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STUDIES

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY
LATTER-DAY SAINT
JOURNAL



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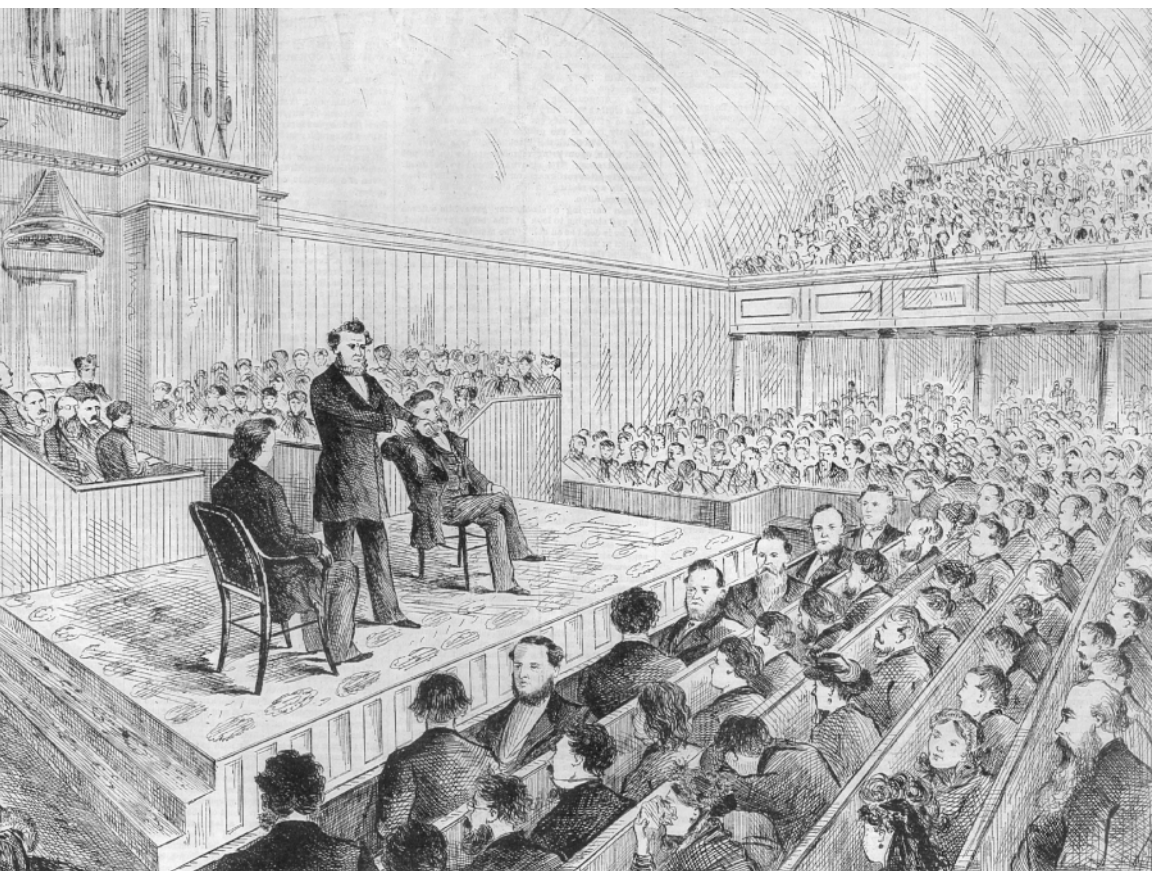


FIG. 1. Brigham Young in the Mormon Tabernacle at Salt Lake City. President Young preached dozens of sermons in the Tabernacle. This portrayal of the April 1873 general conference depicts Brigham Young resigning as business director of the Saints. *Daily Graphic*, April 16, 1873, 4, courtesy Gary L. and Carol B. Bunker.

“Strange Ramblings”

The Ideal and Practice of Sermons in Early Mormonism

Davis Bitton

People who attended meetings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during its first seventy years heard many sermons preached (fig. 1). But the sermons often seemed different from those heard in Protestant and Catholic congregations. For the Saints, this was further evidence that Mormonism was not tied to a professional clergy but, like primitive Christianity, allowed wide participation by parishioners. Outsiders, however, were often less than favorably impressed with Mormon sermons. According to one observer, most Mormon speakers he heard were guilty of “strange ramblings.”¹ Before examining in detail the peculiarities of preaching among the Latter-day Saints, let us set the stage.

Sermons in American Oral Culture

To underline the importance of sermons in an earlier age, some historians have emphasized the significance of “oral culture,” by which they mean a cultural setting in which the spoken, rather than the written, word is primary, as it is when literacy is low.² In such cultures, the spoken word always has an extraordinary impact. From the first settlements in the New World, sermons were a common feature of the oral atmosphere in which people lived; even those who could read found sermons a central feature in their verbal surroundings.

The sermons of the colonial period and early republic were numerous. A number were published in periodicals or as pamphlets or later as collections. They varied in style and content, including political sermons³ as well as those on the obligations of Christian faith.⁴ Training for the ministry

ranged from the formal instruction received in colleges and divinity schools by the more affluent classes to the complete lack of such training received by itinerant Methodist circuit riders.

Not surprisingly, the style of sermons extended along a spectrum. At one extreme were such carefully prepared addresses as those by Jonathan Edwards and, to mention only some celebrated examples, William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Theodore Parker. Such was the ideal in most churches.⁵ The pastor was expected not only to minister to the congregation but also to demonstrate each Sunday the fruit of his seminary training in homiletics and his many hours of study and preparation for the specific topic to be treated.

At the other end of the spectrum were the more informal sermons heard in evangelical churches and camp meetings. Revivals relied on preaching that appealed strongly to the emotions. Holiness, or Pentecostal, groups exhibited a high degree of the emotional fervor that had earlier been disparaged as “enthusiasm.”⁶ The populist, anticlerical strain in American Christianity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been convincingly described by historian Nathan O. Hatch: “Obscure Christians without social grace and literary education,” he writes, “went beyond merely denying the right of the clergy to ascribe authority to themselves” by inverting “the traditional assumption that truth was more likely to be found at the upper rather than at the lower reaches of society.”⁷

A graphic example of a sermon that made no pretense of scholarship or careful preparation comes from Indiana in the 1820s. An itinerant preacher came to a backwoods settlement. He preached in a house with swine and geese sheltered directly beneath the floor. Using a chair for a pulpit, the preacher thumped it to emphasize points. He began:

Thare’s some folks, howsomever, . . . what thinks preachers must be high larn’d, afore they kin tell sinners as how they must be saved or be ‘tarnally lost; but it ain’t so I allow—(chair thumped here and answered by a squawk below)—no, no! This apostul of ourn what spoke the text, never rubbed his back agin a collige, nor toted about no sheepskins—no, never!—(thump! thump! squawk and two grunts).—Oh, worldlins! How you’d a perished in your sins if the fust preachr’s had a stay’d till they got sheepskins! No! no! no! I say, give me the sperit.⁸

Baynard Rush Hall, whose descriptive words recreate the sermon, says his family always returned from such meetings “more and more convinced that a learned, talented and pious ministry was, after all, *not* quite so great a curse as many deem it.”⁹

Nineteenth-Century Mormon Sermons

Depending on their backgrounds, early converts to Mormonism had their own expectations and qualifications. Some of the more publicly visible early Mormon preachers—Sidney Rigdon, Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, and Orson Spencer—had been ministers before their conversions. As time went on, some Mormons accumulated considerable experience preaching in the mission fields or in their home congregations. There was even a brief effort to provide formal training in the School of the Prophets at Kirtland, Ohio.¹⁰ Yet, for the most part, those who preached Mormonism, like others who challenged the genteel tradition, were untrained and inexperienced. At regular Sunday worship services, those who conducted or prayed or preached were not a class of specially trained pastors but, rather, members of the congregation itself or, on occasion, itinerant missionaries or visiting General Authorities.¹¹

The number of sermons preached to Mormon congregations, as well as the number heard by an individual over an average lifetime, is astounding. Someone with fifty years of faithful attendance at worship services would hear something like one hundred sermons a year and thus a total of five thousand sermons.

The number of Mormon congregations grew as the Church organization matured from the 1830s to the end of the century—as wards and stakes were established and chapels and tabernacles were constructed in the West. Brigham Young is given credit for establishing over three hundred settlements. If, in each of these settlements, two sermons were given per week (an underestimate), that is more than six hundred per week. Assuming fifty weeks per year for ease of calculation, the total number of sermons given per year throughout the Church was thirty thousand, and of course it was quite possible, especially during stake and general conferences, for more than two sermons to be preached to a single congregation in a given week.

Given the staggering number of sermons delivered throughout Mormonism in the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that the great majority of them were never stenographically taken down or printed. In rare cases, a permanent record remains in minute books or a diary kept by someone in the congregation, and some diaries contain reactions to sermons given in ward meetings. Diarists and stenographers such as Wilford Woodruff and Willard Richards kept notes that were later used in attempting to reconstruct Joseph Smith's sermons.¹²

Especially in the second half of the century, talks by General Authorities were often recorded stenographically, although not all of these were transcribed or published. Venues for publication included periodicals such

as *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, which began in 1840, and from 1850, the *Deseret News*. Starting in 1854, the *Journal of Discourses* appeared annually until 1886, with two or three variations from that schedule, and included the text of sermons by General Authorities. Some of these had first been published in the *Deseret News*, and some were published in the newspaper but not included in the bound volume.¹³ The speaker normally had the opportunity to review the transcription before it was published and, quite understandably, made adjustments and improvements.

My evaluation of nineteenth-century preaching therefore rests on a sample that is far from comprehensive and not “representative” in the strictest sense. Valuable work in researching and analyzing Mormon sermons has already been accomplished, but much remains to be done in both stylistic and content analysis.¹⁴ Fortunately, much of Mormon sermonizing survives, and from it some conclusions can be drawn. In the remainder of the article, I will focus on (1) a central characteristic of Mormon preaching in the nineteenth century: its reliance on the Spirit instead of an elaborately prepared written script; (2) the reaction of both non-Mormons and Mormons in the congregation; and (3) a specific effort at the end of the century to improve the quality of preaching in the Church. As those familiar with Latter-day Saint worship will recognize, some of the characteristics noted here continued through the twentieth century, but with modifying influences, and that, in any case, is another study.

The Spirit. Delivered by nonprofessional, although sometimes quite experienced, preachers, Mormon sermons were not models of unity or carefully contrived rhetorical devices. Just as it was unheard of for a person to read a testimony or a prayer, it was virtually unthinkable in the nineteenth century to give a memorized or prewritten sermon.

The scriptural foundation for Latter-day Saint preaching is Doctrine and Covenants 84:85: “Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man.” This revelation, given in 1832, was itself a modern restatement of Matthew 10:18–19: “And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.”

Both anciently and in 1832, the mandate to “take ye [no] thought beforehand” was specifically directed to apostles and missionaries, but the principle was understood to have general application. The preparation should be general, a storing up of understanding and reflection, while the inspiration of the moment would call forth the words needed to

reach the hearts of a specific audience or congregation. In no case, according to these instructions, should the Mormon sermonizer read a prepared text. What he should seek, indeed the *sine qua non* of a truly successful sermon, was “the Spirit.”

One of the effects of the Spirit was overcoming stage fright. “The feeling of fear when it rests upon a man, drives away the Spirit of God. The two spirits cannot exist in the same bosom,” wrote George Q. Cannon in 1881. “One must have the mastery. If the Spirit of God has the mastery, it drives away all fear, and enables a man to speak under its influence with power.”¹⁵

Speaking out of his own experience as a young missionary and a mission president, President Cannon acknowledged that fluency and mastery might take time to develop. Those discouraged with their initial efforts were urged to “persevere, nothing doubting.” In the human setting, lack of pretense could well evoke sympathy, and if a successful sermon is one that convinces and moves, then the early Mormon preachers seem to have enjoyed a remarkable degree of success.¹⁶

The sensation of enjoying a natural flow of expression was often described in the nineteenth century by the word “liberty.”¹⁷ “Had liberty,” or “enjoyed liberty,” the Mormon elders would record.¹⁸ Lorenzo Hill Hatch preached Mormonism for the first time on June 2, 1844, and, as he wrote in his journal, “the Lord told me that I could not preach of myself and I was confounded.” Later in the month, in Vermont, he tried a second time with different results: “The Lord blessed me and I had great liberty.”¹⁹ Orson Pratt, one of the great missionaries of the nineteenth century, also had the experience when God “favored me with liberty of utterance and with the power and gift of the Holy Ghost.” His meaning is more clearly understood by his recognition of the opposite, contrasting experience: “I have seen a few times . . . when my mind seemed to be entirely closed up, and when what few words I could stammer forth before a congregation, were altogether unsatisfactory to my own mind, and I presume to those who heard me.”²⁰

This usage of “liberty” is rather frequent in personal journals of the period. The journals of William E. McLellin provide many examples.²¹ Likewise, in 1839, Arza Adams preached “on the first principles with liberty and the Lord was with me so that I could not be confounded by any man preaching for hire.” Like Adams, Henry Boyle confronted gainsayers with liberty: “I had great liberty in speaking, the Lord blessed me, and the priest was utterly confounded and put to shame before all the people.”²² In most instances, the sensation of enjoying liberty was simply recorded with gratitude. “I had great liberty and spoke at length,” wrote Jesse Crosby in 1844. “Br. Brown and others bore testimony. The Spirit of God was there.”²³

Many other examples confirm the reality of speaking with liberty.²⁴

Humility was both a prerequisite and a natural consequence of preaching by the Spirit. Once when William E. McLellin (fig. 2) attempted to preach, he was tongue-tied and lethargic: “I had no animation in it, no memory, and in truth I had lost the spirit of God.” Going into the woods to pray, he confronted his own weakness, discovering “that it was not me who had preached so many gre[a]t sermons—But that the Lord had given me Light & Liberty.” Having put down a Methodist minister who challenged him, McLellin had become proud: “This was the whole secret” of his failure.²⁵ About six weeks after this experience, McLellin addressed a congregation that included Joseph Smith and other prominent Latter-day

Saint leaders. He felt inadequate but spoke for an hour and a half. “And it was not I but the spirit and power of God which was in me,” he wrote, “and it did seem to me before I finished as though it was not I or that I had got into another region where all was light & glory.”²⁶

On one occasion, Benjamin Johnson spoke “with good liberty, and perhaps began to feel a degree of self importance not approved of by the Lord.”²⁷ He recognized that pride was a sure means of extinguishing the Spirit and that, without the Spirit, enjoyment of such liberty was impossible. George Q. Cannon had a similar experience in 1851, when he was preaching the gospel in Hawaii:

It was a weak attempt. I had to pull everything out that I said. It did not come easy. The only way that I could account for it was I had made up in my own mind yesterday what subject I would speak upon—and the Lord had left me to my own strength to show me my weakness. It is a fact. I have proved it to my satisfaction that I cannot preach this gospel unless aided by the Almighty.²⁸



FIG. 2. William E. McLellin, 1867. McLellin learned firsthand that pride would turn away the Spirit and leave one unable to preach effectively. Courtesy Church Archives.

One might object that these instances of depending so heavily on the Spirit when sermonizing were experienced by missionaries and apostles, not by lay members. But all who addressed Mormon meetings—including lay members, women as well as priesthood holders—sought to be guided by the Spirit. Brigham Young addressed this subject in 1852:

I would rather hear men tell their own experience, and testify that Joseph was a Prophet of the Lord, and that the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and other revelations of God, are true; that they know it by the gift and power of God; that they have conversed with angels, have had the power of the Holy Ghost upon them, giving them visions and revelations, than hear any other kind of preaching that ever saluted my ears. If I could command the language and eloquence of the angels of God, I would tell you why, but the eloquence of angels never can convince any person that God lives, . . . independent of that eloquence being clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost; in the absence of this, it would be a combination of useless sounds.²⁹

In October 1880, George Q. Cannon, recently sustained as First Counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, addressed a congregation in Tooele, Utah. He was speaking off-the-cuff—not reading from a prepared text. Indeed, he said, this was one major difference between the Latter-day Saints and ministers of other churches. President Cannon explained:

We do not cogitate in our private apartments or in our libraries or in our studies what shall be said to the people, and to frame discourses to deliver to them. It is right and proper that the Elders of this Church should try to inform themselves respecting the principles of the Gospel; but it would not be right, neither is it right for them to prepare their discourses and arrange before hand what they say to the people. We might tickle your ears, we might say pleasing things to you, we might give utterance to fine moral sentiments which you would think very beautiful; but they might not be what the people need. It requires the inspiration of the Almighty to take of the things of God to impart to the people. Without that I know it is useless for any Elder in this Church to attempt to teach, and that if he taught his teachings could not result in any possible good to those who listened.³⁰

President Cannon went on to acknowledge eloquence and even beauty in the sermons and writings of a Church of England minister he had heard and especially Henry Ward Beecher, who was “noted for his eloquence and the good sense which characterizes many of his discourses.”³¹ Pleasing, charming, and mellifluous the sermons of these preachers could be, but they did not represent the model of Mormon pulpit sermonizing. Despite

the many good qualities exhibited by preachers of other churches, they lacked something essential. President Cannon explained:

It is not that they do not believe in good moral sentiments, and are not capable of teaching them; it is not that they are ignorant, for they have a great deal of what is called worldly wisdom; but it is that they are destitute of the power of God, the inspiration of the Almighty, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; therefore their teachings do not bring people to a knowledge of the truth.³²

President Cannon did not deny all value to their sermons. They might make the world better “to some extent.” But they lacked the priesthood and the power of God that had been restored to earth with Mormonism and that all Mormon elders possessed. President Cannon noted:

There have been Elders of this Church who could not read, who have gone forth to preach; but they had in them the power of God, they had the inspiration of the Almighty, they had the everlasting Priesthood, by authority of which they were authorized and empowered to declare unto the people the principles of life and salvation. These men, although ignorant and unlearned, and not capable of teaching by their own wisdom, have been the means of bringing salvation to hundreds and thousands of souls, and of bringing them into the Church of Christ, and into a condition where they could receive the Holy Ghost.³³

A little later, President Cannon reemphasized the point:

A man who has the spirit of God given unto him through obedience to the Gospel, and who is ordained to minister in the things of God, even if he can scarcely read, as I have said, goes forth among the people accompanied by the power of God, and searches out the honest in heart. He does not use flowery words, he does not deliver great swelling discourses; but he preaches the truth in simplicity, in meekness, he tells people what to do to be saved, and he has the authority from the Lord to administer the ordinances of salvation to the people; and when they repent humbly before God, and confess their sins, he baptizes them for the remission of their sins, and lays his hands upon their heads for the reception of the Holy Ghost; and they become new creatures.³⁴

George Q. Cannon had no apologies to make. The Latter-day Saints marched to a different drummer, and for him there was no doubt which of the two models represented the power of God on the earth.

Language, Style, and Substance. Mormon preachers sometimes followed a practice well established in the homiletic tradition of Christianity: preaching on a specific scriptural text. In a two and a half hour sermon given in 1832 in Middlebury, Ohio, William E. McLellin “expounded prophecy after prop[h]ecy and scripture after scripture.”³⁵ Gordon Irving’s important thesis analyzes the scriptural passages used most often during

the 1830s.³⁶ McLellin and those who accompanied him preached frequently on John, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Peter.³⁷

More often, Mormon preachers disregarded the practice entirely or modified it beyond easy recognition. No doubt the early missionaries often utilized the approach now disparaged as “proof-texting,” but in their minds they were simply unfolding what the scripture said about a certain topic. And in the spirit of good humor, Mormon preachers occasionally advanced extrabiblical, even extrascriptural, statements as “text.”³⁸ “Blessed are they that hear the Gospel of salvation, believe it, embrace it, and live to all its precepts,” said Brigham Young. “That is the text, and a whole sermon in and of itself.”³⁹

Reacting to the specific challenges of the moment, the early sermonizers included both religious and secular references, a distinction often meaningless at the time. Anecdotes and personal experiences helped to bring ideas home. Few sermons were unified. Without apology, the speakers, who were not being graded by speech professors, moved from one topic to another, stringing together two, three, or more ideas. If there were several things that needed to be said, they would say them one after another, ignoring the Aristotelian unities; the speakers were interested first and foremost in teaching and encouraging the Saints.

There were sermons (or sections of omnibus sermons) on irrigation, childrearing, housekeeping, the missionary obligation, the gathering, and new settlements. There were sermons of celebration and, not surprisingly, sermons of comfort and condolence.⁴⁰ The doctrine of the two ways, the contrast between Zion and Babylon, was an inexhaustible theme, interpenetrating almost everything else when it was not the primary message. The Saints were praised and coddled, criticized and harangued. Why were they not living up to their profession? Too often they followed the ways of the world. The assumption that all Mormons were in lockstep behind an authoritarian leadership collapses in the face of the repeated injunctions to attend meetings, keep the Word of Wisdom, avoid contention, and practice polygamy.

At times, Mormon speakers used strong language to get the point across. Said Brigham Young in 1856:

I will tell you what this people need, with regard to preaching; you need, figuratively, to have it rain pitchforks, tines downwards, from this pulpit, Sunday after Sunday. Instead of the smooth, beautiful, sweet, still, silk-velvet-lipped preaching, you should have sermons like peals of thunder, and perhaps we then can get the scales from our eyes. This style is necessary in order to save many of this people. Give them smooth preaching, and let them glide along in their own desires and wishes, and

they will follow after the traditions of their forefathers and the inclinations of their own wicked hearts, and give way to temptation, little by little, until, by and bye, they are ripe for destruction.⁴¹

What members needed, in President Young's view, was not to be soothed and reassured in their worldly ways but to be told forcefully to repent and follow counsel: "I wish to have every man who rises to speak from this stand, lay aside the smooth tongue and velvet lips and let his words be like melted lead, that they may sink into the hearts of the people."⁴²

During the Mormon Reformation of 1856–57,⁴³ some sermons may have been a bit earthy.⁴⁴ One can well imagine that uneducated farmers or laborers wishing to communicate with a congregation of the same kind of people used colloquial language and sometimes slipped into ungrammatical usage, slang, and down-to-earth comparisons. Even Heber C. Kimball complained that the "music" was taken out of his sermons when Albert C. Carrington edited them for publication.⁴⁵ However, Mormon sermons were far from commonly and deliberately vulgar or profane.

Lengthy sermons seem to have been common in the early days of the Church. One evening in 1831, William E. McLellin spoke for two hours, and the meeting was not over, for Samuel Smith then "ex[h]orted and invited the people to embrace the truth," after which McLellin spoke again.⁴⁶ Such long discourses may have been the reason for Joseph Smith's advice to "preach short sermons, make short prayers," although his own sermons could go on for great length.⁴⁷

Heber C. Kimball stated an ideal but also recognized a problem in practice:

The people are often fed too much, with too long sermons. . . . Stop your long sermons, except God leads and dictates. I should advise you, if you have but a little water in the pond, not to let your saw run the full length of the log. Get up when you have something to say, and sit down when you have done. Long sermons will not answer. Preach short sermons, you Bishops.⁴⁸

President Heber C. Kimball did not want bishops, after a meeting had already run its course and two or three speakers had spoken, to tax the patience of the congregation by giving another long discourse. "You Bishops are always there, and you can preach when the sheep are not crammed to death. There is too much of this cramming, for by it you will gag the people and throw them overboard."⁴⁹

Outsiders' Opinions

From the beginning, Mormon preachers were heard by many non-Mormons. The missionary thrust required addressing those not of the

faith, arousing their interest, and convincing them, if possible. Visitors to Mormon meetings—in branches wherever they had been established, but especially in Kirtland, Nauvoo, and later Salt Lake City—often sought to satisfy their curiosity by attending meetings and listening to the Latter-day Saint expounders. Travelers, whose brief visits among the Saints apparently entitled them to speak as experts, often had a field day. Perhaps the marvel is that sometimes they found something to praise.

In 1842, for example, the Reverend George Moore, a Harvard-trained Unitarian minister, visited Nauvoo and attended a meeting. “I don’t know that I ever before saw such a congregation of stolid faces,” he wrote in his diary. His description continued:

When I entered, one of their number was speaking about the Elder and younger Son in the parable of the Prodigal Son. He made wretched work as a Speaker—he hesitated—and what he said amounted to nothing at all—he did not seem to know himself what he was talking about. But he soon gave way to another—a man of about 50 years of age—who spoke for nearly an hour at the top of his voice. There was but little connexion in what he said. He would run from one subject to another—just as an old Sailor will tell a long yarn, in which the great essential is to keep talking.⁵⁰



FIG. 3. Horace Greeley, who visited Salt Lake City around 1856 and commented on Mormon sermonizing. Photo by Bogardus and Bendann Brothers, engraved by J. C. Buttre, from L. U. Reavis, *A Representative Life of Horace Greeley* (New York: G. W. Carleton, 1872), frontispiece.

In 1855, Jules Remy tried to be complimentary. Brigham Young, he said, had “a certain kind of natural eloquence which is very pleasing to his people.” Orson and Parley P. Pratt were praised for “easy elocution, their agreeable delivery, purity of language, knowledge of the laws of composition, consecutiveness of ideas, logical deduction from the principles they lay down,” and, withal, “real rhetorical excellence.” But most Mormon sermons Remy heard were composed, as mentioned earlier, of “strange ramblings.”⁵¹

At about the time of the Mormon Reformation, Horace Greeley (fig. 3) listened to addresses by Orson Pratt and John Taylor. Greeley did not expect to hear a polished delivery, but he did care that the speaker had something worthwhile to say. “Let him only be sure to

talk good sense, and I will excuse some bad grammar,” he wrote. But he had his limits, and the rambling talks that moved from one thing to another violated his sense of order and propriety:

When a preacher is to address a congregation of one to three thousand persons, like that which assembles twice each Sunday in the Salt Lake City tabernacle, I insist that a due regard for the economy of time requires that he should prepare himself, by study and reflection, if not by writing, to speak directly to the point. This mortal life is too short and precious to be wasted in listening to rambling, loose-jointed harangues, or even to those which severally consume an hour in the utterance, when they might be boiled down and clarified until they were brought within the compass of half an hour each. A thousand half hours, Reverend Sir!—have you ever pondered their value? Suppose your time to be worth ten times that of an average hearer; still, to take an extra half hour from a thousand hearers in order to save yourself ten or fifteen hours’ labor in the due and careful preparation of a sermon, is a scandalous waste, which I see not how to justify. Be entreated to repent and amend!⁵²

In 1860, British traveler and orientalist Richard F. Burton, not entirely unsympathetic to the Mormon faith, attended a meeting in the Salt Lake City Eighth Ward. Bishop Abraham O. Smoot “began with ‘Brethring,’” Burton said, “and proceeded at first in a low and methody [stereotypical Methodist] tone of voice . . . to praise the saints, and to pitch into the apostates.” Paying attention to manner of delivery as well as subject matter, Burton was severe. Smoot’s delivery he pronounced “by no means fluent, even when he warmed,” and his speech was somewhat nasal, for “he made undue use of the regular Wesleyan organ—the nose.” To Burton’s sensitive English ears, grammatical errors were numerous. Yet the actual content of Smoot’s sermon was not disparaged. “He appeared to speak excellent sense in execrable English. He recalled past persecutions, without over-asperity, and promised future prosperity without over-prophecy.”⁵³

The concluding speaker of the meeting was Brigham Young, whose preaching style Burton analyzed in great detail:

The discourse began slowly, word crept titubantly [staggeringly] after word, and the opening phrases were hardly audible; but as the orator warmed, his voice rose high and sonorous, and a fluency so remarkable succeeded falter and hesitation, that—although the phenomenon is not rare in strong speakers—the latter seemed almost to have been a work of art. The manner was pleasing and animated, and the matter fluent, impromptu, and well turned, spoken rather than preached: if it had a fault it was rather rambling and unconnected. Of course colloquialisms of all kinds were introduced, such as “he become,” “for you and I,” and so forth. The gestures were easy and rounded, not without a certain grace, though evidently untaught.⁵⁴

When making a point, Brigham would often raise and shake the forefinger, a gesture Burton thought most of the world would regard as “threatening and bullying.” And he considered Brigham’s address “long.”

Other visitors were also far from complimentary.⁵⁵ In 1861, Hiram S. Rumfield heard Bishop Leonard Harrington speak in the Tabernacle: “He commenced in a tone so low and mumbling that his first utterances, however interesting they may have been to those who were near enough to hear him, were certainly lost to the majority of the congregation; myself included.” The congregation was so noisy, the coughing so frequent, that only gradually did the visitor gather that the theme of the sermon was “the necessity of implicit obedience to teachings of the Church.”⁵⁶ “I heard two sermons,” wrote W. F. Rae in 1871, “both of which were harangues about things in general; the only special doctrines enunciated and enforced by repetition, not by argument, being that the Mormons were God’s chosen people, and that Polygamy was a divine institution.”⁵⁷

In 1877, James F. Rusling attended a meeting in the Tabernacle. He wrote: “The speaking, as a whole, scarcely rose above mediocrity except perhaps Mr. [George Q.] Cannon’s. It was noisy and common-place, without logic or symmetry, and would have provoked most eastern audiences to ridicule, rather than led to conviction. . . . All seemed quite illiterate, their rhetoric limping badly, and their pronouns and verbs marrying very miscellaneously.”⁵⁸

In 1884, Emily Faithfull generalized disapprovingly:

The sermons in the Sunday evening ward meetings of the Mormons chiefly consisted in advice as to the raising of cattle, the destruction of vermin, the cleaning of water-ditches, and other worldly concerns; and indeed some of the sermons in earlier times were couched in language so coarse and revolting, that ladies have told me they hardly knew how to endure it. Rabelais himself could not have surpassed it!⁵⁹

She may not have attended many sacrament meetings on which to base her judgments, but we can hear the clucking tongue.

However, not all Mormon sermons were cut from the same cloth. In 1888, Alexandra Gripenberg, intending to be complimentary, described a sermon as “similar in content to the sermons of Unitarian ministers: it did not contain much dogmatic theology in the usual sense but only sound and humane morality.”⁶⁰ The Mormon preachers would not have liked the idea that they were simply repeating the middle-class moral injunctions that could be heard from pulpits throughout the land, but it was true enough that a practical emphasis—what should be done in the here and now—was common.

