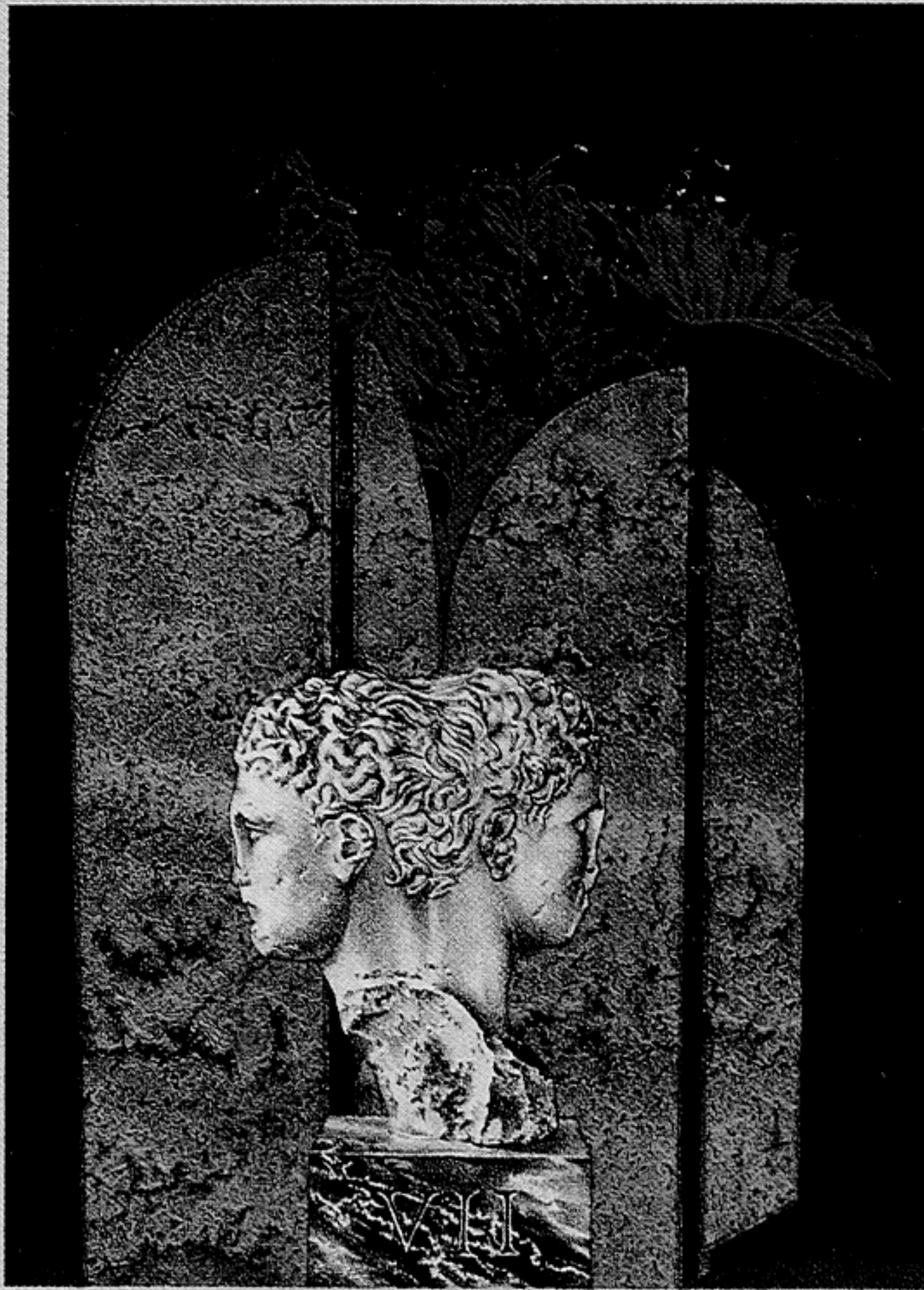


# BYU STUDIES



GREEK (Archaic Period) Double Portrait Bust of { HERMES &  
HERCULES

XXXIII/XXXIII

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Brigham  
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# Whither the Aim of Education Today?

## A Symposium of Thought

William O. Nelson

### CHARACTERS IN THE DIALOGUE

Professor	Erasmus
Student	Horace Mann
Robert Hutchins	John Dewey
Plato	George Counts
Aristotle	Edward Thorndike
Augustine	Arthur Bestor
Thomas Aquinas	Herbert Feigl
Martin Luther	Theodore Brameld
Jean Jacques Rousseau	Alfred N. Whitehead
Herbert Spencer	

### PROLOGUE: A SCENE IN THE GARDEN OF THE MIND

The class had ended in a stalemate. Though the topic under discussion had been the purpose of the school for the future, the past kept coming up as a means of looking to the future. As with most discussions, talk was fragmented. Reference had been made to the timeless philosophies, but only superficially. When the class ended, one student commented, "I'll just leave the problem to you philosophers to solve." The rejoining laughter expressed a seeming futility of any thought convergence on the subject.

The professor had been notably silent during the discussion and mildly amused at the struggle. "You may now appreciate to some extent the struggle that education has had for over 2,500 years. Perhaps now you feel the same need I did many years ago—to read widely and deeply to attempt to understand the assumptions that underlie some of the educational issues of today. For any educational philosophy is merely an extension of our personal assumptions. Well, we'll see you next meeting."



Several followed him out.

"What did you mean," asked a student, "when you said that any educational philosophy is but an extension of one's own personal assumptions?"

"Take yourself," replied the professor. "Why was your experience today so frustrating? Was it not because you have not come to grips with the issues? Put another way, don't you feel the need to examine some of your personal assumptions about education?"

"If there is one thing my generation has discovered," replied the student, "it is that the present is a refutation of the past. Why dwell on it?"

"Precisely my point," rejoined the professor. "Your answer reveals the dilemma of your generation. You want to deal with 'the now' and 'build your own future' but refute the cumulation of all that man has learned for thousands of years. As your past is the prologue to your future, humanity's past is its prologue."

"But," protested the student, "whose interpretation of the past am I to accept? The voices are so many and varied!"

"True, but your reply says in effect that truth has escaped the ages—that it is not to be found!"

"Not necessarily," the student replied. "What may have been valid for them is not valid for us. Truth is only relative to its age."

"And that, my young friend, is at the heart of the issue at hand. It is the dispute of the ages. If what you say is true, then each new generation stands to forfeit its predecessors. May I remind you that youth is never moderate with its modifications. Its idealism begs for immediate and sometimes radical change. This produces cleavage in family, community, and society. And society does not long endure such tension. If, on the other hand, instead of repudiating our past we attempt to glean those truths that have been found valid through the ages of man, we can build a better future."

"It seems to me that your alternative is such a prolonged process when the times demand solutions now."

"You see," smiled the professor, "your impatience is coming through again. Whether they be artifacts or ideas, that which had endured has taken time in the making. Excellence knows no shortcuts."

"I suppose the frustration I feel is that my understanding of any 'whole picture' is so fragmented."

"Yes," smiled the professor, "we all see through that proverbial 'dark glass.' Our attempt to see the whole is, however, to acquire wisdom, to obtain perspective."

"You're quite fond of that word *perspective*, aren't you?"

"It is like viewing a painting from the impressionist school. If one stands too close, his perspective of the whole is distorted. Such is the story of mankind."

"Wouldn't it be marvelous," said the student, "if each new generation could see the past for itself and talk to those who have lived before?"

"Spoken like a true conservative!" laughed the professor.

By this time their walk had taken them to University Square, an area of marble benches secluded by trees and foliage. Low voices were heard from the area as they approached. Coming into the enclosure, they saw a group of men dressed in anachronistic garb of bygone ages, some seated on the ground, some on the benches. The first impulse of the mentor and his pupil was to retreat since they had probably intruded on a theatrical rehearsal, but faces that were too familiar attracted their curiosity.

"Doesn't that man look like Aristotle?" whispered the student.

"Yes, and look!—there's that reformed libertine Augustine!"

"Who's the short one with the tunic?"

"Why, that's Plato. He's much shorter than I imagined. And there's our own John Dewey."

"Who are those other men?" the student inquired.

They scrutinized one after another, recognizing some. One with long robes and a portly carriage they identified as Erasmus, the great humanist. A tall, angular, beardless man was immediately recognized as Horace Mann, and sitting by him was Herbert Spencer. Another was mistaken for the German philosopher Goethe.

"No, he is Jacques Rousseau, the French iconoclast! Good heavens," exclaimed the professor, "there is one of my old professors, 'Old Hutch.'"

The men continued in conversation. Unobserved in the background, the professor and the student found seats within hearing distance and eavesdropped in silence. Robert Hutchins was speaking.

#### INTELLECTUALISM AS THE CHIEF AIM OF EDUCATION

Hutchins: Gentlemen, you were asked to come to this gathering to explore whether some reconciliation is possible concerning the diversity in educational philosophy and aims. I appreciate your response to my invitation. To commence our discussion, permit me to suggest this proposition: The educational issues that divided the ancients were simpler and less divergent



than the issues that divide modern educators after 2,500 years. Gentlemen, is there any hope for accord?

Plato: You, of course, would recognize as well as any that divergent philosophies are the result of divergent aims. We too had our rival forms. But our aims—even those of the Sophists—seemed less enamored by the satisfaction of so-called needs. We valued more lofty ideals: beauty, truth, morality, and wisdom. We saw education as developing the intellect to the end that man could make better judgments and determine the right order of life. You modernists seem dedicated to more pragmatic purposes, perhaps because it is easier to teach reading, writing, and computation than to educate toward moral virtue.

Aristotle: You made that aim, dear Plato, the zenith of your educational philosophy. “Education,” you asserted, “makes good men. . . . Good men act nobly, and conquer their enemies in battle, because they are good.”<sup>1</sup> I don’t believe there has been stated a more comprehensive or noble aim for education. Would you want to modify that “end” with the passage of time?

Plato: No. The statement, I believe, is one of the universal truths of all time. But the statement cannot be taken by itself as an accurate reflection of education. You will recall the idea in the dialogue between Socrates and Theaetetus. There are two patterns set before men: the one blessed and divine, the other godless and wretched. The ultimate idea of good is God. Our true happiness can only be found when man frees himself from the vices and passions of the body and acquires that wisdom which will lead him to a life like God.<sup>2</sup> This must be considered the ultimate purpose of education, however idealistic.

Rousseau: My opposition to your philosophy, Plato, was your point that evil is associated with the lower element of man’s dual nature, namely, his body. My position is still that “everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Maker of the world but degenerates once it gets into the hands of men.”<sup>3</sup>

Plato: Yes, you and I would differ on this matter, Rousseau. You proposed that there is a natural unfolding of this goodness if man can be left in an uncontaminated state. I say that this goodness is residual in man’s soul and manifest to us through his highest faculty, reason.<sup>4</sup> Education, therefore, in the truest sense ought to be the concern of man’s higher nature, his soul. “This is the only education which . . . deserves the name; that other sort of training, which aims at the acquisition of wealth or bodily strength, or mere cleverness apart from intelligence and justice is mean and illiberal, and is not worthy to be called education at all.”<sup>5</sup>



Bestor: You also postulated, Plato, a distinction among intellectual classes. Only the gifted should be afforded the benefits of higher education. How often in the name of democracy we have proposed an egalitarian philosophy to accommodate the so-called "average student"!<sup>6</sup>

Plato: Yes, and of course you recognize that proposition as the fundamental thesis of the *Republic* wherein I argued for the distinct classes. The highest classes are those who possess the highest degree of reasoning power; the lowest are those who have the lowest degree. The philosopher-kings are those few who possess superior intellectual powers that enable them to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of supreme good. Thus, they are those who would rule beneficently.<sup>7</sup> It is a pity that the Academy failed to save Athens. If the gods had favored us with one good philosopher-king to banish injustice and establish good government on earth, perhaps this end would have changed the course of humanity.<sup>8</sup>

Hutchins: You must not lament over the Academy, Plato. What appears to be failure to one man is a success to civilization. You must be consoled with the knowledge that the Academy became the rational foundation for the Medieval universities in Europe and has been the basis of conservative thought since your time.<sup>9</sup>

Aristotle: Also, Plato, you do me an injustice. Who can doubt your influence upon me as your former pupil of the Academy? How often have I defended your view of the indestructibility of the soul. You looked with suspicion upon knowledge derived through our senses, but I found it necessarily useful in describing science. It was less subjective. I attribute our difference in viewpoint to our different temperaments. You taught me to believe in God, but never proved his reality to me. I had to do so. You contemplated him; I had to demonstrate him. To you he was a mysterious Entity. I found him to be the rational center of an orderly universe. My love was for facts; yours for contemplation. But who can say how much influence we left behind in each other's life? You yourself declared in the *Laws* that you had moved more toward the practicable. And after you had gone and I became old, I had to admit, "The more lonely and alone I am the more I have come to love myths."<sup>10</sup>

Plato: I did not mean to offend, dear pupil! You must forgive an old man's nostalgia. No man has equalled your effect on the intellectual mentality since our time.

Hutchins: May it be observed, gentlemen, that historical Christianity only became an intellectually respectable religion when it was blessed with your influence.



Augustine: Yes, Plato, were it not for your influence in my education, Christianity never would have been palatable to me.<sup>11</sup> The early Christian idea that God was bounded by the figure of a human body was so revolting to me, that I wrote, "I thought not of thee, O God, under the figure of an human body; since I began to hear aught of wisdom, I always avoided this."<sup>12</sup> But being partially convinced that Christianity was true by that noble scholar Ambrose, I sought a reconciliation. Couldn't Ambrose tell me? Couldn't the church? I finally found my answer among the Platonists. For fifteen years I had labored at the thesis on the Trinity without "ever reaching a satisfactory conclusion."<sup>13</sup> I finally found that if I could accept the platonic notion of the reality of an immaterial being as God, then I could accept him and the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>14</sup>

Whitehead: Could you also accept the absolute quality of Plato's "truth"?

Augustine: Not fully. I wrote, you recall, "The only thing I cannot doubt is that I doubt. But if I doubt it must be because I have implanted within me a concern for truth. Were it not for this I could not doubt. My doubting then is a very act of faith—faith in the goodness and the beauty of truth, in the reality and unity of truth."<sup>15</sup>

Thomas Aquinas: Yes, Augustine, but it was Aristotle's methodology which provided the means to arrive at a unity of truth.<sup>16</sup> Using his methodology, I was able to prove the truth about God, man, and his universe. This gave rise to scholasticism and the educational institutions of the Middle Ages.<sup>17</sup>

Horace Mann: I am troubled about one point, gentlemen. I, with other scholars, had assumed that historic Christianity was representative of the original Christian philosophy. Yet you assert that historic Christianity is a synthesis with Greek philosophy. Doesn't that demonstrate an exclusive dependence on rational thinking? Wasn't the emphasis of the original Christians different? Would that we might summon Paul or one of Jesus' disciples to be with us, for we had long assumed that their aims and what you and Augustine described were synonymous.

George Counts: The Christians had little to do with us then; we have little to do with them still!

Martin Luther: Permit me to respond. After all, this very question became the basis for my dissent against Rome. Early Christianity was a nonspeculative doctrine in the midst of speculative philosophies. The early church fathers spent most of their effort admonishing the body of the church to refrain from philosophy. Tertullian lamented the day you taught the Christians dialectic, the art of proving and disproving.<sup>18</sup> The church was not concerned



about philosophy till some of its members asked, "What shall we do with Plato?" Irenaeus, in reference to the philosophers, said, "Now either all these men . . . knew the truth or else they did not. . . . If they did, then the Savior's descent to the earth was superfluous; . . . if they did not, why do you . . . go to them for supernatural knowledge, since they do not know God?"<sup>19</sup> The chief difference between original Christianity and the secular philosophers lay in the fact that whatever merit philosophy had in its search for God, according to Christian doctrine it was superseded by revelation. Thus, Christianity's aim and the aim of you philosophers were divergent rather than compatible.

Aquinas: I believe we would have to argue that point, my dear Martin. Were not Origen and Clement great apologists for the church, and did they not afford it intellectual respectability?

Luther: We must both remember that the Apostles had been taken and revelation ceased. Like myself later, neither Origen nor Clement claimed revelation or authority. Both were thoroughgoing Hellenists. We can deduce this from their writings. Clement wrote: "Philosophy prepares the work that Christ completes."<sup>20</sup> And Origen introduced logic and dialectic into the church, the two obsessions from which the early church had prided itself on being free.<sup>21</sup>

Aquinas: Your indictment is harsh on the philosophers, Martin. The language was but their vehicle to carry the Christian faith. One does not question the proposition of revelation as the major characteristic of the original church.<sup>22</sup> The principles were laid down supernaturally. Man, imbued with the power of reason, could then be independent and autonomous in his intellectual functions. His reason is his only basis for interpreting the supernatural laws of God.<sup>23</sup> Happiness results from being in accord with these laws. Thus, happiness, the purpose of a Christian's education, consists of the cultivation of the moral and intellectual virtues.<sup>24</sup>

#### CHRISTIAN HUMANISM AS AN AIM OF EDUCATION

Erasmus: I trust that you recognize the implication of what you are saying, Thomas. Your adoption of the Hellenistic world is a remarkable example of syncretism. Such a humanistic reconciliation implies that before one becomes a Christian, one must first become a man, mature enough on the human level to be able to perform an act of faith and acts of morality. For the sake of argument: If classical education has developed its own admirable technique for producing a perfectly developed human being, why should we look elsewhere for some other kind of education?<sup>25</sup> As



for me, I find it more comfortable to stay with the joys of this world rather than the "other world" philosophy that preoccupies you saints. So I am comfortable with the first purpose of education being "that the tender spirit may drink in the seeds of piety, the next that he may love and learn thoroughly the liberal studies, the third . . . that he may be informed concerning the duties of life, the fourth . . . that from the earliest childhood he may be habituated in courteous manners."<sup>26</sup>

Aquinas: Even you, Martin, advocated a humanistic purpose of education for the good of the state!

Luther: Yes, "even if there were no soul . . . and men did not need schools and languages for the sake of Christianity and the Scriptures, still for the establishment of the best schools everywhere, both for boys and girls, this consideration is of itself sufficient, namely, that society, for the maintenance of civil order and the proper regulation of the households, needs accomplished and well-trained men and women."<sup>27</sup>

Whitehead: John Milton similarly defined education in his famous *Tractate of Education* as "that which gets a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."<sup>28</sup> This was a similar position to your own, Plato. But Milton also wedded this humanistic purpose to Christian doctrine when he wrote, "The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright."<sup>29</sup>

Mann: That theological idea had an unquestionable influence upon colonial school policy in America. The Ordinance of 1787, for example, stipulated that "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."<sup>30</sup>

#### KNOWLEDGE AS THE CHIEF AIM OF EDUCATION

Thorndike: Gentlemen, you seem to forget that scientific rationalism has been discarded as a basis for truth for centuries. I agree that we owe an immeasurable debt to our friend Aristotle, but others also deserve mention: Comenius, Newton, and Bacon. It is unfortunate that they could not be with us. They were responsible for infusing a scientific spirit into education. Bacon's *Novum Organum* gave us inductive logic. Comenius improvised this to the educational setting, though I think he was exaggerating when he acclaimed the process as being as "free from failure as are . . . mechanical contrivances, when skillfully made."<sup>31</sup> What this contribution did for education was, in my opinion, to take the whole of knowledge and make it the province of the educator. Aristotle,

you made a valiant contribution. It took the contribution of many others to rival your own.

Aristotle: Were I alive in his time, I would have been one of the first to embrace Bacon's scientific methodology.

#### SELF-ACTUALIZATION AS AN AIM—THE REJECTION OF THE OLD WAY

Rousseau: You recall, Edward, that I resisted then such a broad comprehensive aim. Who can attain it? "My object [was] not to furnish [the student's] mind with knowledge, but to teach him the method of acquiring it when necessary."<sup>32</sup>

Dewey: It was you, Jacques, that gave impetus to the so-called liberal movement in education. You, Pestalozzi, and Froebel. Your recommended curriculum was oriented toward the total life adjustment. Pestalozzi paid tribute to your genius when he said, "The ultimate end of education is not perfection in the accomplishments of the school, but fitness for life."<sup>33</sup>

Luther: Superficially, one might be impressed with that thought. But I must point out that it was a frontal assault upon the Original Sin doctrine of the holy scriptures. Your rhetoric would have it that man is innately good, that his instincts should be allowed free expression without rule or restraint. "Let nature and experience be your guide," you decreed! Your "new morality" doctrine, whether deliberate or not, undermined the whole fabric of Christian morality.<sup>34</sup>

Rousseau: My concern was not theological, Martin. It was for the individual. I chose to leave theology to you theologians. If man's potential is unlimited, unbounded, is he not "perfectible" in the full sense of being capable of achieving perfection? As for the problem of choosing good over evil, that too is quite simple. Man being innately good, his decisions will likewise follow his innate nature.<sup>35</sup>

#### PERFECTION AS AN AIM OF EDUCATION

Mann: We confronted this issue early in American education. The Calvinists believed the sectarian notion of Original Sin, and this idea was pervasive within our early school system. I myself subscribed to Rousseau's philosophy of the "perfectibility of man" and his view on man's nature. It is true that we are born with natural appetites and passions that have no relation to God or his laws. This is the "carnal mind" that your esteemed Paul refers to so often, Martin. But once our rational and moral powers are developed and



we learn something of what God is through home, church, and school, we see and feel that we ought to love and obey God. But now comes the struggle. On the one hand we have our animal and worldly desires; on the other, reason and conscience. If we seek to obey God and subdue and control our natural impulses that lead to sin, we may come “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”<sup>36</sup> My attempt to imbue the educational system of our society with this idea and rid it of sectarianism stirred a great controversy.

Luther: Your notion is still controversial, Horace. Its sophistry lies not in its end—the perfection of man—but in the means by which you believe man can accomplish that end. It implies that we perfect ourselves through our own effort and native intelligence. There is no room for the grace of our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ!

Mann: On the contrary, Martin, the most comprehensive charge of the Savior was “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). To keep this charge I must aim at perfecting every part of the nature which God has given me—my body, that it might enjoy the good He offers me and be a fit residence for the indwelling soul; my powers of mind, that I may perceive and comprehend the wisdom which surrounds me in the creation and understand his laws; my soul, that I may do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with my God. In aiming at this perfection, those books will aid me which teach me how wonderfully and fearfully I am made or which enlarge my knowledge of the laws of God’s providence.<sup>37</sup>

Aquinas: Horace, your view contains an implicit interpretation of Christianity quite apart from its historical character. That is what Martin is attempting to tell you. Your view deliberately opposes a theocentric interpretation.

Bestor: Your *Tenth Annual Report*, Horace, declared your belief in natural law, the same conception held by Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and others. This is essential to your educational philosophy and the point that we conservatives have so resisted. Your view of natural rights is that it is an absolute right for every human being to receive an education and it is the state’s duty to see this is done. This concept of natural rights will ultimately destroy man’s freedom since it makes the state an instrument of coercion. As you state in your report, this doctrine ultimately gives property to the “commonwealth” or the state in the hope that all will be educated and thus saved from “poverty and vice.”<sup>38</sup> Cubberly correctly observed that it was your efforts that changed education from a religious orientation to an emphasis on “social efficiency, civic



virtue, and character, and that you were successful in transferring the control of community schools into state hands.”<sup>39</sup>

Mann: I still believe that “the common school is the greatest discovery ever made by man. . . . Other social organizations are curative and remedial; [the schools are] preventive and an antidote; they come to heal diseases and wounds; this to make the physical and moral frame invulnerable to them. [If] the common school [were] expanded to its capabilities . . . nine-tenths of the crimes in the penal code would become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills would be abridged; men would walk more safely by day; every pillow would be inviolable by night; property, life and character held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes reflecting the future brightened.”<sup>40</sup>

Spencer: Eloquently articulated, Horace! I similarly advocated, a generation before your time, a totally comprehensive program inclusive of the home, the school, and the church. I maintained that the school should assume responsibility for healthful living, vocational training, preparation for family, worthy citizenship, and worthy use of leisure time.<sup>41</sup>

Dewey: Your recommendations, Herbert, did not go unnoticed. They became the basis for the Seven Cardinal Principles of secondary education in the United States in the early twentieth century.

#### SOCIAL EFFICIENCY AS AN AIM FOR EDUCATION

Spencer: You’re very gracious, John, but it was really you who synthesized our previous thought and gave it rational coherence as a philosophy. In a remarkably consistent and thorough manner, you rewrote American educational practice in light of Darwin’s evolutionary philosophy and the ideas of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel. This was in accord with my “composition of all things” theory, placing the mind and the body as aspects of the same evolving organism. This theory made it unnecessary to postulate a supernatural origin to the soul or mind, or to speculate an eternal destiny.<sup>42</sup>

Dewey: I argued this question, Herbert, in *Democracy and Education* and claimed that the dualist philosophy of mind and body as posited by the conservatives was responsible for the unnatural cleavages in society and education, such as labor-leisure, practical-intellectual, man-nature, and so forth. Of course, if the mind is not different from the body, this means there is a unity in all things. This naturally led to the conclusion that education and life should be united.<sup>43</sup>



Brameld: By rejecting the traditional notion that man is born with a ready-made mind that absorbs stimuli and knowledge, you insisted that people react to situations because of their social environment. You argued that the individual derives his mental powers from society.<sup>44</sup> This, of course, places primary importance upon education for making man what he is. As you know, it was this idea that caused me to place the total burden for the reconstruction of society itself upon the educational institution.<sup>45</sup>

Plato: Do you modernists not see that such an argument robs man of his divine character? If man is merely an evolving creature devoid of a soul, his whole destiny consists of this world. There is no room for evil, no room for good! How can realities so evident be denied?

Brameld: You speak, Plato, about “good” and “evil.” How can such values be considered apart from humanity? The only way to validate moral choices is by social consensus.<sup>46</sup> If the people involved in the moral issue do not agree that the consequences are good for them, there is not much sense in introducing the notion of social consequences at all.

Plato: And therein lies your whole justification of the democratic ethic, those patterns of behavior that supposedly produce the greatest good for the human nature. It presumes that a society will always make laws and rules in its own best interest. History discredits this hypothesis completely.

Aristotle: Protagoras had a similar idea when he said, “Man is the measure of all things.”

Aquinas: And if man be the measure, God is not! The past is cancelled, and man becomes the law and the society in terms of his own wants. Rather than the revealed truth being man’s infallible source, his wants become the infallible source.

