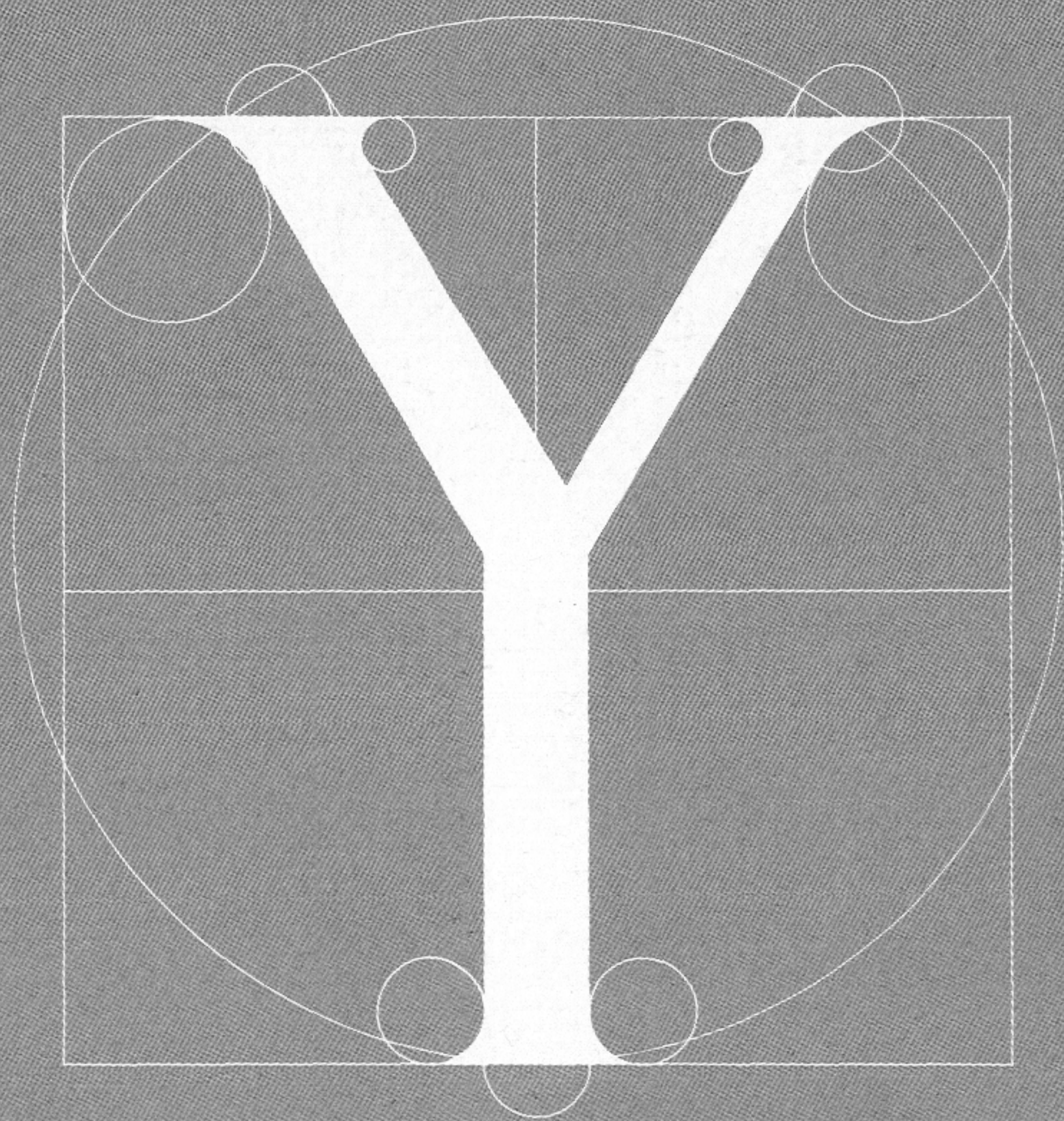


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CONTENTS

Young Heber J. Grant's Years of Passage RONALD W. WALKER	131
Benjamin, a poem JOHN STERLING HARRIS	150
The Treaty / Covenant Pattern in King Benjamin's Address (Mosiah 1-6) STEPHEN D. RICKS	151
The Magic and Mundanity: Eileen Kump's <i>Bread and Milk and Other Stories</i> GLORIA L. CRONIN	163
Reflections from the Ganges THOMAS F. ROGERS	173
Elizabeth to Zacharias, a poem CARA BULLINGER	189
Resurrection Morning, a poem CARA BULLINGER	190
Making a Mormon of Milton JOHN S. TANNER	191
Moses of Michelangelo, a poem ELAINE ELLSWORTH NAYLOR	207
Utah Valley Metaphors, a poem LORETTA M. SHARP	208
Mormon Bibliography 1983 SCOTT H. DUVALL and BARBARA S. BALLANTYNE	209
"Thou Hast Made My Mountain to Stand Strong," a poem SALLY T. TAYLOR	236

Book Reviews

DAVID J. WHITTAKER

Richard Lloyd Anderson <i>Understanding Paul</i> KENT P. JACKSON	239
Milton V. Backman <i>Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration</i> LARRY C. PORTER	242
Marilyn Brown <i>Goodbye, Hello</i> RICHARD H. CRACROFT	243
Orson Scott Card, <i>Woman of Destiny</i> Donald R. Marshall, <i>Zinnie Stokes, Zinnie Stokes</i> Douglas H. Thayer, <i>Summer Fire</i> EDWARD A. GEARY	246
Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, David F. Wells, and John D. Woodbridge, eds. <i>Eerdmans' Handbook to Christianity in America</i> MILTON V. BACKMAN	252

EDITORIAL INTERNS

VIRGINIA E. BAKER
M. SHAYNE BELL
CARA BULLINGER
CHRIS DAHLIN
LAURA HAMBLIN DONNER
JONATHAN D. LANGFORD
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Young Heber J. Grant's Years of Passage

Ronald W. Walker

*O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth:
and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.
(Psalm 72:17)*

As Heber J. Grant came of age, Mormonism was as much a part of the Utah landscape as the Territory's dusty valleys and vaulting mountain walls. Young Heber met religion everywhere—in his Salt Lake City home and neighborhood, at the Tabernacle on Temple Square, in the offices of Church and civic leaders where he sometimes ventured, and certainly in his native Thirteenth Ward, one of the most innovative and organizationally developed Latter-day Saint congregations of the time. Slowly young Heber internalized his religious culture, but not before encountering the usual perils of adolescence and “coming of age.” The process tells a great deal about Heber himself, but also about the beliefs, rituals, and worship patterns of early Utah Mormonism.

Heber J. Grant was a second-generation Mormon, born 22 November 1856 at Jedediah Grant's imposing Main Street home. His father, Brigham's counselor and Salt Lake mayor, died nine days later. In Jedediah's stead, the boy was christened by Thirteenth Ward Bishop Edwin D. Woolley, who found the spirit of the occasion to be unusual. “I was only an instrument in the hands of his dead father . . . in blessing him,” the bishop later remarked. That boy “is entitled [someday] to be one of the Apostles, and I know it.”¹

There were other harbingers of the child's future. Once Rachel, his mother, took the boy to a formal dinner at the Heber C. Kimballs'.

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¹Preston W. Parkinson, comp., *The Utah Woolley Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1967), 126; see also Heber J. Grant (hereafter cited as Grant) Typed Diary, 22 September 1924 and 2 February 1938, Grant Papers, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). The christening is recorded in the Thirteenth Ward Papers, LDS Church Archives. When citing material in the Grant collection, I have used box and folder numbers only when source identification cannot be established through the use of the collection's register.

After the adults had finished dining, the children were invited to eat what remained. Excited, little Heber was thoroughly enjoying himself when Brother Kimball suddenly lifted him atop a table and began prophesying about his future. The terrified child especially remembered the foreboding, coal black eyes of President Young's first counselor.² Moreover, there was the portentous Relief Society gathering held at William C. Staines's home, where Eliza R. Snow and Zina D. Young spoke and interpreted in the "unknown" tongue. Blessing each of the women present, they eventually turned to Rachel. Heber, who was playing on the floor, recalled hearing something about his becoming "a great big man." His mother's understanding, however, was more precise. "Behave yourself," Rachel knowingly told him as he grew to maturity, "and you will some day be one of the apostles in the Church."³

The Thirteenth Ward, the Grants' home congregation, made these auspicious predictions more likely. One of the largest and most culturally diverse wards in the Territory, the Thirteenth Ward also boasted major human and economic resources. Among its members were some of the most prominent men in the Territory, including General Authorities, prominent merchants, and land investors. These in turn brought a high level of prosperity. "The 13th Ward," observed one contemporary, "was richer than all the Saints at Kirtland when the Temple was built." Indeed, it may have enjoyed the highest income level in the Church during the years when Heber J. Grant was growing up.⁴

Such a ward was an ideal setting for the beginning of the LDS Sunday School movement. While churchmen had earlier organized a few scattered and short-lived Sabbath schools, the Thirteenth Ward's was the first established after the city's bishops agreed, in a major policy decision, to counter the post-Civil War denominational academies with Mormon Sabbath schools.⁵ A typical Sunday might find the children meeting at the Thirteenth Ward Assembly Rooms, where they listened to short talks, sang, and recited inspirational prose and poetry. Leaders might also "catechize" the youth with questions drawn from the Bible, Book of Mormon, or LDS church history, liberally awarding prizes for both correct answers and proper conduct.

²Grant to Helen Mar Monson, 2 November 1942, Grant Letterbook 81:601, Grant Papers.

³Grant, Conference Report, April 1927, 17–18.

⁴Zerubbabel Snow, General Minutes of the Thirteenth Ward, 1854–68, 12 May 1863, Thirteenth Ward Papers; Leonard J. Arrington, *From Quaker to Latter-day Saint: Bishop Edwin D. Woolley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 325.

⁵General Minutes of the Thirteenth Ward, 30 March 1867, Thirteenth Ward Papers.



Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Department

Rachel Grant and Her Son, Heber

Heber took advantage of the ward's new school. In fact, the ambitious and assertive boy was often at front stage. Excelling at memorization, he quickly mastered the Mormon "Articles of Faith"; the first five pages of John Jaques's *Catechism*; and Joseph Smith's health revelation, The Word of Wisdom, a frequent Sunday School recitation. "You were our prize Sunday School boy," remembered a classmate. "Bros. Musser and Mabin [John Maiben] predicted great things for you."⁶ On one occasion, he pitted his declamatory skills against Ort [Orson F.] Whitney, whose rendition of "Shamus O'Brien" proved superior to Heber's "The Martyrdom of the Prophet and Patriarch." But "Heber had another card up his sleeve," Orson Whitney recalled many years later. "He answered more questions from the *Catechism* than any other student in school, and won a prize equal to mine, which was the *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*."⁷

Yet Heber's confident facade concealed a desperate shyness. When first asked to pray publicly, he trembled "like a leaf" and feared imminent collapse.⁸ President Young's 1868 reconnoiter at the school had similar results. Unnerved, Heber stumbled badly in his recital of the Word of Wisdom, causing his classmates great merriment. Thoroughly confused, Heber had to begin his recitation anew. President Young later salved the incident by highly complimenting him. "I was my father's own son by not being discouraged [and quitting]," Heber remembered Brigham telling him, "but demonstrated a true spirit of determination to accomplish the task given me." Heber never forgot his embarrassment nor President Young's words of praise.⁹

As in Victorian England, Mormons used their Sabbath schools for both moral and social uplift. Children were taught scripture study, Sabbath observance, honesty, family solidarity, inviolability of the Word of Wisdom, and, of course, general propriety. At times the latter instruction was specific. Boys were told to stop stealing peaches from neighborhood gardens and warned of "the evil consequences of such evil conduct." Moreover, they should quit "throwing mud from the end of a stick which disfigured buildings that had cost a great deal."¹⁰

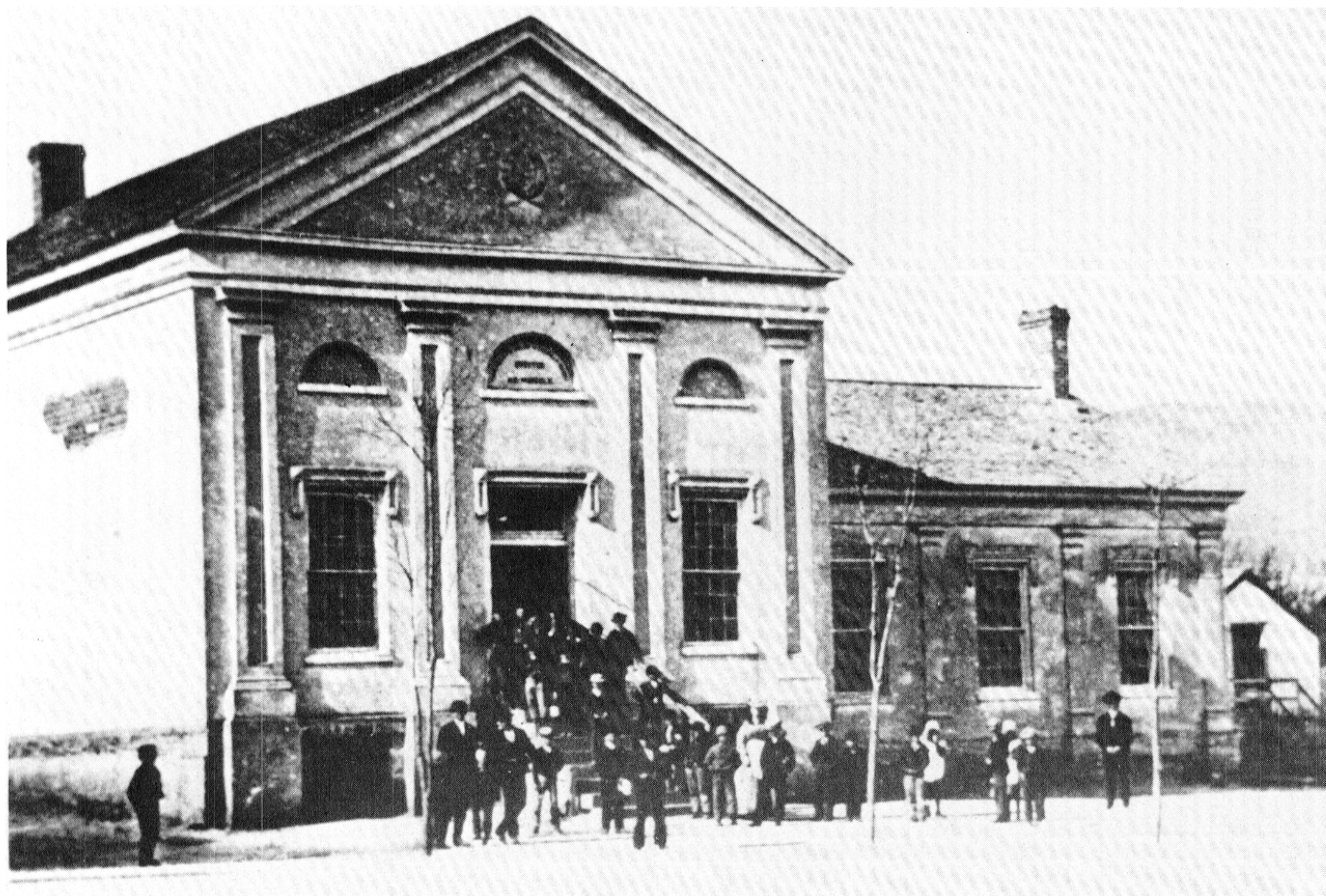
⁶Belle Whitney Sears to Grant, 20 February 1919, General Correspondence (hereafter cited as Gen. Corr.), Grant Papers. For Articles of Faith and Jaques's *Catechism* respectively, see Grant, "Remarks at the Dedicatory Service of the Pocatello Institute," p. 1, 17 October 1929, draft in box 156, fd. 5, Grant Papers; and Grant to Wilford Owen Woodruff, 19 September 1922, Grant Letterbook 59:753, Grant Papers.

⁷Orson F. Whitney, Minutes of Birthday Celebration, p. 6, nd, box 177, fd. 8, Grant Papers.

⁸Grant to Thomas G. Judd, 10 May 1926, Gen. Corr., Grant Papers.

⁹Grant, undated and loose diary sheet, box 177, fd. 5, Grant Papers.

¹⁰Sunday School Minutes, 23 August 1868, Thirteenth Ward Papers. For the social ramifications of Victorian reform, see George Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), 147–205.



Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Department

Thirteenth Ward Meetinghouse, circa 1870

Perhaps such a boyish misdeed almost drove Heber from the school. Angered by a reproof, the youth stormed from the Assembly Rooms, exclaiming that the school could go “plumb to hell.” “Being raised as an only child,” he later explained, “I was . . . rather . . . hot-headed . . . and I quit going.” After many entreaties to return, including those of George Goddard, his neighbor and a member of the school’s superintendency, Heber finally rejoined his classmates. Brother Goddard “kept me from going where I said the Sunday School could go,” Heber acknowledged.¹¹

Heber generally enjoyed the school and credited it as having a major shaping influence on his character. Clearly its impact went beyond rote learning and indoctrination. Goddard, Maiben, and school librarian F. A. Mitchell, who was always on hand to lend “good books to read,” were in fact role models that the fatherless boy desperately needed.¹² “Your integrity and devotion . . . has been an inspiration to me,” Heber wrote in mid-life to Maiben. “I look back with pleasure to the happy associations that I have had with you and Brother Goddard, Bishop Woolley and many other faithful Saints when I was a young man.”¹³

Heber’s youthful Thirteenth Ward experiences involved more than Sunday School exercises. While the pioneers’ first meetings were centered on Temple Square, almost from its establishment the Thirteenth Ward held a plethora of meetings. These included youth meetings, women’s meetings, men’s meetings, Quaker-type meetings that allowed broad-based participation, and preaching meetings that were held during the winter season as often as three times a week. Unlike most pioneer Mormons, who were chronically lax in their meeting attendance, Heber was often seated in a Thirteenth Ward pew. Indeed some of his fondest memories centered on “going to meeting.” There were Brother Blythe’s interminable half-hour prayers and George Goddard’s sweetly and often sung rendition of “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?”¹⁴ And then there was Bishop Edwin D. Woolley. Charitable, well-meaning, and firmly dedicated to his religion, Bishop Woolley could also be summary during a preaching meeting.

¹¹Grant to A. G. Gowans, 10 July 1919, Grant Letterbook 54:826; and Grant to Hyrum H. Goddard, 8 December 1937, Grant Letterbook 75:930, Grant Papers.

¹²Grant, Blessing of F. A. Mitchell, 15 September 1919, Grant Letterbook 55:70, Grant Papers.

¹³Grant to John Maiben, 19 July 1901, Grant Letterbook 31:98 (inserted between pp. 680–81). See also Grant, “Remarks at the Funeral Services of Franklin B. Platt,” 18 March 1928, Grant Letterbook, p. 332, in box 192, fd. 8, Grant Papers.

¹⁴W. S. Naylor to Grant, 22 November 1940, Ephemera Material (Birthday Tributes), Grant Papers; Emily Wells Grant to Grant, 11 August 1890, Family Correspondence, Grant Papers.

During one worship service, he “spoke warmly” of those who accused him of failing to act “the part of a Father” and urged his critics to air their feelings. When William Capener did so, Bishop Woolley peremptorily cut him off from the Church. Members debated the action the following week, with half the congregation refusing to sustain the excommunication. Bishop Woolley, however, refused to budge. Railing “about the whoredom and the wickedness” of the ward, the bishop vowed “by the help of the Lord and the brethern [*sic*]” to cleanse it.¹⁵

Heber's memory of Bishop Woolley focused on more prosaic things—like the bishop's heavy emphasis on tithe paying or his control of speakers and meetings. Bishop Woolley didn't like meetings to last longer than two hours and invariably warned his preachers to limit their sermons to a single hour. Heber normally positioned himself in the northeast corner of the Assembly Rooms where, after the obligatory hour, he would periodically snap his watch crystal as a reminder of the hour's lateness. The act usually was unnecessary. From his vantage point, Heber could witness the bishop's surreptitious hand reach out and tug at a long-winded preacher's coattails. But Woolley's behavior was not automatic. A spellbinding speaker like John Morgan, fresh from his Southern States mission, received *carte blanche*. “Bishop Woolley knows whose coat to pull,” the boy thoughtfully observed.¹⁶

There were other speakers Heber remembered being drawn to. Young John Henry Smith, only eight years Grant's senior, seemed always to carry “the inspiration of the Lord.” Joseph F. Smith, nephew of the founding prophet and youthful counselor to President Young, also spoke impressively. Even “as a little child . . . before I could thoroughly comprehend the teaching of the authorities of the Church,” Heber recalled, President Smith's Thirteenth Ward preaching would “thrill my very being.”¹⁷

No speaker captivated him like President Young. Somewhat over five feet eight inches tall (above average for the time), Brigham Young carried himself with conscious presence. Observers who watched his delivery emphasized his lips, which “came together like the jaws of a bear trap” and conveyed “indomitable pluck.” While young Heber

¹⁵General Minutes, 21 and 25 December 1856, Thirteenth Ward Papers. According to Bishop Woolley, Capener had previously agreed that their long-standing dispute would be settled privately. The disgruntled communicant, however, had refused to come forth.

¹⁶Grant to Iva Hamblin, 23 May 1935, Grant Letterbook 72:644, Grant Papers. For Woolley's emphasis on tithe paying, see J. H. Midgley to Grant, 16 May 1941, Gen. Corr., Grant Papers.

¹⁷Grant, “Remarks at the YMMIA Board Meeting,” 29 January 1919, box 157, fd. 3, Grant Papers.

probably failed to detect them, Vermont provincialisms such as *leetle*, *beyend*, *disremember*, *ain't you*, and *they was* gave color to his remarks and punctuated his easy, conversational style.¹⁸ Mormons and gentiles alike generally agreed on Brigham's pulpit appeal.¹⁹

Heber himself was enthralled by Young's "wonderful capacity to hold his audience" and his ability to inspire his listeners about "the principles of life and salvation."²⁰ Whether behind a Thirteenth Ward pulpit or more frequently occupying the rostrum at Temple Square where Heber often attended, President Young stated and restated his themes: Build Zion . . . Sacrifice time, talent and means for the community . . . Bear each other's burdens . . . Become the Lord's steward . . . Be self-sufficient . . . Avoid Babylon . . . Work hard . . . Perform your duty . . . Obey. So indelibly were they impressed on Heber's young mind that Young's themes became his own lifelong preaching texts.

Heber learned other lessons by attending the Thirteenth Ward's preaching meetings. One elder never used a simple word when several larger ones might do. On one occasion after delivering a fulsome sermon, he was followed to the speaker's stand by the ungrammatical Millen Atwood. During the first sermon, Heber, who was studying English at the time, penciled on his removable cuff a long list of unfamiliar words that required study. Eyeing Atwood, he proposed to continue his self-improvement exercise by listing a few solecisms. "I did not write anything more after that first sentence—not a word," Heber vividly remembered sixty-five years later. "When Millen Atwood stopped preaching, tears were rolling down my cheeks. . . . [Atwood's] testimony made the first profound impression that was ever made upon my heart and soul of the divine mission of the Prophet [Joseph Smith]."²¹

Heber's lay priesthood activity also helped mold him. Unlike Mormon young men of today, he apparently was never asked to break

¹⁸For these and other contemporary descriptions of Brigham Young's speaking, see sketch by S. A. Kenner in *History of the Bench and Bar of Utah*, ed. and comp. C. C. Goodwin (Salt Lake City: Interstate Press Association, 1913), 12; *Chicago Times*, report filed 22 February 1871, in Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1936), 469; *New York Herald*, 12 August 1868; and "A 'Forty-Niner' Describes Brigham Young," in LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, *Journals of Forty-Niners: Salt Lake to Los Angeles*, vol. 2 of *Far West and the Rockies* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur R. Clark, 1954), 276 n.

¹⁹Ronald W. Walker, "Raining Pitchforks: Brigham Young as Preacher," *Sunstone* 8 (May-June 1983): 4-9.

²⁰Grant to Susa Young Gates, 16 March 1927, Grant Letterbook 65:167, Grant Papers.

²¹Grant, "The Spirit and the Letter," *Improvement Era* 42 (April 1939), 201. See also Grant, Conference Report, April 1901, 64; and Grant, *Reminiscences of President Heber J. Grant*, p. 25, nd, box 145, fd. 4, Grant Papers. Grant remembered the first speaker using such phrases as "We have indisputable and uncontrovertable evidences of the divine benignity."

and bless the sacramental bread.²² He did, however, serve as one of the ward's block teachers, whom Bishop Woolley admitted were not always the "best talents" or the "best men." They were, in Woolley's mind, simply the best that would "work with him."²³ This meant occasionally asking a youth like Heber to labor with an experienced companion like Hamilton G. Park. Heber's teaching activity was of more than passing importance. Park's faith was deep and visionary—he once announced that he had "seen the Savior and heard him speak."²⁴ As the man and boy walked around the block occupied by the imposing Salt Lake Theatre, Brother Park plied his impressionable companion with faith-promoting stories, many involving his personal experiences as a missionary to Scotland. Such moments convinced Heber that Hamilton Park was "one of the best spirited men in the Church & one that would sacrifice Everything for his religion."²⁵ At a time when few teenagers served as block teachers, Heber performed with uncommon diligence. In addition to his monthly teaching chores, he regularly attended the twice monthly bishops' report sessions at the Council House.²⁶ Every bishop, bishopric counselor, and teacher in the city was invited to these sessions, but leaders complained of "thin" and "woefully neglected" attendance. Typical meetings might find half of the city's bishops and only a handful of teachers present—Heber of course being one of them.²⁷

Commensurate with this activity, young Heber was ordained a seventy, pioneer Utah's most common lay priesthood office. At that time, Heber was very much a sapling among mature men.²⁸ Most Thirteenth Ward priesthood bearers were in their middle or late thirties. Even the few who held the "Lesser" or Aaronic Priesthood

²²Grant Typed Diary, 7 July 1901.

²³Minutes of the Bishops' Meetings, 29 April 1869 and 1 September 1870, Presiding Bishopric Papers, LDS Church Archives.

²⁴Anthon H. Lund Journal, 7 January 1900, LDS Church Archives.

²⁵Grant Manuscript Diary, 29 May 1881; Grant to the Family of Hamilton G. Park, 3 May 1912, Grant Letterbook 45:343–44; and undated draft manuscript, p. 4, box 177, fd. 5, Grant Papers.