Observer Phil Robinson had a favorable impression of the practicality of Mormon sermons:

These addresses are curiously practical. They are temporal rather than spiritual, and concern themselves with history, official acts, personal reminiscences, and agricultural matter rather than points of mere doctrine. But as a fact, temporal and spiritual considerations are too closely blended in Mormonism to be disassociated. Thus references to the Edmunds Bill take their place naturally among exhortations to “live their religion,” and to “build up the kingdom” in spite of “persecution.” Boycotting Gentile tradesmen is similarly inculcated as showing a pious fidelity to the interests of the Church. These are the two chief topics of all addresses, but a passing reference to a superior class of waggon, or a hope that every one will make a point of voting in some coming election, is not considered out of place, while personal matters, the health of the speaker or his experiences in travel, are often thus publicly commented upon.⁶¹

Robinson was generous in his conclusion: “The result is, that the people go away with some tangible facts in their heads, and subjects for ordinary conversation on their tongues, and not, as from other kinds of religious meetings, with only generalities about their souls and the Ten Commandments.”⁶²

N. L. Nelson’s Effort to Improve Sermons

Some Latter-day Saints recognized that improvement in Mormon sermonizing was needed. As early as 1841, the following letter to the editor from “a worthy female correspondant [*sic*]” was published in *Times and Seasons*:

There is a commandment which says, “Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” It was generally believed by the ancients, that the serpent possessed the power of fascinating in order to secure his prey. There is a fascinating power in eloquence, which I have often thought is more like the fascinating power attributed to the serpent, than anything else on earth. A minister of the gospel should possess that power, in order to obey that commandment literally and fully; and his success will generally be in proportion to the degree in which he possesses it: for there is nothing that can so effectually secure the attention, and gain the hearts of the people, as truth clothed with eloquent language.⁶³

In the second half of the century, study groups and ward or community mutual improvement societies, even before the formal organization of auxiliaries by the Church, typically included talks and debates, and, in addition to whatever guidance they received in the schools, individuals could take instruction in elocution.⁶⁴ Advice on preaching was given in editorials, articles, and even some sermons.⁶⁵



FIG. 4. N. L. Nelson, 1904. A teacher of rhetoric and elocution at Brigham Young Academy, he cared deeply about improving preaching in the Church. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Provo, Utah.

At the end of the century, N. L. Nelson (fig. 4), who taught rhetoric and elocution at Brigham Young Academy (not yet called University) in Provo, Utah, published *Preaching and Public Speaking: A Manual for the Use of Preachers of the Gospel and Public Speakers in General*.⁶⁶ As a missionary in the Southern States Mission, he had had “frequent occasion to deplore the fearful waste of time, money, energy, and opportunity to save souls,—to say nothing of the mental anguish,—which is involved before the raw missionary, with no other guide than blundering experiment, is changed into the fairly capable preacher.”⁶⁷ Rejecting the fond assumption that youths called as missionaries were suddenly transformed into articulate preachers, Nelson described the typical mis-

sionary as “defeated time after time,” even “utterly routed,” before humbling himself, studying the scriptures, and finally becoming an effective “preacher of righteousness.”⁶⁸

With regard to speakers in sacrament meetings, Nelson was merciless. As a clerk in his ward, he had the experience of taking minutes in Sunday meetings and often found the sermons “desultory” and incoherent. “I cannot think of a more profitless hour than that spent in listening to an aimless speaker,” he said. Nelson would continue to attend meetings in order to renew his covenants in the sacrament, but after receiving “this blessing . . . , I can sit back to an hour’s punishment, if need be, and count it among the blessings of adversity.”⁶⁹

To parry the charge that he had “a fault-finding spirit,” Nelson claimed to be voicing the feelings of many others who would not speak out and of “the multitude of Latter-day Saints who now seldom go to meeting.” Any who might doubt his strictures should simply observe the effect of sermons on the congregation: “Among the portion that sleep, some of whom are on the stand, may be counted here and there leading members of the ward.” Of those awake, the majority show a “leaden eye” and a “lackadaisical expression.” Realizing that his comments might appear harsh, he defended them

as a necessary diagnosis if improvements were to be effected. “It seems to me a healthy rule,” he wrote, “to count that charity misplaced which fosters the evil it feeds, be it beggary or bad preaching.”⁷⁰

Nelson’s book, revised from a series of articles first published in the *Contributor*, is in part a Mormon version of the standard rhetoric textbook of the period. But it does not stop with rhetoric. Since “one cannot give what he has not got,” Nelson provides much advice on intellectual and personality development. In “Subject-Matter for Sermons,” he puts forth a thoughtful analysis of the “Importance of Point of View.” In “The Art of Thinking,” he explores such topics as “The Value of Thinking as Compared with Thought-gathering” and “How to Set the Wheels of Thought Moving.”

Recognizing that there are different kinds of sermons and different audiences, Nelson insists that certain underlying principles remain. The sermon should have unity—with a beginning, a middle, and an end—and should say something. It should also be interesting. Using standard rhetorical terms, Nelson discusses description, exposition, exegesis, argumentation, discussion, and persuasion. For him rhetoric was not inherently evil but a discipline that could be applied for either good or ill, and he did not want the preachers of righteousness to be handicapped by ignorance of it. He offers recommendations on the choice of words and the construction of sentences and on breathing, voice development, and gestures.

Yet Nelson by no means repudiates the traditional Mormon understanding of preaching by the Spirit. He simply insists on the need for a broad and deep preparation—a storing of the mind, from which the humble speaker, under inspiration, could draw a sermon that would be at once interesting and inspiring, feeding both the mind and the heart:

Let us then continue to believe that we are to take no thought about what we shall say, that we are to rely implicitly upon the Lord’s giving in the hour thereof what is mete for every man. But let this trust never be an apology or a justification for minds in which nothing has bloomed and ripened since the days we were on missions. Let it mean what God designed it to mean, that we are not to prepare sermons by rote.⁷¹

Although outspoken in his criticism of lay speakers in the Church, Nelson did not wish to impugn the General Authorities. At the end of his book, he includes a sermon by President Wilford Woodruff delivered at a stake conference in Ogden on October 19, 1896. “Any one can see that it is not a studied effort,” Nelson points out, “just as everyone must feel that it was dictated by the Spirit of God. The fact that the sermon admits of logical analysis down to the last detail, should settle the question, once for all, that the Holy Ghost is a spirit of order, and that consequently our sermons will be logical and progressive in the exact ratio that our minds yield to this

Spirit.” Nelson praises the sermon for the simplicity of its diction, its clarity and directness, and its avoidance of “attempts at oratorical effect.”⁷²

Inserting headings that were not in the original, Nelson finds an Introduction, a First General Division, a Second General Division, and a General Conclusion, with specific instances and experiences supporting each heading. Significantly, the Woodruff sermon was entitled “Obtain the Spirit of God.” Nelson did not wish to leave the impression that by studying his textbook or using certain techniques one could dispense with spiritual influence: “My purpose has been, not to teach how we may get along without the Spirit, but how, by accustoming our minds to order and system, we shall offer the least resistance to its guidance.”⁷³

There is no satisfactory way of measuring the effect of Nelson’s book. Students in his rhetoric and elocution classes at Brigham Young Academy probably learned something from it, and the book was read by an unknown number of others. We are entitled to doubt that any general transformation was wrought. Individual speakers who followed his lead and prepared themselves as Nelson recommended may have given sharp, well-organized sermons, but if the “Nelsonians” were brash, as Nelson himself came close to appearing, they were probably criticized in turn for their conceited attitude. To the extent that a certain class of youth became better-educated and pursued programs of self-improvement, especially if they also developed a sensitivity to spiritual impulses, perhaps Nelson’s efforts improved the caliber of preaching in the Church.

The Receptivity of the Congregation

From the 1830s, it has been recognized that, along with the “liberty” enjoyed by the speaker, the tolerance and receptivity of the congregation is vital in making a sermon successful. For the Holy Spirit to perform its work fully, both speaker and auditors must be in tune. William E. McLellin cites many occasions of being unable to get through to his audience when they resisted the Spirit. “I believe I effected but little in consequence of the coldness and backwardness among them,” he said of one congregation in 1834. Speaking to them the next day, he noted, “My spirit seemed somewhat bound in consequence of the dissensions among the brethren.”⁷⁴

George Q. Cannon reinforced this concept in 1894, explaining the congregation’s role and adding provisos that show his own criteria for successful sermons. “It is most delightful,” he said, “to be in meetings where the Spirit of God reigns, controlling the speaker and softening the hearts of the hearers. I do not take any pleasure in meetings where this is not present.”

Essentially repeating his reflections of 1880 quoted earlier, he gave this counsel to the Latter-day Saints:

It should be our aim, when we come to conference, not to be satisfied unless we feel the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the power thereof resting down upon us. We should come with our hearts prepared for that, seeking for it in faith, our desires ascending unto our Father in heaven in the most fervent manner to soften our hearts and to give unto us His Holy Spirit. We should ask Him also to give it unto those who address us, that they may speak the words of life and salvation, that each of us may go from the meetings feeling that the Lord has been with us, and has given us bread to feed our souls and to strengthen us in the midst of our trials, our afflictions and our perplexities.⁷⁵

For Latter-day Saints who learned to listen by the Spirit and to empathize with the lay speaker whose place behind the pulpit they had occupied or might soon occupy, sacrament meetings could be spiritually fulfilling even when the sermons given failed to meet the world's view of successful rhetoric.

The Spirit can enhance the understanding of the audience even if a speaker is lacking in the Spirit, concentrating more on worldly subjects. "When a subject is treated upon with all the calculation, method, tact, and cunning of men, with the effusions of worldly eloquence, before a congregation endowed with the power of the Holy Ghost, and filled with the light of eternity," said Brigham Young,

they can understand the subject, trace its bearings, place all its parts where they belong, and dispose of it according to the unalterable laws of truth. This makes all subjects interesting and instructive to them. But the case is quite different with those whose minds are not opened and instructed by the power of God. Sermonizing, dividing, and subdividing subjects, and building up a fine superstructure, a fanciful and aerial building, calculated to fascinate the mind, coupled with the choicest eloquence of the world, will produce no good to them.⁷⁶

Thus, Latter-day Saints should not be passive hearers but rather should seek the guidance of the Spirit as they strive to grow in knowledge and understanding not only of the gospel but of practical and secular things as well.

Conclusion

Though sometimes ungrammatical, earthy, and seemingly disorganized, nineteenth-century Mormon sermons were unique in their reliance on the Spirit to guide both speaker and listener. Under the Spirit's influence, Mormon sermons had great power. Latter-day Saints were encouraged to



FIG. 5. George Q. Cannon, ca. 1880. President Cannon reminded the Saints that it was a privilege to receive instruction and counsel under the guidance of the Spirit. Photo by C. R. Savage, courtesy Church Archives.

listen as did Ezra T. Benson, who in 1855 claimed never to have heard a Mormon sermon he did not “rejoice in”:

It never made any difference who addressed the people; no matter who was called upon to speak, however eloquent his discourse might be, however pointed his remarks might be, no matter however simple, or how many times I might have heard the same subject treated upon, it was always edifying to me, for I ever found something new, and although I might have heard the same things, perhaps, a great many times, but my memory being so short and treacherous, I had forgotten some things, but as soon as I heard them again I could then recollect them; my mind would be refreshed, and I would remember that I had heard the same things before.⁷⁷

President Cannon (fig. 5) reminded the Saints that it is a privilege to receive “instruction and

counsel, and reproof and warning” under the influence of the Spirit of God:

We have had a great deal of excellent instruction today, and no doubt that which has been said has prompted many reflections, which will be very profitable to us if we have the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance after we leave here. I do not know any people upon the face of the earth who have so many privileges in this respect as the Latter-day Saints. The Gospel is preached in great simplicity, accompanied by power; and there is no subject connected with our present or our future existence that does not receive attention from the Elders who speak to us. . . . There has been a continuous flood of instruction and counsel, and reproof and warning when needed. We have walked in the light, and not in the dark, and have known the mind and will of God concerning us.⁷⁸

Even though few nineteenth-century Mormon sermons met the world’s criteria for a pleasing sermon, they were capable, as George Q. Cannon said, of providing “bread to feed our souls.”

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1. Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City* (London: n.p., 1861), excerpt in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Knopf, 1958), 280.

2. For stimulating suggestions on changes in public discourse, see Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, eds., *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Transformations in the Theory and Practice of Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993).

3. Political sermons, though delivered by preachers, contained political as well as religious references and were subsequently published as pamphlets. For the colonial and federalist periods, there is a handy collection of these sermons, with an introduction, in Ellis Sandoz, ed., *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730–1805* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991).

4. Especially valuable for the eighteenth century is Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

5. Examples are conveniently gathered in *American Sermons: The Pilgrims to Martin Luther King Jr.* (New York: The Library of America, 1999).

6. “Enthusiasm” is used here in the narrow, technical sense to describe the varieties and dangers of simply claiming inspiration for one’s words and actions when in a state of emotional fervor.

7. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 45.

8. Baynard Rush Hall, *The New Purchase* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1916), 170–75, as cited in E. Harris Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1956), 167–68. Merle Curti used this example in his presidential address to the American Historical Association. Merle Curti, “Intellectuals and Other People,” *American Historical Review* 60 (January 1955): 262.

9. Harbison, *The Christian Scholar*, 68; italics in original. Concerns over preaching by “ignorant and unlettered men” were expressed by others, including, for example, Lyman Beecher in 1814, whose criticism was viewed as an attack on the Methodists. Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 18–19.

10. Steven R. Sorenson, “Schools of the Prophets,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1269–70.

11. See “The Triumph of Vernacular Preaching,” in Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 133–41; and William G. Hartley, “Common People: Church Activity during the Brigham Young Era,” in *Nearly Everything Imaginable: The Everyday Life of Utah’s Mormon Pioneers*, ed. Ronald W. Walker and Doris R. Dant (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 249–95.

12. Dean C. Jessee, “Priceless Words and Fallible Memories: Joseph Smith as Seen in the Effort to Preserve His Discourses,” *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (1991): 25–40; Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980).

13. For Brigham Young, Elden J. Watson has performed a valuable service in his compilation *Brigham Young Addresses: A Chronological Compilation of Known Addresses of the Prophet Brigham Young*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: By the compiler, 1979–84). A useful compilation of sermons following the termination of *Journal of Discourses* in 1886 is Brian H. Stuy, comp., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. (n.p.: By the compiler, 1987–92).

14. Examples of general work on Mormon sermons and preaching include Halbert S. Greaves, "Public Speaking in Utah, 1847 to 1869" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1941); James Lavar Bateman, "The Speaking in the Mormon Missionary System" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1950); Joseph Boyer Jarvis, "Preaching in the General Conferences of the Mormon Church, 1870–1900" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1958); and Barbara M. Higdon, "The Role of Preaching in the Early Mormon Church, 1830–1846" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1961). For rhetorical analysis of individual preachers, see the entries in James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1997* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 890–91.

15. George Q. Cannon, "Overcoming Diffidence," in *Gems for the Young Folks* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881), 43.

16. At the beginning, and for many years, only males served formally as missionaries and did all of the preaching in Church conferences and even in sacrament meetings. On the other hand, women bore testimonies, sometimes functioned unofficially as missionaries, met among themselves in meetings of instruction and spiritual outpouring, and from 1842 had their own organization, the Relief Society, with opportunities for presiding in meetings and preaching the gospel. There is no convenient way to know how many women preached in sacrament meetings as time progressed, but many did so. Many others "preached" in the Sunday School, Primary, and Young Women organizations begun in the latter half of the century. By the 1890s, some women were called to serve as full-time missionaries. Calvin S. Kunz, "A History of Female Missionary Activity in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1898" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976); Diane L. Mangum, "The First Sister Missionaries," *Ensign* 10 (July 1980): 62–65.

17. I did not find this precise usage in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, although the following may be extended to include it: "Free opportunity, range, or scope to do or of doing something; hence, leave, permission"; italics in original.

18. Davis Bitton, "Kirtland Missionary Activity," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 503.

19. Lorenzo Hill Hatch, Journal, June 2, 17, 1844, typescript, 6, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections).

20. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 15:229, November 24, 1872. See also Orson Pratt, *Orson Pratt Journals* (Salt Lake City: E. J. Watson, 1975), 69.

21. Jan Shippis and John W. Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 67, 96, 106, 147 ("He had but little Liberty"), 148, 152 ("I had but little liberty"), 175, 179, 180, 181, 192, 216.

22. Arza Adams, Journal, typescript of holograph, 4, Perry Special Collections. Henry Boyle, Autobiography, 8–9, Perry Special Collections.

23. Jesse W. Crosby, The History and Journal of Jesse W. Crosby, 22–23, Perry Special Collections.

24. Andrew F. Ehat, ed., "They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet: The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (1979): 155; Lorenzo Hill Hatch, Journal, 6; William Hyde, The Private Journal of William Hyde, 13, Perry Special Collections; Levi Jackman, A Short Sketch of the Life of Levi Jackman, 1797–1876, 3, Perry Special Collections; John Murdock, Diaries, 10, Perry Special Collections; Luman Andros Shurtliff, Biographical Sketch of the Life of Luman Andros Shurtliff, 38, Perry Special Collections; Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*,

1833–1898, 9 vols., ed. Scott G. Kenney, January 24, 1836 (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1985), 56; Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 300. These works, including those cited in the previous two notes, are reproduced for CD-ROM by Infobase.

25. Shipp and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 41.
26. Shipp and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 47.
27. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's, 1947), 73.
28. Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 21, quoting George Q. Cannon, Journal, August 17, 1851, typescript, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; punctuation added.
29. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:89–90, June 13, 1852.
30. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:120–22, October 31, 1880.
31. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:121, October 31, 1880.
32. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:121–22, October 31, 1880.
33. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:121, October 31, 1880.
34. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:122, October 31, 1880.
35. Shipp and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 73; George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:23–25, August 12, 1855.
36. Gordon Ivor Irving, “Mormonism and the Bible, 1832–1838” (honor’s thesis, University of Utah, 1972); Gordon Irving, “The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s,” *BYU Studies* 13, no. 4 (1973): 473–88. See also the cursory discussion of texts in Higdon, “Role of Preaching,” 159–67.
37. See the list compiled by M. Teresa Baer in Shipp and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 403–4.
38. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:18, November 1, 1857.
39. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:129–30, December 4, 1856.
40. Davis Bitton, “Mormon Funeral Sermons in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson*, ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 27–50.
41. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:226, March 2, 1856.
42. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:222–23, March 2, 1856. See Ronald W. Walker, “Raining Pitchforks: Brigham Young as Preacher,” *Sunstone* 8 (May/June 1983): 4–9.
43. For information about the Mormon Reformation, see Paul H. Peterson, “Reformation (LDS) of 1856–1857,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3:1197.
44. Gene A. Sessions, *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982).
45. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:99, August 2, 1857. A small anti-Mormon newspaper published the following letter from E. D. in 1859:

You have doubtless read many of the discourses from which you have quoted, and felt somewhat amused at their intrepidity; but if you could only have been present, to behold the orators, writhing under the influence of the most violent emotions; to hear those heated sentences ringing in your ears, with all those embellishments of music which Br. Carrington so wantonly clips out, the effect upon your mind must certainly have been greatly heightened. (E. D. to Kirk Anderson, Esq., in *Kirk Anderson's Valley Tan*, March 1, 1859, 2)

46. Shippo and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 64.
47. Joseph Smith, quoted by George A. Smith in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:23, August 12, 1855.
48. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:179, January 11, 1857.
49. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:179, January 11, 1857.
50. Donald Q. Cannon, "Reverend George Moore Comments on Nauvoo, the Mormons, and Joseph Smith," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 5 (spring 1982): 5–7, quoting George Moore, Diary, 8–9, Harvard University Archives.
51. Remy and Brencchley, *Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City*, 280.
52. Horace Greeley, *Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 186–87, as cited in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 4:524.
53. Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints and across the Rocky Mountains to California* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 287.
54. Burton, *City of the Saints*, 288.
55. Criticism went both ways. Sermons by other Christians were not immune from criticism by Mormons, and mockery of preaching by the illiterate could even be found in Mormon publications. In 1863 the *Deseret News* reprinted a sermon allegedly delivered by a preacher in Mississippi:

My brethering and sistern: I air a ignorant man, follered the plow all my life, and never rubbed agin nary college. As I said afore, I'm ignorant; and I thank God for it. . . . Well, I'm agin all high larnt fellers what preaches grammar and Greek for a thousand dollars a year. They preaches for the money and they gits it, and that's all they'll git. They've got so high larnt they contradicts Scripter what plainly tells us that the sun rises and sets. They say it don't, but that the yearth whirls round like clay to the seal. What ud come of the water in the wells ef it did? Woden't it all spill out and leave 'em dry, and whar'd we be? I may say to them as the serpent said unto David, "Much larn'ing hath made thee mad."

When I preaches, I never takes a tex till I git inter the pulpit; then I preaches a plain sarmint what even women can understand. I never premeditates, but what is given to me in that same hour, that I sez. (Rev. J. M. Aughey, *Iron Furnace*, quoting an "unlettered preacher," reprinted in *Deseret News*, April 29, 1863, 350)

If the Mormon editor saw any discomfiting similarities to preaching he heard in his own meetings, he did not say so.

In 1862 a lengthy discussion of Protestant, especially Anglican, sermons appeared in the *London Spectator*. Critical of the assumption that the clergy had a cachet of superior knowledge or eloquence, the author sought to de-emphasize the sermon. In fact, he said, the sermon should be optional both in the sense that the preacher would deliver one only "when he had something that seemed to him of weight" and in the sense that the parishioner "would only attend when he had reason to expect something worth attention." "Why," asked the author, "are we to listen patiently to all these fanciful *ex cathedra* explanations from men whose reasons for supporting a political candidate for Parliament we should scarcely weigh at all, and whom we might decline to hear upon the ethics of family life?" Apparently seeing no possible application to preaching by Mormons, the *Deseret News* editor reprinted the article and endorsed the criticism

of “modern sectarian preachers.” “Nonsensicalness of Sectarian Sermonizing,” *Deseret News*, September 8, 1862, 75.

56. Archer Butler Hulbert, ed., “Letters of an Overland Mail Agent in Utah,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society at the Annual Meeting Held in Worcester October 17, 1928* (Worcester, Mass.: Davis, 1929), 258–59.

57. W. F. Rae, *Westward by Rail: The New Route to the East* (New York: Appleton, 1871), 123–24. The visit was in 1869.

58. James F. Rusling, *Across America: or The Great West and the Pacific Coast* (New York: Sheldon, 1874), 46. The visit was in 1867.

59. Emily Faithfull, *Three Visits to America* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1884), 172.

60. Ernest J. Moyné, trans. and ed., *Alexandra Gripenberg’s A Half Year in the New World: Miscellaneous Sketches of Travel in the United States (1888)* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1954), 177.

61. Phil Robinson, *Sinners and Saints: A Tour across the States and round Them* (Boston: Roberts Bros., 1883), 158.

62. Robinson, *Sinners and Saints*, 158.

63. Letter to Editor, *Times and Seasons* 2 (April 15, 1841): 383; italics in original.

64. Davis Bitton, “Six Months in the Life of a Mormon Teenager,” *New Era* 7 (May 1977): 46. Even an experienced, effective speaker like George Q. Cannon was willing to submit to instruction. In February 1880, while living in Washington, D.C., he took twenty hours of individual lessons in elocution from a Professor Congden. My research notes underlying my *George Q. Cannon: A Biography*, from George Q. Cannon, Journal, February 6–16, 1880.

65. For examples, see Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:243, March 16, 1856; Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:272, March 23, 1856; Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:21, August 17, 1856; Lorenzo Snow, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:181–82, January 18, 1857; George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:179, July 15, 1883.

66. N. L. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking: A Manual for the Use of Preachers of the Gospel and Public Speakers in General* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1898).

67. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking*, iii–iv.

68. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking*, 19–23.

69. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking*, iv.

70. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking*, iv.

71. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking*, 39.

72. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking*, 435.

73. Nelson, *Preaching and Public Speaking*, 435–36.

74. Shipp and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 140.

75. George Q. Cannon, in *Collected Discourses*, 4:12, January 14, 1894.

76. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:90, June 13, 1852; italics in original.

77. Ezra T. Benson, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:75, May 13, 1855.

78. George Q. Cannon, in *Collected Discourses*, 4:11–12, January 14, 1894.

Joseph as a Type of Christ in Syriac Literature

Kristian S. Heal

Kept among the marvelous manuscript treasures of the British Library is a fifth-century Syriac manuscript containing details of the lectionary readings, or Old and New Testament passages for religious services.¹ Prominently featured among the Old Testament readings prescribed for Easter are the account of the binding of Isaac² and excerpts from the story of Joseph.³ The story of binding Isaac is clearly apposite to the crucifixion. What is not so clear perhaps is the appropriateness of the story of Joseph as an Easter reading. This is in part because Joseph is often viewed in modern times solely as an example of moral fortitude in the face of temptation.⁴ However, the Christological aspect of the Joseph story was also important for early Christians. In fact, in order to understand why the reading of the story of Joseph was appropriate for Easter, one must know that Joseph was seen in early Syriac Christianity first and foremost as a type of Christ.⁵ This article will show the extent of this typological connection in the early writings of the Syriac-speaking Christians and will also show how this typological connection affected one particular retelling of the Joseph narrative.

The interest in the Joseph narrative (in Genesis chapters 37 and 39–50) among Syriac authors should not come as a complete surprise. At least from the time of the Hellenistic period and onward, the narrative has caught the attention of its readers and has been retold and commented upon extensively in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.⁶ Among early Christian writings, numerous Greek and Latin works include references to the story, and a number of homilies and poems are devoted to the theme.⁷ But it is in the writings of the poet-exegetes from the early Syriac tradition that the figure of Joseph is explored most extensively.⁸

The majority of these Syriac retellings of the story of Joseph are classified as dramatic dialogue poems. These are poems that are characterized by the presence of dialogue, often within a narrative framework, and, in some forms, interspersed with homiletic material. The extended cycles of verse homilies (*memrē*) on Joseph stand apart from other examples of dramatic dialogue poetry in that “they alone cover a whole series of episodes, thus taking on the dimensions of an epic narrative.”⁹

In this article, I shall limit my explorations to the writings of Aphrahat (fourth century A.D.) and to the cycle attributed to Narsai (d. A.D. 503). As the table of comparisons (at the end of this article) between the life of Joseph and the life of Jesus shows, however, a much broader tradition stands behind this Christological interpretation of the Joseph story. The table includes references drawn from all the relevant published works in Syriac, as well as texts in Greek and Armenian.

Aphrahat

We shall first examine how the figure of Joseph is used in the writings of Aphrahat,¹⁰ a Syriac-speaking Christian from Persia.¹¹ Though little is known of his life, Aphrahat is one of the most important and gifted writers of the early Syriac tradition, and he is the first known writer in the Syriac tradition to make any specific comparisons between the life of Joseph and the life of Jesus. He is survived only by his collection of twenty-three demonstrations, which he wrote between A.D. 337 and 345, but these reveal much about his ideas and beliefs, particularly with respect to scripture.¹²

Throughout these demonstrations, Aphrahat employs a rhetorical technique that involves producing a sequence of “exemplary figures or events, mainly from the Old Testament,” to illustrate a particular example or point.¹³ Father Robert Murray has made an extensive study of Aphrahat’s use of this rhetorical device and has classified the material as “examples (1) of prayer, (2) of various virtues, (3) of those who were led into sin, (4) of reversals of fortune, [and] (5) of righteous figures who were persecuted.”¹⁴ Joseph features prominently in Aphrahat’s lists, particularly in those of categories two, four, and five. Other examples of Aphrahat’s use of the figure of Joseph fall outside of Murray’s classification system. Joseph is numbered among those whose purity was a perfect fast before God (A. 101:7–8); those whom Satan attacked by means of women (A. 256:26–257:2); those who were justified though they did not keep the Sabbath (A. 557:20–27); those who, though one, were esteemed more than the many by God (A. 824:17–19); and those through whom the Spirit spoke (A. 984:11–12).

A further development in the hermeneutical functions attributed to Joseph is found in a “complex syncrisis, or ‘Comparison-series’”—a development of the simpler list sequence that Murray refers to as “Aphrahat’s favorite party piece.”¹⁵ Syncrisis is a rhetorical figure in which one thing is compared with another; it is used of the “figure which consists of a repeated Simile, . . . or of a number of separate comparisons used together.”¹⁶ Syncrisis is often used in the Old Testament—for example, in Isaiah 32:2, where the prophet says, “And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

In demonstration 21, Aphrahat lists biblical characters who were persecuted, contrasting their fates with those of their persecutors: “Jacob was persecuted, and Esau was the persecutor. Jacob received blessings and the right of the first born, but Esau was rejected from both of them. Joseph was persecuted and his brothers were the persecutors. Joseph was exalted and his persecutors bowed down before him and his dreams and visions were accomplished” (A. 953:3–8). At this point, however, Aphrahat’s sequence transforms into a comparison series by means of a single connecting line: “The persecuted Joseph is a type of the persecuted Jesus” (A. 953:8–9). Aphrahat then provides a list of eighteen examples of how the life and figure of Joseph can be compared with those of Jesus:

Joseph’s father clothed him [with] the long sleeved coat, and the Father of Jesus clothed him [with] a body from the virgin. Joseph’s father loved him more than his brothers, and Jesus was the friend and beloved of his Father. Joseph saw visions and dreamed dreams, and Jesus fulfilled visions and the prophets. Joseph was a shepherd with his brothers, and Jesus was the chief of the shepherds. When Joseph’s father sent him to visit his brothers, they saw him coming and planned to kill him; and, when his Father sent Jesus to visit his brothers, they said “this is the heir; come, let us kill him” (Matt. 21:38).¹⁷ Joseph’s brothers cast him into the pit; and the brothers of Jesus sent him down in the grave. Joseph came up from the pit, and Jesus arose from the grave. After Joseph came up from the pit he ruled over his brothers; and after Jesus arose from the grave his Father gave him an excellent and great name so that his brothers were subject to him, and his enemies were laid beneath his feet. When Joseph saw his brothers, they were ashamed and afraid and marveled at his majesty; and when Jesus comes in the latter time, when he is revealed in his majesty, his brothers will be ashamed and afraid and greatly alarmed, for they crucified him aforetime. Now, Joseph was sold into Egypt at the advice of Judah; and Jesus was delivered to the Jews by Judas Iscariot. When they sold Joseph, he did not speak [literally, “give”] a word to his brothers; and Jesus did not speak and give a word to the judges who judged him. Joseph’s master delivered him unjustly to prison; and Jesus, the sons of his people condemned him unjustly. Twice Joseph gave up his

garments, once by means of his brothers and once by the hand of his master's wife; and Jesus yielded up his garments and the soldiers divided them among themselves. Joseph, as a thirty year old, stood before Pharaoh and became a lord to Egypt; and Jesus, as a thirty year old, came to the Jordan to be baptized and he received the spirit and went out to preach. Joseph provided food for the Egyptians with bread; and Jesus provided for the whole world with the bread of life. Joseph took the daughter of a wicked and foul priest; and Jesus took to himself the church from the unclean nations. Joseph died and was buried in Egypt, and Jesus died and was buried in Jerusalem. Joseph's brothers took up his bones from Egypt; and Jesus, his Father raised him up from the grave/sheol and took his body with him to heaven without corruption. (A. 953:9–957:10)

Joseph is not the only biblical character whose life Aphrahat sees as typifying that of the Lord. In fact, the section beginning with the comparison of Joseph and Jesus is something of a tour de force in which Aphrahat makes comparisons between the life of the Lord and the life of Moses (fifteen comparisons), Joshua (nine comparisons), Jephtha (four comparisons), David (twelve comparisons), Elijah (eight comparisons), Elisha (eight comparisons), Hezekiah (eleven comparisons), Josiah (eight comparisons), Daniel (eighteen comparisons), the Three Young Men (eight comparisons), and Mordecai (eleven comparisons).