Luther: No absolute truth! Moral choices decided by social consensus rather than the revealed word of God! There can be no reconciliation of this view with the truth. It is Rousseau’s “new morality” in the extreme. Its pervasive agnosticism has corrupted society since it left them without a moral foundation based on the holy scriptures. It argues that “authoritarian consensus” is good whereas God’s authoritarianism is the defect of organized religion. Man is safe with powers God dare not be trusted with!

Aristotle: It is safe to say, Martin, that the later philosophers found God an unnecessary assumption to either their philosophy or methodology.

Thorndike: Gentlemen, the question is not whether God is a necessary assumption, but the methodology by which all of us derive our assumptions. Comte, Herbert, and Spencer, to name a



few, have gone over this same ground and have come to the conclusion that reason and revelation are not valid sources of truth. Must we revive their arguments again? To his credit, Dewey developed a scientific methodology. Who can doubt that his problem-solving methodology led to the advancement of the twentieth century? And is not education really a scientific matter rather than a metaphysical matter? The chief aim of education, as I see it, is for each individual to "secure the fullest satisfaction of his human wants." Education must therefore change human nature and wants that "are futile or antagonistic to the satisfaction of other wants and . . . cultivate those wants which do not reduce or actually increase the satisfaction of others." Education, then, "is not preparation for life; it is life."<sup>47</sup>

Dewey: I heartily agree! "The school must represent life—life as real and vital to the child as that which he carried on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground. . . . Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living."<sup>48</sup> This is the reason I could never see listing a group of aims for education. The process is its own end.<sup>49</sup>

#### THE GREAT SOCIETY AS THE CHIEF AIM FOR EDUCATION

Counts: Your philosophy, John, led me to argue for construction of a "new social order" built by schools. I believe it is the schools' responsibility to provide the great vision of social democracy and through the means at their disposal set about to reconstruct the social order. If young people are given this as a goal while in school and commit themselves to it, then a new order may be realized.<sup>50</sup> "The great purpose of the public school therefore should be to prepare the coming generation to participate actively and courageously in building a democratic industrial society that will cooperate with other nations in the exchange of goods, in the cultivation of the arts, in the advancement of knowledge and thought, and in maintaining the peace of the world. A less catholic purpose would be certain, sooner or later, to lead the country to disaster."<sup>51</sup>

Aquinas: Since your morality is completely nonsupernatural and man-centered, it must serve, not the individual, but the state. How can your own educator, whom you designate "a servant of the state," hope for a liberty that the state denies to all other orders? How will democracy, in eliminating differences, escape destroying the liberty which creates differences?

Counts: The masses will have to be organized, and "the people must capture the state." Then we must hope that eternal



vigilance will prevent the eventuality of the government assuming “a complete monopoly of the police and military power.”<sup>52</sup>

Hutchins: Such a prospect can also be prevented by a “universal dialogue.” If our hope for democracy is to be realized, every citizen must be educated to the limit of his capacity. There must be absolute freedom of opinion in the classroom whereby every student has a right to give his point of view. If both dialogue and democracy continue, “if they can be expanded, freedom, justice, equality, and peace will ultimately be achieved.”<sup>53</sup>

Plato: If man’s hope for democracy rests, as you say, on every citizen being educated to the limit of his capacity, mankind’s hope for democracy will never be realized because every citizen is not going to be educated to that limit. Your argument is greatly exaggerated.

Dewey: But the survival of democracy, as you say, Robert, rests on proper communication. “Without . . . communication, the public will remain shadowy and formless. . . . Till the Great Society is converted into a Great Community, the Public will remain in eclipse. Communication can alone create a great community. Our Babel is not one of the tongues but one of signs and symbols without which shared experience is impossible.”<sup>54</sup>

#### ATTEMPTS TOWARD A UNIFYING AIM OF EDUCATION

Feigl: Our experience today in attempting to reconcile our views illustrates the futility of dialogue as an end of itself. We have talked in terms of abstractions and slogans. If we can learn to apply operational definitions to our language, we may eliminate most of our misunderstandings. This means we must discount the methods of faith, revelation, mysticism, and pure reason. If we achieve this, we shall be able to “do” science rather than just talk in scientific language.<sup>55</sup> This seems our only hope for reconciliation.

Whitehead: But there is a better and more logical alternative, Herbert. Much of the gap between the so-called liberal and conservative camps might be bridged if we accept *all* the ways of knowing truth, recognizing the validity of both reason and experience. There is also a third method—the aesthetic or artistic. We must recognize that man “is employing the artistic mode when he relies upon feelings, sensations, emotions, and intuition rather than upon abstract reasoning or the scientific method.”<sup>56</sup> Why can’t we recognize, with the conservatives, that one of the primary aims of education is intellectual in nature? With the liberals, why can’t we agree that the schools’ activities mustn’t be limited to purely academic ideas?<sup>57</sup>

Aquinas: Such a compromise could never satisfy those of us who regard the dual nature of man as an imperative. It is wholly illogical to argue, as you modern thinkers do, for a pluralistic society when advocating a monistic philosophy. Or is it, gentlemen, that while you are espousing cultural pluralism, you are really seeking an agnostic universalism that will become the doctrine of your "New Society?"<sup>58</sup>

Hutchins: Gentlemen, gentlemen, let us not resort to accusation! We are no better off than when we commenced. It is growing late. Perhaps in generations to come a great synthesizing philosophy will capture the attention and hearts of all men. May we not be so arrogant as to suppose that we have the only reasoned alternatives. Perhaps through the process of time man, in spite of cultural diversity, will arrive at similar ends.

Aristotle: Let us hope such a prospect is not too far away—for the good of humanity.

Erasmus: As Hutchins said, "It is growing late." Let us leave the problem to the mortals.

#### EPILOGUE

The professor and student sat in subdued silence for some time. An ethereal quality remained. Finally, the student spoke. "Any educational philosophy is but the extension of the personal assumptions of one man. It's beginning to make sense!"

"Yes," replied the professor, elated with the pupil's insight, "you saw some very prominent men, but men necessarily confined to a perspective as broad or as narrow as their assumptions. We've caught just a glimpse of their ideas over 2,500 years."

"I can see," said the student, "that the outlook of each man led him to a particular educational aim. I didn't realize there was such a diversity in their views. This explains to me why there has been such a difficult time arriving at a consensus on educational philosophy. I think Hutchins's question—'Is there hope for agreement?'—is the real issue today."

"You're quite perceptive," smiled the professor. "Any other insights?"

"Well—I'm not quite sure I know how to articulate all I heard. It seems," said the student hesitantly, "that for centuries God was regarded as man's ultimate authority. That belief provided man with an absolute guide to live by and affected his philosophy about life. Our modern age seems to have overthrown—or outgrown—this necessity to look to a supernatural being for authority. There doesn't seem to be any ultimate authority—unless, of course, one



looks to the government—but that’s not my generation. We see no one or no being as an ultimate, infallible guide. Maybe that explains why we have such a difficult time with traditional values, why social problems almost defy solution, and why education today—particularly higher education—is so aimless.”

“I think you have summarized very well the fundamental issue of your age. Modern society has undergone a serious social transformation over the last several hundred years which has brought us to an almost totally secular society today<sup>59</sup>—and our educational institutions reflect this.<sup>60</sup> But it was not always this way. Harvard and other notable American colleges began as institutions specifically for the purpose of inculcating the religious and cultural heritage into a prospective clergy so that they in turn could impart those spiritual values to society. Religious education was a preeminent concern. Lamentably, a university education today from a public institution too frequently leads to agnosticism.”<sup>61</sup>

“Do you think we should return to ‘Christianizing’ education as it was practiced in the early history of our nation?”

“That’s hardly possible,” replied the professor, “nor is it realistic. I personally would like to see teachers help students to recognize, within guidelines, that we live today in a world of competing values. One set of values affirms a God-centered universe that makes us accountable to moral imperatives and the other set of values denies it. But the likelihood of that happening, I admit, is remote because teachers are neither prepared to do it, nor do they have the inclination to do it. They’re content to teach the facts of their discipline and ignore spiritual considerations. The end results will be that we continue to serve students an educational menu that caters to their rational and material appetite, but ignores their spiritual hunger.”<sup>62</sup>

“So what do you see as an answer to the problem?”

“Aren’t there some clues from what you heard and saw today? Good education begins with a coherent philosophy, and that cannot be separated from a teacher who imparts that philosophy. In other words, if you want to improve society and affect students in a moral sense, it begins with a teacher who exemplifies a well-ordered life, strength of moral character, and a superior personality. In my estimation, one cannot become a truly effective teacher, regardless of academic credentials, unless one has a clear sense of moral judgment, a clear understanding of right and wrong and good and evil. Choosing good over evil is the crowning achievement of life, and this is not done without educating toward that end. Education in its truest sense must lead a student to good choices.”



"In other words, if we are to ever get at the root of our problems, it must be done by educators who have a sense of moral purpose," summarized the student.

"Surely that's a part of it. Of course, the best place for effective discipline and moral education to occur is in the home. But the paradox is this: educators have little confidence that the family will do the job, but for their part they are so committed to pluralism with regard to teaching moral values that they end up being ethically neutral—so nothing really gets done through the school system."

"You don't hold out much hope then for the public school system to teach moral values."

"No," said the professor, shaking his head, "the answer must come from the home and a few privately funded universities that are unfettered from the control of government benefactions at the federal, state, or local levels and whose administrations regard it as their primary mission to educate students toward intellectual, moral, and spiritual ends. A private university has a constitutional privilege not permitted a state school: it can make religion a vital part of its academic curriculum. Someday a modern Academy will arise that has a clear purpose of transmitting its religious values and heritage to future generations, and of training future teachers to take their place in society with that end in view. But this will . . ."

"How do you think," interrupted the student, "the prevailing academic community will look on such an endeavor?"

"Many will not notice. But those who champion academic freedom to mean a forum for all competing ideas can be expected to react somewhat hysterically to such a venture. But therein lies another paradox of the modern university educator—many who are too timid to mention God in the curricula unhesitantly advance the theories of social Darwinism. They contend they're teaching subject matter, but I suggest that they're indoctrinating students toward skepticism and a totally secular perspective to life."

"But, on the other hand, wouldn't such an effort by a university to teach moral values be considered religious indoctrination?"

"This is where a private university administration must carefully assess their aims and ask: What values and aims do we want to persistently emphasize? On what moral imperatives do we justify the teachings of such values? Are the values we currently espouse congruent with principles that will bring students to greater moral and spiritual progress? Once these questions are decided upon, there must be a vigorous effort toward teaching these values in all phases of the university curriculum."



"I'm curious to hear how your ideal university would differ from all others."

"Fortunately, there are a few universities already moving toward that ideal in this nation. They are religiously based and authoritarian in character with a clear sense of their educational mission. So we're talking about a situation that has already taken root. But since we're talking about a 'most ideal' situation, I believe three vital elements would characterize such a university. First would be a clear sense of mission, one to which all administration and faculty were agreed and committed. The university would have clearly articulated aims that would include a search for ultimate truth with a recognition that God is its ultimate source.<sup>63</sup> The university faculty would see themselves as partners in promulgating a common philosophy—not an amalgam of past failed theories, but one that clearly reflects an intellectual and spiritual commitment to the future. A core curriculum of requirements would be developed to achieve those aims, the assumption being that certain intellectual, spiritual, moral, and scientific truths are cumulative and that educated persons ought to understand and embrace these truths. Excellence and innovation, therefore, would not be regarded as ends in themselves but as the by-product of a commitment to timeless values.

"But it is not only sufficient," continued the professor, "for a university to state its aims in terms of a written philosophy. Too often these aims are perfunctorily repeated by administrators at faculty workshops and are then forgotten as each instructor pursues his own interest. Each faculty member must be committed to these aims, which leads me to a second vital element—a reconceived idea of teaching. A teacher is looked on today as a purveyor of information whose task it is to sharpen the skills of the mind. But a teacher is more than this. He or she must be conceived as a guide to worthy living, as one who helps a student interpret life, and who, to use John Henry Newman's phrase, can 'arouse the *right* curiosity.' A teacher then is an individual who is intellectually and morally qualified to guide others on a course to worthy goals in this life and to focus their goals toward eternity."

"But you've left no allowance for academic freedom in your ideal university!" protested the student.

"On the contrary. A teacher committed to aims based on transcendental values has actually more freedom for the pursuit of ultimate truth. If he is firm in his convictions on ultimate truths and values, such as the reality of God and truths that emanated from him to guide mankind, then he doesn't have to constantly reassess those values and revise his assumptions because of changing social



theories. He is actually free to pursue knowledge based on ultimate truth.”<sup>64</sup>

“You mentioned training teachers. How would the university do that?”

“Yes, I was coming to that. Teachers are traditionally prepared to teach in the school system by being trained in two areas. First, they receive training in subject matter such as math, biology, or English. Second, they are trained in the methodology of teaching subject matter. But where is the curriculum that prepares them for perspective and for teaching moral values? This is practically nonexistent. A curriculum therefore would be devised to accomplish this. It would minimally consist of courses of study that would help students examine the root philosophies of current methods and innovations and help them understand the moral implications of these philosophies. Few teachers, for example, understand that certain learning models are based on the theory that men, like animals, may be selectively reinforced toward desirable or undesirable behavior. Such a philosophy is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of free will.

“You would also find, in the college of education, textbooks, monographs, and articles written by the faculty that reflect the intellectual and spiritual aims of the university with regard to its educational philosophy.”<sup>65</sup> The philosophy of secularism took root in our school system when educational philosophers, committed to the notion that there are no absolutes and consequently no permanent values, wrote the textbooks that have influenced teachers for over fifty years. To counter their influence it will take a comparable spiritual commitment and skill at writing and teaching. We have got to produce teachers who are equipped to philosophically cope with the specious philosophy of relativism. To do that requires a faculty in the college of education to train future teachers toward that end. A parallel kind of training, of course, would be required in the other colleges within the university.

“A third element would be a course of study in teaching moral and spiritual values and how these can be taught within the framework of constitutional law and school policy. Such a course would demonstrate to a potential teacher how to expose students to the reality that we live in a world of two competing value systems. You saw that contrast today where certain educators believed man to be God’s creation. The consequence of that belief is that man inherits certain fundamental rights respecting his life, property, and moral choices. The other view, represented by modern philosophers, holds to the assumption that the ‘animals are [man’s] elder brothers,’<sup>66</sup> that the fittest survive, and that man creates a better

society through his own wants and genius. The essential difference between the two philosophies is how we regard the worth and value of each individual."

"Do you really believe that such a university could arise in our modern era, given the present emphasis on secularism?"

"I'm absolutely convinced it will because of the vision and commitment of certain educators. Imagine the impact of a university that bases its aims on moral truths and trains potential teachers to take their place in society to leaven the loaf of secularism! I believe such an Academy would succeed where Plato's did not. And when such a university fully matures, it will become the proverbial 'city on a hill'—a virtual lighthouse that will help prevent others from wrecking on the shoals of misguided philosophies."

"Well I hope," sighed the student, "your optimism is soon rewarded."

"Perhaps in your lifetime."

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Plato, pt. 1 of *Laws*, in vol. 7 of *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 648.

<sup>2</sup>Plato, *Theaetetus*, in vol. 7 of *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 530.

<sup>3</sup>Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. William Boyd (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1962), 8.

<sup>4</sup>Plato, pt. 10 of *Laws*, 768.

<sup>5</sup>Plato, pt. 1 of *Laws*, 649.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur Bestor, "Educating the Gifted Child," *New Republic* 137 (4 March 1957): 12–16.

<sup>7</sup>Plato, pt. 6 of *Republic*, in vol. 10 of *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 381ff.

<sup>8</sup>"That one exemplar who would show the world how it could have rest from its evils might be produced by the Academy. If that happened it would indeed have fulfilled its object. . . . The Academy did not save Athens. It had a long life, longer than any school there has ever been. When it was closed it had been in existence for nearly nine hundred years, but as far as our scanty knowledge goes it had no effect politically. No great and good leaders came from it, no philosopher-kings to banish injustice and establish good government on earth. We do not know even of one who tried to do so. In politics the Academy was a failure and that fact would have condemned it in Plato's eyes" (Edith Hamilton, *Echo of Greece* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1957], 81, 87).

<sup>9</sup>A. M. Dupuis, *Philosophy of Education in Historical Perspective* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), 19–20.

<sup>10</sup>Hamilton, *Echo of Greece*, 95, 103.

<sup>11</sup>Augustine, bk. 1 of *Confessions*, in vol. 18 of *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 9:14, 12:19, 16:25.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, bk. 5, 10:19–20; bk. 7, 1:1.

<sup>13</sup>Hugh Nibley, *The World and the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954), 95, citing D. Thomasius.

<sup>14</sup>Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. 4, 16:29–31; bk. 5, 10:18–10:21; bk. 6, 3:4–4:5; bk. 7, 1:1; bk. 8, 5:6–7:13, 21:32; chaps. 5–6, bk. 8, of *City of God*, in vol. 18 of *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 267–69.



<sup>15</sup>Noah E. Fehl, *The Idea of a University in East and West* (Hong Kong: Chung Chi College, 1962), 263.

<sup>16</sup>Aristotle said in effect, "You cannot find out what is best by thought alone. Observation and experience are necessary as well as logical reasoning and intuitive knowledge" (Hamilton, *Echo of Greece*, 100).

<sup>17</sup>"The deepest foundation of the idea of a university is the Platonic faith in the unity of truth" (ibid., 34).

<sup>18</sup>Nibley, *World and Prophets*, 39–40, citing Tertullian.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 43, citing Irenaeus.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 40, citing Clement of Alexandria.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. For a more detailed analysis of this thesis, the following works are recommended: Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity* (New York: Harper, 1957), which traces how the Greek use of rhetoric and dialectic came into the Christian church to pervert the original teachings of the Apostles; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: New American Library, 1964), which documents the original church's opposition to Greek classical education and how Origen and others caused the church to embrace it (see especially chap. 9).

<sup>22</sup>Thomas Aquinas, "Summa Theologica," in vol. 19 of *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 504.

<sup>23</sup>Rousas J. Rushdooney, *The Messianic Character of American Education* (Nutley, N.J.: Craig Press, 1968), 15.

<sup>24</sup>John S. Brubacher, *A History of the Problems of Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1947), 7.

<sup>25</sup>Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 425.

<sup>26</sup>Brubacher, *Problems of Education*, 7–8, citing Erasmus.

<sup>27</sup>Frederick Eby, *Early Protestant Educators* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931), 68.

<sup>28</sup>Henry Wyman Holmes, "Locke and Milton," in *Lectures on The Harvard Classics*, ed. William Allan Neilson (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1914), 299–300.

<sup>29</sup>Brubacher, *Problems of Education*, 9, citing Milton.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 201, citing Comenius. Brubacher compares the Comenius doctrine to the twentieth century: "Ernest Horn in the twentieth century was of the opinion that progress in method had advanced to such a point . . . that the efficacy of teaching subjects like writing, spelling, and reading was on a scientific par with diagnosis in medicine."

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 11, citing Rousseau.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 14–15, citing Pestalozzi.

<sup>34</sup>James Burnham, *Suicide of the West* (New York: John Day, 1964), 50.

<sup>35</sup>Dupuis, *Philosophy of Education*, 102, citing Rousseau.

<sup>36</sup>Mary Mann, *Life of Horace Mann* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1937), 534–35. This quote is from a letter of Horace Mann to the Rev. O. J. Wait.

<sup>37</sup>Horace Mann, "On Corporal Punishment and Emulation, in Schools," *Common School Journal* 4 (15 August 1842): 248–49.

<sup>38</sup>Rushdooney, *Messianic Character*, 25, citing Mann.

<sup>39</sup>Ellwood P. Cubberly, *The History of Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 690.

<sup>40</sup>E. I. F. Williams, *Horace Mann, Education Statesman* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 248–49.

<sup>41</sup>Dupuis, *Philosophy of Education*, 135.

<sup>42</sup>See Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, 4th ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1896).

<sup>43</sup>John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 72, 76–77, 80, 340, 388–95.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 40–66.

<sup>45</sup>See chap. 6 of Theodore Brameld, *Toward a Reconstructed Philosophy of Education* (New York: Dryden Press, 1956), 149–67.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>47</sup>E. L. Thorndike and Arthur Gates, *Elementary Principles of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 16–21, 33.

<sup>48</sup>John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed* (Washington, D.C.: Progressive Education Association, 1926), 6.

<sup>49</sup>John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 60.

<sup>50</sup>George Counts, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (New York: John Day, 1932). Counts's work argues that the school should participate in the task of changing the United States from a capitalistic society to a socialistic society.

<sup>51</sup>George Counts et al., *The Social Foundations of Education* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 544.

<sup>52</sup>George Counts, *The Prospects of American Democracy* (New York: John Day, 1938), 183–84, 197.

<sup>53</sup>James Burnham, *Suicide of the West*, 68, 72.

<sup>54</sup>John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Chicago: Gateway, 1946), 142.



<sup>55</sup>Herbert Feigl, "The Logical Character of the Principle of Induction," in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), 297–304. A work that demonstrates the use of analytical philosophy applied to educational theory is John Wilson, *Language and the Pursuit of Truth* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), which argues that truth is predicated on (1) knowing what a statement means, (2) knowing the right way to verify it empirically, and (3) having good evidence for believing it. According to Wilson, metaphysical "truths" do not meet these criteria. Another such work is Othanel Smith and Robert Ennis, *Language and Concepts in Education* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1961). Henderson's essay in this volume maintains that by applying "scientific explanations" to history we may be able to predict the future and avert calamities, such as war. Dewey had evangelized for the teacher being "always . . . the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God" (Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*, 13). Has such come to pass through analytic philosophy?

<sup>56</sup>Dupuis, *Philosophy of Education*, 249.

<sup>57</sup>Alfred N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 13–16.

<sup>58</sup>This is the major thesis of Burnham's book *Suicide of the West*, in which he argues that the liberalism that permeates our society has, in fact, become the ethic, the morality, the ideology, and public policy with all save a few. His contention is that Western society, through the infusion of this liberal dialectic, has lost its will to survive and is thus set on a suicidal trend. For Burnham's criteria of modern liberalism, see especially 40–42, and chap. 7.

<sup>59</sup>Will Herberg suggests that modern man is in a spiritual chaos where neither freedom nor order is possible. This has come to pass because of self-indulgence, pleasure-seeking, and the search for power. How did our society manage to get into this spiritual wasteland? Herberg concludes that it is because of a "creeping conviction that human life can be lived and understood, in its own terms, without regard to any higher order of reality, that is, *without regard to God*" (Will Herberg, "Modern Man in a Metaphysical Wasteland," *Social Education* 33 [December 1969]: 932 [emphasis added]). Alexander Solzhenitsyn contends that once man liberated himself from the idea that he is God's creation, he turned to self-worship and gratification of his physical nature:

We turned our backs upon the Spirit and embraced all that is material with excessive and unwarranted zeal. This new way of thinking, which had imposed on us its guidance, did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man nor did it see any higher task than the attainment of happiness on earth.

It based modern western civilization on the dangerous trend to worship man and his material needs. Everything beyond physical well-being and accumulation of material goods, all other human requirements and characteristics of a subtler and higher nature, were left outside the area of attention of state and social systems, as if human life did not have any superior sense. . . . A total liberation occurred from the moral heritage of Christian centuries with their great reserves of mercy and sacrifice. (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart" [Commencement speech at Harvard University, reprinted in *Imprimis* 7 (August 1978): 5–6])

<sup>60</sup>"To a very large extent, American universities have fallen down on the job of transmitting values to students. Other institutions are also falling short, but the universities' failure is especially serious because historically they have had the task of imparting the essentials of the Western tradition to the leaders of tomorrow. Now young people in universities are generally offered a smorgasbord curriculum that fails to convey any sense of their own heritage. . . . The failure of the universities to transmit traditional values has left the field wide open to ideologies and methodologies—those modern substitutes for religion. Certain points of view accepted in academic guilds have become the values transmitted by higher education. Schools impart values under the guise of imparting none. That is a form of dishonesty corrosive of a healthy democracy. . . . It's important to get basic moral standards and commitment back into the highest levels of our intellectual effort. After all, it was the combination of spiritual, moral and civic concerns with exacting intellectual activity that really built this country and made democracy work on a continental scale" (James Billington, "Universities Have Fallen Down on the Job of Teaching Values," *U.S. News and World Report* 97 [1 October 1984]: 69–70).

<sup>61</sup>"The fact of the day is that in the mainstream of American higher education, religion is either a thing of the past or else an insignificant vestigial presence that has managed to survive beyond its time. God may not be altogether dead in the 'establishment' colleges or universities, but He has certainly been closeted so that His province does not figure prominently in the public presentations and deliberations of educational purpose" (John A. Howard, "The State of Religion in American Higher Education," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 41 [15 May 1975]: 467).

<sup>62</sup>A recent example of this emphasis on utilitarian aims is the study done by the National Commission on Excellence in Education: "Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. . . . The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our education attainments." What is the perilous "risk" to our nation? "The risk is not only that the Japanese make automobiles more efficiently



than Americans and have government subsidies for development and export. It is not just that the South Koreans recently built the world's most efficient steel mill, or that American machine tools, once the pride of the world, are being displaced by German products. It is also that these developments signify a redistribution of trained capability throughout the globe. Knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs, synthetic fertilizers, and blue jeans did earlier. If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system for the benefit of all. . . . Learning is the indispensable investment required for success in the 'information age' we are entering" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform: A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education* [Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983], 5–7).

<sup>63</sup>For example, in 1953 Elder Harold B. Lee listed five aims for Church schools: First, "to teach truth, secular truth, so effectively that students will be free from error, free from sin, free from darkness, free from traditions, vain philosophies and from the untried, unproven theories of science"; second, to "educate youth, not only for time, but for all eternity"; third, to "so teach the Gospel that students will not be misled by purveyors of false doctrines, vain speculations of faulty interpretations"; fourth, "to prepare students to live a well-rounded life"; and fifth, "to set the stage and help youth to acquire a testimony that God lives and that His work is divine" (Harold B. Lee, "The Mission of the Church Schools" [Address delivered at Brigham Young University, 21 August 1953], 3). As another example, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., First Counselor in the First Presidency, gave the following inaugural charge to Howard S. McDonald when he was installed as president of Brigham Young University: "The University has a dual function, a dual aim and purpose—secular learning, the lesser value, and spiritual development, the greater. These two values must always be together, neither would be perfect without the other, but the spiritual values, being basic and eternal, must always prevail, for the spiritual values are built upon absolute truth" (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *The Mission of Brigham Young University* [Provo: Brigham Young University, 1949], 10).