²⁶Grant, "Sermon Delivered by President Heber J. Grant, 12 June 1921," draft in Gen. Corr., box 53, fd. 7, Grant Papers; and Grant, "Funeral Services for Edward W. Hunter," 1 December 1931, Grant Letterbook, p. 634, box 192, fd. 8, Grant Papers.

²⁷Minutes of the Bishops' Meetings, especially 11 November 1858, 27 September 1860, 19 November 1863, and 7 July 1870, Presiding Bishopric Papers.

²⁸A survey of ward priesthood officers in 1856, the last comprehensive Thirteenth Ward census, reveals that of the 130 boys and men over twelve years of age, fourteen held the Aaronic Priesthood (five deacons, three teachers, and six priests) and sixty-seven held the Melchizedek Priesthood (eleven elders, forty-five seventies, and eleven high priests). Forty-nine were unordained. The average age for deacons, teachers, and priests was twenty, thirty-five, and twenty respectively. For elders, seventies, and high priests the average age was twenty-five, thirty-four, and sixty-eight. Only three minors were ordained to either of the priesthoods (Ordinance Records, 1856, Thirteenth Ward Papers). The paucity of Aaronic Priesthood bearers continued at least until the late 1870s when there were only 170 in the entire city—or about nine per ward (see Minutes of the Bishops' Meetings, 31 August 1877, Presiding Bishopric Papers).

were normally adults. In contrast, Heber was ordained and assigned to the Thirtieth Quorum of Seventy when he was about fifteen years old.²⁹

Lessons, meetings, and priesthood duties were not the only shaping forces in the young boy's life. Books also influenced him. He found Parley P. Pratt's *Autobiography* to be "intensely interesting" and was "thrilled" by Pratt's *Key to Theology*. The Thirteenth Ward library furnished Dr. Paley's two works, *Evidences of Christianity* and *Natural Theology*, and Heber accounted Nelson's work, *Infidelity*, as having made a "profound impression" on him. However, none of these affected him as much as Samuel Smiles's chapbooks, *Character*, *Thrift*, and *Self-Help*, which in the Victorian style of the time idealized the self-made man. Equally important were his *Wilson* and *National* school readers. Their firm biblical values made such a powerful impact on the boy that he quoted from these elementary readers for the rest of his life.³⁰

Then there was the Book of Mormon, which Anthony C. Ivins, Heber's uncle, first persuaded him to read. Pitting the fourteen-year-old Heber against his own son, Anthony Ivins promised the first boy to finish the book a pair of buckskin gloves, a wild frontier extravagance. After the first day, Heber's hopes were virtually dashed. Young Ivins had stayed up most of the night and read 150 pages, while Heber, who hoped to read the scripture thoughtfully, had amassed only twenty-five pages. The incident, however, had a "Tortoise and the Hare" ending. "When I finished the book," Heber remembered, "I not only got a testimony [of it] but . . . the gloves as well." After his fast start, Heber's cousin never read another page.³¹

Young Heber, however, did not escape adolescence without its usual trials. By his late teens, he obviously prized his independence—even when dealing with the men whom he admired most. For example when Bishop Woolley asked him to manage a ward social—a dance—Heber hesitated.

²⁹Grant to Edward H. Anderson, 5 June 1900, Grant Letterbook 30:619; and Grant Typed Diary, 16 December 1930, Grant Papers. Toward the end of Grant's life, several sources indicate that he had been earlier ordained an elder. Heber J. Grant himself never mentioned such an ordination, nor is it confirmed by ward records.

³⁰Pratt: Grant Typed Diary, 22 November 1930, Grant Papers, and First Presidency Letterbook 63:517, LDS First Presidency Papers, LDS Church Archives. Paley: Grant, "Draft of Remarks at Tabernacle," 7 July 1895 and 26 January 1896, Grant Letterbooks 21:38 and 33:28, Grant Papers. Nelson: Grant, Draft of B.Y.U. Centennial Address, 16 October 1925, Grant Letterbook 63:548, Grant Papers. Smiles: Grant to Edward Anderson, 5 and 6 June 1900, Grant Letterbook 30:619–20, 622, Grant Papers. Readers: Grant to Leo J. Muir, 10 June 1941, Grant Letterbook 80:107, Grant Papers.

³¹Grant, undated and untitled draft of reminiscences, box 145, fd. 4; and Grant to J. M. Shodahl, 9 December 1927, Grant Letterbook 65:736, Grant Papers.

"I will do my best, but you need to agree to some conditions."

There had grown a bond between the boy and his bishop that allowed such cheeky candor. Because of Heber's marble playing and perhaps his graver offense of ball throwing against the Woolley barn, Edwin had labelled him "the laziest boy in the Thirteenth ward." But Heber had earnestly mounted a successful campaign to reclaim the bishop's confidence.³²

Heber made his first request. The dance would require a smooth dance floor, not the rough-hewn planks of the Thirteenth Ward Assembly Rooms. Only by whittling candle wax into the cracks could the floor be made smooth. Bishop Woolley had long opposed the idea for safety reasons. But he agreed to Heber's terms.

"And you must agree to pay the loss if there is one. You cannot have the party in the Thirteenth ward and make any money," Heber complained. "The young people won't come any more. . . . You have got to have three waltzes."

Neighboring wards permitted at least three of the new "round dances" such as the waltz and polka each evening. But Bishop Woolley insisted on quadrilles and cotillions, where dancers discreetly grouped themselves in old-fashioned lines or squares instead of pairing off in couples.

For a moment Bishop Woolley weighed philosophy and values against the possibility of another unsuccessful dance. An earlier party had failed to raise money for the St. George Temple fund, and the ward's proud reputation for always being in the lead had been tarnished.

"Take the three waltzes," Bishop Woolley conceded.

As his last request, Heber argued that they must hire Olsen's Band—the only ensemble in town that played the "Blue Danube Waltz" to perfection. The problem lay with the band's flutist, whose drunkenness at an earlier ward engagement had caused a great deal of disorder. As a result, Bishop Woolley had strictly forbidden the band to return. But once again Heber won. "Take Olsen's Quadrille Band," the bishop said. "Take your three round dances. Wax the floor."

On the night of the dance, President Young himself came. "This is for the benefit of the St. George Temple, isn't it?" he asked Heber at the door. Squeezing a ten dollar gold piece into the young man's hand, he asked, "Is that enough to pay for my ticket?" and entered the well-decorated room.

³²Grant Manuscript Diary, 30 August 1903, Grant Papers.

That night the Thirteenth Ward raised \$80 for the new temple. No other ward earned half that much. “We scooped the town,” Heber recalled years later, “and we had *four* round dances!”

When the unauthorized fourth round dance began, President Young instantly recognized the change in the program and protested, “They are waltzing.”

“No,” said Heber, only technically correct. “They are not waltzing: when they waltz they waltz all around the room. This is a quadrille.”

Heber’s sleight of hand brought a laugh from Brigham and the mild rejoinder, “You boys, you boys.”³³

A short time later President Young played a central role in one of Heber’s greatest trials of faith. The Church leader had called the seventeen-year-old into his office to discuss the future, and he quickly focused their talk. “I think it is about time some of . . . [Jedediah’s] boys were putting on the harness,” he told Heber. “Don’t you want to go on a mission?”

“That is a splendid idea, and I approve of it,” Heber later recalled saying, “but I have some brothers three years older than I, and I suggest that you call them first.”

At length Brigham complied but found the Grant polygamous half-brothers to be even more hesitant than Heber. As a result, Rachel’s son was once more summoned to the President’s office, and this time Heber agreed to accept a mission call the following spring.³⁴

Actually, there were good reasons for his misgivings and mock resistance. He had left school at the age of sixteen to support his mother—and to fulfill his desire for a commercial career. His employers had promoted him rapidly, and now for the first time Rachel and her son enjoyed a measure of prosperity. But Heber’s feelings were by no means consistent. Patriarch Perkins had promised him while Heber was still an infant that Heber would “begin the ministry when very young.” Rachel and Heber had read and reread this blessing repeatedly, making it the boy’s text for life. Now with President Young’s call, the part about a youthful ministry seemed literally fulfilled. Excited, Heber began reading of the exploits of George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, and Erastus Snow—other teenaged missionaries—no doubt mentally comparing his skills and sinew with the young heroes who had

³³Rachel Grant Taylor, “When Brigham Young Watched a Waltz,” *Improvement Era* 44 (November 1941): 654, 678.

³⁴Grant to Leland H. Merrill, 14 June 1938, Grant Letterbook 76:611; Grant, “Draft of Remarks on Brigham Young,” 1 June 1924, box 157, fd. 5; Grant Typed Diary, 23 November 1928, Grant Papers.



Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Department

Heber J. Grant as a Young Man

preceded him.³⁵ He paid his debts and prepared for an immediate departure.

According to the custom of the time, formal missionary calls were announced during the official proceedings of general conference, and Heber entered the Tabernacle in April 1876 fully expecting to hear his name read. However, much to his bewilderment, the clerk failed to do so. Heber was devastated. During the next several days as he tried to complete his normal duties with Wells Fargo, he frequently wept in disappointment and perhaps in embarrassment.³⁶ Years later he would learn why no mission call had come. Erastus Snow and Daniel H. Wells had objected to his name when the list of prospective missionaries was submitted for General Authority approval. The boy, they claimed, was already performing “a very splendid mission” in providing for his widowed mother.³⁷

The wound was slow to heal. Unbeknown to his closest friends and even to Rachel in whom he often confided such matters, during the next four or five years the episode haunted him. The problem, he believed, lay in the efficacy of Perkins’s blessing—and in the larger question of religious revelation itself. Had not the patriarch erred? How “sure” was prophecy’s “sure word”? “I was tempted seriously for several years to renounce my faith in the Gospel because this blessing was not fulfilled,” he admitted. “The spirit would come over me . . . that the patriarch had lied to me, and that I should throw the whole business away.”³⁸

The Word of Wisdom also challenged the young man’s faith. While his Thirteenth Ward Sunday School tutors inveighed against coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol, the prohibition of these commodities was never made to be a religious test. Mormons could be considered “good” Mormons and still occasionally imbibe. In fact, devout Rachel’s boardinghouse first introduced Heber to the taste of coffee. He soon became addicted, and despite Rachel’s gentle disapproval he found that he could not abandon it. Time after time he quit, only to find his appetite uncontrollable. Finally, “Aunt” Susan Grant, his

³⁵The undated and unidentified blessing is found in box 176, fd. 23, Grant Papers. For its importance to Heber and Rachel, see Grant to Edward H. Anderson, 5 June 1890, Grant Letterbook 30:620; Grant to Rachel Ridgway Grant, 16 December 1901, Grant Letterbook 34:135; and Rachel Ridgway Grant to Grant, 23 May 1905, Family Correspondence, box 127, fd. 12, Grant Papers. For details of Heber’s youthful missionary call and his reading of teenaged proselyting accounts, see “Reminiscences of President Heber J. Grant,” nd, box 145, fd. 4, Grant Papers.

³⁶George H. Crosby, Jr., to Grant, 27 November 1931, Gen. Corr., Grant Papers.

³⁷Grant to Wilford Owen Woodruff, 18 August 1922, Gen. Corr., Grant Papers.

³⁸Grant to Marian Cannon Bennion, 2 March 1935, Grant Letterbook 72:284; and Grant, “Reminiscences of President Heber J. Grant,” pp. 17–18, nd, box 145, fd. 4, Grant Papers.

father's former plural wife, served him a cup of her special blend of creamed coffee. Heber demurred.

"Have you promised anybody that you would quit?"

"I have promised myself a number of times that I would quit," he allowed. But "now I have said I am going to take a cup of coffee whenever I want it and I haven't drank any for months."

"This is a fine cup to quit on," said the angelic Aunt Susan, who was entirely out of character as a temptress.

"All right, my dear aunt." Heber raised the cup to his lips, his mouth watering. But after a moment the full and undrunk cup returned to the table, and with that victory his craving for the beverage ceased.³⁹

The young man had greater difficulty with beer. Fearing an early death like his father's and convinced of the virtues of life insurance, Salt Lake City's youngest agent repeatedly sought coverage to protect his mother. Nineteenth-century actuarial tables, however, discriminated against slender girths and no company would issue Heber a policy. Determined to gain weight, Heber sought out Dr. Benedict, who had an immediate solution. If Heber would drink four glasses of beer daily, Dr. Benedict prescribed, within two years he would have the additional twenty pounds necessary for coverage.

At first Heber found beer "bitter and distasteful," like his mother's herbal "kinnikinnick" tea. But he quickly acquired both a business and a personal taste for it. Within a year, he secured the fire insurance business of most Salt Lake City saloons and Utah breweries, an additional ten pounds, and a growing relish for the savor of hops. His daily four-glass limit became five, and occasionally grew to six.

He warred with his acute sense of conscience. Rereading the Word of Wisdom, he resolved to abandon his drinking and place his health and his mother's future with the Lord, "insurance or no insurance." But resolutions were easier made than kept. "I wanted some [beer] so bad that I drank it again," he confessed. Finally, he found strength in the same formula that he had used with coffee. By telling himself he was free to take a drink whenever he wished, he overcame his obsession and ceased drinking. As quickly, he lost his trade with the saloons and breweries of the Territory.⁴⁰

³⁹Grant to Leslie [Midgley], nd, Grant Letterbook 74:294, Grant Papers.

⁴⁰Grant, "Draft of Remarks Made at the Inglewood Stake Conference," 4 February 1940, box 156, fd. 1; Grant to Leslie [Midgley], 23 November 1936, Grant Letterbook 74:294; and Grant to Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Huish, 20 April 1936, Gen. Corr., Grant Papers.

During this time of personal struggle, Heber learned firsthand of the apparent fallibility of Church leaders. With Rachel in St. George, Utah, doing temple work, he and Frank Kimball kept “bachelor hall” at the Grant home. Frank Kimball, a moral but not an outwardly religious man, was summoned by the Fifteenth Ward bishopric and tried for his membership. After attempting in vain to testify for his friend, Heber perched himself on a fence pole outside an open window of the second-story hearing room. Kimball found it difficult to make a confession of faith, but pled for a year’s probation to prepare himself. In response the bishopric, ignoring President Daniel H. Wells’s counsel “to go slow” with the case, demanded guarantees about his future tithe paying and several other duties. Heber was outraged. “No, I wouldn’t [agree], darn you,” he found himself saying under his breath, still seated on his pole. Minutes later Frank Kimball was excommunicated, a judgment which, at least according to Grant’s understanding, breached fairness and Christian kindness.⁴¹

Heber’s several problems and scarring experiences gnawed at his spirit. Uncertain of his inherited faith, he attended at least one meeting at the freethinking Liberal Institute, probably more in curiosity than in actual discontent.⁴² He also became “greatly interested” in the writings of Robert G. Ingersoll, nineteenth-century America’s antichristian curmudgeon.⁴³ Accordingly, his network of friends reflected his growing religious ambivalence. Balancing the young man’s many staunchly Mormon friends were others that he later came to regard as disreputable. They “smoked a little, and did things they ought not to do,” Heber recalled, “but I liked them, they were jolly fellows.”⁴⁴ He later considered his situation to be grave. “I stood as it were upon the brink of usefulness or upon the brink of making a failure of my life.”⁴⁵

Heber credited the Thirteenth Ward for his salvation. Bringing his Sunday School experience to full circle, the twenty-one-year-old was appointed a teacher. As in the earlier days of Brothers Goddard, Maiben, and Musser, Heber now stood before a congregation of

⁴¹Frank Kimball, the son of Mormon matriarch Sarah M. Kimball, refused to appeal the decision to the high council and remained out of the LDS church the rest of his life (Grant to Heber M. Wells, 8 April 1937, Grant Letterbook 75:246); Grant to the family of Elder John Morgan, 22 April 1937, Grant Letterbook 75:286–87; and Grant Typed Diary, 11 October 1940, Grant Papers.

⁴²Grant to Henry C. Link, 31 October 1938, Grant Letterbook 76:909, Grant Papers.

⁴³Grant to Fred (?), 26 April 1924, Grant Letterbook 61:832; and Grant, “Draft of B.Y.U. Centennial Address,” 16 October 1925, Grant Letterbook 63:549, Grant Papers.

⁴⁴Grant to Thomas Judd, 13 April 1936, Grant Letterbook 73:648; and Grant to Leona Walker, 15 May 1939, Grant Letterbook 77:791, Grant Papers.

⁴⁵*Contributor* 16 (August 1895): 640.

“scholars,” teaching, catechizing, praying, and serving as a role model. He frequently asked questions drawn from the Book of Mormon or the “Little Learner” section of the *Juvenile Instructor*. After several years’ service, his responsibilities were expanded to include assistant secretary and eventually secretary of the school.⁴⁶

Mormondom’s first ward Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association [YMMIA] also allowed him to serve. The Thirteenth Ward YMMIA called Heber as a president’s counselor at its initial meeting in 1875, and he continued in that capacity through a series of new presidencies for the rest of the decade.⁴⁷ The YMMIA’s weekly sessions were first designed to give men in their late teens and early twenties the chance for self-study and speechifying, though exercises later included readings, essays, music, lectures, and answering questions on religious and cultural topics.

The Thirteenth Ward YMMIA meetings were often high toned, though once the men peremptorily refused a member’s suggestion to take “the round dance pledge.”⁴⁸ Gospel topics were the primary staple, with each youth expected to speak. Since fifteen or twenty men were usually present (out of an enrolled thirty-three), meetings theoretically could be long. In actuality, most participants talked briefly. “Bro. H. J. Grant said he like the rest who had spoke before him was unprepared,” the minutes of one meeting recorded, “but according to the Book of Mormon he was satisfied that this was the Gospel of Christ restored.” On another occasion he was more loquacious. “If a person had any sense at all,” Heber observed, “he could see that Tobacco and Whiskey was not good for the human system as nearly any one that used Tobacco had to make themselves sick the first time and[,] Second[,] how disgraceful an intoxicated person made himself.”⁴⁹

Heber had other Mutual duties concurrent with his ward assignment. He acted as Salt Lake Stake YMMIA secretary and as a Mutual “missionary”

⁴⁶Sunday School Minutes, especially 27 May, 5 August, 23 December 1877; 13 January, 10 and 17 March, 19 and 26 May, 21 July, 18 August, 13 October, 3 November 1878; 13 April 1879, Thirteenth Ward Papers. See also Grant Manuscript Diary, 3 January 1886, and Grant to Thomas W. Sloan, 15 August 1905, Grant Letterbook 40:50, Grant Papers.

⁴⁷“Y.M.M.I.A.,” Thirteenth Ward Manuscript History, nd, LDS Church Archives. From pioneer times youth “improvement” meetings were held in the ward, some as late as 1874, but its meetings of June 1875 are generally credited with being the beginning of the modern YMMIA movement. (“Biographical Sketch,” nd, Grant Letterbook 58:177, lists Heber J. Grant as having served as president, although no corroborating evidence is found in the sketchy official minutes.)

⁴⁸Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association Minute Book, 1874–76, 20 September 1875, Thirteenth Ward Papers.

⁴⁹Ibid., 17 September and 11 October 1875.

in the emerging Churchwide youth organization. The latter calling required him to speak before various Utah congregations. Unlike his later forceful, machine-gun style delivery, his first effort was a halting, two- or three-minute affair which no doubt drew beads of perspiration. Lastly, the 1880 April general conference sustained him as secretary to the General YMMIA Superintendency of the Church. He thereby became associated with Elders Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, and Moses Thatcher, members of the new superintendency.⁵⁰

Grant's adult Sunday School and Mutual activities reenforced the values and faith of his heritage and permitted him to navigate successfully the difficult adolescent years of passage. No doubt he inflated the seriousness of his early crisis of belief. Bright and curious, he was subjected to a man's world when sixteen, yet his acts never trespassed pioneer Utah's basic religious norms. His gambling was with matchsticks, he permitted himself no Sunday baseball playing, and when friends offered him a sexual liaison, he fled with the rapidity of Joseph of Egypt.⁵¹ More than he knew, his religious feeling was inbred.

"You must know[,] and I am the only person who would tell you so," he wrote to a friend, "I have got to be a very good boy. I attend meetings Sunday, generally twice a day, [and] go to the Elders Quorum [and my] Youngmen's Mutual Improvement Asstn."⁵² While many of Zion's youth found it chic to renounce plural marriage, Heber wrote a long, impassioned defense that, whatever it lacked in grammar, orthography, and argument, clearly set him apart among his contemporaries. "Shall we the sons and daughters of these men and women who have sacrificed so much for their religion resign any portion of that religion [viz. polygamy] to suit the notions and fancies of those who are our bitterest enemies?" He particularly scored his disbelieving friends who claimed that they would never enter into its practice. "Just stop and think for one minute what must be the feelings of a polygamist mother . . . [for] one of her children speaking lightly of an ordinance, by the practice of which they were born."⁵³ Rachel's influence was always close at hand.

⁵⁰Stake Secretary: Grant to James N. Lambert, 3 April 1923, in Grant Typed Diary, 5 April 1923, Grant Papers. Mutual Missionary: Grant to Emil A. Berndt, 16 July 1920, Gen. Corr., Grant Papers. Church MIA Secretary: Edward H. Anderson, "The Past of Mutual Improvement," *Improvement Era* (November 1897): 6.

⁵¹Grant to Leslie [Midgley], 23 November 1936, Grant Letterbook 74:294; Grant to Leona Walker, 15 May 1939, Grant Letterbook 77:791, Grant Papers; Grant, "Sunday Baseball," 16 *Improvement Era* (January 1913): 262.

⁵²Grant to Fera[morz] Young, 26 March 1876, Gen. Corr., Grant Papers.

⁵³The address, which the nineteen-year-old apparently delivered before his seventies quorum particularly censured the disbelief of Mormondom's youth (Grant, "Draft on Polygamy," 12 February 1876, box 156, fd. 5, Grant Papers).

Those who knew young Heber best understood his religious commitment. "He lives his religion," Richard Young reported, "but is seldom able to warm himself unto enthusiasm over a principle; his love is a practical, everyday, common-sense devotion to principles which from their superiority to all others, he chooses to believe are divine."⁵⁴ Bishop Woolley was less analytical. When Heber was called to preside over the Tooele Stake at age twenty-three (thereby fulfilling Patriarch Perkins's blessing in an unexpected way), Bishop Woolley made a point of being at the conference. He wanted to assure the people that they were "getting a man and not a boy." Later the bishop met John Henry Smith on a Salt Lake City street. Reaching up and placing his arms around the large Apostle's neck, Bishop Woolley became emotional. "John Henry . . . I can't remain here much longer, but when I am gone don't you forget Heber J. Grant. . . . [He] is worthy to be one of the Apostles, don't you forget him."⁵⁵

⁵⁴Richard W. Young Diary, 2:3-4, November 1882, Western Americana, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

⁵⁵Grant to Orson Woolley, 20 February 1917, Grant Letterbook 53:667, Grant Papers.

Benjamin

What is it that a father finds in one
to favor over others?

Did Isaac know what grace was his
in primogeniture,
while Ishmael wandered?

Did Esau find
his father's way not right
And think the issue
of the pottage just
a specious way
to further
predestination—

To choose my father—

He passed along that
odd selection too,
So Joseph was his pet—

I heard him say that Rachel
was his love,
and saw her eyes
in Joseph's face,

I know such ancient tales
of brothers—
one chosen,
the other not,
inexplicably,

And like Abel's brother
wish I knew
why God must choose.

—John Sterling Harris

The Treaty / Covenant Pattern in King Benjamin's Address (Mosiah 1–6)

Stephen D. Ricks

That covenants of some kind were necessary to secure peace and maintain order was a fundamental concept of society in the Ancient Near East.¹ Covenants held a significant position in the civic life of Ancient Israel and also played a central role in its religious thought.² Similarly, covenants and covenant-making are widely attested in the Book of Mormon.³ The covenant assembly described in Mosiah has attracted particular attention and has been fruitfully studied by Hugh Nibley in the light of the ancient Year Rite⁴ and by John Tvedtnes as an example of a Feast of Tabernacles celebration.⁵ The formal structure of this section of Mosiah may also be compared profitably with the treaty/covenant pattern attested in extant Ancient Near Eastern treaty literature as well as in several large sections of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and, to a lesser extent, in other Old Testament writings.⁶ This article will investigate the possible cultic setting of

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¹J. A. Thompson, "The Near Eastern Suzerain-Vassal Concept in the Religion of Israel," *Journal of Religious History* 3 (1964): 1.

²The principal word which is translated "covenant" in the Old Testament, *b^erit*, occurs 287 times in the Old Testament, mostly in a religious context. However, the term *b^erit* is also used with reference to agreements between husband and wife (Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 16:8; Mal. 2:14), between two men (Gen. 21:22–27, 31:44–53; 1 Sam. 18:3, 23:18), between kings and their subjects (2 Sam. 5:3; 2 Kgs. 11:4, 17), and even between men and animals (Job 5:23, 40:28; Hos. 2:20).

³The terms *covenant* or *covenants* are used 131 times in the Book of Mormon. In more than eighty percent of those cases, the word is used in a religious context. The covenant setting of Mosiah 1–6 is assured by the use of the word *covenant* seven times in this passage.

⁴Hugh W. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1964), 243–56.

⁵John A. Tvedtnes, "The Nephite Feast of Tabernacles," in John W. Welch, ed., *Tinkling Cymbals: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley* (N.p.: 1978), 145–77. In addition, a lengthy analysis of this section of Mosiah has been made by John W. Welch in an unpublished paper, "Benjamin's Speech (Mosiah 2:9–5:15): A Textual Analysis with Commentary." Welch sees in it an intricate chiastic structure. He has summarized his conclusions in "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 202–3.

⁶Klaus Baltzer, in his brilliant form-critical study of the covenant pattern, *The Covenant Formulary*, trans. David Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), finds this form used not only in the Pentateuch and in Joshua but also in later periods of Israelite history and even in the Intertestamental and Early Christian eras.

these covenant passages in the Old Testament and in Mosiah, study the treaty/covenant pattern as it is reflected in these texts and in Ancient Near Eastern treaty literature, and then consider the implications for the Book of Mormon as an authentic ancient document.

SETTING OF THE COVENANT ASSEMBLY

Among the first to propose a connection between covenant-making and cult in the Old Testament was the Norwegian Old Testament scholar Sigmund Mowinckel.⁷ His arguments are, however, not based primarily on the major covenant texts of the Hexateuch (the five books of Moses plus Joshua) but rather on Psalms 50 and 81, where theophany is linked with covenant-making and decalogue formulas:

Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself . . .

