with attention to its lyric qualities, it may be subsumed within the lyric genre and thus be in a position to enrich and to be enriched by other poems. Although it can be esteemed and valued in aesthetic isolation, its significance and appreciation expand when read in relation to and comparison with other works. Other poems may also conceivably emerge in new light as their poetic context is expanded to accommodate this poem. It is true that in the sciences the discovery of a new example of a given species does not modify the characteristics of the species as a whole. Yet in matters of aesthetic concern, this is not the case: each new example necessarily not only extends and enlarges but also subtly and invariably changes the genre.

A particularly good example of this kind of intertextual enrichment with regard to the "Psalm of Nephi" can be seen in its com-

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17Hans-Georg Gadamer argues convincingly that the essential difference between literary and nonliterary texts resides in their fundamentally different claims to veracity. "... der Unterschied zwischen einem literarischen Kunstwerk und irgendeinem anderen literarischen Text [ist] kein so grundst¨urzlicher. Gewiss besteht ein Unterschied zwischen der Sprache der dichterischen Prosa und der 'wissenschaftlichen' Prosa. Man kann diese Unterschiede gewiss auch vom Gesichtspunkt der literarischen Formung aus betrachten. Aber der wesentliche Unterschied solcher verschiedener 'Sprachen' liegt offenbar anderswo, n¨amlich in der Verschiedenheit des Wahrheitsanspruches, der von ihnen erhoben wird."  "Wahrheit und Methode: Grundz¨uge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik," 3. erweiterte Auflage [T¨ubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1972], p. 135.) It is, thus, questionable whether the "Psalm of Nephi" gives the reader any reliable information about Nephi's actions or attitudes. This view is contrary to that represented by Reynolds and Spaldahl and more recently by Steve Gilliland, "Awake My Soul!": Dealing Firmly with Depression," "Esquizas 8 (August 1978): 37-41. (See also Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 74-76.) Gadamer's view of poetry, however, has not gained universal acceptance. Among the opposing theories, for example, is that advanced by Kate Hamburger in Die Logik der Dichtung (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1957) in which lyric poetry is approached as a "real utterance" (Wirklichkeitussage) having the same status as a historical narrative.


19"... toute oeuvre modifie l'ensemble des possibles, chaque nouvel exemple change l'espace. ... Plus exactement, nous ne reconnaissons à un texte le droit de figurer dans l'histoire de la litterature ou dans celle de la science, que pour autant qu'il apporte un changement à l'idée qu'on se faisait jusqu'alors de l'une ou de l'autre activite. Les textes que ne remplissent pas cette condition passent automatiquement dans une autre categorie: celle de la litterature populaire, "de masse," là, celle de l'exercice scolaire, ici." (Tzvetan Todorov, Introduction à la litterature fantastique [Paris: Seuil, 1970], p. 10.)
parative juxtaposition to thematically similar Old Testament psalms. Psalm 51, which tradition holds was occasioned by Nathan the prophet’s visit to David after David had sinned with Bathsheba, like the “Psalms of Nephi” expresses profound grief for sin and transgression and looks forward to God’s righteousness. David’s pleas to “create . . . a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit” (v. 10) evoke the sympathetic vibrations of Nephi’s heart that sorrows because of his flesh and of his soul that grieves because of his iniquities but nonetheless knows in whom to trust and upon whom to rely. Although Nephi’s sorrow for sin is certainly genuine and sincere, the gravity and imminency of David’s transgression emerges with harrowing power in contrast. David yearns for deliverance, so that his tongue can sing aloud of the righteousness of God (v.14); yet in comparison, Nephi’s resolve to lift his voice forever to the rock of his righteousness, to his everlasting God, is at once more ecstatic and more compelling. When Nephi exclaims, “May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite!” he echoes David’s assertion that “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (v. 17). And with this poetic echo comes some of the urgency and tragedy of David’s penitence that shapes and colors the aesthetic impact of the line in such a subtle yet important way that it could be missed if the generic similarity of the two statements were not explicit.