<sup>64</sup>The professor's arguments infer that moral, ethical, and religious education require something more than intellectuality and experimentation. Latter-day Saint theology requires that before society can change there must be a regeneration of the inner man. Therefore, an ideal Academy would have a faculty composed of men and women who have been spiritually regenerated. This view was given to graduating students of Brigham Young University in a baccalaureate address by Elder Marion G. Romney in 1957:

The unique commission of . . . Brigham Young University . . . is threefold. First, to help you recognize that there are two sources of learning, one divine, the other human; second, to urge and inspire . . . students to drink deeply from both sources; and third, to teach and train [students] to correctly distinguish between the learning of the world and revealed truth "from heaven" that [they] may not be deceived in [their] search.

This unique commission puts peculiar responsibility upon both teachers and students not imposed by any other university. . . . The teacher at Brigham Young University has an obligation to keep these distinctions clear in his own thinking and in his own heart, and to make sure that they are indelibly stamped upon the minds and hearts of his students. The student has the obligation to realize that an acquaintance with the learning of men, as well as a knowledge of the revealed word of God, is essential to a proper discharge of our teaching obligation to the world.

Don't let anyone tell you there is anything narrow-minded or provincial or bigoted about this view. Both the teacher and the student who has been born again, who has been on the mountaintop and beheld in vision the mighty mission of this University in saving the souls of men, enjoy here a freedom available in no other university—the freedom to seek learning both human and divine, 'by study and also by faith,' and *the freedom to teach without restriction the finite wisdom of men by the glowing light of the infinite wisdom of God, so far as He has revealed it*. The spiritually reborn do not have their academic freedom restricted but greatly extended at Brigham Young University. (Marion G. Romney, "Your Quest for Truth," in *Church News*, 8 June 1957, 10 [emphasis added])

<sup>65</sup>Brigham Young stated in a letter the purpose of the founding of Brigham Young University: "I hope to see the day when the doctrines of the Gospel will be taught in all our schools, when the revelation of the Lord will be our texts, and *our books will be written and manufactured by ourselves and in our own midst*. As a beginning in this direction I have endowed the Brigham Young Academy at Provo and [am] now seeking to do the same thing in this city" (Brigham Young to Willard Young, 19 October 1876, in *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons*, ed. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], 199 [emphasis added]).

<sup>66</sup>This is the eminent psychologist G. Stanley Hall's phrase. See *Recreations of a Psychologist* (New York: Appleton, 1920), 75.



## Lombardy Poplars

They lined both sides of streets  
In older Utah towns  
And bordered close-in fields—  
Planted no further apart than fence posts—  
As alien in the West as settlers were.

Their thick-ribbed trunks and heart-shaped leaves  
Marked them kin to native cottonwoods,  
But with that peculiar spire-like form  
That spaced so close, quickly  
Made a hedge fifty feet tall.

It was always said that they  
Were planted as windbreaks.  
And true, the sweep of wind  
Through empty valleys  
Could do with some impediment.

But was it that the Eastern men  
Emerging from their forest groves  
That ever blocked the distant view  
Found the scale just too immense  
And needed walls against the space.

—John S. Harris

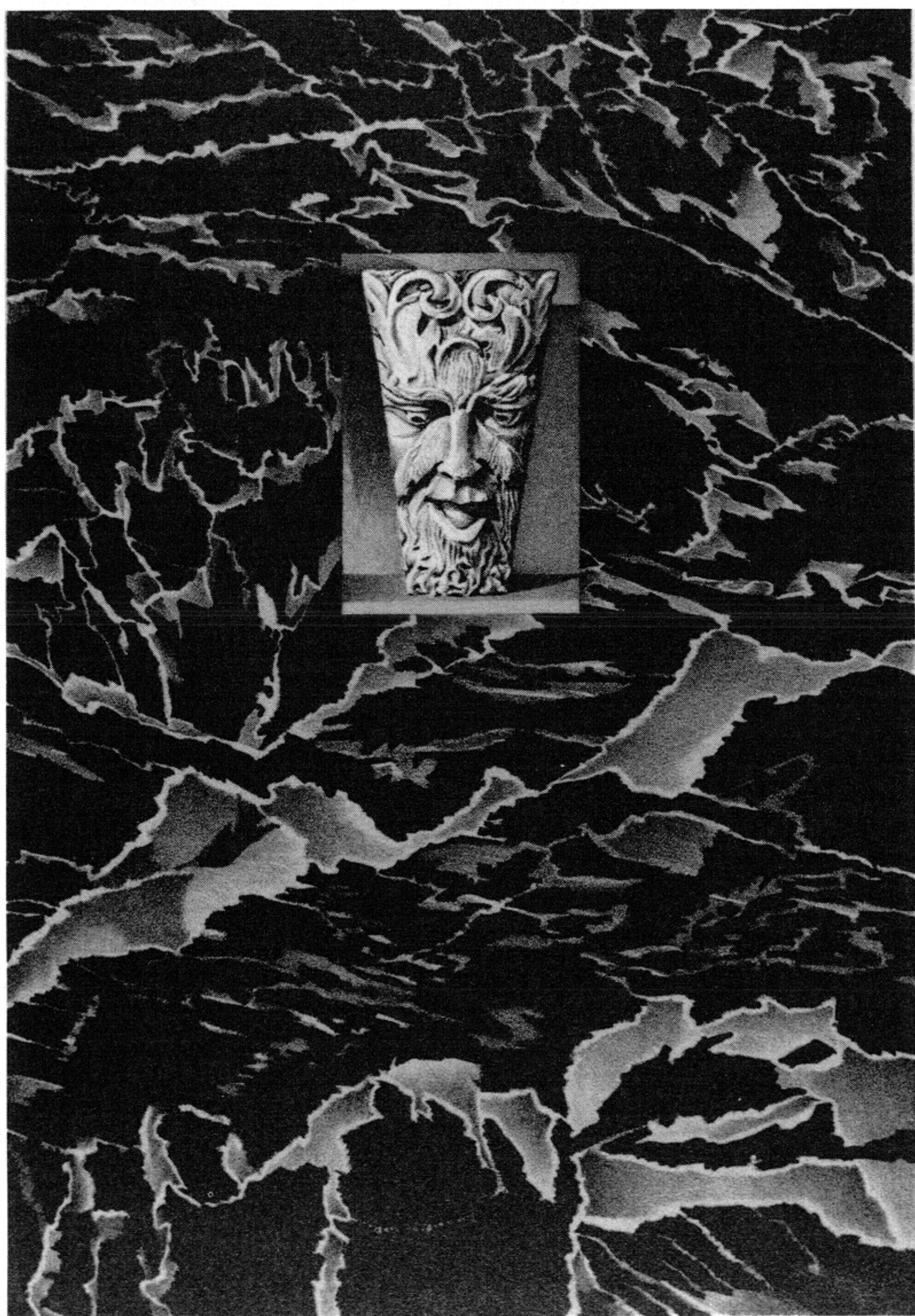
# Intimate Scale

## A Portfolio of Lithographs by Wayne Kimball

Wayne Kimball is a professor of art at Brigham Young University. He is perhaps best known for his detailed and often deeply moving lithographs. Between 1967 and 1988 he mounted thirty-two solo exhibitions and took part in 175 group exhibitions, including the "Seventh British International Print Biennale" (invitational) in Bradford, West Yorkshire; exhibitions in five Dutch museums, 1982–84, including the Gemeente Museum in Arnhem and the Prinsenhof in Delft; and a 1987 solo exhibition at the Weatherspoon Gallery in Greensboro, North Carolina. His art has won fifty-two awards, among them a 1988 first prize at the "Recent American Works on Paper." His works hang in forty-seven permanent collections, including those at Brigham Young University; the Tamarind Lithography Workshop; the U.S. Library of Congress; and the Lessing J. Resenwald Collection of the National Gallery of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. His works have also been reproduced in thirty-three books and catalogs. *Brigham Young University Studies* is pleased to reproduce nine of his lithographs in this issue.

Kimball writes: "In recent years my work has become somewhat less directly answerable to current and modern developments in art and more dependent upon idiosyncratic tendencies and to my perception of some movements of the past. There has been no deliberate attempt to break from or ignore our time. I belong to this era, and would not prefer to live in another. However, there has been a sense of kinship growing in me with Northern Gothic and Renaissance painters, namely Robert Campin and Jan van Eyck and with the Islamic and Indian miniaturists. Some values which, in my view, characterize those artists and which attract me are: (1) the evolution of entire worlds within seemingly very restrictive sets of conditions; (2) the invention of extremely peculiar and unexpected forms which are immediately identifiable in objective terms, yet which reflect subjective—if not irrational—vision; (3) exuberant response to tactility of both subject matter and picture as art object; and (4) intimacy of scale which invites close examination, requires impeccable execution, and allows form to be read before process."



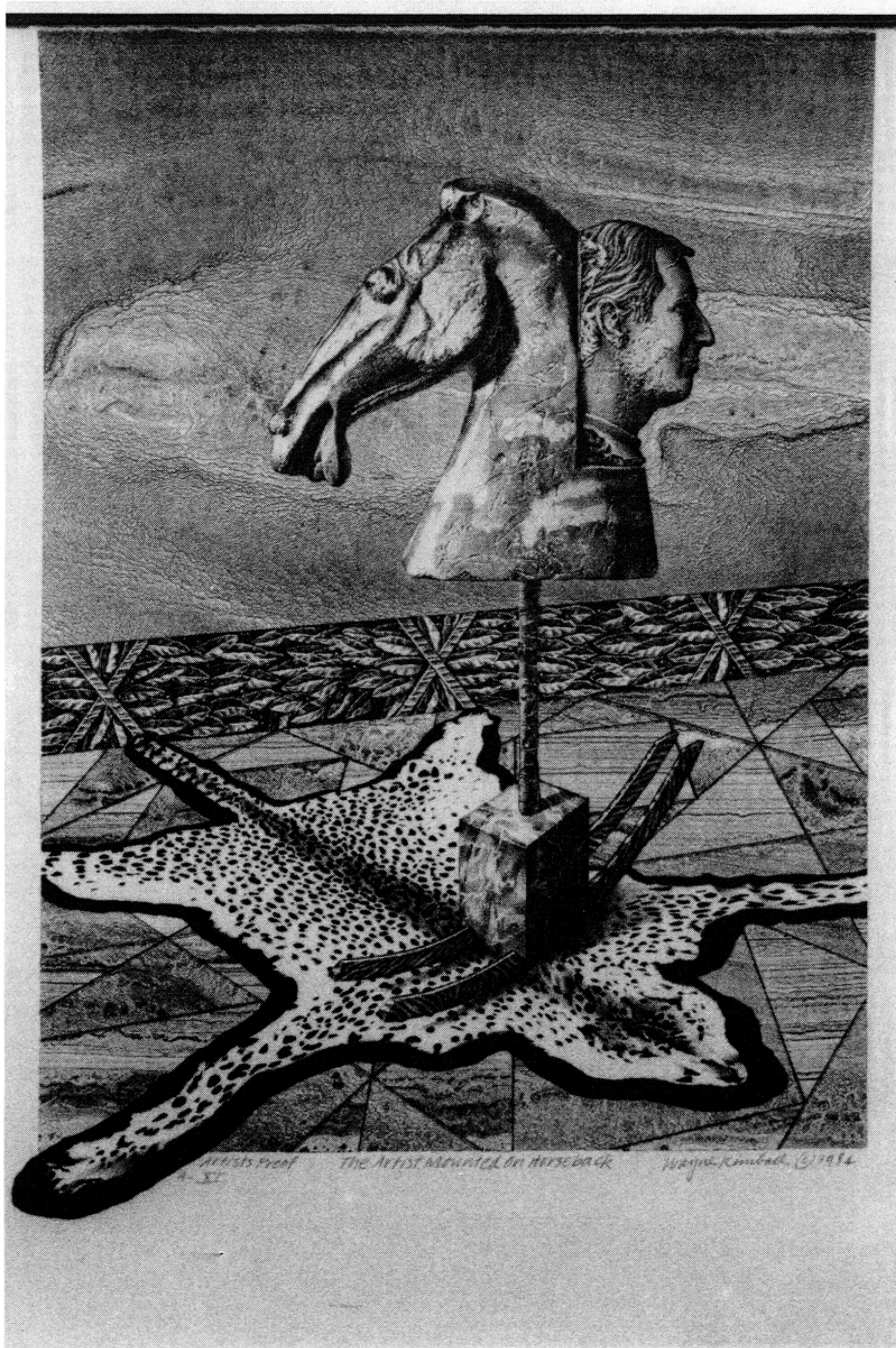


Artist's Proof

Wayne Kimball, 191

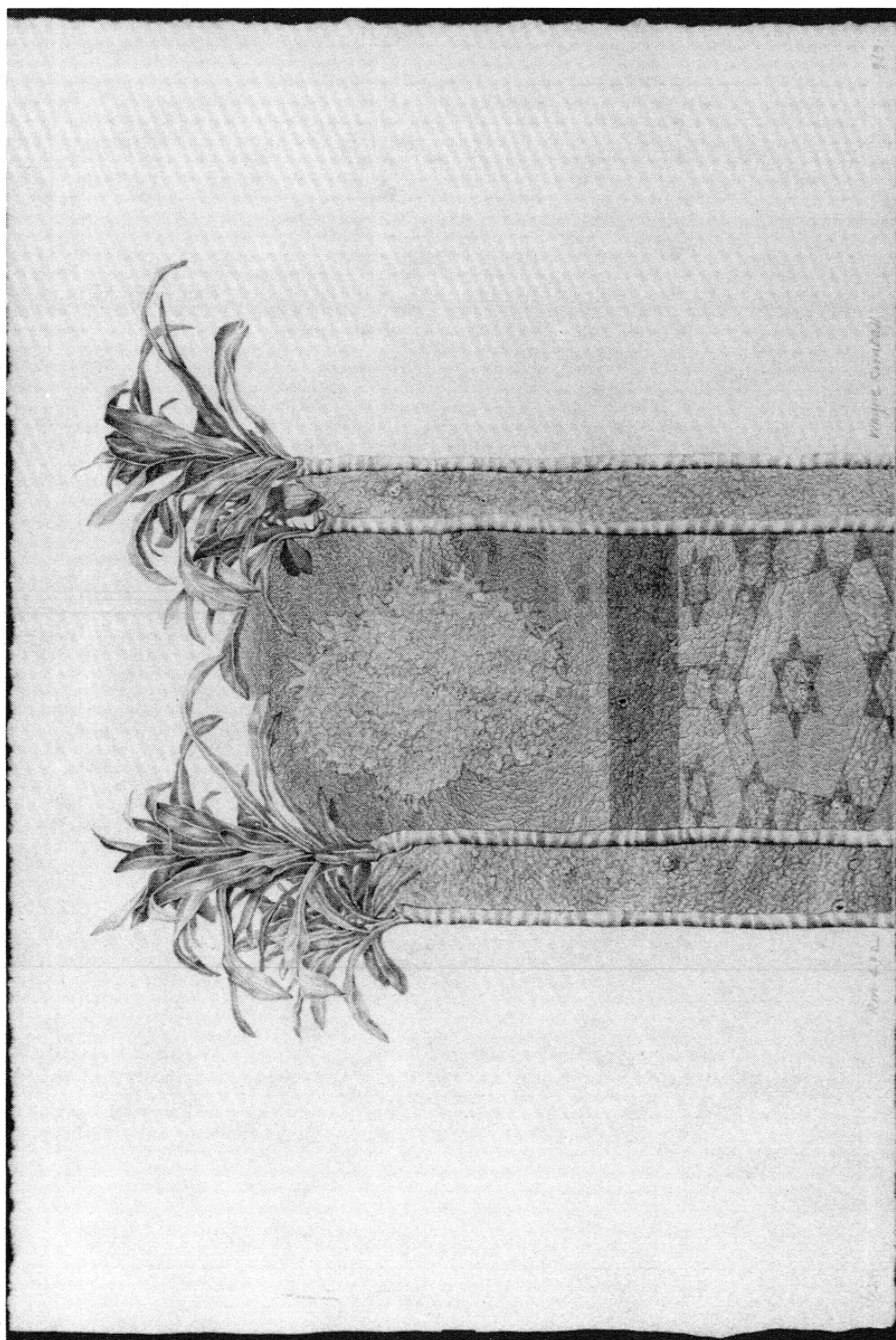
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*The Artist Mounted on Horseback*





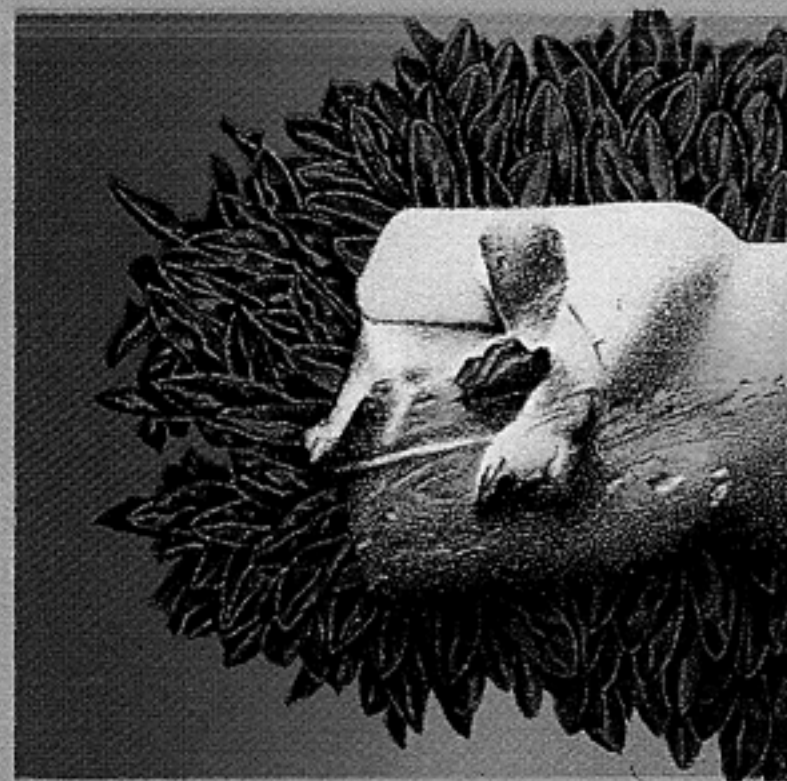
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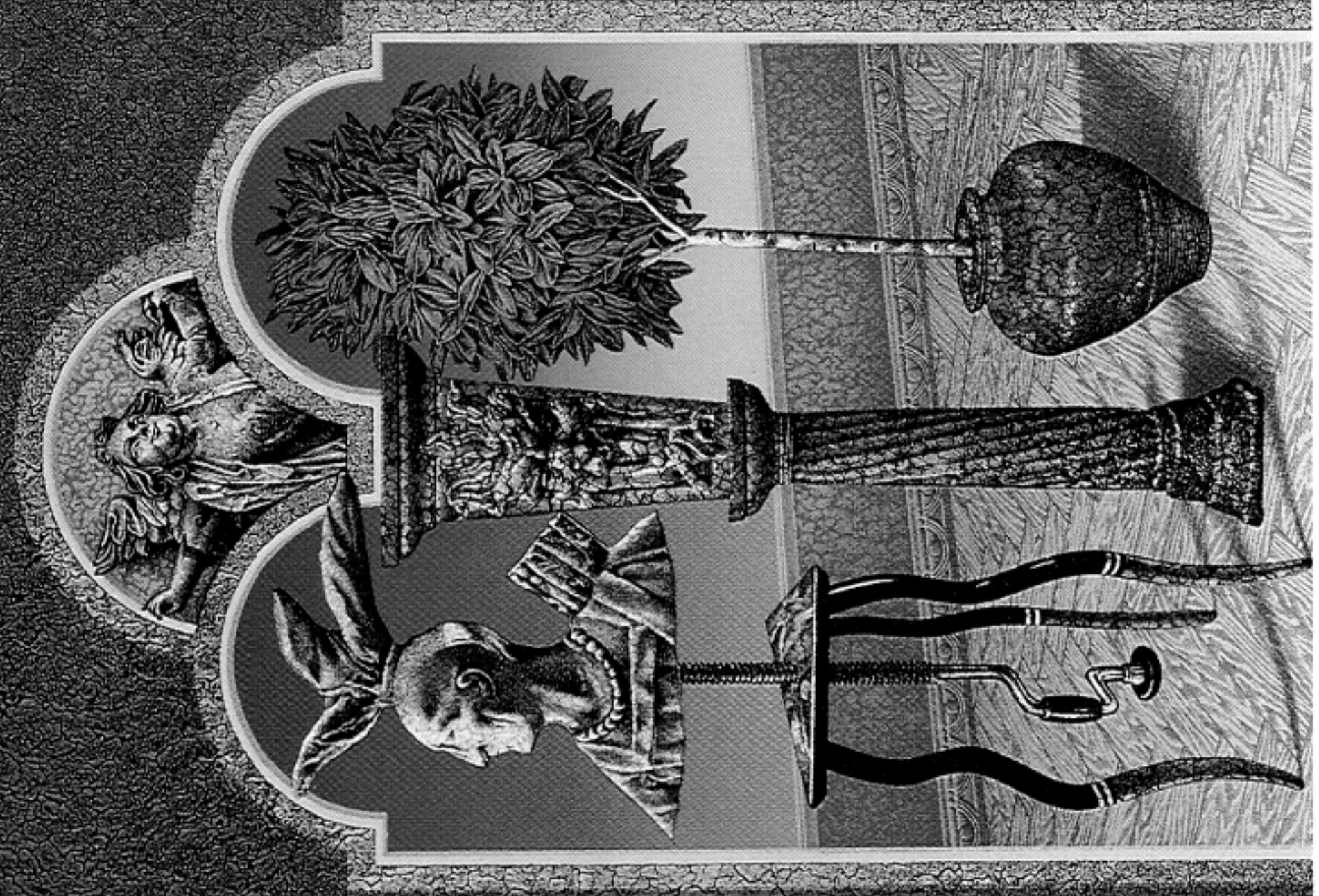
*2nd ELDDIR without the (ERNST) Nightingale*





*Torso, w/ Arms Crossed  
34/50 Wayne Kimball 1987*





36  
174  
Distant Relatives  
and  
Secret, Guessed  
1988  
Wings-Kimber

*Distant Relatives and Secret, Guessed*





ZWEI EISROH  
VI/XLIX  
Wagner-Kunsthaus 1913



# Brigham Young on the Social Order

Ronald W. Walker

“Suppose we had the power to take the poor and the ignorant, the low and the degraded who are trodden under foot by the great and the powerful among earth’s inhabitants, and bring them together and purify them and fill them with knowledge and understanding and make a nation of them worthy of admiration, what would you say to this?”

—Brigham Young<sup>1</sup>

In our mind’s eye we can see Brigham Young stepping to the pulpit. His presence is dominating. Old women rouse themselves in expectation. Men stop coughing. Even children cease their squalls. Typically the first words he speaks are almost inaudible, but warming to a subject he soon achieves fluency and control. His manner is effective but impromptu, “spoken rather than preached,” rambling instead of concise.<sup>2</sup> It is a scene reproduced hundreds, perhaps thousands, of times during his thirty years in the West.

He often preaches about the proper social order. What role should women and men have in an ideal society? What should be the function of work, education, and recreation? His views are not simply Christian homily. Born in upstate New York in 1801, Brigham Young is a child of America’s “golden age of community experiments”<sup>3</sup> and a convert to Joseph Smith’s earthly, here-and-now revelations.<sup>4</sup> As a result, he hopes to transform his rough but ambitious people into an exemplary community where cooperation, dedication, unity, and pioneer-building are sacramental rituals. Of course we must not mistake the pulpit ideal for the real. Utah conditions do not always conform to his exhortations. Nor is he always consistent in his preaching: time and circumstance sometimes alter his emphasis. Nevertheless, his statements convey a softer view of Utah society than is often attributed, and, more importantly, they are also biographically revealing, suggesting a thoughtful man of quick and hardy wit, whose much alleged “heavy

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hand” is tempered by practical and caring forbearance. And if his feet are firmly planted in the American agrarian frontier, his vision reaches upward. Religion impels him. When this dimension mixes with his social thinking, the result is one of America’s most successful religious utopians. Perhaps no other utopian operated on such a grand or effective scale.

He often approached the topic with studied casualness. His October 1872 sermon, one of the best expositions of his ideas, mingles governing principles for his “order of Enoch” with lively fancy:

I would build houses expressly for their convenience in cooking, washing and every department of their domestic arrangements. Instead of having every woman getting up in the morning and fussing around a cookstove or over the fire . . . she would have nothing to do but to go to her work. Let me have my arrangement here, a hall in which I can seat five hundred persons to eat; and I have my cooking apparatus—ranges and ovens—all prepared. And suppose we had . . . our cooking room attached to this hall; and there is a person at the further end of the table and he should telegraph that he wanted a warm beefsteak; and this is conveyed to him by a little railway, perhaps under the table, and he or she may take her beefsteak. “What do you want to take with it?” “A cup of tea, a cup of coffee, a cup of milk, piece of toast,” or something or other, no matter what they call for, it is conveyed to them and they take it. And when they have all eaten, the dishes are piled together, slipped under the table, and run back to the ones who wash them. We could have a few Chinamen to do that if we did not want to do it ourselves. (15:221)

Brigham Young wished for more than relief from domestic labor. His system allowed vocational specialization, even for nineteenth-century women. Certainly their utility extended beyond the need “to sweep houses, wash dishes, make beds, and raise babies” (13:61). After breakfast, they might “go to work making their bonnets, hats, and clothing, or in the factories” (15:221). While he thought manual labor for women unfitting (16:16), the professions were open to them. They could “stand behind the [business] counter, study law or physic, or become good book-keepers and be able to do their business in any counting house, and all this to enlarge their sphere of usefulness for the benefit of society at large” (13:61).

Men in turn should do sinewy labor: “Some for the kanyon, perhaps, or for the plow or harvest, no difference what, each and every class is organized, and all labor and perform their part” (15:221–22). However, he placed some vocations beyond the pale. Bone surgeons might perform a service, he thought, but frontier physicians generally accomplished more harm than good—and



at considerable expense (13:142; 14:109; 15:225–26). Lacking licensing standards and such primary knowledge as germ theory and antiseptics, the Utah medical profession was not above censure.