But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

(Ps. 50:5–6, 16–19)

Albrecht Alt, in his seminal study of the origins of Israelite law, suggests that Israel's apodictic law (an absolute and universally applicable form of law, of which the Decalogue remains the parade example) was recited at the Feast of Tabernacles each sabbatical year.⁸ He supports his argument by appeal to Deut. 31:10–13:

⁷Sigmund Mowinckel, *Le Décalogue* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1927), 124–29.

⁸Albrecht Alt, "Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts," in *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische Klasse* 86 (1934): 65–66; reprinted in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), 1:327–28; English translation, "The Origins of Israelite Law," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religions*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 128–29. Alt termed "apodictic" law of the type "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," while the other category of law which Alt isolated, "casuistic," is of the type "If a man (does such and such) . . . then" For a current detailed discussion of the characteristics of apodictic law, see Hans Jochen Boecker, *Law and Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient Near East*, trans. Jeremy Moiser (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 191–207.

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release [that is, in the sabbatical year], in the feast of tabernacles,

When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:

And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

Similarly, Gerhard von Rad examines several covenant passages in the Hexateuch and suggests a cultic provenance for them. On the basis of the formal structural similarities in these passages, von Rad claims that Israel celebrated a periodic covenant renewal festival, in all likelihood at the Feast of Tabernacles; since it was "in earlier times preeminently the festival to which the community came on pilgrimage it is therefore inconceivable that the festival of the renewal of the covenant between Yahweh and the people should not be identified with this same festival."⁹

As John Tvedtnes's careful analysis has shown,¹⁰ the Benjamin pericope (a passage of scripture which forms a self-contained literary unit) in the Book of Mosiah reflects numerous details—pilgrimage to a cult site (in this case the temple), sacrifice of animals, and dwelling in booths, among others—in common with the classical prescriptions for the Feast of Tabernacles celebration.¹¹ All of this suggests the same ritual setting—the Feast of Tabernacles—for the covenant assembly in Mosiah as for the covenant renewal festivals in the Old Testament.

FORMAL STRUCTURE OF THE COVENANT ASSEMBLY

The formal structure of the Benjamin pericope has equally striking parallels to the covenant passages in the Hebrew Bible and to the treaty

⁹Gerhard von Rad, "The Problem of the Hexateuch," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 35. In a similar vein, John Bright writes in *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 171: "It is exceedingly probable . . . that there was a regular ceremony of covenant renewal—whether annually or every seven years (Deut. 31:9–13)—to which the tribesmen would come with their tribute to the God-King, to hear his gracious deeds recited and his commandments read, and then with blessings and curses to take anew their oath of allegiance to him."

¹⁰Tvedtnes, "Nephite Feast of Tabernacles," 157–60.

¹¹See Ex. 23:16, 34:22; Lev. 23:33–44; Num. 29:12–38; Deut. 16:13.

literature of the Ancient Near East. In his essay on "The Problem of the Hexateuch," Gerhard von Rad analyzes the Deuteronomic covenant into the following constituent elements: (1) the historical presentation of the events at Sinai and the material surrounding these events (Deut. 1–11); (2) the reading of the law (Deut. 12:1–26:15); (3) the sealing of the covenant (Deut. 26:16–19); and (4) the blessings and curses (Deut. 27ff.).¹² He also divides the Sinai tradition into (1) the exhortation (Ex. 19:4–6), (2) the historical recital of the events at Sinai (Ex. 19ff.), (3) the reading of the law (Ex. 20–23), (4) the promise of blessing (Ex. 33:20ff.), and (5) the sealing of the covenant (Ex. 24). On the basis of these structural similarities, von Rad theorizes that the covenant ceremony consisted of a recital of history and a proclamation of the law, accompanied by oaths, blessings, and curses.¹³ This basic structure of the covenant was further nuanced by a comparison with Hittite treaties composed in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C., approximately the same period of time when the Israelite exodus from Egypt took place.¹⁴ The fundamental elements common to both the Hittite treaties and the covenant passages in the Old Testament include the preamble, the antecedent history, individual stipulations, witness formulas/oaths of acceptance, blessings and curses, and provisions for the recital and deposit of the treaty/covenant.¹⁵

These same constituent features also appear in the account of the covenant assembly in Mosiah. In what follows, we shall consider manifestations of each of these elements in the covenant passages in the Old Testament, in the Hittite treaties, and in the account of King Benjamin's address in Mosiah.

¹²von Rad, "The Problem of the Hexateuch," 27.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴The constituent elements of the Hittite treaty were first isolated and analyzed by Viktor Korošec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge* (Leipzig: Verlag von Theodor Weicher, 1931), 12–14. The structural link between the Hittite treaties and the Old Testament covenant passages was first suggested by Elias Bickerman in "Couper une alliance," *Archives d'histoire du droit oriental* 5 (1950–51): 153; reprinted with an additional note in Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, Part One (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 23, and were developed and expanded by George Mendenhall in "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954): 50–76. The literature on the treaty/covenant in the Bible and the Ancient Near East since Bickerman and Mendenhall has been considerable. Dennis J. McCarthy provides in his recent *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978) a thorough analysis of Ancient Near Eastern treaties and their structural relationship to the covenant pericopes in the Old Testament as well as an extensive bibliography.

¹⁵The specific names for these categories are, to an extent, my own, but they are similar to those in other treatments of the treaty/covenant pattern in the Bible, for example, Thompson, "Near Eastern Suzerain-Vassal Concept," 4, and Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," 57–60, all of which are based ultimately on the analysis of the constituent elements of the Hittite treaty in Korošec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge*. The biblical covenant passages which will be studied here include Ex. 19:3b–8, 20–24; Deut. 1–31; and Josh. 24. Other passages may also be analyzed in the light of this pattern, for example, 1 Sam. 12.

Preamble / Titular Descriptions

In the Hittite treaties, this section contains the name of the suzerain making the treaty as well as other titles and attributes: "These are the words of the Sun, Muwatallis, the Great King, King of the land of Hatti, Beloved of the Weather-God . . ." ¹⁶ The parallel biblical passages introduce either God as the maker of the covenant: "And God spake all these words, saying . . ." (Ex. 20:1) or the prophet who acts as the spokesman for God, who remains the ultimate initiator of the covenant proceedings: "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel . . ." (Josh. 24:2). Similarly, the actual proceedings of the covenant assembly in the Book of Mosiah begin: "And these are the words which he [that is, Benjamin] spake and caused to be written, saying . . ." (Mosiah 2:9). But here, too, although Benjamin is speaking the words, he is clearly acting as the mouthpiece of God. Indeed, a sizable part of his address consists of words which had been made known to him "by an angel from God" (Mosiah 3:2).

Since the biblical and Book of Mormon covenant accounts (unlike the Hittite treaties) are embedded in a historical narrative, the actual preamble to the covenant is generally preceded by additional background details, as in Ex. 19:1–3:

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

And Moses went up unto God and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel . . .

(Compare also Josh. 24:1–2; Deut. 1:1–5)

Similarly, the details in Mosiah 1:1–2:9 provide background information necessary for understanding the setting of the covenant assembly itself.

The background of the Mosiah section—at a time of transition in the rule, when the reigning monarch, Benjamin, transferred the kingship to his son—is closely paralleled by biblical covenant passages and Hittite treaty materials. Indeed, Baltzer claims that the ideal of kingship in Israel was for "the successor . . . to take office before the

¹⁶McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 1.

death of his predecessor'' and that this transfer of power is associated with covenant-making ceremonies.¹⁷

Antecedent History

This part of the Hittite treaties contains mention of the past kindnesses which had been shown by the suzerain toward his vassal, providing the rationale for the great king's appeal (in the following section which contains specific stipulations) to his vassal to render future obedience in return for past benefits: "When, in former times Labarnas, my grandfather, attacked the land of Wilusa, he conquered [it]. . . . The Land of Wilusa never after fell away from the land of Hatti but . . . remained friends with the king of Hatti."¹⁸ The parallel biblical covenant passages retell God's mighty acts performed on behalf of his people, Israel: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Ex. 19:4; compare Ex. 20:2; Josh. 24:2–13). In other instances, the Old Testament covenant sections recount Israel's relations with God and his prophet; for example, Deut. 1:5 and 3:29, in which God's acts on behalf of Israel, and Moses' deeds and his relations with Israel are both related. The Mosiah passage includes a long account of the past relations between King Benjamin and his people (Mosiah 2:9–19). King Benjamin uses the thanks which the people owe to him for his contributions to their welfare as an *a fortiori* argument for the greater thanks which they owe to God:

And behold also, if I, whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service . . . do merit any thanks from you, O how you ought to thank your heavenly King!

. . . who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath . . . and even supporting you from one moment to another. . . .

(Mosiah 2:19, 21)

Individual Stipulations

In the Hittite treaties, this section includes the specific obligations which the vassal had to his overlord: "Thou, Alaksandus, shalt protect the Sun as a friend. . . . If anyone says an unfriendly word about the Sun and you keep it secret from the Sun . . . then thou, Alaksandus, sinnest before the oath of the gods; let the oath of the gods harry thee!"¹⁹

¹⁷Baltzer, *Covenant Formulary*, 82–83.

¹⁸McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 1.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 2.

Corresponding biblical sections contain those individual commandments God placed his people under obligation to observe. A major example of this is found in Exodus 20–23 where God, after recounting his mighty deeds on behalf of the Israelites, enumerates—first succinctly in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:3–17) and then in greater detail (Ex. 21:1–23:19)—the commandments they are to observe. Benjamin's address also contains numerous commandments the people are called upon to obey:

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth. . . .

And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you. . . .

(Mosiah 4:9–10; compare Mosiah 2:22, 24b, 4:6–30)

Witness Formulas / Oaths of Acceptance

The Hittite treaties contain clauses in which the gods are invoked to witness and act as guarantors of the treaties: "The Sun God of heaven, lord of the lands, Shepherd of men, the Sun Goddess of Arinna, the Queen of the lands, the Weather-God [are called to witness this treaty]." ²⁰ Clearly, such a clause would have been unacceptable in a covenant in monotheistic Israel. In one instance, however, a stone is designated as a witness to the covenant "for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God" (Josh. 24:27). In general, though, the people witness against themselves in the event that they fail to observe the covenant (Josh. 24:22), or they say, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8; compare Ex. 24:3), thereby implicitly calling upon God to act as the guarantor of the covenant and its executor in the event of its nonfulfillment. In the Benjamin section of Mosiah, following the king's address, the people express their desire "to enter into a covenant with [their] God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments" (Mosiah 5:5). They further demonstrate their willingness to obey by allowing their names to be included among those who have "entered into a covenant with God to keep his commandments" (Mosiah 6:1).

Blessings and Curses

The Hittite treaties include a list of curses which would attend those who failed to observe their treaty agreements and of blessings if

²⁰Ibid.

they did observe the covenants: "If thou, Alaksandus, break the words of this document, which are placed on this document, then may these oaths wipe thee out . . . and wipe thy seed from the face of the earth. But if thou keepest these words, then may the thousand gods . . . keep thee, thy wife, thy sons . . . with friendly hand."²¹ Such a list of curses and blessings is also known from biblical literature. Deuteronomy 27–28 contains the longest series of such curses and blessings recorded in the Bible:

Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother: and all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark: and all the people shall say, Amen.

(Deut. 27:15–17)

Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

(Deut. 28:3–4)

More often in the Old Testament, however, the curses and blessings are implicit in the covenant passages, as in Josh. 24:19–20:

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins.

If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

(Compare also Ex. 23:20–33)

In a similar manner, the curses and blessings in the Benjamin passage in Mosiah are also implied rather than explicitly stated:

And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ.

And now it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not take upon him the name of Christ must be called by some other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the left hand of God.

(Mosiah 5:9–10)

²¹Ibid.

Recital of the Covenant and Deposit of the Text

The Hittite treaties frequently, though not invariably, contain provisions for the recital of the treaty document and for its deposit in the temple: "Moreover, let someone read thee this tablet which I have made for thee three times every year."²² The biblical covenant sections also mention the recital of the covenant: "And he [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people" (Ex. 24:7; compare also Ex. 19:7). Other passages also mention the writing and deposit of the text: "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord" (Josh. 24:26; compare Deut. 27:2–4). The Book of Mosiah records that the words of King Benjamin were sent out among the people, not only enabling them to understand the proceedings of the covenant assembly but also serving as a permanent record of that assembly (Mosiah 2:8–9). At the end of his address, when all of the people expressed a willingness to take upon themselves Christ's name, their names were recorded (Mosiah 6:1). As one of King Benjamin's last acts as ruler of the people, he appointed priests "to teach the people . . . and to stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made" (Mosiah 6:3).

The majority of the verses comprising the Benjamin pericope—Mosiah 1:1–2:41, 3:24–27, 4:6–30, 5:2–6:3, 6:6—reflect features characteristic of the treaty/covenant pattern. However, certain passages—Mosiah 3:1–23, 4:1–5, 5:1, 6:4–5—do not accord with this pattern. In part, this is probably the result of the section's being an account of the covenant ceremony and not simply a transcript of the covenant.²³ But in addition—and perhaps more importantly—it is the result of Benjamin's sermon intentions: he is interested not only that his people recognize the legitimacy of his son and successor and that they formally renew their covenant with God but also that they repent and experience a "change in heart" (compare Mosiah 5:2–6). John W. Welch's analysis of the chiastic pattern in Mosiah 2:9–5:15 reveals that Mosiah 3:11–27—a passage which (with the exception of verses 24–27) does not accord with the treaty/covenant pattern—forms the centerpiece of the chiasmus:

²²Ibid.

²³Bickerman, in the "Note Additionelle" to his study "Couper une alliance" in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 27, makes the point that no copies of covenants themselves have survived among the Israelites (in contrast to the Hittites and other peoples of the Ancient Near East, actual copies of whose treaties have been discovered) but only reports concerning the covenant rituals. As a result, there is frequently some imprecision in correspondence between the contents of the covenant pericopes in the Old Testament (and in Mosiah 1–6 as well) and the contents and order of Ancient Near Eastern treaties.

- I. Introduction (2:9–28)
 - God is the Heavenly King and man has obligations thereunder.
 - God has physically created you.
 - Covenant peoples are servants of God.
 - There is hope of exaltation after death.
- (A. Coronation proclamation [2:29–30])
 - II. For obedience to the laws, the Lord and king impart victory and prosperity (2:31–41; compare Lev. 26).
Contention is prohibited (2:32).
 - III. The Angel makes declaration of Christ's atoning mission for the salvation of mankind (3:2–10).
 - IV. Benjamin discusses the present state of man and the point of his conversion (3:11–27).
 - There is a possibility of reconciliation.
 - The alternative of damnation is presented.
- (B. The people fall to the ground, confess their iniquity, and are forgiven of their sins [4:1–3]).
- III'. Benjamin gives testimony of the goodness and glory of God and his salvation (4:4–12).
- II'. Stipulations of the law require men to impart substance for peace and social order (4:13–30; compare Lev. 25).
Contention is prohibited (4:14).
- (A. Covenant proclamation [5:1–15])
- I'. Conclusion (5:6–15)
 - God is Heavenly Father and will excommunicate upon breach of obligations.
 - God has spiritually begotten you this day.
 - Covenant people know God by serving him.
 - There is hope of exaltation of the people after death.²⁴

As this illustrates, the passages in this pericope which contain (according to our analysis) the "individual stipulations"—that is, Mosiah 2:22, 24b, 31–41, 4:6–30—form an envelope around Mosiah 3:1–4:3, the core of the entire section, in which King Benjamin brings his people to recognize and confess their sins and to obtain forgiveness for them.

CONCLUSION

As Hugh Nibley has noted on numerous occasions, one of the best means of establishing a text's authenticity lies in examining the

²⁴Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," 202–3.

TREATY / COVENANT PATTERN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IN MOSIAH

Constituent Element	Ex. 19:3b-8	Ex. 20-24	Deut.	Josh. 24	Mosiah 1-6
Preamble / Titular Descriptions	Ex. 19:3b	Ex. 20:1	Deut. 1:5 (Deut. 1:1-5)	Josh. 24:2a (Josh. 24:1-2a)	Mosiah 2:9a (Mosiah 1:1-2:9a)
Antecedent History	Ex. 19:4	Ex. 20:2	Deut. 1:6-3:29	Josh. 24:2b-13, 16b, 17-18a	Mosiah 2:9b-21, 23-24a, 25-30
Individual Stipulations	Ex. 19:5-6	Ex. 20:3-23:19	Deut. 4-26	Josh. 24:14, 18b, 23	Mosiah 2:22, 24b, 31-41, 4:6-30
Witness Formulas / Oaths of Acceptance	Ex. 19:8	Ex. 24:3		Josh. 24:16a, 19a, 21-23	Mosiah 5:2-8
Blessings and Curses		Ex. 23:20-33	Deut. 27:9-28:68	Josh. 24:19b-20	Mosiah 5:9-15 (3:24-27)
Recital of the Covenant and Deposit of the Text	Ex. 19:7	Ex. 24:4-8	Deut. 27:1-8, 31:9, 24-26	Josh. 24:25-27	(Mosiah 2:8, 9a) Mosiah 6:1-3, 6

degree to which it accurately reflects in its smaller details the milieu from which it claims to derive.²⁵ The extent to which the Book of Mormon correctly mirrors the culture of the Ancient Near East in matters of religious practice, manner of life, methods of warfare, as well as other topics (especially those which were either unknown or unexamined in Joseph Smith's time), may provide one of the best tests of the book's genuineness. In addition, the extent to which the Book of Mormon accords with Ancient Near Eastern canons of literary style and structure may also provide a test of authenticity. Chiasmus, a well-known feature of classical prosody, has been identified and intensively studied as an element of biblical style only in the twentieth century. Now, as John W. Welch's researches have convincingly demonstrated, it has been identified as a pervasive stylistic feature of the Book of Mormon.²⁶ The cultic life setting of the covenant renewal festivals in the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua has been

²⁵See, for example, Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Publishing Company, 1952), 2.

²⁶Compare John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10 (1969), 69-84, the first of several published and unpublished studies which he has done on the subject (including those mentioned in notes 5 and 24).

identified as the Feast of Tabernacles and its form (going back to what must have been a far more ancient Near Eastern pattern) has only within the past several decades been analyzed to include a preamble, antecedent history, stipulations, witness formulas, blessings and curses, and provisions for the recital and deposit of the text. That the covenant assembly in the book of Mosiah has been found to have the same ritual setting—the Feast of Tabernacles—as the covenant renewal festivals in the Old Testament is remarkable; that the covenant ceremonies in both the Old Testament and the Book of Mosiah reflect an Ancient Near Eastern pattern prescribed for such occasions may provide another control for establishing the genuineness of the Book of Mormon.

The Magic and Mundanity: Eileen Kump's *Bread and Milk and Other Stories*

Gloria L. Cronin

Eileen Kump's slender and sophisticated volume, *Bread and Milk and Other Stories*,¹ represents a significant addition to the steadily developing genre of the Mormon short story. Its genesis derives from two distinctly Mormon taproots: the peculiar history of the author's grandmother who grew up among the polygamous United Order of Southern Utah, and Kump's uniquely Mormon belief in the richness and power of the ordinary bread-and-milk experiences of life. Speaking of the power of attraction her grandmother's stories held for her, Kump tells us:

Grandmother's life had first attracted me as a writer because of the historical significance of her childhood in the United Order. That needed to be recorded. But aside from such historical significance, I began to see the beauty and disappointments of her life, the pulse of it, the heartbeat. The richness of it and the power lay essentially in the little everyday happenings that formed its greatest part: soapmaking day; gathering sand with which to scour the knives, forks, and spoons; the square of cheese that sometimes lay beside the nightly meal of bread and milk; the gift slipped through the window on Christmas Eve.²

The second taproot is what gives the work its thematic coherence. Speaking recently on the subject of the life-sustaining power of everyday experience, Kump says, "There is importance—even magic—in the mundane, in the bread and milk of living."³ Furthermore, she

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¹Eileen Kump, *Bread and Milk and Other Stories* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1979). All subsequent page references will be to this volume.

²Eileen Kump, "The Bread and Milk of Living," *Ensign* 13 (March 1983), 26.

³*Ibid.*

explains, immersing ourselves hopefully and affectionately in the everyday “is a sure way to befriend mortality and make life an adventure.”⁴ Through Amy, the central character, Kump begins to test artistically her grandmother’s premise that life is indeed an enterprise worth embracing and trusting. As Amy’s life unfolds for the reader and, one suspects, for the writer, we see behind the surfaces of the events the serious fictional exploration of those multiple Christian paradoxes of finding through losing, of communion at the heart of aloneness, of vitality at the core of crisis.

Structured around the progressive rites of passage which form the essence of each story, the total collection forms a modified bildungsroman, one that deals not only with the female initiation story but also one that treats initiation as a lifelong experience. As Amy systematically penetrates terror, humor, tragedy, and magic through her experiences with evil, loss, birth, death, courtship, marriage, pregnancy, child rearing, old age and death, Kump deftly underscores through a process of incremental repetition her central theme—the essential holiness of daily human endeavor.

The tone of these initiation stories differs markedly from the majority of initiation stories in the broader tradition of American letters. To begin with, they are written by a woman about a woman. But more significantly, they avoid the usual late romantic formula of isolation, male bonding, fragmentation and alienation, frontier or urban wasteland symbology, and Freudian interpretation of the maturation process. Though a story about a persecuted desert community in the grips of poverty and fragmented family life provides a prime opportunity for the easy application of such a traditional literary formula, Kump successfully skirts all temptation to resort to low seriousness and romantic despair and to their opposites—gratuitous optimism and unearned hope. And herein lies the true mark of the artist. Out of deceptively simple materials and an extremely understated style, Kump slowly and carefully illuminates the deep mystery of human experience—that at the heart of the ordinary lies the crucial rite of passage into genuine human experience, and that at the often crisis-ridden nexus of that true rite of passage, fear of loss and annihilation can yield the power of grace, wonder, and apotheosis.

Treating her subject matter with unpretentious directness, charming humor, poetic simplicity, delicious irony, and powerful understatement, Kump repeatedly establishes for herself and the

⁴Ibid.

reader the firm belief that though the rite of passage is often ambiguous and difficult, it is a normal, safe conduit through which the immature ego passes into mature awareness and joyful acceptance of the paradoxes of life. Relying on the multiple assurances conveyed by her title, the patterned inevitability of the life-cycle myth which undergirds the stories, and the statement from the prologue that these stories depict the period after the Persecution when the "more ordinary struggles for survival [and] perfection" (p. x) engage the Saints, Kump manages to illuminate for the reader that larger, brighter sphere of meaning which makes holy the bread-and-milk experiences of life.

In "The Willows," the first story, we witness eight-year-old Amy experiencing her first transition from childhood irresponsibility to a discovery of evil and precariousness as her Edenic Mormon world is invaded by the gentile world of spitting, swearing Sevys and a threatening federal marshal. Wrenched from tea parties under the orchard trees, from her closeness to Will, and from daydreams of refined life in Salt Lake City, Amy must come to terms with persecution—the loss of half of her family, and the nightmarish burden of the adult secrets of the community. The crash of the warning rock heralds both the arrival of the federal marshal and Amy's symbolic fall into human experience—a transition which leaves her both frightened and suspicious. After seeking her mother's hiding place and being sternly rebuffed, she is forced to a realization of the fragility of life and the adult burden of preserving a society. Assuming the household tasks in her mother's absence, she nevertheless craves the security of dependency. And even though that night her father cradles her protectively in his arms like a Santa Claus returned home for Christmas, her sense of security is again shattered a few hours later when she discovers that Will and Aunt Edna have gone and left only the playthings wrapped in the little green scarf—a reminder of the previously idyllic family existence. However, the culminating experience in this story is Amy's awakening from her dream of innocence to a sense of evil. As she confronts McGary, who has no guns and knives in his beard as childlore had promised, she learns a powerful lesson about the banality of evil. Kump's brilliant summary statement of this initiation is restrained and psychologically consistent with the age of her protagonist: Amy, back arched stiffly against the porch post like an animal at bay, announces to McGary with all the injured trust of childhood, " 'I don't have a pa anyhow' " (p. 15).

Yet, despite the potentially shattering nature of these childhood experiences, Amy in the next story, "China Doll," is depicted as an

emotionally healthy child whose family is intact and whose ability to love is unimpaired. But the further initiations carry her into the bewildering trauma of being within earshot during her mother's difficult delivery of Esther and of encountering the fickleness of magic and the meaning of death. The focus of this story is the contrasted responses to life of the skeptical Harriet and her ever-optimistic and uncrushed daughter Amy. Paradoxically, the story opens with a cornucopia image of plenty as Kump describes Harriet's well-stocked basement—the result of a fruitful summer on Grandfather's farm. Yet, knowing that what is given may also be taken away, Harriet wavers between joy and fear:

Knowing how life is, Harriet was skeptical, but again this morning warm wings of excitement hovered. Every morning since the day the family had come home from Grandpa's ranch, the wings had been almost more than she could bear. Not only had Grandpa's fields and orchards yielded far beyond what Seth could get their own sandy soil to produce, but Esther was almost well, healed by herbs and faith, and cool mountain air.

(P. 19)

By contrast, in believing the promises of Marcus the Magician, who turns up to entice the family to a circus entertainment and ends up walking off with a cheese in payment for the tickets, Amy teaches Harriet the importance of fantasy and trust. Yet Harriet, aghast at Amy's foolishness, believes that "magic [is] deceptive, artificial" and that "its pleasures [have] no wings" (p. 22). Both are correct, but it is Amy with her optimism who best handles the trial of Esther's death. As Amy cradles the dying infant with fierce maternalism in an attempt to outwit death—a gift of self Harriet cannot seem to make at this time—we see Amy's superior emotional resources. And as the family builds the small grave near their house, Kump draws further contrasts between Amy and Harriet. Clearly resigned and worn with grief, Harriet seems to have little understanding for Amy's dilemma. When Amy resourcefully finds her own solution—that of giving Esther the valuable china doll to take with her into the grave—Harriet, ever skeptical and practical, asks with deep world weariness, " 'To what use?' "

Yet the father understands that to recover from loss one has to believe and sacrifice as Amy intends to do. In defense of Amy's generosity, Seth replies, " 'To Amy's use. . . . She isn't as acquainted with life as we are. . . . She's happy from inside out' " (p. 25). In such a manner he aids Amy in her discovery that the empty, still point

of human loss can be healed through the grace consequent upon giving—the kind of giving demonstrated by Amy's tangible offering of love and trust. Thus, Amy's love provides the vehicle of passage.