Narsai

Narsai,¹⁸ “the most profound and original theologian of the great Church of the East,”¹⁹ was the head of the School of Edessa and then founder of the theological School of Nisibis. He is reputed to have written a verse-homily for every day of the year, though only eighty-one of these are known to have survived. Two works on Joseph have come down to us under his name. The first is a single verse-homily on Joseph, which can be attributed to Narsai with certainty.²⁰ The second, which is the focus of this study, is a cycle of four verse-homilies on Joseph.²¹ This latter work is attributed to Narsai in four of the eight manuscripts in which it is preserved.²² However, doubts have been raised both as to Narsai's authorship and as to the unity of the collection, and one must be satisfied with considering this an anonymous early work.

In the second homily in this latter collection, the author makes it most clear that he sees Christological typology as the central hermeneutical function of the biblical story of Joseph. “This wondrous story,” he states, is full of “symbols and types of the son of God” (N. 42:1–2).²³ The author later informs us that in telling the story of Joseph, he is, in fact, also telling the story of Jesus: “The story of Joseph will go on now, as well as that of the

Messiah, And we will see how much the story of this one [Joseph] is like [the story of] that one [Jesus]" (N. 43:19–20).

Retelling the Joseph story in terms of Christological typology is presented not only as an appropriate interpretation of the biblical narrative but also as a necessary one. For in making this particular aspect central, the author succeeds in making Christ central to the narrative and thereby, in his eyes, ensuring that his work is of some lasting value to its listeners. As the author puts it, "The power of the word of the *memrā* [homily] is great in the presence of the listeners When [perhaps with the meaning of 'only when'] it is spoken with the voice of the spirit of prophecy. But every *memrā* in which the messiah the king is not mentioned Is rejected as foul and is not received by the listeners" (N. 43:1–4). The author, therefore, calls the discerning to "give heed to this . . . story" and appreciate its abundance of Christological types (N. 42:1–2). Only then is one able to drink from the cup of Joseph and become full and gladly intoxicated, for "the blood of the messiah is mingled in the vessel of the son of Israel" (N. 42:12–15).

This last line is doubly significant for the author. First, the line refers to the Lord "put[ting] his testimony in Joseph" (N. 41:19), an allusion to Psalms 81:5, signifying that the Lord ordained Joseph to act as a type of him (N. 44:18–19). Second, in a more general sense, the Lord was in Israel. As the author states earlier, "The leaven of life was hidden in the Israelite people Until the time that the light [of the world] shone forth from them" (N. 40:7–8). Joseph's role in the preservation of Israel was essential, therefore, not only to ensure that the house of Israel might abound numerically but also to protect the lineage of the Messiah. These two results are linked to the promise made to Abraham that his seed would multiply and that all the nations would be blessed through him and his seed (N. 39:11). So it was for the purpose of fulfilling both clauses of the Abrahamic promise that "the Lord sent him [as] a remnant before the sons of Jacob That he might give them life, so that they would not also perish in the time of famine" (N. 38:4–5).

The metaphorical presence of Christ in Israel is employed later in the second homily, when the brothers are about to return to Joseph with Benjamin. In the biblical narrative, Judah offers some assurance to his father by saying that he will "be surety for [Benjamin]" (Gen. 43:9). The scene is considerably expanded in this Syriac retelling. Here, Jacob actually demands a surety for Benjamin, feeling confident that unless this is done, the propensities of his children will result in his eventually having to mourn for both sons of Rachel (N. 45:10–11).

Reuben steps up first and offers his two sons as surety. Reuben's pledge, however, is not received because Jacob "will not receive the son who

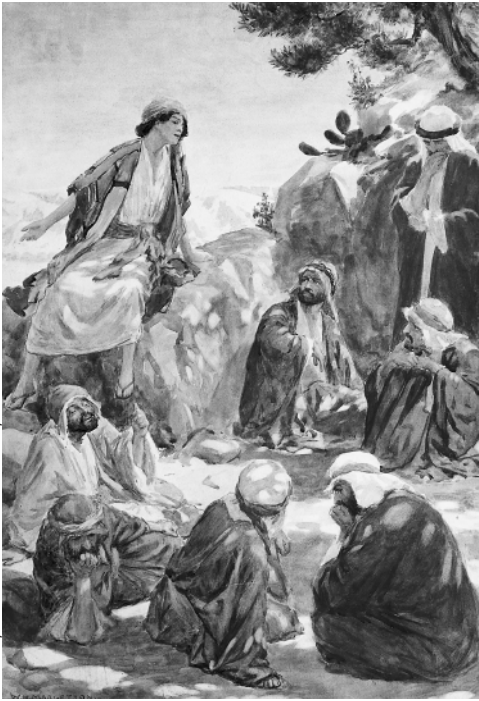


FIG. 1. *Joseph Tells His Brothers about His Dreams.* William Henry Margetson, 1891–1940. Watercolor, pencil on paper.

despised the bed of his father” (N. 61:8). Seeing Reuben’s failure, Levi offers to pledge his own son for the sake of Benjamin, to which Jacob responds by saying, “the sin and iniquity that you have committed are more displeasing than that of your brother” (N. 61:13). Jacob is concerned because of Levi’s angry temperament (N. 61:14) that had caused him to take revenge upon the Shechemites (Gen. 34:25–40) and because he thought that Levi would simply exchange Benjamin for Simeon in order to save his companion in vengeance: “And perhaps, instead of [Simeon] you will deliver [Benjamin] that your brother [Simeon] may be saved” (N. 61:17).

Seeing the failure of his brothers to offer an acceptable pledge to their father because of their past misdeeds, Judah, who also wants to offer himself as a pledge, is understandably reticent, due to his conduct in Genesis 38. Nevertheless, he does offer himself as a pledge, and his pledge is accepted. Jacob is willing to overlook Judah’s misdeeds and to entrust Benjamin to him because “God Almighty has entrusted you with the son and from you he shall shine forth” (N. 62:15). Jacob is delivering Benjamin not so much to Judah as to the “Treasury of Life who is kept within [his] limbs” (N. 62:20). In this instance, it is Judah who functions as a type of Christ.

The author of these homilies was not content simply to point out that the story of Joseph is full of “symbols and types of the son of God” (N. 42:1–2); like Aphrahat, he offers us his own list of examples in the form of a comparison series.²⁴ Before giving the comparison series, the author tells of the great famine in the land of Canaan and how necessity had called the brothers, the eleven stars, to go down to Egypt. “They went down to the

land of Egypt and worshipped the dreamer of dreams" (N. 43:9). This, the author points out, is "a great symbol of the Son of God" because it is exactly what will "happen to all the crucifiers on the day of resurrection" (N. 43:10, 12).

The author is so overwhelmed with the Christological typology that he is not "permitted to go along the path quickly" (N. 43:16) but must rather demonstrate how much the story of Joseph (fig. 1) is like that of Jesus:

Joseph dreamed dreams of his brothers but they did not believe it. And as much as he dreamed, the treacherous brothers hated him much [more]. Our Lord spoke with the crucifiers in parables, And the more he spoke the more they envied him. Joseph interpreted for the Egyptians and they believed, As also the gentiles believed in our Lord and his parables. Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in the inner chamber, And the Lord of Joseph revealed [himself] to his disciples in the upper room. His mistress confined Joseph the just in prison, And Zion confined our savior in the tomb. Joseph went out from prison and took off his outer garments, While our Lord went out from the tomb and put on glory. Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh just as they were, And he sat upon the throne and was a king of the whole of Egypt. And our Lord revealed and made himself known to his disciples And ascended and sat on the right hand of the Father, who sent him. Joseph purchased the whole of Egypt with ordinary bread, And the Lord of Joseph [purchased] the whole of creation with His body and His blood. (N. 43:21–44:17)

The comparison sequence is not intended to be exhaustive—hence the author's admonition to the discerning to give heed to the story (N. 42:1). Furthermore, the author makes a number of other links to the life of Christ during the course of the narrative, often by means of adding specific rhetorical connections to the New Testament. These links divide into two groups: those in which there is an explicit typological reference made and those in which the typological connection appears to be intended, though it is left implicit in the narrative. I have approached the identification of the latter group in two steps. First, by means of the explicit typological references, it is possible to build up a picture of the events in the life of Joseph that are construed as corresponding to events in the life of Jesus. From this it can be seen that, with few exceptions, all of the explicit typological links are made either to the trial and death or to the resurrection and future coming of the Lord. Second, I have examined the portions of the narrative in which typological links are likely to occur to see whether any specific rhetorical links have been added at that point to the New Testament text.

The trial and death of the Lord is linked typologically with two events in the life of Joseph. Aphrahat suggests this connection in two entries in his comparison sequence. First, "After Joseph came up from the pit, he ruled

over his brothers; and after Jesus arose from the grave, his Father gave him a grand title so that his brothers were subject to Him” (A. 956:3–4). Here Aphrahat makes Joseph’s pit and Christ’s prison typologically synonymous and moves quickly on to the next important typological link, that of Joseph being exalted in Egypt and the Second Coming of the Lord. Second, Aphrahat connects the stripping of Joseph’s garments at the hands of his brothers and at the hands of Potiphar’s wife with the single instance of Jesus yielding up his garments to the soldiers (A. 956:19–22).

Narsai follows Aphrahat’s interpretive model, also providing two instances in which Joseph is stripped of his garments,²⁵ two people who petition for the life of Joseph,²⁶ and two individuals who are instrumental in bringing about Joseph’s demise.²⁷ Of these six links, however, only one is explicitly made in Narsai.

The one explicit link is in an exegetical comment on Reuben’s suggestion to throw Joseph into the pit:

Reuben did not say [this] out of wickedness, But he said this out of lovingkindness for the sake of [saving Joseph’s] life. [He] did not speak this word of himself, Lovingkindness placed the word in his mouth and thus he spoke. Something else was in the heart/mind of Reuben but this in his mouth, Because he [really] wanted to deliver [Joseph] and send him back to his parent. How much Reuben struggled here for the sake of Joseph, like Pilate who struggled for the sake of Jesus. (N. 8:13–20)

In the corresponding instance, Potiphar is struggling for Joseph’s freedom against the word of his wife. In the biblical narrative, Potiphar’s wrath is immediately kindled upon hearing the accusation made by his wife, and he throws Joseph into prison (Gen. 39:19–20). Narsai recasts this account so that Potiphar replies to the accusation made by his wife: “If you are pure, why does the garment of the slave remain with you? If Joseph audaciously came to lie with you, He would have taken your garment and not you his. Behold, your lack [of intelligence] is revealed together with your transgression” (N. 24:1–4).

The ingenious Potiphar proceeds, like Sherlock Holmes, by suggesting that both Joseph and his wife should stand before him and then he would be able to see from their faces which one was the guilty party. For obvious reasons, Potiphar’s wife calls this plan madness and insists that Joseph be cast into jail. Her argument is subtle, the convincing line being “that I may never again chance to see him before me in this house” (N. 24:13).²⁸ Potiphar replies, “I will hearken to you . . . And I will send him to prison according to your will” (N. 24:14–15). The link between Potiphar and Pilate is suggested further by the connection Narsai makes in his comparison series between Potiphar’s wife and the Jews who brought about the death of

Jesus: "His mistress confined Joseph the just in prison, And Zion confined our savior in the tomb" (N. 44:8–9).

Potiphar's wife also seems to be the subject of a different typological link made during the course of narrating her attempt to seduce Joseph. In the biblical narrative, the only reported speech we have from Potiphar's wife is "Lie with me" (Gen. 39:12). In Narsai we are presented with a fuller account of her persuasive ways:

Hear me Joseph, because I love you and accept my advice And carry out my desire and let not your heart quake because of Potiphar. For I can kill him quickly with poison. Now, instead of a servant, be a King and Lord of the house. Lie with me Joseph and carry out my will and don't be afraid, And be mine and I and whatsoever belongs to me is yours. (N. 18:19–19:3)

The offer of kingship and dominion as part of the temptation suggests a corresponding episode in the New Testament: "Again, the devil taketh him up into a high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:8–9). The following line, included in an authorial comment praising Joseph's resisting of temptation, adds validity to the linking of these two episodes: "The Chief of the Air [that is, Satan] hid a snare for you by the agency of Eve" (N. 21:3). It is not surprising that the author, writing for a monastic community steeped in a misogynistic tradition, would equate Potiphar's wife—and also, by implication, women generally—with the adversary. One is mindful of the list composed by Aphrahat in which he recounts the instances in which the devil has tempted men by means of women (A. 256:25–260:12).²⁹

The same comparative approach continues after Joseph is made regent. Whereas in the biblical narrative, Potiphar and his wife are no more heard of, in the Narsai retelling, an extended account is given of the reaction of Potiphar and his wife to the news of Joseph's newly exalted position. Potiphar is racked with guilt and fear, thinking, "Perhaps [Joseph] will remember that which I did to him and will do away with my life." However, Joseph forgives him, saying, "For that folly of the prison was not your fault" (N. 33:12, 16). Potiphar's wife is understandably even more concerned; she fears for her life and "storms gather . . . in her eyes" (N. 34:21). She confesses her sin to her husband and dictates to her scribe a petition begging forgiveness, which she delivers to Joseph. After reading the petition, Joseph "dismissed her in peace, and her mind was at rest" (N. 37:5). By inserting this account, the author creates a neat chiasmic pattern of events:

Joseph departs from his father.

The brothers throw Joseph into the pit and sell him to Egypt.

At the hand of Potiphar and his wife Joseph is cast into prison.

Joseph is exalted in Egypt.

Joseph meets Potiphar and his wife and forgives them.

The brothers come to Egypt and are reunited with Joseph, who forgives them.

Joseph is reunited with his father.

At the center of this pattern of events is Joseph being exalted in Egypt, linked both implicitly and explicitly with the glorious return of the Lord (N. 43:9–16; 44:6–7; A. 956:1–11).

The author of this retelling of the Joseph narrative has succeeded in his aim of putting Christ at the heart of the homilies. Drawing and building upon Aphrahat's typological framework, the author has included direct and indirect typological references and augmented the narrative to bring out this hermeneutical function of Joseph more fully. Though not the most poetically beautiful of the cycles on Joseph,³⁰ this collection certainly excels in its creative use of typology and narrative expansion.

Numerous hints have been made in this article to the centrality of typology in Syriac literature, particularly of the early period. For early Syriac writers such as Aphrahat and his younger contemporary Ephrem, typology was a central mode of expression. God revealed his mysteries through the types and symbols found in scripture and nature, and their apparent abundance led Ephrem to exclaim, "Lord, Your symbols are everywhere."³¹ In this and other respects, early Syriac Christianity demonstrates its affinity with its Jewish heritage. In both literatures, we find the use of "testimonia, typology, periphrastic quotation, [and] haggadic expansion,"³² and in many instances there is a clear relationship between the Syriac and the Jewish traditions.³³ We find, then, in the literature of this early period of Syriac Christianity one of the few examples of a "genuinely Semitic-Christian literature."³⁴ For this and numerous other reasons, Syriac literature is a great storehouse of treasures that are worthy of pursuit.

In the following table, A. stands for Aphrahat, as quoted in Ioannes Parisot, ed., *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes*; A. C. is from Edward G. Mathews, *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian*;³⁵ N. refers to Paul Bedjan, ed., *Homilae Mar Narsetis in Joseph*; and E. is from Stephanus Evodius Assemani, *Sancti patris nostri Ephraem Syri opera omnia*.³⁶ Except for the passages from Mathews and Assemani, the translations in the table are the author's own. In some cases, Mathews and Assemani have been quoted and in others paraphrased.

TABLE 1

Syriac Comparisons of Joseph and Jesus

Reference	Life of Joseph	Life of Jesus
A. 21:9	Joseph was a shepherd with his brothers (cf. Gen. 37:2).	Jesus was the chief of the shepherds.
A. 21:9	His father clothed Joseph with the long-sleeved coat (cf. Gen. 37:3).	His Father clothed Jesus with a body from the virgin.
A. 21:9	Joseph's father loved him more than his brothers (cf. Gen. 37:3).	Jesus was the Friend and Beloved of his Father.
A. C. 143:18–20; 143:20–21	Before Joseph came to the land of the Egyptians, he was with his father in splendor and honor (cf. Gen. 37:2–4).	Our Lord, before he came to this earth, was with the One who sent him in glory and praise.
A. 21:9	Joseph saw visions and dreamed dreams (cf. Gen. 37:5, 9).	Jesus fulfilled the visions and words of the prophets.
N. 43:21–44:1; 44:2–3	Joseph dreamed dreams of his brothers, but they did not believe it; rather, they hated him (cf. Gen. 37:5–11).	Our Lord spoke with the crucifiers in parables, and the more he spoke, the more they envied him.
E. 31–32; 33–34	The youth Joseph from Jacob's bosom was sent to inquire about his own brothers (cf. Gen. 37:13–14).	The Lord was sent to us from the Father's bosom to save us all.
A. 21:9	When Joseph's father sent him to visit his brothers, they saw him coming and planned to kill him (cf. Gen. 37:18).	When his Father sent Jesus to visit his brothers, they said, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him" (cf. Matt. 21:38).
A. C. 143:8–11; 143:11–13	When the brothers of Joseph saw him, they said, "Behold, here is the dreamer coming toward us; come, let us kill him, and let us see whether his	And when the husbandmen saw our Lord, they said, "This is the heir to the vineyard. Come, let us kill him, and henceforth the inheritance

Reference	Life of Joseph	Life of Jesus
	dreams come of anything” (cf. Gen. 37:18–20).	will be ours” (cf. Mark 12:7; Luke 20:14).
E. 35–39; 39–42	Joseph’s harsh brothers, as soon as they saw him approaching, began to devise evil against him, though he was bringing them peace from their father (cf. Gen. 37:18).	The Jews also, ever hard of heart, as soon as they saw the Savior, said, “This is the heir, let us kill him, and all will be ours.”
N. 8:11–19; 8:20	Reuben petitioned for the life of Joseph (cf. Gen. 37:22).	Pilate petitioned for the life of Jesus (cf. Matt. 27:2–26, 58–66; Mark 15:1–15, 42–47; Luke 23:1–25, 50–53; John 18:28–19:22, 31, 38).
E. 43–45; 46–47	Joseph’s brothers said, “Let us do away with him, and let us be set free of his dreams” (cf. Gen. 37:20).	The Jews said, “Come, let us kill him and lay hold on his inheritance.”
A. C. 143:13–14; 143:14–16	Joseph fell into two pits: into one because of his dreams and into the other for the sake of victory over desire.	Our Lord was enclosed in two pits: in the flesh because of his mercy and in Hades for the sake of his victory over death.
A. 21:9	Joseph’s brothers cast him into the pit (cf. Gen. 37:24).	The brothers of Jesus sent him down into the grave.
A. 21:9	Joseph came up from the pit (cf. Gen. 37:28).	Jesus arose from the grave.
A. C. 143:6–7; 143:7–8	Joseph rose from the pit to rule the kingdom and from disgrace to glorious honor.	Our Lord rose from the cross into the heavens, and from Hades into the throne of glory.
A. 21:9	After Joseph came up from the pit, he ruled over his brothers.	After Jesus arose from the grave, his Father gave him an excellent and great name so that his brothers were subject to him and his enemies were laid beneath his feet.

Reference	Life of Joseph	Life of Jesus
A. 21:9	Joseph was sold into Egypt at the advice of Judah (cf. Gen. 37:26–27).	Jesus was delivered to the Jews by Judas Iscariot.
E. 48–49; 50–51	Joseph's brothers, while eating, sold him, slaying him in intent (cf. Gen. 37:25–27).	In the same way, the "abominable" Jews, while eating the Passover, slew the Savior.
A. 21:9	When they sold Joseph, he did not speak or give a word (cf. Gen. 37:28).	Jesus did not speak or give a word to the judges who judged him (cf. Acts 8:32–35).
A. C. 144:11; 143:12–13	The kid was slain, and Joseph lived (cf. Gen. 37:31).	Our Lord gave his flesh to the cross for the salvation of his Church.
A. C. 144:13–14; 144:14–15	Joseph's cloak was soaked with blood, but his flesh was not harmed at all (cf. Gen. 37:32).	They seized the flesh of our Lord, but not his divinity.
E. 52; 53	Joseph descended into Egypt.	Our Savior descended to Earth.
A. C. 143:26–27; 143:27–28	Joseph entered the land of the Egyptians, and his mistress desired him (cf. Gen. 39:7).	Our Lord entered into the tomb, and Hades desired him.
A. C. 143:28; 143:29	His mistress hastened to corrupt Joseph (cf. Gen. 39:7).	Hades hastened to corrupt our Lord.
E. 54–57; 58–61	Joseph, within the marriage chamber, trampled down all the strength of sin, putting on the bright prizes of victory against the Egyptian woman, his mistress (cf. Gen. 39:11–12).	The Lord, the Savior of our souls, descended into hell, destroying there all the power of the dread and near invincible tyrant.
A. C. 143:29–30; 143:30–31	The woman was unable to overcome the strength of Joseph (cf. Gen. 39:11–12).	Hades was unable to overcome the strength of our Lord.
A. C. 143:31–32; 143:32–144:1	Joseph's mistress grabbed his clothes, but Joseph escaped (cf. Gen. 39:11–12).	Hades grabbed the garment of our Lord, but his flesh ascended and rose up.

Reference	Life of Joseph	Life of Jesus
A. 21:9	Twice Joseph gave up his garments, once by the hands of his brothers and once by the hand of his master's wife (cf. Gen. 39:11–12).	Jesus yielded up his garments, and the soldiers divided them among themselves.
N. 44:8; 44:9	His mistress confined Joseph the just in prison (cf. Gen. 39:16–20).	Zion confined our Savior in the tomb.
A. 21:9	Joseph's master delivered him unjustly to prison (cf. Gen. 39:20).	The sons of his people condemned him unjustly.
E. 62–63; 64–65	When Joseph had conquered sin, he was put in prison until the hour of his crowning (cf. Gen. 39:20).	So, too, the Lord, that he might take away every sin of the world, was placed in a grave.
A. C. 143:23–25; 143:25–26	Joseph stood in shame in prison like an evildoer although he was clothed with every meekness and chastity (cf. Gen. 39:20).	Our Lord came to the cross like a sinner although he had overcome the world.
A. C. 144:2–3; 144:3–4	Joseph entered into prison and comforted those who were captive (cf. Gen. 39:20–23).	Our Lord entered into Hades and comforted the dead.
E. 66–67; 68–69	Joseph in prison spent two whole years in great freedom (cf. Gen. 41:1).	The Lord, as powerful, remained in the tomb for three days, not undergoing corruption.
A. C. 144:4–6; 144:7–9	Joseph interpreted the dreams for the servants of Pharaoh—the first one he enabled to return to his job as chief butler, while the other, Pharaoh hanged on a cross (cf. Gen. 40:1–23).	Our Lord led one thief into the garden of delights because of his faith, while upon the other he set a decree of punishment because of his doubt.
N. 44:10; 44:11	Joseph went out from prison and took off his outer garments (cf. Gen. 41:14).	Our Lord went out from the tomb and put on glory.

Reference	Life of Joseph	Life of Jesus
A. C. 144:15–16; 144:17–18	Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh (cf. Gen. 41:46).	Our Lord was thirty years old when he was baptized in the Jordan River.
A. 21:9	Joseph, as a thirty-year-old, stood before Pharaoh and became a lord of Egypt (cf. Gen. 41:46).	Jesus, as a thirty-year-old, came to the Jordan to be baptized, and he received the Spirit and went out to preach.
E. 70–73; 74–77	Joseph, on Pharaoh's order, was brought out graciously from prison, as a true type, when he easily interpreted the meaning of the dreams indicating the abundance of grain that was going to be (cf. Gen. 41:14–37).	Our Lord, Jesus Christ, was raised from the dead by his own power, despoiling hell, offering to the Father our liberation, proclaiming resurrection and everlasting life.
N. 44:4; 44:5	Joseph interpreted for the Egyptians, and they believed (cf. Gen. 41:14–37).	The Gentiles believed in our Lord and his parables.
N. 44:12–13; 44:14–15	Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams just as they were, and he sat upon the throne and was a king of the whole of Egypt (cf. Gen. 41:14–43).	Our Lord revealed and made himself known to his disciples and ascended and sat on the right hand of the Father, who sent him.
E. 78–79; 80–83	Joseph took his seat in Pharaoh's chariot, having received authority over the whole of Egypt (cf. Gen. 41:43).	Our Savior, king before the ages, ascending into heaven on a cloud of light, took his seat with glory at the Father's right hand, above the cherubim, as the Only Begotten Son.
A. 21:9	Joseph took the daughter of a wicked and foul priest to wife (cf. Gen. 41:45).	Jesus took to himself the church from the unclean nations.
A. C. 143:16–17; 143:17–18	Joseph, instead of his licentious mistress, took Asenath as his wife (cf. Gen. 41:45).	Our Lord, instead of that first murderous congregation, chose for himself the holy Church.

Reference	Life of Joseph	Life of Jesus
A. 21:9	Joseph provided food for the Egyptians with bread (cf. Gen. 41:55–56).	Jesus provided for the whole world with the bread of life.
N. 44:16; 44:17	Joseph purchased the whole of Egypt with ordinary bread (cf. Gen. 41:56).	The Lord of Joseph purchased the whole of creation with his body and his blood.
A. 21:9	When Joseph saw his brothers, they were ashamed and afraid and marveled in his majesty (cf. Gen. 45:3).	When Jesus comes in the latter time, when he is revealed in his majesty, his brothers will be ashamed and afraid and greatly alarmed, for they crucified him aforetime.
A. C. 144:1; 144:2	Joseph fed those who were captive (cf. Gen. 43:31–34).	Our Lord was a light-giver to the dead in Hades.
A. C. 144:9–10; 144:10–11	Joseph judged his judges and cast into prison those who had put him to shame in the pit (cf. Gen. 42:24).	Our Lord is the judge of those who crucified him.
E. 84–100; 101–110	When ruling over Egypt, Joseph received authority against his enemies, and his brothers were brought willingly before the tribunal of the one who had died through them; they were brought to prostrate themselves with fear and trembling before the one who had been sold by them to death, and with fear they prostrated themselves before Joseph, whom they had not wanted to be king over them. But Joseph, recognizing his brothers, revealed them as murderers by a single word. They, when they realized, stood dumbfounded in great shame, not daring to utter,	So, too, on that fearful day when the Lord comes on the clouds of the air, he will take his seat on the throne of his kingdom, and all his enemies will be brought, bound by fearsome angels, before the judgment seat—all those who did not want him to rule over them. For the lawless Jews thought then that if he were crucified he would die as a human, the wretches not being persuaded that God had come, for salvation, to save our souls.

Reference	Life of Joseph	Life of Jesus
	not having anything at all to say in their defence, knowing exactly their own sin at the moment when they sold him, while he, who seemed to have been destroyed by them in Hades, was suddenly found to be ruling over them.	
N. 43:11; 43:12	And they knelt down upon their faces and worshipped before the son of Rachel (cf. Gen. 42:6).	The crucifiers will kneel before our Lord on the day of resurrection.
E. 111–114; 115–118	Joseph said quite openly to his brothers, making them fear and tremble, “I am Joseph, whom you sold [into slavery], but now I rule over you, though you did not want it.”	The Lord showed the cross in an image formed of light to those who crucified him, and they recognized the cross itself and the Son of God, who was crucified by them.
N. 44:6; 44:7	Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in the inner chamber (cf. Gen. 45:1).	The Lord of Joseph revealed himself to his disciples in the upper room.
A. C. 144:18; 144:19–21	The brothers recognized Joseph on the second occasion.	At the Second Coming of our Lord will the congregation recognize and know that he is the Christ.
A. 21:9	Joseph died and was buried in Egypt (cf. Gen. 50:26).	Jesus died and was buried in Jerusalem.
A. 21:9	Joseph’s brothers took his bones up from Egypt (cf. Ex. 13:19).	The Father raised Jesus up from the grave/sheol and took his body with him to heaven without corruption.

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1. The manuscript (B.M. Add. 14528) is discussed in F. Crawford Burkitt, “The Early Syriac Lectionary System,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1921–1923): 301–39. On the lectionary more generally, see R. H. Fuller, “Lectionary,” in *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. J. G. Davies (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 211–12.

2. Gen. 22:1–19 (Good Friday or the Eve of Easter). On this text in the Syriac tradition, see Sebastian Brock, “Gen. 22 in Syriac Tradition,” in *Mélanges Dominique Barthélemy: Études bibliques offertes à l’occasion de son 60e anniversaire*, eds. Pierre Casetti, Othmar Keel, and Adrian Schenker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981), 2–30.

3. Gen. 37 (Thursday before Good Friday); Gen. 40 (Good Friday—optional); Gen. 42:3–43:14 (Holy Saturday—optional); Gen. 40 (Holy Saturday—optional); Gen. 43:15–45:13 (Easter Sunday—optional).

4. For recent examples by Latter-day Saint writers, see Arthur R. Bassett, “Joseph, Model of Excellence,” *Ensign* (September 1980): 9–13; Mark E. Petersen, *Joseph of Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985); George Horton, “Joseph: A Legacy of Greatness,” in *Genesis to 2 Samuel: Studies in Scripture*, vol. 3, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 63–92 (includes a table of comparisons between Joseph and Jesus). A forthcoming volume by Brian Hauglid, Kristian Heal, and Stephen Ricks will examine the figure of Joseph in Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Latter-day Saint tradition.

5. See, in particular, A. W. Argyle, “Joseph the Patriarch in Patristic Teaching,” *Expository Times* 67 (1956): 199–201; Martine Dulaey (Amiens), “Joseph le patriarche, figure du Christ,” in *Figures de l’Ancien Testament chez les Pères*, Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 2, ed. Pierre Maraval (Strasbourg: Centre d’analyse et de documentation patristiques, 1989), 83–105. The Syriac material was not taken into account in either of these articles.

6. For a useful summary of the impact of the Joseph story in later biblical writings, see James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 13–27. For Joseph in Philo, Josephus, and Targumic literature, see Maren Niehoff, *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, vol. 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1992). For Joseph in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, see Harm W. Hollander, *Joseph as an Ethical Model in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha, vol. 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981); H. W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary*, Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha, vol. 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1985); and George W. E. Nickelsburg Jr., *Studies on the Testament of Joseph*, Septuagint and Cognate Studies, no. 5 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975). For a general survey of oriental texts (Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Turkish) on Joseph, see Eberhard Hilscher, “Der biblische Joseph in orientalischen Literaturwerken,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientalforschung* 4 (1956): 81–108. For an illuminating study of the development of some aspects of the Joseph story in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic tradition, see Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House*.