Similarly, the avowal of the poet of the eighty-fourth psalm that “my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the L ORD; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (v. 2) and Nephi’s affirmation that “my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord and my heart pondereth continually upon things which I have seen and heard” mutually provide enriching and broadening interpretive contexts which potentially render the broadest meaning of both passages more accessible and more fully real.

Yet one further and more distant comparison may well serve to illustrate the point. In the thirty-first canto of “Purgatorio,” Dante’s weakness and shortcomings are brought fully and painfully to his mind. He stands conscience-stricken and penitent with his eyes cast toward the ground as Beatrice rehearses his transgressions; he is then told that the grief at hearing is not sufficient, so he must lift his eyes to behold and to experience even greater pain. Eventually the suffering is too great for Dante to endure; he collapses exclaiming: “Tanta riconoscenza il cor mi morse/ ch’io caddi vinto” (So much recognition [i.e., self-recognition, self-condemnation] bit at my
heart, that I fell overcome). By means of a sensitivity to certain broadly shared generic conventions coupled with even the vaguest memory of Dante’s penitential collapse at the sight of his weakness, the experience of hearing Nephi’s heart exclaim, “O wretched man that I am,” of seeing the poet come to an awareness of his own shortcomings to the extent that his heart groans and weeps, can be heightened, extended, and enriched and, more significantly, moved one step closer, perhaps, to full poetic universality. The two passages partake of the same traditions, and the lyric strength of one, consequentiy, poetically reinforces the other.

Neither the enrichment nor, indeed, the aesthetic fulfillment it produces in itself justifies the application of lyric conventions to the reading of the “Psalm of Nephi.” Ultimately, the reason for reading this text as a poem is that the complex system of parallelisms suggests the author intended, at least in part, to call attention to language, his medium of expression, to write a text which was, at least to a degree, self-referential, and to celebrate the essence and power of the word as such: he intended his text should be read as a poem. By reading these words as they were intended to be read, by engaging the poetic mind, indeed the prophetic mind, on its own terms, the reader is warranted the most profound understanding of the meaning of the text and the richest appreciation of its significance.

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21To regard Nephi as a poet is entirely consistent with what is otherwise known about him. Hugh Nibley in An Approach to the Book of Mormon, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), pp. 220–21, notes that “in Lehi’s day an inspired leader had to be a poet.” Nephi, moreover, of all other figures in the Book of Mormon, seems most concerned with questions of language and is the most moved by the difficult yet lyrical mode of Isaiah.
At the Heart of the Labyrinth

Patricia Hart

At the heart of every labyrinth is a destination that becomes an embarking point, or so says Justino Larra del Molino, whom I wait to see, creasing my program in the humidity of a palm.

"‘Tom! Is anyone sitting here?’” It is Frederic Sanbourne, in Comp. Lit., who bends down to look at my face.

"‘Yes—no—I’m not sure really.’"

"‘Oh well . . . ’” and he is off, rows down, rows closer, within questioning range. He always poses questions to visiting poets, and this once I cannot bear to be at his side, to be a blurred edge at the focus of stupidity. Frederic Sanbourne is mesmerized by the sound of his own voice; unfortunately, it affects few of the rest of us in the same way. Today I cannot bear the thought that Justino Larra del Molino might look down from the modest podium to catch Frederic Sanbourne’s windborne sand words, see me, and perceive a friendship.

People like blots of paint fill up the room, someone trailing cologne, someone a cigar, all color but no focus, for there will be no focus till Justino Larra del Molino enters the room; then that will put something into focus.

Focus, I have thought to myself from the very beginning, hoping that out of the labyrinth, out of Justino Larra del Molino’s labyrinth, I will find in language the ball of thread to lead me. Justino Larra del Molino is not the first Latin American poet to use the labyrinth. There is the other, much better-known, more widely acclaimed, who used it first. But after all, he did not invent the labyrinth. It was there long before him. It has always been there. The other, blind visionary Argentine is tremendous in his scope, speaks to people of many countries. But Justino Larra del Molino speaks to me in a way that is so personal and so acute that his is the labyrinth I want most desperately to penetrate.