“Jephthah's Daughter” traces Amy's passage into puberty. It is a lighthearted and delightful account of one of the more perplexing aspects of such an initiation, the initiate's essential imaginative ignorance of the psycho-symbolic meaning of the events which transpire on behalf of herself and the community. Amy, who has been chosen as May Queen, must enact ritually before the community the tragic story of Jephthah's daughter, who because of her father's promise must on risk of death take vows of chastity and be confined until death to the companionship of her maid servants. This highly ironic and humorous comment on the early stages of Mormon female adolescence (not to mention the upcoming trials of Mormon womanhood) is made all the more poignant and funny since Amy is quite unaware of these ironies. Yet the satire is secondary to the crowning experience of this story. Amy, ironically betrayed by her own zest for life, cannot summon up the appropriate feelings of tragic waste and loss necessary to provide the emotional climax for the community. Full of remorse for her inability to summon up a tragic response for her audience, Amy bursts into genuine tears and inadvertently brings about the best May Day celebration in the history of the community. The story is an insightful and sensitive comment on the dilemma of Amy, who stands upon the brink of adulthood yet lacks the requisite experience to act with full conviction and understanding. She is, nevertheless, able to negotiate the passage because of the honesty of her emotional responses.

“Regarding Courtship,” a complex story whose central focus is very clearly on three contrasted adult responses to the traumatic initiation into loneliness, takes us deeper into Amy's early adult experiences as it details the account of one suitor rejected and another accepted. Bryce, the choice of the community for Amy's hand, is sent to Boston on a two-year mission. Unsure of her desires, Amy refuses to marry him before he goes. His immature response to the loneliness of Boston and the injunction to put Amy out of his mind causes Bryce to send the inevitable self-pitying and rejecting letter which betrays Amy's trust in him. Bryce fails to negotiate the initiation into manhood.

The second part of the story contrasts Bryce's immature response to loneliness with that of a much more mature, self-possessed, and taciturn suitor whose encounter with isolation has produced in him

both pain and a superior reverence for life. Hearing of Amy's rejection by Bryce, Israel intuitively acknowledges Amy as the possessor of the kind of power and warmth he has experienced only once before in his life. Kump gives considerable time to the account of his childhood when Israel, pushed to the verge of isolation and terror separating boyhood from manhood, experiences nevertheless the saving grace of human empathy and love as he makes the transition. At age nine he is given the responsibility of driving Aunt Clara north to recover her health. One night, while he is lying under the wagon, "as a man was supposed to do," the wolves come so close he fears for his life. On the brink of terror, he experiences that fulness of human love felt only at moments of great human suffering. "'Israel . . . would you like to come and get in the foot of my bed?'" Aunt Clara calls (p. 47). In this crucial rite of passage, Israel has learned that the moment of annihilation is also the moment of grace.

As an explanation of why he must marry her, Israel tells Amy she reminds him of Aunt Clara, for whom he would lay down his life. Sensing the relationship between his early experience of terror and aloneness and his subsequent reverence for life and human bonds, Amy wisely resolves never to ask him if he loves her. It is an affair rooted in far deeper human feeling than Bryce's untried romantic love. Her own knowledge of "aloneness," her warm nature and her instinctive power to heal qualify Amy for commitment to Israel. Hence, moved to the edge of a truly fine human contract, Amy passes into a more mature insight into the deeper purposes of marriage and love in the context of adult responsibility, history and community. Completely free from self-pity over Bryce's rejection, she gains understanding which borders on epiphany as she grasps that mysterious sacrifice of private motive for communal purpose which constitutes one more juncture of grace in the midst of crisis:

Love was important, but so was life. Her mind spun. What was important? A tiny spring had made poplars grow in the desert. Maybe farms someday. Surely Israel's regard for her was a beginning of importance. And love or not, . . . it was suddenly painful to think of him alone out there unanswered.

(P. 51)

"Bread and Milk," perhaps the most successful of the stories, continues to trace the development of this insight as it describes Amy's passage into the isolating vulnerability of first pregnancy. Mystified with the wonder of it all and possessed of a deep need for seclusion, she hugs the secret greedily to herself until the night she

imparts it to Israel in the seclusion of their bed. Her disappointment and shock are considerable when Israel tells her he has already guessed and rolls away from her in sleep. Later, alone in the coolroom, dipping into the honey jar, Amy firmly resolves to maintain her integrity and privacy by hiding the fact from the community. She is not yet ready to relinquish self and permit the ritual passage by allowing the community to participate in what she mistakenly and egotistically believes to be a private event.

On the Sunday morning when she can no longer button her dress, she finally understands the true meaning of mortality and responds with mature awareness. While conducting a hymn she lets the concealing shawl drop for all to see. As she walks to the window, she comments with deep feeling, “ ‘Do you hear the quail? Do you hear its cry? It is lonely. Now for goodness sake, sing as if you are lonely, lonely for the Father’ ” (pp. 59–60). Her sense of human isolation, intensified by the mystery of childbirth, prompts her to renewed awareness of the fragility of human experience and her need for the support of the community. Hence, she articulates for everyone the shared experience of human estrangement from the Father. It is one more encounter with that consoling grace which is available only when at the crisis of the passage the initiate sacrifices ego and accepts the shared human condition.

“Four and Twenty Blackbirds” treats the theme of individual isolation even more powerfully than the previous stories. The painful nature of the son’s passage into manhood and the ambiguity of the experience provide the emotional core of the story. Kump successfully depicts the pain of the son as he seeks his father’s love and approval and the helplessness of mother and father as both come to an awareness of the cost of the bonding process.

The triple point of view in the story functions as a metaphor for the helpless separateness each of the actors feels. Perhaps the most moving and complex of the stories, “Four and Twenty Blackbirds” begins with the dilemma of a harsh father who, raised during a period of pioneering and colonization, agonizes angrily over a seemingly irresponsible son who must be taught the value of life and work. The focus then moves to the agony of the boy, who, isolated for a week up a remote canyon, has been charged with the care of his grandfather’s sheep. The eleven-year-old boy wears his feet to blisters bundling and herding the animals, chopping more wood than he needs, relentlessly polishing the smokestack of the lantern, mending the tear in the bedding, and repeatedly sweeping the floor of the shepherd’s

wagon as he strives to meet the challenge of passing from childhood into adulthood.

The reunion of father and son after this harsh test is touching. The son hugs the awkward older man and begs to sleep alongside him on the narrow cot in the wagon. It appears the crucial bonding of father and son is secure. However, the paradoxical and ambiguous nature of the process is only too apparent during the homecoming scene. The crucial *rite de passage* is Amy's as well as her son's. As Amy removes the boy's shoes and discovers the dreadful blisters which Israel has failed to notice, her horror threatens to alienate Israel, who swiftly remembers the pain of his own boyhood experience but is nevertheless the victim of his own inarticulateness and rigid past as he fails to reassure both mother and son of the inevitability, even the necessity, of the suffering as part of the initiation into manhood. While Amy stands torn with love for both men, Israel can only bury his tenderness and pleasure in the boy in stern command. "'Raise up, Laun. Come on now, Laun, *raise up!*'" (p. 69) he orders, and when Laun finally looks up, Israel realizes Laun's "were not the eyes of a friend" (p. 69).

Bewildered, Israel retreats to the barn where he recalls the picture of his own father—patriarchal, articulate, totally self-assured—and he wonders how he did it. All Israel understands of fathering is that "your own strength became a hand full of air, if not a mockery, unless your children were good" (p. 70). But he has not his father's air of moral authority nor his father's warmth or verbal fluency. But just as Israel had been rescued from the terror of his initiation by Aunt Clara's call to come in at the foot of her bed, so Amy softens Laun's passage by drawing the new initiate into the circle of nursery rhymes, thereby providing the counterbalance of nurturance to add to Israel's pride in the boy's accomplishment—a passage into the full charity of womanhood for Amy.

However, Israel's subsequent isolation from the warmth and reassurance of the family circle is powerfully delineated by Kump as she shows him entering the kitchen later that night only to find it empty. Upstairs, where the children ought to be asleep and "Amy available to him," he hears the note of a nursery rhyme. Having failed to understand the relationship between the trial and the moment of grace, he finds himself isolated in his uncertainty and failure from that intimate circle of warmth and friendship upstairs.

The central event in "Sayso or Sense" deals with Amy's childhood dream of a house of her own. Determined to have a cool cellar in

which to can in the heat of the summer and a house angled away from the neighbors, Amy encounters crushing opposition in the form of her immovable father-in-law, for whom all cellars are only too reminiscent of the pitiful dugouts of the generation before. She is doubly baffled by Israel's "Mosaic" adoration of his father and convert's passionate zeal (see p. 74). In fact, her faith in the whole patriarchal system is shaken when its twin pillars in her life conspire against her to become the unwitting destroyers of her dream home. The story is delightfully funny in its depiction of Amy's desperately trying to find the humor and good spirits to succumb to a male conspiracy which produces house minus basement, closets, and private front view. Her subsequent struggle to capitulate with genuine charity involves a tremendous sacrifice of individuality and privacy. Her father-in-law's vision of a house, not as a separate entity with its exclusive south-facing aspect but as part of a growing community integrated by north-facing houses, brings once more the realization of the isolating yet integrating demands of community and tradition.

We laugh when, just as Amy predicts, the whole neighborhood troops through her kitchen door amid all the rituals of canning or, funnier still, in the midst of Israel's Saturday night bath. We laugh again when she dreams that God while conducting a priesthood meeting explains to Israel and her father-in-law, who are sitting on the front row, that "when they came to earth, men could have their choice—sayso or sense—but they couldn't have both because that wouldn't be fair to the women" (p. 78). But the dream is really about her deep hurt. For the two men, building the home involves a necessary personal bonding process which cancels her private hopes of sanctuary. Their communal philosophy of "home" eclipses her private wishes to the point that she finds herself resentful of her father-in-law's "rich prophetic" voice and ability to cow Israel (p. 74). Yet as she subdues the profound disappointment and accepts the symbolic compromise house that results, her anger over the nature of the men who rule her life distills first into comedy, then into understanding. Finally one day, after a fit of tears over the neighbors who troop through the privacy of her house, her love for her father-in-law enables her to complete the ritual passage. "'Trivia is trivia and must remain so in a world of sorrow'" (p. 80), he explains to her with intended kindness. As her love for him carries her past the disappointment and isolation of the past months, Amy once more enters that sphere of grace which lies within and without the moment

of passage. "How could a dream matter to Israel when it made less and less sense to her" (p. 80).

The final story, "God Willing," provides a fitting coda to the collection. It pictures Amy as an old woman facing death. Long since bereft of Israel, she tries to relive the experiences of her life right up to the arrangements for Israel's funeral. Frightened by the memory of their last words together about the privacy of sorrow and the public necessity of funerals, she flees into the garden with her hoe in an attempt to shut out the hurtful memory. Failing to do so, however, she allows full reign to the remembrance of her pain at his death and the insensitivity of well-meaning neighbors and family. The remembered discussion of eternity with the three women at the funeral functions as a painful initiation into acceptance of the conditions of her own impending departure.

Kump's intention in this story is to reinforce once more the ironic conjunction between isolation and grace at every passage in human experience. As memories of her grandchildren and the affairs of the moment mingle with snatches of doctrine about the hereafter and free agency, we see that Amy's well-tempered faith finally provides her with the power to reconcile and transcend the hiatus between the temporal and the spiritual, the present and the future. As the pain in her arm intensifies, she actually defeats the sordidness of the experience through a brilliant act of memory which illuminates once again the active presence of grace at the still point of crisis. As Amy slides down into death while vividly recalling waiting in her white dress for Israel on her wedding day, Kump brings us once more to the heart of the paradox. The moment of passage is at one and the same time the moment of union and arrival—a union actual and symbolic which has survived all the trials of the human endeavor and emerged intact.

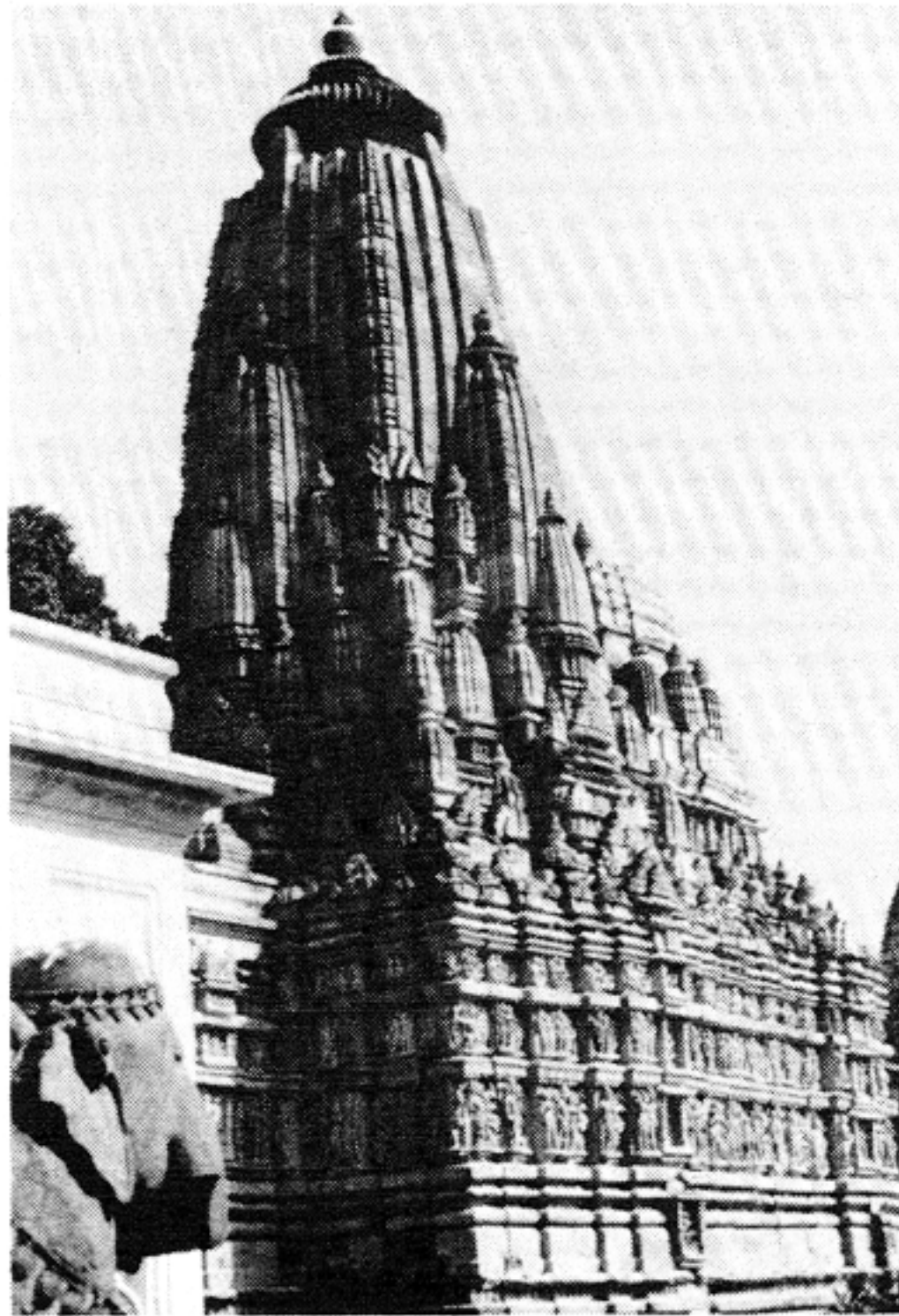
Hence, we see *Bread and Milk* as a coherent collection of stories bound by the unifying consciousness of one central character and a common theme—that progress toward salvation which hinges on the ultimate integrity of an isolating pattern of linear time punctuated by saving intersections of grace and isolation in the midst of passage into deepening maturity. *Bread and Milk* is a deeply felt and sophisticated artistic performance which affirms that the other side of the coin stamped mutability and passage is the coin stamped charity and stability.

Reflections from the Ganges

Thomas F. Rogers

The memories are still vivid after just a few months. But it seems as if the events they recall occurred aeons ago—in some earlier incarnation, as the Hindus might say, or as the uncommon and totally unexpected phenomena of a particularly memorable dream. I'm thinking especially of those early mornings in June and July when, reversing the process, I would arouse from the night's unconscious and, in wakefulness, fully experience that dream in every dimension and with all my senses. I'd be lying there, covered with a thin sheet or with no sheet at all, on a

charpoj that had the roof to take cooler outdoor roof was basically of a building I that period. I rent the entire orbitant monthly The building meters from the Ganges), just be- of a small river- the south end Asi section of reputedly oldest city. There were as temples on



been carried to advantage of the night air. The the third floor had rented for was required to building. Its ex- cost came to \$40. was located only Holy Ganga (or hind the spires front temple, at of town in the Varanasi, India's and most sacred shrines as well either side of the

river and beyond as far as one could see in each landward direction. Varanasi (or Banaras or, according to its oldest name, Kashi) is a panoply of temples and shrines, most of them dedicated to that most enigmatic deity, who is the source both of generation and creativity and also of death and destruction—Shiva—and each of these houses has at its center an abstract stone effigy of Shiva's linga (or phallus), so revered by those who come to worship, so shocking to the neophyte tourist.

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BYU Studies

What were those sights and sounds as, at five o'clock, the sky grew light and we rooftop sleepers began to stir? First the cawing of the ubiquitous

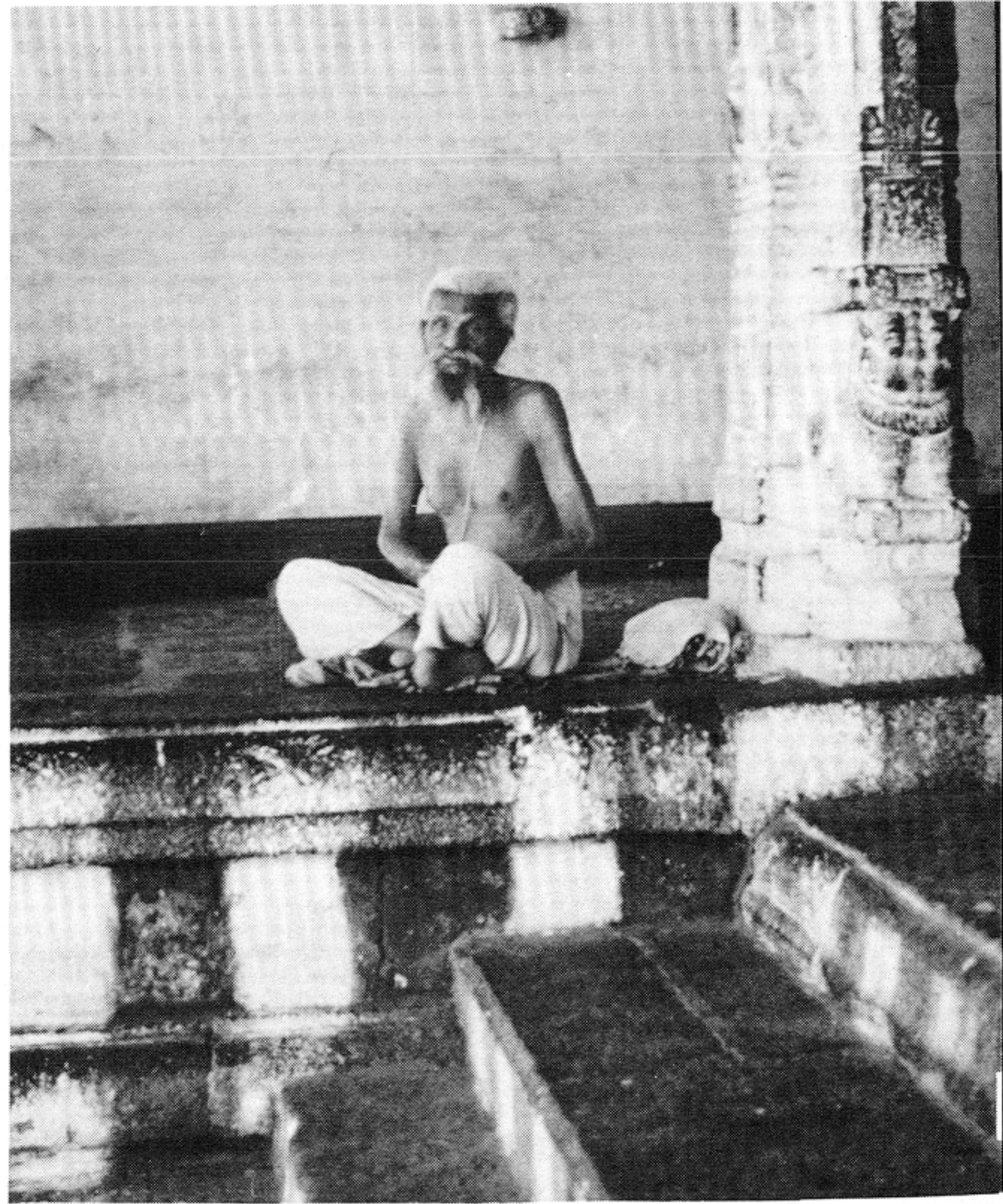
Indian crows, which, together with hordes of hawks and vultures, began to sweep and dive in search of fresh carrion—the corpses, animal or human, which had emerged on the landscape during the night or which might now be floating down the Ganges. The supply is always plentiful and ever self-renewing. (How grateful I was that these birds could somehow tell that my particular stench was less putrified and therefore insufficiently appetizing. Even so, it required a special exercise of faith to remain unperturbed as they continued to swoop just yards above my yet inert body.) Competing with the raucous crows were the gongs and chants of the temple priests who each dawn call the faithful to worship—to my ears less enchanting than otherwise because overamplified and distorted through blaring loudspeakers. (Even earlier similar sounds had already been broadcast by Mullahs from the Muslim section calling their fellows to prayer and waking many a Hindu and Western visitor in the process. This ritual is typical in fact of most cities in the north of this country with the world's still second-largest Muslim population, larger even than that of Pakistan.) Then there was the garrulous, quarrelsome old beggar woman who also in the early dawn always planted herself beneath my roof to accost the many pilgrims who deem it especially auspicious to arrive at the Ganges before sunup. The day's continuing cacophony would later be interspersed with more delightful sound—the flutes and drums of an occasional wedding party wending its way to Mother Ganga for her blessing.

If I could ignore the old woman, the birds, and the electronic chants, I could not be oblivious to something else. What most urgently aroused me from my slumber was the awareness that sometime within that first half hour after sunrise my roof and those roofs about me would be invaded by dense packs of brown monkeys of all sizes and stages of growth, the newly born clinging to their mothers' abdomens as the mothers leaped from one cornice or precarious landing to the next and

Reflections from the Ganges

came within arm's length of us in search of anything we humans might have left lying about—a book, a pair of spectacles, a piece of clothing, or anything edible. These brazen mischief-makers, totally oblivious to the humans about them, would comb our territory undeterred, as if it were their turn on the roof now and ours to descend indoors. The least threatening gesture on our part would provoke a frightening show of fangs and, if we were not careful, a rabies-infested bite. The Indians have learned to be equally oblivious to the monkeys—it is the best form of self-protection—but I could not. They were too much of a novelty. It was too curious finding yourself, as you might at the zoo, suddenly inside a cage with them. And in appearance, in behavior, in their thought processes, they seemed too much like ourselves not to study. Later in the day the “monkey man” would come, bringing with him two of them, dressed in a *sari* and a *kurta*. At his command and for the rupee they collected from your hand, the monkeys would go through the postures of dance, diving, prayer, lovers' embrace—which only reinforced the illusion that you could somehow commune with them and learn their secret thoughts.