Lawyers were a greater bane: “I feel about them as Peter of Russia is said to have felt when he was in England. He saw and heard the lawyers pleading at a great trial there, and he was asked his opinion concerning them. He replied that he had two lawyers in his empire, and when he got home he intended to hang one of them” (15:224). Brigham Young believed lawyers were bent on strife and that the adversary system of law made “white black, and black white” (14:85). To be sure, he granted that lawyers had their place, but declared, “I cannot find it” (15:224).

Merchants scored no higher: “I never could, the poorest day I ever saw in my life, descend so low as to stand behind a counter. Taking that class of men as a whole, I think they are of extremely small calibre” (9:189–90). The problem was severalfold. Commercial profits drained from Zion precious capital resources (12:372–73) and often placed wealth at the disposal of enemies (11:298). Moreover, merchants were acquisitive. If “they had a chance to buy a widow’s cow for ten cents on the dollar of her real value in cash, [they] would make the purchase and then thank the Lord that he had so blessed them” (17:361–62). If such were to secure a heavenly reward, Brigham believed, “it would be by the skin of their teeth” (15:20).

The fundamental reason for excluding doctors, lawyers, and merchants from ideal society was that they were not producers of real wealth. Like Adam Smith and Karl Marx, Brigham Young held that labor was the basic element of production, and for him this meant using “bone, sinew, nerve, and muscle” to transform natural resources into usable products (1:254). In contrast, those who lived “by their wits” earned his scorn. Such a man “never did a thing to produce a morsel of bread. He never took the pains to raise a goose, duck, lamb, or sheep. . . . No, he never did anything useful; but still he eats, drinks, and wears, and lives in luxury. In the name of common sense what use is such a man on this earth?” (14:82–83).

These feelings led Brigham Young to construct a theology of agrarian work. He conceded the desirability of assembling to “pray, and preach, and exhort, so that we may obtain the power of God.” But such a religion, he archly observed, would not “raise our bread, nor perfect the Saints in wisdom” (11:325). What counted was works (3:154). Rather than simply preaching faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands, his text was often “building of a literal kingdom of God” (10:171). “Learn . . . how to yoke



together a pair of oxen," he taught his followers, "how to manage and drive them across the plains, how to get timber from the kanyons, how to make brick, and how to hew stone and bring them into shape and position to please the eye and create comfort and happiness for the Saints. These are some of the mysteries of the kingdom" (10:25).

His was a nuts-and-bolts Zion. Some might believe that the Lord could send an angel "with a loaf of bread under one arm and a leg of bacon under the other," but that was not Brigham's faith (11:105). Providence would interpose only in human extremity, "when I cannot feed myself through the means God has placed in my power" (1:108). His social order would be built by perspiration. "Do we realize," he asked, "that if we enjoy a Zion in time or in eternity, we must make it for ourselves? That all who have a Zion in the eternities of the gods organized, framed, consolidated, and perfected it themselves, and consequently are entitled to enjoy it[?]" (9:282).

The principle of work had important corollaries. It could be used to maintain order: "My policy is to keep every man, woman, and child busily employed, that they may have no idle time for hatching mischief in the night, and for making plans to accomplish their own ruin" (2:144). Likewise, it helped to dispense charity. Young believed that "to give to the idler is as wicked as anything else" (16:19). He maintained an ambitious public works program, at times assisting as many as two thousand men (10:206). The magnitude of the effort eventually overreached necessary projects and forced the construction of marginal and imaginative ones such as an adobe wall around Salt Lake City. "I build walls," he explained, "dig ditches, make bridges, and do a great amount and variety of labour that is of but little consequence only to provide ways and means for sustaining and preserving the destitute" (8:11).

He recommended that physical labor be balanced with mental activity: "Some think too much and should labor more, others labor too much, and should think more, and thus maintain an equilibrium . . . then you will enjoy health and vigor" (3:248). In an ideal society, members upon completing a day's labor might "repair to our [lecture] room, and have our historians, and our different teachers to teach classes of old and young" (15:222). At stake was the maximizing of human potential. He recalled when in the English "Potteries" passing a disfigured seventy-four-year old man (his head, Brigham exaggerated, was "within sixteen or eighteen inches off the ground") who had spent his life as a cup turner. "How do we know, but what, if he had had the privilege, he would have made a statesman or a fine physician, an excellent mechanic or a



good judge? . . . This shows the necessity of the mind . . . indulging in every exercise it can enjoy in order to attain to a full development of its powers" (13:61).

He spoke with the feeling of a man who himself had been denied formal education. "Learn! learn! learn! continue to learn, to study by observation and from good books!" (19:64–65). He recommended that children begin with the rudiments of their mother tongue and continue to include such "useful" pursuits as "history, arithmetic, reading, writing, and painting" (8:9; 15:222). Theology, or gospel study, scored the highest in his priorities (6:317; 7:202), but he repeatedly proclaimed a commitment to "all the arts and sciences, and every branch of mechanism known and understood by man" (13:263). Such learning would not only "fit us for increased usefulness," but also enable us "to improve our minds" (14:83).

He acknowledged that the Saints stood in need of intellectual improvement. Many were ignorant and mean in manner, and Utah in fact could boast of only "a few learned men and a few good scholars among the women" (14:192). To remedy these deficiencies, he advocated several enterprises. The territory's young men might form lyceums, societies, and evening schools to study the arts and sciences. Instead of "riding over the prairies hunting and wasting . . . [their] time," they could organize themselves to study statutes and constitutions (12:406–7). And he strongly supported Utah's private elementary and secondary schools, which he believed brought his people the highest per capita literacy in the world (8:40). But there were bounds to his advocacy. He rejected both public schools and Salt Lake City's superior Protestant denominational schools as uncontrollable intrusions within Zion.

Brigham Young also believed that education had its perils. He recalled hearing as a young man the silly question of the wife of his minister: "Do you suppose that we shall [be] under the necessity of eating with our hired help when we get into heaven?" (14:100). False learning brought pride and social distinctions. "What better is the man that can dress himself nicely and labor in a school house six hours a day," he asked, "than the man who works ten or twelve hours a day hewing rock? Is he any better?" (16:19). And he warned against self-importance. "We all wish to know something that our neighbors do not know. With scientific men you will often find the same trait of character; 'My studies and my researches are beyond those of my neighbors; I know more than they know; I treasure this up to myself, and I am looked upon as a superior being, and that delights me' " (17:52).



Education was not the only antidote he suggested to soften the rigors of pioneer life. He found recreation equally necessary, in part because of a personal need: “My mind labors like a man logging, all the time, and this is the reason why I am fond of . . . pastimes—they give me a privilege to throw every thing off, and shake myself, that my body may exercise, and my mind rest” (1:30; also 6:147). He also wished to cultivate the upcoming generation. When parents forbade novel reading, theater attendance, or other amusements in the name of religion, the result was often counterproductive. Upon maturing, their children became “more fit for companions to devils, than to be the children of such religious parents” (2:94).

Convinced that “a gathering and social spirit seems to be the order of heaven” (7:267), he tried to create one for Zion. In contrast with “the tight-laced religious professors of the present generation [who] have a horror at the sound of a fiddle,” he encouraged dance and song. Musical harmony gave him “exquisite joy” and prompted the dictum: “There is no music in hell, for all good music belongs to heaven” (9:244). He complained that Utah celebrated but four annual holidays (New Year’s, Pioneer Day, Independence Day, and Christmas) and wished for more (12:238–39). He recommended that families enjoy outings together (2:283), and for community entertainment he constructed Salt Lake City’s Social Hall and later its famed theater. The latter he hoped would avoid bloodcurdling melodrama for more soothing and constructive fare (9:243–45). As a result of these and other labors, he was satisfied that Mormon “recreations” compared favorably with any in the Christian world (13:147).

To such cultural values as work, education, and recreation, Brigham Young added another. He was concerned with environment. His ideal community would have proper hygiene and planning. No cows, pigs, outhouses, or other nuisances would be tolerated in the residential area: “Gravel our streets, pave our walks, water them, keep them clean and nicely swept, and everything neat, nice and sweet.” He recommended two-story homes to ensure proper upstairs sleeping ventilation and hoped that residences might be clustered within walking distance of both work and community halls. But he refused to abrogate personal choice or private property: “Build your houses just the size you want them, whether a hundred feet, fifty feet or five. . . . If there is any one person who has better taste in building than others, and can get up more tasteful houses, make your plans and we will put them up, and have the greatest variety we can imagine” (15:221–22).

For Brigham Young, any attempt to deal with human beings had to begin with a recognition of their diversity. People were not



similarly “gifted and capacitated” (6:93). Nor were their interests and fancies the same: “One sister would get up a certain fashioned bonnet, and another one another fashion”; or “one would trim it in a certain way, and another in another way” (11:305). Why not? “Let us take a course to understand men [and women] as they are, and not endeavour to make them precisely as we are, for this you cannot do” (9:124). Such tolerance might yield important by-products. “If houses and dresses and other things were alike,” talent and expression, he believed, would stultify. Yet, with variety Zion might “show to the world an example worthy of imitation” (11:305).

He believed that individuality also obtained in economic activity. While some Mormons favored a voluntary equalization of members’ wealth, he rejected such ideas out of hand. With humankind’s diverse talents for spending and acquiring, the program was unworkable. “How long would they remain equal?” he asked. “The cry would soon be—‘I have no bread, no house, no team, no farm; I have nothing’ ” (12:56). “Why a year from to-day we should need another division” (18:354). Ideally, he agreed that there should be rough equality of wealth (13:93; 17:53). But the poor should be lifted without lowering the prosperous. Again, he focused on human variety: “Let those who possess the ability and wisdom direct the labors of those who are not so endowed, until they too . . . acquire the same degree of ability” (18:354).

Here, then, was the crux of much of Brigham Young’s social thinking and the rationale for his own wealth. In a strongly autobiographical passage, he spoke of the obligation of an enlightened man of circumstance:

Gather around you the poor and honest of mankind and bestow your charity on them, not by giving them in the way that charity is almost universally understood, but supply them labor that will pay an interest on the outlay of means and, at the same time, afford food, raiment and shelter to the laborer; in this way the man of means becomes a benefactor to his race. Let him instruct those who know not how to cultivate the soil, who know not how to plant gardens and orchards and vineyards, in all these useful and profitable employments. Let him teach them the use of animals and how to profit by their labors and products. After he has taught them how to raise the wool and the flax, let him teach them how to make clothing of various kinds. Now they have their bread, meat, clothing, vegetables, fruit and dwellings which they have produced by their labor under the direction of the rich, good men whose capital and wisdom have elevated those poor persons from a state of destitution and want to a state of comfort and comparative independence. (10:193)

Of course, the idea of the wealthy assisting the poor was a nineteenth-century maxim. But Brigham’s pronouncements



conveyed little of the cant found elsewhere. Money grubbing was anathema to him. At times he denounced “unrighteous monopolies,” struck out at capitalists who “lock up all the means . . . so that the people can not get a dollar,” and attacked monied castes that created distinctions without reference to “Goodness, virtue or truth” (10:3; 16:77). He especially abominated the money-mindedness of some of his own people: “It has caused my spirit to weep and mourn to observe their greediness, their cheating and lying, their scheming in every possible way to wring a picayune out of this man, or that woman” (3:118). The problem lay not in wealth, but in its misuse: “The Lord has no objection to his people being wealthy, but he has a great objection to people hoarding up their wealth, and not devoting it, expressly for the advancement of his cause and kingdom on the earth” (11:294). He detailed the matter most precisely:

If the Lord has given me means and I spend it needlessly, in rings for my fingers, and jewelry for adornment I deprive the Priesthood of that which they ought to have to gather the poor, to preach the Gospel, to build temples and to feed the hungry in our midst. . . . Every yard of ribbon that I buy that is needless, every flounce, and every gewgaw that is purchased for my family needlessly, robs the Church of God. (14:18)

Nothing aroused his scorn so quickly as the “ding-dong” of fashion (13:4). He inveighed particularly against the extravagance of the prevailing feminine styles:

The present custom of many is such that I would as soon see a squaw go through the streets with a very little on, as to see clothing piled up until it reaches, perhaps, the top of the hedge or fence its wearer is passing. . . . In my feelings they are positively ridiculous, they are so useless and unbecoming. Do you recollect a fashion there was a few years ago, that has now nearly ceased, when a woman could not walk through the streets without holding her clothes two feet in front of her if her arm was long enough? . . . Now it is on the other side, and I do not know but they will get two humps on their backs, they have one now, and if they get to be dromedaries it will be no wonder. (15:161)

He questioned if some women’s dresses did not in fact conceal a six-horse team, with “a dozen dogs under the wagon” (15:132). To match their nonsense, men ought “to have one half of their hats covered with feathers and the other half with a cockade, and frills up and down the sleeves of their coats and the legs of their pantaloons” (12:37). He urged Zion to free itself from such excesses by creating an indigenous fashion, emphasizing simplicity and diversity (12:202; 14:17).



Behind Brigham Young's discussion of Christian stewardship, wealth, and fashion lay his quest for a godly community, a city on a hill. As every apprentice historian of Utah learns quickly, the Mormon leader was concerned with religious commonwealth. He taught his followers that his social order devolved from the biblical Enoch, whose society in turn was a shadow of the celestial (12:210). "We are trying to be the image of those who live in heaven," he insisted. "We are trying to pattern after them, to look like them, to walk and talk like them, to deal like them, and build up the kingdom of heaven as they have done" (9:170). Such a goal would be secured, he believed, only by the celestially-minded. The Saints, however, were by no means ready for the task: "What hinders this people from being as holy as the Church of Enoch? It is because you will not cultivate the disposition to be so" (1:202). The challenge lay inward. Man "is so prone to wander and give himself up to the grovelling things of the world . . . that it is literally a breaking up the fallow ground of his heart to prepare him to see the holy city. . . . Herein lies our labor" (13:151). From the transformation of a single heart, Zion would go forth, systematically extending holiness to families, neighborhoods, and finally to the world (10:173).

He hoped this religious dedication would bring several important results. First, it might produce a godly people. As their greatest and most important labor, the Saints should love God (12:229) and keep the sayings of Jesus (1:134). In this pursuit he constantly urged them on: "There is not an individual here but what has power . . . to drink whisky or let it alone, to swear or not swear, to lie or not lie . . . slander and backbite a brother or a sister or not. This power is our own individual property" (9:220).

Second, piety could reorient people from selves to society: "Just as long as every man works for himself we are not the Lord's" (15:166). Sacrifice loomed large in his view: "If we have not yet learned that poverty, sickness, pain, want, disappointment, losses, crosses, or even death, should not move us one hair's breadth from the service of God, or separate us from the principles of eternal life, it is a lesson we have to learn" (1:336).

Third, he hoped the people's faith would at last bring them to accept their stewardship before God. Here Brigham Young returned to one of his most recurring themes:

I have much property in my possession, and we use the terms, "my farm, my house, my cattle, my horses, my carriage," &c., but the fact is we do not truly own anything; we never did and never will, until many long ages after this. . . .



Every man and woman has got to feel that not one farthing of anything in their possession is rightfully theirs, in the strict sense of ownership. When we learn this lesson, where will my interest and my effort? I do not own anything—it is my Father’s. . . . His providence has thrown them into my care; He has appointed me a steward over them, and I am His servant, His steward, His hired man, one with whom He has placed certain property in charge for the time being that is, pertaining to the things of this world. (4:28–29)

Finally, there was a goal of unity, which he also defined in religious terms. Like God’s angels, men and women might be “of one heart and of one mind,” seeing, understanding, and knowing alike, through “faithfulness and obedience to the requirements of their Father and God” (11:15). For the rank and file Saint, this specifically meant foregoing political partisanship and accepting his leadership. Again, the heavenly pattern pertained: “Do you think [in heaven] they get up different ones whom they will run for their king, governor, or president? Do you think there is an opposition ticket there?” (16:76–77). He thought political parties promoted “distrust and jealousy, which led to discord and strife” and often had the additional result of electing officeholders “who would let the nation sink for a can of oysters and a lewd woman” (7:14–15; 17:51).

These values in themselves were not unusual, even in Jacksonian America. What set them apart was Brigham Young’s theocratic view. He believed that prophets such as himself were empowered to dictate “even the ribbons the women wear” (4:271; 11:298). Those who thought otherwise were “ignorant” and “from the enemy” (11:298; 18:246). He claimed to possess “the power of God” and asserted the heavenly knowledge to direct the Saints’ conduct “just as well as I know the road home” (9:289; 18:70). He had immense self-confidence, claiming that but one in forty (and here he no doubt was modest) could manage his followers so well. They had “to be watched like an infant running around the house, that knows no better than to take the carving knife or fork and fall upon it and put out its eyes” (12:56–57).

These statements were, at least in spirit, in conflict with his ideas of human diversity. But Brigham Young was no Savonarola. He minimized outward performance, including some of the rituals that have come to characterize modern-day Mormonism. Particularly in his later years, he urged the Saints (and himself) to live the “Word of Wisdom” health code, rejecting pleas to make the abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee a test of fellowship (9:35). Instead, with counsel having very much a modern ring, he urged the Saints to replace their pastries, beef, and particularly



pork with a simple diet of fish, vegetables, fruits, hard bread, and pure mountain water (12:37, 122, 192–93; 13:153–54; 19:68). He was equally forbearing about tithe-paying. His strongly worded sermons on behalf of the practice were balanced by his willingness to let individual conscience govern. “I shall seek in vain for a man in this Church who has paid his tithing strictly,” he declared (16:112). “Do you believe it? I know it” (14:87–88; also 12:36).

Nor was his a narrow and hidebound Sabbatarianism. While he recognized and preached the scriptural injunction to meet together on the Sabbath to confess faults and partake of the communion (15:222), his stress was not on Sunday asceticism and observance, which he believed was the accretion of unnecessary tradition. “You do not see me here every Sabbath,” he once spoke revealingly at the Saints’ community-wide service,

Perhaps some of you wonder why. . . . If I had my own choice, and could have my own dictation with regard to physical and mental labour, I would set apart, for the express benefit of man, at least one-seventh part of the time for rest. . . . Perhaps assembling here on the Sabbath is a rest to many, though it is not very much of a rest. To those who have been labouring all the week to the utmost extent of their strength, it may be somewhat of a rest to sit on these hard benches; but when I come here I have a constant labour on my mind. . . . If I had my own mind, I would devote the time for meetings like this within the measure of the six days, and on the seventh, rest from all my labours, for the express purpose of renewing the mental and physical powers of man. (8:57–58; also 3:324; 10:187)

While he underplayed some aspects of present-day Mormonism, Brigham and his people nevertheless displayed enormous religious energy. Their zeal was expended in Zion-building: preaching, baptizing, emigrating, settling, procreating, refining themselves—all in preparation for Brigham Young’s ideal society, the consuming passion that unified his thinking and acts. Scores of his sermons detailed the step-by-step building of this society. Missionaries began the process by carrying to the world “the keys of life and death,” which included the promise of an immediately better life in America (8:52). Brigham believed the gospel net should be expansive: “No matter who may apply to you for baptism, even if you have good reason to believe they are unworthy, if they require it forbid them not” (14:78).

To the natural eye, some of these sheaves had little apparent beauty. The gospel message usually failed to touch the rich, noble, and educated (12:257; 14:192). During his English mission Brigham had stayed the night with converts, and sometimes wondered, when turning down his bed sheets, where the original sheet was amid all the patching. He had seen other British converts



cover themselves with blankets while they washed their only clothes prior to the Sabbath (12:256–57). “We have mostly come from the plough and furrow, from the mechanic shops and the loom, from the spinning-jenny, the kitchen, and wash-room. This people have not been educated in the devilry and craft of the learned classes of mankind, and consequently possessed honesty enough to embrace the truth” (6:70–71).

Many failed to persevere. Brigham Young estimated less than a fourth of those who were baptized actually made their way to Utah (11:101), and many who came soon cast off their faith. The latter group gave Brigham apoplexy. He saw them as a waste of precious Church resources. He complained with characteristic vigor that they would not apostatize in the old country or in New York, where many emigrants temporarily settled. “They will labor there year after year, and struggle and toil until they can get to the gathering place . . . then they can apostatize, forsake the faith, and turn away from the holy commandments of the Lord Jesus.” For a time he considered placing all prospective emigrants under a covenant to be faithful but finally gave up the idea: “This is not our business [to determine who may come to Zion]. Our duty is to preach the Gospel and to receive all that wish to have the ordinances administered to them, and leave the result in the hands of God. This is his work, not ours” (14:79; also 13:30–31).

Those whose faith endured became grist for Brigham’s social mill, to be taught “the things which pertain to this world and to this life” (10:27). Zion would lift and reform them:

We take . . . [the poor] and we calculate to make them rich; we have taken the foolish and we calculate to make them wise; we take the weak and we calculate to make them strong. We calculate to build up this people until they know as much as any other people on the face of the earth, in mechanics, in the arts and sciences, and in every true principle of philosophy. (13:148; 14:103–4)

As always, Brigham Young defined this labor to be religious, preparatory for higher things. His people performed manual labor “to receive the full benefit of the spiritual” (9:239). “If you do not learn to live here . . . how can you understand the things pertaining to the life to come?” (12:261).

Despite his sometime pulpit harshness, there grew between Brigham and his people a respectful if not affectionate bond. According to Heber C. Kimball, his counselor, ten or twenty women might daily approach him for domestic advice (5:276). He returned their regard: “There is not a father who feels more tenderly towards his offspring, and loves them better than I love this people” (1:49). “My course,” he claimed, “is not to scold, but to persuade



and entreat the people to do their duty, holding before them the reward of faithfulness" (12:128). The father-figure image was apt, for Brigham's manner and speech was paternal. We "have to learn by the childish principle," he told his people, "a little today and a little more tomorrow" (16:41). The mastery of the "First Reader," he reminded, required more than a day (12:259). He wished to teach them more but thought he already had spoken beyond their preparation and worthiness (7:238). There was a tantalizing mystery about his reticence: "If I were to tell you one half of the things that I know in many particulars, it would astonish the half hearted who . . . do not understand the workings of the providences of God among the children of men" (18:359).

He had a hard sense of reality about his Saints. They might be "the best people in the world" (9:154–55) and had already improved at an unprecedented rate ("Enoch and his people . . . did not make greater progress"). Still, he was highly impatient (7:331). Many refused to listen to his advice: "It goes in at one ear and out at the other—it is like the weaver's shuttle passing through the web" (16:161). Others were like boys with sleds trudging slowly up a hill then rushing swiftly down. They were "apt to be slow to learn righteousness and quick to run in the ways of sin" (12:124). And he admitted that on Zion's fringe there were dregs aplenty. No community, he complained, had a higher proportion of thieves, for his missionaries had gathered along with the devout some of "the meanest men that ever disgraced God's footstool" (15:226).

Given this estimate, it is not surprising that Brigham was hesitant about praying for the destruction of the wicked. "Be careful," he advised, "for if they were all to be overthrown at once, how many would there be left that are called Saints?" (9:3). The question, he acknowledged, was embarrassing: "Do you think one half of . . . [the Saints] will enter in at the straight gate, pass by the angels and the Gods, and receive a celestial exaltation? I pray they may, even if I do not believe so" (4:195–96). Other moments found him still more dour, estimating "very few" would actually enter heaven's highest glory (18:213). Such conditions called for slow and tedious work. Zion's task would require many years and the labor of perhaps "hundreds and thousands" of prophet leaders (9:142).

Part of the problem lay with the "potent . . . almost almighty" force of custom (19:91–92), which unconsciously and often deleteriously conditioned morality. Once implanted, folkways became an almost insurmountable barrier to social progress: "Our traditions are so firmly fixed in our feelings that it is almost impossible to rise above, over-ride, or get rid of them. They cling



to us like the affections of tender friends" (13:261). They made men "automatons on the stage of life, following the maxim, 'As the old cock crows, so crows the young'" (3:276). He urged his people to declare war against "foolish traditions, pride and vain imaginations" (10:202) and suggested better ways in their place: "If we live long enough together, we shall have a tradition of our own." Then we will "learn the law of right . . . [and] be able at all times to know right from wrong" (3:324).

To circumvent false custom, Brigham Young turned to the upcoming generation: "I am not going to gather the lions of the forest from the sectarian world . . . but the mothers in Israel are going to rear them" (4:132). Unlike some of his own generation, whom he characterized as "old grannies" devoid of "a hundredth millionth part of an ounce of common sense," Zion's youth were untrammelled "with erroneous traditions and teachings," and to them he hastened to transfer power:

It is a common adage, "Old men for counsel, and young men for war." . . . I would say, with comparatively few exceptions, "young men for counsel, and young men for war." For knowledge and understanding I would rather, as a general thing, select young men from eighteen years of age—the sons of men who have been in this Church from the beginning, than to select their fathers. (7:335–36; also 12:394)

Keenly sensitive to his difficult social task, Brigham Young proclaimed himself "willing to wink" at his followers' ignorance and excused "a great many naughty things." "It is not by words, particularly, nor by actions, that men will be judged," he explained, but by "the sentiments and intentions of the heart" (6:307; 8:10; also 7:279). He urged this genial view upon Zion's second- and third-rank leaders: "How it floods my heart with sorrow to see so many Elders of Israel who wish everybody to come to their standard and be measured by their measure. Every man must be just so long, to fit their iron bedstead, or be cut off to the right length" (8:9). He fellowshiped many whom he thought rival denominations would unchurch. These, he proclaimed, "pass along unscathed . . . with the hope that they will reform and learn to live their religion more faithfully" (3:212, 12:163). He pursued a similar "hands-off" policy with members unable to accept the full range of Mormon doctrine, suggesting that they live morally for the present in the hope of receiving a believing heart and mind in the life to come (8:14).

Brigham Young's Zion was by no means a freewheeling pluralistic society on the twentieth-century model. But neither was it a religious tyranny. Brigham claimed that his community enjoyed "perfect liberty" (1:362–63) and promised that his ideal society,



when fully established, would continue to guarantee “every person in his rights” (6:342). He was especially adamant about preserving religious liberty: “I never would ask a man to be a Saint if he did not want to be; and I do not think I would persecute him if he worshiped a white dog, the sun, moon, or a graven image” (14:97; also 12:113–14; 14:94–95). He was unruffled when Protestant camp meetings came to evangelize Utah: “I am going to permit every one of my children to go and hear what they have to say” (14:157, 196–97).