7. For references see Argyle, “Joseph the Patriarch”; and “Joseph (Le Patriarche),” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique Doctrine et Histoire* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974), 8:1276–1289.

8. For a survey of Syriac retellings of the Joseph narrative, see Hilscher, "Der biblische Joseph in orientalischen Literaturwerken," 81–108. The most important study to date on the Joseph narrative in Syriac literature is Heinrich Näf, *Syrische Josef-Gedichte: Mit Übersetzung des Gedichts von Narsai und Proben aus Balai und Jaqob von Sarug* (Zürich: Schwarzenbach, 1923).

9. Sebastian P. Brock, "Dramatic Dialogue Poems," in *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, ed. H. J. W. Drijvers and others (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), 140.

10. References to the writings of Aphrahat, indicated by A. and included in parentheses, are to column and line number of Ioannes Parisot, ed., *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes*, Patrologia Syriaca, 2 vols. (Paris: Didot, 1894, 1907). English translation by Kristian S. Heal.

11. For an introduction to Aphrahat, see Marie-Joseph Pierre, *Aphraate le sage persan: Les exposés*, Sources chrétiennes, no. 349 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988), 33–199.

12. For further details, see Tjitze Baarda, *The Gospel Quotations of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage: Aphrahat's Text of the Fourth Gospel*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1975); Robert J. Owens, *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*, Monographs of the Peshitta Institute, no. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1983); Kuriakose A. Valavanolickal, *The Use of the Gospel Parables in the Writings of Aphrahat and Ephrem*, Studies in the Religion and History of Early Christianity, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1996).

13. Robert Murray, "Some Rhetorical Patterns in Early Syriac Literature," in *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus*, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology, 1977): 109. The same technique is used in Hebrews 11, where the author gives examples of faith.

14. Murray, "Rhetorical Patterns in Early Syriac Literature," 111.

15. Murray, "Rhetorical Patterns in Early Syriac Literature," 110.

16. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1968), 734.

17. On the use of the parable of the wicked tenants in Aphrahat and Ephrem, see Valavanolickal, *Use of the Gospel Parables*, 133–48.

18. References to the cycle on Joseph attributed to Narsai, indicated by N. and included in parentheses, are to page and line number of Paul Bedjan, ed., *Homiliae Mar Narsetis in Joseph* (Paris: Harrassowitz, 1901). For information on the life and work of Narsai, see S. Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Louvain: Peeters, 1981), 426:60–72; and Arthur Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1965), 266:57–121. For details of published and unpublished works, see S. P. Brock, "The Published Verse Homilies of Isaac of Antioch, Jacob of Serugh, and Narsai: Index of Incipits," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 32 (1987): 279–313; and William F. Macomber, "The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 39 (1973): 275–306.

19. Macomber, "Manuscripts," 275.

20. Homily 41 on Joseph, in Alphonse Mingana, ed., *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 2 vols. (Mausilii, 1905), 2:265–88. The homily does contain some Christological typology, but it is Jacob, not Joseph, who is seen as a type of Christ (lines 97–106):

The love [shown] towards Joseph by his parent is like that [love] which Christ [showed] towards John [who] loves his Lord. Spiritually speaking, our

Lord also begat 12 [sons], and one of them he honored with his love more than his companions. In the manner of Jacob, who begat the tribes in the number of the months, in that same manner, our Lord chose the disciples for the instruction of man. He ordered them according to the number of the sons of Jacob so that the symbol of the nation [the Jews] would resemble the salvation of the nations [the Gentiles]. In the likeness of our savior, Jacob begat twelve tribes and [thereby] depicted a likeness of the [group of] twelve Christ chose.

21. The cycle extends to approximately 2200 lines and is comprised of four *memrē*. The first, second and fourth *memrē* are written in 12+12 syllable couplets, while the third *memrā* is written in 7+7 syllable couplets. The content of the four *memrē* may be summarized as follows: The first *memrā* covers the period from when Joseph relates his dreams to his brothers until he becomes viceroy of Egypt (Gen. 37:5–Gen. 41:52). The second *memrā* recounts the events from the beginning of the period of famine until the announcement to Jacob that Joseph is still alive (Gen. 41:53–Gen. 45:28). The third *memrā* tells of Jacob's departure with his family to go down to Egypt and his meeting with Joseph (Gen. 46). The fourth *memrā* describes a conversation between Jacob, Joseph, and Dinah, in which Joseph relates in dramatic terms how he came to be in Egypt. This *memrā* ends with Jacob adjuring Joseph to forgive his brothers (compare Gen. 50:15–21).

22. See A. S. Rodrigues Pereira, "Two Syriac Verse Homilies on Joseph," *Jahrbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 31 (1989–90): 96–97, in which he lists eight manuscript witnesses, four of whom positively attribute authorship to Narsai. Two manuscripts (Ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library 135 and Ms. Berlin, Königl. Bibliothek 59), which contain only the first two *memrē*, attribute authorship to Jacob of Serugh. Nāf rejects this attribution (*Syrische Josef-Gedichte*, 38–39) partly on the grounds that another collection of *memrē* on Joseph can be more positively ascribed to Jacob.

23. See also N. 43:17: "The type of our Lord is depicted in the stories of Joseph and his brothers." Other hermeneutical functions are also attributed to Joseph. See, for example, N. 40:17–20, in which the function of Joseph as one who conquered bodily desires is mentioned: "Blessed be the one who chose Joseph the just and glorified him in the land, And set him up as a model and an example for all the just, And that they might be delivered from bodily desires And might inherit the good and new life of the kingdom."

24. The author also introduces the comparison series using a line very similar to that used by Aphrahat: "The type of our Lord is depicted in the stories of Joseph" (Ps. N. 43:17).

25. N. 21:7–11; compare A. 956:19–22. Joseph's nakedness is not specifically mentioned in the episode with Potiphar's wife. It seems to have been made specifically by the author to make the twofold typological link.

26. Reuben: N. 8:11–20; Potiphar: N. 24:1–9.

27. Judah: N. 8:5–10, 10:2–5; Potiphar's wife: N. 24:10–15; 44:8–9.

28. Note that when Joseph is reporting to Potiphar's wife about how he had been instructed concerning her, Joseph observes that Potiphar "cautioned [him] exceedingly" on this point (N. 19:15). Also of interest is part of Joseph's response to Potiphar: "[I am] wronged by the debauched one, But if I say that it is not true, who will believe me? For she is the mistress and everything she desires is authorised for her And you listen to everything she says and believe [her]" (N. 24:18–21). There seems to be an implicit warning here against marriage in which the wife rules over the husband and is also likely to be unfaithful.

29. However, it should also be noted that the role of biblical women is often expanded and portrayed very positively in the Syriac tradition. For references, see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Spoken Words, Voiced Silence: Biblical Women in Syriac Tradition," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2001): 105–31.

30. Nāf finds the cycle attributed to Narsai to be stylistically and literarily deficient. *Syrische Josef-Gedichte*, 15, 36.

31. Hymns on Faith 4:9, quoted in Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1992), 55.

32. For a good discussion of parallels with Jewish exegesis and doctrine, see Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (reprint; London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 281–94.

33. Sebastian P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979): 212–32.

34. Sebastian P. Brock, "An Introduction to Syriac Studies," in *Horizons in Semitic Studies: Articles for the Student*, ed. John Herbert Eaton ([Birmingham]: [Department of Theology, University of Birmingham], 1980), 4.

35. Edward G. Mathews, *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium v. 572–73, Scriptores Armeniaci, t. 23–24 (Louvain: Peeters, 1998). Quotations are from the English translation of Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium v. 573.

36. Stephanus Evodius Assemani, *Sancti patris nostri Ephraem Syri opera omnia*, 3 vols. (Rome: Ex Typographia Vaticana apud Joannem Mariam Henricum Salvioni, 1732–46). Quotations are from the electronically published translation of Archimandrite Ephrem Lash (<http://www.anastasis.org.uk/>).

Hymn from Deuteronomy 30:20

That we may love our God
and love his Son, who conquered death,
that we may bear their rod—
they loved us first and lend us breath.

That we may heed God's voice
and find the Savior, whom we seek,
that we may know our choice—
his watchmen on the tower speak.

That we may cleave unto
and walk with God in all our ways,
that we may go and do
for God, who is our length of days,

that we may live and move
and be in him, and in this land,
that we may love and prove
our Lord—dwell long, and faithful stand:

For self and seed choose life—
say, "Lord, we will abide in thee."
For self and seed choose life—
earth's light and life has made us free.

—Casualene Meyer

On the Way to Becoming an Authentic Reader

Richard H. Cracroft

Not long before his death, the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas reflected, “My education consisted of the liberty to . . . read indiscriminately and all the time, with my eyes hanging out.”¹ I confess, eyes still hanging out at age sixty-six, that it was likewise with me! And like Herman Melville, who dated his life from his first discriminately indiscriminate immersion in books,² I date my intellectual and spiritual life—I’ve never made much distinction between the two—from the books I’ve read. I learned personal integrity, moral values, democracy, fair play, pluck, and the inevitable triumph of good over evil from my father’s many volumes of Horatio Alger, *The Motor Boys*, and *Tom Swift*; I learned inductive and deductive logic and courage (and almost everything I knew about women until I married the best of them) from my sister’s volumes of *Nancy Drew* and from my own accumulated volumes of the *Hardy Boys*; and I learned gridiron grit, moral courage, and prowess from those much-perused, hallowed tomes *Touch-down to Victory*, *A Minute to Play*, *All-American*, and *Ros Hackney, Half-back*. I humbly confess that which few know: I am Ros Hackney.

In my early teens, however, I became D’Artagnan in Dumas’s *Three Musketeers*; then I was Edmond Dantès, the Count of Monte Cristo, and Tonty of the Iron Hand, and Robin Hood. And I rode with *The White Company*; swung my way through *Tarzan*, *Lord of the Apes*; and thrilled my way through *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, *Dracula*, the *Complete Sherlock Holmes*, and all of Edgar Allan Poe; and found late-night freedom in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *King Solomon’s Mines*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, and Booth Tarkington and Rudyard Kipling; and I bombed Tokyo with Eddie Rickenbacker in *Seven Came Through*. Yes, I traveled widely at 1067 East 4th South, Salt Lake City.

My lack of discrimination led me, too early, to Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road*, and several questionable books among my father's Book-of-the-Month-Club selections at the same time that I was relishing the short stories in my mother's monthly *Relief Society Magazine*—all lump-in-the-throat products of the “suddenly-she-realized” school of Mormon literature. But my concerned mother's more discriminating tastes led me, via gifts, to *The Robe*, *The Big Fisherman*, *The Silver Chalice*, *Quo Vadis*, and *Ben Hur*, sword-and-faith novels much to my liking. Then I saw Jose Ferrer's thrilling film performance of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. I read, memorized, and acted the play again and again with my tolerant friends, and my literary tastes soared. I have never forgotten Cyrano's impromptu balladizing as he confidently duelled:

Lightly I toss my hat away,
 Languidly over my arm let fall
 The cloak that covers my bright array—
 Then out swords, and to work withal!

 Hark, how the steel rings musical!
 Mark how my point floats, light as the foam,
 Ready to drive you back to the wall,
 Then, as I end the refrain, thrust home!³

My reading became more focused during my Swiss-Austrian mission, where I read late into the night, devouring the standard works, *auf Deutsch und auf Englisch*, along with some thirty-five Church books (duly noted in my journal) sent me faithfully by my indulgent mother, and a dozen volumes of Goethe, Schiller, Erich Kästner (*The Parent Trap*), and German poetry. It was a different era then, and I had an understanding mission president, who, encouraging my bad poetry, named me the mission poet laureate—I don't think I had much competition.

Back home, married, in college, and a self-anointed English major, I found the malady lingered on—but now more prescribed and very literary. Yes, once, alone and bored while on sentry duty in the military, between one and four A.M., I gorged, thrice, a yellowed and waterlogged issue of *True Romance*, left by earlier sentries. Yes, I read on my honeymoon, and it was infectious: in our first years of marriage, my brand-new wife and I read, individually but simultaneously, all of Ernest Hemingway. So it has continued, lifelong. In a routine as regular as saying my prayers, brushing my teeth, and turning off my hearing aids, I have read every night of my life, from thirty minutes to four hours—from Salt Lake City to X'ian and from Zürich to Londontown; by lamplight, candlelight, firelight, propane lantern, or flashlight; in every bed, miserable sleeping bag or tent that I have ever occupied. All of this will be sworn to—or at—by my long-suffering

wife, Janice, who bravely conceals the fact that she hasn't had a good night's sleep in a darkened room in forty-three years.

In fact, it was while reading by flashlight in bed when I was sixteen that I first became aware of the problem I am addressing and undertaking to solve in this essay: the tension that each of us experiences between *religion*—with its spiritual, eternal, and supernal focus—and the very human, earthly, and earthy *humanities*.

On that night in 1952, I was reading an expensive 35¢ paperback edition of Nevill Coghill's translation of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which I had picked up after work at the magazine shop (I have it still). At dinner, Mom and Dad recognized my acquisition as a "classic"—a classic being a book which, according to Mark Twain, "people praise and don't read."⁴ When Mom sounded "lights out" at about 10:30 P.M., I had complied, as usual, by putting down my book, saying my prayers, turning out the light, and settling into bed—for I was a good boy. Then, stealthily, as was my wont, I pulled out the flashlight from beneath the mattress and began the most delicious minutes of my day. Mother obviously indulged me in this clandestine activity, as the number of batteries I required for my nightly reading was prodigious, and she quietly kept my flashlight supplied.

On this particular night, however, I ran headlong into the earthy humanities, stumbling, at 12:15 A.M., and without the slightest warning, onto "The Miller's Tale." As I read of the bawdy trick played on the old man by his naughty young wife and her lascivious lover, I was at once stunned, delighted, titillated, and shocked. And I began to laugh, long and low. But not low enough. Suddenly my mother appeared in my room like a specter—be-negligéed, be-Mentholatumed, and be-curlered—and began scolding me for my after-midnight offense. She demanded to know what I was laughing at. Hesitantly and half-apologetically, I read my mother much of the tale, including the offending but hilarious lines. Mother, angelically gowned embodiment of Propriety, Purity, and Piety, vividly portrayed the human dilemma of Carnality warring with Spirituality, of the Profane battling the Divine. Then, Mother's humanity triumphed over her spiritual scruples, and she began to laugh, and laugh, and laugh, with mighty abandon, at age fifty-four, in 1952, at a ribald but very human story written six hundred years earlier. "It's scandalous," she chortled. "But it's a classic," she rationalized, clearly torn by the old battle raging within between the assertive, alluring, human flesh and the holy, sweet, but decidedly calmer joys of the Spirit; between humanities and religion. Then clucking, "Don't stay up too late," she left me alone in bed with Chaucer and fled to her own bed and, I'm sure, prayers for her son's spiritual welfare, while I returned to the very human road to Canterbury.



Although my mother turned her back on the confusing ambiguities raised by her sixteen-year-old boy reading Chaucer's ribald tale, the old, old war between the flesh and the Spirit is not so readily dismissed. For most of us, Alexander Pope's humanist charge to "know then thyself, presume not God to scan, / The proper study of Mankind is Man"⁵ collides head on with Lorenzo Snow's profoundly theocentric couplet, "As man now is, God once was: / As God now is, man may be,"⁶ which makes the proper study of mankind not man, but God, and raises the question, is the term "a Latter-day Saint humanist" an oxymoron?

One morning circa 1977, a very driven lady, I'll call her Sister Grundy, descended upon my department chairman's office, threw down the gauntlet in the form of a long list of books currently being taught by BYU professors of English, myself included, and demanded that we so-called Latter-day Saint humanists cease and desist in exposing young minds to "godless filth and trash." In her unassailable estimate, these wicked books fell far short of our own humanities standard, which is, as BYU Professor of English Edward Geary has stated, to "celebrate human dignity" and "prepare readers for lives of virtuous action";⁷ and these books seemed to fall woefully short of meeting that which she considered the spiritual standard against which any book read at BYU should be measured: "Worthy to be read to the Brethren in the Temple on Thursday morning." Sister Grundy had taken the trouble of sending the book list, along with specific, underlined passages from the books and the names of the teachers who taught them—that is, nearly every member of the English faculty—to the First Presidency. She assured me that I would be "hearing from them shortly." Bless the Brethren, I never heard a word.

So there I sat, a sitting stake president, looking at a list of books that I cherished as literature, which Dr. Neal Lambert and I have often defined as the significant expression of significant human experience, books laden with passages that were indeed, as Sister Grundy's "gotcha" highlighting clearly demonstrated, wrenched from context and quivering nakedly before me, full of profane words and offending paragraphs that I surely would not want to read to my children in family home evening much less to the Brethren in the temple. The Latter-day Saint humanist dilemma.

If you have had your thumb or nose in much imaginative literature or art, you have probably experienced similar confrontations—with a parent, a roommate, a seminary teacher, or your own conscience. At some point, every spiritual man and woman must come to grips with the inevitable clash that occurs occasionally between one's humanities and one's spiritualities. Each of us must rationalize, justify, and explain, if only to oneself, spending precious mortal moments with imaginative literature—or, for that matter, enjoying paintings, sculpture, opera, or music—which could not be comfortably received by the Brethren on Thursday mornings in the

temple, or by ourselves in the solitude of our souls. “As if you could kill time,” Thoreau asserts in *Walden*, “without injuring eternity.”⁸

At some point, as professor, department chair, or dean, I have received complaints about the contents of *The Scarlet Letter*, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Roughing It*, *Tom Jones*, *Don Quixote*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *King Lear*, *A Long Day’s Journey into Night*, *Ceremony*, *The Tin Drum*, *The Odyssey*, *Faust*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Macbeth*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Giant Joshua*, *Metamorphosis*, and *Sons and Lovers*—and you may here insert the names of a hundred other works of literature that, in their unblinking examination of the catastrophic, fallen human condition, have trodden upon someone’s cherished spiritual beliefs and values or upset another’s delicate moral equilibrium—and will do so again, somewhere, today.

As I tried to explain to Mrs. Grundy, I admire each of the books she was attacking; I find in them something of inestimable value that enables me to overlook the words or phrases or situations foreign to my sensibilities and worldview. I told her that these very human books have taught me valuable insights and truths, that I believe they teach our students something that cannot be learned as well any other way. I tried to explain that wrenching words and passages from their contexts and labeling them as offensive was akin to walking out on the Oberammergau Passion Play during the Crucifixion scene because of the R-rated violence—she’d be missing the point. I reminded her, in many futile words, that we walk in twilight in a fallen world and that it is “a contradiction in terms,” as Cardinal John Henry Newman pointed out long ago, “to attempt a sinless literature of sinful man.”⁹ I took the high road and urged Sister Grundy to trust Latter-day Saint students to read with eyes of faith the literary expressions of sinful men coping with the human condition, to trust that as they venture into experience they will be guided by the Holy Spirit, even without their knowing it, in winnowing and sifting their experiences, culling the good from the evil, the gold from the dross, and understanding them both; and I urged her to trust faithful Latter-day Saint teachers of goodwill to teach human and spiritual values and truths by that same Spirit. Alas, Sister Grundy and I were like two ships passing in the night or, in German, *eine Aneinandervorbeisprechung* (speaking by one another), and she went her way, apparently unwilling to extend that trust and shaking her head at my wrongheaded defense of profanity and immorality.



Now, some twenty-five years after Sister Grundy’s visit, I’d like to offer five steps that a Latter-day Saint reader can take to overcome the “carnal,

sensual, and devilish” (Moses 5:13) with which we mortals are beset and to calm the tempest between the flesh and the Spirit, between the humanities and divinity. I hope that the result will be that each of you will leave this essay well on the road to becoming an authentic reader¹⁰—one who reads good books well, with a fine balance of humanist sensitivity and spiritual insight, and thus becomes a better human being and Latter-day Saint.

Step 1. Henry David Thoreau labels the first step in his “Reading” chapter of *Walden*: “To read well,” he writes, “that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise.”¹¹ The first step, then, is to *read well in books which are both good and true*—an admonition that the authentic reader select judiciously “out of the best books” (D&C 88:118), books that have the potential to enlighten, enrich, and ennoble and that are “of good report [and] praiseworthy” (A of F 13)—and, if read authentically, most books are. Sir Francis Bacon’s counsel still pertains: “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few are to be chewed and digested.”¹²

Step 2. Step two follows naturally; we *avoid reading that which can harm the soul and repel the Holy Spirit*. Here, Sister Grundy would perk up her ears and shout, “Told ja!” In this fallen world, personal purity is hard won and hard preserved. While reading the literature of the world will occasionally appeal to the “carnal, sensual and devilish” in our nature, the authentic reader, mindful of his moral balance, selects his reading judiciously, according to his own strengths and cognizant of his own weaknesses; should he encounter surprises, he consciously makes the effort to control and direct his spirit, in his own way and at his own pace, and, if so prompted, will follow Joseph out the door, leaving Potiphar’s wife with his cloak.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell unknowingly showed me how a disciple handles the sudden intrusions of the world. Not long after he was called to Apostleship, Elder Maxwell attended a performance of a play by Clinton F. Larson staged in a theater-in-the-round at BYU. As the performance proceeded, we viewers were all startled when, to emphasize the temptations of the fallen world, the director introduced a half-dozen provocatively and garishly attired belly dancers dancing to loud and raucous music. The shocking dissonance was exactly the effect that the director wanted, and it made his point well. Still, I was startled and a bit shocked, and thinking, “Oh-oh,” I looked over at Elder Maxwell, seated nearby, wondering how a newly ordained Apostle would react to a situation he had innocently and unexpectedly found himself in. He did not arise and walk out, nor did he raise his arm to the square. Instead, he seemed to be reading intently, by the dimmest light, his program. The play made the spiritual point that Dr. Larson desired, and afterward I stood with Elder Maxwell and heard him

sincerely compliment the playwright on the powerful effect of the drama. Elder Maxwell had spontaneously averted his soul from apparent worldly intrusion, and unwilling to toss out the baby with the dirty bath water, he stayed to enjoy the protagonist's "mighty change." I realized that Paul's assertion that "unto the pure all things are pure" (Titus 1:15) was not a condition to be achieved, in any circumstance, without conscious and determined effort.

Step 3. Elder Maxwell exemplified another key to being an authentic reader, for step three is, in reading, as in daily life, *learning how to discern and respond to the gift of the Holy Ghost*. Brigham Young, while counseling the Saints in 1867 to "read good books," added, "although I cannot say that I would recommend the reading of all books, for it is not all books which are good. Read good books, and extract from them wisdom and understanding as much as you possibly can, aided by the Spirit of God, for without His Spirit we are left in the dark."¹³ Brother Brigham, knowing that the mortal journey is fraught with ambiguity and that which one person finds "good," "true," or "of good report," another may find vile, false, and reportable, told the Saints in 1853, "It is your duty to study to know everything upon the face of the earth, in addition to reading [the scriptures]. We should not only study good, and its effects upon our race, but also evil, and its consequences."¹⁴

The key to selecting our reading is learning just how much of this world we can process without losing our delicate in-the-world-yet-not-of-the-world balance. Learning to walk with the Holy Ghost, to rely on what Emerson called "this wise Seer within me"¹⁵ is, of course, the study of a lifetime and one of our great challenges as mortals. Brigham Young said, "The greatest mystery a man ever learned, is to know how to control the human mind, and bring every faculty and power . . . in subjection to Jesus Christ; this is the greatest mystery we have to learn while in these tabernacles of clay."¹⁶ During our journey as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13; D&C 45:13), the Holy Ghost, when invited and encouraged, assists us in reading authentically and turning our reading into a holy act.

Step 4. Step four occurs when the authentic reader, guided by the Holy Ghost, *catches the vision of the plan of God, is converted, and comes to see everything by the light of that plan*. I stumbled onto the plan of salvation one wintry Sunday afternoon in 1950, when I was fourteen. Passing the time between roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and Sunday evening sacrament meeting, I took up my father's triple combination, counted the relatively few pages comprising the Pearl of Great Price, and decided I would try to read an entire standard work in one afternoon. I did, and, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, I stumbled suddenly and without warning, like

Keats “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer,” onto a new world. That afternoon’s reading—attentive, authentic, and inadvertent—laid the philosophical foundation of my being and changed my life—and has greatly affected my reading. I learned later that we call that experience *conversion*.

From the moment I read, “Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name” (Moses 1:3), the Holy Spirit excited my imagination, already primed by my voracious reading habits, and I was suddenly reading the adventures of Moses and Abraham, Adam and Eve, Noah, Enoch, and Joseph Smith Jr. with the same attention, absorption, and excitement I brought to the adventures of Robin Hood, Ros Hackney, and Ben Hur. The living room at 1067 East 4th South dropped away, and I was there, with Moses, viewing worlds without number; I was one of the Grand Council watching the great immortal drama unfold before my mind’s eye; I thrilled at hearing the Only Begotten say, “Here am I, send me”; I shouted with the two-thirds at the dramatic words, “I will send the first” (Abr. 3:27). With Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Noah, and Enoch—and, a few pages later, Joseph Smith Jr.—I thrilled at the dramatic “Enter, Satan, Stage Center,” viewed with them the great Alpha and Omega vision, and imagined that I could see, in my soul’s eye, something like the glory of the Father and the Son and hear, with all of them, the powerful introduction “This is my Beloved Son, hear Him” (JS-H 1:7); with them I heard the Lord give the command to “awake and arise” and be about teaching all men, everywhere, his “plan of salvation” (Moses 6:62).

As I closed that book and returned to that Salt Lake City living room, everything looked the same, but everything was different, for through authentic reading I had read and envisioned and experienced for myself the plan of God; it was indelibly imprinted on my heart and mind and soul; and, though I would often be momentarily sidetracked, even when my erring humanity pushed it to the back of my consciousness, the plan haunted me and colored everything and directed my decisions and my course: I would spend the rest of my life trying to teach the reality and beautiful sense of these visions as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, which I first partook of as a youth in a Sunday living room in which words on a page became alive, illuminated by the Holy Ghost. I found that this new point of view—this new understanding of the plan of life—illuminated everything I have since read and placed the journeys of fictional and real characters in a new perspective.

Step 5. One’s personal vision of and commitment to the plan of God—undergoing conversion—brings the authentic reader to step five: a *constant awareness of cosmic irony*. Latter-day Saints or believing men and women who have emerged from their private Sacred Groves must learn to walk the

mortal walk *cockeyed*—if you’ll allow it—with one eye cocked to the pressing daily realities of this life, to the here and now, the temporal, while the other eye is cocked to the reality of infinity, the eternal now, the out-there. The authentic reader learns to read mortality like the youth in 2 Kings who is allowed to envision beyond the threatening armies the mountain “full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kgs. 6:17).

This haunting awareness of otherworldly reality in the midst of present worldly reality is the sense of cosmic irony. It dogs most of us believers on our mortal journey, as caught by Eliza R. Snow’s profoundly true lines, “Yet oftentimes a secret something Whispered, ‘You’re a stranger here,’ And I felt that I had wandered From a more exalted sphere.”¹⁷ Cosmic irony is seen in the sense of the cosmic incongruity I experienced recently while driving behind a Phoenix delivery truck bearing the banner “The Father and the Son Home Furnishings,” or, in Utah, “Kolob Mortgage and Loan.”

Irony describes the micro-jokes with which human life is fraught—the funny and sad differences between expectations and realities, the painful incongruity between *is* and *ought to be*—the wisdom in the comment by William Hazlitt, the great English essayist, that “Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they ought to be.”¹⁸ Cosmic irony cranks mortal irony up a notch and describes the macro-joke, the gap between man as he is and the divine man he can be; or, as Robert Frost puts it, cosmic ironically, “Forgive, O Lord, my little jokes on Thee / And I’ll forgive Thy great big one on me.”¹⁹ Constant awareness of the plan, of divine purposes and eternal inevitabilities, enables us to negotiate the tension between earthly passages and heavenly strivings, to keep our feet firmly planted in mortality but our vision and direction informed by a divinely directed homing Liahona.



One summer evening in 1952, when I was sixteen, I bought a paperback book titled *Immortal Poems of the English Language*, edited by the minor poet Oscar Williams. I devoured the book, cherished it, and ran, late one evening and without warning, into William Wordsworth’s “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” a poem that thrilled me with what I sensed was a poetic reaffirmation of my experience with Abraham, Moses, Joseph Smith, and the plan of God. Wordsworth, feeling the “prison-house” growing around him and shutting him off from his earlier intimations of immortality, sighs, “But yet I know, where’er I go,

/ That there hath past away a glory from the earth.” Then he declares that glorious premortal state, in words almost as familiar to Latter-day Saints as “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents” (1 Ne. 1:1):

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

As we grow, he laments, we forget our origins, and our intimations of that earlier state “fade into the light of common day.” Still, lifelong, we catch fleeting and haunting glimpses of our eternal home:

Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither.²⁰

I thrilled—and still do, fifty years later—sensing in Wordsworth a haunted fellow cosmic ironist. In this volume, I found others similarly haunted, like Gerard Manley Hopkins, who wrote, “The world is charged with the grandeur of God,” and proclaimed that the world is renewed daily, “because the Holy Ghost over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.”²¹ I heard in them an echo of the Pearl of Great Price, that “all things are created and made to bear record of me” (Moses 6:63).

For the authentic reader, the juncture between literature and faith becomes seamless, and working lifelong at mastering these five steps, she becomes a kind of divinely inspired inventor and re-inventor of herself. Full of anticipation and spiritual insight, and mindful of cosmic realities and of what Wordsworth calls “the vision splendid,”²² she overlays on her reading a literary criticism guided by and grounded in an increasing sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and she can find expanding layers of spiritual meaning and worth in even the commonest and most profane book. She becomes a capable and confident authentic reader, one who has learned, in Bloom’s words, “to strengthen the self, and to learn its authentic interests.”²³ To accomplish this end, Bloom suggests, “there is no method but yourself, when your self has been fully molded.”²⁴ Such is the authentic reader, “fully molded,” fully realized, fully able to see life and literature and art, not only from an expansive and ennobling human perspective, but from that whole view a mortal obtains when touched by the larger, eternal perspective. Such an authentic reader becomes like a full-and-dripping sponge, which, when touched, will cause all who touch him or her to come away with fingers moist with knowledge and goodness, truth and beauty—

with the essence of the Holy Spirit. Withal, such a reader is better prepared than I was to respond to, even enlighten and inspire, the Mr. and Mrs. Grundys of this fallen-yet-wonderful and aspiring world.