Patricia Hart is the author of two novels: Death in Deseret and Little Sins. She has also published fiction, poetry, and articles.
At the heart of the labyrinth . . . and the words have thrust me through the verb, over, under and around the prepositions, ordered me through the imperative forms. I had to know Spanish to find my way among those words of his which forked and bent and started falsely but ultimately led somewhere. It was a kind of quest.

I have walked as in the maze of a hedge-trimmed garden, walls of green obscuring things only a few feet away, looking for the right path, knowing by smell that somewhere, not far away, existed the vista of roses at the center. That is why I have come to sit on a chair that folds and see face to face Justino Larra del Molino, speaking his language, understanding his tongue, waiting for those words like piles of stones.

A door at the front of the room, behind the podium, opens to let out a circus little car swarm of clowns, Dr. Danforth, Dr. Ellens, Dr. Hubert, Dr. Sánchez, Dr. Piñieta. They are all animated, giving off a first-kissed glow of plastic fame. "As I told Justino Larra del Molino," every one of them will say to their classes. And there will be someone in the classes, someone like I was, who will not say it but who will think, "And what did he think of you, my friend? We see what you have thought of him, but what did he think of you?"

I do not want to touch Justino Larra del Molino. I do not even want to talk to him, though as a younger man I might have. I do not want to pose a question to him from here in the twelfth row, a question said so the great man will turn his whitened head and peer through his thick glasses and see for a few seconds of his life—me. No. I merely want to sit here with the accumulation of verbs and nouns and prepositions wrestling in my head, changing my mind set, and I want to hear him speak in his own voice and his own tongue and feel the focus and the favor of the words spoken so close to the source, so close to the heart.

There is a scattering of doctorates, and then he is before us, Renaissance Christ arms uplifted and the apostles seeming lesser, smaller, in the background. He walks to a chair on the dais on which the podium has been set, and sits down.

Dr. Sánchez stands up. Introduction is not the word, I think, as it implies the concrete presence of something introduced into something else, meaning into space, thoughts into mind. In that way it is not an introduction because it is less than air, nothing.

"And so I present to you the renowned poet, thinker and humanist, Justino Larra del Molino." And he sits down beaming as if the crashing wave of applause were for him.
Now it begins, that thing which I have been waiting for, now it will start. For seven years I have been getting ready, and now the moment of fruition comes on me and I hope that I have done enough.

To give, to speak, to do, I started with them and built slowly, carefully, phrase upon phrase, myth upon myth, as if filling up a great man-made lake of infinite twists and turns, of infinite depth. There were other pretexts, surely, as I performed the task, job market to be expanded, people to meet, places to go. But at the center of the forking paths was literature, and the rose on that bush in the innermost square was the poetry of Justino Larra del Molino.

"My dear American friends," he begins, and then Dr. Sánchez is on his feet again, standing beside the poet, basking in the nearness, leaning, reaching for the microphone, and he says, "Excuse me, but I see a number of you out there who I'm sure don't understand Spanish fully enough to get the complete meaning from this great man's words. So I think it would be a good idea if I translated so that all of us can understand entirely."

Don't let him ruin it.

"It is so good to be invited here," Justino Larra del Molino begins again.

"It is so good to be invited here," Dr. Sánchez repeats.

I am an accountant now, and I have done that for two years. But there are still people in the Language Department who remember me. I took a dual major, in accounting and Spanish, always knowing that accounting would provide me with my work, but hoping from the labyrinth of the rest to extract my meaning, and at the heart of the labyrinth, the rose on the bush of the innermost square is the poetry of Justino Larra del Molino.

"I would like to talk today a little bit about psychic activity," says Justino Larra del Molino.

"I would like to speak today somewhat about psychic activity," parrots Dr. Sánchez. Dual wordings, dual presentations, and yet two is somehow not twice what one was.