Frequently he grumbled at first about an intrusion into his society then came to tolerate it. “I would have it distinctly understood that we deport ourselves in a friendly and neighborly manner toward our [non-LDS] friends,” he said of the non-Mormon merchants for whom he bore strong private animosity. They “may have the privilege of eating and drinking and enjoying themselves as well as we, if they get . . . [their means] honestly” (11:276–78, 80). He even tried to come to personal terms with the disorder of Salt Lake City’s Main Street, which he caustically called “Whisky Street.” Despite its “robbery, theft, drunkenness, lying, deceiving, gambling, whoring, and murder,” the only instrument he lifted against it was moral suasion. “Every variety [of good and evil],” he explained to his followers, “is necessary to prove whether we will preserve our integrity before God.” To demonstrate his own, he refused to walk through the vice area to the end of his life (7:242; 14:225–26).

Brigham Young might put the best face on things, but the coming of Gentile culture spelled the end of his social vision. Secularism, urbanization, and the market economy left little room for a labor-driven, agrarian, cooperative theocracy. But for his own people, during their moment of pioneering, his hopes had important results. For them, emigration, settlement, and daily living in their towns were as much sacramental acts as their baptism or confirmation, and they pursued these temporalities with great energy and success. Indeed, if judged by its ability to transform lives and by the scale of its operation, the Mormon Zion far excelled its communitarian rivals.<sup>5</sup>

Brigham Young believed his service and counsel had been good. “I do not know that I could do better than I have done since I have been in this kingdom,” he once characteristically remarked. “If I were to live my life over again, I should be afraid to try” (11:44).



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 12:259. Hereafter cited parenthetically. Due to a printing error, pagination of vol. 12 is not sequential.

<sup>2</sup>The mise-en-scène is that of the nineteenth-century traveler Richard Burton, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*, ed. Fawn M. Brodie (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 287–88.

<sup>3</sup>Ernest Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, quoted in Arthur Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America: 1663–1829*, 2d ed., enl. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 4–7.

<sup>4</sup>“Of the one hundred and twelve revelations announced by Joseph Smith, eighty-eight dealt partly or entirely with matters that were economic in nature” (Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966], 5–6).

<sup>5</sup>Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth: Utopian Communities in America 1680–1880*, 2d ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 18–19, estimates that the nineteenth century had one hundred utopian schemes enrolling over one hundred thousand people. Brigham's Utah exceeded all these schemes in toto.



# William James Barratt: The First Mormon “Down Under”

John Devitry-Smith

No single figure has aroused a more intense interest to those researching the origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia than William Barratt. Until recently his life and fate have been shrouded in mystery.

William James Barratt was born on 25 January 1823, in Burslem, North Staffordshire, England.<sup>1</sup> This area, covering approximately twenty-seven square miles, was known as the Potteries because of its prominence as the center of British earthenware manufacture. Barratt's family had lived here for several generations. His grandfather had married a widow when he was eighteen years old and worked as a farmer in Burslem. Taken as a recruit during the Napoleonic Wars, he was not heard of until he returned after being discharged. Upon his arrival home, he found his wife had remarried during his absence. He therefore left Burslem and his family.<sup>2</sup>

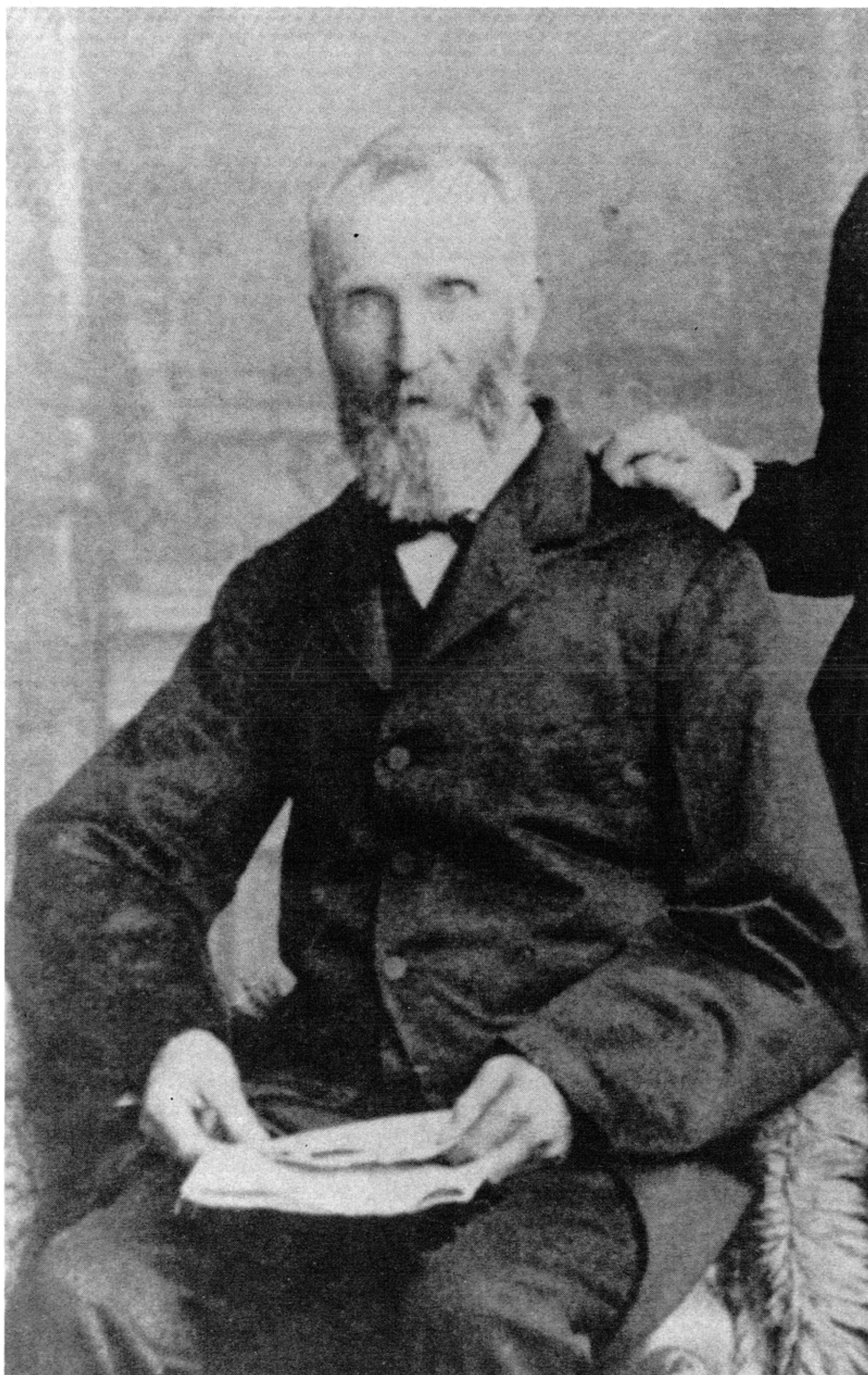
William James Barratt's father, William Joseph, was the only son of this marriage and had a good education for that time. According to the memoirs written by his grandson (also named William Joseph) he had strong religious inclinations and after being converted at a revival meeting went to London to try to convert his half-brother. Although unsuccessful in the conversion attempt, he remained in London, found work at a chemist shop, and boarded with a widow and her daughter. After a time, he married the daughter, Mary Ann Holland. The couple resided in London until approximately 1830, when they returned to Burslem with their two sons, William James, aged seven, and his younger brother Fredrick. Apparently this was not the first time they had been back in Burslem. Indeed, they may have lived there for a considerable period, as evidenced by William James's birth in Burslem.

Upon the family's return, William Joseph worked as a foreman in a factory. However, he was replaced while he was striking

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William James Barratt, c. 1880



for better wages. Being a man of resources, he began buying and selling goods from the factory as a wholesaler. He moved from place to place, doing especially well in exporting goods from Dundalk, Ireland, into England. He planned to settle in Dundalk, but Mary Ann would not go. Soon afterward, William Joseph died at the age of thirty-six. Left with three children and no means of support, Mary Ann soon married Robert Higgins.

Barratt's conversion story and baptism date are unknown. The earliest reference to the Church's being introduced into the area where he lived is found in the Manuscript History of the British Mission, 10 March 1839: "The work continues to spread in Manchester and vicinity, among the Staffordshire Potteries and other places in England."<sup>3</sup> The first actual reference to the gospel being preached in Burslem is dated 25 July 1839. On that day, Elder William Clayton began a five-day visit to Burslem during which he baptized seven people. From then on Alfred Cordon, a resident of Burslem who had been baptized 30 June 1839 at Manchester, "commenced preaching the Gospel holding meetings [and] baptizing believers."<sup>4</sup> In August and September of 1839, William Clayton, Willard Richards, and John Moon labored in Burslem with some success.<sup>5</sup> By the end of 1839, David Wilding had baptized more than thirty-six people in Burslem.<sup>6</sup> The success continued when Wilford Woodruff arrived on 21 January 1840 and baptized many during a stay of six weeks. A few months later, Elders George A. Smith and Theodore Turley also experienced success in Burslem and the Potteries.

William Barratt was likely baptized in mid to late 1839 or early 1840. His interest in the gospel probably stemmed from the influence of his religious father. That he was the only known member of his family to join the Church suggests a firm conviction in his own mind of its truthfulness. Apparently William became an active member after his baptism. The earliest reference to him appears in the journal of Alfred Cordon:

Thursday July 9th 1840 after I had been Preaching at Hanley bro Wm. Barratt came to our house and told me that he expected he was going to South Australia he was about 17 years of age he had a mother and a stepfather he was to have started on the Saturday The Spirit made it manifest to me that if he went he must be ordained to the Office of an Elder On Friday morning while Elder Smith was at Manchester he was impressed upon to come to Burslem he had a coat part made at the Tailor and he went and fetched it from him just as it was And he arrived at Burslem at nine o Clock in the Evening. When he had been here about Twenty minutes he had it manifested to him that he had come for the very purpose of Ordaining William Barratt an Elder We held Council Meeting on Saturday Evening at Hanley Bro Barratt



was present he was ordained an Elder and blessed under the hands of G. A. Smith and myself I gave him a Number of address and a few Timely Warning and two numbers of the Starr.<sup>7</sup>

George A. Smith also made the following note:

Saturday, July 11. Attended Council of the official members at Hanley [Hanley is two miles from Burslem], which lasted till midnight. We made arrangements to have all the ordained members attend to preaching every Sabbath at some place in the country, and report their proceedings every two weeks to the Council. Ordained William Barrett [sic] to the office of Elder, furnished him with what books I could, and gave him instruction preparatory to his mission to Australia; he was 17 1/2 years old.<sup>8</sup>

William Barratt's "mission" to Australia was a direct consequence of his mother's and stepfather's decision to emigrate. Life was not easy in Staffordshire, and work was hard to find because of the poor economic situation throughout England. The British government, aware of overcrowding and unemployment, promoted emigration to Australia by means of advertisements such as the following:

TO SMALL FARMERS AND OTHERS  
PERSONS OF SKILL AND INDUSTRY, AND POSSESSED  
OF SOME CAPITAL, BUT UNABLE BY THE USE OF IT  
TO PROCURE A COMFORTABLE LIVELIHOOD.

I don't wish to offend any of you; and I will not therefore inquire how it is that you got into your present deplorable state, but tell you how you may get out of it. . . . If some of us were to quit the country, the rest might live. . . . I, for one, am going to the new colony of SOUTH AUSTRALIA. . . . I believe it to be, as to soil and climate, one of the finest, richest, most healthy, and productive countries in the world. . . .

All the money which the Commissioners receive for purchase of land, or for the rent of pasturage, is to be spent in conveying to the colony, free of expense, young, able bodied labourers, giving a preference to those who have wives. . . . There will never be a single convict sent thither. . . . Consider if it would not be for your benefit to come with me to the beautiful climate of SOUTH AUSTRALIA, rather than to ramble over the Back Settlements of America, [or] the bleak, dreary, and unhealthy wilds of Canada.

I am Fellow-Countrymen your friend,  
An Intending Colonist of South Australia  
July 1st, 1835<sup>9</sup>

Upon learning of Barratt's intentions to emigrate, the elders in England made every effort to prepare him for missionary work when he reached Australia. About two weeks after his departure, George A. Smith wrote from Ledbury, Herefordshire, to his father,



John Smith, in Montrose, Iowa, describing his association with the young emigrant:

After conference I went to Burslem, found William Barratt, who is a worthy young man, about starting for South Australia, a distance of 16,000 miles. I ordained him an Elder and gave him a letter of recommendation and spent all the time I had, which was about three hours, in giving him instruction. He left in good courage, and wrote back from London, the day he sailed, and said to his brethren: "Be faithful and I will meet you in Zion bringing my sheaves with me." He was only seventeen years and six months old. He said he would write to Cousin Joseph as soon as he reached the colony.<sup>10</sup>

On 15 July 1840, two days before sailing from London aboard the barque *Diadem*,<sup>11</sup> Barratt wrote to Alfred Cordon from Deptford, conveying his heartfelt feeling and commitment to the gospel and his intent to eventually settle in the United States:

Dear brother in Christ

I write these few lines to inform you of my arrival this morning After a tedious journey with much profaneness and swearing as I never hear in my life before. I often went out the boat for the purpose of reading during which my bible fell into the canal but I got it out again

I have felt the importance of my office but I have felt the power also I have said nothing on board respecting the Gospel because of there mockery I have felt the loss of the Saints to be my greatest trial yet

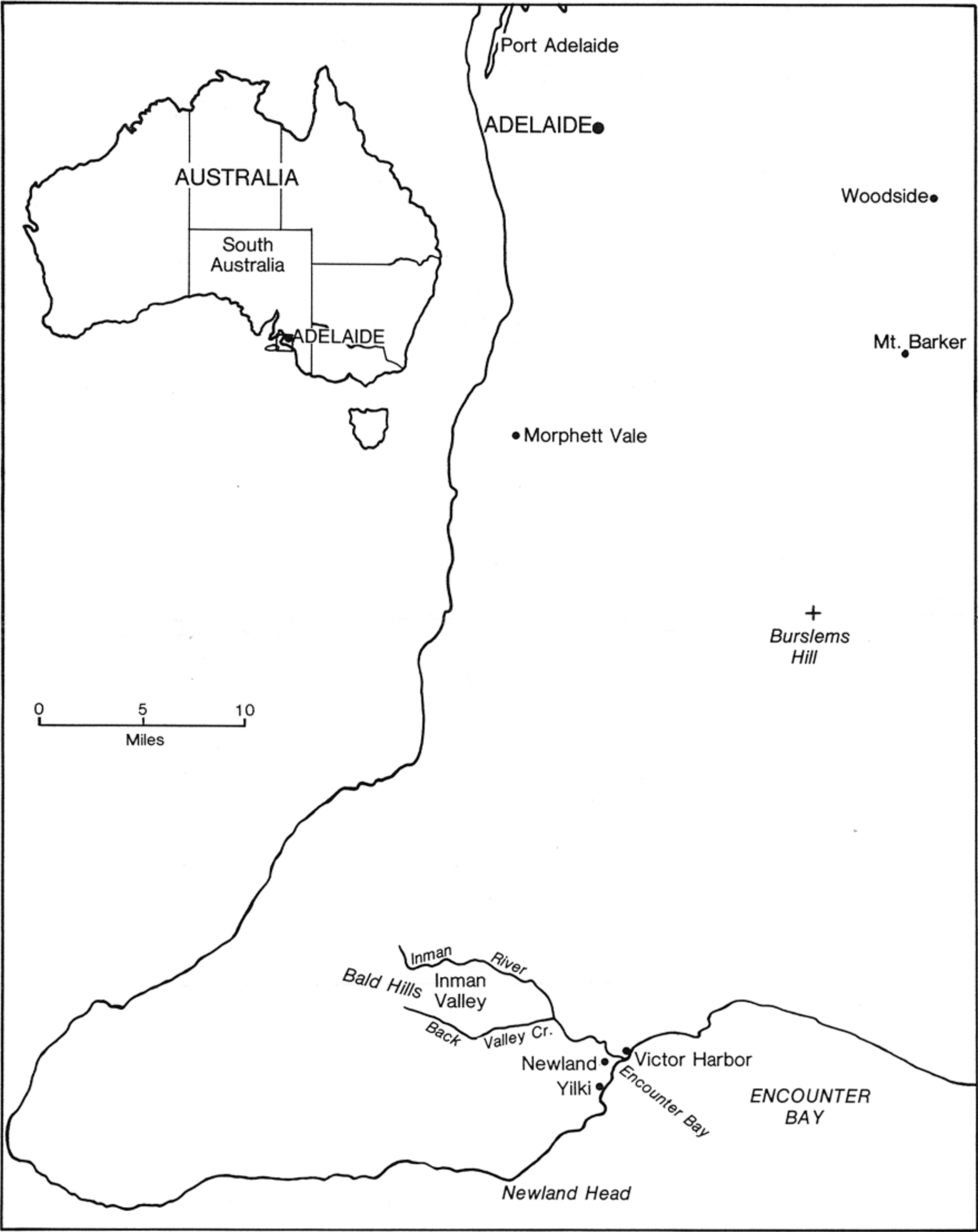
But I think this to be very profitable unto me that I may be the more zealous in good works brethren I feel just as the Apostles were as a Lamb among wolves going in a land of strangers to preach to gospel I desire greatly to see you all for the sake of the gospel I therefore disire your prayer in my Behalf I have witnessed much of the spirit of Revelation since Sunday in fact I only thought it a mere thought when the elders testified with others they were called by revelation But now I know the truth of the Assertion which proves to me who ought to preach and that none ought to preach without They are called by Revelation.

Dear Brother give my love to all the Saints and tell them that as many as are faithful I will meet them in Zion bringing my Sheaves with me.

If they are willing to do these things tell them my faith is fixed and my resolution strong to meet you all their, whom I love in the lord.

Tell Bro Smith I have found that courage is very servicable already now brethren and listen again I say prey for me that a door of utterance may be given unto me in a foreign land to preach the gospel Now brethren rejoice with me for his blessing he has bestowed upon us on whom are come the end of all things even the coming of the Lord to his Saints, Brethren sorrow not for me as those that have no hope but we have an hope of living and eating and drinking together in the kingdom of our God. I have not much to say now only exhort





A Map of Australia Showing Locations Discussed in This Article



thee to be steadfast and pray for me that I may be humble for I feel at this moment as clay in the hands of the potter that I may be moulded and fashioned as he will for I feel that my will is lost in the will of the Lord. Now may the very God of peace keep your whole soul blameless until the coming of the Lord. Brethren I rejoice with you as though present with you. Grace to the brethren with faith from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Grace by with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ. In Sincerity

To A. Cordon from W. J. Barratt<sup>12</sup>

Wilford Woodruff records a general note on Barratt and his departure:

Elders G. A. Smith and A. Cordon ordained William J. Barret [sic] of Burslem England, 17 years of age to the office of an Elder on the 11 day of July and he set sail at London for South Australia a voyage of 16,000 miles on the 17th day of July, 1840, to preach the gospel to that far distant people. South Australia is a new colony settled by the English now about 10,000 souls and rapidly increasing.

Thus doors are opening in all parts of the world for the rapid spread of the fulness of the Gospel. We received a letter yesterday from Elder Barret which he wrote just before he sailed. He exhorted us to be faithful and pray for him. He was clothed with the power of the Priesthood and the Holy Ghost, the spirit of Prophecy and Revelation and the importance of his mission. He testified in the name of God that he should return to Zion bringing his sheaves with him. He took our address and J. Smith jr. in the U. S. and says he will write. O Lord bless him.<sup>13</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith was first informed of Barratt's undertaking in late 1840 and acknowledged his departure approvingly in an epistle to the traveling high council and elders in England: "I am likewise informed that Elders have gone to Australia and the East Indias. I feel desirous that every providential opening of the kind should be filled, and that you should prior to your leaving England, send the gospel into as many parts as you possibly can."<sup>14</sup>

In all known accounts concerning Barratt's mission to Australia, the fact that he was simply acting upon the decision of his parents in proceeding to Australia is neglected, leading many to the incorrect assumption that Barratt was called and sent as the first missionary to Australia. He traveled to South Australia of his own choosing, being "appointed to labor as a missionary as opportunity might present itself."<sup>15</sup> However, once his plans were made known to Church authorities and his good character revealed, every assistance and encouragement was given in promoting his success.

The family, consisting of Robert Higgins, Mary Ann Barratt Higgins, William Barratt, Fredrick Barratt, aged fourteen, and their younger sister Mary Ann Barratt, Jr., aged three, arrived



16 November 1840, in Adelaide, South Australia, a colony begun only four years earlier. South Australia at the time had a population of 14,510, of whom about 8,490 resided within the municipality of Adelaide and 6,110 in the country districts.<sup>16</sup> Barratt's family were among the last to receive government assistance for a time. In the autumn of 1840, immigration by the aid of the Colonization Commission came to an end for want of funds. Only 175 people emigrated to South Australia the following year compared to 8,622 the previous three years.<sup>17</sup>

William's stepfather, Robert Higgins, began employment in the government works, most likely in or around Adelaide, while William traveled to Mount Barker about twenty miles away and worked as a shepherd's cook.<sup>18</sup> Although South Australia was not a convict colony, Barratt found the moral tone of the settlement disappointing. On 9 April 1841 he wrote to Alfred Cordon in Burslem, commenting on the condition and prospects of the colony—and the possibility that he might even return to England:

Dear Brother

I write to inform you that I still stand fast in the Lord and am stedfastly looking for his appearing, We had some very rough weather on our voyage, but the Lord shewed me beforehand what was about taking place, therefore I could rejoice while others were murmuring, But what more concerns you is the Gospel of which I am made a minister I have not baptized any at present The people seem wholly determined to reject my testimony, surely there are few Saints in this place I seem to be given up to work [among] wickedness and uncleanness, I never saw so much Prostitution Drunkenness and Extortion, in England as is practised here the Prophecy is well fulfilled upon them, They that flee from the trap are taken in the snare. They Collony will soon kill or cure the people, in fact a many of the collonists wish themselves back again, you may think Masters dare not speak to there men, but it is quite the reverse I have been oblinded to put up with treatment that I never should have recieved in England a many of the most wealthy men in the Collony are amancipated convicts and they make it there business to study how they may rob the labourer of his hire, A many are crying peasce and safty to this place, but I say Woe! Woe!!! Woe is there doom, So now brethren and Sisters farewell If I meet you not in England I shall in Zion

I remain yours

W. J. Barratt<sup>19</sup>

Cordon adds: "The letter was eight months in coming to me, he would have written to America but no vessel had sailed from that place that he could send by."<sup>20</sup>

Young William did get the opportunity to send a letter to the Prophet in America soon after. The letter states that he had arrived safely at Adelaide after a rough passage and had commenced to



preach but had not yet baptized. He cites the same obstacles as mentioned in the correspondence to Alfred Cordon.<sup>21</sup> This was the last known communication from Barratt to the Church.

About this time Barratt found a friend in Robert Beauchamp, a member of a religious group called Plymouth Brethren. While William Barratt lost interest in Mormonism, Beauchamp, as a result of his contact with Barratt, was to become one of the longest serving presidents of the Australasian Mission.<sup>22</sup> Twenty-five years later, Beauchamp recounted his conversion and association with Barratt in the following letter to President Brigham Young, dated Melbourne, 26 August 1866:

Dear Brother, May God bless you in the work to which you are called. I beg to acknowledge the receipt of the tracts you so kindly sent me; please accept my thanks. I trust you will bear with me, while I give a brief history of the Lord's dealing with me, and how I have been gradually led on from truth to truth, and from grace to grace to the present time.