At this point, you are thinking, “He just ruined my comfortable reading of Agatha Christie or Tom Clancy,” or, worse, you’re thinking, “Thanks, Cracroft, I’ll never again be able to just enjoy a book.” Relax, and keep on reading—authentically—and you’ll inch toward bona fide authenticity. None of us will become the authentic reader overnight. We’re all aiming celestially; so let’s aim, like Don Quixote, for the stars literarily—or at least aim for the back of the head.

In 1955, influenced by Ernest Hemingway, Ezra Pound, and Joe Lewis, I took a boxing class at the University of Utah. A week or two into the course, as I was sparring with my assigned sparring partner, I suddenly became aware that I was being closely observed by our ancient, featherweight boxing instructor. He called me aside, asked me my name, and growled, “Cracroft, you’ve got the build, the stance, and the moxie, but you’re pulling your punches; you’re aiming for the tip of his nose. You may tickle his nose, but you’ll never deck him. You’ve got to smash right through to the back of his head. Oh, you won’t reach it,” he grinned, “but he’ll feel like you did.” Inspired by these poetic words, I stepped back to my sparring partner, who looked a bit frightened, and we sparred. I moved in very close and, feinting right, I launched a left jab—I’m left-handed—throwing everything I had into it and aiming, of course, for the back of his head. To my carnal delight, I landed as hard a blow as I had ever delivered. My padded fist did not reach the back of my partner’s head, but en route it broke his nose, blacked both eyes, and knocked him down and just about out. “That’s the idea,” my wiry instructor chuckled, and he gleefully marked an A in his book. My bleeding sparring partner, unwilling to turn the other cheek, went to the showers and, being a poor sport, refused to spar with me again—ever.

I learned that in becoming a punishing boxer, or an authentic reader, or a Latter-day Saint, we obtain better results if we go for broke, aim high, aim for the back of the head or at gaining the highest rung on the celestial ladder. Oh, we may not get there, but we’ll get much further than if we had aimed low and comfortably. So it is with reading authentically.

Well, it’s time for me to get back to my books, and you to yours. As usual, I am presently undergoing four books. Cigar-smoking Mark Twain insisted that he came into this world asking for a light. I came into this

world waving a valid Salt Lake City Public Library card and asking my mother to please stop blocking the light. I plan to exit this world asking, like Goethe, for “*mehr Licht*” (more light)²⁵ and caught with my thumb in a book. If at that moment I happen to be reading a spy novel, I hope my wife will replace it with my well-thumbed copy of the Book of Mormon—after all, first impressions are important. In any case, I hope my demise won’t be for a millennium or two, for I have “miles to go before I sleep, / [And books to read that will not keep].”²⁶ And so do you.

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18. William Hazlitt, "On Wit and Humour," in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, vol. 6, *Lectures on the Comic Writers, etc. of Great Britain* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 5.

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20. Williams, *Immortal Poems*, 260–62, 265 passim.

21. Williams, *Immortal Poems*, 458.

22. Williams, *Immortal Poems*, 262.

23. Bloom, *How to Read and Why*, 22.

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25. John R. Williams, *The Life of Goethe: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 52.

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Hymn for the Nauvoo Temple

*Now is the time for labor. Let the fire of the covenant
which you made in the House of the Lord, burn in your
hearts, like flame unquenchable.*

—Brigham Young

Steadfast fathers who stayed and begged the holy gift
by faith sought grace and truth within the veil.
Brigham's mighty labor blessed—saints received, then left,
enabled to follow the hardest trail.

Once wind and pride and fire felled these holy stones,
made saints progress and in a desert gather—
but humble flame and smaller wind with stillest tones
have turned our stony hearts to flesh and Father.

With temple built new in sight of earth and heaven,
we wait and glory to receive our Savior.
With a covenant of fire that will not end,
shout “Hosanna!” Now is the time for labor.

—Casualene Meyer

The English Editor and the “Mormon Scare” of 1911

Peter J. Vousden

In 1911 the Latter-day Saints in Great Britain found themselves, to an unprecedented degree, the focus of often intense public and official attention. Extravagant allegations were made against the Church and the missionaries in the national press, and questions were asked on the floor of the House of Commons. Winston Churchill, the Home Secretary, conducted an official inquiry into the activities of the Church. Although he concluded that the accusations were of no substance and that no action by the government was required, the matter did not end there; the popular press continued to publish fanciful accounts of Mormon elders kidnapping English girls.¹

Much of the ferment in 1911 was stirred up by professional anti-Mormon lecturers such as Hans Peter Freece, a disaffected member of the Church from Utah who toured the British Isles warning large audiences that Mormon missionaries were stealing English girls and taking them to Utah for forced polygamous marriages. A man such as Freece, who could present himself as an authority, was the perfect ally for the small, unrepresentative band of clergy who wanted Britain rid of the Latter-day Saints;

1. The chief Church officer in Britain during the 1911 press campaign was Rudger Clawson, the president of the European Mission. A very good analysis of the press debate can be found in Davis S. Hoopes and Roy H. Hoopes, *The Making of a Mormon Apostle: The Story of Rudger Clawson* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1990), 253–67. Malcolm R. Thorp also discusses the role of the British press during the same period in “‘The Mormon Peril’: The Crusade against the Saints in Britain, 1910–1914,” *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975): 69–88.

this band included Bishop Welldon of the Church of England and the Catholic priest Bernard Vaughan. Their cause was readily espoused by a section of the popular press that saw salacious stories as a money spinner. Thus the London *Daily Express* sponsored and promoted a large anti-Mormon rally in London at which Freece, Welldon, and Vaughan all spoke.²

A Three-Pronged Attack in the Press

The “ridiculous travesty of a religion which goes by the name of Mormonism”³ was attacked on three fronts. First, it was alleged that the missionaries actively pursued a polygamous lifestyle. Second, the missionaries were accused of “employing vicious propaganda whereby English girls are lured to Utah.”⁴ Third, the Church was said to be gradually seizing political power in the United States as the first step toward eventual world domination.

Typical of the sensationalistic press treatment is a full-page cartoon that appeared in the woman’s magazine *Mrs. Bull* in April 1911. Entitled “The Spider and the Fly,” it depicts a sinister black-suited missionary in a web marked “Utah” trying to lure an innocent English maiden to take a step closer (fig. 1). Some anti-Mormon sources alleged that the Church held real estate greater in extent than the combined land area of France, Spain, and Portugal and that it was richer than “either the [American] Steel Trust or [Rockefeller’s] Standard Oil.”⁵ Such journalism was intended to strike a note of indignation in the hearts of modest Englishmen.

If the press highlighted what they saw as the dangers, they also promoted what they saw as the only answer: “The total expulsion of the Mormon agents of polygamy.”⁶ A cartoon on the front page of *People*, a popular London Sunday tabloid, depicted a Mormon missionary being dipped head first into a horse trough; the caption read, “Keep him under.”⁷

2. The British view of Mormonism may have been jaundiced by a long line of sensational anti-Mormon literature reaching back to Arthur Conan Doyle’s first work of fiction, *A Study in Scarlet* (London: Ward, Lock, 1888). Other fictional works published in Germany and France may have given credence to the sensationalist view of Mormonism that Freece, Welldon, and Vaughan were trading in. For a discussion of anti-Mormonism in nineteenth-century France, see Massimo Introvigne, “Old Wine in New Bottles: The Story of Fundamentalist Anti-Mormonism,” *BYU Studies* 35, no. 3 (1995–96): 45–73.

3. *Daily Express* (London), April 29, 1911.

4. *Daily Express*, April 24, 1911.

5. W. T. Stead, “The Mormons and the Anti-Mormons,” *Review of Reviews* 43 (March 1911): 300.

6. *Daily Express*, April 29, 1911.

7. “Keep Him Under,” *People* (London), April 30, 1911, 1.



FIG. 1. "The Spider and the Fly," by Frank Holland. Typical of the sensationalistic treatment Mormons received from the British press in 1911, this cartoon appeared in a popular British women's magazine. The cartoon depicts one of the foremost accusations made in the anti-Mormon

press, that Mormon missionaries were luring innocent English girls to Utah to become polygamous wives. *Mrs. Bull*, April 15, 1911, 845. By permission of the British Library (shelf mark 272).

However, in the midst of such journalistic hysteria, some editors maintained a sense of balance and fair play. One magazine went to great lengths to disprove the allegations that English girls were in dire peril. This magazine searched records of steamship companies and found, for example, that on March 17, 1910, the steamship *Dominion* carried twenty-five passengers, with no unattached girl under the age of twenty-five. After looking at similar cases, the authors concluded, “We find whole families under the leadership of the parents embracing Mormonism. . . . English girls are safe.”⁸ Men of the caliber of G. K. Chesterton called for religious toleration and pointed out that the Church had discontinued polygamy in 1890.⁹ And the most famous and controversial editor and journalist in London defended the Mormons with the most vigor and conviction. His name was William T. Stead (fig. 2).

The Powerful Editor Who Defended the Mormons

During the 1880s, as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Stead had established new trends in journalism. By 1911 he was founder and editor of *The Review of Reviews*. In an age when the newspaper and printed magazine publishers were media kings, Stead was the equivalent of the television news mogul of the late twentieth century.

Stead was a man of great personal energy who was surprisingly eclectic in his social circle. His friends included feminists Annie Beasant and Olive Schreiner on the one hand and millionaire imperialist Cecil Rhodes on the other. Always flamboyant and inclined to dramatic effect, Stead has been called the founder of modern British journalism. It is therefore somewhat ironic that he should side with the Mormons against the popular press in 1911.

Although he pioneered sensational journalistic techniques, his objective had never been prurient titillation. Stead was first and foremost a moral and religious campaigner. In 1883 he caused a sensation by portraying, in particularly florid terms, the desperate plight of London’s poor. Two years later, he created a storm with an investigative stunt breathtakingly daring for Victorian Britain: exposing the extent of child prostitution in London. Such was the outcry raised by his *Gazette* articles in summer 1885 that Parliament subsequently passed a law to increase the protection of young girls. As the nineteenth century rolled into the twentieth, Stead once more courted controversy by speaking out against British involvement in the South African Boer War.

8. *Mainly about People* (London), February 11 and April 18, 1911.

9. *Illustrated London News*, April 29, 1911.

Clearly, W. T. Stead was a man unafraid to write what he thought was right. He took an early interest in the 1911 anti-Mormon campaign and, deciding to establish the facts before he offered an opinion, invited two Mormon missionaries to lunch at his house in February 1911. They were Elder W. P. Monson from Preston, Idaho, and Elder E. F. Tout of Ogden, Utah. He also invited Hans Peter Freece and his wife. Freece flatly refused Stead's hospitality on the grounds that he could not share a meal with Mormon elders. After some negotiation, a meeting was set up in Stead's office in London. The meeting opened with prayer, which was rather unusual for a newspaper office; Stead commented on the need "for guidance into the way of truth, for the maintenance of charity, and the avoidance of passion or prejudice."¹⁰ At the close of a long meeting, Stead was left "perfectly clear" that the allegations made by Freece were false.

Stead was a spiritualist by personal conviction, and there is no evidence that he approached Mormon doctrine with any degree of commitment. He was, however, incensed by the tactics of "unscrupulous journalists" as they intensified their attacks on the Mormons in spring and summer 1911. He stated that polygamy had not been practiced for twenty years, that missionaries in Britain did not preach it, and that there was not a shred of evidence to suggest that young British womanhood was in peril: "No English

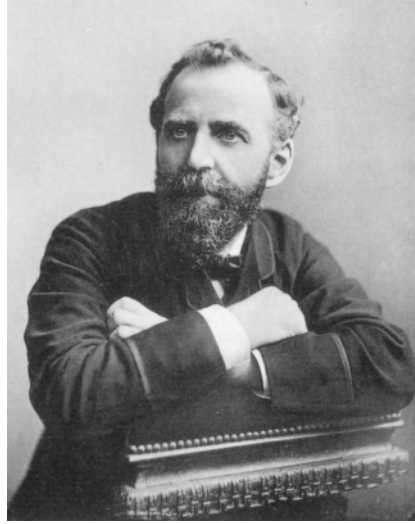


FIG. 2. William T. Stead, 1889. The "founder of modern British journalism," William T. Stead was the most powerful editor in England at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although he pioneered sensational journalistic techniques, he was first and foremost a moral and religious campaigner. He used his considerable influence as a publisher to fight for causes he believed in, such as the plight of child prostitutes in London. In 1911 he defended the Mormons in England when they were vilified by the majority of the British press—and even by some prominent members of the British clergy. From a photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co., in Frederick Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1925), 1:2.

10. Stead, "Mormons and the Anti-Mormons," 297.

girl has yet been proved to have contracted a plural marriage as a result of their [the missionaries'] teaching."¹¹

Stead went one step further and turned his attention to "the parsons and priests and bishops who have been befooled by the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mail*." He suggested that these men "ought to be thoroughly ashamed of themselves." Of Bishop Welldon, who had urged anti-Mormon legislation, Stead wrote, "It is almost inconceivable that a man of his experience and knowledge of the world should have so far forgotten the elementary principle of religious toleration."¹² Stead also wrote a personal letter to the editor of the *Daily Express* complaining, "It is rather discreditable to our pulpit and our press that I have been left almost alone to raise a protest in the name of religious liberty against Mormon baiting."¹³

Stead's Last Campaign

Circumstances conspired against Stead to ensure that this great campaigner's last campaign was that of defending the Mormons. Within a matter of months, he was invited to the United States, where he was popular on the lecture circuit, to share a platform with President William Howard Taft and William Jennings Bryan on the subject of world peace. Stead accepted the invitation and booked passage to New York on the luxury liner SS *Titanic* in April 1912. Stead perished in the tragic sinking of the "unsinkable" vessel, which seems a perversely appropriate exit for one of the great exponents of dramatic reporting. Although the storm of anti-Mormon bigotry and misunderstanding had subsided by this time, many members of the Church mourned the loss of an influential friend in the icy waters of the north Atlantic.

No Church member grieved more than Rudger Clawson, president of the European Mission. Writing to the First Presidency in April 1912, Elder Clawson eulogized Stead for doing "much to turn public sentiment in our favor." As a token of the Saints' appreciation, Elder Clawson suggested that temple ordinances be performed on behalf of the man. Thirteen months later, Elder Clawson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, stood proxy for William T. Stead in the Salt Lake Temple. It was a fitting way for an Apostle to express his gratitude to a courageous friend of the British Latter-day Saints and their missionaries. "Those who lift up their voices and wield

11. W. T. Stead, "The Anti-Mormon Crusade," *Review of Reviews* 43 (May 1911): 438–39.

12. Stead, "The Anti-Mormon Crusade," 438–39.

13. Stead, "The Anti-Mormon Crusade," 439–40.

their pens in defense of the Latter-day Saints will in no wise lose their reward," Elder Clawson observed.¹⁴

The Impact of Stead's Letter to the *Daily Express*

William T. Stead's letter to the editor of the *Daily Express*, published on April 28, 1911 (reprinted below in its entirety), was a landmark document in its favorable portrayal of the Church in Britain. Three days before Stead's letter was first printed, Rudger Clawson, president of the European Mission, had written to the First Presidency expressing his frustration and disappointment with the Saints' inability to place their case before the British people. "We have been doing and are doing all we can to get the truth before the people but have measurably failed," he lamented, "because they do not want it; that is, the press does not want it." Elder Clawson credited Stead's letter with doing much to change that situation and helping to "turn public sentiment in our favor." Regarding a poorly attended anti-Mormon rally, Elder Clawson informed the First Presidency, "There is no doubt that Mr. Stead's letter to the *Express*, as well as other influences . . . had the effect of neutralizing the Holborn Hall Meeting, which utterly failed in its unholy purpose."¹⁵

In June 1911, Elder Clawson wrote to Stead, expressing appreciation for his "courage" and "outspoken frankness" on behalf of the Latter-day Saints. Stead's intercession was appreciated because such candid and fair reporting was rare: "It is not often that men of prominence and influence speak or write favorably of us," reflected Elder Clawson, "and yet we only ask to be represented as we are in truth."¹⁶

14. "European Mission Report Made by Elder Rudger Clawson of the Council of the Twelve, 1910–1913," typescript, 1913, 82, Clawson Papers, Box 8, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

15. "European Mission Report," 79, 82.

Holborn Hall was a stately meeting hall in London. According to the London *Daily Express*, the meeting had been called "to protest against the vicious Mormon propaganda now being carried on in this country under the cloak of religion" and "to urge on the British Government the imperative necessity for immediate action to prevent any continuance of the enticing away of English girls to Utah by Mormon emissaries." European Mission President Rudger Clawson claimed the meeting was "a flat failure, as but few were in attendance," whereas anti-Mormon writer Winifred Graham described the meeting as "rousing" and recalled that "the hall was packed." "Protest against the Mormons," London *Daily Express*, April 28, 1911, 1; Rudger Clawson, *William T. Stead and His Defense of the "Mormons"* (Liverpool: n.p., n.d.), 4; Malcolm R. Thorp, "Winifred Graham and the Mormon Image in England," *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1980): 109–10.

16. "European Mission Report," 82.

William T. Stead's Letter to the Editor of the London Daily Express

To the Editor of the "Express."

Sir,—Will you kindly permit me the privilege of recording in your columns an emphatic protest against the mischievous and wicked nonsense that is being written and spoken in furtherance of what is known as the Anti-Mormon Crusade in this country?

What is described as "a great non-partisan anti-Mormon meeting" is advertised for to-night in Holborn Hall. If the objects of that meeting were merely to expose, to refute, and to demolish by arguments addressed to reason or appeals to emotion what its promoters regard as the Mormon heresy, there would be no call for public protest. But the avowed object of the anti-Mormon crusaders is not polemics; it is persecution.

The Dean of Manchester, Dr. Welldon,¹⁷ who presides over to-night's meeting, has declared: "I think the Mormon propaganda ought to be put down in England. If the law is not strong enough to put it down, it ought to be reinforced." Another crusader, the Rev. Father Bernard Vaughan,¹⁸ not content with appealing for persecution by statute, has invoked lynch law. From his pulpit he has declared that "the Mormons should be taken by the scruff of the neck, rushed across our island, and dropped into the sea."

I protest against this undisguised appeal to the hateful spirit of religious persecution as an outrage upon the fundamental principle of religious liberty,

17. James F. C. Welldon, Right Reverend Bishop and Dean of Manchester, was a renowned classical scholar who heard reports of recent polygamous marriages when he visited Utah in 1905. Shortly after the meeting at Holborn Hall, Welldon, a candidate for the Bishopric of Southwark, was passed over by the Prime Minister for the appointment. Stead wrote, "The Dean is a good man and a staunch friend of peace. But the part which he took last month in heading the anti-Mormon crusade justifies the Prime Minister in passing him over." Thorp, "The Mormon Peril," 76; Stead, "Anti-Mormon Crusade," 438; "Protest Against the Mormons," 1.

18. Vaughan was a prominent Catholic preacher. A bold social critic, he dedicated one of his books to his "BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO LIKE ANNAS, CAIAPHAS, PILATE, AND HEROD ARE VAINLY STRIVING TO RID YOURSELVES AND YOUR COUNTRY OF JESUS CHRIST." Bernard Vaughan, *Society, Sin and the Savior* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1908). Stead criticized Vaughan severely, writing that it would "do [him] good" to "stand in sackcloth and ashes at Charing Cross for a whole day." Charing Cross was the site of the most famous pillory in London. Stead, "Anti-Mormon Crusade," 439.

an outrage which is not the less detestable because it is masked by the hypocritical and mendacious pretence of a desire to protect English girls from being lured into polygamous harems.

It is one of the most familiar devices of intolerant religionists to invent malicious falsehoods to serve as a cloak for persecuting those who dissent from the faith of the majority. Without going back to Imperial Rome, where the vilest calumnies were used to inflame the populace against the Christians, we need not go far afield to find how anti-Semitic rancour finds in the revival of the old accusation, the blood sacrifice, the most convenient pretext for atrocities at which humanity shudders.

Father Vaughan might profitably recall how often the lurid narratives of "The Confessional Unmasked"¹⁹ and "The Revelations of Maria Monk"²⁰ have been used to justify Orange bigots²¹ always in violent assaults upon their Catholic neighbors. Nothing would be easier than to follow up this anti-Mormon crusade by a far more popular and dangerous agitation against the Roman Catholics, whose conventual institutions, so rapidly multiplying in our midst, have often aroused the passions and prejudices of the Protestant mob.

19. C. B. [David Bryce], *The Confessional Unmasked: Showing the Depravity of the Priesthood; and Immorality of the Confessional, being the Questions Put to Females in Confession* (London: Thomas Johnston, 1851) was a piece of anti-Catholic propaganda that discussed confessional techniques purportedly used by supposedly prurient Roman Catholic priests. The Protestant Evangelical Mission Electoral Union, which hoped to secure repeal of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1828, promoted the publication by printing 25,000 copies and sending one to every member of Parliament in 1865. Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England: Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982), 88–90.

20. Maria Monk, *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal* (New York: Howe and Bates), was first printed in 1836. The book claimed to relate the experiences of Maria Monk, who allegedly converted to Catholicism, joined a convent, and became the sexual slave of corrupt priests. According to the book, the babies produced by these scandalous liaisons were strangled. Monk supposedly escaped to the United States, where her story might be told. The fictitious account became a bestseller, was widely believed, and ignited anti-Catholic sentiment in Europe and America. Ray A. Billington, "Maria Monk and Her Influence," *Catholic Historical Review* 22 (October 1936): 283–85; Nancy Lusignan Schultz, "Introduction," in *Veil of Fear: Nineteenth-Century Convent Tales* (West Lafayette, In.: Purdue University Press, 1999), vii–xxxiii.

21. The Orange Confederation was a secret society formed in 1688 whose members attached themselves to the standard of William, Prince of Orange. The Orangemen employed secret signs and passwords and sought to elevate Protestantism and suppress Catholic influence in the British Isles. Ogle Robert Gowan, *Orangeism: Its Origin and History* (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, 1859), 45, 54–56.

The attack upon the Mormons is almost entirely based upon the lie that their propaganda in this country is a propaganda in favour of polygamy, and that the chief object of the Mormon missionaries is to allure innocent and unsuspecting English girls into polygamous marriages.

I have called this a lie because it is a demonstrably false statement which is repeated again and again after it has been proved to be false. Not one of the anti-Mormon crusaders has ever been able to produce any evidence that at any time, in any place within the King's dominions, has any Mormon apostle, elder, or missionary ever appealed, publicly or privately, to any one of the King's subjects, male or female, to enter into polygamous relations with any one here or in Utah.

It is on the contrary admitted by the persecutors themselves that the Mormon emissaries constantly and even passionately repudiate as a baseless slander the accusation that they are propagandists of polygamy. No one has ventured to assert that even one of the Mormon missionaries in our midst is a polygamist.

Their enemies complain that they ought to be polygamists according to the scripture of the Latter Day Saints, just as the Orangemen always maintain that according to the doctrine of Rome every Catholic ought to desire to relight the fires of Smithfield.²²

But the State has nothing to do with construing the texts from the Book of Mormon or the bulls of persecuting Popes. If the Mormons are better than their creed, we ought surely rather to rejoice than to invoke Parliament and lynch law to hound them out of the country.

Even if the Mormons, like the Mahometans and many millions of the King's loyal subjects, believed in polygamy, that is no reason for depriving American citizens who share that belief of the right to enjoy the liberties of this free country.

But it is asserted that the Mormons lure young English girls to Utah for immoral purposes. For this assertion there is not even the shadow of a semblance of proof. If any one, Mormon or Gentile, were guilty of such a crime, let the offender be punished with the utmost rigour of the law after his crime has been proved to the satisfaction of a judge and jury. But after all that has been said in Press and pulpit for months past, the anti-Mormon

22. At Smithfield, England, heretics were burned at the stake by Romanists. William Swinderby, a Christian martyr who was convicted of heresy, was executed there in 1401. In 1494, a widow in her eighties was burned at the stake there for possessing writings of "John Wickiffe" [Wycliff]. Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater, or Martyrs Mirror* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite, 1972), 342, 351.

crusaders have utterly failed to bring forward even one solitary case of an English girl who has been lured into polygamous relations here or in Utah by any Mormon emissary.

The whole story is as monstrous a fiction as the lies of Titus Oates.²³ The falsehood that thousands of English girls are being shipped to Utah every year is sheer, unmitigated rot. Last year about 550 persons left England for Utah,²⁴ sixty of whom were under eight years of age. Of the remainder, many were married couples, and among the single emigrants there were as many men as women.

The whole so-called crusade is an outbreak of sectarian savagery worked up by journalists, who in their zest for sensation appear to be quite indifferent to the fact that the only permanent result of their exploit will be to advertise and to spread the Mormon faith among the masses, who love fair play and who hate religious persecution none the less because it is based upon a lie.

W. T. STEAD

Bank Buildings, Kingsway, London, W.C.

23. Titus Oates, D.D. (1649–1705) was an unscrupulous scoundrel who plotted, conspired, blackmailed, perjured, and lied to his advantage. In 1679 he wrote *A True Narrative of the Horrid Plot and Conspiracy of the Popish Party against the Life of His Sacred Majesty, the Government and the Protestant Religion* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst and Thomas Cockerill, 1679). Widely hailed at the time for his breathtaking expose which led to the deaths of innocent Catholics, Oates was subsequently discredited and imprisoned, only to be released and rewarded when William of Orange came to power. Jane Lane, *Titus Oates* (London: Andrew Dakers, 1949).

24. Stead obtained his information from the two Latter-day Saint missionaries, W. P. Monson and E. F. Tout, who met with him in his office in February 1911. Stead, "Mormons and the Anti-Mormons," 297.

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Weaving the Covenant

Square the frame;
thread the loom.
Draw straight and
bowstring-taut the cords.

With harness and heddle
pattern the covenant cloth.
Throw color-threaded shuttle,
straight as an arrow,
swift as pure thought,
to fill the sovereign space.
Enlarge the fabric
of stake-stretched tent.
Increase the temple-tall poles.

With reed press tight,
rich patterns of light.
Extend and bind
borders with gold.

Prepare royal robes;
spread canopied veil.
Dress Earth to
embrace the Lord!

—Sharon Price Anderson

“Give Up All and Follow Your Lord”

Testimony and Exhortation in Early Mormon Women’s Letters, 1831–1839

Janiece Johnson

Women composed a significant portion of the early converts who would follow Joseph Smith over hundreds of miles and through the fires of persecution. Lucy Mack Smith, Rebecca Williams, Phebe Peck, and Melissa Dodge represent well the dedication and testimony of such early Latter-day Saint women. Despite separation from loved ones and the dangers and difficulties they would face as Church members, religion was the guiding factor in their lives. These women testified of the value of their experiences and exhorted others to “give up all and follow your Lord” regardless of the trials that were required of them.¹

The early history of the Saints is one of transition: the spiritual transformation of individuals from an old lifestyle to a new, the theological development of the Church, and the actual physical movement of the Saints from one location to another. The history of the Saints and of Church leadership during the Church’s first ten years of existence are well chronicled, though the familiar narratives leave out many integral parts of the story. The manner in which the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been written is characteristic of the changing historiography of United States religious history in general. Only since the late 1960s have historians focused extensively on women’s documents and made concerted efforts to include women and others previously omitted in the historical tapestry.

1. Phebe Crosby Peck to Anna Pratt, Independence, Missouri, August 10, 1832, photocopy, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

While considerable historical scholarship has recently been directed toward the study of women after the organization of the Relief Society in 1842, many stories of the female members of the Church in the 1830s remain untold.² No comprehensive attempt has been made to bring light to the women residing in this historical hollow.³

This deficit in documentation is due to several problems. Extant collected records of women in America are sparse. Not only were there at times tendencies for women to neglect writing, but those who were literate often lacked the time and resources to commit their experiences to paper. As Hepzibah Richards penned to a family member in 1838, “I must be brief for I expect both time and paper will fail me before I have said one half I wish.”⁴ Women’s organizations in the early Church lacked both the tenure and continuity necessary to insure that the significant role women performed was not overlooked. And it is only in the last decades that historical repositories have made an aggressive effort to acquire the documentation for women’s history. Two historians, Charles Sellers and Susan Juster, have used this absence of information to conclude that early Mormon women were few in number and short on influence or that Latter-day Saint leaders were misogynists. Seller and Juster suggest that women were generally dragged into Mormonism by their husbands and would not have united

2. For a few contemporary accounts, see Kenneth Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, *Women’s Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982); and Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992). Martha Sonntag Bradley, “‘Seizing Sacred Space’: Women’s Engagement in Early Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (summer 1994): 57–70, specifically explores religious commitment during the first two decades of the Church through an examination of over two hundred female conversion narratives.

3. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery provide an introduction to prominent women in Kirtland in their article “Sweet Counsel and Seas of Tribulation: The Religious Life of the Women in Kirtland,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (1980): 151–62. For an expansive bibliography of published material concerning Mormon women, see James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, eds., *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1997: An Indexed Bibliography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 1018–38.

4. Hepsy Richards to William Richards, Kirtland, January 22, 1838, typescript, Church Archives. Pen, ink, and paper were precious. In letter writing, often every last centimeter of space was utilized. At times this meant writing both horizontally and vertically to maximize writing space. See Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 93–95.

with the Mormons of their own volition.⁵ Such assumptions, in addition to the gap in research on early Mormon women, call for a more comprehensive examination of the existing records.

The letters presented here augment the recent historical trend to acknowledge the value of women's voices.⁶ They provide a glimpse into

5. Charles Sellers, a prominent Jacksonian historian, argues that unlike other religious movements of the time, Mormonism had more men than women because of a "widespread female reluctance" to accept the faith. According to Sellers, this demographic, in fact, "revers[ed] the usual female preponderance in religious movements." Sellers's analysis of Mormonism is not positive. For him, Joseph Smith was a "resourceful trickster" who utilized the church he established for his needs. Sellers's knowledge of Mormonism appears superficial. He utilized the example of Lucy Harris to demonstrate that women fought vigorously against Smith and his church and averred that women could not be baptized unless related to a male Saint. He asserted, "The writings of the most loyal [Mormon women] convey an undertone of resentment." Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 218–25. Sellers's sole named source for this analysis of Mormon women is an unpublished paper that cited Elizabeth B. Tanner and Eliza M. Partridge. My cursory reading of writings of both Tanner and Partridge does not discern a tone of resentment. Unlike Sellers's characterization, many Mormon women were the first in their families to join with Smith and endure harassment for their beliefs. See Janiece Lyn Johnson, "'Give It All Up and Follow Your Lord': Mormon Female Religiosity, 1831–1843" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2001).