One more unforgettable sound and image which so sharply recurs is that of another venerable beggar, a refugee from Calcutta, who also made his station on the footpath by my building and who literally “sang for his supper.” What right had this utterly destitute and feeble old man, on the verge of his dying, to the thrilling, passionate voice which penetrated our souls and resembled nothing so much as that of a flamenco gypsy bewailing some dark amorous tragedy? Except that this old man on the banks of the Ganges was praising with deepest love, and in Bengali, the “sweetest” of the subcontinent's languages (he knew no Hindi), his Lord Krishna. The man so impressed us that my hosts engaged him for a farewell concert on my last night in Varanasi—again on my rooftop. During my four months in India I had religiously avoided the wiles of its ubiquitous professional beggars. But on the evening of this man's recital, I





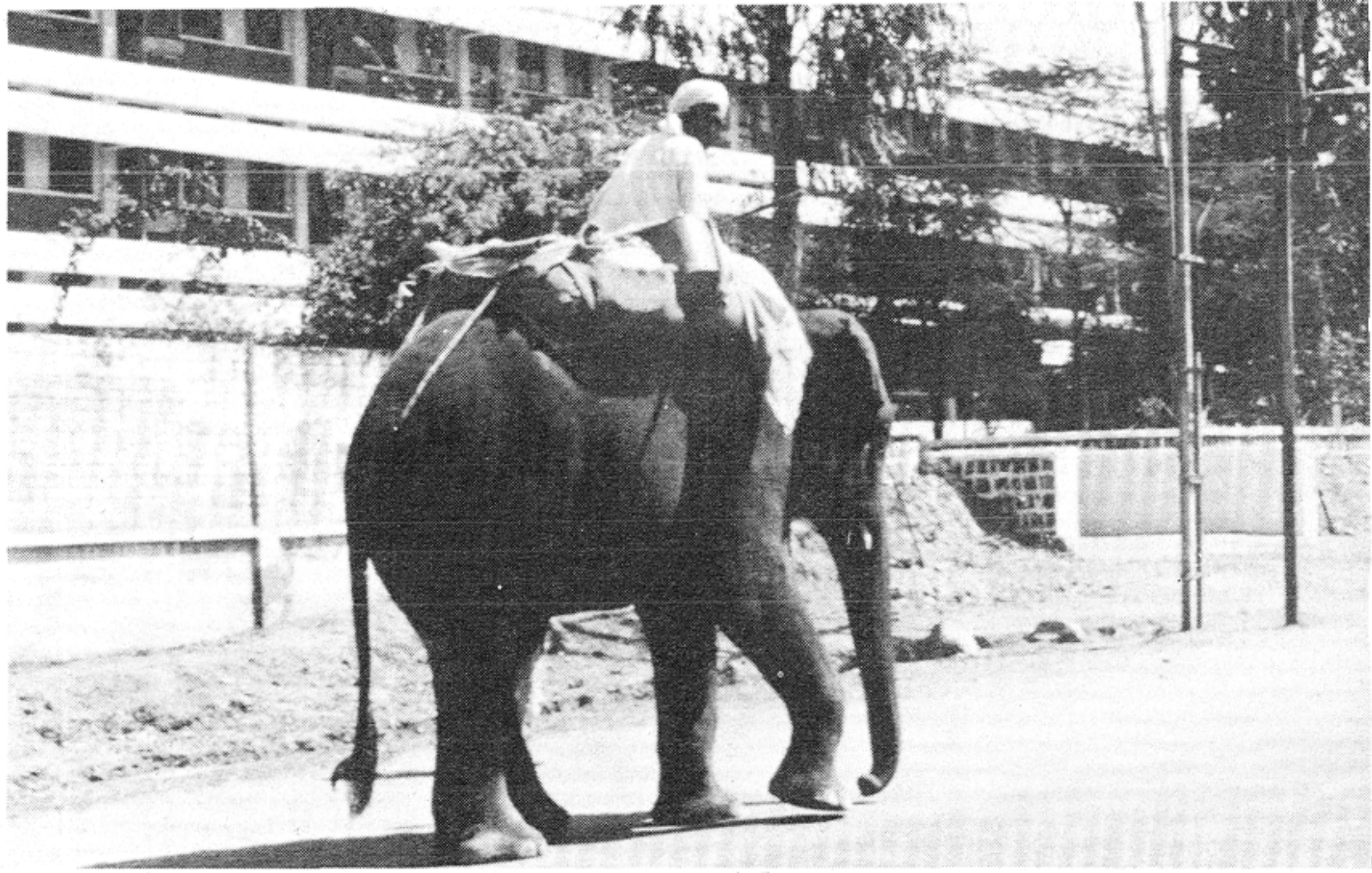
awarded him forty rupees (or four dollars), for him, I'm sure, the means of avoiding starvation for at least another month with a plentiful supply of rice. Another beggar, an amputee whom I could see from another window at the small linga and open shrine on another side of my building, never seemed to demand a contribution, but gave one instead. At midday a cow would approach his sweat-encrusted body, which he would then offer, one limb at a time, including the stump of his leg, for its surface salt. The pleasure

he took in being so licked was clearly sensual. But who could begrudge him what might have been his only daily pleasure? Later, as I emerged onto the stoop of my house in a busy part of this very congested city of several million, I encountered the muzzle of yet another scrawny milk cow, ready to lick me too, if she could. My front door opened onto the small courtyard opposite the domicile of my landlord, an enterprising, propertied Brahmin priest. Here he kept cows and goats and buffalo in numbers hard to believe to provide his family and doubtless several customers with milk and curd and butter. It was some trick wending your way around those fairly docile beasts and carefully avoiding their ever-new piles of droppings—particularly at night—droppings which also provided the landlord with fuel.

When we first went to India, we stayed in hotels or were guests of rather Americanized Indian Christians. But when I returned, after a trip home on unexpected family business, I settled in Varanasi, living in the environs of and taking meals with Hindus. I will always be grateful for this unplanned change because it enabled me to experience, rather than simply view from the outside, the life of those who still adhere to India's most ancient, most distinctive, and still dominant culture. The present life of Varanasi, as Diana Eck has pointed out in her recent book on the city, "reaches back to the sixth century B.C. in a continuous tradition. If we could imagine the silent Acropolis and the Agora of Athens still alive with the intellectual, cultural, and ritual traditions of classical Greece, we might glimpse the remarkable

Reflections

tenacity of the life of Kashi. Today Peking, Athens, and Jerusalem are moved by a very different ethos from that which moved them in ancient times,



but Kashi is not.”¹ What holds for Varanasi is as true of much else in India—Bombay and New Delhi being notable exceptions. But while the venerable Hindu tradition (particularly through its Buddhist offshoot) has been equally as influential as the Judaeo-Christian tradition in the history of mankind, there are seemingly no ties between them, at least no direct ones. However, I did discover that Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hinduism which in its classical form was codified by the grammarian Panini about 400 B.C., has a number of striking features in common with Old Church Slavonic, the sacred tongue of Orthodox Slavs first formulated in the ninth century A.D.—features both of grammar and word roots not shared by other Indo-European languages. This only suggests that, together with Persian, the Slavic and Sanskrit languages have over the millennia maintained a close kinship. Nevertheless, since the Aryan invasion some 4000 years ago, and thanks largely to the formidable natural barriers imposed by the Himalayas and the Central Asian desert, the speakers of these languages have pursued separate existences, with very different histories and traditions.

It is unthinkable to almost every American that we would ever adopt the traditional life-style of the Indian populace—unless we were reduced to it by dire emergency (which is *not* so unthinkable). Nevertheless, the Indians have found a way to cope with a number of the problems of our time and civilization which seem to be increasingly threatening to us. Take, for example, the problem of wasted resources and pollution. I would certainly not claim that India has achieved ecological stability. The extensive deforestation of recent decades has denuded hillsides and produced increased flooding, which annually claims thousands of lives. Still, I find it hard to imagine that, given our pattern of consumption, we would do nearly as well as the

¹Diana Eck, *Banaras: City of Light* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 5.

Indians, whose population is more than three times ours, while their total living space is only somewhat more than a third of the size of the United States.

How does the Indians' relatively more efficient ecology work? First—and I admit that this is largely by necessity (most Indians would probably indulge themselves as much as most Americans if they had the opportunity)—the life-style of most Indians is one of extreme austerity. Their means are terribly limited, and for that reason, as far as I could tell, nothing is ever wasted. In fact, it is an established function of certain “untouchables” to sift through every ounce of refuse. Out of the dusty trash heaps, pieces of cloth of whatever size and shape are salvaged and neatly laid aside, as is every shred of paper and every bit of plastic. Daily, at the cremation pyres in Varanasi, a man sifts the ashes to retrieve the gold from the coins placed in the corpses' mouths or the jewelry they might have worn prior to their burning. He earns a good five dollars a day in the process. But the recycling procedure really begins with those scavenger birds I described, which descend on the trash heaps in each neighborhood at the first light of day. Then come the cur dogs. Then the cows and buffalo, which feed on the leaves and stalks trimmed from plants; and the goats and swine, which in turn consume any discarded vegetable matter and then some. By the time the human sifters come along, very little organic matter is left. Rodents also do their share, but their number is kept in check by India's deadly snakes, which, though they may claim some 30,000 lives each year, also save the crops. Insects must also somehow fit into the ecological scheme. They seem to generate spontaneously in profuse numbers as soon as the monsoon arrives, and I noticed that, unlike myself, my hosts, though they were not Jains, never stamped on the large black stinging ants that swarmed across their floor—they would merely flick them away when the ants got on their person or near their food—nor seemed at all perturbed by the enormous cockroaches, an inch or more long, that congregated in the vicinity of the kitchen and the toilet. I had brought along some DDT powder with which I vowed to keep my own WC completely to

Reflections

myself. But after a while I began to feel guilty. What harm were those cockroaches doing me? The ethos of respect for all forms of life, which my hosts observed



so naturally, began to get to me, without my ever being lectured. Still, I became very comforted to see the little yellow lizards that darted around the walls and ceiling of my study, consuming so many of the bothersome insects that hovered around my reading lamp and boldly flew into my face.

Obviously, the ethic of personal renunciation and asceticism assists the Indians to reconcile themselves to the austerity which their circumstances have required of most of them. But are they any the worse off for it? Though a third of them exist under the starvation line, which is tragic and nothing to envy, the other two-thirds are, I suspect, on the whole healthier than most of us. They are much more trim. Few are overweight. (Their diet is so much lower in fats and sugars and excess protein.) And surely their immune systems are better developed, enabling those who reach adulthood to resist a variety of infectious diseases. (This is not to say that public sanitation is not still a serious problem and deserving of greater attention. The coliform count in the late summer at certain piers in Varanasi where the raw sewage runs directly into the Ganges goes as high, a British nurse informed me, as 6000. And yet, as my host pointed out, at least 200,000 Hindus in that city, throughout their lives, have drunk only Ganges water and claim that, because it is so holy, it cannot infect them.) On the whole, it seems to me that India has much to teach about basic survival to those of us in the West who consume far more than we need and who acquire far more than we can ever use, who avoid all contact with the vital, teeming earth, of which we are a part and upon which we have an unavoidable physical dependency but prefer not to acknowledge it. (Perhaps one of the most grotesque manifestations of our excessive affluence is the elaborate gas-guzzling campers, equipped with refrigerators, sinks, stoves, and portable commodes—in other words all the comforts, with which we pretend to venture into nature and then find ourselves in even closer proximity

to other such campers than to our neighbors back home.) Our materialistic acquisitiveness does more than waste resources. It has a dire effect on our

psyches, our values, and our seriously compromised spirituality. The other issues I will raise are, each in its own way, extensions of this one.

Our “hanging on” to material artifacts beyond our real need for them is paralleled by our obsession with remaining eternally young, attractive, and well preserved, even after death. I have never been anywhere where people were less fashion conscious than in India. Anything goes, as long as it will cover your essential nakedness. Nor have I ever been anywhere where the citizens were basically more modest. (The only exception that comes to mind is a hermaphrodite with “four o’clock shadow,” dressed in outlandish woman’s garb. But such persons, I was told, also constitute a social class, often serving as cooks for the wealthy.) Despite the often scanty summer attire, we never saw a naked Indian adult, but more than enough naked Europeans and Americans on the beaches in Goa and Kerala. As for this physical vessel which our own scriptures assure us must return to dust before its resurrection, I confess that one of my slight but pervasive apprehensions while in India was the fear that, in case of my own or my daughter’s death, our bodies would be disposed of in customary Hindu fashion—a truly inspired hygienic procedure, by the way—that is, burned within the first nine hours and consigned to Mother Ganga and hence into the mouth of some crocodile or else into the immense delta of silt which daily increases at the river’s mouth in the Bay of Bengal. I could not imagine a more ignominious, more impersonal, more “unhomey” fate for our remains, though probably the truth is that, as non-Hindus, we would have been considered too impure to pollute the Ganges in that fashion.

The problem of poverty is what likely comes first to most Westerners’ minds when they think of India—if they don’t also think of ornate temples and elephant-borne rajas or of dense tropical jungles, which, incidentally, in India are practically nonexistent (the Indian



Reflections

jungle is more like the canyons of our Wasatch Front). I had been warned about beggars that accost you at every street corner, warned that there are



too many to begin to help, that the most aggressive are hardened, exploitive professionals. And except for that wonderful minstrel from Calcutta, who more than earned his handout, I consistently resisted them with no unease of conscience. But after returning home, I reread Mosiah 4:26 and have ever since felt a little queasy, as I did after stamping on those ants and employing my lethal DDT.

In the West we are simultaneously exercised over matters of equality and social status, a kind of contradiction all its own. Thus we think disapprovingly of India's millennia-old system of *varnas*, or castes. I will not try to defend the caste system, which, by the way, was imposed on the indigenous Indians by the Aryans, our own ancient uncles. But it too has its advantages. The average Indian experiences considerably less stress and tension in his daily life than the average Westerner, largely because societal roles are pretty much predetermined by birth so that individual competitiveness and status consciousness are greatly reduced. I also have a sense that, lacking our rampant Western individualism where each one is encouraged to "do his own thing" to the exclusion of his neighbor, Indian life is somehow much less depersonalized. Though it is true that in a public setting Indians, like Russians, take but slight notice of any except their own acquaintances and that Indian society is extremely fragmented, social relations being restricted not only to ethnic and caste groups but also to the many professional subcastes, or *jati*, there is nevertheless the sense that relations are discrimination-free (at least psychologically). There is a felt equality, even mutual subordination, on the part of each individual in so vast a society—an openness to one another. (I am here reminded of the pioneer sociologist Emile Durkheim's recommendation before the turn of the century that, to avert the ills of modernity, "the centers of communal life" should undergo "*occupational decentralization*," whereby each corporation and group of workers "becomes a definite institution, a collective



personality, with its customs and traditions, its rights and duties, its unity.'²)

And what of Indian aesthetics? Are those intricately carved temple facades really so magnificent, or are they a little too "busy"? And what about the adornment of the body? Surely no more elegant or adaptable woman's garment exists than the classical *sari*. I also came to admire the beauty mark on the forehead much more than some Western women's grease-globuled lipstick. But why do Indian men wear so

many gaudy rings on the same hand, paint vermillion around the soles of their feet, and, in some cases, go to such lengths with the marking of their foreheads during *puja* and for the rest of the day? Call it gaudy if we will—another way is to see it as vibrant and life-affirming. Indian taste is nothing if not baroque. We see it in their imaginative textile design, in their sharp but subtly blended condiments, and in their exquisitely subtle, Bach-like classical music—their most accomplished art, I believe. It is *our* loss if we cannot learn to like it. It's really what you get used to, isn't it?

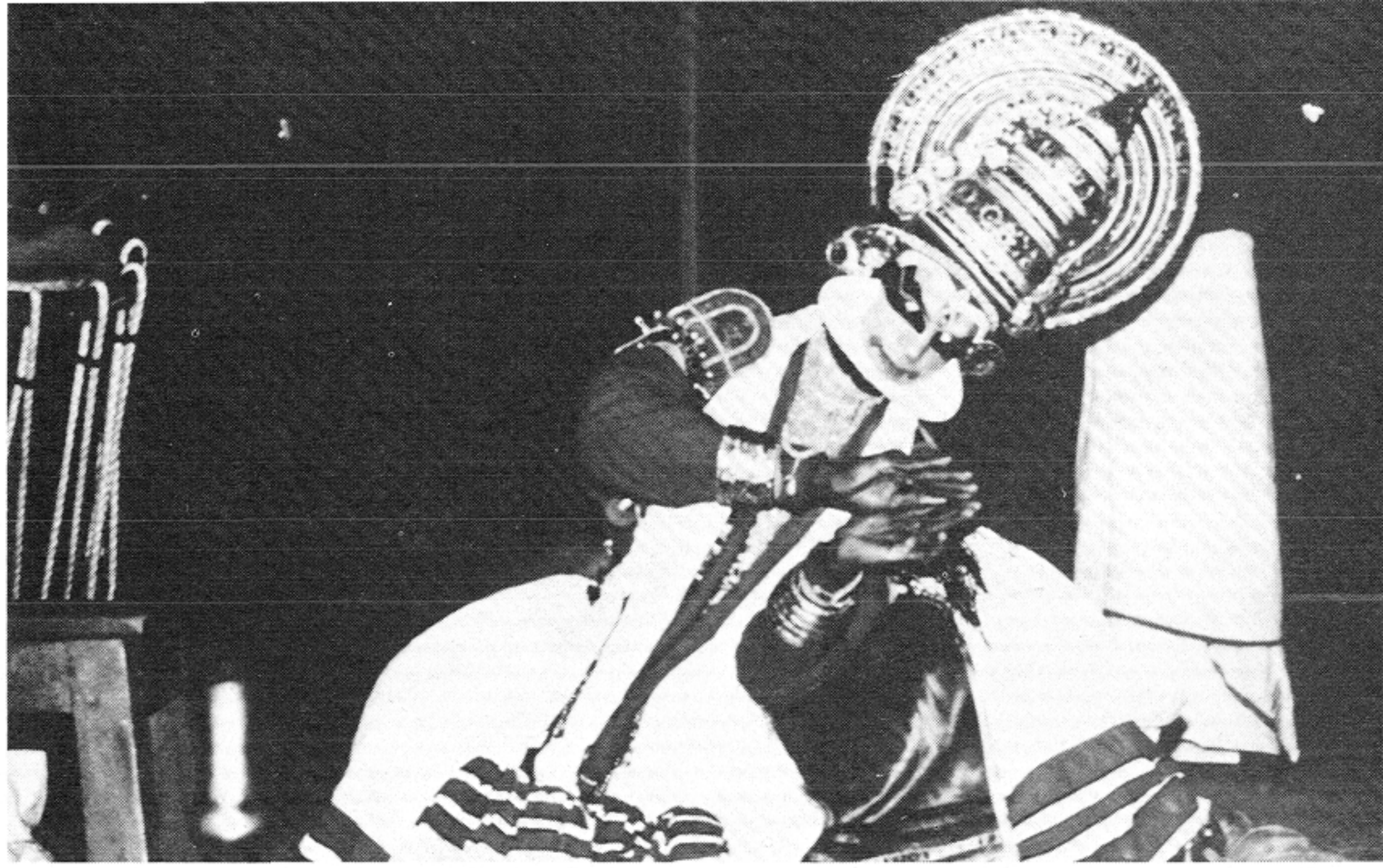
Another of the Indian mores, in common with the rest of Asia and, not many generations ago, much of Europe also, is that of arranged marriages. I have heard enough testimonials from very impressive and ostensibly quite compatible Indian couples that I must believe this system has its advantages, that the serious concern of elders who know their children well may produce better matches than the Western system where couples often quickly join together through sheer infatuation and, when that is dispelled, as quickly divorce. What such mores presuppose, of course, is an underplaying of romance and sex as life's highest end or as essential to instant happiness or as something which cannot naturally evolve between any two well-suited individuals after marriage. Although Western romantic values pervade

²Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (New York: Free Press, 1951), 390.

Reflections

India's escapist formula films, they do not as yet so much extend into ordinary life.

I do not wish to go too far in defending Indian customs



and institutions, because some terrible disparities need to be addressed, disparities which traditional institutions, holding so firmly to the status quo, in effect ignore. The economic inequities are all the more exaggerated because, as throughout the Middle East and earlier in China, it is beneath the dignity of the privileged classes to exert themselves in the world of work and thereby make the kind of contribution to society which, with their background and influence, they are so well endowed to make. In addition, many of the university students, the country's future leaders, are lazy and poorly motivated. Often, since they have been admitted to institutions by political machination, they have dangerous illusions of self-importance and foment riots and demonstrations and literally terrorize their teachers, university administrators, and other public officials. (Just try to ride in a first-class train compartment through the state of Bihar, even with a cowering railway official in your company, and try to keep the free-loading students from breaking in on you and crowding you out of your seat.) Despite the fact that India boasts a woman prime minister, the treatment of too many women remains shameful and inhumane. There are still child brides, brides murdered when their dowries don't come through, and widows cast onto the streets by their children. Women are the real underprivileged class and the ones who, as often as not, perform the most menial, backbreaking labor. Furthermore, the notion that one is by his or her merit or lack of merit born into his or her particular status cannot help but encourage the kind of social apathy and fatalistic neglect of the unfortunate which is only partially counteracted by the religious giving of alms.

But here we are faced by a dilemma, which makes me sound very contradictory indeed, because, on the other hand, so much in traditional Hindu religion if abandoned for the skepticism and secularism of the West would only compound many of India's problems and add to them all of our own. There are facets of the religious life



in India which we have lost and badly need to imitate or reacquire, unlikely as that prospect is. I have in mind the omnipresent openness to the forms of religious devotion and the spontaneous ardor of that devotion, the kind of "love affair" the Indian appears to engage in with his or her particular gods. And there is neither self-consciousness nor ostentation about such matters. They are a given, an essential part of human existence, and it is still not fashionable to disparage or question religion,

at least in public. Instead the onus is on those who do not worship or are not devout.

How does Indian religion compare with our own? In the first place, if there is still an area of the world where people build and go for worship to what they call temples, it is in Asia and particularly India. To be sure, these temples are less ancient than you might think. Most that are still extant were constructed in our own millennium. In fact, it was apparently the Greeks who, after Alexander, introduced the temple idea to India. Before that, the ancient rites which persist to this day—"temple rites" nevertheless, in our sense of the word—were performed out of doors. But like our own, Indian temples (which also have sunstones and moonstones) are laid out as *mandalas*, or symbolic representations of the cosmos. Shoes must be removed before one is permitted to tread on sacred ground, and each Hindu temple is located on a river or has a large tank installed next to it, enabling devotees to perform certain ablutions, rites of purification, before temple worship. If space permitted, I could quote lines from mankind's oldest scriptures, the Brahamana Vedas, whose incantations on various organs of the body as these are washed and anointed prior to the donning of a linen garment would not strike Latter-day Saints as so very strange. Cremation itself, which occurs outside the temples, is called "the last sacrifice" and is surely a vestige of the animal sacrifices described in the Vedas, in turn reminiscent of similar rites among both our early Aryan ancestors and the Semites. In performing

Reflections

such auspicious rites, Brahmins reverse the sacred white thread, which they receive during their initiation into manhood, from the left shoulder to the



right. (I witnessed a distinguished Brahmin priest doing just this as for twelve days he performed particularly sacred rites in behalf of his deceased mother. He was also required to wear, in addition to his thread, only a single seamless white piece of cloth. We in turn make much of what is signified by Jesus' cloak being similarly seamless.) Corresponding traditions persist among the equally ancient Parsis or Zoroastrians, now mostly situated in the vicinity of Bombay, whose youth while being initiated to the priesthood receive for lifelong wear a white undershirt. Indian weddings, too, are especially lavish. The groom arrives in a horse-drawn carriage dressed and accoutered like some great raja. Both bride and groom are adorned in kingly and queenly garb, portending, as it were, a kind of future status to which they could be heirs.

There are, of course, important differences as well. The claims made for the Hindu gods or for those whose lives they are meant to bless seem less universal and more limited to the peoples of the subcontinent itself, more like the Hebrews' exclusivity than like the claims made for Christ. The Hindu gods are less historically grounded, with those now most prominent incidental or nonexistent in Vedic times. (Shiva is in fact a Dravidian borrowing.) Moreover, the principles of voluntary suffering and self-sacrifice by an omnipotent god for all mankind and of the forgiveness of and imperative love for one's enemies—the ultimate Christian ethic—seem distinctive to the Christian tradition. One of my teachers introduced me to a *shloka* (or proverb) that could be translated as follows:

What is the goodness in a man if he is good to those who have helped him?

Only he is considered good who is kind even to those who have done him harm.

But when I asked if this sentiment were central to Vedic or Upanishadic ethics, she readily conceded that it was exceptional.

The answer given by the Savior to the question of why a man was born blind clearly separates his doctrine from all the fatalistic or deterministic

theologies of the world. When even the disciples wondered, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" the Savior's singular reply was "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:2-3).

In many respects, however, the major Asian religions clearly anticipate the Sermon on the Mount. There is also, both in Hinduism and in Buddhism, the aspiration to reunite with the cosmic divine and to acquire a godly nature through ascetic self-denial and right living. There is a concept of eternal progression, though the developmental stages are seen as involving more than one earthly probation. Consider this distinctively LDS statement from Brigham Young:

If anybody wants to know what the Priesthood of the Son of God is, it is the law by which the worlds are, were, and will continue for ever and ever. It is that system which brings worlds into existence and peoples them, gives them their revolutions—their days, weeks, months, years, their seasons and times and by which they are rolled up as a scroll, as it were, and go into a higher state of existence.³

How reminiscent this now seems of the thought one encounters in Hindu and Hindu-derived statements. In addition there is the interesting principle of *bhakti*, or divine love, according to which "God is like a father to his son, like a friend to his friend, like a lover to his beloved"; and "What God wants from man is his love to Him, his surrender to Him and his service to Him. It is only from the love of God that the knowledge of God arises. Unless man has the love of God he can never know God and his greatness and grace."⁴

I have no illusions that many Indians live up to the lofty universal precepts which are so vividly and unabashedly extolled in Hinduism.

³*Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1925), 201.

⁴S. Rangachar, *Early Indian Thought* (Mysore: Geetha Book House, 1964), 239, 240.

Reflections from the Ganges

Like most Christians, most Hindus observe the highest ideals of their religion mostly in the breach and by default. It is also doubtless true that the relative innocence of Indians is protected by their limited opportunity to become acquisitive, promiscuous, or highly critical of their traditions. Still, among them are individuals who remarkably exemplify the very values we hold sacred. Two such were the gifted and giving teachers I was fortunate to engage in Jabalpur and Varanasi. Shrimati Dr. Rama Pande, with a Ph.D. in Vedic Sanskrit, gave up a promising scholarly career to serve her family's needs. Without making a fetish of her faith, she renounced the wearing of jewelry ten years ago and more recently the viewing of films, even those with scripts written by her brother who is a successful screen-writer in Bombay. She did this so that she would be less distracted by this world and have more time for others. Without my requesting it, she provided me with a simplified version of the Sermon on the Mount in Sanskrit, and she is sought after not only by friends and family but also by the young prospective Methodist ministers who study with her to resolve the disputes that arise within their Christian community. My saintly Hindi teacher in Varanasi, Shri Virendra Singh, after concluding his own formal schooling at age fifteen, founded a village school for illiterates, which, after eight years, enrolled 120 students and required the assistance of three additional teachers. He refuses to wear his Kshatria caste thread as a sign of status, confronts his Brahmin landlord and others when they are duplicitous and manages to win their respect in the process, and his personal life would be exemplary for any Christian. He and his wife gave up tea (an unheard of sacrifice in India) so their *girls* can attend a better school. Both Dr. Pande and Mr. Singh radiate that special "light" we read about in John and in Doctrine and Covenants 88, as does Reverend K. Singh, the former Brahmin who is now the dynamic minister of the Assembly of God church in Jabalpur, and who one Sunday unhesitatingly invited me to preach the sermon.



I have come to realize that in the things that matter most there are others in this world, not even Christian, who have much to teach us. My associa-

tion with such people has only further enhanced my respect for the gospel of Jesus Christ, which, without necessarily attributing it to Him, they so impressively exemplify. What these people have to offer, like the gospel itself, is so simple and accessible, yet so free from glitter and sensation, that for the most part they go unnoticed, though their worth is known to those whose lives they touch and whom they motivate to become *their* better selves. Theirs is the sainthood to which we should all aspire. Solzhenitsyn's eulogy of a simple Russian peasant woman (who in Soviet society is everyone's scapegoat—the butt of scorn—*and support*) is a fitting tribute to such persons:

We all lived beside her, and never understood that she was that righteous one without whom, according to the proverb, no village can stand.

Nor any city.

Nor our whole land.⁵



⁵Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "Matryona's House," in *We Never Make Mistakes*, trans. Paul W. Blackstock (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1963), 100.