I was formerly a member of a sect of professing Christians, called the Plymouth Brethren. I had been taught and firmly believed, that "Mormonism" was a weak and silly cheat, that our dear martyred Prophet Joseph Smith was an impudent and ignorant imposter, and that all "Mormons" were ignorant, illiterate, deluded creatures, objects of pity and contempt. It is true I had never conversed with, or even seen a "Mormon;" but what of that! Those who had given me my ideas of "Mormonism" were learned and pious Christians, in whom I had unbounded confidence. Well, with these impressions, I left England for Australia, in the year 1840. In the year 1841, I became acquainted with a young man who was aimable and intelligent, or at least I thought so, until I had made the discovery that he was an Elder of the Church of Latter-day Saints. I had formed an attachment to the young man, and my heart was touched with pity for him, and I determined, with God's help, to convert him from the error of his ways. To this end, I set myself to work with great zeal; I prided myself upon my knowledge of the Scriptures; but what was my surprise, to find that this poor deluded "Mormon" knew them better than myself. We had several meetings together, and in the end, instead of converting him to Christianity, I found that, if he had not quite made a "Mormon" of me, he had at least taught me many precious truths. He had convinced me that all the professing Christian churches, were no more than very unskilful imitations; not even having the form of Godliness, but a form without the power. I therefore disconnected myself from all associations with what I now saw was no more like the Church of God, than a brass sovereign was to the legitimate coin. I became disgusted with all professions of religion. [If] I did not believe in "Mormonism," I could not believe in any of the existing forms of so-called Christianity. I honestly believed in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, and sincerely desired to know the will of God, in order that I might do it. I had been convinced by the "Mormon" Elder that baptism by immersion was necessary as a first act of obedience, and I told him that though I could



not consent to be baptized into "Mormonism," I was desirous of submitting to the ordinance, as an answer of a good conscience towards God, by showing a willing obedience, so far as it had been made plain to me. I was accordingly baptized, but not prepared for the laying on of hands. I enjoyed the society of this young Elder for about three months, when business called him into the country, and I never saw him more.<sup>23</sup>

Beauchamp's remark that William Barratt was called into the country probably refers to his moving to Encounter Bay, where his family had settled. The 1841 census records the family as living at Encounter and consisting of Robert Higgins, Mary Ann Higgins, William James Barratt, Fredrick Thomas Barratt, and Mary Ann Barratt.<sup>24</sup> However, William may not have arrived in Encounter Bay until some time in 1842 as Robert Beauchamp later recorded his baptism by Barratt as being in 1842 at Adelaide.<sup>25</sup>

The principal pioneer settler of Encounter Bay was the Reverend Ridgway Newland, a Congregational minister from the Tabernacle, Hanley, North Staffordshire, who brought a party of thirty-four to South Australia in June 1839. Newland had taken up land grants at Encounter Bay prior to his arrival. Here the small party camped in tents for the first two years while trying to get established. Some moved away, but more settlers arrived, the Barratt-Higgins family among the first newcomers. That most of the settlers at Encounter Bay were from the same district in England played a large part in the family's decision to relocate there.<sup>26</sup>

The Reverend Newland was loved and respected by the settlers of Encounter Bay as a minister and a man. He was often asked to represent the district in Parliament but felt his ministry far more important. However, he was actively concerned with all local projects. He had been known to swim rivers to get to church and ride miles at the end of the day to visit the sick.<sup>27</sup>

Young William Barratt no doubt became well acquainted with Newland. A few years later he married the minister's housemaid, Ann Gibson. Ann's parents had been members of Newland's congregation at Hanley. Ann had been employed at an early age in the potteries, where William Barratt had also worked, but the two did not meet until years later at Encounter Bay. Ann's father, James Gibson, had been well acquainted with some of the members of the Newland party who left England in 1839, and with his family he soon followed them, leaving England in December of 1840. He took up land at the Inman Hills while Ann went into service with the Newlands as a housemaid.<sup>28</sup>

William lived with his family for some years after arriving at Encounter Bay, helping his stepfather in the store he had set up and



also working as a sheep shearer.<sup>29</sup> William and Ann were married 21 May 1846 by the Reverend E. Meyer, a Lutheran missionary, at the Tabernacle, a small chapel at Vilki, Encounter Bay, named after the Tabernacle in Hanley, North Staffordshire.<sup>30</sup> Shortly after the marriage, they moved to Glenbrook, Lower Inman, about two miles from Victor Harbour, where William rented a property. In 1851 William purchased some land eight miles away at Back Valley, which opened into Bald Hills. The land was nothing more than scrub, and William brought with him a boy named Hunt to help with the work of clearing the land.<sup>31</sup> William's oldest son, William Joseph, recalls driving a team of bullocks for his father while he was ploughing. "At harvest we had to cut wheat with a sickle. We cut it and put it in heaps and father tied it up."<sup>32</sup>

William Barratt became a prominent landholder in the Bald Hills and Inman Valley area. His signature is on some of the documents and petitions trying to get roads built and educational facilities for his children. It is also reported that he did local doctoring when the need arose. He bought more land closer to Inman Valley that he used for dairying as he could not grow wheat.<sup>33</sup> When Ann's father died in 1877, he left an estate valued at 750 pounds. Ann was the sole heir. William and his family then moved to a property at Inman Hills called Wattle Farm. This farm is still called Barratt's Place by the local residents. William and Ann had seven children: William Joseph (1847–1940); James (1849–1921); Ann Weymouth (1851–?); Mary Shipway (1852–1919); Sarah (1857–1921); and Fredrick Joshua (1868–1956).

William Barratt's decision to forego Mormonism and return to the mainstream religions of the day probably stemmed from a variety of reasons. His association with Reverend Newland and others in the Encounter Bay party cannot be underestimated. This, along with the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith when William was twenty-one and the apparent demise and disintegration of the Church no doubt contributed to the decision. When we consider the poor image of the Church and the persecution that grew with the introduction of new principles such as polygamy, William Barratt's choice is easy to understand.

It seems likely that he was probably better informed concerning the movements of the Saints in the States than previously assumed. Australian newspapers frequently published reports about the Mormons. In addition, some of Ann's relatives emigrated to Ohio at the same time her family came to Australia, in 1840. A descendant of William Barratt's had in her possession a number of postcards sent by a Gibson from Ohio.<sup>34</sup>



As time passed, William Barratt seems to have been more than content with his new life in South Australia. Although Mormon missionaries arrived in Australia in late 1851, and branches were organized in South Australia at Adelaide, Woodside, and Morphett Vale, there is no record that Barratt ever tried to make contact with any members or missionaries.

Although the spirit of Mormonism evidently faded to little more than a memory, William Barratt retained his interest in religion. In the early 1850s, he held services in his own house until the Bald Hills Congregational Church was erected in 1856 with Reverend Newland as minister. Later, William Barratt himself became a lay minister. No records were kept for the parish until 1862, but from the first entries William Barratt's name is prominent. Accounts emphasize his continuous missionary work, religious conversation, "Christian fellowship," and leadership role in church activity. The following resolutions proposed by William James Barratt on 21 February 1869 help illustrate his continual struggle to fulfill the religious needs of those around him and supply some form of organization to the small branch:

1. That after this date the members at Bald Hills meet every Lords day for prayer and mutual Exhortation, Edification, comfort etc., and the brethren, in the absence of the Pastor, to preside in rotation as by the plan to be made for that purpose.
2. That with a view to encourage the study of the sacred scriptures, bibles be provided for the use of the congregation.
3. That a roll of church members meeting at Bald Hills be prepared by W. J. Barratt and laid for approval before a future meeting of the church and that such roll in its approved form be entered into the minutes of such meetings.<sup>35</sup>

Over the years he conducted business ranging from the hanging of hats and whitewashing of the interior of the chapel to representing the parish at the Southern Association conventions of the church. Some of the sermons he preached throughout the district have been preserved by the family.<sup>36</sup> A local history refers to Barratt as "one of the most prominent local preachers who conducted services for both Methodists and Congregationalists."<sup>37</sup>

Clearly, William James Barratt was born to preach. For whom he preached and the exact doctrines he taught may not have been all that important to him as long as he could be of service and uplift those around him. If he had continued to espouse the radical doctrines of Mormonism, he would probably have found little audience among the settlers of the Inman Valley and little opportunity to play a part in the development of the colony and society around him.



Although he was an active Latter-day Saint for only a few short years, William Barratt indirectly brought many into the LDS Church through his only known convert, Robert Beauchamp. It is possible that he converted others. Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson made a trip to Australia in 1896 and recorded: "From Private sources I have learned that Elder Barret [sic] did baptize a few."<sup>38</sup> William James Barratt died 10 September 1889 at Bald Hills and is buried some twelve miles away in the churchyard cemetery at Victor Harbor.<sup>39</sup> He was a remarkable man whose name continues to hold a certain mystery and excitement. Despite the fact that he had no further contact with the Church after 1841, his humble introduction of Mormonism into Australia has evolved into a current membership of more than seventy thousand in the land Down Under.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Jill Stratton, ed., *Biographical Index of South Australia, 1836–1885* (Marden, South Australia: South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, 1986), 80.

<sup>2</sup>William Joseph Barratt, *Memoirs of Early Days in South Australia*, MS, copy in author's possession from Mrs. Ethel B. Groth of Marden, South Australia, a direct descendent of William J. Barratt.

<sup>3</sup>British Mission Manuscript History, 10 March 1839, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).

<sup>4</sup>"A Sketch of the Life and Labors of Alfred Cordon," MS, 2, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo (hereafter cited as Lee Library).

<sup>5</sup>British Mission Manuscript History, September 1839.

<sup>6</sup>"Life and Labors of Alfred Cordon," 2.

<sup>7</sup>Alfred Cordon, *Reminiscences and Journal, 1839–68*, MS, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>8</sup>George A. Smith, "My Journal," *Instructor* 82 (14 September 1947): 417.

<sup>9</sup>Reprinted in Manning Clark, ed., *Sources of Australia History* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1977), 166–71.

<sup>10</sup>British Mission Records, July 1840, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>11</sup>Ronald Parsons, *Migrant Ships for South Australia* (Magill, South Australia: Privately printed, 1983), 89.

<sup>12</sup>Cordon, *Reminiscences and Journal*.

<sup>13</sup>Wilford Woodruff, *Journal*, vol. 1, typescript, 481–82, Lee Library.

<sup>14</sup>"Extract from an Epistle to the Elders in England," *Times and Seasons* 2 (1 January 1841): 258.

<sup>15</sup>Andrew Jensen, *Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1941), 36.

<sup>16</sup>British Parliamentary Papers, Colonies, Australia, no. 7, Sessions 1842–1844 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1969), 313.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Barratt, *Memoirs*.

<sup>19</sup>Cordon, *Reminiscences and Journal*.

<sup>20</sup>Alfred Cordon to George A. Smith, 26 December 1841, George A. Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>21</sup>*Millennial Star* 18 (2 August 1856): 487.

<sup>22</sup>After a number of years as an active missionary in Victoria, Robert Beauchamp emigrated to Utah with his wife and child. Later in the same year he was asked to take charge of the Australasian Mission, arriving back in Melbourne in November 1869. Beauchamp set himself a hectic schedule visiting the scattered Saints; baptizing; and organizing branches in Melbourne, Sydney, and New Zealand. After five years as mission president, Beauchamp was growing weary and wished to return to Utah. By the time a replacement finally arrived in 1874, it was disclosed that Beauchamp had had a brief affair with a member in Sydney. He could never bring himself to return to his family in Utah, although he remained an active member until his death in Geelong, Victoria, 7 September 1890.



<sup>23</sup>"Correspondence," *Millennial Star* 28 (3 November 1866): 701–2.

<sup>24</sup>Anthony G. Laube to the author, 20 September 1987.

<sup>25</sup>Records of the Melbourne Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1882–1910, Lee Library.

<sup>26</sup>Anthony G. Laube, *Settlers around the Bay: The Pioneering Families of Encounter Bay and Victor Harbour* (Victor Harbor, South Australia: Privately printed, 1985), 3.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>29</sup>Barratt, *Memoirs*.

<sup>30</sup>Laube, *Settlers around the Bay*, 51.

<sup>31</sup>Barratt, *Memoirs*.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>Laube to the author, 20 September 1987.

<sup>34</sup>Ethel B. Groth to the author, August 1987, 17 September 1987, and 4 October 1987.

<sup>35</sup>Minute Book of the Bald Hills Congregational Church, copy in author's possession.

<sup>36</sup>Groth to the author, 17 September 1987.

<sup>37</sup>John Cameron, *A Band of Pioneers* (N.p. 1977), 55.

<sup>38</sup>Jensen, *Encyclopedic History of the Church*, 36.

<sup>39</sup>Statton, *Biographical Index of South Australia*, 80.



# The Gospel of John as Literature

Thomas F. Rogers

If I were challenged to name my favorite literary work, my thoughts would quite naturally turn to those remarkable novels by Russian authors—*The Brothers Karamazov*, *Anna Karenina*, or *Doctor Zhivago*—which, in my opinion, have no equal and even rank among the world's semisacred books. I would be hard pressed, however, to choose among the Russians, universal and profound as their writing is for me. If pressed, I would probably settle for *The Brothers Karamazov*, whose epigraph, incidentally, is from the Gospel of John.

Each in his unique way, our greatest writers and the life they depict cry out, often tragically, for that controlling, mediating, comforting, inspiring voice of one who can alone assure us that the universe is not cruelly indifferent to our circumstances and ultimate fate. Intentionally or not, their works point to the Savior. But there are other writings that emanate from the Savior and in which his very voice calls to us. (See D&C 18:34–36.) These of course are the scriptures. And if I were cast upon a desert island with only one book to sustain me for the rest of my days, I would want that book to be the Gospel of John. I would choose it because, beyond any other work I know, it is both a literary and a spiritual masterpiece, as lovely and compelling as any Sophoclean tragedy or the verse of our greatest poets, yet also a profound testimony to the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

Viewing the Gospel of John aesthetically, we can say, first of all, that it is richly poetic yet at the same time the simplest in its vocabulary of all the books of the New Testament. It is also a slim book. (Indeed, I note with some embarrassment that my commentary is easily as long as the Gospel itself.) John tells us in his last verse, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (21:25). If John knew more, why didn't he give us more? Did his

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stylus run dry? Did he lack the means to buy more ink and parchment? Possibly. But John's style, we are told, was essentially gnostic, which means he wished in cryptic fashion to allude to the gospel's deep mysteries without betraying their essence to the unreceptive or as yet uninitiated. These are the hallmarks of poetry too: brevity, compression of meaning, and obliqueness or indirection. In this, the only Gospel that so alludes to all it does not give us, so much is nevertheless given—intimated between the lines or in the form of pithy clues that, if we are sufficiently thoughtful and sensitive, conjure a wealth of feelings and associations. We are so engaged, given so much space to thinkingly, feelingly react expressly because the text is so understated. Less is truly more.

This work has such potency that if it were not scripture I'd be wary of its sway on me. Its precepts strike with the force of mathematical axioms whose truth we do not question. They are like compelling music, whose ethereal harmony and pure pitches convey distilled intimations of eternal truth and divine love. Like the very greatest verse or music, this Gospel provokes, in an almost magical way, a sense of awe, a tearfulness, a quiet euphoria, a ready intimacy with its subject, a "peak experience" (to borrow a term from the psychologist Maslow), a spiritual "high" or "fix." It makes us feel the way we sometimes feel in the presence of a masterpiece or in very holy places. Those who have beheld Michelangelo's *David* at the Academia in Florence or visited the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam or traveled to Christ's alleged tomb in Jerusalem or the Sacred Grove in New York know what I mean.

Like a certain kind of poetry, the Gospel of John is also basically "lyric." Like the most ecstatic love poem, it celebrates the goodness, truth, beauty, and above all love of God for his principal creations, you and me: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (3:16). The author openly acknowledges the forces of darkness and destruction, and the work's hero entertains no illusions regarding the threat they pose: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (15:24). But unlike the great tragedies or the finest realistic novels, the Gospel of John does not brood about the human condition. Nor does it condemn: "I judge no man" (8:15), Christ declares. And to the woman taken in adultery: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (8:11). John earlier confirms this divine restraint by telling us, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (3:17). Instead, the Savior affirms—and here without



coyness or the slightest indirection—"I love the Father" (14:31) and "the Father loveth the Son" (5:20) and then prays that his disciples may know the same love: "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them" (17:26). The Gospel of John is in this sense the ultimate love lyric—a paean of universal affinity like no other. It affirms the Lord's full, unqualified acceptance of us all—something many a Christian has a hard time understanding, particularly about himself or herself.

Perhaps, where his immediate hearers are concerned, the chief mystery in John is the Lord's identity as the Son of God, the true Messiah and Savior of this world. It is this to which the book's striking metaphors largely have reference. And how many there are, how rich because of them, the work's imagery. John begins by enigmatically referring to Christ as "the word" (1:1), alluding, as the New Testament rarely does, to the Savior's premortal existence and his role as Creator. (In Greek the term is *Logos*, which bears an array of further associations, not the least of which are the concepts of *order* and also *intelligence*.) Then, in one of the Gospel's most pregnant and recurring images, John calls the Savior "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (1:9). How marvelously this metaphor ties in with all the connotations of vision or lack of it that later arise as Christ heals the blind man. The double entendre and the greater figurative significance of the following lines—so reminiscent of what Sophocles does with the very same image in *Oedipus Rex*—require no further comment, though they appear to be totally lost on the learned Pharisees. The blind man's parents, in their effort not to be implicated by the disapproving officials, also fail, it seems, to see the spiritual import and the tremendous irony in their very own words: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not" (9:20–21). In powerful though perhaps unwitting testimony, the blind man himself provides the key:

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him,  
Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one  
thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he  
thine eyes?

He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear.  
(9:24–27)

If we question what is ultimately being conveyed by this intricate play of words, Christ lays the issue to rest just verses later:



And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. (9:39–41)

Across the broad spectrum of Indo-European languages, incidentally, there is a close correlation between the basic roots for “to see” and “to know.” Hence, what from Latin emerges into English words like “vista” and “vision” has clear analogues in the Slavic *videti* (to see) and *vedeti* (to know). (*Bear* in Russian is *medved* the “honey-knower.”) And in Sanskrit we have the oldest sacred texts, the *vedas*, and the science of wisdom, *vedanta*, with obviously the same root. For a fuller elucidation of this central image of light and vision in relation to Christ and the spirit of truth, reread the remarkable vision in Doctrine and Covenants 88—equally poetic, by the way, in its expression.

The other metaphors in the Gospel of John are similarly profound in what they tell us about Christ and his dominant role in the destiny of all mankind. In chapter 1 and many times thereafter, the Savior refers to himself as “the Son of Man.” (Even in 9:35, where the King James Version reads “the Son of God,” the Greek has “the Son of Man.”) I’ll have more to say about the import of that particular expression. In chapter 2, Christ is “the bridegroom” (2:9) and also refers to his body as a “temple” (2:19, 21). What profound implications there are in this striking notion that Christ’s body and ours are in the fact temples of the Spirit—a concept we find only in this one Gospel. In chapter 3, the Savior defines himself as the analogue of the brass serpent that Moses raised to preserve his people in the wilderness (3:14). In the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, he is the source of “water springing up into everlasting life” (4:14) while, when teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, he is the “living bread” (6:32, 35, and 51). As in other literary masterpieces, we encounter leitmotifs which unite images, lines, and the work itself with other texts. The symbolic tie to desert manna, to the unleavened bread of the Passover, and to the emblems of the sacrament is apparent. And there are further remarkable associations with this single image—the staff of life. As Malcolm Muggeridge suggests, “Bread, in his estimation, was to the body what the truth he proclaimed was to the soul. It had its own sanctity, and just for that reason could not be procured, as the Devil proposed, miraculously from stones.”<sup>1</sup>

Then consider this: after partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were thereafter



prevented from partaking of the fruit of the tree of life (Moses 4:31), at least while in a mortal, sinful state. The tree of Lehi's vision, which is only finally reached by those who enduringly hold to the iron rod, is in turn clearly interpreted as symbolic of "the love of God" (1 Ne. 11:22), while the tree of faith described by Alma (or are they all to some extent the same tree?) is described as bearing a fruit, for those whose faith sufficiently matures, as "sweet above all that is sweet" and "white above all that is white" (Alma 32:42)—a fruit that fully fills and nourishes but that is only accessible when we satisfy certain conditions. Do you sense, as I do, a further correspondence between the constraints placed upon our access to the precious fruit of those several trees and the admonition given with respect to our partaking of the emblems of the atonement: that in doing so unworthily, we eat and drink "damnation" to our souls (1 Cor. 11:29; 3 Ne. 18:29). Again, the beverage we partake of in the sacrament service as much evokes the Savior's reference to himself as the source of "living water" as it does the sacrificial shedding of his blood. What a deftly woven network of allusions and cross-references! How compacted and seemingly endless the pattern of its imagery.

There are other metaphors that I can barely touch upon. George Tate has pointed out that for him "the feature that most distinguishes John from the other Gospels is the overt, spoken comparisons Christ makes between himself and details of the Exodus."<sup>2</sup> One such image appears in the announcement of John the Baptist, "Behold, the Lamb of God" (1:29), with its obvious allusion to the unblemished lamb prescribed for sacrifice during the Passover. When challenged by the Pharisees, Jesus meaningfully gives them one of the titles of the Old Testament Jehovah, "I Am" (8:58). (I doubt, incidentally, that many Christians perceive all that this response clearly implies about the overarching role of Christ in the history of mankind.) With equal significance he refers to himself in chapter 14 as "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6) while in chapter 10 he is the "door" to the sheepfold (10:9) and also the "good shepherd" (10:11), thus pointing to a further scriptural antecedent in the twenty-third Psalm. In chapter 11 he is "the resurrection and the life" (11:25) and in chapter 15 "the true vine," of which we are the "branches," fruitful or otherwise (15:1–6).

In a remarkably insightful discourse, Jeffrey Holland suggests a further reason for the use of such metaphors grounded in the familiar experiences of the Savior's listeners:

They . . . needed the uncommon invitation commonly extended to lift up their eyes to higher purposes. . . . Jesus spoke of *temples* and the people thought he spoke of temples. . . . He spoke of *bread* and



the people thought he spoke of bread. . . . [T]hese were not merely parables in the allegorical sense. . . . They were in every case an invitation to "lift up your eyes," to see "heavenly things." . . . They are also repeated manifestations of his willingness to meet people on their own terms, however limited that understanding, and there lead them on to higher ground.<sup>3</sup>

I have been writing of the Gospel of John as I might of a poem. Like the other three Gospels, it is also a drama with pathetic if not starkly tragic overtones in the depiction of its hero's earthly demise. The Savior's betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, and resolve to submit to the most painful of deaths, are, at this point of his story and as pure plot, as nobly tragic as anything any dramatic hero ever had to face. And in the fact that Christ's predicament is occasioned by his own sense of principle and concern for others, there is a decidedly greater affinity with tragic heroines such as Antigone or Joan of Arc than with the victims of hubris and temperamental excess found in most Greek and Shakespearean tragedies.

The Gospel of John is also remarkable for the skill with which it characterizes various supernumeraries through dialogue. Think of the blind man's gutless parents, so unwilling to acknowledge the miracle of their son's healing and its obvious source. They must have been highly respectable citizens who valued their reputation above everything else. How vividly they contrast to the guileless Samaritan woman who, though she has lived with as many men as certain Hollywood starlets, hides nothing, readily acknowledges, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet" (4:19), and forthwith approaches her own people, urging them to "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (4:29). The principal theme of these terse dialogues is, again, the discovery of who Jesus really is. These encounters embody all the tension and surprise, all the suspense and reversal of expectation of Sophocles' "recognition scenes" that Aristotle commended to dramatists in the *Poetics*. Consider the lines from three by now familiar episodes—each, in the total unawareness and incredulity of its personae ("Who is this man?"), a gem of dramatic suspense. From the encounter with the woman of Samaria:

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?



Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. . . .

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. (4:10–14, 25–26)

After all the indirection and verbal parrying, the simple matter-of-factness of that last line takes my breath away, as it must have the woman's. It also reminds me of perhaps the most compelling testimony recorded in modern times because, again, so terse, so direct, so unqualified and unpretentious—straight reportage without need for the slightest speculation:

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God. (D&C 76:22–23)

There is a similar climactic directness in Jesus' words to the blind man:

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. (9:35–37)

You may ask, who was the reporter who stood by and took down these exact words? I cannot tell you. But I feel, as I read such passages, it is the Master's voice I hear—yes, almost hear—in or between such lines. And I'm reminded of something I once heard the great literary scholar Rene Wellek say about the Christ of the Gospels to a group of "sophisticated" graduate students as we examined Dostoevsky's memorable "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor": "No man could ever duplicate that voice or that personality." Malcolm Muggeridge made a similar observation:

The Gospels convey no impression of how he spoke, the timbre of his voice, whether he used gestures and was given to declamation, though in their reports of what he said the style of his utterances is unmistakable. This was sharp, incisive, pungent, often ironic and never theatrical. He was clearly very observant, both of nature and of men; very aware of how society worked, of the forces of cupidity and aggressiveness which shaped human behavior. Hence his great gift for vivid imagery, and for telling a story; his parables are little masterpieces of narration, and, like the best of Tolstoy's short stories, easily comprehensible at all levels of understanding. As a communicator pure and simple, I should say that Jesus was supremely



effective—this quite apart from his special role and mission in the world. . . .

. . . No one can fail to be aware of the teller; behind the parables one senses a perceptive, often ironic, brilliantly creative mind. Unmistakably, they are the work of an artist rather than of a thinker, or, in the narrower meaning of the word, moralist.<sup>4</sup>

Part of that voice's force and potency comes again, like the gospel itself, from all that the Savior says or hints at in so few words. Dostoevsky uncannily captured this quality in the "Inquisitor," where, in medieval Seville, a bitter and condemning Spanish priest harangues his prisoner in a monologue pages long, then, when he stops, receives the most eloquent and irrefutable response imaginable: with not a single word but with a kiss, a kiss of understanding, forgiveness, and magnanimous compassion from the condemned prisoner for the man who has decreed his imminent destruction in the fires of the auto-da-fé. In a letter he wrote while in Siberian exile, Dostoevsky, like Wellek, commented on the singularity of the Savior's voice as he had encountered it in the scriptures:

I believe that there is nothing lovelier, deeper, more sympathetic, more rational, more manly, more perfect than the Savior; I say to myself with jealous love that not only is there no one else like him, but that there could be no one. I would even say more: If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth.<sup>5</sup>

That voice is taut, suspenseful, intrinsically dramatic in its reply to the Pharisees as recorded by John:

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. (8:56–58)

That took the Pharisees' breath away also—enough for them to pick up stones and attempt to take his life right then and there.

Jesus engages in similar repartee, deftly placing the burden of self-justification upon his accusers, even when he is seized by the authorities: "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he" (18:4–5). Again before Caiaphas (this in the account by Matthew), in response to the high priest's demand, "tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God": "Thou hast said" (Matt. 26:63–64). And yet again before Pilate: "Pilate therefore



said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king” (John 18:37). That is indeed another of the Savior’s appellations, isn’t it—“King of the Jews”? Note with what further dramatic irony—far surpassing even the comprehension of its instigator, Pilate—a sign to that effect is placed on the cross above Christ’s head, legitimizing over the objection of his enemies his just claim to that title. And similarly the scarlet robe, crown of thorns, and reed scepter with which the Roman soldiers adorn him. Here we are truly dealing with the kind of ironic confusion of mock appearances with reality that we have come to expect in the work of certain twentieth-century absurdist playwrights.

In examining the text’s overall narrative structure, we encounter another effect in common with the best dramatic scripts. Episodic as are all the Gospels, we reach a point in John where the pace of events nevertheless radically changes. In a scene whose action becomes so retarded that time seems to stand still—as it does during Shakespeare’s soliloquies, certain operatic arias, or very intimate and usually very climactic cinematic moments when the camera slowly moves to a long, sustained close-up—the Gospel of John similarly concentrates on the Savior’s discourse to the Apostles just prior to his arrest. This sermon, which in its significance rivals and beautifully complements that delivered on the mount in the Gospel of Matthew, extends over five chapters and treats subjects not dealt with in any other account: the sending of the Comforter and with him the Lord’s peace; the striking parable of the vine and the branches; the great high priestly prayer invoking divine unity and love; and, at the outset, what must be an especially sacred ordinance—the washing of the disciples’ feet. Again a visible gesture but fully articulate in all it teaches about the Savior’s unsurpassed humility and love for others. There must be a reason why John, of all the evangelists, was privy to that occasion and alone recorded it.