"The human psyche is the womb of all the sciences and the arts."

"The human psyche is the uterus where all the sciences and arts begin."

Worse and worse, but it is not Dr. Sánchez, necessarily, who is dividing the path. I struggle to keep up, catch a fleeting glimpse of the hem of a poem as Justino Larra del Molino disappears beyond a hedge in front of me.
"As artists we must never abandon our claim to investigate and establish causal relationships in complicated psychic events."

"As artists, we need never give up on our right to look into and establish causal relationships in complex psychic happenings."

Come back, I want to call through the ordered green inferno. Come back and let me try to follow you again. I have learned your language, studied every nuance. I could stand where Dr. Sánchez stands and say every word over, better, more exactly. And yet there are these endless twists and turns, and what is more, it is early morning and the fog will not burn off.

"It is important for us to know that in art, psychic events are derivable."

"It is vital for us to know that in art, psychic events can be derived."

Concentrate, I will myself, and I stumble through the shrubbery, brushing this shoulder, bruising that shin.

"We may make the distinction that Carl Jung suggests between the psychological and the visionary modes of artistic creation."

"We can make the same distinction as Carl Jung makes, between a psychological and a visionary method of artistic creation."

Faster, I tell myself, but there is no faster in a place I may be running as fast as I can toward a sound, a movement, and find my senses have confounded me and I have gone in precisely the wrong direction.

"The latter, in this view of the presentation of psychic events, reverses all the conditions of the first."

"The second, in this way of seeing the presentation of psychic happenings, turns around all the conditions of the first."

If there are any sounds now, they are muffled, far away. There is no way of knowing in which direction the center lies, even if I could find my way toward it through the maze.

"And so I will continue with my discussion of the presentation of the psychic disposition of the artist as we see it through contrasting the psychological and the visual modes, as they apply in a specific case."

"And so I will go on with my discussion of the presentation of the psychic personalities of artists as we see them through contrasting the psychological with the visionary methods, as they may pertain in a given case."

A whole sun of a day has passed above my head and sunk, pulling the last of illumination down with it. I find myself, at last, alone in the dark.
"... and so we have made explicit all the implications of a psyche turning in on itself and dividing into mirror image modes of creation where psychic happenings reverse the conditions of the visionary mode, and vice versa."

"... therefore, we have made clear all the implications of a psyche looking inward, dividing into negative-image methods of creation where psychic happenings invert the conditions of the visionary method, and vice versa."

I look at my hands folded in my lap. The great man has finished speaking. Around me, a surge of people push forward to him, shaking his hand, jostling, putting a pen out for him to sign a copy of The Book of Mortal Sin, The Sykes Report, or his latest book of poetry, Silver Is Like a Smell. I cannot bear the room.

Around the edge of the crowd I make my way, eyes on the one door at the front of the room, past the assembled crowd. I will have to skirt the central body to get out. Miraculously, no one calls to me, none of my old teachers remembers my flame. I suspect they are busy warming their own hands. I am nearly to the door. But coming from the opposite direction, my height almost exactly and as dark as I am fair, is another young man of about my age.

"¡Chino!" he calls to the man at the center of attention. Several people turn and look with annoyance over their shoulders. Who is this young man to say "¡Chino!" with that kind of insouciance to Justino Larra del Molino?

"Chino," he calls again, "¿Cuándo vienes? ¿Cuándo vamos a salir de aquí?"

The poet excuses himself, all white hair and dignity, and moves in the direction of the call. I hurry to the corridor, but the young man goes out the door behind me, barely glancing over his shoulder.

"¡Tomás!" the voice of the poet reverberates down the hall as he addresses the young man like me. "¡Tomás! What is this petulance?"

"Oye, Chino," the answer, "all this chatter! So you write! Good! So why so much talk about it! Spare us and yourself and just do it!"

The poet's response was lower, and, of course, I was walking away from it.

"I put on the show," perhaps he said, "and that is why they bring me here, as well as you. They pay for it and they get it." But of course that may not be what he said at all. The great man opened his mouth, and who am I, down in my garden of forking paths, to say I understood a single word?