Expressing views similar to Sellers's, Susan Juster, a historian at the University of Michigan, essentially likened Joseph Smith to the prophet Matthias, who preached that "woman is the capsheaf of the abomination of desolation—full of all devilry." Referring to the "intense misogyny displayed by many of these 'Old Testament Patriarchs,'" Juster assumed that because an organization was patriarchal it was also misogynistic. Susan Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh: Gender, Language, and Sexuality in American Protestantism," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, ed. Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 351. In addition, in her book *Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics and Evangelism in Revolutionary New England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 132, Juster suggests that the "overt misogyny" of Mormon patriarchs relegated Mormon women to secondary positions at church and in the home. However, evidence has not been produced from the writings of Mormon women that they felt like the object of male derision during Joseph Smith's lifetime, nor has misogyny been found in the Prophet's writings. In addition, the teachings of Mormon leaders demonstrate a reverence toward the exalted role of women. Mormon women generally reveal an understanding of, and a deference to, the patriarchal order. See Ileen Ann LeCheminant, "The Status of Women in the Philosophy of Mormonism from 1830 to 1845" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1942); Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 1–20.

6. See, for example, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "'Tryed and Purified as Gold': Mormon Women's 'Lives,'" *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994–95): 16–34; and Kristin Hacken South, "Introduction to the Journals of Emma Lorena Barrows Brown," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994–95): 35–69.

two central features of the religious experience of early Mormon women: testimony and belief. The women considered here believed the Book of Mormon and the new revelations given through Joseph Smith to be the word of God. They felt similar to Lehi, who, after tasting the sweetness of God's love, intensely desired to share it with others. Olive Boynton Hale, an early Latter-day Saint woman, wrote to her mother:

[You] think that my being called to pass through so many trials and afflictions might cause me to doubt the truth of the great work that is rolling through the earth with mighty power, which thousands are embracing, & rejoicing that they have been enabled to receive in these the last days, and I feel to rejoice with those that do rejoice in the latter day kingdom which I do know is the work of the Lord, and it will continue to roll on untill Christ Jesus our Lord will descend in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, when the saints shall be caught up to meet him in the air.⁷ I pray this may be our happy lot.⁸

These women testified of their experiences and knowledge and had faith that their human testimony would awaken that same yearning in their friends and families so that they too would gather with the Saints in Zion.

Despite the general paucity of sources for women's history overall, the archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints houses a significant collection of women's writings.⁹ The four early letters printed here are a part of that collection and indicate the value of contemporary documentation. While autobiographical reminiscences are helpful in recreating life experiences, they often lack the candor and spontaneity encountered in letters. Although the collection of women's writings is impressive, only a few of these describe the personal lives, emotions, and activities of early female Saints, these contemporary letters are particularly valuable in portraying women's perspectives in early Church history.

7. At Christ's Second Coming, the faithful alive on the earth will be "caught up" to meet him (1 Thes. 3:17; 4:17). The Latter-day Saint interpretation of the doctrine includes the return of Christ and his Saints to the newly cleansed earth to reign. This identifies some of the millennialist tendencies of the early Saints (D&C 88:96; 101:31; 109:75).

8. Olive B. Hale to Martha Hale, 1841, New Liberty, Adams County, Illinois, Church Archives. The full text of Olive's letter can be found in Johnson, "'Give It All Up and Follow Your Lord,'" 143–50.

9. Christy Lee Best, *Guide to Sources for Studies of Mormon Women in the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976). A substantial amount of material has been added to the collection since this guide was published.

Besides providing important examples of women's writings, the letters provide insight into these women's religious experiences as the focal point of their lives. Religion took precedence over every other aspect of their lives, including money, social standing, geographical location, and even family. These women waded through waters of sacrifice to reach their goals. Rather than being merely followers, they believed on their own—at times dragging their husbands and families to Mormonism.

From the eloquent writing of Lucy Mack Smith to the unpolished, though poetic, articulation of Melissa Morgan Dodge, these letters show women with different levels of education and different experiences. The women shown here do not illustrate perfection. They were not without complaints, nor were they pollyannish. They experienced supreme hardships and the frustration of the momentary loss of faith, but their overriding message remained. These four were stalwart in their convictions, dedicated to the Latter-day Saint course during ordeals as refugees in exile and many other struggles throughout their lifetimes.

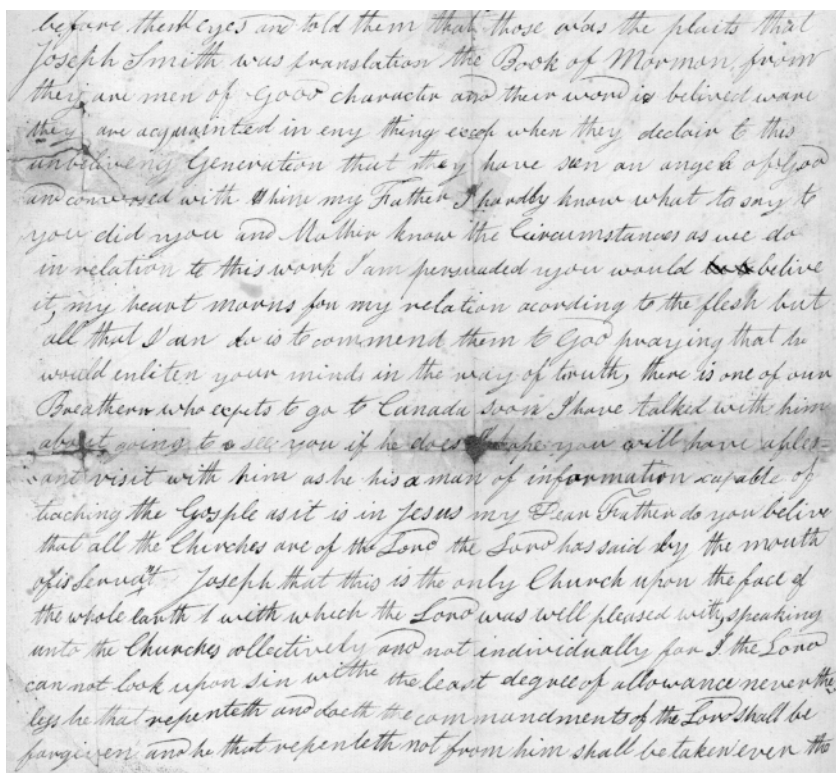
Once in the fold, these independent and self-actuated women desired their familial intimates to join them, despite the trials they would surely encounter in hopes of happiness in this life and an ultimate eternal reward. As research continues to elucidate more shadows and complexities in American religious history, greater insight into the motivations and desires of those who embraced Mormonism will expand our understanding and appreciation of the faith.

The four letters printed here reflect a portion of the collection at Church Archives. My research has uncovered some forty letters written by women during the first decade of the Church. No doubt many others exist but are not available in archival collections. While the process of choosing letters for this document corner was unscientific, these four letters are representative of the diversity among early Mormon women's letters.

The original of each letter, with the exception of the Phebe Peck letter, is located in the Church Archives. The location of Phebe Peck's letter is unknown, though the Church Archives possesses a fine photocopy. Though faded, all of the original letters are in relatively good condition. Editorial marks added include carets < > to indicate insertions into the text by the authors themselves. Strikeouts are shown by ~~strikeouts~~. Brackets [] indicate my textual clarifications. Minimal punctuation has been added for clarity.

These four letters capture insights into the lives of four distinctly different women. They were not extremists. They were satisfied with their circumstances, like many other women of the time, and did not move to

radically alter their female experience.¹⁰ But as their letters demonstrate, once they had felt of God's love and the power of the restored gospel, they rejoiced and were compelled to share it with others (fig. 1).¹¹



before their eyes and told them that those were the plights that Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon, from them are men of good character and their word is believed where they are acquainted in any thing except when they declare to this unbelieving Generation that they have seen an angel appeared and conversed with him my Father I hardly know what to say to you did you and Mother know the Circumstances as we do in relation to this work I am persuaded you would ~~be~~ believe it my heart mourns for my relation according to the flesh but all that I can do is to commend them to God praying that he would enlighten your minds in the way of truth, there is one of our Brethren who expects to go to Canada soon I have talked with him about going to see you if he does ~~perhaps~~ you will have a pleasant visit with him as he has a mass of information capable of teaching the Gospel as it is in Jesus my Dear Father do you believe that all the Churches are of the Lord the Lord has said by the mouth of his servant Joseph that this is the only Church upon the face of the whole earth with which the Lord was well pleased with speaking unto the Churches collectively and not individually for the Lord can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance nevertheless he that repenteth and doeth the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven and he that repenteth not from him shall be taken away the

Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 1. Excerpt from Rebecca Williams's 1834 letter to her father, Isaac Swain. Although Isaac had disowned Rebecca for joining the Church, Rebecca continued to share her testimony of the Restoration, Joseph Smith, and Jesus Christ in hope that her family would one day be converted to the truth. The full text of Rebecca's letter is printed on pages 100–102.

10. See Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims in America: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 6–7.

11. Jeremy Mumford maintains that the Mormon attitude regarding gender was no different from that of other Americans but involved a different, more informal concept of evangelism for women. These letters are a prime example of informal warning. See Jeremy Mumford, "The Sexual Dynamics of 'Warning': Women, Men and the Mormon World Mission, 1830–1860," senior essay in history, Yale College, May 13, 1992, Church Archives.

Letter of Lucy Mack Smith to Solomon and Ester Mack, 1831

Lucy Mack Smith experienced a broad spectrum of challenges and pleasures in her lifetime. The woman who became the mother of the Prophet Joseph had the personality and mental acuity to mold her individuality as a female member of the Church of Christ. Lucy Mack was born in July 1775 in Gilsum, New Hampshire. Because of the influence of Lucy's mother, the Macks' was a deeply religious home where the Bible and education were central. This religious emphasis and familial tradition produced children who tended to focus their lives spiritually. The Macks were believers in visions, healings, and miracles. The example of her mother and Lucy's own brush with death generated in Lucy a firm desire to provide a comparable spiritual environment in her home to teach her family to serve God.¹²

Lucy Mack met Joseph Smith Sr. in Tunbridge, Vermont, where she was visiting her brother. They were married in 1796. Joseph Smith Sr. was an inwardly religious man who, from his familial tradition, was suspicious of organized religion. But with the support of her husband, Lucy centered her life in spirituality and religion despite her lack of adherence to a particular church.¹³ She was introduced to the truths of the Restoration through her third son, Joseph, and though she was older than the other women included here, her testimony is strikingly similar. She adapted her stores of spiritual experience to encompass the new realities she discovered daily through the articulations of her son. She was officially united with the Church at her baptism in 1830 at the age of fifty-four.

Lucy was unfailingly strong-willed, knowledgeable, and forthright in admonishing others and sharing her beliefs with those around her. She was also courageous. As a protective mother and an ardent believer in God, Lucy once professed to a Presbyterian deacon, "If you should stick

12. Biographical information about Lucy Mack Smith comes from Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); and Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853; reprint, Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1995).

13. Although she convinced the Presbyterian minister in Palmyra to baptize her and three of her children, she specified she did not want to be baptized a member of that church. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 53, n. 32.

my flesh full of faggots, and even burn me at the stake, I would declare, as long as God should give me breath, that Joseph has got that Record, and that I know it to be true.”¹⁴ A few months later, Lucy Smith led a group of eighty Saints to Kirtland in extremely harsh circumstances. Her company and at least one other were halted at Buffalo by ice on Lake Erie. Lucy felt the necessity to hurry on the journey, but the other leaders were inclined to wait until the ice broke up. After chiding those leaders about their lack of faith, Lucy and her company boarded their boat and watched the ice separated to allow their passage.¹⁵

As the mother of the Prophet, Lucy was not immune to the privations suffered by the Saints throughout their experience. She was subjected to the trials of Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo. In Nauvoo she lost her husband of fifty-four years, and within four years she also witnessed the passing of four of her five sons, two of whom were violently taken. Though she expressed her support of Brigham and the Twelve,¹⁶ she stayed in Nauvoo after the Saints left. She died in Nauvoo under the care of her daughter-in-law Emma in 1856, still consistent in her testimony of her son’s work.

In an 1831 letter to her brother Solomon Mack, written the year after her baptism, Lucy displays her knowledge and zeal regarding the latter-day work of God. The letter is a buff-colored folded sheet written on three sides in black ink that has faded to sienna brown. Lucy’s handwriting is petite and precise. Abounding in Book of Mormon vernacular, the letter testifies of Lucy’s beliefs and admonishes her brother and his family to come to the light of the restored gospel.¹⁷ Her writing sets the theme for this group of letters: taste the love of God and share it.

Waterloo¹⁸ January 6th 1831

14. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 135.

15. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 529–34.

16. Ronald W. Walker, “Lucy Mack Smith Speaks to the Nauvoo Saints,” *BYU Studies* 32, no. 1 and 2 (1992): 276–84.

17. In her letter, Lucy alludes to Book of Mormon ideology and doctrine. Readers will recognize passages from scripture including the Book of Mormon title page; 1 Nephi 10:4, 18; 19:8; 2 Nephi 25:18–19; 26:12; 28:13–16, 30; 29:1–10; Jacob 5:70–72; Mormon 9:22–25; and Moroni 1:1–4, 7, 19.

Dear Brother & Sister¹⁹

Although we are at a great distance from each other and have not had the pleasure of seeing each other for many years,²⁰ yet I feel a great anxiety in your welfare, and especially for the welfare of your souls; and you yourselves must know that it is a thing of the greatest importance to be prepared to meet our God in peace, for it is not long before he is to make his appearance on the earth with all the hosts of heaven for to take vengeance on the wicked & they that know not God.²¹ By searching the prophecies contained in the old testament we find it there prophesied that God will set his hand the second time to recover his people the house of Israel. He has now commenced this work: he hath sent forth a revelation in these last days; & this revelation is called the book of Mormon, it contains the fullness of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and is sent forth to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things God hath done for their fathers; that they may know of the covenants of the Lord & that they are not cast off forever, and also of the convincing of both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the <Christ the> Eternal God and manifests himself unto all nations; it also contains the history of a people which were led out of Jerusalem six hundred years before the coming of Christ in the flesh. God seeing the wickedness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem he sent out a prophet named Lehi and commanded him to declare to the people that

18. Waterloo, New York, is ten miles northwest of Fayette. This letter coincided with a conference of the Church at the Whitmer home in Fayette. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:140 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

19. Solomon Mack (1773–1851) and Ester Hayward (1773–1844). Solomon was the youngest Mack brother, and Lucy the youngest sister. Two years separated them. Lucy was hesitant to include any details of his life in her history, reasoning that he was yet alive and could write his own history. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 35.

20. Solomon Mack lived in Gilsum, New Hampshire, for most of his adult life. Since Gilsum is 286 miles east of Waterloo, Solomon's siblings likely did not have much interaction with him. In her history, Lucy published an 1835 letter from her brother Jason to Solomon that also referred to the many years that had passed since they had seen each other. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 52–53.

21. This period, as Grant Underwood has shown in *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), was a time of ardent millennial expectations for the Saints and Christians in general. Many believed the Second Coming of Christ was imminent or had already occurred. Surely the common usage of different variations of the phrase "I come quickly" throughout the new revelations added to these millennial expectations of the Saints. See Doctrine and Covenants 33:18; 34:12; 35:27; 36:8.

unless they repented of their sins that the City would be destroyed but they would not hear him but sought to take away his life, therefore the Lord commanded him to take his family together with another man named Ishmael and his family and flee out of the City and they were led by the hand of the Lord on to this continent, and they became very numerous and were a people highly favoured of the Lord, but there arose contentions among them and the more wicked part of them being led by one of the sons of Lehi named Laman arose up in rebellion against their bretheren and would not keep the commandments of God therefore he sent a curse upon them and caused a dark skin to come over them and from Laman our Indians have descended the more righteous part of them were led by another of the sons of Lehi named Nephi he being a prophet of the Lord. I can not give you much of an insight into these things but I write this that when you have an opportunity of receiving one of the books that you may not reject [it] for God has pronounced a curse upon all they who have ~~an~~ a chance to receive it and will not for by it they will be judged at the last day. There are many in these parts who profess to know God and to be his humble followers that when this thing is offered them they say we have [2] bible enough and want no more, but such are in the gaul of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity and understand not the bible which they have, for all the holy prophets speak plainly of the gathering of the house of Israel and the coming forth of this work; and God says he will give us line upon line precept upon precept here a little and there a little: there are more nations than one and if God would not reveal himself alike unto all nations he would be a partial [God]: we need not suppose that we have all his words in our bible neither need we think that because he has spoken once that he can not speak again. Perhaps you will enquire how this revelation came forth, it has been hid up in the earth fourteen hundred years, it was placed there by Moroni, one of the Nephites, it was engraven upon plates which have the appearance of gold, he being a prophet of the Lord, and seeing the wickedness of the people and knowing that they must be destroyed, and also knowing that if the plates fell into the hands of the Lamanites that they would destroy them, for they sought to destroy all sacred writings therefore he hid them up in the earth, having obtained a promise of the Lord that they should come forth in his own due time unto the world, and I feel to thank my God that he hath spared my life to see this day. Joseph after repenting of his sins and humbling himself before God was visited by an holy Angel whose countenance was as lightening and whose garments were white above all whiteness and gave unto him com[m]andme[nts, page torn] which inspired him from on high. and gave unto him [power] by the

means of which was before prepared that he should translate this this book,²² and by <reading> this this our eyes are opened that we can see the situation in which the world now stands [fig. 2] that the eyes of the whole world are blinded, that the churches have all become corrupted, yea every church upon the face of the earth that the Gospel of Christ is no where preached.²³ This is the situation which the world is now in, and you can judge for yourselves if we did not need something more than the wisdom of men for to show us the right way. God seeing our situation had compassion upon us and has sent us this revelation that the stumbling block might be removed, that whosoever would might enter. He has now established his church upon the earth as it was in the days of the Apostles. He has now mad[e] a new and everlasting covenant ~~with~~ and all that will hear his voice and enter he says they shall be gathered together into a land of promise and he himself will come and reign on earth with them a thousand years he is now sending forth his servants for to prune his viniard for the last time and wo be [3] unto them that will not hear them. There are many who think hard when we tell them that the churches have all become corrupted, but the Lord God hath spoken it and who can deny his word; they are all lifted up in the pride of their hearts and think more of adorning their fine

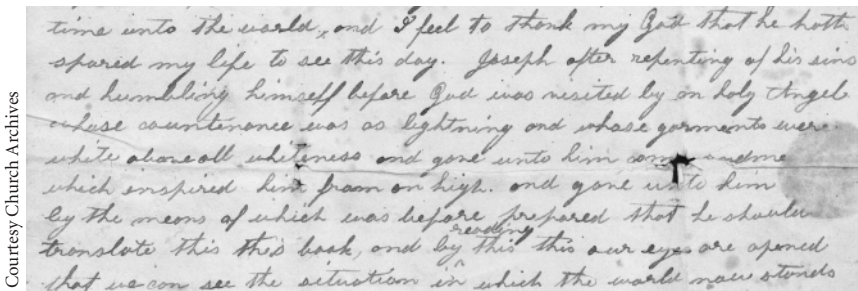


FIG. 2. Excerpt from Lucy Mack Smith's 1831 letter to Solomon and Ester Mack. In this portion of the letter, Lucy recounts the Angel Moroni's visit to her son. Lucy's letter, written in petite and precise handwriting, contains many references to the Book of Mormon as well as her testimony of the restored gospel.

22. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:6–8; and *History of the Church*, 1:10–12.

23. In Joseph Smith's 1832, 1838, and 1842 accounts of the First Vision, he focused on the corruption of all churches on the earth at that time. See *History of the Church*, 1:5–6; and Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 155–69.

sanctuaries than they do of the poor and needy: the priests are going about preaching for money, and teaching false doctrines and leading men down to destruction by crying peace peace when the Lord himself hath not spoken it. When our Saviour was upon the earth he sent forth his disciples and commanded them to preach his Gospel and these signs he said should follow them that believed, in my name the[y] shall do many wonderful works they shall cast out devils, they shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover;²⁴ now where can we find these signs following they that call themselves preachers of the Gospel and why they do not follow; it surely must be because they do not believe and do not teach the true doctrine of Christ for God is the same yesterday today and forever and changeth not. We read that at the day of Pentacost people being pricked in their hearts began to cry saying men and brethren what shall we do and Peter being filled with the Holy Ghost stood up and said repent every one of you and be baptised in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for a remission of your sins and you shall receive the Holy Ghost.²⁵ [page torn] this promise was not to them alone for he goes on to say this [page torn, prom]ise is to you and to your children and to all [who] are afar off [page torn] as many as the Lord our God shall call: therefor the promise extends unto us if we will obey his commands. Peter did not tell them to go away and mourn over their sins we<e>ks and months and receive a remission of them and then come and be baptised, but he told them first to repent and be baptised and the promise was they should receive a remission of their sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and this is the Gospel of Christ, and his church is established in this place and also in the Ohio, there has been three hundred added to the church in the Ohio within a few weeks and ther are some added to this church almost daily,²⁶ the work is spreading very fast. I must now close my letter by entreating you as one that feels for your souls to seek an interets in Christ and when you have an opportunity to receive this work do not reje<c>t it but read it and examine for yourselves I will now bid you farewell and I want you to some of you come here or write immediately for we expect to go away to the Ohio early in the spring

24. See Mark 16:17–18.

25. See Acts 2:37–38.

26. Parley P. Pratt noted that “the churches in Ohio had increased to more than a thousand members, and those in New York to several hundred.” Parley P. Pratt Jr., ed., *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 5th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1961), 61.

[1831]²⁷ if you write this winter you may direct your letters to Waterloo Seneca County.

I want you to think seriously of these things for they are the truths of the Living God. Please to accept this from your Sister Lucy Smith [fig. 3].

Advertised

July 1

To be left at Keen[e]²⁸
post office

Seneca Falls²⁹

N.Y. 8 Jany

Capt. Solomon Mack³⁰

Gilsum

New Hampshire

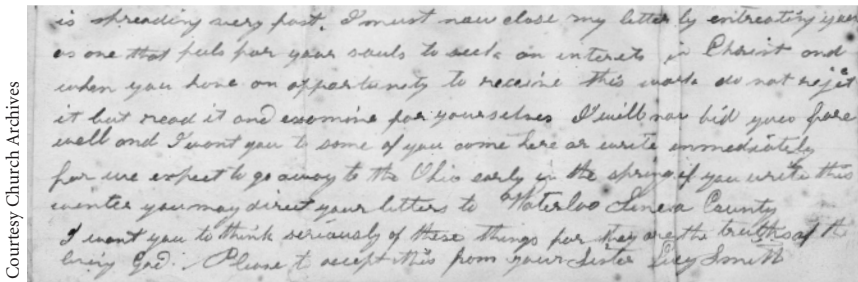


FIG. 3. Conclusion and signature of Lucy Mack Smith's 1831 letter to Solomon and Ester Mack.

27. Lucy would lead a group of eighty to Kirtland in February or March of the same year. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 172–84.

28. Keene, New Hampshire, is nine miles south of Gilsum.

29. Seneca Falls is five miles east of Waterloo.

30. In her 1853 history (written in 1845–46), Lucy mentions that Solomon was known as Captain “for at least twenty years.” Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 35.

Letter of Phebe Peck to Anna Pratt, 1832

In June 1830 amid the harassment of neighbors, a young widow, Phebe Peck, was baptized a member of the newly formed Church of Christ in a dammed river in Colesville, New York.³¹ Phebe Crosby was born in March 1800 to Elisha Crosby and Susan Lowell at Unadilla, Otsego County, New York. Phebe married Benjamin Peck in about 1819; they had five children together before his death in 1829.³² They lived in Bainbridge, New York, and after her husband was gone, Phebe maintained a close relationship with his extended family, who lived nearby. Benjamin's family comprised a good portion of those baptized with Phebe and became known as the Colesville Saints.³³ They were persecuted from the time of their baptisms until the oppression reached an apex, and they left New York the following April.

Phebe left Colesville with the other Saints for Thompson, Ohio, which offered just a brief respite from their troubles and tribulations. The initial good will of Lemam Copley, who invited the uprooted group to his farm to live, was short-lived. After Copley's disenchantment with the Church and the personal difficulties of the Colesville Saints, they were on the move again within a couple of months. With hopes of Zion fresh in their minds, they were some of the first Saints to settle in Jackson County, Missouri.

31. Mobs tore down the dam built by the Colesville Saints for baptisms. The baptisms had to be postponed until the following day when the dam could be rebuilt. The confirmations planned for that same evening also had to be postponed until later. The majority of information about Phebe given here comes from William G. Hartley, *"They Are My Friends": A History of the Joseph Knight Family, 1825–1850* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1986), 51–53; Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1971; Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2000), 202–301; and International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers, *Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Publishers Press, 1998), 3:2549.

32. Hezekiah (1820–1859), Samantha (1821–1839), Henry (1823–died young), Henrietta (1823–1896), and Sarah Jane (1825–1893) were their children. Henry and Henrietta were twins.

33. Benjamin Peck's two brothers, Hezekiah Peck (1782–1850) and Ezekiel Peck (1785–1850), and their families also joined with the Saints at Colesville. They were all baptized on June 29, 1830. Benjamin's sister, Polly Peck Knight (1774–1831), had married Joseph Knight Sr., and the Pecks had become acquainted with Joseph Smith through Joseph Knight, who Joseph Smith called "a faithful old man." "Records of Early Church Families," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 26 (July 1935): 108–9.

The Colesville group was an integral part of the first emigration to Missouri. Phebe and her family were active members of the Kaw Township congregation, where she taught her children the principles of the gospel and supported her family as a tailoress.³⁴ Then, after twelve years of providing for her family alone, Phebe married Joseph Knight Sr., following the death of his first wife, Polly Peck Knight, in 1831. Polly was a sister of Phebe's first husband. Phebe and Joseph had two children together for a total of sixteen, though most of the children were already living away from home at the time of their marriage. Joseph was twenty-eight years Phebe's senior.³⁵

Phebe experienced the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County, the later difficulties in northern Missouri, the move to and life in Nauvoo, and the sorrow associated with the martyrdoms of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Joseph Knight Sr. died in 1847. After his death, Phebe married Cornelius P. Lott.³⁶ Thereafter, Phebe spent her time with her children and their families until her death in 1849.³⁷

34. *Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude*, 3:2549.

35. In his journal, Newel Knight described their union in this way: "My Father had married again after my Mothers death a widow Peck my Mothers Brothers widow with four small children he was now getting old & it seemed a hard struggle for him to get along." Newel Knight, *Autobiography and Journal*, [51], Church Archives. In 1845, Phebe was to be sealed to Joseph Knight Sr. in the Nauvoo Temple, but she initially refused. She said that she cared for him but "did not love and honor him as her head and bosom companion." They were separated for a season, but after some discussion with a Church leader, Phebe showed up at the temple the day of the scheduled sealing. Though there seemed to be no major difficulties between Phebe and her husband, tension seemed continually present between Phebe and Joseph's older children. Newel Knight, *Autobiography*, [40, 111], Church Archives.

36. They were married at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, on March 30, 1847. There is no record of them living together. See, for example, "Records of Early Church Families," 109.

37. The exact date of Phebe's death is unknown. On May 6, 1849, from Andrew County, Missouri, Martha Long Peck, Phebe's sister-in-law, wrote a letter to her son Reed in Corlandville, New York, telling him of Aunt Phebe's death. She also mentioned the deaths of Joseph Knight Sr. and Newel Knight, both of whom had died two years previously. Martha Long Peck to Reed Peck, Church Archives. To further complicate the matter, Newel's widow, Lydia Knight, wrote to Brigham Young from Pottawatomie County, Iowa, on May 28, 1849, explaining that she would not be heading west that season as "Mother Knight" claimed that the wagons and cattle, which were rightly Lydia's, were given to the Riches (two of Phebe's daughters married Rich brothers, Charles and Thomas). After Lydia's inquiry into the matter, the property was given to her but not in time for her to go west that season. Brigham Young, *Papers, Incoming Correspondence*, Church Archives. Though Lydia's letter was written after Martha's,

Though the historical record does not supply us with many specific details of Phebe's life, her 1832 letter to Anna Pratt gives us what other records do not. It provides a detailed account of a time of reflection and relative peace in Zion. Her candor, as she shared her beliefs and her plain-spoken censure of and admonitions to her non-Mormon friends who had not accepted the message of the Restoration, evidences her devotion to the restored gospel. The photocopy of the Phebe Peck letter suggests that the original document was one folded sheet, 15" x 11", written on three sides in meticulous penmanship in dark ink.

Independence³⁸

May

August the 10 1832

Affectionate Sister³⁹

I received your letter Jan. 22 which gave me great pleasure.⁴⁰ I esteemed it as a blessing to have the priveledge of hearing from you once more you must forgive my negligence in not writing before as I have been busily engaged in business but I shall now attempt to writte you the sentiments of my heart in the fear of my God I can realize that I am seperated a great distance from you but yet my mind will often travel back to the place of your abode but Anna it is not because I wish myself back but it is because of the feelings I have for <you> and the rest of my relatives in that part of <the> world⁴¹ yes we are seperated by roling bellows of water but the Lord's

Lydia may have been writing about a past event that would lead one to believe that Phebe must have died by May 1849, since she is absent from any records farther west than Winter Quarters.

38. Phebe was most likely living in nearby Kaw Township at the time, though return letters would have to be directed to Independence. Hartley, *Joseph Knight Family*, 77; *History of the Church*, 1:196–206.

39. Anna Jones Pratt (ca. 1813–?), wife of Stephen B. Pratt (ca. 1810–?), was a relative of Phebe. Larry C. Porter, "'Ye Shall Go to the Ohio': Exodus of the New York Saints to Ohio, 1831," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Ohio*, ed. Milton V. Backman Jr. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1990), 8–9. It is possible that Anna was Phebe's sister, but because of a lack of information about the family of Elisha and Susan Crosby, the familial connection remains in question. Anna and Stephen B. are found in the 1840 and 1850 census for New York State, living in Bainbridge, Chenango County.

40. The location of the January 22 letter is unknown.

41. Census records show there were Pratts and Pecks in Chenango County, New York, throughout most of the nineteenth century.

protecting hand has been over us through all our travels and has brought us safely to this land where I shall spend the remainder of my days and if I ever see you again it will be upon this land and I will assure you it would be a joyful meeting to us all. I well remember the last time I saw you when I took my leave of you the sensations of my Heart at that time I think will never be forgotten by me⁴² although I did not know when I left that I should be called to come thus far and I presume it has been that which has caused you to <almost> wonder but did you know as I know concerning our leaving Ohio⁴³ you would not but you do not neither can I tell you but this much I can say that did you know of the things of God and <could you> receive the blessings that I have from the hand of the Lord you would not think it a hardship to come here for the Lord is revealing the mysteries of the heavenly Kingdom unto his Children⁴⁴ and these blessings in your state of unbelief you can not enjoy but you may yet have the priveledge if you have not entirely hardened your heart against these things and I would exhort you not to reject another call you have been called to repent of your sins and obey the gospel you have been convicted from time to time but you could not give up all for christ and now I feel to say that if you do not give up all and follow your Lord and [2] and Master you will not be made worthy to partake of the Celestial glories in the kingdom of our God I hope you will think of <these> things and ponder them in your Heart for they are of great worth unto the Children of Men. I must tell you the joyful news of the workings of the <Lord> among the Children we have had the pleasing view of beholding eleven children from 8 years old to 14 go down into the water in obedience to the commands of God among whom was my

42. Phebe's language depicts a very intimate relationship. Whether or not they were sisters, as relatives living in the same town, Anna and Phebe most likely had much interaction. Phebe was baptized on June 28, 1830, by Oliver Cowdery. There is no record of Anna being baptized, though she knew Joseph Smith in Bainbridge, New York, and originally planned to leave with the Colesville members. She "ran away" to get married to Stephen and did not go with the Saints. Harriet E. Shay statement, cited in Porter, "New York Saints to Ohio," 8–9.