Others could tell you far more about the nuances of the Gospel’s original Greek. (One wonders what we may be missing because we can’t have the Savior’s words in Aramaic—or, for that matter, Nephi’s in Reformed Egyptian.) It was exciting for me to learn that the root meaning of our word *deacon* is simply “servant,” of *angel* “messenger,” that *pneumatic* derives from the Greek for “spirit,” and *martyr* means “to witness.” (What heroic associations those two bring together: “witness” and “martyr.”) As with all fine writing, the exact choice of words and their subtle connotations are very important and sometimes crucial. Here’s just one example: in a scripture familiar to all returned missionaries—“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus



Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3)—the form of the verb *know* is present subjunctive, which makes the recommended action, to “know” God, a process and an ongoing requirement rather than a single completed act. Thus salvation is *not* just a matter of instant conversion, but a process of enduring and ever renewing our acquaintance with the Lord until we draw our very last mortal breath.

As much as I value the literary qualities I have been discussing, it is the fundamental themes of the Gospel of John that finally persuade me to prefer it to any other text. Christ is characterized in chapter 1 with the attributes of “grace and truth” (1:14) in the King James version. The Greek word for *grace* has a still broader range of significance, however. It also stands for divine or spiritual love. When you think about it, these two qualities, love and truth, sum up all the other virtues. Many verses in the Gospel of John affirm to what extent Christ taught them and was their exemplar: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (15:12); “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (8:32); “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (17:19).

Another interesting point that Christ stresses time and time again, particularly in the Gospel of John, is that in all he says and does he defers to the Father: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (5:30); “He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (7:18). With what special concern he gives us this touchstone to his own credentials and, by extension, ours too when we act in his name. Then there is that plea for unity in his great intercessory or high priestly prayer, which has to be the spiritual high moment in this or any other Gospel. (How fittingly—and how ironically—it occurs just prior to the divisive and conspiratorial playing out of his betrayal, arrest, trial, and execution.)

There is a further important corollary, I believe, to the Savior’s plea “that they may be one, even as we are one” (17:22). That is the sense of joyful fulfillment to which, along with Deity, mankind is potentially heir: “that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (4:36). Already in that pregnant first chapter, the evangelist asserts, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (1:12). And elsewhere: “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one” (17:22); “I ascend unto



my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (20:17). Not only is it clear from the foregoing verses that the Father and Son are distinct personages, but we too are time and again invited to partake of all they enjoy. (Yet, need I remind you, that for saying so, we are viewed by many as spurious or even non-Christians?) There are further profound implications in the Lord's striking term of self-address, so frequently invoked in this particular scripture: "the Son of Man." I find here an undeniable suggestion that God the Father is indeed a Man (though written with a capital "M"): a perfect Man. The further implication is surely that we, too, being men and women, are at least potentially heir to the same divinity and perfection. This recurring thesis is, to my mind, the philosophical apotheosis of the Gospel of John and its greatest so-called "mystery." Sadly, the glorious import of this very clear teaching tends to be overlooked or even denied by the majority of men, who must think so little of themselves that they are unwilling to believe what the Lord has told them about their own divine nature—or to live for its full realization.

The Savior's discourse on the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John is surely the most extensive in all scripture. Lest we become impatient and weary when the Spirit seems to elude us, we should all ponder Christ's statement, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (3:8). And we should keep in mind the various blessings that he has promised us, through the Spirit, if we keep his commandments: comfort, discernment of truth, enlightenment, remembrance, and peace that passeth all understanding (14:16–27). In his comments on the man born blind, the Savior also gives us a very important answer that separates his doctrine from all the fatalistic or deterministic theologies and -isms of this world. When even his disciples wondered, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (9:2), 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" (9:3). Still later he reaffirmed, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (14:13). (Lest we forget, this is again a glory they wish to share with all of us.) There is another interesting set of statements which, on the surface, seem terribly discriminating: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (6:44); and "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (17:9). Calvin must have cherished these verses, but he failed to see in them that impersonal statement of natural law to which even the Lord is



bound. Surely those who fail to qualify as the Lord's do so by their own choice. As another verse so forcefully puts it, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (3:19–20).

Finally, there is the Lord's sublime plea for our sanctification in his great prayer to the Father, which ties this scripture to the final verses of the Book of Mormon. What does it mean to be sanctified? Do we sufficiently ponder that expression? A key to how we must go about doing so is provided in another striking metaphor, again in John, in that very verse which Dostoevsky chose as epigraph to his great masterpiece: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (12:24).

There is a further tie to both the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price, dealing, again, with an aspect of the Savior's personality that transcends mere words. First, there is the incident in a vision, recorded in Jacob, in which "the Lord of the vineyard wept, and said unto the servant: What could I have done more for my vineyard?" (Jacob 5:41). (Incidentally, this represents a different application of horticultural imagery from that which occurs in the New Testament.) After addressing the multitude on the American continent, the Savior "wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept again" (3 Ne. 17:21–22). It is interesting that in the description of Christ's emotional state the account in 3 Nephi differs markedly from the accounts of his sermons in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. If John had included an account of the Sermon on the Mount, I would expect it to resemble 3 Nephi in what makes that version so distinctive. Another account of the Lord's weeping occurs in chapter 7 of the Book of Moses. Speaking with Enoch several millennia before his mortal descent upon the earth, the Lord declared, "Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name, also" (Moses 7:35). And then:

The God of Heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?

. . . How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?

. . . [H]ow is it thou canst weep?



The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;

And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood. (Moses 7:28–29, 31–33)

How profoundly this elucidates the reason why Christ would weep while blessing the children of the Nephites—sensing, despite their innocence, a like potential for enmity, contention, and consequent affliction. A few verses later we are told that the Lord

told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook. (Moses 7:41)

How aptly all of this pertains to Alma's explanation of the atonement—"that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh" (Alma 7:12)—and his characterization of true disciples as "willing to mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9). Through the gift of compassionate tears, God enters the hearts of men, and men in turn unite, in affinity and in purpose, with the Divine.

The account in John of the Savior's reaction to Mary's grief prior to the raising of Lazarus similarly underscores that profound compassion that finally, as much as all he ever said, endears him to us and persuades us that, with all our fallibility, he truly understands and still stands by us:

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

Jesus wept.

Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! (11:33–36)

The Savior's tears, described, except as already noted, nowhere else in scripture, are the most sublime token of his matchless love. To my knowledge, there are no passages in the world's many other sacred writings that so poignantly convey God's unfathomed love for men, his constant other-directed tenderness and sensitivity, and, most moving of all, the grief occasioned by his paternal compassion—so human, yet so divine.



At this point aesthetic principles may no longer apply. Nevertheless, in common with only the greatest literary, musical, and visual masterpieces, such scripture touches our hearts and has its way with us in a manner that critical analysis cannot fully account for but that cannot be forgotten and leaves us never again quite the same.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Malcolm Muggeridge, *Jesus: The Man Who Lives* (Glasgow: Wm. Collins, 1981), 53.

<sup>2</sup>George Tate, "The Typology of the Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," in *Literature of Belief*, ed. Neal E. Lambert (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1981), 256.

<sup>3</sup>Jeffrey R. Holland, "Lift Up Your Eyes," *Ensign* 13 (July 1983): 12–13.

<sup>4</sup>Muggeridge, *Jesus*, 43–44, 64.

<sup>5</sup>F. M. Dostoevsky to Mme N. D. Fonvisin, Omsk, March 1854, in *Letters of F. M. Dostoevsky*, trans. Ethel Colburn Mayne (New York: Horizon Press, 1961), 71.



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## Book Reviews

RENDELL N. MABEY and GORDON I. ALLRED. *Brother to Brother: The Story of the Latter-day Saint Missionaries Who Took the Gospel to Black Africa*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984. 161 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by Newell G. Bringhurst, professor of history at College of the Sequoias.

In October 1978, two Latter-day Saint couples, Rendell and Rachel Mabey and Edward Q. (Ted) and Janath Cannon, arrived in Lagos, Nigeria, as the first Mormon missionaries assigned to work with that country's black African population. Although the Church had long been active in South Africa, missionary efforts had been restricted to people of European ancestry. *Brother to Brother* is based on Rendell Mabey's copious 1,305-page journal, compiled over the period from late 1978 until the fall of 1979, while the Mabeys were serving in Nigeria and neighboring Ghana. The transition from journal to book was achieved with the aid of Gordon Allred, a professor of English at Weber State College.

Written in a "faith promoting" style designed primarily for Latter-day Saint readers, *Brother to Brother* is a revealing account of a unique and challenging new phase of Mormon missionary activity. Almost from his arrival, Mabey could barely keep pace with the dozens of requests from Africans for information about Mormonism, and sometimes for immediate baptism. This overwhelming response was due in part to the earlier formation of many "unauthorized Mormon branches" in Nigeria and Ghana. These branches had been organized during the 1960s and early 1970s by black Africans who had heard of Latter-day Saint beliefs. In some cases, they had acquired various publications and tracts from Church headquarters, and had even assumed the official Church name: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Moreover, these self-styled African Mormons had secured legal recognition under this name in both Nigeria and Ghana. In addition to these unauthorized "grassroots" Mormons, Mabey found a second group of interested investigators among the leaders and members of several independent Christian congregations who had

learned of Mormon beliefs either through word of mouth or from Church tracts. When the missionaries arrived in their midst, they requested baptism en masse. This initial interest resulted in a total of 1,723 black Africans joining the Church during Mabey's one-year sojourn.

This phenomenal success did not come without some difficulties. Africa's tropical climate and general environment provided a series of "culture shocks" for the American missionaries. The intense heat and humidity made the mere thought of donning the typical Mormon missionary attire of a "suit and tie . . . torture." Mabey found slacks and a short-sleeved white shirt "the only tolerable but still respectable alternative" (23). He also had difficulty adjusting to the food and water. Living on the run, in often primitive conditions, with an irregular diet took its toll on the seventy-year-old missionary, causing him to lose twenty-five pounds in a six-month period.

Mabey also faced several challenges in dealing with those black Africans who embraced Mormonism. Their religious rituals frequently deviated from standard Church practice. For example, in some branches church services included clapping and chanting, complete with drums, musical sticks, gourds, and large blowjugs. The leaders of one Nigerian congregation solicited direct contributions by having members deposit coins in a large collection platter in a ceremony accompanied by "a crescendo of praise-the-Lords and hallelujahs" (71). In another branch, this one in Ghana, Mabey had to deal with a woman who had assumed the title "Mormon prophetess." Her position stemmed, in part, from the fact that she owned the building in which the branch held its meetings. Such problems, added to the pressure of converts requesting immediate baptism, caused Mabey to remark, "I really am concerned that we are extending our work too thinly now and must rest for a season to regroup and perfect our records and organization" (105). Since the Mabeys and Cannons were the only LDS missionaries in all of Nigeria and Ghana, there was clearly a pressing need for additional missionaries. At the same time, Church officials in Utah felt the environment was not suitable for the typical Mormon missionary, the young, single nineteen-to twenty-year-old male fresh out of high school. Instead, Church officials opted to send older married couples, such as the Mabeys. Mabey himself notes the need for "dedicated [missionary] couples well-seasoned in the gospel, capable of organizing, instructing, and providing sound leadership training" (77-78). But it was difficult to find "couples with the necessary temperament and background" (132).



On the whole, *Brother to Brother* is written in an interesting, engaging style and is well illustrated. It also contains well-drawn maps that are extremely helpful to the reader in locating the towns and villages described throughout the book. At the same time, the book glosses over or fails to deal with some crucial issues. Conspicuously absent is any mention of opposition or hostility to Mormon missionary activity in either Nigeria or Ghana. Despite Mabey's assertion that "the title *missionary* was an honored one, the passkey to nearly every door" (135), it is hard to believe the missionaries did not encounter some opposition from the leaders of other Christian denominations or from government officials. As Mabey himself notes, his fellow missionaries, the Cannons, experienced visa problems on at least two occasions in getting in and out of Ghana. Referring to these problems, Mabey states that upon his return to the United States "I discovered a real bottleneck in Washington" (152). But he does not explain what that "bottleneck" was. Also the reader is left wondering how African Mormons reacted to directives issued by Mabey that went against their established rituals and customs. Did any of them resist or even resent the restrictions imposed on the use of African music in church services? More important, how did they react to restrictions prohibiting black priesthood bearers "from baptizing and confirming except under direct [white] supervision" (142)? According to Mabey, this restraint was imposed to maintain order and prevent "our large but orderly processions toward the waters" from becoming "a stampede without adequate preparation or record keeping" (142). But this restraint must have seemed perplexing to at least some black priesthood holders as well as to the dozens of Africans clamoring for immediate baptism into the faith. Finally, Mabey's account would have benefited from a brief postscript on Mormon activities in Nigeria and Ghana in the five-year period subsequent to his departure. These problems notwithstanding, *Brother to Brother* is an enlightening account of a new and potentially significant phase of Latter-day Saint missionary activity.

JAMES B. ALLEN. *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, A Mormon*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987. xi; 383 pp. \$22.95.

Reviewed by B. Carmon Hardy, professor of history, California State University, Fullerton.

James Allen's study of William Clayton is one of the most important Mormon biographies of our time. There are several reasons for this. The first has to do with the specimen nature of Clayton's life. Although Professor Allen prefers to focus on him as a study in discipleship rather than as a sample Mormon, the time period involved necessarily gives Clayton representative significance. During his years as a Church member, 1838–79, he witnessed many of Mormonism's most significant historical events. He was part of the impressive harvest of English converts brought into the Church in the late 1830s and 1840s. He participated in the saga of migration across the Atlantic to the Mormon Zion. He lived in Nauvoo and saw the Saints lose their prophet-leaders through violence. Clayton was a part of the vanguard of pioneers who first crossed the plains and entered the Salt Lake Valley. He contributed to growth of the Latter-day Saint commonwealth under the leadership of Brigham Young. And he saw the coming of the railroad and the commencement of the national crusade against Mormon polygamy.

More than this, however, because of his religious devotion and a gift for organization, Clayton's talents were often appropriated by the Church's leaders in important ways. While he participated as a local leader in England before emigrating and was later employed in certain lesser capacities by Brigham Young, it was the use of his abilities as a secretary and confidant of Joseph Smith for which he is best remembered. He also participated in musical affairs in both Nauvoo and the Salt Lake Valley and was the author of the well known hymn "Come, Come, Ye Saints." He was secretary to the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, a member of the secret Council of Fifty, a coinventor of the roadometer, author of *The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants Guide*, founding secretary of ZCMI, Utah's first territorial auditor and recorder of marks and brands, and one whose diary became the basis for several passages in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*. Even this does not exhaust his contributions.

A well-recorded and busy life does not by itself, however, a great biography make. It yet must be written. Allen does not disappoint us here. Admitting vulnerability to affective attachment



to Clayton and concerned with avoiding the infection of his own religious presuppositions into the material, Allen generally succeeds in working around both difficulties. Clayton is plainly shown, for example, as a man afflicted with bouts of paranoia, including fear that Church authorities were romantically interested in his wives. Neither does Allen spare Clayton as one maimed by the frailties of an excessive gullibility or difficulty with alcohol. And rather than yielding to a simple, faith promoting explanation of Clayton's discipleship—his continuing belief in the face of personal hardship, unfulfilled prophecy (as with millennial expectations associated with the Civil War), or insensitive demands upon his time by Church leaders—Allen turns to the aid of social science. Citing a 1955 study by Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails*, Allen finds that William Clayton's perseverance in the faith can be explained by conditions that generate steadfast behavior in most religious groups most of the time (315–16).

It was Clayton's closeness to Joseph Smith, and the diary he kept while serving as Joseph's secretary, that are probably most interesting and, to some perhaps, most troubling. Allen gives us numerous glimpses, through Clayton's eyes, of the conflict between Joseph and his wife Emma over polygamy. When, with the Prophet's consent, Clayton began pursuing the younger sister of his first wife, he too incurred Emma's displeasure. Margaret Moon, the young woman involved, was engaged to another Mormon then on a mission for the Church. Although Margaret agreed to marry Clayton as a plural wife, she yet had feelings for her former fiancé, and the situation became complicated. Not only did Emma express ill will but Clayton's mother-in-law, living in Clayton's home, was also terribly distraught by the affair. When Clayton asked Joseph about it, the Prophet assured him that he had done no wrong and that, rather than fretting, Clayton had a right to all the wives he could get (193, 216 n. 4). Joseph also told Clayton not to worry about the possibility of public discovery. If necessary, he might have to be excommunicated. But that would be only a charade. Clayton could then be rebaptized and, Joseph said, advanced just as in the past. In his account of this matter, Allen engages in one of the few instances where, in my own view, he interferes to let the bullet pass. The Prophet's response, he says, was "obviously a bit of tongue-in-cheek" (194–95).

To suggest that those sections of the book dealing with polygamy are nothing but compilations of spicy intrigue would be grossly inaccurate. Not only does Allen handle the materials relating to Clayton's polygamy in Nauvoo with restraint, but his



account of Clayton's subsequent marital life is sensitive biography at its best. Clayton had ten wives and forty-two children. Three of the women divorced him. Through it all, there were many trials. There were also many happy moments. The courtship and marriage to Diantha Farr (sister of the man to whom Margaret Moon was engaged) is tenderly told. It leaves no doubt that romantic feelings were possible in plural contractions. Similarly, the conflict felt by another wife, Maria Lyman Clayton, when her father, Apostle Amasa Lyman, was excommunicated for his involvement with the Godbeites, is described with compassion for those on all sides. This episode provides Allen with another example of Clayton's discipleship because, despite the great regard and friendship for his father-in-law and the affection felt for Maria, he was willing to sacrifice both rather than forsake an orthodox devotion to his church.

Another topic of interest to contemporary Mormon historians is the fascination Clayton displayed for astrology and alchemy. Allen makes the point that we must not be too judgmental here because, not only were many other Americans of the time, including some Mormons, interested in such things but they were believed to have a foundation in scientific truth. Clayton was not only a subscriber to astrological literature but dabbled in its use and hoped to match astrological castings with Church prophecy. His brief connection with alchemy involved an attempt to organize a Utah branch of the British Metallic Mutual Association, an alchemic society, and several unsuccessful tries at transmuting one metal into another. Clayton was not only deceived in this but was bilked out of a fair amount of money.

Part of what makes the volume so readable is less the strategic commentary William Clayton's life permitted on such things as Joseph Smith's private affairs, polygamy, and astrology than its thoughtful record of the mundane: the grit of daily account keeping on land, tithing, and temple building in Nauvoo; personal dilemmas arising from the prickly business of sorting out private financial interests, dealing with the Smith family, and settling the question of the Church's leadership after the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum; the frictions, delays, and misunderstandings generated by the logistics of movement to the Rocky Mountains; Clayton's melancholy descent from the center of things, of "Remembering Joseph but Following Brigham"; the disappointment of a mission to his homeland marred by error and an unfortunate experience with alcohol. More than a window on the lives of the leaders, Allen's work is overwhelmingly the life of William Clayton, nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint.



Finally, something needs to be said about sources. Allen makes it clear that the Clayton diary used for the period through early 1842 is in the BYU library. This was the volume that he and Thomas Alexander edited and published as *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton 1840–42* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1974). And Clayton's record of the overland journey from Nauvoo to the Great Salt Lake in 1846–47 was published by the Clayton Family Association in 1921. While Allen refers throughout to other papers and letters found predominantly in the Church's archives in Salt Lake City, the important diaries for the period 1842 to 1846 are not discussed except in a footnote on page 105 (n. 3). There the reader is told to "see" Clayton's journals for those years but is then informed that they are in "private custody" and that Allen was given their use by "special permission" only. So far as I could find, there was no other commentary on these particular documents anywhere in the book. Information about Clayton's unpublished papers is little more than cryptic throughout. Some greater account of provenance, location, and conditions surrounding these materials would have been both interesting and an aid to further scholarly inquiry. Aside from this, however, the book's documentation is ample, clearly described, and helpful. The work contains photographs of Clayton and eight of his wives.

Allen's engaging portrait of William Clayton not only allows us to share in the trials of a Mormon "disciple" but evokes a sense of recognition and empathy for him as a fellow man.

RICHARD E. BENNETT. *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846-1852: "And Should We Die."* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. 347 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Gail Geo. Holmes, an Omaha, Nebraska, businessman and advisor to the Old Council Bluffs Historical Recovery and Development Group.

Richard E. Bennett, archivist at Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba, has done what archivists do best. He has marshalled an enormous collection of facts, quotations, and references on Mormons at the Missouri River between 1846 and 1852. In so doing, Bennett has served notice on LDS historians that they can no longer ignore that nebulous place between Nauvoo and Salt Lake City.

Bennett's approach is novel and refreshing. Traditionally, when historians have given any attention to this period they have focused on the hardships of the pioneer group, the call of the Mormon Battalion, and the April 1847 departure from Winter Quarters to the Great Basin. Bennett has not slighted these but has given equal attention to ecclesiastical organization, social and political life, and the development of LDS doctrine.

The sheer magnitude of assembling and analyzing this vast array of material, however, seems to have pushed Bennett into a number of mistakes. For example, he refers to the Middle Missouri Valley as a wilderness and suggests that Lewis and Clark in 1804 were the first white men to reach Council Bluffs. Actually, French, Spanish, and American explorers, traders, and others had used this Platte-Missouri crossroads since early in the eighteenth century, almost a hundred and fifty years before the Latter-day Saints arrived here. By 1846, there were dozens of acres of land under cultivation, a mill, a ferryboat, a steamboat landing, traders, four stores, government agents, and missionaries. Dozens of Indian-white families were living in the villages of Point aux Poules and Bellevue. In view of the extent of development, it is misleading to refer to the area as a wilderness.

It is true, however, that Mormons gave a fresh impetus to the development of the region. While Bennett gives important information on Kaneshville, Council Point, and other communities, he does not delve into the basic role and enduring success of Mormon industry in the Missouri Valley. Viewed from the perspective of 1700 to 1987, the 1846-53 Mormon period in southwest Iowa and eastern Nebraska was a watershed. Before this time, the economy was based on the fur trade. The Mormons moved in and began sod busting, log building, and organizing communities. Their accomplishments were remarkable and enduring. Some basic agricultural patterns and town and county governments established by the Mormons still exist there today.

Understandably but unfortunately, Bennett puts a good deal of emphasis on the experience at Winter Quarters at the expense of the Mormon experience in southwest Iowa. He evidently overlooked the community census reports recorded on Family History Library films 001922 and 001923 and also Silas Richards's 1848 crop reports for twenty-one southwest Iowa communities, with additional notes about nonreporting communities. One gets the impression from Bennett's book that there were only small clusters of Mormon families along the "east bank" of the Missouri River. Orson Hyde, writing in the 27 June 1849 edition of the *Frontier Guardian*, gives a different impression:



The roads in Pottawatomie county are so completely blockaded by fences that there is hardly room enough left for a passage to Heaven. It is proposed that a committee of three persons be appointed, one from Carterville [southeast of Kaneshville], one from Kaneshville, and one from Big Pigeon [eight miles northeast of Kaneshville], to examine and determine the most feasible route for a public road leading from the prairie south of Carterville through the latter place, passing through or near Kaneshville and extending up the Tabernacle [Pigeon Creek Tabernacle] hollow to Little and Big Pigeon.

These, presumably, were some of the “little groups” Bennett found clustered along the east bank of the Missouri River. In addition, there were dozens of other communities scattered far to the east, north, and south of those named by Hyde. These communities pulsed with vitality and life. What Bennett calls a two-story schoolhouse was, in fact, a music hall paid for by Orson Hyde. It was used as a music studio, concert hall, and center for other cultural and social activities. Bennett also ignores the mercantile houses in Kaneshville, the hotels, lawyers, doctors, and dentists, band and choral concerts, cotillion dances, public debates, and performances of *Macbeth*. In short, the cultivated people who had built Nauvoo were engaged in a repeat performance in the Missouri Valley, though they used logs instead of bricks for their temporary towns. The steady influx of non-Mormon speculators, investors, preachers, settlers, and opportunists indicates their success.

Statistics have always been at the heart of any discussion of the Mormon experience in Iowa and Nebraska. When we try to come to terms with the statistics of 1846-53 (and it is important to remember that the final exodus took place in 1853, not 1852), three questions arise: How many Latter-day Saints started west? How many died en route? How many apostatized or at least dropped out of the exodus? The answers to these questions will aid in answering another fundamental question: How successful were Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve in shepherding the exodus?

Fortunately, there is enough data—eyewitness accounts, census reports, and reports by Church officers—to make at least some preliminary assessments. Bennett used some of these but overlooked or dismissed others. Perhaps the most obvious error in Bennett’s statistics appears in his table of 1846 Mormon population (90). Bennett underestimates the numbers. For example, he lists 500 as the number of people in the Mormon Battalion. But if we assume only 489 men volunteered for the Battalion, 12 boys went along as aides to officers, and some 20 women served as laundresses, we have a total of about 520. To this figure we need to add 33 wives and “many” children who followed the battalion. It



appears the gross count should be somewhere between 550 and 600.

The same kind of oversight plagues Bennett's table entitled "1848-1852 Emigration West from Kaneshville" (228), based on an average of three people per wagon. If we assume Pratt and Taylor successfully led all 1,490 emigrants to the Great Basin without any loss of life in 1847, and if we assume that 540 of the Mormon Battalion population reached the Great Basin, we have a total of 2,030 in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847—that is, if all the pioneer company returned to Winter Quarters, as Bennett implies. Add to this Bennett's figures of 2,400 migrants in 1848, 1,850 in 1849, and 2,100 in 1850, and we get a net population of 8,380 in the Salt Lake Valley by 1850. Yet the U.S. census counted 11,380 people in Utah in 1850. Thus we have a discrepancy of 3,000 people—and perhaps more, depending on when the census was taken and when the last of the 2,100 migrants arrived in Utah in 1850.

How many Mormons participated in the westward migration? Bennett seems to have overlooked the possibility that other Latter-day Saints in western Illinois, southeast Iowa, St. Louis, and other parts of the United States and Canada joined the exodus. He does allow for some to have come "from the east," but overall his figures seem too conservative.

How many died en route? There are few original documents available to answer that question. Most promising is the data-rich sexton's record from Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters, September 1846 to May 1848. Though it deserves a thorough reading and analysis, Bennett largely dismisses this document. For example, he says, "An heroic monument at the Winter Quarters cemetery in Florence, Nebraska lists the names of over six hundred people who supposedly died there in 1846-47. Present-day promotional literature still relies on this original estimate" (136). However, the bronze tablet on the Winter Quarters monument is based on the sexton's record and lists 369, not 600 plus, who died at Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters between September 1846 and May 1848. Thus Bennett both discounts and distorts the primary document available to historians concerning how many people died both at Cutler's park and at Winter Quarters. That unbroken record of deaths commenced in September 1846 and ended in May 1848, not in 1847. In short, he has overestimated the number of deaths and underestimated the number of migrants.