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War Veteran at a Clinic

Clinton F. Larson

Like sponge against flaps where legs once were,
Steeping the augury or lure of notoriety,
Cordite pluming your very mind with a dream
Of mortal injury, you show the literal seam
Of groin ripped and gaping. Will your eyes
Away, to other scenes, to niceties of flies
Swatted and decked amid conveniences of home,
Where eyes do not blur as they see the comb
Of order align the news of losses in the field:
Hence, statistics; hence, a gathering to shield
Integrity. Soldier, writhe within your stain
That you mistakenly aspired to enter fury’s lists.
Our decorum should have kept you an anchorite
Defensively at home, not for show, as a contrite
Civic-minded being, like anyone. Go home, rump
Of what you were, and trundle there, or stump
For a better cause than war, our privy peace,
Unseemly and unpopular as you are. Then lease
An electric chair to wheel among the caring
Folk that house such residue as you, who stare
Into voids of inattention, saluting and comparing
Ways admissible to higher echelons where wills
Are made and noted for excision. Pale mills
Of minds turn from vanes that, like limbs blown
In winds of dusk, shudder and creak, somewhat known,
As if signalling dementedly for a lesser fame.

Clinton F. Larson, a professor in the English Department, is poet in residence at Brigham Young University.
Book Reviews


Reviewed by Karen Lynn, professor of English, and director of the Honors Program, Brigham Young University.

"'Trivia is trivia and must remain so in a world of sorrow'" (p. 80) Amy Gordon's father-in-law assures her. Yet a principal message of *Bread and Milk*, a collection of eight short stories, is that much of the joy of life is bound up with these very trivia.

Amy Gordon, the Mormon pioneer woman whose life the stories trace, lived in a time when happiness lay in contentment, not excitement. The commonplace happenings in the stories—daily chores, small moments of forgiveness, a May Festival—are the secure, precious givens of existence that enable Amy and her family to accept life, even in its tragic moments, with equanimity and thankfulness. A story might focus on nothing more earthshaking than the teenage Amy's secret wish to be chosen May Queen, or her reluctance several years later, as the young wife of Israel Gordon, to announce her first pregnancy. When major events do occur, they appear, as they do in life, against the backdrop of the everyday: the death of Amy's little sister coincides with a magician's visit to the town, and Amy's own death is set alongside her preoccupation with sorting and recording her memories.

The historical Amy Gordon was the grandmother of Eileen Kump. The author states in the Prologue that the stories "must be called fiction, I suppose, because so much of them is made up. . . . That doesn't mean the stories aren't true. They are. They could have happened as well as what happened" (p. x). And many of the details certainly carry a quirky, whimsical, real-life conviction: Israel's sincere but self-conscious love letter to his future wife, the mysterious and pathetic love song about "waiting in the rain" that no one but Amy knows, the May Day celebration that never questions the appropriateness of, or asks the reason for, the tradition that requires the Queen and her attendants to reenact every year the story of
Jephthah's daughter and her companions bewailing their virginity upon the mountains. Either Eileen Kump was fortunate in being able to elicit such details from her remarkable grandmother, or else it is Eileen Kump's imagination that is remarkable.

The author chooses not to rely heavily on plot. Most of her stories show a character at a moment of reconciliation or decision, and the interest lies in that character's interior monologue. "The Willows," the first story, is one of the strongest. Eight-year-old Amy must enter the world of adult deception and ambivalence, reconciling her belief that lying and hating are sins with the need to protect her polygamous family (her mother is hiding with other polygamous wives in a willow grove) from the federal officers, the "gentiles," who have become such monsters in her mind. "China Doll" is the admirably understated story of the death of Amy's little sister. It is principally Amy's mother's story; several of the stories focus only partially on Amy. In "Jephthah's Daughter," the adolescent Amy doubts she will ever satisfy the exacting standards of the bishop's May Day committee, since "breadmaking was a weakness in-born" (p. 30) and the committee seeks domestic skills as well as beauty. "Regarding Courtship" views Amy through the eyes of her future husband. "Bread and Milk" details the self-consciousness of Amy as Israel's newly pregnant wife. It is her assignment to lead the singing in church. "How can I stand up there with my arms raised, my middle big?" she asks her mother. "I will have to stand up there and be weighed like a sack of grist" (p. 59).