43. At the January 1831 conference in Fayette, New York, attended by Newel Knight and possibly others from Colesville, Joseph introduced the concept of gathering. Doctrine and Covenants sections 37 and 38 were given coincident with the conference and include the command to gather. After the conference, the Colesville Saints began to pack and attempted to sell their property in order to gather to Missouri. They left Thompson on June 28 and arrived in Jackson County on July 26. Hartley, *They Are My Friends*, 64, 66–68, 73, 74.

44. This closely relates to the revelation included in Doctrine and Covenants 6:7 and 42:61.

three oldest⁴⁵ can we not rejoice in seeing the rising generation growing up in the knowledge of the Lord and I think by giving them good instructions they will grow up and be strong in faith they will arise and testify what the Lord has done for them in the pre<s>ance of a congregation of people Hezekiah says he enjoys himself well he will take up his cross and pray in the family when asked⁴⁶ My Children are all contented and I am very thankful for it⁴⁷ Henrietta and Sarah express a great desire to see you I have not gone to keeping house as yet but I expect to next fall My h<e>alth is tolerable good and also the health of all our friends I must draw to a close by requesting you to give my love to your Husband and Miss Pollard⁴⁸ and all enquireing friends Phebe Peck
 write as soon as you receive this

Anna Pratt

A few lines to Sister Patty⁴⁹

it is with a thankful Heart for the preservation of my life and <for> the priveledge of writing to you that I desire to improve these moments I often think of you while in my lonely meditation and sometimes it will cause a deep sigh to burst forth from my bosom thinking that perhaps I never shall see you again while in this world and again <when> I think I have forsaken all for Christ it bri<n>gs consolation that surpasses the grief on the other hand you must realize my sister that nothing but the mercies of God and his consoling spirit that has upheld me while passing through the trials of

45. Hezekiah, Samantha, and Henrietta Peck were 12, 10, and 9 years old respectively. Sarah Jane, her youngest, was 6 years old at the time of the letter.

46. Hezekiah was named after his uncle Hezekiah Peck. Though the commandment to “take up your cross, in the which you must pray vocally” (D&C 23:6) was specifically directed at Joseph Knight Sr., Phebe demonstrates that its relevance to all Saints was established early on. See also Doctrine and Covenants 1:2, “the voice of the Lord is unto all men.”

47. As Phebe seems concerned that her children are growing up in truth and light, it is interesting that just prior to this letter the Lord specifically mentioned in revelation that the children of Zion were growing up in wickedness (D&C 68).

48. Minerva Pollard (ca. 1797–?) is listed as living with the Pratts in the 1850 census. Her relationship to the family is unknown.

49. The Patty mentioned here may be Hezekiah Peck’s wife, Martha Long Peck, who was known as Patty. However, she was in Independence, Missouri, with Phebe at the time of the letter’s creation. As with Anna, Phebe demonstrates an intimate relationship with Patty.

parting with my near and dear friends⁵⁰ and could you but see and believe as I do the way would be opened and you would come to this land and we should behold each other and rejoice in the things of God for this is A day of rejoicing and also a day of mourning⁵¹[3]

We rejoice when we realize the wonderful works of our Heavenly Father and his dealings towards his children yes I rejoice in the commands and revelations that has been given in these last days⁵² and again I feel to mourn many times because of the unbelief of the Children of men I feel to rejoice with those that rejoice and to weep with those that weep.

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon made us A visit last spring and we had many joyful meetings while they were here and we had many mysteries unfolded to our view which gave me great consolation⁵³ we could view the condescension of God <in preparing> mansions of peace for his children and whoso will not receive the fullness of the gospel and stand as valient soldiers in the cause of christ cannot dwell in the presence of the Father and <the> Son but there is a place prepared for all who do not receive but it is a place of <much> lesser glory then to dwell in the Celestial kingdom. I shall not attempt to say any farther concerning these things as they are now in print⁵⁴ and are going forth to the world and you

50. Phebe had lived in Chenango County, New York, most of her life. Though the assurance that she was doing right in leaving with the Saints consoled her, it did not eliminate the difficulty of parting with friends and family. When she left in 1831, she did not know when she would again see them.

51. See Alma 28:12.

52. Before 1832, when the Church first attempted to print the revelations, Church members learned of the revelations as they were written down and passed around. Certain revelations were more popular and circulated more widely than others. Phebe refers to a number of the early revelations in her letter, demonstrating her desire to learn every new thing that had been revealed by the Lord. Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 1:31; Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants, Volumes I–III" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1974; reprinted on CD, Provo, Utah: The Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, 2001), 14; Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 89, 92.

53. When this letter was written, the revelation we now know as Doctrine and Covenants section 76 had been published as "A Vision," *Evening and Morning Star*, July 1832, 10–11.

54. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon visited Jackson County, Missouri, in April 1832. Present-day sections 82 and 83 of the Doctrine and Covenants were received during their stay. The decision to print the revelations in the original Book of

perhaps will have an opportunity of reading for your self and if you do I hope you will read with a care-ful and a prayerful heart for these things are worthy of notice and I desire that you may search into them for it is <that> which lends to our happiness in this world and in the world to come.

You perhaps would like to know something about my situation I can tell you I have plenty to eat drink and to wear and enjoy as good health as I did in Bainbridge we have good water and this is a delightful country we can raise <our> own cotton and flax and all things that the heart can wish Hezekiah is now at work with one of the Brothers in the church and has earned seven dollars in five weeks the rest of the Children live with me they often speak of their cousins in that place and wish me to send their best love to you and your children I must finish my letter but I would warmly request you to write for my anxiety is great to hear from you please to give my respects to my Brothers and tell them not to forget that they have A sister in Missouri⁵⁵ I add no more. P Peck

Independence Mo.

Aug. 11th

Mr.

Stephen D Pratt

South Bainbridge⁵⁶ Chenengo County
NY

Commandments as commanded by the Lord was made during the April conference, as recorded in section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

55. Though there are no sisters listed, Foster and Archibald Crosby were the brothers of Phebe, according to “Records of Early Church Families,” 108. There is a Foster Crosby in the New York 1830 census living in southeast Putnam County, New York (close to New York City). Archibald is not listed in that census.

56. South Bainbridge (present-day Afton) is approximately fifteen miles northeast of Colesville (present-day Ninevah, New York).

Letter of Rebecca Williams to Isaac Swain, 1834

Rebecca Swain, born in Loyalsock, Pennsylvania, in 1798, was the youngest of the nine children of Isaac Fisher Swain and Elizabeth Hall.⁵⁷ Elizabeth died while Rebecca was young, and the family moved around the Northeast until they settled in Niagara County, New York, where her father remarried. When Rebecca was seventeen, she met Frederick Granger Williams, the tall, dark-eyed pilot of the ship on which Rebecca crossed Lake Ontario to visit her sister Sally Clark in Detroit. Frederick called often at the Clark home, and he and Rebecca were married in late 1815.⁵⁸ Frederick and Rebecca and their four children moved around the great Western Reserve of Ohio before finally settling in Kirtland Mills, Ohio, in 1828 or 1829. There Frederick took up the practice of medicine.⁵⁹ As Frederick worked, Rebecca aided him with patients and learned medical terms and treatments.

In fall 1830, Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer Jr. stopped in Kirtland on their journey west. Rebecca and Frederick were members of Sidney Rigdon's Campbellite congregation in the community. Like many other followers of Rigdon, they listened with interest to the missionaries' message of Christ's restored Church, a new prophet—Joseph Smith—and a newly published record of ancient people in the Americas—the Book of Mormon. Rebecca and her four children attended all of the missionaries' private meetings, accompanied by her husband when his work schedule would permit. She was convinced of the

57. Isaac Swain (1759–1838) and Elizabeth Hall Swain (1755–1813). Most biographical information about Rebecca Swain used here comes from Lucy Ellen Williams Godfrey, *Biographical Information on Rebecca S. Williams*, ca. 1930 and 1935, Church Archives; and Nancy Clement Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams, Second Counselor to the Prophet Joseph Smith in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and His Wife Rebecca Swain Williams, Pioneer of 1849: Read Their True Story in the First Introduction—after 100 Years* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1951).

58. They were married in Wyandotte, Wayne County, Michigan. Frederick G. Williams, "Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church," *BYU Studies* 12, no. 3 (1972): 244.

59. Their children were Lovina Susan (1816–1847); Joseph Swain (1819–1838), an invalid and a major source of concern for Rebecca; Lucy Eliza (1821–?); and Ezra Granger (1823–1905). Frederick's medical services were a needed service on the Ohio frontier. He became very successful through much study and was soon visited by doctors from other parts of the country who wanted to learn from him.

truthfulness of Mormonism and was soon baptized. Frederick needed more convincing. He decided for a time to leave it alone but could not and was later baptized.⁶⁰

Frederick was very enthused about his new religion, and the day after his baptism he left on a mission to Missouri with Oliver Cowdery. Although Frederick planned to return after three weeks, Rebecca did not see him for ten months. Between her husband's calling in Joseph Smith's First Presidency and his missionary efforts, for Rebecca the mission to Missouri would be the beginning of many long months of caring for her family without the aid of her husband. Rebecca's youngest son, Ezra, was her support during Frederick's absence and throughout the rest of Rebecca's life.

With the missionary zeal of a new convert, Rebecca eagerly wrote to her father to inform him of her newfound faith. She was devastated when only a thin letter of response came back to her. Her news infuriated her father, and he insisted that she leave the Church. When she would not, he disowned her and vowed to cut off all communication with her.⁶¹ Evidenced by the remnant of this 1834 letter to her half brothers and her father, the threat was only partially carried out. In her 1835 patriarchal blessing, Rebecca was promised, "In consequence of thy prayers and thy tears, thou shall yet prevail, and the Lord will give thee thy father's family who are now far from the way of Salvation. But the Lord will make bare His arm and show mercy unto them IN MAKING THY HUSBAND A SAVIOR UNTO THEM."⁶² She held hope for this throughout her life.

Frederick and Rebecca gave liberally of their time and means to the building up and protecting of the Church in Kirtland. Before Joseph and Emma Smith's own home was finished in Kirtland, the Prophet and his wife lived across the street with Frederick and Rebecca. One day, as a mob came and surrounded the home, Rebecca astutely dressed Joseph in her bonnet and cloak, and he was able to leave the house and pass through the

60. There is some discrepancy as to their baptismal dates. There was either one day or several weeks between their baptisms. Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 55. Godfrey, Biographical Information.

61. Even her letters to her brother John, to whom Rebecca was particularly close, were returned unopened. On the back of one of the returned letters, John wrote, "Father forbids me reading your letter or to write to you. Goodbye and Bless you always, your brother, John." Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 63. Despite her father's actions, Rebecca's eldest sister, Sarah Swain Clark, joined the Church in Michigan in 1832. Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 63, 72.

62. As cited in Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 89.

crowd to safety. In March 1832, Rebecca and Frederick spent a night removing tar from Joseph's body after he was mobbed in Hiram, Ohio. Such help allowed Joseph to be ready to preach before a packed house the next morning.

According to historian Andrew Jenson, Frederick succumbed to "improper influences" during the difficulties in Kirtland in 1837.⁶³ As a result, he was rejected as a counselor in the First Presidency at Far West, Missouri, in November 1837 and was excommunicated twice. During this time of strain, Rebecca remained stalwart in her defense of Joseph Smith and the Restored Church. Rumors of Frederick's dissent reached her father, Isaac Swain, in Niagara, and he promptly wrote her a letter asking her to return home. When Rebecca's reply arrived in September 1838 reaffirming her faith, Isaac lamented, "'Not a word of repentance!'"⁶⁴

Frederick was rebaptized and died in full fellowship in 1842 at Quincy, Illinois. Rebecca lived the rest of her life as a faithful member of the Church. She received temple ordinances at Nauvoo alongside her son Ezra. Shortly before the journey to Utah, she became a plural wife of Heber C. Kimball, though she was considered a wife in name only.⁶⁵ She initially lived in Salt Lake City, helping her son, Ezra, with his medical practice, before moving to Mill Creek in Salt Lake County. She later helped colonize Utah's Cache Valley with her children and grandchildren. Rebecca died of consumption at Smithfield, Utah, on September 25, 1861.

Rebecca's 1834 letter to her father and stepbrothers, written while her husband was serving as Second Counselor to the Prophet, portrays a woman who feels and knows what she is witnessing. She greatly desired to see her family join the Church, a desire that provoked her to do whatever was in her power to bring it about. In the face of adversity she did not cower. Her strength and conviction are evident. All that remains of the let-

63. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1901–36), 1:52.

64. Cited in Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 197. Rebecca was not aware of this event. One hundred years later, the descendants of Rebecca recovered an unsent letter written to Rebecca by her half brother George relaying the episode. Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 197. The letter is currently housed in Church Archives.

65. Kimball did not provide food or shelter for Rebecca. She remained with her son Ezra's family until her death. Kate B. Carter, *Heber C. Kimball: His Wives and Family* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1967), 7; and *Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude*, 4:3394–95.

ter is one buff-colored sheet, 7" x 12 7/16", written with chestnut ink, and is presumably the last page of the letter. Her elegant script flows with small flourishes.

.....
 he got on [h]is jo<ur>ney, I have been reading over your letter of May the 23 which I have read over again and again⁶⁶ its gives me pain to here that your mind is so much disturbed about the Book of Mormon and the Star⁶⁷ I feal <a>fraid my Father is in some degree gitting into the same Spirit you charge the Editor with, as it regards the origen of the Book of Mormon their ~~their~~ is no disagreement in the Book betwin the Author and the witnesses⁶⁸ the Book plan[l]y shoes for it self Pa 547 and 548 and unto three shall [page torn] be ~~shone~~ shown by the power of God⁶⁹ there is no con-[tra]diction. the plaits was found in the same manner that the Auther says they was in the town of Manchestor Ontario County I have heard the same storry from several of the family and from the three witnesses them selves⁷⁰ I heard them declair in publick meeting that they saw an Holly Angel come down from heaven and brought the plaits and laid them before their eyes and told them that those was the plaits that Joseph Smith was translation the Book of Mormon from they are men of good character and their word is belived [fig. 4] ware they are acquainted in eny thing excep[t] when they declair to this unbeliveng Generation that they have seen an

66. The location of the May 23 letter is unknown, though its existence demonstrates that Isaac's threat to cut off Rebecca completely was not fully carried out.

67. It is probable that this is a reference to the nine letters of Ezra Booth that were published in the *Ohio Star* in 1831 and later in E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: By the author, 1834), 175–221. Although it is unknown how Rebecca's father and brothers obtained the letters, several New York newspapers had reprinted the articles.

68. In his third letter, Booth refutes the testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. In Booth's testimony, he tells of a commandment (revelation) that he read while on a mission in Missouri. The commandment told the witnesses to "see and hear those things by faith, and then they should testify to the world, as though they had seen and heard, as I see a man, and hear his voice." The argument became whether the witnesses saw and heard what they testified to or if it was their imagination. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 186–87.

69. Moroni prophesied of the Three Witnesses in Ether 2.

70. Joseph Smith, his family, and the Three Witnesses testified to the veracity of Smith's account throughout their lives.

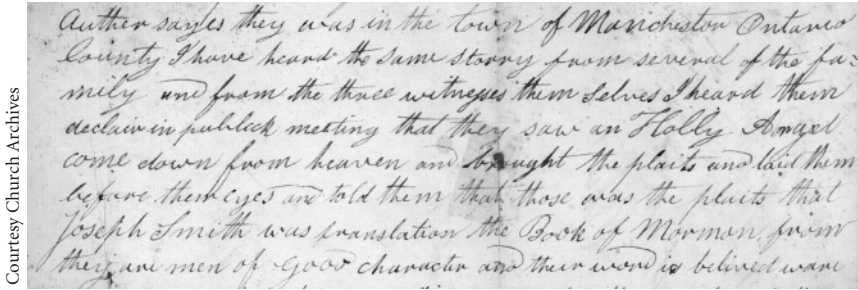


FIG. 4. Excerpt from Rebecca William's 1834 letter to Isaac Swain. In this passage, Rebecca bears her testimony of the Three Witnesses. Writing to her father, who rejected Mormonism, Rebecca testifies of the truth and desires her family to join in her belief.

angel of God and conversed with him my Father I hardly know what to say to you did you and Mother know the Circumstances as we do in relation to this work I am persuaded you would ~~bele~~ believe it, my heart morns for my relation acording to the flesh but all that I can do is to commend them to God praying that he would enliten your minds in the way of truth, there is one of our Breathern who expets to go to Canada soon⁷¹ I have talked with him about going to see you if he does I hope you will have a plesant visit with him as he his a man of information capable of teaching the Gosple as it is in Jesus my Dear Father do you belive that all the Churches are of the Lord the Lord has said by the mouth of [h]is Serva<n>t Joseph that this is the only Church upon the face of the whole earth with which the Lord was well pleased with, speaking unto the Churches collectively and not individually for I the Lord can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance nevertheless he that repenteth and doeth the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven and he that repenteth not from him shall be taken even the [2] light which ~~h~~ he hath received for my Spirit shall not always strive with man saith the Lord of hosts,⁷² ~~as~~ <so> than we see all that are pure in

71. As early as 1830, members were teaching their family members and friends in Upper Canada (Ontario). The Canadian Mission opened in 1832. Since the Swains lived on the southern side of Lake Ontario, it would be uncomplicated for a missionary heading to Canada to stop off in Youngstown. Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:251.

72. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30–31, 33. In 1834, the revelation we know as section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants had been published as "Revelation Given Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831," *Evening and Morning Star*, March 1833, 78.

heart the Lord will bless I want my Brothers to write to me⁷³ I pray the Lord to comfort you in your last day witth his holy Spirit and may they be your best days⁷⁴ my Children join me in love to you I must close my letter to ever remember the instruction [~~unintelligible~~] <thatt> I have recived from my beloved Father yours <in love> Re Williams

do write to us soon, I hope your mind will be composed concerning this work. be asured that we feal firm in the cause knowing that the Lord is at the helm and will ~~th~~ turn and over turn tell all things shall be brought <to> pass and Iseral shall again rejoice in the Lord.

Kirtland Mills⁷⁵
Jun 4

Rec^d June 12, 1834
Mr Isaac Swain

Youn[g]stown

New York Ni Co⁷⁶

73. William and George Swain, to whom the letter is addressed, were stepbrothers to Rebecca. Their mother was Patience Dune, Rebecca's father's second wife. Her older brother John was particularly close to Rebecca as a child. See Godfrey, *Biographical Information*; and Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams*, 12.

74. Isaac Swain lived another four years.

75. Kirtland was also called Kirtland Mills prior to, and throughout the stay of, the Saints. See Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, 37.

76. Youngstown is thirteen miles north of Niagara Falls and thirty-one miles north of Buffalo, New York. Niagara County, New York, is bordered on the north by Lake Ontario.

Letter of Melissa Dodge to William T. Morgan, 1839

Little documentary evidence survives to detail the story of Melissa Morgan Dodge's life. This letter to her brother, William T. Morgan, is the only writing of Melissa Dodge known to exist. The shadowy outline of her life story is found in family genealogical information and the records of her sons.

Melissa Morgan was born blind to Nathaniel Morgan and Mary Wheeler in Jefferson County, New York, on October 28, 1798. She was the oldest of four children.⁷⁷ When she was twenty, she married Erastus Dodge in nearby Henderson. Melissa and Erastus were baptized after meeting Mormon missionaries in 1832. Their entrance into the Church was dramatic. Melissa's oldest son, Augustus, described the restoring of his mother's sight by David W. Patten and Warren Parrish at the time of her baptism. He also explained that his crippled left elbow was healed instantaneously as well.⁷⁸

Melissa bore fifteen children in her lifetime, ten before she had sight. Only seven of the fifteen matured to adulthood. The other eight died before their first birthdays, and several are listed as having the same birth and death date.

Melissa and her family moved to Kirtland in spring 1834. Erastus and Augustus worked on the Kirtland Temple, and undoubtedly Melissa also expended time in aiding those working on the temple and in the completion of the temple itself. The Dodes moved with the Saints from Kirtland to Missouri, arriving during the initial troubles in Clay County. They then settled in Caldwell County on Shoal Creek near Far West. At the surrender of Far West in October 1838, Erastus and Augustus were both held prisoner for eight or ten days. Once reunited, the Dodes were driven out of Missouri in the dead of winter and suffered much. They crossed the Mississippi River to Adams County, Illinois, where the family lived until they moved to Nauvoo. There they resided four blocks from the Prophet. Melissa's son Seth was a mason on the Nauvoo Temple, and the rest of the family also assisted in the construction of the temple and the Masonic

77. Information about Nathaniel and Mary's family is incomplete. The Ancestral File in the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, identifies a daughter, Margaret (1799–?) and another of unknown name (1801–?). It does not include William as a son.

78. Biographical information about the Dodge family is found in Augustus Erastus Dodge, *Mormon Biographical Sketches Collection*, Church Archives; Augustus Erastus Dodge, *Reminiscences*, Church Archives; and Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:742.

Hall. Erastus died in August 1843, and, after two years of widowhood, Melissa died in 1845.⁷⁹

Though the view of Melissa's life is limited, the best glimpse we have of what is obviously her true motivation in life shines through this one personal record. While her poetic flourishes demonstrate her appreciation for the world she then saw around her, her rough articulation shows a lack of formal education. Likewise she demonstrates her knowledge of the scriptures and Joseph Smith's revelations. Melissa's life was an intense struggle, and she stood with those who were willing to sacrifice all for their beliefs.⁸⁰ The Melissa Dodge letter is in excellent condition, one tan sheet 12" x 15" written on three folded sides with russet ink. Melissa's letter is written—almost scrawled—in bold and broad strokes.

June <the> 23 1839

Dear Brother and Sister⁸¹ With thankfull<ness> to the Lord We are yet alive and have this opportunity of leting you no that We are in the land of the living We have bin drove from our home and we are now in Illinois in Adams County Whear We rented land⁸² Seth Works out⁸³ he has 14 dollars a month Sally Works out this Somer and is a doing well⁸⁴ the rest of the Children are at home⁸⁵ all though We have bin <driven> by a Cruel mob

79. Lyndon W. Cook, comp., *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839–1845* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994), 21.

80. Joseph Smith Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams, 1835), 58–62.

81. This letter is found in William T. Morgan, Correspondence, Church Archives. Morgan is listed as living in Henderson, New York, in the 1830 and 1840 censuses. Information is not available as to the identity of his wife.

82. The Dodges lived near Far West from spring 1835 until late 1838. Adams County, Illinois, just south of Hancock County, was a place of refuge for many of the Saints after the expulsion from Missouri. Many used Adams County as a place of preparation before moving on to Nauvoo. See Susan E. Black and Richard E. Bennett, eds., *A City of Refuge: Quincy, Illinois* (Salt Lake City: Millennial, 2000.) With a branch of the Church at nearby Freedom, the Dodges were in the company of many fellow Saints. Stanley B. Kimball, "Nauvoo West: The Mormons of the Iowa Shore," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 132–42.

83. Seth George Dodge (1821–1882), Melissa's oldest living son, was eighteen at the time the letter was written. Seth and Sally worked away from home.

84. Sally Morgan Dodge (1826–1877), Melissa's oldest daughter, was thirteen at this time.

85. With Sally and Seth gone, Melissa had five children to care for at home. By the time she wrote this letter, she had buried six children.

We can say like paul We take the Spoiling of our goods Joyfully noing thear is a god in heaven Which Will <bring> them to judgment in his one [own] due time and the day [is] soon a coming When his Saints shall not be driven and harrist about by a Cruel mob but thanks be to my god the day is night [nigh] and the [h]our is neer When he Will take vengenc on all the ungodly and give his Children a reward a crown of righteousness While the Wicked must perish under his Wrath for they have drive some from thear homes and Some they have kiled in a Shocking maner Some they Whiped and Some they put in prison but all this is to show that the Scripture Shall be fullfilled and the time dray nigh When the Son of man will Come to reine With his Saints⁸⁶ for the time is Come that judgment must begin at the house of god⁸⁷ and if it first begin at us What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God if Righ[te]ous Scarcely be Saved Whear Shall the ungodly and Sinner appear though Wicked men and divels Strive to keep us from that land and from thear homes the Saints they drive to try the Lords Comand We are Still determind [to] maintain the faith Wich once Was deliverd to the Saints [2] and not fall away like Some have and deni <the> gospel of Christ⁸⁸ they are thoughts [those] that fel on Stonny ground Who When they have h[e]ard the Word immediatly receive it with gladness and no root in them Selves and So endure but for a time afterward⁸⁹ When affliction or persecutions ariseth for the Words Sake immediately they are offended but We are determind by the grace of God our lord and Savor Jesus Christ to <endure> in faith to [the] end that We may receive the Crone that is prepared for his Saints⁹⁰ I prais my maker While I breath[e] if I am drove from place to place and serve the Lord for this I no he has no other Church Below I do feel to rejoyce that it is as well With us as it is for god has bin our Sheald and buckler⁹¹ he has bin our Covet [cover] in the Storme When We Weare drove from Missouri in february aCrost the prearas [prairies] you must realise [fig. 5] your Self how you Wo[u]ld have felt to have bin drove from your home for nothing but for

86. See Doctrine and Covenants 43:29.

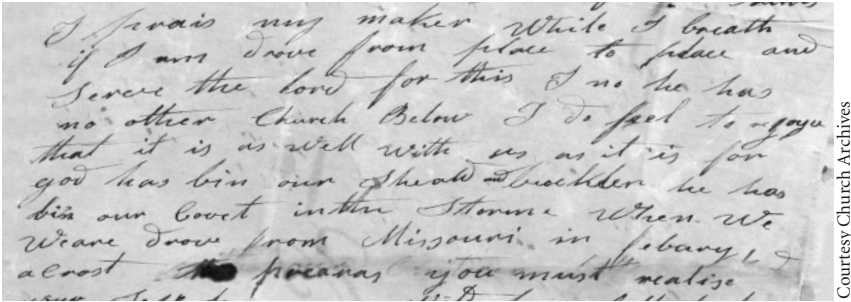
87. See Doctrine and Covenants 112:25.

88. The Lord repeatedly warned the Saints through revelation that "if thou art not aware, thou wilt fall" (see D&C 3:9). With ten to fifteen percent of members leaving the Church after the trials in Kirtland and with continuing problems with apostasy through the events in Missouri, the Saints were accustomed to apostasy by the time they reached Illinois. Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, 462.

89. See Mark 4:16.

90. See Doctrine and Covenants 78:15.

91. See Doctrine and Covenants 35:14.



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 5. Excerpt from Melissa Dodge's 1839 letter to William T. Morgan. In this portion of her letter, Melissa expresses gratitude to her Lord, who delivered her family from the Missouri mobs. Melissa's letter shows great determination, faith, and hope in the face of adversity.

the religion of Jesus Christ in <the> dead of the Winter on the open preras [prairies] With your littles ones but thanks be to the Almighty god he has preserveve [preserved] us and has <kep> us from <the> hand of our Cruel enemies Who Was threatning our lives daly & if [I] Could See you and talk With you I could tell you all about it We Want to See you all or hear from you may god grant to give you his Spirit to enable you to See the thruth as it is in Christ Jesus that We may meet in the Celestel Kindom of god Whear parting is no more thear We Shall Sing our makers prais through out relms of endlis days⁹² <We> Weant you Should Write and let us no Whear our Brothers and Sisters all are So We can Write to them to let them no that We are a live⁹³ and Writ as so[o]n as you get this letter that I may hear from you once more for I cant express how I Want to see you all and talk With you and then I could tell you this from your Brother and Sister Erastus and Melissa Dodge

give our love all enquiring frends
Derect your <letters to> Adams County
Pa[y]son post office Illinois

92. Though Melissa's handwriting and spelling are particularly crude in comparison to that of the other letters introduced in the article, Melissa's style is the most poetic.

93. There were at least three generations of Morgans who lived in Jefferson County. There is little information available on the Dodge family.

I heard last Summer that father Was dead⁹⁴ thear fore I shant Said
<not> much about him blesed are the dead that die in the Lord⁹⁵

Dont for git to let me no Whear you all are and Writ[e] immeatly that
I may no Whear you all are and then I Will Write more particulars

I See the little birds With Eas[e] fly ove[r] the hils and lofty trees Could
I but fly as Well as theay I [would] quicly Com and talk with the[e.]

Melissa Dodge

To Mr
William T Morgan
Of Henderson; CO.
Of Jefferson; NY

Payson Ill⁹⁶

July 6

Over

Sandy Hill
Payson Illinois

94. Nathaniel Morgan (1772–) died sometime in the 1830s. He was in Henderson in 1830 for the New York state census.

95. Revelation 14:13. See also Doctrine and Covenants 29:13.

96. Payson is located thirteen miles southeast of Quincy, Illinois.

Janiece Johnson (janiecejohnson@hotmail.com) will continue her academic career at Vanderbilt University in fall 2002. She received a B.A. in political science and an M.A. in American history from Brigham Young University. This documentary article is a selection from her master's thesis, "Give It All Up and Follow Your Lord': Mormon Religiosity, 1831–1843" (Brigham Young University, 2001), which explores the themes of nineteen letters written by early Mormon women. As this is an ongoing research topic, the author requests the help of anyone who may have access to or knowledge of letters written by early women in the Church. If you have information about such documents, you may contact her at the email address listed above. The author would like to thank the staff at the Church Archives for their help and support in the research of this project.

Winnand Oct. 23/60. Great Salt Lake City
October 23rd 1860.
President Brigham Young,

Dear Sir,

Having found no suitable
occupation yet, and being desirous of making
myself useful; I take this opportunity, to recom-
mend myself to your memory for the case, that
any vacancy might have to be filled, and also
in order to give you an idea of my handwriting.

I am a native of Prussia, 33 years of age,
and am perfectly acquainted with practical book-
keeping by double entry, and I am conversant
with the english, low dutch and french language,
the latter however I had no occasion to practise
in the last years.

I should be very glad, if you could give me
any situation suitable to my abilities, and remain
in that expectation

Dear Sir,

respectfully Yours
Paul A. Schettler.