Elizabeth to Zacharias

barely heard Mary's steps outside,
For she moves like a light wind
Through leaves. She blooms—
A desert flower in time of rain.
Her eyes are bluer than I remember;
They are the blue of a sky beyond the one
We know. I heard her young voice
Calling me as doves call the morning.
I dropped the bread dough on the table
And rose to meet her.
I stood still, for our child moved
Beneath my wrinkled hands. I felt the pulse
Of Moses and Abraham. The promises live within us,
The priesthood moves in our dark sanctums,
A glimmer of prophets' words in the night
Of my coming age and the centuries of wandering
Our people shall know.

—Cara Bullinger

Resurrection Morning

Beyond open windows, behind trees,
He stands, feeling the green wind
Touch the fine-etched leaves.

Sun flings new-day shadows,
Moving the dim lake to sing
Psalms with hands stroking the joy-wood.

A blind worm lifts its head,
And a lily proffers a petal
From its leafy bed to the sky's warmth.

Energy pulses in his wrists
Like air beating the clouds
Where thunder cracks and lingers

At the bend of earth and sky.
In his hand the lily is lamb-soft
As a sigh before he ascends.

—Cara Bullinger

Making a Mormon of Milton

John S. Tanner

I. THE URGE TO MERGE

On several occasions in *Paradise Lost*, John Milton invokes his muse, the Holy Spirit, to reveal to his sightless eyes insight about “things invisible to mortal sight” (3.56; see also 1.1–26; 7.1–39).¹ With the possible exception of William Blake, no other major English poet lays greater claim to the role of poet–seer. Even from his earliest poems, Milton hopes someday to “attain / To something like Prophetic strain” (“Il Penseroso,” 174). Struck by the many similarities between Milton’s great epic and Mormon doctrine, many LDS readers assume that the poet in fact attains the “prophetic strain” wished for in youth and claimed in old age. Indeed, many of my students and some of my colleagues seem to regard Milton as a sort of unbaptized Mormon: teach him that angels are really the premortal spirits of mankind and, *voilà*, he is fit for the font and full fellowship, his greatest work ready for review by the Correlation Committee.

As a Mormon Miltonist myself, I confess that I am of two minds about this view of Milton as an unbaptized Mormon. On the one hand, I recognize numerous remarkable and largely unsuspected parallels between Miltonic and Mormon theology, parallels entailing some of our most distinctive and even “heretical” teachings, such as our belief in material monism and our historic acceptance of

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¹With two exceptions, all references to Milton’s works are made to *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1957). *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence, against Smectymnuus* is in volume 3 and *De Doctrina Christiana* is in volume 15 of *The Works of John Milton*, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933). *De Doctrina Christiana* is more complete in the Patterson edition than is the same work, *Christian Doctrine*, in the Hughes edition; therefore the work has been quoted sometimes from the one edition and sometimes from the other. *Paradise Lost* is cited in the text by book and line; Milton’s other works are cited by title and page.

polygamy.² These shared ideas ought to be more widely known by both LDS and non-LDS readers of the poet.³ On the other hand, however, I fear that the number and degree of our shared beliefs with Milton are often overstated, resulting in significant distortion of both Miltonic and Mormon doctrine, each of which has its own integrity. We need to be more judicious in our attempts to assimilate the poet into the fold.

Because Restoration theology adopts a broadly inclusive view of truth—whatever is true is the gospel—the impulse to discover proto-Mormons among our favorite writers becomes nearly irresistible.⁴ I recall as an undergraduate at BYU that nearly every author we read was upon occasion seen as a sort of closet Mormon: from Shakespeare to Swift, Thoreau to Twain, Kierkegaard to C. S. Lewis. While this inclusiveness is admirable, it is attended by perils. Frequently our assimilative zeal is prompted by insufficient knowledge, both about the author in question and about the distinctive character of LDS theology. Assimilation often occurs at the cost of what Duns Scotus calls *haecceitas*, or the “this-ness” of a thing—that is, the particularities which render an object what it is rather than what it may resemble.⁵ Like objects, ideas have their “this-ness” too; they have a singularity and integrity which must be respected. Injudicious comparisons ignore *haecceitas*, raising general likenesses to the status of exact equivalencies and reducing to insignificance formidable discrepancies arising out of differences in history, culture, and biography. All likenesses are, of course, partial; we need not forego finding resemblances (a basic cognitive operation) simply because the world presents few clones. But we ought to attend to differences as well as similarities when drawing comparisons.

In comparing Milton to Mormonism, this means attaching crucial caveats to supposed similarities regarding shared beliefs in such things

²Words such as *heresy*, *unorthodox*, and *heterodox* are meant as relative terms; they imply no judgment. One Christian’s orthodoxy is another’s heresy.

³I have outlined the intersections between Miltonic and Mormon thought for non-LDS Miltonists. This essay is an attempt to do the same for LDS readers, as well as to address the problems of assimilation generally. See John S. Tanner, “Milton among the Mormons,” in *Ring the Bell Backward*, Proceedings of the First International Milton Symposium, ed. by Ronald G. Shafer (Indiana, Pa.: Indiana University of Pennsylvania Imprint Series, 1982), 123–32.

⁴For a compilation of statements regarding this inclusive view of the gospel, see Hugh Nibley’s article on Brigham Young and education: “Educating the Saints,” in *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless*, volume 1 in the Religious Studies Monograph Series, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University (Salt Lake City: Publisher’s Press, 1978), 229–60. For a more recent reconfirmation of this catholicity, see the 15 February 1978 Statement of the First Presidency.

⁵Efrem Bettoni, *Duns Scotus: The Basic Principles of His Philosophy*, trans. Bernadine Bonansea (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1961), 60–65.



Milton, at Age 62

as human dignity and freedom, the fortunate fall, and the nature of God the Father and the Son. On these and other doctrines, surface similarities frequently conceal subsurface divergences. Yet, curiously, also beneath the surface lie a number of shared heterodoxies that surprisingly align Milton with some of Mormonism's most revolutionary beliefs. Hence, my thesis is that Milton is both less *and* more like a Mormon than is generally supposed. If this seems somehow double-minded, I take solace in the similar attitude Jesus adopted toward those on the periphery of the kingdom: "he that is not against us is for us," and, a few verses later, "he that is not with me is against me" (Luke 9:50; 11:23). There is a time to count allies and a time to close ranks.

II. THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM

Historically Mormons have welcomed Milton as an ally. Orson F. Whitney imitated *Paradise Lost* in his *Elias, an Epic of the Ages* and dreamed of the day when the Latter-day Saints "will yet have Miltons and Shakespeares of our own. God's ammunition is not exhausted."⁶ This is a dream that persists among us, judging from a recent twelve-book epic in blank verse by R. Paul Cracroft, and from the encouragement Church leaders give to Miltonic enterprises by Mormon artists.⁷ Doubtless some LDS enthusiasm springs merely from Milton's reputation as the greatest Christian poet in English, if not indeed in Western civilization, rather than from genuine familiarity with his work. Still other, more informed LDS admiration of Milton arises from his eloquent articulation of general Christian ideas. But it is incorrect to assume, as many of my students do, that because Milton espouses Christian commonplaces his work is, *ipso facto*, Mormon; for many apparent doctrinal coincidences between Milton and Mormonism derive from a common basis in Christian scripture and tradition, not from teachings unique to either the poet or the LDS church. Moreover, as contemporary Christianity sheds ever more of its historic dogmas—such as a belief in a real hell and devil, or in a war in heaven, or in an Adam, or even in a divine savior—Milton's poem may increasingly seem to have few analogues outside the LDS faith. Yet in fact it is deeply embedded in a

⁶"Home Literature," in *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*, ed. Richard H. Cracroft and Neal E. Lambert (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), 206.

⁷R. Paul Cracroft, *A Certain Testimony: A Mormon Epic in Twelve Books* (Salt Lake City: Epic West, 1979); Boyd K. Packer, "The Arts and the Spirit of the Lord," *Brigham Young University Studies* 16 (Summer 1976): 575–88; Spencer W. Kimball, "The Gospel Vision of the Arts," *Ensign* 7 (July 1977): 2–5.

long, complex Christian tradition.⁸ Before we claim Milton as uniquely our own, we would do well to become more informed of what a prodigiously well-educated seventeenth-century Christian could have garnered from his own resources and of what must be his own invention—or a gift from his muse.

Without a well-informed sense of Milton's intellectual milieu, the reader may easily conflate Christian commonplaces with truly uncommon dogmas. In their first flush of enthusiasm for *Paradise Lost*, for example, my young LDS readers often urge parallels in the following areas: the nature of the Godhead, Satan's rebellion and the War in Heaven, the Creation, the fortunate fall, free will, obedience and repentance, the Atonement of the Son, and the Apostasy. With the exception of his views on the Creation and the Apostasy, however, Milton's ideas on none of these topics is peculiarly LDS in character. Many of Milton's beliefs on these subjects, moreover, are distinctly *unlike* those espoused by the Church.

Consider, for example, Milton's conception of the War in Heaven. Milton's primary sources for his description of Satan's rebellion and the subsequent war are the Bible (especially Isaiah and Revelation), traditional Christian exegesis, and classical accounts of epic warfare (especially those by Hesiod, Homer, and Vergil).⁹ The result is a war quite unlike that envisioned by most Latter-day Saints. For Mormons, the War in Heaven is seen principally as a war of words and wills—like the debates between Abdiel and Satan (5.809–907; 6.131–87); in *Paradise Lost* the war assumes the character of a pitched Homeric battle. Many Mormon readers gloss over this crucial difference. Similarly, they tend to see the fallen angels through Mormon lenses. Yet the rebel angels are not only *not* the unembodied spirits of mankind, but their war has nothing to do with human freedom, for man does not yet exist. Further, the revolt is provoked not by Satan's plan to deny men free agency, but by his envy of the Son (5.600–72). True, as a figure of magnificent intellect, enormous persuasiveness, and insatiable ambition, Milton's Satan resembles the fallen angel of light in the Pearl of Great Price; but his motives, as well as the issues and conduct of the war, are all conceived of quite differently.

⁸Book length studies treating Milton's use of scripture and exegetical tradition include J. M. Evans, *"Paradise Lost" and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), and C. A. Patrides, *Milton and the Christian Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

⁹For a fuller account of the sources contributing to Milton's war in heaven, see Stella P. Revard, *The War in Heaven: "Paradise Lost" and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980).

Similar qualifications need to be attached to any number of other fundamental doctrinal similarities, including that most basic premise of belief: the nature of the Godhead. Owing to the many colloquies between the Father and the Son depicted in *Paradise Lost*, most LDS readers assume that Milton must share our Arian view that Christ is not consubstantial with God the Father. Milton's actual views on the Godhead, however, are not nearly so simplistically antitrinitarian as they may at first appear. Hence, his possible Arianism has long been a matter of scholarly controversy.¹⁰ One has only to read his long and labored argument for a subordinationist position vis-a-vis the trinity (*Christian Doctrine*, 932–64) to recognize that whatever Milton believed on the nature of the Godhead it is quite far removed from the unambiguous, bold declaration of modern revelation: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also" (D&C 130:22). Milton admits that it is legitimate to conceive of God anthropomorphically, for this is how God describes himself in scripture. But the human form and attributes ascribed to God, Milton concedes, may be metaphoric: merely the way an ineffable deity accommodates his self-revelation to finite human understanding (*Christian Doctrine*, 905–6). In *Paradise Lost*, the poet typically describes the Father as light and as a bodiless voice, rarely with corporeal images. Characterized as somewhat severe and dispassionate, the epic's God often seems quite unlike the loving Father in Heaven regularly invoked by Latter-day Saints in prayer and song. The Mormon God—my God—weeps before Enoch over his wayward, rebellious creatures (see Moses 7:28–29). Milton's God, in a particularly disagreeable moment of irony, feigning to be fearful of the rebel armies, laughs the apostate angels to scorn (5.719–32).

The fall that Mormons find so fortunate, Milton regards, at best, as a mixed blessing. True, both his Adam and the Adam of modern revelation rhapsodize about a fortunate fall (12.469–84; Moses 5:10), but if God converts sin into an occasion for rejoicing by sending a savior, He also loudly decries Adam's sin: "Happier had it suffic'd him to have known / Good by itself, and Evil not at all" (ll.88–89). Similarly to Milton, man's first disobedience marks a "heinous offence," comprehending in itself a litany of sins. "For what sin can be named, which was not included in this one act?" Milton asks, and enumerates a

¹⁰W. B. Hunter, C. A. Patrides, and J. H. Adamson, *Bright Essence: Studies in Milton's Theology* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971) contains several important articles dealing with Milton and Arianism, as well as a useful bibliography.

catalogue of evils: “distrust in the divine veracity, and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of Satan; unbelief; ingratitude; disobedience; gluttony; in the man excessive uxoriousness . . . parricide, theft, invasion of the rights of others, sacrilege, deceit, presumption in aspiring to divine attributes, fraud . . . pride, and arrogance” (*De Doctrina Christiana*, 181). This is a far cry from the Mormon exculpations of Adam’s transgression (not sin) as a wise and mature choice.¹¹

We in the LDS church take a warmly enthusiastic view of the Fall; it is the enabling condition of progress. Milton’s theodicy implies that the Fall is truly tragic (compare 9.6), working great evil upon the human family, who had they *not* fallen might have progressed up the scale of perfection to the stature of angels (5.496–505).¹² This view of the Fall as an impediment to growth, precisely the inverse to LDS doctrine, is largely overlooked by Mormon readers in their enthusiasm for Adam’s view of the situation—and for Milton’s famous view in *Areopagitica*. It is easy to forget, however, that Milton’s magniloquent argument in behalf of growth through trial is couched in explicitly postlapsarian terms: “As . . . the state of man *now* is” (now that Adam has botched things up) we can know good only by evil; “the knowledge and survey of vice is *in this world* [i.e., this fallen world] so necessary to the constituting of human virtue” (*Areopagitica*, 729; my italics). This is not an argument about how the world might have been had Adam not fallen. For all its sweeping rhetoric, Milton’s argument is situated within the conditions governing this fallen world and, more tactically, directed to the debates prevailing in Parliament over censorship. Milton’s generalizations fall somewhat short of Lehi’s universal claims about the necessity of opposition in *all* things (see 2 Ne. 2:11–29), which they seem to echo.

Milton’s thoughts about purification by trial differ from Lehi’s on yet other counts. Struck by the resemblance between Lehi’s blessing of Jacob and *Areopagitica*, a Mormon critic whose paper I recently reviewed quoted the following phrase from Milton’s tract to corroborate the Book of Mormon parallels: “That which purifies us is trial, and trial

¹¹For a representative collection of LDS statements to this effect, see Wilson K. Andersen’s unit “The Fall—A Planned, Purposive Change,” in *The Gospel in Principle and Practice* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 183–91. Joseph Fielding Smith’s comment from 14 January 1961 is illustrative: “What did Adam do? The very thing the Lord wanted him to do. I hate to hear anybody call it a sin, for it wasn’t a sin” (ibid., 186).

¹²Dennis R. Danielson, *Milton’s Good God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 164–201; see also his chapter “The Unfortunate Fall,” 202–27.

is by what is contrary'' (*Areopagitica*, 728). What this assimilationist conveniently leaves off the quotation is the introductory clause, which reads: "Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather'' (*Areopagitica*, 728). Had he pursued Milton's meaning here, the critic would have discovered that beneath the surface similarity loom chasms of differences separating the poet from father Lehi. For as the deleted phrase implies, Milton believes in original sin; he believes man is born with congenital debilities deriving from the fall of Adam and inexorably passing themselves down from parent to child to the latest generation (*Christian Doctrine*, 981–82). We inherit an impure legacy—physical and moral. Furthermore, Milton continues, the spirit that animates our physical bodies possesses no individual existence before our birth nor separate life after our deaths, until the Resurrection (*Christian Doctrine*, 979–81). Thus, an examination of a clause excised from a sentence otherwise so LDS in sentiment leads to discovery of doctrines repugnant to our beliefs: original sin as opposed to original innocence (see Moro. 8; D&C 74:7), Miltonic mortalism in contrast to Mormon eternalism.¹³

Evidently, Mormons and Milton may be sharply differentiated on any number of doctrines. Indeed, the more one learns of the particular complexities of Milton's thought, the more hesitant one becomes to locate him under any convenient rubric, Mormon or otherwise. One final example of this comes from the latest scholarship on Milton's theology. Milton, like Mormons, is often associated with what is labelled Arminianism, a theological position deriving from the writings of Jacobus Arminius, a seventeenth-century Dutch theologian who emphasized human free will in contrast to Calvin's insistence upon human impotence in the face of absolute divine sovereignty. Given Milton's stress upon human choice (repeatedly dramatized in his work, from "Comus" to *Paradise Regain'd*), it would seem logical to associate Milton with Arminianism—until one remembers that this label was also applied to papists and High Churchmen, such as the Archbishop Laud, implacable enemy of the Puritans. Recent scholarship is now providing a corrective to our easy categorization of Milton as Arminian, reminding us that the term's religious and political meanings altered sharply over the course of Milton's

¹³Mortalism describes the belief that the soul dies with the body (Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* [New York: Penguin, 1977], 317–23; *Christian Doctrine*, 979–80). Eternalism, by analogy, defines the doctrine that the soul is coeternal with God (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1938], 352–54; Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965], 49–57).

tumultuous life, as did his own views.¹⁴ At a minimum, we must recognize some incongruity in ascribing to Milton, proponent of religious tolerance and inward paradises, the very label that his contemporaries applied to Laud, enforcer of external conformity and ritual.

And I would suggest, in passing, that comparable complexities govern Mormon doctrine on the issue of works and grace. It is a mistake to align Mormonism exclusively with either Protestant individualism and interiority on the one hand, or Catholic authoritarianism and externality on the other. To stress one pole at the expense of the other is not to characterize our doctrine, but to caricature it. Similarly, Milton's thought cannot, without caricature, be neatly brought under any simple religious umbrella, as his life testifies. Milton's career traces a steady disillusionment with organized religion as he is "church-outed." Finally, composing his own theology, he becomes a "church of one" (*The Reason and Church Government*, 671). Mormonism, while finding nothing to fault and much to admire in Milton's rejection of apostate religion, is likewise itself *sui generis*.

III. WAS MILTON'S MUSE A MORMON? TWO TEST CASES

If Miltonic and Mormon thought are unique—each possessing its own individuality and integrity—it is nevertheless true that the two belief-systems also intersect, and often in singular ways. Seeing these remarkable coincidences of doctrine, we in the Church want to explain them as cases of clear inspiration: here is evidence that the poet did indeed, as he claimed, receive ideas from nightly visitations by his muse (7.28–30). It is instructive to examine more carefully the hypothesis that Milton and Joseph Smith had access to the same source of inspiration, that they shared the same heavenly muse.

In order to test this hypothesis, it is necessary to locate some point of consensus which Milton and the Prophet share virtually alone, exclusive of the rest of Christendom. While no unique convergences come to mind, I can think of two such shared anomalies. The first entails their views of creation, the second their accounts of a Christian Adam. Unlike most Christian theologians since Augustine, Milton did not believe in *ex nihilo* creation, or creation out of nothing; rather he endorsed the view that God fashioned the universe out of preexistent matter, matter which is "intrinsically good" (*Christian Doctrine*, 976). Yet Miltonic materialism, implicit in *Paradise Lost's*

¹⁴A fine discussion on this will soon be published by Dennis Danielson in the forthcoming Proceedings of the Second International Milton Symposium, in the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Imprint Series.

description of Chaos (“Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave,” 2.911), was not recognized until his long-lost theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, was found and translated in 1820. Previously, Milton’s imagery, if regarded at all, was dismissed as poetic license, no more radical than the imagery of Genesis itself. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, however, Milton boldly reasons that neither the Hebrew, nor the Greek, nor yet the Latin verb for *create* can possibly signify “create out of nothing” (*Christian Doctrine*, 975–76). Joseph Smith not only agrees with Milton (and a minority of other thinkers, it must be acknowledged) in rejecting *ex nihilo* creation, but he makes his argument in remarkably similar terms. The Prophet also avers that matter is intrinsically good (compare D&C 88:12; 93:33)—so good that it is an honor and a blessing, rather than a shame and a hindrance, that we (like God) have bodies. In another place the Prophet reasons that the Hebrew verb for *create* cannot mean “create out of nothing” but would be better translated “to organize”: “Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter, which is element.”¹⁵

Does this stunning coincidence of doctrine and logic provide evidence that the same voice dictated the ideas to both men? Well, yes and no. The case for whole-cloth inspiration is not incontrovertible. Others have disputed the logic-defying doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Genesis itself is more easily compatible with *creatio ex materia* than with patristic theories of *ex nihilo* creation. Moreover, even the remarkably similar linguistic reasoning may be explicable by the existence of a common third source. Milton, who knew Hebrew and things Jewish, likely knew that Ibn Ezra, author of an important late medieval commentary on the Hebrew text, mounts the same case about the verb *create*. Milton’s commentary follows that of Ibn Ezra quite closely, even adducing the same proof text from Isaiah.¹⁶ That Joseph Smith directly knew Ibn Ezra seems highly improbable. But his Jewish Hebrew teacher, Joshua Sexias, likely did. It is possible that Joseph Smith learned the substance of Ibn Ezra’s gloss on the Hebrew verb *create* from his teacher. Indeed, the lexical expertise in Hebrew evident in the Prophet’s explication of *create*, which sounds so Rabbinic, renders Sexias a likely source. Both Milton and Joseph Smith, then, may have shared indirectly a common “horizontal” source, one that

¹⁵*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 351–52; compare *Christian Doctrine*, 977: “No created thing can be finally annihilated.”

¹⁶Harris Francis Fletcher, *Milton’s Rabbinical Readings* (1930; reprint, N.p.: Archon Books, 1967), 81–83.

can partly account for the similarities in their argument.¹⁷ But does this rule out a “vertical” source for this shared anomaly—that is, revelation from on high? No, for both men still had to be receptive to ideas that were possibly prompted by things encountered in their respective environments. In their bold choices, surely the light of inspiration must be allowed to play, but we ought not to overstate the claim. Some judicious restraint is called for in making a case for inspiration from the Spirit alone—all the more so because Milton does not arrive at exactly the same conclusion about preexistent matter as does Joseph Smith. While the Prophet understands that matter is coeternal with God, Milton rejects this truly revolutionary idea as “inconceivable,” opting instead for the position that matter is coterminous with God, that creation is *ex deo*, or out of God’s own substance.¹⁸

The second shared “heresy” that provides a good test case for inspiration regards stories about postlapsarian Adam’s conversion to Christian faith. This is even more anomalous than the denial of *ex nihilo* creation. Milton is almost alone among Christian thinkers in having Adam learn about the future atoning mission of that Second Adam, Jesus Christ. The idea that Adam knew about the Atonement and became a baptized Christian is, of course, familiar to readers of the Pearl of Great Price. Once again, if we look hard for Milton’s sources, we discover obscure Jewish traditions depicting fallen Adam’s colloquies with angels, and minority Christian opinions that he became a “Christian man.”¹⁹ Milton may have known of these traditions. But it is quite unlikely that Joseph Smith knew any of these specific sources. Does this incontrovertibly confirm mutually independent inspiration? No, for it is just possible that Joseph Smith knew about these or similar traditions regarding Father Adam through his New England environment. It may be, in fact, that *Paradise Lost* itself helped shape some such popular traditions in the New England mind, since the poem was enormously popular in early America, its influence waning about the time of Joseph’s birth.²⁰ Thus, although Joseph likely never read the poem, its ideas may have filtered into even the unlettered culture of rural upstate New York.

¹⁷The terms *horizontal* and *vertical* come from George T. Boyd, “Revelation,” in *Views on Man and Religion: Collected Essays of George T. Boyd*, comp. James B. Allen, D. C. LeCheminant, and D. J. Whittaker (Provo: Friends of George T. Boyd, 1979), 65–75.

¹⁸*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 352–54; *Christian Doctrine*, 976. For a discussion of background and sources for Milton’s denial of *ex nihilo* creation, see Patrides, *Milton and the Christian Tradition*, 26–53.

¹⁹Evans, “*Paradise Lost*” and the *Genesis Tradition*, 54, 291–92; Patrides, *Milton and the Christian Tradition*, 127, 259; Georgia B. Christopher, *Milton and the Science of the Saints* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 135–46.

²⁰George F. Sensabaugh, *Milton in Early America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), 282–305.

Yet, once again, the differences between Milton's and Mormonism's use of the tradition of a Christian Adam seem as striking as the similarities. In *Paradise Lost*, Adam's knowledge of futurity may be in part a poetic technique to implicate the reader in the narrative by tracing the consequences of the story to our day, and in another part a strategy for bringing the story around to Christ, the "greater Man" alluded to in the opening, without whose mission of restoration the poem could not become a theodicy justifying the ways of God to man but would remain a tragedy of disobedience, woe, and loss. Adam's conversion as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, by contrast, serves by no means only as incidental embellishment for the narrative but forms an integral part of the deepest and earliest structures of Mormon doctrine. The idea that Christianity exists before Christ informs the whole Book of Mormon narrative and is a central concept in what might be termed "dispensation theology," that is, the doctrine that the gospel was possessed by some people in every age.

These two "shared heresies"—creation from matter and the Christian conversion of Adam—indicate how difficult it is to make a watertight case that purely vertical inspiration operated upon Milton as I believe it did upon Joseph Smith. For those having eyes to see, the similarities suggest that Milton was inspired, but they do not confirm that his inspiration is either identical to Joseph Smith's or without precedent. Moreover, I know of *no* similarity between the beliefs of Milton and Joseph Smith that is wholly without precedent and that must, consequently, be ascribed either to pure chance or pure revelation. Furthermore, since *Paradise Lost* was reasonably well known in early New England, no such absolute proof of mutually independent originality is even theoretically possible. But the possibility of shared sources does not destroy the thesis of inspiration either. Indeed, inspiration explains rather better than chance the enormous number of resemblances between Milton's ideas and those of the restored gospel. Further, this hypothesis allows us to take Milton at his word—and the impassioned sincerity of his claim seems self-evident to me from the text—that his muse is not merely a conventional fiction lifted from epic poetry but a messenger from God himself: "For thou art Heav'nly, she an empty dream" (7.39).

IV. MILTON AS REVOLUTIONARY

That John Milton and Joseph Smith hear the Spirit speak related but differing words need not discredit the idea of inspiration.