Bennett, attempting to explain away the shortfall in death count by the sexton, notes that some pioneer saints could not afford the \$1.50 burial charge and the cost of coffins, which could be as high as \$3.50. What he fails to note is that some were buried without



coffins, with less formal covering such as brush, split logs, or blankets. With no real evidence to the contrary, it seems unlikely that Saints were buried other than in the cemetery for lack of a burial fee. If the Saints freely shared their desperately inadequate food supplies, it is likely they arranged for proper burial of their own or their friends' dead, with or without cash.

How many apostatized or merely dropped out of the exodus? Bennett claims at least 2,000 Mormons "left the church at the Missouri" (314). That is about one-third the number once claimed by some local Reorganized Latter Day Saints in the Middle Missouri Valley, but it is still inflated. My evidence would suggest that between 400 and 700 dropped out of the exodus at the Missouri River. Here again, census figures are necessary parameters.

Thus the problem of numbers is very real. It is unfortunate that while Bennett's book shatters some myths and false perceptions, it creates some of its own. Still, it must be regarded as an important contribution. Bennett demonstrates that Mormons did indeed have a life between Nauvoo and the Great Basin, a life filled with both significant and poignant events. There is no longer any excuse for us to be ignorant of the Mormon sojourn in the Missouri Valley.

JESSIE L. EMBRY. *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987. 238 pp. \$19.95.

Reviewed by Kahlile Mehr, cataloging supervisor at Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

As the hundredth anniversary of the Woodruff Manifesto approaches, books and articles have proliferated on the topic of Mormon polygamy. Fortunately, enough time has passed that some degree of objectivity holds sway in current presentations. The time for polemics or apologetics is past. There is only a need to understand and distill present meaning out of past circumstance.

Embry has brought together a plethora of information on many aspects of polygamy untouched by previous inquiries. In a straightforward and scholarly manner, she deals with the intricacies of household economy, social activity, church activity, and other aspects of the diurnal life in the principle. She compares polygamous life with life in monogamous families. Her somewhat surprising conclusion is: life inside the principle was not much different from life outside the principle.



Though I can agree with this conclusion on many points, I must contest it on a few. I agree that the underlying mores of the era controlled the conduct of both those within and without polygamy. But I continue to believe that polygamy fundamentally changed the lifestyle of many women who lived it.

First, though, I must admit to a bias. Polygamy was a factor in a number of my own ancestral lines and, in the cases I have studied, the practice was trying for the women to the point of being starkly tragic. My ancestors were in most cases second wives. Two lived on farms and essentially raised their families as married widows. In another case, marriages between four women and one man ended in two divorces, an estrangement, and a relatively unhappy family life. My sample is of course much smaller than Embry's. Still, I tend to think that polygamy required lifestyles frequently at variance from that in monogamy.

Let me review one of Embry's points that I contest. Embry discusses one aspect of polygamous lifestyle, the female economic role, on pages 94–98 of the book. She states that 12 percent of polygamous wives received no support or minimal support from their husbands. She found a similar percentage of monogamous women who received no support, but this was because they were widows. I contend these statistics do not adequately differentiate between the quality of husband support rendered to polygamous wives and that rendered to monogamous wives. To me the evidence does not yet contradict the "stereotype" that many polygamous wives developed independence of necessity and bore more financial responsibility than their monogamous counterparts.

A second point at which I vary from Embry is the significance she gives to the social and ecclesiastical pressures placed on both men and women to live the principle. What Embry tamely calls "encouragement" to enter polygamy (62) was much more than that. I think we have little comprehension of the fervent sacrament meeting orations that made many think polygamy was mandatory to reach celestial glory. Nor do I think we appreciate how social expectations swayed impressionable young girls into unions with married men many years senior in age. Obedience to authority was quite as powerful as adherence to religious principle for those who entered the principle. Embry deals with these issues, but I would rate them as more significant than her portrayal suggests.

The book has many strengths. It is objective and does not make assertions for which it provides no evidence. It far surpasses the scholarship of Kimball Young's book *Isn't One Wife Enough?*—its only legitimate antecedent. It summarizes a great mass of data otherwise available only in rambling oral histories,



bringing us numerous insights into the daily reality of polygamy. It is the most comprehensive and best work available on polygamy beyond the veil of stereotype.

Unfortunately it shares a weakness of other works on the topic—the problem of documentation. Polygamy was lived out mostly behind closed doors and unseen inside human souls. The documentation in most cases simply was never created.

There is another major problem with the sources beyond the fact that they are so sparse. The sources for this book consist primarily of interviews of polygamists conducted in the 1930s by a sociologist with a clear bias against the practice, and interviews conducted in the 1970s and 1980s with children of polygamists. The first group's interviews may well have been tinged by the bias of the interviewer, and the recollections of the latter group are far removed from the events they recount. At best, the sources give a partial glimpse of polygamy after 1880, with heaviest emphasis on marriages contracted after the Manifesto, when circumstances surrounding the practice were much different from earlier periods.

Embry is aware of these problems, but her admission of its reality is relegated to a chapter on demographics, rather than being given its due prominence in her introduction. The result is that this study is really more of a distant reflection rather than a clear close-up of polygamous life throughout the period of its practice.

With regard to composition, I felt that chapter 2 was the best précis I have read on the history of polygamy. I was not so pleased by some of the other chapters. As I moved into the chapters analyzing each element of family life I began to get lost in the details and cast of characters. This occurred particularly when I kept running into paragraphs without topic sentences and had to backtrack to remember what I was reading about. Also, I would occasionally stumble on sentences that did not quite convey what was intended, such as this one from the beginning of chapter 3: "Mormon polygamy raises a lot of questions about demography," rather than something like, "Demography reveals a lot about the nature of Mormon polygamy." The result is that the casual reader might get bogged down before reaching the concluding chapters.

Nevertheless, this is an important work on an important topic. Basically positive in its approach, it provides a balance to the negative sensationalism of polygamy's detractors and uncritical wishfulness of its proponents. Polygamy was one of the greatest single factors that made Mormonism what it was in the nineteenth century. If it is lost from our consciousness, we give up much of that heritage. Embry's work gives us a chance to reflect again on a legacy we ought not forget.



EDWIN B. FIRMAGE, ed. *An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988. xiii; 152 pp. \$9.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Richard D. Poll, professor emeritus of history, Western Illinois University.

Reading *The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown* was like visiting with an old and admired friend. President Brown was a faculty colleague when I came to Brigham Young University in 1948. He was an adviser and strategically situated helper in the 1960s, when several campus developments engaged the attention of members of the board of trustees. And he was an amiable commentator as Eugene Campbell and I put together the biography that reached the bookstores ten days after his death in 1975.<sup>1</sup>

Several factors fully justify the publication of this memoir, even though it contains little new biographical information. First, it reintroduces to the Church a man who is unknown, except for occasional quotations in authorized lesson manuals, to a majority of today's Latter-day Saints. Second, it presents in context most of the famous Hugh B. Brown stories, some of which still circulate in audiotape format. Third, it offers some of the sage advice that made President Brown a special resource for two generations of young people who faced the challenges of understanding and applying the gospel in a changing world. Fourth, it looks at the institutional Church in terms that are a useful corrective to dogmas of prophetic infallibility and scriptural inerrancy. Fifth, it reminds those who knew him, personally or as a powerful pulpit figure, of why Hugh Brown found a unique place in the hearts of so many people.

The memoir is a slightly expanded and lightly edited transcript of a series of taped interviews that University of Utah law professor Edwin Firmage had with his maternal grandfather in 1969–70. Several letters and a selection of family pictures have been added. Noting in the book's introduction that "Grandfather told the truth—as he remembered and believed it" (xii), Firmage does not correct the occasional small errors of fact<sup>2</sup> or grapple with the evidence that some of the great faith-promoting stories, such as the currant bush, recount historical events that may never have occurred as described.<sup>3</sup> Instead, he lets the autobiographical reminiscence speak for itself, and it tells the story of a unique, engaging, and important man.

The narrative begins in Salt Lake City in 1883, when a second son and fifth child was born to a stern, even harsh, father and an affectionate mother—both Browns. Hence Hugh Brown Brown,



who came to be the repository of the high hopes of his mother and several prominent Mormons with whom he had contact as a child and young man. His family moved to Alberta, Canada, in 1899. There he learned ranching and received a basic education before going on a mission to England (1904–6) and marrying Zina Card, of Logan. Their sixty-six year union gave him eight children and a firm testimony of the potential for happiness in a good marriage. While Zina was totally incapacitated by a series of strokes that left her bedridden and speechless for seven years, he dictated these words:

I hope that my wife and I can both live until the last one of us dies, so that when we go, we will go hand in hand. For I am afraid that this is the only way I will be able to get through the pearly gates, to hang on her hand and slip through on her record. Then when our children come up there, their mother will have a big harp and I, with chin whiskers, will have a banjo and we will play and march as they come, "littlest by littlest," as we used to say on Christmas mornings. (134)

After military service as a training officer in World War I, Hugh qualified to practice law in Canada, then relocated with his family in Salt Lake City in 1927. Already having served as a stake president in Alberta, he soon was called to head the Granite Stake; that calling brought collaboration with Harold B. Lee, Henry D. Moyle, and other pioneers of the Church welfare program. His enduring connection with the Democratic party led to an unsuccessful campaign for a senatorial nomination in 1934 and a brief, unhappy service on the Utah Liquor Control Commission. When he moved to California in 1937, at fifty-three years of age, he felt his fortunes to be at a low ebb.

The remaining forty-two years were devoted almost entirely to Church-oriented work. He served successively, and successfully, as president of the British Mission, LDS servicemen's coordinator, British Mission president again, and very popular teacher of religion at BYU. An unrewarding quest for wealth in the Canadian oil business, 1950–54, was followed by calls to be an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve, then one of the Twelve, then a Counselor *to*, Second Counselor *in*, and from 1963 to 1970 First Counselor in the First Presidency. When Joseph Fielding Smith reconstituted the First Presidency on the death of David O. McKay, Hugh B. Brown resumed his calling among the Apostles.

The memoir is salt-and-peppered with the wit and wisdom of its author. Of the former, some was purely for fun's sake. In a courting letter to Zina, he observed that "it is possible for a Brown to feel blue" (34). As death approached, he more than once used the phrase "Son of Obituary" (146); to his biographers he suggested



that it might be an appropriate title for their book. But more often he used the light touch to make a profound point, as when he credited these words to an elderly and forgiving bishop with whom he served as a young and by-the-book counselor: "Brethren, there is one thing for which I am profoundly grateful, and that is that God is an old man. I would hate to be judged by you young fellows" (19).

Few specific details about President Brown's activities as a General Authority are provided in the memoir. His overall appraisal: "Although I have had some rather difficult experiences . . . by reason of some misunderstandings and disagreements, it has been a truly wonderful experience" (115). In his editorial afterword, Firmage describes the controversies over racial policies during the 1960s and concludes: "I believe without the slightest doubt that his [Brown's] position on blacks and the priesthood was the matter that led to his removal from the new First Presidency" (142–43).

On the basis of his assignment, while Assistant to the Twelve, to review applications for temple divorces, Elder Brown was moved to write and speak extensively on the problems and possibilities of marriage. He believed that most Mormon families would benefit from "better programs of sexual education" (118). Of prescriptive approaches to marital behavior, he wrote:

It is a dangerous thing to try to regulate the private lives of husbands and wives or for church leaders to go into the bedroom of a couple who are married and try to dictate what they should or should not do. Many of the problems people bring to the authorities of the church should be settled by the persons themselves. They know the basic rule of right and wrong. For example, there are cases where abortion is absolutely justified, in fact necessary, such as in the case of forcible rape, the threat of permanent injury to the mother's health or life, or the possibility of a grossly deformed birth. . . . And while we have not taken the unyielding attitude of some other churches toward artificial birth control, we cannot officially endorse it because too many young people would stop having children. Even so, I think we will one day have to modify our position. (119–20)

The last two chapters, "A General Authority" and "A Final Testimony," should be read by a wider audience than is likely to see them. They reflect the experiences of a man who was often a minority voice in counsel even when he held great power in administration. Observations on the nature of the General Authority calling (123–26) are important in a time when doctrines of infallibility are attractive to many Saints. Advocacy of a thoughtful approach to testimony was a hallmark of President Brown's sermons, and quotable aphorisms abound. For example:



The church is not so much concerned with whether the thoughts of its members are orthodox or heterodox as it is that they shall have thoughts. (139)

Revealed insights should leave us stricken with the knowledge of how little we really know. It should never lead to an emotional arrogance based upon a false assumption that we somehow have all the answers—that we in fact have a corner on truth. For we do not. (140)

Both creative science and revealed religion find their fullest and truest expression in the climate of freedom. (137)

All my life I have advocated that people in and out of the church should think through every proposition presented to them. Positions may be modified as time passes by discussing them with others, but there should be no question that both liberals and conservatives in the church are free to express their opinions. (131)

In my own life I have questioned all the things that men and women question and I have had my own struggle with some problems. But I have found it desirable to lay aside some things that I do not fully understand and await the time when I will grow up enough to see them more clearly. There is so much that is good and true that I can and do approve and accept with all my heart that I can afford to wait for further light on some of these disturbing questions. (133)

Hugh B. Brown was an imposing, intelligent, articulate, and—in spite of surgery for tic douloureux that left his face partially paralyzed—handsome man. Among the General Authorities of his day, his charisma was matched only by President David O. McKay. There is some evidence that, like President McKay, he was not impervious to the danger against which he cautioned: “But the man who is to be successful as a church leader must learn . . . that the adulation of people can be detrimental if it gives him a wrong estimate of his own importance” (123). Still, his life and teachings commend themselves to today’s Latter-day Saints, and this memoir offers an economical way to encounter them.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Eugene E. Campbell and Richard D. Poll, *Hugh B. Brown: His Life and Thought* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975).

<sup>2</sup>For example, “within 120 miles of Cambridge” (21–22), “Pacific” (90), and “Supreme Court” (95).

<sup>3</sup>See Campbell and Poll, *Hugh B. Brown*, 67–71, 217–19. An energetic, dedicated, and persuasive young stake presidency might lead every member of the Lethbridge stake to make a tithing contribution in 1922, but the recollection that at year’s end there “was not a man, woman or child in the stake who had a dollar who had not tithed it” is almost certainly inaccurate (70).

AVRAHAM GILEADI. *The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretive Keys from the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988. xviii; 250 pp. \$19.95.

Reviewed by Royal Skousen, professor of English at Brigham Young University.

This book is an important milestone in LDS scriptural study. For the first time, a Latter-day Saint scholar has fully recognized the inadequacy of the outdated and archaic 1611 King James translation and has produced a completely new translation of a biblical book from an LDS point of view.

As modern readers we are familiar with the King James language of the New Testament Gospels, but other parts—especially the prophetic books of the Old Testament and Paul's letters—remain obtuse, in part because of the rhetorical complexity of these works, but also because their language (especially in an archaic translation) is so difficult to understand. Gileadi's goal is to translate Isaiah into modern English so that Isaiah can speak directly to us. Gileadi succeeds because his language is modern, yet elevated; it avoids slang and modernistic expressions that would detract from the seriousness of Isaiah's message. In addition, Gileadi has striven to achieve a consistent translation of Isaiah's terminology, thus allowing the reader to more readily see the prophetic patterns in this book.

As far as the Isaiah text goes, this book is virtually identical to Gileadi's *The Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah*.<sup>1</sup> But there are important differences between the two editions. The first edition has only a brief foreword (five pages), then launches directly into the Isaiah text, and concludes with a scholarly essay entitled "An Apocalyptic Key." This second edition, on the other hand, starts with a 93-page introduction, followed by the Isaiah text itself. I myself prefer the short foreword of the first edition, simply because the real beauty of both these editions is the Isaiah translation itself, and the first edition gets the reader into Isaiah much quicker.

Another important difference between the two editions is the intended audience. The first edition is directed towards a scholarly and non-LDS audience, whereas the second is written for a general LDS audience. Gileadi's rhetorical arguments in his first edition have had some influence on conservative biblical scholarship. Modern Isaiah scholarship denies the single authorship of Isaiah, even though statistical analysis of the prefixal elements in Isaiah shows a unity.<sup>2</sup> Gileadi has taken a different tack and emphasizes the rhetorical unity of the Book of Isaiah, particularly its chiasmic structure. In Hassell Bullock's words, Gileadi's work "illustrate[s]



how a recent scholar has approached a topic considered by many other scholars to be a settled issue and has offered new insights and intriguing possibilities.”<sup>3</sup>

A third difference between the two editions is the typography. It is unfortunate that the second edition of such an important book suffers from the usual computer-generated typesetting problems found in many books today. Lack of ligatures and traditional old-style numbers, poor intercharacter spacing in the treatment of italic transcriptions, and the general lack of typographic aesthetics all disrupt the reader’s attention. These deficiencies were not present in the first edition, thanks to the excellent work of Tamara and Thomas K. Hinckley, who designed and typeset the first edition. The type in the first edition is much more readable than the awkward cutting of Garamond used in the second edition.<sup>4</sup>

In the introduction to the second edition, Gileadi explains the rhetorical structure of the Book of Isaiah for an LDS audience. Gileadi’s insights are interesting, but for some reason I found the reading slow going. The analysis in the first edition is more spartan and for me much easier to read. In particular, in this new edition, I found the sample verse-by-verse commentary on chapter 28 of Isaiah unnecessary. This is not a criticism of Gileadi’s analysis of chapter 28, but simply my own predilection for reading the actual text rather than an expansionary and paraphrastic commentary. The real reason Gileadi’s book succeeds is the translation itself: Isaiah can finally be understood *without* the use of an extensive commentary!

Gileadi’s main goal is to achieve a meaningful text. His basic text is the traditional Masoretic text (MT) of Isaiah, but he also uses the Septuagint (LXX) and the Qumran Isaiah (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) in order to clear up difficult passages in the Masoretic text. He also considers some alternatives from the Isaiah passages in the Book of Mormon, as in the following example (which conflates readings from the Masoretic text and the Septuagint):

*Isaiah 2:16, King James Version (from the Masoretic text):*

And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

*Isaiah 2:16, Septuagint:*

and upon every ship of the sea, and upon every display of fine ships.<sup>5</sup>

*2 Nephi 12:16 (conflated):*

And upon all the ships of the sea, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

*Isaiah 2:16, Gileadi’s version (also conflated):*

against [all vessels at sea,]<sup>c</sup>

both merchant ships<sup>d</sup> and pleasure craft.

<sup>c</sup>16 So LXX; not in MT.

<sup>d</sup>16 Hebrew *ships of Tarshish*.

Gileadi also emends the text in places where the original makes little sense. Some of his emendations are based on plausible transcriptional errors in the original consonantal text of Isaiah; others are based on alternatives to the traditional Masoretic assignment of vowels to the consonantal text.

In order to make more sense out of the text, Gileadi sometimes transposes the order of words, phrases, lines, and verses. The main motivation for each transposition is, it would appear, to make sense out of a passage, but unlike the consonant and vowel emendations there often seems to be little independent motivation for reordering. One particularly interesting transposition occurs in Isaiah 53:9. Here Gileadi transposes phrases apparently in order to increase the parallels with Jesus' death and burial:

*Isaiah 53:9, King James Version (from the Masoretic text):*

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death;

*Isaiah 53:9, Gileadi's version:*

He was appointed among the wicked in death,<sup>a</sup>  
among the rich was his burial;<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a9, b9</sup> Terms transposed; appear reversed in text. Compare 14:20 and the lack of a burial for the wicked and violent Tyrant.

In each instance, Gileadi warns us when he does emend or transpose the text. And he gives reasons for his conjectures.

There are a few infelicities in Gileadi's poetic translation. Sometimes he produces nonparallel English that is hard to read:

You may take courage in one another,  
but shall be in fear;  
you may arm yourselves,  
but shall be terrorized. (8:9)

Many will stumble into them,  
and when they fall shall be broken,  
and when they become ensnared  
shall be taken captive. (8:15)

A suckling infant will play near the adder's den,  
and the toddler reach his hand  
over the viper's nest. (11:8)

In a few places Gileadi uses obscure or archaic words (*italics added*):

Ever trust in the Lord,  
for the Lord *Yah* is an everlasting Rock. (26:4)

Thus says the Lord, your Maker,  
who formed you from the womb and *succored* you:  
(44:2)



A few of his words suggest a modern interpretation (*italics added*):

It shall ignite the jungle forests,  
and they shall billow upward  
in *mushrooming* clouds of smoke. (9:18) [Atomic bombs?]

What will you do in the day of reckoning  
when the *holocaust* overtakes you from afar? (10:3)  
[The Jewish holocaust during World War II?]

Therefore, though you plant choice crops  
and sow *hybrid* seed . . . (17:10) [Modern genetics?]

Like tornadoes sweeping through the South,  
they come from the *steppes*, a land of terror. (21:1)  
[The steppes of Russia?]

*High rises* and panoramic *resorts*  
shall become haunts for ever after. (32:13) [Modern architecture?]

To them I will give a *handclasp* and a name within the walls of my  
house. (56:5) [Temple rites?]

Despite these few interpretative translations, Gileadi's translation contains many marvelous expressions:

If you are willing and obey,  
you shall eat the good of the land.  
But if you are unwilling and disobey,  
you shall be eaten by the sword. (1:19–20)  
Woe to those drawn to sin by vain attachments,  
hitched to transgression like a trailer. (5:18)  
For the godless utter blasphemy;  
their heart ponders impiety:  
how to practice hypocrisy and preach  
perverse things concerning the Lord,  
leaving the hungry soul empty,  
depriving the thirsty soul of drink. (32:6)

In all, Gileadi has produced a wonderful translation. When I sit down to read Isaiah, I choose Gileadi.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Avraham Gileadi, *The Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretative Key* (Provo: Hebraeus Press, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>L. La Mar Adams, "A Scientific Analysis of Isaiah Authorship," in *Isaiah and the Prophets: Inspired Voices from the Old Testament*, ed. Monte S. Nyman (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984), 151–63.

<sup>3</sup>C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 130.

<sup>4</sup>I wish to thank Jonathan Skousen for these insights on the typography.

<sup>5</sup>This English translation of the original Greek is taken from *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, with an English Translation* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1879).

# Shadows

Call Ishmael what you will,  
Ishmael knew:  
Shadows were real.

Ishmael survived.  
I died  
With no shadow  
Developed by the sun.

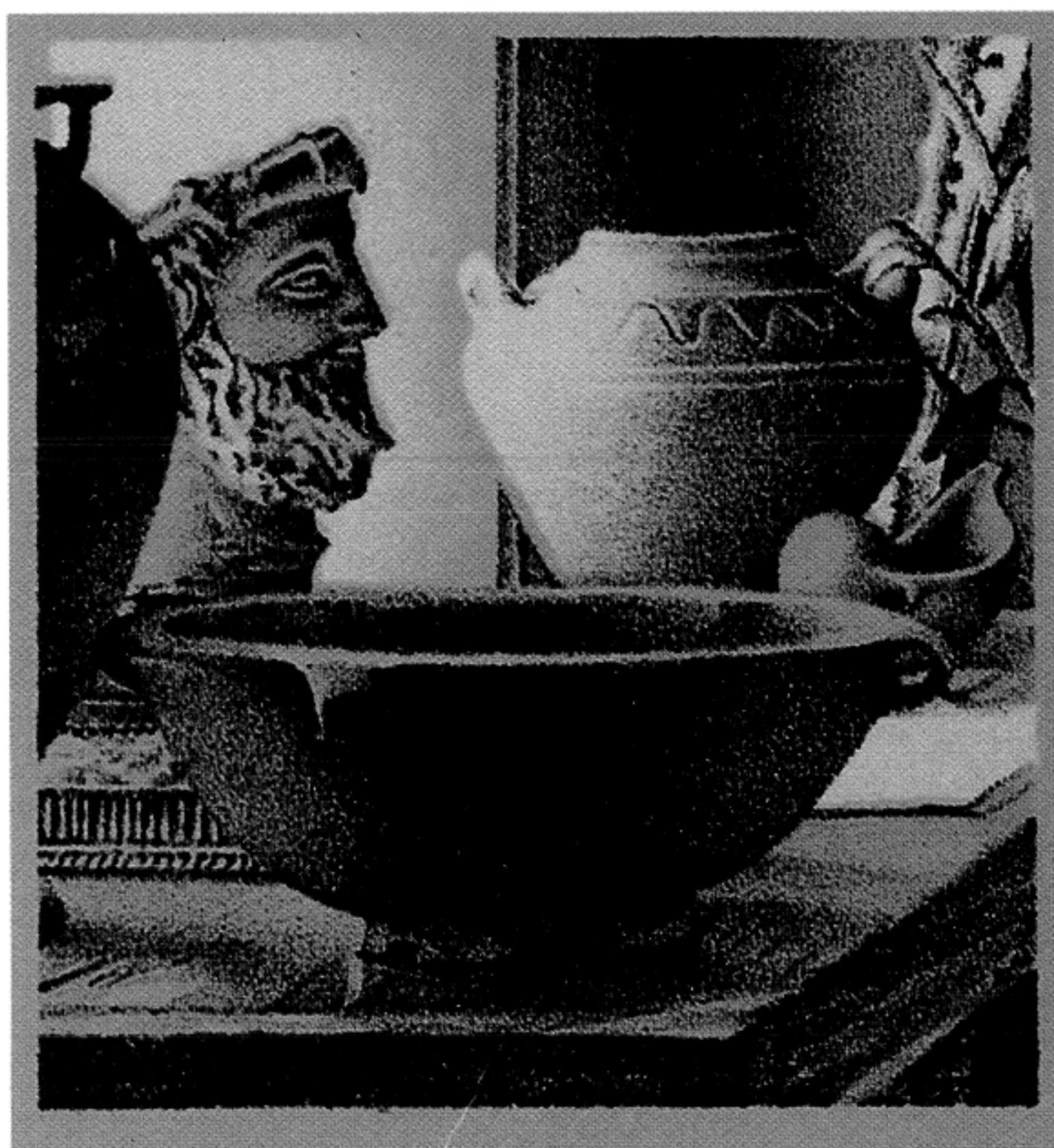
I stood—Fedallah  
In the shadow of Ahab,  
Wicked King,  
And covered my eyes.

—Dianna M. Black





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