"Four and Twenty Blackbirds" is the poignant account of Amy and Israel at cross-purposes over the disciplining and rearing of their son Laun. Israel doubts his adequacy as a father at the same time that he doubts the strength of his young son. "He was not this boy. Had his own ma . . . wept over him because he was so pale? Had he cried? . . . 'Raise up, Laun. Come on now, Laun, raise up!' The boy did it, his eyes on Israel all the while. They were not the eyes of a friend" (p. 69). In "Sayso or Sense," Amy's husband and father-in-law build her a new house. She had spent years dreaming of how each detail of the house would be. As her reasonable suggestions are disregarded one by one, she halfway suspects that in a pre-earth life all priesthood holders were given the choice between sayso and sense.

and chose the former. "God Willing" is the story of the death of the widowed Amy and, in retrospect, the death and funeral of Israel twenty years earlier.

Although she chooses a Mormon setting for her stories, Eileen Kump is too sophisticated a writer to rely on oversimple, pseudo-spiritual solutions to her characters' dilemmas. The readers may sometimes feel, however, that the implications of each tension are not really followed through: we are convinced of Amy's anxieties over the disclosure of her pregnancy, but rather suddenly she decides not to worry about it any more; and when her careful and exact vision of her new house is shattered, she reconciles herself to her fate in a way that seems almost facile. Since Eileen Kump's imagination, taste, and craftsmanship are so evident—in this reviewer's opinion, no finer short fiction has ever been written by a Mormon author—it is tempting to wish for a sustained treatment of a really complex set of problems, perhaps in novel form. Most of the stories in Bread and Milk take up a single, already-existing conflict and then allow it to melt into resolution under the warmth of good will, faith, and the passing of time. How wonderful it would be to see what Eileen Kump could do if she decided to present the growth of an interwoven set of difficult conflicts and then see them through to a working-out. All the prerequisites for accomplishing such a task seem to be there in abundance.


Reviewed by Donald Q. Cannon, professor of Church history and doctrine, Brigham Young University.

Emma Smith, wife of the Prophet Joseph, has long attracted the interest of Latter-day Saints. For more than a century after the death of Joseph Smith, Mormons looked upon Emma with disfavor. Then, in recent years, her reputation has been restored. Indeed, several LDS authors have suggested that Emma deserves our sympathy and understanding. Foremost among those who have administered historical artificial respiration to her character is Erwin Wirkus. In his book, Judge Me Dear Reader (Orem, Utah: Randall Publishers, 1978), Wirkus pleads with his readers to understand Emma, to realize
how truly difficult her life was, and to forgive her for her shortcomings. That this favorable view of Emma has gained widespread acceptance is attested to by the approval of this point of view by Church Correlation. Evidence of that sanction is the lesson on Emma Smith and section twenty-five of the Doctrine and Covenants in the Gospel Doctrine Sunday School manual for 1978–79.

Because Emma has come full circle from disfavor to favor, it would seem that the time is right for a balanced view, even for a definitive biography of the “real” Emma Smith. But alas, Emma by Keith and Ann Terry is not that book. The authors of Emma candidly confess that “this book is not and does not pretend to be a definitive biography of Emma Smith” (p. xx). It is neither definitive nor “historically accurate biography,” as claimed on the dust jacket. Indeed, what research was invested in this work is totally inadequate. A careful reading of Emma reveals the authors’ failure to use the best and most authoritative sources, faulty organization, poor writing style, exaggerations, and confusion of places, events, and people.