The LDS church has always adopted an ample, generous view of God's revelations—accounting all truth, everything leading to Christ, as given of God (compare Moro. 7:15–18). And there are a remarkable number of instances where the two men speak with nearly the same voice. Often these coincidences involve Mormonism's most revolutionary tenets, as in the two examples discussed above. Milton is our ally even in that most controversial past Mormon practice of polygamy—and the early LDS apologists knew it! Milton and Luther are the two non-LDS defenders for polygamy most frequently cited by early nineteenth-century Mormon polemicists. Milton's defense of polygamy in *Christian Doctrine* was reprinted in 1854 in the *Millennial Star* and subsequently in other LDS polemic literature.²¹ And no wonder, for Milton's reasoning on the subject is as bold as it is unassailable: "Either therefore is polygamy a true marriage," he proclaims, "or all children born of that state are spurious; which would include the whole race of Jacob" (*Christian Doctrine*, 994). By just such scriptural syllogisms Orson Pratt thoroughly outmaneuvered a congressional chaplain in a famous debate.²²

That Milton could be numbered among the "polygamophiles" to this day shocks and surprises many readers who still cling to the stereotype of the poet as a staid, conservative champion of Christian "orthodoxy."²³ Nothing could be further from Milton's reputation among his contemporaries as a radical—a notorious regicide and libertine divorcer. Mormons probably find most to sympathize with in the revolutionary Milton, an image increasingly revived by modern scholarship.²⁴

For all his erudition, Milton was scarcely a servile slave to tradition but was prepared to reconstruct his beliefs from the ground up, and was contemptuous of the timid or lazy soul who "may commit the whole

²¹*Latter-day Saint Millennial Star* 16 (27 May, 3 June 1854): 321–24, 342–45; David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1982, 363–64, 383–84, 391–92. (I wish to thank Dr. Whittaker for alerting me to early Mormon pamphleteers' use of Milton. Whittaker's excellent study contains valuable comprehensive notes.)

²²Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1940), 452–53; Robert D. Hatch, "The Pratt–Newman Debate" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960); Orson Pratt, *The Bible and Polygamy* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Steam Printing Establishment, 1877).

²³Leo Miller, *John Milton among the Polygamophiles* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 180–82. The term *polygamophile* is Miller's invention.

²⁴Hill (in *Milton and the English Revolution*) provides the most extreme major reevaluation of Milton as a radical, but the trend has existed at least since Maurice Kelley examined the relation of *Paradise Lost* to *De Doctrina Christiana* in the early forties (*This Great Argument* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941]). Although Hill probably makes Milton too radical (see Andrew Milner, *John Milton and the English Revolution: A Study in the Sociology of Literature* [London: Macmillan, 1981], 195–209), there is a growing consensus at least to remember Milton was a revolutionary, even if not so wild-eyed a one as Hill proposes.

managing of his religious affairs” to the safe “care and credit” of someone else—“make ’em and cut ’em out what religion ye please” (*Areopagitica*, 740). In the process of trying to discover what scriptural Christianity really entails, Milton successively peels back the layered accretions of creedal tradition, a tradition that he had labored so diligently to master. In his mature theology he rejects “received opinions,” relying instead upon the scriptures alone and the light of right reason, shunning principles that do not derive from the primitive apostolic church (*Christian Doctrine*, 901).

Milton knew that an apostasy had occurred. The description of it in *Paradise Lost* should stir the soul of every Latter-day Saint:

Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav’n
To thir own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint.

(12.508–12)

Yet the depth of Milton’s solidarity with Mormons is not apparent from this powerful account of the Apostasy, for belief in an apostasy is common to all Protestants, and the Pauline imagery (Acts 20:29) is also common fare for anti-Catholic rhetoric. What at once sets Milton apart from even mainline Protestantism and what allies him with Mormonism is his early dating of the Apostasy. Most English Protestants dated the Apostasy from the rise of the reformers, but Milton, together with primitivist Christian sectarians, pushes the falling away back to the time of Constantine, thereby calling into question all the “superstitions and traditions” that have accrued since the early centuries of the Church.²⁵ Milton thus endorses an extreme position on the issue of Christian tradition and puts himself in the company of radical sectarians—and, of course, of Mormons.

Nor does the supposedly august poet of Christian orthodoxy shrink from endorsing other positions variously occupied by the scorned sectarians that proliferated during his time—the Ranters, Diggers, Muggletonians, Levellers, and Fifth Monarchists.²⁶ On his journey towards becoming a “church of one,” Milton breaks first with the Anglicans and then with the Presbyterians over the issue of a paid clergy and shows himself sympathetic to the idea of lay ministry.²⁷

²⁵Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, 84–87.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 93–116.

²⁷Milton’s *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church* is but one of numerous attacks against a paid ministry.

He also rejects not only set liturgies, such as *The Book of Common Prayer*, but set prayer generally (*Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence, against Smectymnuus*, 124–27). He further distances himself from proponents of a state church by espousing adult baptism—so church membership would not be universal and automatic but individual and by choice. And, in common with some on the radical fringe, Milton believes in material monism, that is, that all creation is material, including spirit (5.404–43; compare D&C 131:7–8).²⁸ So long as Milton feels his beliefs are grounded in scripture and reason, he courageously charts his own course, and in the process tacks across Mormon seas. Polygamy, apostasy, lay ministry, adult baptism, spontaneous prayer, materialism—all find analogies (not exact parallels) in LDS theology.

So, too, does Milton's millenarianism. He looks for Christ to return as "our shortly expected King."²⁹ Further, he considers England to be a chosen land and the English an elect people, a saving remnant destined to be a vanguard introducing the true Christian liberty to the world and thereby preparing the world for the Messiah's return (*Areopagitica*, 743). These chiliastic sentiments find striking analogues in Mormon doctrine and history. What is more, history served to chasten, though not defeat, both Miltonic and Mormon millenarianism in similar ways. The failure of Milton's England to become that "noble and puissant nation" (*Areopagitica*, 745) he envisioned may find a corollary in our failure to realize a political Zion, first in Jackson County, then in Nauvoo, and then in the Great Basin. By analogy, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs of Missouri and the host of official government persecutors that followed him become comparable to the royalists, also bent on destroying the nascent theocratic state. Both Milton and Mormons had to redefine Zion: the Garden of Eden, like the City Beautiful, must temporarily be left behind, but its values are recovered by internalizing Paradise, which is relocated in a righteous family making its way through the world. Yet, though the idea of a kingdom of God is for the moment depoliticized, the King is still coming, and His dominion is still to be established literally upon this earth.

By the time Charles II returned from the Continent, the grand adventure in republicanism had failed, and people of Milton's radical

²⁸Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, 324–33.

²⁹Hill quotes this phrase from Milton's prose in his chapter on the poet's millenarianism (*ibid.*, 281). By the publication of *The Ready and Easy Way*, just before Charles II's imminent return, Milton gave the phrase an even more decidedly political twist: Christ is the "*only* to be expected King" (891; my italics).

persuasion had either fled in exile or been forced underground. When they spoke again, their voices were muted and their radicalism veiled, as in *Paradise Lost*. But the inspired ideas of such revolutionaries did not wholly die; they were reborn in America and lived underground in England to resurface during more tolerant times.³⁰ Such times had arrived when the first Mormon missionaries landed on British soil, bearing a message that echoed indigenous themes. Although neither the missionaries nor their converts could have known it, the restored gospel had a Miltonic ring. When I recall the stunning success of those first elders in England, I like to suppose that the “pick and flower of England”³¹ they drew into the gospel net were, in their humble way, the spiritual posterity of Milton’s inspired radicalism, the remnants of his chosen people.

And what of Milton himself? Would Milton have accepted the missionaries’ message had he “been living at [that] hour”? One can only wonder. He was a proud and independent man. This much is sure: although he shares much common turf with us, in his own day he was not an unbaptized Mormon. He may, however, be a baptized Mormon now. For on 24 December 1878, in the St. George Temple, “John Milton, Poet,” was baptized by proxy into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.³² We find means to make our favorite poets Mormon—one way or another.

³⁰For a discussion of what happened to the radical ideas that flourished during the English Revolution, see Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 306–8; and *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

³¹The phrase is Charles Dickens’s, from *The Uncommercial Traveler*, cited in *Among the Mormons*, ed. William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 337.

³²St. George Temple Records, No. 110097, Book H, 570. It is surprising that proxy baptism for Milton was not performed earlier, when Wilford Woodruff was baptized on behalf of most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, the presidents of the United States, and other “eminent men”—including, among others, Christopher Columbus, Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, David Garrick, William Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Friedrich von Schiller, Robert Burns, and Lord Byron (Wilford Woodruff Journal, 21 August 1877).

Moses of Michelangelo

Moses, you are magnificent!
There is awe
In your marbled translucence,
In your composed wholeness,
And your quiet dignity.

Michelangelo knew you were there.
And he chipped away unerringly
At the rough stone
That covered you
Until you were free,
Smoothed
And polished
And clear.

And now you are *here*,
Shining through,
Turning marble into life!

(Oh, Master Sculptor,
I know I am not a Moses.
My chunk of stone is only small—
But I am here.
Free me.
Free me!)

—Elaine Ellsworth Naylor

Utah Valley Metaphors

Metaphors stream into these three windowed walls.

Clouds veil Timp again, the mountain maid
waiting her lover. The sun is almost fallen
in the lake, and winds rattle catalpa pods.
Already, dark pushes at light.

The Rockies ring Utah Valley, blue and cold
as the fear circling when I reach
for a pen, when I wonder if this time I'll write
a real poem. I make too many connectives!

I want to see: lake, mountains, tree. Better still,
blue, yellow, red. Let me duck to avoid bumping
the new moon; oh, let brain and blood ally
till image and word unite.

—Loretta M. Sharp

Mormon Bibliography 1983

Scott H. Duvall and Barbara S. Ballantyne

The 1983 "Mormon Bibliography" contains almost as many entries as the 1982 bibliography. It appears that articles, pamphlets, and books printed on Mormon topics continue to keep a solid pace year after year. Yet, the abiding fear every bibliographer harbors—that he is missing something—strikes close, especially when it is too late to add anything. We encourage all who write articles related in any way to Mormonism, especially those published in specialized journals, to inform us, in Special Collections of the Brigham Young University Library, of what they have published.

One realm of Mormon publishing exists that has not been placed in this "Mormon Bibliography" nor in any of the recent previous Mormon bibliographies. Newspapers devoted exclusively to Mormon audiences have flourished over the years in various cities around the western United States. Some of these are, and have been, published by private individuals. Others have been issued by groups. Some of these publications continue their publications today; others have ceased publication.

These regional Mormon newspapers include the following titles and places of publication: the *California Inter-Mountain News*, in Los Angeles, California; the *Latter-day Sentinel*, in Phoenix, Arizona; the *Latter-day Sentinel*, in Cerritos, California; the *Beehive*, in Las Vegas, Nevada; the *Latter-day Trumpet*, in Idaho Falls, Idaho; the *Hawaii Record Bulletin*, in Honolulu, Hawaii; *Mormon Life*, in Sacramento, California; the *Seagull*, in Seattle, Washington; the *San Diego Seagull*, in San Diego, California; the *Southwest Saint*, in Albuquerque, New Mexico; the *Latter-day Spokesman*, in Royal City, Washington; and the *Beehive*, in Denver, Colorado.

The *California Inter-Mountain News* has been publishing weekly since 21 March 1935. In that first issue the editors of the newspaper expressed that their effort was "born of the conviction that there is

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need of a suitable vehicle of expression and social solidarity for the California Inter-Mountain group, in numbers more than forty thousand.” Although the “Mormon colony” (as they called it then) now numbers more than three hundred thousand, the focus and purpose of this regional newspaper remain the same.

For many years subscription and distribution of the *California Inter-Mountain News* was through the wards and stakes in Southern California. The Church has since discontinued this practice. Hence, the newspaper must seek individually paid subscriptions. It concentrates on the Southern California area and charges \$4.95 per year or \$7.95 for a two-year subscription. Although in the past couple of years this newspaper has had difficulties, it has lately increased its number of subscriptions and may continue publishing for another fifty years.

Two of the more recent unofficial Mormon publications are the “Latter-day Sentinels” in Arizona and California. These are privately owned newspapers which are published biweekly. The subscription cost is \$10.00 per year. Paid subscriptions now number 13,000 for the *Arizona Sentinel* and 10,000 for the *California Sentinel*. The Arizona paper has been published since 1978, the California since 1983.

In Arizona the *Sentinel* also publishes an LDS “Buying Guide” every year. These guides are published to help Mormons in the area know who the Mormon businessmen are. These guides are published in a “Yellow Page” format as a “Guide to Merchants Who Appreciate the Mormon Business.” They also contain lists of the stake and ward officers and their phone numbers for all stakes in Arizona.

The publishing family (Malin Lewis, publisher, and Crismon Lewis, editor, are father and son) looks upon their newspaper as a service to the Mormon community. And it appears that the two “Sentinels” are received very well in Arizona and California. The papers are well done; they satisfy a need for “Mormon” news in those two areas.

The *Beehive*, in Las Vegas, has also been quite successful. Beginning publication in 1975, it is published monthly and distributed free of charge to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Las Vegas area. It contains local news of the LDS church, listings of weddings and anniversaries, community news, sports news, etc. In addition, the *Beehive* has a variety of columns devoted to such subjects as building and development or the court system. It also has classified listings and advertising from which the operating revenue is generated.

The *Latter-day Trumpet*, published monthly in Idaho Falls, Idaho, is also a private enterprise newspaper. It is primarily an organ

of information about LDS people in the Upper Snake River Valley. A great deal of space is devoted to advertising which obviously helps to defray the costs of publication. The *Latter-day Trumpet* is distributed free of charge to Mormons in southeastern Idaho.

Two of the regional Mormon newspapers which are currently published differ from those already reviewed. The *Hawaii Record Bulletin*, of Honolulu, and *Mormon Life*, of Sacramento, are both nonprofit newspapers published by the Public Communications Council of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The newspapers are sent free of charge to each LDS home in its respective multi-region. *Mormon Life* was published for one year (1982) as a privately owned newspaper in the same mold as the other newspapers discussed. In April 1983, however, it came under the auspices of the Church's Sacramento Area Public Communications Council. The purpose of this move was to enable the newspaper to present more accurate information and also to improve the quality of the information disseminated about the Church in the Sacramento Valley. The two editors and the news bureau director are called to their positions. They report to the multi-regional public communications director, who, in turn, reports to the Regional Representative coordinating the efforts of *Mormon Life*.

Other regional Mormon newspapers have been published during the past ten years. The *San Diego Seagull* is still publishing. It is, however, more of a local paper than the others. The *Seagull*, in Seattle, the *Southwest Saint*, and the *Latter-day Spokesman* have ceased publication because of financial difficulties.

Those newspapers which have been successful, however, seem to be fulfilling a role in the lives of thousands of Mormons who want information concerning the Church in their own area. These regional Mormon newspapers constitute a type of Mormon publishing which will not appear in most Mormon bibliographies. Yet, every year, they publish a great deal of information on Mormonism.

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“Thou Hast Made My Mountain to Stand Strong”

Ode in Double Sestina¹

Isaiah twenty-five, ten: “. . . in this mountain
shall the hand of the Lord rest.” Holding lean
and sandy valleys, preeminent, in spring
they gather in congeries of cragged shadows,
great mountain chains, ranges and monoliths, whose
jagged peaks lift up toward luxuriant light.

Slides of gray shale slip and shine along the light,
and boulders, like behemoths of the mountain,
tip against the layered walls. A cave’s mouth whose
darkness conceals the hungry eyes of a lean
predator, waiting like famine in shadows,
yawns crookedly from across the wooded spring.

Coming to the crispness of another spring,
here life thrives. Timber jays and magpies draw light
as they wheel and glide. Coyotes move through shadows,
and raucous squirrels scale the white fir and mountain
ash for remnant cones. Deer appear like ghosts, lean
and fearful of the day. Moss-antlered elk whose

life, once stalked by bear, cougar, and wolf and whose
young once filled the high mountain valleys now spring
through oak brush and thicket, over logs that lean
beside the swollen stream. In the early light,
the yellow flower of the Curleaf Mountain-
Mahogany scatters sun in the shadows.

Up from a dark draw and above the shadows,
the aspens flutter like Christmas tinsel whose
sweet green reproves the somber fir’s and mountain
pine’s deep tones. Bearberries and waxflowers spring
wild. Squaw cabbage and camass grow in the light
meadows. Redfruited gooseberries feed the lean

curlews; and at treeline, bristlecone pines lean
and twist, forever chilled beneath the shadows
of glaciated peaks. On the windy heights where light
icy crystals blow, only lichen lives long, whose
rust, and grey flocking brightens the bouldered spring.
“Lord, by thy favour thou has made my mountain

to stand strong.”² Down from the desolate mountain
peaks, cataracts somersault between the lean
chasm walls. Over the sharp-edged cliff they spring
and fan to waterfall veils, leaving shadows
of moisture under the overhang. Streams, whose
pebbled beds run bright beneath the crystal light

flow swiftly, winding through fern forests and light
meadow grass, gaining strength along the mountain
slopes, to roar toward the valley floor. Water, whose
substance gives survival or death for the lean
desert life, now crashes free through the shadows,
imbued with the power of the mountain spring.

Hundreds of centuries past, before this spring,
before the sad dimming of their savage light
when beaded lives became a song of shadows,
and great legends were lost among the mountain
ledges, hills were filled with a race, bronze and lean,
people who revered the living earth, whose

keen eyes saw that all things had *puha*³ and whose
prayers thanked the water for sharing from its spring,
thanked the mountain for pinon nuts from its lean
crop, and thanked the sun for its great gift of light.
Where are those wanderers lost from the mountain?
Where are the shamen⁴ who told tales of shadows?

They are there when the owl cries from the shadows
and when, almost unseen, a meadowlark, whose
song belies its common wings, gilds the mountain
air with tonal wealth. They are there in the spring
when late crusty snow melts softly in the light.
They are there with the stippled trout and the lean

doe. Can mankind now let all living things lean
 toward a holy peace and fill frightening shadows
 of the night or black terrors of death with light?
 "I will lift my eyes unto the hills,"⁵ yet whose
 hand will soothe but His who formed each stone and spring,
 each lake and gentle bay and great grey mountain.

Oh Father, Thy mountain of man is most lean.
 In his frantic spring, he stumbles through shadows.
 Thou, whose name is peace—give him Thy holy light.⁶

—Sally T. Taylor

Sally T. Taylor, an assistant professor of English at Brigham Young University, won first place at the Eisteddfod Festival at BYU in February 1984 with this poem. The poem was later published in *A Little Light at the Edge of Day* (Provo, Utah: Press Publishing, 1984), 61–63.

¹"The *sestina*, the most complicated of the verse forms initiated by the twelfth-century wandering singers known as troubadours, is composed of six stanzas of six lines each, followed by an *envoy*, or concluding stanza, that incorporates lines or words used before: in this case the *words* (instead of *rhymes*) end each line in [a definite] pattern. . . . The earliest example . . . is, in fact, a *double sestina*: Sidney's 'Ye Goatherd Gods.'

"The poem [has] . . . two sets of six six-line stanzas, with a triplet concluding the whole. The same six key words end the lines of each stanza; their order is always a permutation of the order in the stanza just preceding: the pattern is 6 1 5 2 4 3, i.e., the last word of line 1 of any stanza is always the same as the last word of line 6 in the preceding stanza. Line 2 always ends like the preceding stanza's line 1; line 3 like line 5; line 4 like line 2; line 5 like line 4; and line 6 like line 3. All six key words appear in the triplet in the same order as that of the first and seventh stanzas." (*The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 3d ed. [New York: W. W. Norton, 1970], 1418, 153.)

²Psalm 30:7.

³An Indian word meaning supernatural power.

⁴Indian healers or wisemen.

⁵Psalm 121:1.

⁶Final note: all lines have eleven syllables, following the pattern set by Sir Phillip Sidney (1554–1586).

Book Reviews

RICHARD LLOYD ANDERSON. *Understanding Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983. 448 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by Kent P. Jackson, assistant professor of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University.

With his publication of *Understanding Paul*, Richard L. Anderson has made available for the first time a major work that examines the life and writings of the apostle Paul from the perspective of both Paul's world and the doctrines of the restored gospel. Writing from the vantage point of a lifetime of commitment to the message Paul taught and almost three decades of studying and teaching about Paul, Anderson has achieved a marriage of gospel and secular learning that should be a paradigm for Latter-day Saint ancient scripture studies for many years.

Paul embodied many of the complexities of his generation. As a Jew of the Diaspora, he grew up in a world which encompassed the conservative traditions of his forebearers and the liberal cosmopolitanism of his neighbors. A practicing Pharisee trained as a scholar in that profession at the feet of one of its foremost rabbis, he held status in his Jewish faith and functioned closely with its hierarchy. He was a product of the Greek world in which he was born and raised. And he was a citizen of Rome as well—not only a product of that empire, with its ever-expanding world and world view, but actually enjoying the status of membership in its elite citizenry. Although he undoubtedly spoke the Aramaic of his Jewish brethren and read the Hebrew of their sacred texts, his acts, speeches, and writings are preserved forever in the language of the Greeks—the world language of his day—which Paul knew and used with flawless eloquence. Such complexities were the realities of Paul's life, and they formed the backdrop of his ministry. Without understanding them, it is difficult to understand fully Paul the man, his life, and his writings.

The foremost contribution of Anderson's *Understanding Paul* is its incorporation of these facets of Paul's world into the context of the gospel message the ancient Apostle taught. For Anderson it is the

message itself that is of prime importance. Historical, cultural, and linguistic insights, so lavishly provided in the book, serve as a tool to understanding the very focus of Paul's efforts: the message of the gospel.

Understanding Paul is divided into eight chapters and four appendices. Two of the chapters deal with introductory issues, the third discusses Paul's ministry as described in the book of Acts, and the remaining five chapters each deal with a collection of Paul's letters. In these final chapters, the letters are grouped into fairly standard divisions that reflect subject matter, date, and place of writing. The book as a whole is not a commentary on the New Testament text; it is, for the most part, an analysis of the issues discussed by Paul in his letters. In the chapters that deal with the epistles (following valuable introductory material), Anderson discusses the letters topically. He has chosen from each letter the most significant doctrinal issues (anywhere from one to nine), and he discusses each in depth—both within the context of Paul's other writings and within the context of the doctrines as restored by Joseph Smith. Readers seeking a verse-by-verse commentary will not find it in this book. But the issue-by-issue commentary is most valuable for understanding Paul and his larger message.

The appendices add to the reader's understanding of Paul and his world. Among the valuable material in the appendices is a lengthy chronological chart that outlines the events of Paul's career and proposes dates for them.

Along with the many strengths of *Understanding Paul*, nevertheless, two possible weaknesses come to mind. As mentioned above, the book is a topic-by-topic commentary rather than a commentary on the text. Thus, some readers may not find the book as useful as it would be otherwise in locating information on specific passages. However, the excellent scripture index at the end of the book refers readers to any scriptural passage discussed in the book. Serious readers who seek better understanding of Paul's theology and of his approach to teaching the gospel will not be disappointed with the format of the book. In fact, Anderson's topical approach to the letters is undoubtedly one of the great strengths of *Understanding Paul*, however less serviceable the book may appear to some who need a commentary on the text. In Anderson's work, the issues are discussed in an organized and detailed manner, not piecemeal, as they appear in Paul's writings. This gives the reader a greater sense of actually understanding Paul and the doctrines he taught.

A second criticism has more to do with editorial matters. The book would be much more readable if it had more subheadings. One chapter alone goes for thirty pages without a break in the text. This not only makes that chapter tedious to read, but it also makes the book less serviceable to those readers who otherwise could find desired topics more easily. There are other places in the book where a break in the text would have provided a welcome mental and visual pause.

Some may accuse Anderson of trying to present Paul as a modern-day Latter-day Saint in *Understanding Paul*. Such a criticism is factually unfounded, and it raises a philosophical issue that requires a brief comment in this review. Paul claimed in soberness that the gospel message which he taught was revealed to him, that he “neither received it of man, neither was [he] taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12). He went to great lengths to emphasize this fact. Similarly, Joseph Smith claimed to have received his doctrine from the same source. For Latter-day Saints who accept the testimonies of both inspired men, it is not only justifiable but indeed necessary to conclude that they understood and taught the gospel and its doctrines in the same way. Since the modern revelations (the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price) were given specifically to reveal untainted truth in a world of theological confusion, Latter-day Saint scholars need not hesitate to turn to those sources to understand the things that Paul taught. The gospel as understood in the LDS church provides the theological backdrop for Anderson’s work on Paul. He draws liberally from the speeches and writings of Joseph Smith and explains Paul to a Latter-day Saint readership through the perspective of the Latter-day Saint faith. This is a strength, not a weakness, of his work.

Finally, *Understanding Paul* responds often to the beliefs and interpretations of other Christian faiths regarding Paul’s message. Richard Lloyd Anderson possibly understands the Protestant and Catholic perspectives on the New Testament better than any other Latter-day Saint Bible scholar. His book makes frequent reference to those perspectives to show Latter-day Saints the strength of the LDS position. With an understanding of both Paul and the gospel, it is no surprise to find that the message of modern revelation is consistent with the gospel message of Paul. Were it not so, one would be compelled to conclude either Paul or Joseph Smith to be in error.

MILTON V. BACKMAN, JR. *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration*. Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1984. 239 pp. \$12.95.

Reviewed by Larry C. Porter, director, Church history, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University.

Milton Backman's *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* began with an intended single testimonium—that of Joseph Smith. Originally Backman intended to carefully harmonize Joseph's four dictated statements pertaining to the First Vision—the 1832 recital, the 1835 description, the 1838 account, and the 1842 Wentworth Letter. As the writing progressed, however, Backman felt it would be illuminating to present the accounts of Moroni's visitations. Further expansion brought in pertinent accounts of the eleven special witnesses to the Book of Mormon, thus broadening the book's initial base to include statements of key contemporary observers in the early Mormon movement.

The text is very "Joseph" oriented. Its primary content centers on the Prophet's own accounts of his interactions with the miraculous. Biographical information on those named in the accounts other than Joseph Smith is intentionally limited; a minimal background sketch on each of the witnesses merely identifies his role. Moreover, *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* is not a history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York and Pennsylvania. Backman places emphasis on the statements of individuals concerning specific events and not on the overall historical setting.

Inquirers increasingly desire to examine documents pertaining to early Mormonism in order to piece together the varied facets of its past. Understandably, many who would enjoy such a study do not have sufficient time or access to certain sources. Aware of this problem, Backman compiled sources capsulizing what is known on pertinent Restoration subjects and made them available in one account.