To become aware of some of the problems inherent in this biography, consider the following. In many instances the authors fail to make use of the best source material on Emma Smith, in particular, and Church history, in general. While discussing the Emma–Brigham controversy and Major Lewis C. Bidamon (Emma’s second husband), they fail to incorporate, or even call attention to, the insightful and precise work done by Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery. This team of LDS authors has been working for several years preparing a major biography of Emma Smith, which is to be published by a national publisher during 1982. Along the way these two fine scholars have given numerous lectures and have published several articles which should be included in any biography of Emma.¹ In their discussion of the Kirtland Safety Society, the authors fail to mention or use the study by Marvin C. Hill, C. Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, “The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics,” which appeared in BYU Studies 17 (Summer 1977): 391–475, and as a separate publication. That fuller study rejects the notion that the bank failed because of general economic conditions and Joseph Smith’s inexperience in financial matters, arguing that the Society failed because it was unable

to get a corporate charter from the state of Ohio. Likewise, the Terrys' discussion of the New Translation makes no mention of the pioneering work of Robert J. Matthews, who has written several fine articles and an excellent book on that subject. For example, Emma's critical role in preserving the manuscripts prior to their publication in 1867 is ignored in the Terrys' work. Richard L. Anderson has spoken widely on the Joseph–Emma letters, the subject of a forthcoming book. Unfortunately, the Terrys do not include in their study his insights regarding Emma. These omissions are major oversights which constitute serious errors.

Emma also contains many other historical inaccuracies. The number of casualties at Haun's Mill was seventeen, not forty (p. 39). The letter which Joseph wrote to Emma while in Liberty Jail is not at Chicago, but at Yale (p. 48). Dimick Huntington was not Demick (p. 98). Three of the four articles credited to James L. Kimball, Jr., were in fact written by Stanley B. Kimball, who is not even listed (p. 158).

Concerning the matter of faulty organization, the most obvious problem is the lack of chapter titles and the exclusion of a table of contents. Without these guides the reader is left to wander aimlessly through the book, not knowing for certain what is next. A related problem is footnoting. The notes are listed at the back of the book, but they refer not to specific quotations but are simply listed page by page. Consequently, the reader is never sure what specific source relates to what specific quotation or passage in the text. Also, the book reads more like an outline than a full story. It is filled with one-sentence paragraphs, and often the subject changes so abruptly that one can hardly catch one's breath while reading. In a word, the story is not complete.

In addition, the writers employ careless exaggerations and overstatements. While this practice seems common in popular Mormon writing, it distorts the truth and is inappropriate in historical work. For example, when the authors compare Governor Boggs with Hitler, the statements attract attention and reinforce current Mormon attitudes, but they considerably overstate the matter.

In their handling of some topics, Keith and Ann Terry tend to confuse people, places, and events. The role of Emma Smith vis-a-vis the role of W. W. Phelps in the creation of the first Church hymn book is unclear. The Masonic Hall on Main Street and the Masonic lodge room in the Red Brick Store on Water Street in Nauvoo are often referred to as if they were the same place. Porter Rockwell's conversations with Joseph Smith III are misplaced in point of time.
Other examples could be cited, but those mentioned should suffice to demonstrate that *Emma* has serious deficiencies. The book is, however, not without redeeming value. For example, the authors often present controversial material without being defensive or apologetic. In discussing Joseph Smith's use of a peepstone and his treasure-hunting activities, they forthrightly present the truth. Their material on plural marriage (chaps. 12 and 13) is relatively up-to-date and honestly presented. In some cases, they do tell us something very meaningful about Emma. Her relationship with Joseph, the family's lack of roots and a home of their own, and her life with her second husband are effectively and sympathetically presented.

But these strengths are outweighed by the major flaws. What concerns the serious student of Mormon history is that the Emma Smith portrayed in this work is not the real Emma Smith. Emma was not the romanticized, dramatized figure presented in the pages of this biography. To understand the real Emma, or to find the truth about Emma, much more is required. In short, we need a definitive, accurate, honest biography of Joseph Smith's wife.
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