Backman's work is a well-formulated layman's manual to the sequence of important documents of Joseph Smith and other witnesses to the Restoration. After examining original sources on a given topic, he has integrated the contents to a single document. References used in the amalgamation of these sources have been cited for those who may wish to examine the original texts. In effect, this volume is an excellent index to the recurrent question of "Now where does that statement come from?"

The book's pervading assumption is that Joseph Smith was an accurate historian. Similarly, a comparison of the witnesses' respective

statements reveals a minimum of conflict of detail in their accounts. This volume was unquestionably written to promote faith and not to expose conflict. As a proselyting tool, it highlights the most powerful statements corroborating the Restoration.

Whenever a compilation is created there is also an automatic potential to fashion new problems. It is not difficult to place documents in chronological order, but it then becomes all too easy to change the meaning by lifting a phrase or sentence from the original text. There is always the pursuant problem of knowing just how much should be quoted versus how much should be trimmed. The author has succeeded in his efforts to remain true to the conceptual intent of the documents under scrutiny.

Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration does not contain a great deal more than that published before. However, its value lies in the gathering of scattered references. Those interested in examining the content of original documents which have been coordinated in a popular format will definitely enjoy the style utilized by Milton V. Backman, Jr., in this singular volume. The continuity, the format arrangement, and the addition of new materials combine to frame a decidedly readable text.

MARILYN BROWN. *Goodbye, Hello*. Sandy, Utah: Randall Book Co., 1984. 123 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by Richard H. Cracroft, professor of English and dean of the College of Humanities, Brigham Young University.

If, on the palate of Mormon literary tastes, *The Giant Joshua* and *The Evening and the Morning* are prime rib, and Marilyn Brown's more recent and remarkable *The Earthkeepers* is filet mignon, then *Goodbye, Hello*, Brown's slighter but well-marbled offering, must be a tender rib steak. But there the metaphor must fade, for Brown is no modern Mormon-prose tenderizer. She is, instead, a skillful artist, a judicious craftsman who has shaped yet another warm and lyrical book which will age well, to the delight of those who anticipate a significant Mormon literature that examines life and lives through the eyes of faith sharpened by Mormon doctrines, practices, and culture.

Too often, Mormon writers, particularly those of what Edward Geary has called "Mormondom's Lost Generation," have attempted to

write from a position of apparent faith, only to reveal their axe-grinding differences with Mormonism in a prose fraught with art but very little Mormon heart; thus they belie the very traditions they are attempting to re-create. As a work of Mormon literature, *Goodbye, Hello* is refreshing, then, for Brown's characters and themes and setting are unabashedly and unapologetically Mormon. And still they work as literature.

Teresa (Trissy) McQueen, an aging woman who has suffered a stroke, is visited during her last hours by other-worldly beings dressed in white robes. Wavering on the threshold of eternity, Teresa recognizes some of the figures yet is troubled by one who draws near but whom she does not quite recognize. As the dying woman moves steadily towards eternity, the novel recounts her gradual discovery of the identity of the mysterious visitor. In the process of making that discovery, Teresa relives three or four years of her childhood, from the age of five through eight—the period of the courtship and early marriage of her sister Till (Clothilde) and her brother-in-law, Rye Hadley.

The frame structure of the novel permits Brown to portray strikingly life on the brink of eternity. These deathbed scenes are told from the point of view of a woman who has done her work well and kept the faith, one for whom the world no longer holds much interest, but one who continues to be concerned about her sister's eternal well-being. At one point the reminiscing Teresa looks up and sees "a big slab of white light like a page with a dark spot on it" and thinks, "my life's over, and there I go with my white page and a spot on it" (p. 2). The spot turns out to be, however, not a blot on her book of life, but a granddaughter "standing in the sunny doorway" (p. 2), and, recalled to the present, Teresa remembers that she is in her daughter's home. Brown evokes the closeness of the earth and eternity in many similarly effective images throughout the book, weaving Edenic imagery, apple trees, a lost and found ring, a rocking chair, and birth and death into a tightly and colorfully woven tapestry which attests to the author's skill.

For most of the book, however, the frame structure plants Trissy firmly in the past, where she recreates her childhood home in pioneer Utah (Antimony, Circleville, Fillmore) and recalls the courtship of Till and Rye. That blossoming courtship encounters an obstacle in Trissy's pa, who (correctly, it turns out) perceives Rye's lack of commitment to Mormon values and beliefs and so opposes the marriage. Rye contradicts Pa's judgment by proving himself capable of keeping a job and by withstanding Pa's careful investigation into his reputation

and life in Fillmore. The couple marry, weather some adjustment difficulties, leave Utah for Idaho, and eventually move to California, where, to the distress of Trissy and her parents, they gradually withdraw from the family and leave Mormonism for another church, thus apparently fracturing the eternal family unit.

Brown is effective, not only because of her sustained skillful prose with its rich images but also because, in describing the events of the novel through the mind of a five-to-eight-year-old child as recalled by the memory of an old and wise woman, she has managed to impart meaning both to the innocent child's exposure to experience and to the old woman's understanding of the brevity and richness of mortality as she ponders the experiences of the child Trissy.

Brown also effectively portrays the Mormon past. Donald R. Marshall accurately asserts that "no one since Maureen Whipple's *Giant Joshua* has a better gift for transporting us back to a Mormon past that is vivid, tangible, and hauntingly convincing" (book jacket). Subtle, understated, the faithful Mormonness of the story is convincing, not only in the faith of the family members, in their prayers, in their adherence to the Word of Wisdom, and in their authentic application of Mormon folkways, but also in their strong belief in the eternal nature of their relationships, a faith which tempers the pain caused by the deaths of loved ones and heightens their concern with the erring conduct of family members who are sealed to each other for eternity.

The book, centered in incidents in the King family history, is based on such eternal concerns. The "goodbye" and "hello" of the title spring not only from the frequent mortal necessity of bidding goodbye to loved ones who die (The world seemed made of "goodbyes and hellos" [p. 117], Teresa says at one point) but also from the welcomes of kin on the other side of the veil. The book becomes, for Teresa McQueen, a working out of that greeting on the threshold of eternity.

Brown has made very real not only the psychology of a five-year-old child, through whose eyes we relive the events, but also such occasions as the rural Utah wedding, Christmas on the farm, and the daily life of the frontier Mormon family. Whether she is describing the making of lye soap, the gathering of wood chips for the fire, or the inside of early Utah homes and stores, Brown has blended her poetic lyricism with her keen ear and eye for history to create a memorable novel which is at once a literary accomplishment and a book which should be popular. Those interested in the destiny of Mormon fiction will welcome this novel as another felicitous step toward a happy future in

a period which may yet be regarded as an era of renaissance for Mormon literature.

ORSON SCOTT CARD. *A Woman of Destiny*. New York: Berkley Books, 1984. 713 pp. \$3.95.

DONALD R. MARSHALL. *Zinnie Stokes, Zinnie Stokes*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984. 144 pp. \$7.95.

DOUGLAS H. THAYER. *Summer Fire*. Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1983. 259 pp. \$5.95.

Reviewed by Edward A. Geary, professor of English at Brigham Young University and editor of *BYU Studies*.

After thirty years in the doldrums, the novel on Mormon themes has found new life recently, with several titles published each year. Many of the new Mormon novels, however, are only superficially Mormon, being merely adaptations for LDS audiences of mass market fiction formulas. Serious Mormon fiction writers have tended to concentrate on the short story, which has lent itself to some significant experimentation, and for which *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, *BYU Studies*, and even, on occasion, the Church magazines have provided an outlet. Two of the writers under review, Donald Marshall and Douglas Thayer, have established reputations primarily as writers of Mormon regional short stories. *Zinnie Stokes, Zinnie Stokes* and *Summer Fire* are their first published novels. Orson Scott Card has achieved his most notable success in the field of science fiction. Though he has written plays on Mormon themes, *A Woman of Destiny* is his first Mormon novel and probably his most ambitious work to date.

The three novels are quite different from one another and could, indeed, be said to represent divergent trends. One is an "inside" novel for "outsiders," written from a Mormon perspective but aimed at a mass market audience. Another is in some respects an outside novel for insiders, only incidentally Mormon in its themes but published by the major LDS publisher for LDS readers. The third is an inside novel for insiders.

Orson Scott Card's *A Woman of Destiny* may well be the most sympathetic fictional treatment of Mormon history ever issued by a national publisher. But that claim, once made, requires some qualification. The novel, published in paperback by Berkley Books, has reportedly had a very good sale, but one wonders what the purchasers thought they were buying. The title, the cover design (on the front an aristocratic-looking woman against a backdrop of sailing ship and covered wagon; on the back the same woman, disrobed, in a passionate embrace), and the blurbs ("The epic saga of a woman who dared to search the world for love") all suggest the formula historical romance. How many readers picked up the book at the supermarket bookrack only to be disappointed when they discovered that the novel does not conform to the expected stereotype? And on the other hand, how many people who might have enjoyed the book were deterred by the garish come-on, thinking that it was cheap sensational fiction?

A Woman of Destiny is not cheap fiction, though it serves up more generous portions of sex and violence than some readers will care for and though Card has a tendency to slip into the language of formula fiction when he describes passion: "her achingly sweet body that was always eager for him, that never could be satisfied." In addition, his characters, especially the women, discuss sexual matters with a frankness that is more characteristic of the late twentieth century than the mid-nineteenth. But this is a big book, vividly imagined and rich in incident, and the sensational scenes are balanced by more sensitive and moving passages.

The "woman of destiny" of the title is Dinah Kirkham, born to a middle-class Lancashire family that has come down in the world. Abandoned by their ne'er-do-well father, Dinah and her two brothers and their mother struggle for survival in the Manchester slums through scenes that could have been lifted out of Victorian "Blue Book" reports on poverty in the Midlands, complete with open sewers, sweatshops, child labor, even the obligatory chimneysweep episode. Through determination, hard work, natural gifts, and considerable luck, they pick themselves up by their bootstraps and achieve success and respectability. (There is more than a little Horatio Alger in this book.) But for Dinah, the transition from mill girl to middle-class housewife is unsatisfying since it ties her to a crude and fumbling husband (whom she married under pressure from her family to save her reputation after an attempted rape by her employer). Thus when Heber C. Kimball arrives in Manchester, he finds a responsive ear in Dinah, who sees in the Restoration message a confirmation of the

sense of special destiny she has cultivated since childhood. Though it costs her a great deal, she joins the Church and emigrates to Nauvoo, where she becomes a spiritual leader among the women and a secret plural wife to Joseph Smith. After the Martyrdom, she joins the westward trek of the Saints, eventually becoming the grand old lady of Mormondom, “the prophetess,” so formidable that even Brigham Young must treat her with care.

Some elements of Dinah Kirkham’s character, as well as several key incidents in the novel, are obviously borrowed from the career of Eliza R. Snow, a fact that has provoked criticism from some readers who feel that this represents both a distortion of history and a sort of preemption of authentic biography. But this is simply one of the risks the historical novelist takes, particularly when he deals with a history so passionately cherished and so heavily mythologized as Mormon history of the Nauvoo period. Not that Card’s history is bad. He has had the benefit of advice from a distinguished Mormon historian (thinly disguised in the Acknowledgments as “Jared B. Ames”), and I find his treatment of Nauvoo people and events much more satisfying than those of Samuel W. Taylor, or Virginia Sorenson, or Vardis Fisher, if for no other reason than that I can imagine Card’s Joseph Smith attracting the loyalty of thousands of followers. But still it is Card’s Joseph, and his Emma, and Brigham Young, and Heber and Vilate Kimball. And to my mind the author runs greater risks in his treatment of these characters than he does in borrowing from Eliza R. Snow. Historical fiction, when it treats actual historical figures, requires the novelist to attribute motives and to speculate on the inner lives of people whose inner lives we cannot know. As a fictional character, Card’s Joseph is sympathetic and well realized, but I suspect that it is difficult for most LDS readers to accept any fictionalized treatment of Joseph Smith—except, of course, their own.

A word remains to be said about Card’s technical achievement. A book jacket blurb proclaims *A Woman of Destiny* as an “epic saga.” I am not sure what an epic saga is, but it is to the novel’s credit that it is neither an epic nor a saga. The tradition of the novel is quite distinct from the tradition of the epic, and a novelist who aims at an epic treatment usually ends up, not with an epic, but with a diffuse and incoherent novel. Card’s focus on Dinah and her family provides his novel with its “indispensable center,” and the credibility is further enhanced by the pretense that the novel is a sort of family history. Each of the ten books begins with an essay by “O. Kirkham, Salt Lake City, 1981,” a descendant of Dinah’s brother Charlie,

who has discovered Dinah's journal in the Church archives and is attempting to reconstruct her life from the limited documentary evidence. This is a simple and by no means original device, but Card uses it to good effect to give a sense of controlled distance and authenticity.

Donald R. Marshall's *Zinnie Stokes*, *Zinnie Stokes* is the shortest of these three novels, and the slightest. It is essentially a wish-fulfillment fantasy built on the themes of the Ugly Duckling and the Quest for the Golden Girl, with just enough realistic detail to make you think that this sort of thing might possibly happen. The book has been a local bestseller, and it makes a pleasant evening's reading, but it falls short of Marshall's earlier volumes, *The Rummage Sale* and *Frost in the Orchard*, in both thematic significance and the vividness of the writing.

Gavin Terry, Marshall's protagonist, had spent his adolescence as a non-Mormon in Cedar City, Utah, and then joined the LDS church after he moved away from the state. This situation suggests interesting possibilities for development, but they are possibilities the novel does not develop. As far as we can tell, nobody that he grew up with in Cedar City cared much whether he was a Mormon or not, and there is no indication that his conversion has had a very profound effect on his life. Gavin returns to Cedar City from his home in Ohio after the death of his wife in order to square accounts, to make right the errors and omissions of his youth. In fact, the list of his youthful peccadilloes is remarkably short. He once kept excessive change from a transaction at the corner grocery; he let a widow pay him for more hours than he actually worked; and he left Cedar City at the end of his junior year in high school with hard feelings toward two of his classmates. His most serious offense, having rejected a poor, plain little farm girl from Enoch when she invited him to a dance, is one that he had entirely forgotten until he meets her again, now "a hauntingly lovely woman" (in the language of the book jacket blurb) with a mystery. The novel unravels the mystery, which is actually rather predictable, and ends with Gavin's life pointed in a new direction.

The most convincing writing in *Zinnie Stokes*, *Zinnie Stokes* occurs in the opening pages with the account of Gavin's reaction to his wife's death after a protracted ordeal with cancer. But the intense emotions of the beginning do not last long, and for a young father who has lost a loved companion Gavin is remarkably unburdened. It is as though the author lacked the energy to continue the kind of

novel he began. Indeed, the whole book seems a little tired. The satiric insights of Marshall's earlier work, the comic Utah names, the vivid evocation of small town life, all are muted or nonexistent in this novel, and with them has gone most of the poignancy that characterizes the author's best work.

Douglas H. Thayer's *Summer Fire*, like his earlier volume, *Under the Cottonwoods*, represents an experiment to determine whether Mormon values can be subjected to the scrutiny of serious fiction, not from a standpoint of partial or complete alienation (as has been the case with much serious Mormon fiction in the past) but from a moral position firmly within the LDS framework. For this reason, even though his work is formally quite conventional, Thayer may be the most innovative writer in Mormon letters today.

Summer Fire is the story of a sensitive and sheltered adolescent's first encounter with evil. Sixteen-year-old Owen Nelson, who, like most of Thayer's protagonists, has grown up in Provo, goes with his cousin Randy to work on a ranch in Nevada, where the foreman, a powerful but war-scarred man named Staver, makes a point of corrupting the summer hands with drink, gambling, and sex. Randy succumbs to temptation. Owen does not, but he does come to see that the moral universe is a much more complex and difficult place than he had imagined.

Presented in outline form like this, the novel appears to be a rather typical initiation story, and so it is. What distinguishes it is its examination of Mormon values and the means by which they are inculcated into the young. Owen's situation is peculiar in that he has been the only male in a household dominated by his genteel grandmother. Since his father (who died when Owen was three years old and who, his grandmother assures him, is by this time well advanced toward godhood) is not around to provide a practical model of masculine frailty, Owen has grown up purely on the LDS ideal of manhood, an amalgam of the idealized models of all the Primary and Sunday School and Aaronic Priesthood and seminary lessons he has heard, plus the equally abstract and genteel ideals of the Boy Scout movement. So intense is his preoccupation with perfection that he cannot understand the necessity for the Atonement. The thematic keynote of the novel is expressed in Owen's remembered conversation with his seminary teacher:

Brother Anderson said that we all needed the atonement; he said that the Lord would suffer for our sins if we would let him and his blood wash us clean. I asked Brother Anderson after class if you needed the

atonement if you kept all the commandments. He said, no, not if you kept them all, and he asked me if I kept them all.

"I think I have."

"That's good. Keep it up. But keep the Lord in mind. You may need him some day."

(P. 5)

The novel is essentially a working-out of Owen's discovery that perfection is a bigger order than he had thought. By the summer's end he has learned that he is not exempt from the fallible human condition, and he has gained at least an incipient appreciation of the necessity of atonement:

I looked at my hands, and then I looked at Randy and the other people in the bus whose faces I could see. I knew that I wasn't any different from them, and I knew that was part of what I'd learned. But there was something else, something even more important, that I didn't have a word for yet. But I would. It was a word like *prayer*, or *faith*, or *love*.

(P. 256)

The missing word is presumably *grace*, though the point is somewhat blurred by the fact that in addition to his new insights Owen also gets the expensive bicycle he wanted.

Summer Fire is an important Mormon novel, in spite of a badly chosen title. (I much prefer either of Thayer's two working titles for the book, *Staver* and *Summer Hands*.) However, the book does have some significant technical shortcomings. The narrative flow is not as strong as it could be, and there is too much repetition of similar incidents, especially in the middle portion of the novel. A summer of ranch work will of course involve a good deal of tedium, but a novel about such a summer ought not to become tedious. One of the great challenges of fiction in the realistic mode is to convey a sense of the banality of life without itself being banal. *Summer Fire* does not entirely succeed in this.

Despite these weaknesses, the book is well worth reading and shows the author's growing mastery of his themes and his craft. The major characters are solidly realized. Owen is not an appealing character, but he is convincing, and through him Thayer presents some powerful insights into the pitfalls of the Mormon genteel tradition. I was particularly struck by the idea that an intense drive for perfection goes hand in hand with a tendency toward narcissism. Probably the greatest obstacle to Owen's moral growth is his preoccupation with himself, with the rightness of his conduct, the weight of his body, the strength of his muscles, the pimples on his face. Though he often thinks he is thinking of others, he is almost always regarding himself

as though from outside himself—a tendency which James Joyce rightly associates (in “A Painful Case”) with moral paralysis. Randy, the more fallible (yet somehow more likeable) Mormon boy, is rather sketchily drawn. But the portrait of Staver, though his motives remain somewhat mysterious, is very effective. Thayer suggests much more than he makes explicit in his treatment of Staver, a technique he could have profitably employed with other characters as well, especially the pious dying housekeeper, Mrs. Cummings.

One of the novel’s real delights is the character of Stan, the hired man with the endless repertoire of tall tales, who is always pulling Owen’s leg. It is rare to find such a good slice of the vernacular tradition in a contemporary novel, and the character reveals a gift for humor that is not apparent in Thayer’s earlier work. Local detail has always been one of Thayer’s strong points, and it is a strong point here, as scenes are rendered with a sharp concreteness that tempts the reader to go to Nevada in search of the Battle River Valley. This is true even though the accuracy of particular details might be called into question. For example, I seriously doubt whether any stream in the southern half of Nevada could supply the gunnysacks full of big trout that Staver takes out of the Battle River when he dynamites the holes for his weekly fish fries, and the old farmer in me is pained at the time lag between mowing and baling on the Johnson Ranch, with its attendant loss of nutritious hayleaves. But the very fact that one can quibble about specific details in this way is an indication of how completely realized the sensory world of this novel is. Whatever its shortcomings, *Summer Fire* has the solidity of a lived experience, and in fiction that is the essential quality.

MARK A. NOLL, NATHAN O. HATCH, GEORGE M. MARSDEN, DAVID F. WELLS, and JOHN D. WOODBRIDGE, eds. *Eerdmans’ Handbook to Christianity in America*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983. 507 pp. Illustrations, maps, charts, photographs, and index. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Milton V. Backman, Jr., professor of Church history and doctrine, Brigham Young University.

Describing multiple aspects of a complex religious history is a task that could penetrate sensitive subjects, controversial themes,

diverse beliefs, and trends difficult to identify and summarize. To obtain accuracy and to assure just such objectivity, the five editors of *Eerdmans' Handbook of Christianity in America* sought assistance from sixty-five contributors. These included some of the best-known scholars of religious history, such as Sidney Ahlstrom, Martin E. Marty, and Edwin S. Gaustad. The editors wrote a brief history of religious developments in America, dividing this narrative into four major sections—"God and the Colonies"; "Christianity and Democracy: From the Revolution to the Civil War"; "The Era of Crisis: From Christendom to Pluralism"; and "Christianity in a Secular Age: From the Depression to the Present." This general history serves as a setting and introduction for succinct essays (two or three pages) on people and movements. Reproductions of documents, citations of provocative statements by religious leaders and writers, maps, charts, timelines, and more than three-hundred and fifty photographs are also inserted in the general narrative.

One of the strengths of this generally well-written work is the accumulation of knowledge from its various contributors. But the flow of the work is interrupted by the innumerable insertions and conflicting writing styles. Although a few authors tend to be wordy and ambiguous, most write with clarity. This handbook includes outstanding yet brief descriptions of religious trends in America as well as many exceptional religiously oriented biographical essays (such as sketches identifying contributions and beliefs of Anne Hutchinson, Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Seaton, Frederick Douglass, Billy Graham, and Martin Luther King, Jr.). This work, however, is weakened by inadequate historical sketches of some faiths (such as the Southern Baptist Convention, Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, Church of Christ, and Seventh-day Adventists) and by controversial statements or glaring errors in other accounts (such as in the essays on Christian Science and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). The handbook also lacks consistency in describing belief patterns of religious communities. Some essays include references to unique beliefs (such as some beliefs of Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses), but other articles (such as the essays on Seventh-day Adventists and Latter-day Saints) show almost a total absence of such information.

Moreover, a few statements regarding church membership and activity would be challenged by many scholars of religious history. The narrative describing religion in colonial America (basically describing the thirteen colonies that became the United States),

makes a reference generally endorsed by writers in this field that only five percent of the adults in the southern colonies were members of a church. After citing this estimate, one historian suggests that at the end of the colonial period more than half of all Americans attended church regularly (pp. 75–77). That membership of the Roman Catholic faith in this country in 1860 was 3.5 million also seems too high an estimate (p. 235).

The main narrative contains few references to Mormonism or Joseph Smith, and the charts identifying major religious groups in America make no mention of this faith. The major reference to Mormonism in the main narrative is under the subheading “Radical and Social Reform: Thomas and Mary Nichols.” One editor writes, “A world of confusing and fluid expectations spawned schemes which seemed as imminently plausible a century and a half ago as they seem bizarre today” (p. 196), such as various health reform movements, phrenology, mesmerism, spiritualism, and free love. “In this climate, it was no accident that the 1830s saw the genesis of the Mormons and the Millerites” (p. 196). And one of the few references to Joseph Smith in the main narrative is a quotation (without any indication of a source; not using footnotes is a common practice in most general textbooks): “Of Joseph Smith it was said that he had ‘his own original eloquence, peculiar to himself, not polished, not studied, not smoothed and softened by education and refined by art’ ” (p. 178). Although the work is primarily historical and contains few references to the patterns of faith of various denominations, the only references to Mormonism in the latter part of the handbook are that Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons are more unorthodox than Seventh-day Adventists (p. 302) and that Mormons are a “distinctive doctrinal break” from Christianity (p. 400). In harmony with many other non-Mormon publications, this work emphasizes that Mormonism and the Book of Mormon are products of the times, representing popular teachings proclaimed in western New York during the 1820s. However, the handbook fails to note the similarities of early beliefs of Latter-day Saints with beliefs held by early Christians, by people during the Middle Ages, or by those during the Reformation.

Most of the information about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is included in a three-page essay written by Lawrence Foster. Author of *Religion and Sexuality* (Oxford, 1981), Foster is an associate professor of American history at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. Although this historian is generally more sympathetic and often more reliable in his presentations on Mormonism than many

other non-LDS scholars, he makes several mistakes in unfolding a brief history of the Latter-day Saints. He writes that “after a series of visionary experiences beginning in the early 1820s, Smith concluded that all existing religions were wrong” (p. 200). Since Foster does not accept as reliable history the account of the First Vision included in the Pearl of Great Price, he does not mention in his essay that Joseph Smith testified that the Father and the Son visited him in the spring of 1820 and told him at that time that he should join none of the churches. Other statements in this essay which misrepresent the views of a high percentage of active Latter-day Saints relate to the Book of Mormon and the other standard works. For example, Foster contends that the Book of Mormon “is a highly complex work of the religious imagination which addressed and provided answers for most of the religious questions that had been troubling people in areas of the Northeast such as the one in which Smith grew up” (p. 200). Foster further implies that Latter-day Saints believe the standard works contain a “synthesis of all previously valid human truth” (p. 201). His statement describing why Latter-day Saints were persecuted prior to the exodus west is an oversimplification. “Their view of themselves as a chosen people with an almost tribal loyalty to the group frightened Americans who believed in religious and social pluralism” (p. 201). Unfortunately, Foster’s condensation precipitates some of these inaccuracies and inadequate explanations. Foster makes an effort to summarize the history of the Mormon faith in a few pages (pp. 200–2); he even attempts to describe the history of Mormonism from Brigham Young to the present in one short paragraph.

Because it provides so much data in one place, condensation is a major benefit of any handbook. But no reader should stop with just an outline, however helpful. *Eerdmans’ Handbook* both benefits and suffers from condensation. It ignores, for example, that Mormonism has become one of the largest faiths in America (with a U.S. membership of more than three million) and is currently the fastest-growing denomination of faiths with more than one million members (by percentage) in the United States.

Nevertheless, though the work contains glaring weaknesses, *Eerdmans’ Handbook to Christianity in America* is a major contribution. This book contains the best collection of succinct religiously oriented biographical sketches and summaries of religious trends in America currently available in a one-volume work written for the general public.

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