FIG. 1. Paul A. Schettler letter to Brigham Young, 1860. Excellent handwriting, which he developed while working as an apprentice in Germany, was among Schettler's many talents. So good was Schettler's penmanship that it attracted the attention of his mission president, John L. Smith. Swiss Manuscript, January 4, 1863. Manuscript History of the Swiss, Italian, and German Mission, January 4, 1863, Church Archives.

“Give Me Any Situation Suitable”

The Consecrated Life of the Multitalented

Paul A. Schettler

Jacob W. Olmstead and Fred E. Woods

In October 1860, this letter arrived in Brigham Young’s office (fig. 1):

Great Salt Lake City
October 23rd 1860

President Brigham Young,
Dear Sir,

Having found no suitable occupation yet, and being desirous of making myself useful, I take this opportunity, to recommend myself to your memory for the case, that any vacancy might have to be filled, and also in order to give you an idea of my handwriting.

I am a native of Prussia, 33 years of age, and am perfectly acquainted with practical bookkeeping by double entry, and I am conversant with the english, low dutch¹ and french language, the latter however I had no occasion to practise in the last years.

I should be very glad, if you could give me any situation suitable to my abilities, and remain in that expectation

Dear Sir,
respectfully Yours
Paul A. Schettler²

Brigham Young, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, quickly found a “situation suitable” to occupy this enthusiastic Prussian convert who had recently immigrated to Utah. During the April 1861 general conference, Paul A. Schettler was called to open the Netherlands for preaching the restored gospel (fig. 2).³ Schettler’s response to this call was one of many examples of his lifelong dedication to the Latter-day Saints as he put his abilities to use in helping to establish Zion at home and abroad.

The story of Schettler's conversion and experiences as a Latter-day Saint is an intriguing example of one who consecrated his time and talents to the kingdom of God upon the earth. While his faith and commitment to his religion are no different from those of the thousands of converted Latter-day Saint immigrants who were a part of the nineteenth-century fabric of Mormon society, Schettler is unique in several ways. He opened the Netherlands for the preaching of the gospel and traveled to Palestine with Church leaders to rededicate the Holy Land for the return of the Jews. His proficiency in linguistics and his appreciation for foreign cultures significantly contributed to the growth of the Church internationally. In addition, through his singular contributions, Schettler became a prominent and trusted figure in both the religious and the economic communities in Utah. Such contributions include promoting Utah's silk industry, serving as treasurer of Salt Lake City for twenty years, and being called as a secretary in the 1873 Order of Enoch.

Schettler's name is frequently mentioned in primary sources related to these activities; however, despite his significant contributions, he has not received recognition in the form of a biography. Unfortunately, thorough research of archival and family genealogical resources has failed to turn up personal source materials, such as a journal—if Schettler kept one—or correspondence.⁴ Nevertheless, this sketch attempts to flesh out Schettler's life and character through family genealogical records, manuscript collections, newspapers, and his few published correspondences.⁵

Paul August Schettler was born August 13, 1827, in Neuwied, a community established by Moravians on the Rhine River in Prussia.⁶ He was the first surviving son of Frederick Schettler and Charlotte Friedericke Menzel. Sadly, only six days after Paul's birth, his mother died.⁷ Shortly after Charlotte's death, Frederick married Caroline Louise Zipperlen, and they had six children.⁸ Of the children born in that marriage, Bernhard Herman Schettler was closest to Paul. The Schettlers' was a home abundant in love and care generated by parents who were devoted to the welfare and education of their children.⁹ They provided a financially secure environment, extending every advantage for the children's education and medical care. This financial security was most likely due to the father's position as manager of the Brotherhood Inn and Brewery in Neuwied.¹⁰

The Schettler children seem to have excelled in their life's pursuits, thanks in part to education and to parental influence. According to one source, the children had the opportunity to attend "one of the best institutions" for education in Germany.¹¹ Located in the town of Neuwied were a number of institutions for learning established by the Moravian Church for the education of its young members. Paul and his half brothers probably

attended the celebrated boarding school for boys that accommodated the French-speaking Swiss from the diaspora of Moravians in the mid-eighteenth century.¹² Bernhard described the curriculum, including “Grammar in German, French and English, Geography, History, Arithmetic, Latin, writing, reading, Geometry and Theology.”¹³ Paul’s proficiency in several languages, which would serve him so well after his conversion to Mormonism, can be attributed to his learning the language of his family’s homeland (German), those languages taught as part of his education (English, French, and Latin), and the language spoken by his relatives in Zeist (Dutch or Low Dutch).



FIG. 2. Paul A. Schettler, date unknown. *Deseret Evening News*, September 20, 1902, 11.

In addition to secular education, the children were instructed in the theological doctrines of the Moravian faith, also known as the Unitas Fratrum, the dominant religion of the Neuwied community. This Christian denomination descended from the Hussite reforms of the fifteenth century and the German Pietist movement of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ Organized into tight-knit communities, the faith followed no dogmatic creeds but relied wholly on the Bible for guidance, particularly the New Testament.¹⁵ Paul’s family and ancestry were deeply rooted in the religious culture of the Moravians.¹⁶

At the age of fifteen, following his education in Neuwied, Schettler entered an apprenticeship to learn the mercantile trade. Bernhard’s description of Paul’s departure illustrates the close relationship of these two young brothers, though they were over five years apart in age:

In April, 1842 my brother Paul A. left for Gnadana¹⁷ (a 2 days journey by steamboat and rail), father accompanied him half the distance, and I well remember when Paul left at 3 a.m. I was awake in bed feeling sorrowful at his leaving, and just before he left the room, he came to my bedside, kissed me and said “[Bernhard] Herman, you can have my kite,” which of course pleased me very much. Paul was gone for 5 years (1847 seemed to me a very long time to look forward to) to learn the mercantile business.¹⁸

Paul matured so much during his five-year absence that his family felt they hardly knew him. During his apprenticeship, he acquired excellent skills in the mercantile trade, finance, and handwriting. These skills, combined with his knowledge of at least five languages, made his immigration to America and obtaining employment much easier than they might otherwise have been. After his conversion to Mormonism, these skills also made him a valuable asset in any position he was called to fill.

The first in the Schettler family to immigrate to the United States was Friedrich Rudolph Schettler, one of Paul's half brothers, who left in August 1849 to pursue his fortune in New York City.¹⁹ Less than a year later, on January 27, 1850, misfortune struck when Friedrich August Schettler, Paul's father, died. At the time, Paul was in Zeist, Holland, probably working in the mercantile trade near his extended family.²⁰ After the death of Friedrich, the family looked to America for their future. Having received encouraging letters from Friedrich Rudolph, Paul's stepmother encouraged Bernhard to try his hand in New York City as well. Her support was particularly influenced by "some fortune teller having told her that there was much luck going to come to her from across some big water."²¹ Bernhard left for America in November 1852. Between 1848 and 1858, Paul likely worked in the mercantile business at Gnadenfeld in Silesia. During these years, Bernhard wrote encouraging letters to Paul inviting him to New York City.²² Finally, in spring 1858, Paul accompanied his stepmother to America.²³

Arriving in New York, Paul quickly procured employment with Lord and Taylor's Dry Goods Store and later as a bookkeeper for Kauffman and Sohn, a wholesale clothing house.²⁴ Before Paul's arrival, Bernhard rented living quarters large enough for himself, Paul, his mother, and his sister Emily [Emilie], who had also immigrated to New York. When Emily contracted an illness, Dr. Borghaus, an acquaintance of the family, began treating her. It was through Dr. Borghaus, who was investigating the doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that Paul was introduced to Mormonism and informed of the Saints' meeting place in Williamsburgh.

By fellowshipping with the Saints, attending their meetings, and studying the doctrines of the gospel, Paul gained a testimony of the truthfulness of Mormonism. On February 9, 1860, Paul was baptized in the East River by Elder George Q. Cannon, who at that time was attending to the duties of president of the Eastern States Mission and acting as an agent for recently immigrated Mormons from Europe.²⁵ When Paul announced his espousal to Mormonism, his family reacted with mixed emotions. Bernhard had confidence in his elder brother's judgment:

It was on the evening of the 22nd day of February 1860, as we were finishing supper the conversation having turned on the subject of religion and the Mormons that Paul told us that he had been baptized and joined the Latter-day Saints. This almost caused mother to faint. She threw herself on her bed and appeared frantic with grief whilst Emily was trying to quiet her. . . . I was astonished, but having no prejudices, and knowing Paul to be a moral and exemplary man, I at last broke the silence by saying, "Well, there is no use to get excited over this. If Paul has embraced that religion, it is worthy of our consideration, and I propose that we all investigate it prayerfully and without prejudice."²⁶

The horrified reaction of Paul's stepmother was not unusual, considering her lifelong devotion to the Moravian faith. After a family investigation into the doctrines of the Church, Bernhard himself desired to join the group; Paul's stepmother and sister Emily declined, expressing opposition to Bernhard's choice.

Paul's confidence and dedication to his newfound testimony must have been earnest. In spring 1860, on announcing his decision to emigrate to Utah, he handed over his bookkeeping position to Bernhard. Missing his brother's baptism by a few days, Paul departed in early May and left with the third Mormon company of 1860, led by Captain Jesse Murphy. Paul was called to serve as company clerk. He fulfilled this calling, keeping minutes of the company's trek until their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley on August 30, 1860.²⁷

Little is known of Schettler's activities after his arrival in the Valley. The October 23, 1860, letter he sent to Brigham Young suggests he actively sought employment in addition to serving as a clerk to Bishop William G. Young in Grantsville, Utah.²⁸ During this period, he was a member of the Seventeenth Ward of the Salt Lake Stake and was rebaptized on October 28, 1860, by Nathan Davis, then first counselor in the bishopric.²⁹ Such rebaptisms of mid-nineteenth-century immigrant converts were viewed as symbols of their renewed commitment to build the kingdom of God now that they had reached the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

On April 21, 1861, less than eight months after Schettler arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, Elder John Taylor of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles set him apart to preach the gospel in Holland. Schettler and his companion, Elder Anne Wiegers van der Woude, a native of the Netherlands, started east for New York on April 26, crossing the plains with Church teams.³⁰ In Florence, Nebraska, a location used to outfit Mormon wagon trains, Schettler met his beloved brother Bernhard, who was immigrating to the Salt Lake Valley. During their brief reunion, the Schettler brothers together confirmed a woman who had recently been baptized.³¹ Taking leave of his brother, Schettler continued his journey with van der Woude,

and after reaching New York, the two young men crossed the Atlantic on the SS *Etna*, arriving in Rotterdam, Holland, on August 5, 1861.³² Until their arrival, Apostle Orson Hyde was the only Mormon known to have visited this land, having passed through the country in June 1841 en route to Jerusalem to dedicate Palestine for the return of the Jews.³³

After arriving in Rotterdam, the elders soon separated. Van der Woude went to Amsterdam, and Schettler to Zeist, a Moravian settlement where he hoped to find success among his relatives.³⁴ Although Schettler's family received him gladly, they were not inclined to receive the gospel. Describing the reaction to his message, Schettler wrote:

After I had preached to them a little of our doctrines . . . it was very difficult to prevail upon them to listen to sound reasoning from that very hour, because their minds had been prejudiced against us to a great extent, through the reading of the most vile and slanderous reports in Dutch and German newspapers.³⁵

Elder Schettler also had several discussions with local preachers and "learned men," to no avail. Of these interactions, Schettler wrote, "They said they were convinced of the integrity of my intentions, but that I was deluded and a fanatic."³⁶ Leaving some missionary tracts and books translated into German,³⁷ Schettler transferred to Amsterdam to aid van der Woude.

Upon arriving in Amsterdam, Schettler discovered that van der Woude had met with similar trials. Schettler explained that "the national character of the Dutch is to stick to the traditions of their fathers more than other nations, and this spirit is manifested in all their customs and fashions."³⁸ These traditions, mixed with opposition by both the clergy and the government, hindered the proselyting efforts of the elders.³⁹ Shortly after Schettler's arrival in Amsterdam, van der Woude left to preach to his relatives. He achieved some success in the small town of Broek, where he baptized the first three people to accept Mormonism in the Netherlands.⁴⁰ Schettler baptized nine additional converts by February 1862, and the first Dutch branch of the Church was organized in Amsterdam on May 10, 1862.⁴¹ Schettler has occasionally been referred to as the first president of the Netherlands Mission.⁴²

Schettler's language skills proved beneficial in the preaching of the gospel in the Netherlands. After translating several Church missionary tracts and books, including "Authenticity of the Book of Mormon," Schettler undertook the task of translating the Book of Mormon into the Dutch language for the first time. Portions of this translation were read at branch meetings, making sections of the Book of Mormon available to Dutch-speaking members. Although Schettler was praised for finishing the translation and

it was helpful in missionary work, his translation was never published.⁴³ In addition, it is significant to note that Schettler made all the translations of the various tracts and pamphlets used in the mission. This undertaking illustrates his enterprising and possibly ambitious character, given that his companion was a native of the Netherlands.⁴⁴

During fall 1862, Apostle George Q. Cannon, who presided over the European Mission, began touring the missions and branches of France, Scandinavia, Holland, and Switzerland.⁴⁵ On September 24, Schettler and van der Woude met President Cannon, and the three began visiting the Dutch Saints.⁴⁶ At some point during this visit, it was decided that Schettler's language skills in German and French would be put to better use aiding John L. Smith, president of the Swiss and Italian Mission.⁴⁷ However, it is also possible that Schettler's transfer to the Swiss and Italian Mission may have been partially due to personality conflicts with van der Woude.⁴⁸

Van der Woude was left to oversee the Netherlands while Schettler continued on the tour with President Cannon. On September 28, President Cannon and company arrived in Basel, Switzerland. They were met by President Smith and began visiting the many branches in that area. Schettler acted primarily as a translator at these meetings, but he also spoke and bore testimony when called upon. President Cannon, impressed with Schettler's abilities, commented, "Brother Schettler . . . interpreted . . . with much facility and correctness."⁴⁹

Schettler, who acted primarily as an administrative assistant to President Smith, found diverse responsibilities in his new position. Soon after the departure of President Cannon, Smith appointed Schettler president of the south and west districts of the Swiss and Italian Mission. In November 1862, Schettler served as acting president while Smith visited branches in the mission.⁵⁰ During 1863, President Smith and Schettler took turns visiting the fourteen branches and 577 members under their jurisdiction.⁵¹ In early June 1863, Schettler visited the Netherlands and baptized eleven converts. Among these converts was Timothy Mets, who later presided over and greatly expanded missionary work in the Netherlands Mission.⁵² To become more effective in his role as assistant, Schettler began to restudy the French language he had learned in his youth.⁵³

At the end of 1863, President John L. Smith finished his missionary labors and went to England, leaving Schettler once again as temporary president of the mission, then designated the Swiss, Italian, and German Mission.⁵⁴ By February 1864, Schettler learned that he had also been released; William W. Riter had been appointed in his stead as president. A description of Schettler's farewell address in Geneva, left in the Swiss,

Italian, and German Mission manuscript history, illustrates his spirit and closeness with the people:

He spoke with great earnestness and power until a large portion of the congregation was in tears. During his speech he prophesied of the judgments of God which would come upon the inhabitants of Switzerland because of their persecutions of the saints.⁵⁵

The cholera epidemic of 1867–68 that raged through the canton of Zurich was seen by Church officials as the fulfillment of this and other prophecies.⁵⁶

The impact of Paul Schettler's missionary service in both the Netherlands Mission and the Swiss, Italian, and German Mission cannot be overstated. After his release, his companions lamented the loss of his language abilities and praised his dedication to the Saints.⁵⁷ President Riter, who accompanied Schettler to the train at the time of his departure, wrote this tribute in a letter to President Cannon, who had baptized Schettler just four years earlier:

Brother Schettler left here yesterday, *en route* for Zion. I do not like the vain eulogies of the world; still, I cannot help paying a tribute to brother Schettler. He is one of God's true and faithful servants, and his name will not be soon forgotten by the Saints in Switzerland.⁵⁸

Schettler left Liverpool for New York on March 23, 1864, on the steamship *City of London*, ahead of the main body of emigrating Saints and returning missionaries, in order to transport "the books, containing the business of the Emigration" to the Latter-day Saint emigration agents in New York.⁵⁹ He joined incoming Mormon immigrants and his former mission president, John L. Smith, in New York. Together they traveled west to the frontier outfitting post in Wyoming, Nebraska. They then joined the William Hyde Company, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley on October 30, 1864.⁶⁰

After his return to Salt Lake City, Schettler distinguished himself in a wide variety of professional and religious endeavors. In October 1864, Mayor Abraham O. Smoot employed him as Salt Lake City treasurer, a position he would hold for twenty years.⁶¹ Sometime during 1865, Schettler married Bavarian native Maria Joseph "Josephine" Gierich [Gierisch]. Paul and Josephine were married for sixteen years and had no children.

Schettler became an "ardent supporter of the silk industry" established by Brigham Young in the Utah Territory.⁶² In 1867, Paul purchased five acres of land—currently the site of the Yalecrest Chapel—on which he planted mulberry trees.⁶³ He also built two cocooneries in the area, one of which he managed. In 1872, Schettler and fellow sericulturist T. B. H. Stenhouse went to California to learn more about raising silk worms in the

United States.⁶⁴ During this trip, Schettler visited many cocooneries, compared Utah silk samples with those he came in contact with, and imported a new French reel machine for the production of silk in Utah.⁶⁵

In addition to Schettler's work as the treasurer of Salt Lake City and his duties with the silk industry, he dabbled in politics and the mining business. On February 10, 1870, Schettler took part in the Peoples Party's sneaky coup d'état of the newly organized Liberal Party. The Liberal Party had invited all the "people" of the territory to take part in their party officer elections. As it happened, all members of the Peoples Party turned out and outvoted the Liberals. Schettler was voted in as treasurer for the party.⁶⁶ Just a few months later, in June 1870, Schettler tried his hand in mining. A group of men led by John Beck, "the crazy Dutchman," laid claim to a bullion mine in the Tintic Mining District in Utah's Eureka Gulch. Included among the nine claimers was a Paul Shetler.⁶⁷ According to a *Deseret News* article published eighteen years after his death, Schettler "was once secretary of the Eureka Hill Mining company and owned a large amount of its stock."⁶⁸ Although mining was a controversial practice criticized by Brigham Young and others,⁶⁹ Schettler's involvement did not seem to affect his relationship with leading Church authorities.

In November 1872, Paul Schettler was called to accompany a group of prominent Mormons on the second apostolic mission to Palestine. Leaving his duties as Salt Lake City treasurer in the hands of his brother Bernhard,⁷⁰ Paul joined President George A. Smith of the First Presidency, Elders Lorenzo Snow and Albert Carrington of the Council of the Twelve, Fera-morz Little, Thomas W. Jennings, Eliza R. Snow, and Clara A. Little. The objective of the group was twofold: first, to rededicate the "land of Palestine" for the return of the Jews, and second, to visit with foreign dignitaries and observe conditions that would allow for a continuation in the spread of missionary work in new lands.⁷¹ Schettler's abilities were key to the success of this mission. Throughout the trip, he served as a translator to foreign heads of state, Church members, travel agents, guides, and money changers. In addition, he organized the group's travel plans and finances, including currency exchange and record keeping. While in Europe, the travelers visited numerous silk factories where Schettler compared silk produced in Utah with that produced in Europe.⁷²

The Saints in Utah participated in the journey to the Holy Land via correspondences printed in several news publications. Eliza R. Snow wrote to the *Woman's Exponent*, Elder Lorenzo Snow to the *Deseret News*, and Paul A. Schettler to the *Salt Lake Herald*. A perusal of Schettler's letters and those of his companions reveals his unique aptitude for detailed planning,

finance, and language. In addition, his letters illustrate his interest in foreign cultures, their histories, and ancient ruins, which he described meticulously.

Some of the experiences of the group bring life to Schettler's personality. While in Egypt, after Schettler purchased "Turkish caps" for several members in the group, Eliza R. Snow wrote:

The most comically amusing practice, and one of constant exhibition, is a person, either Turk or Christian, on a donkey, with a man or boy in gown or turban, running in the rear, and with a stick punching or striking the animal to quicken its speed. Our highly respected cashier and interpreter, Brother P. A. Schettler, adopted this fashionable style, but much to the regret of Miss Little and myself, he disappointed us of the gratification we anticipated in witnessing the interesting and undignified exhibition, by performing it clandestinely.⁷³

Later, after climbing one of the Great Pyramids of Giza, Schettler wrote:

With the assistance of four strong Arabs, two of whom took me by the hands, and two of them pushing and lifting me from behind, where the steps were four feet high, and after resting several times, I reached the top in seventeen minutes, when my Arabs gave me three cheers and a tiger in regular Yankee style, and tolerably good Arab English, asking me of course for the unavoidable "backsheesh," or fee, which you hear from early morning till late in the evening sounded in your ears for real or imaginary services rendered.⁷⁴

George A. Smith described one interesting scene in which he needed to communicate with a rabbi who spoke Hebrew: "I talked to Brother Schettler, he to a German Jew, and the Jew to the Rabbi, as the latter could only speak in Hebrew."⁷⁵ From this and other experiences during the trip, George A. Smith would later brag that Schettler knew six languages.⁷⁶

The correspondence of those who traveled with Schettler indicates they recognized Schettler's superior language and finance skills as essential to the success of the trip. Eliza R. Snow wrote:

Br. Schettler does not so well understand [Italian] as [he does] French and German, but he manages admirably with R.R. officers &c. wherever we are—he acts as interpreter and business agent &c. &c. Whatever language he may not so well understand, he has a happy faculty of guessing, and we have had no difficulty.⁷⁷

Feramorz Little later praised Schettler's "singular ability in managing the affairs of [the] party and the . . . implicit trust and confidence reposed in him."⁷⁸

While Schettler and the group were in Palestine, Brigham Young began to reemphasize an organization known as the Order of Enoch, a social order based on a revelation of Joseph Smith to create a community where

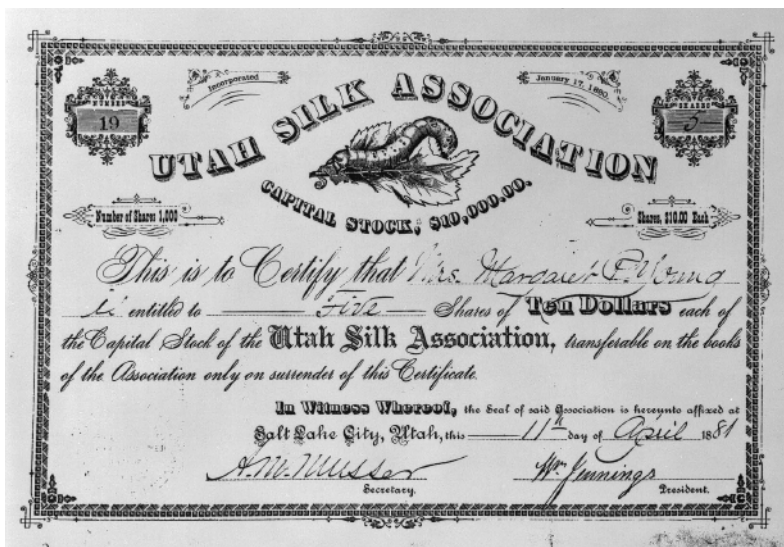
people lived with all things in common. As a result of the economic panic of 1873 and in order to produce economic stability, President Young felt it necessary to reestablish a plan for communal living, known also as the United Order. Nearly 150 community orders were established, the central order being in Salt Lake City. This central administration regulated all other orders, including those organized on a ward level in the city.⁷⁹ On May 9, 1874, after Schettler's return, Brigham Young was elected as president and the Quorum of the Twelve as vice presidents of the order. Paul A. Schettler was elected as one of the six secretaries.⁸⁰

Soon after his return from the Palestine tour, Schettler resumed his duties as treasurer of Salt Lake City. In addition, he was made cashier of the newly organized Zion's Savings Bank and Trust Company.⁸¹ But tragedy struck Schettler on July 8, 1874, when he suffered a stroke of paralysis that debilitated the right side of his body.⁸² Days after the stroke, the *Salt Lake Herald* reported that Schettler was "under the care of an electrician, who says he is confident of restoring him."⁸³ Despite this optimism, Schettler struggled with recovery and relapse throughout the next ten years of his life. However, he continued in the office of treasurer.

In June 1875, the Deseret Silk Association was officially formed, and Schettler was elected treasurer. The main objective of the group was to distribute "information on the subject" of sericulture and "encourage the raising of cocoons and looming silk."⁸⁴ At the meetings of this group, Schettler expressed his expertise in the particulars of raising mulberry trees and silk worms. He also offered to teach anyone who was interested in pursuing sericulture.⁸⁵ To Schettler, sericulture was more than a side occupation; he "felt that in the Manufacture of Silk we [were] helping build up the Kingdom of God."⁸⁶ After the Deseret Silk Association failed because of legal and financial instability, the Utah Silk Association was formed and incorporated on January 17, 1880.⁸⁷ The objectives of the association were similar to those of the preceding organization. Again, Schettler was appointed to act as treasurer (fig. 3).⁸⁸

In addition to deteriorating health, including several more strokes, Schettler suffered major heartache during the last decade of his life. On June 19, 1881, his wife Josephine died after a swimming accident in the Great Salt Lake.⁸⁹ She was lauded as an "excellent wife" and was "highly respected by all."⁹⁰ Less than six months after Josephine's death, Paul married Anna Margrete "Annie" Ballmer.⁹¹ Although little is known of their life together, they did have one son, August Frederick, born November 24, 1882. August died from marasmus in September 1883.⁹²

Annie apparently made good use of the silk her husband produced. A *Deseret News* column praised her fine workmanship: "Mrs. Annie



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 3. Utah Silk Association Stock Quote. As treasurer of the Utah Silk Association, Paul Schettler handled and recorded the monetary affairs of the association.

Schettler . . . has shown us an elegant silk parasol made by her own hands out of home-made silk, and a bonnet and dress of the same material. It is grey in color and flowered beautifully.”⁹³ Annie’s sewing appears to have given her much needed relief from the daily attention and patience her invalid husband required.

In May 1884, Martha Hughes Cannon moved into the Schettler home to help take care of Paul in the final six months of his life. Martha, a plural wife of Angus M. Cannon, was an acclaimed physician and politician. It appears that Martha attended not only to Paul’s stricken condition but also to Annie’s emotional state. In a letter to her husband, Martha reflected on Annie’s trying times. Among other things, she mentioned that Paul had become “irritable & whimsical,” which had caused Annie to be short with him. However, Martha also noted that “no woman (as everyone knows who are acquainted with the matter) could do more than she did.”⁹⁴

Paul August Schettler died on November 5, 1884, at the age of fifty-seven in Salt Lake City.⁹⁵ The funeral service took place in the Salt Lake Twelfth Ward meetinghouse on November 11. Newspapers had been following Schettler’s health the last ten years of his life. His death was reported and a narration of his funeral services was printed by both the *Salt Lake City Herald* and the *Deseret News*, his funeral service making the front page

of the *Deseret News*. Elder T. B. Lewis reportedly “testified to the reputation for honesty and integrity enjoyed by the deceased during the twenty years he had served the public in the capacity of City Treasurer.”⁹⁶ Feramorz Little, who accompanied Schettler on the Palestine tour, praised “the deceased’s nobility of character, [his] honesty. . . [and] his good nature.” He had “never heard a remark from the deceased in any way calculated to wound the feelings of his fellows.”⁹⁷

These fitting comments on the life and deeds of Paul August Schettler describe a man of great gifts with a willingness to assist others. Many held him and his abilities in the highest regard. Although seemingly only one of many obscure figures of early Utah history, Schettler stands apart because of his significant contributions as a Church, community, and business leader.

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1. The Low Dutch mentioned by Schettler possibly refers to a dialect of Dutch spoken in the lowlands of Holland. In this list of languages, he omits the language of his native tongue, which was German.

2. Letter from Paul A. Schettler to Brigham Young, October 23, 1860, Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. All sources cited are in English unless indicated otherwise.

3. “A Visit to the Missions on the Continent Continued,” *Millennial Star* 24 (November 22, 1862): 744.

4. While traveling to Palestine in 1872 and 1873, Schettler mentioned that the group he was with took time to keep journals. See Eliza R. Snow, ed., *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists; Comprising a Series of Letters by George A. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Paul A. Schettler, and Eliza R. Snow, of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Steam Printing Establishment, 1875), 29, 146. However, Sandra Pitts, the family genealogist, who possesses all the known Schettler family records, was unaware of the existence of any journals kept by Paul A. Schettler. In addition, research at various libraries and archives in Utah was unprofitable in locating his journals.

5. These records were found after thorough research in L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City; Special Collections, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah; Church Archives; Family History

Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; and the Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City. The sources used by the authors were obtained courtesy of Sandra Pitts.

6. Bernhard Herman Schettler, "History of the Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," typescript, 1, in authors' possession, courtesy of Sandra Pitts. For further information on the establishment of Neuwied, see J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum, 1722–1957* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Interprovincial Board of Christian Education, 1967), 105–6. In German, see Raymond S. Wright, *Meyers: Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs*, 2 vols. (1912; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 2000), 2:305–6.

7. Paul Schettler was a twin to a stillborn brother. Schettler family genealogical data under "Paul August Schettler," compiled by Sandra Pitts, in authors' possession.

8. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 1.

9. Bernhard's autobiography, the only known source of information on Paul's childhood, lacks Paul's perspective on growing up without his natural mother. Bernhard H. Schettler wrote his autobiography while he was in the Utah State Penitentiary for three months in 1888, having been sentenced by Judge Zane for breaking the Edmunds Act. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 56.

10. Schettler family genealogical data, under "Friedrich August Schettler," compiled by Sandra Pitts, in authors' possession.

11. Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1904), 4:309.

12. For more information on the schools in Neuwied, see Hamilton and Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 114, 181, 190, 359.

13. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 6.

14. Mircea Eliade, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 10:106.

15. Hamilton and Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 119.

16. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 30.

17. Gnadon, or Gnadau, in Silesia, was settled by the Moravians in 1765. At the time of Schettler's apprenticeship, it was part of Prussia. See Hamilton and Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 190; and Wright, *Meyers*, 1:582.

18. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 9. Bernhard fulfilled his apprenticeship in Neuwied. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 16.

19. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 16.

20. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 16.

21. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 17–18.

22. Like Gnadon, Gnadenfeld was settled by the Moravians in the late eighteenth century. At the time of Schettler's employment, it was part of Prussia. Both towns had Moravian seminaries, schools, and missionary programs that Schettler may have been involved in. This may be why he was sent to these towns.

23. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 32. The exodus of the Schettler family to the United States was part of a larger emigration of Moravians from Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. Eliade, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 10:107.

24. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 33.

25. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1901–36), 4:357; Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 93–101.

26. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 34.

27. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 35; Journal History of the Church, August 28, 1860, citing *Deseret News* of September 5, 1860, Church Archives, microfilm copy in the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

28. Manuscript History of the Netherlands Mission, 1861, Church Archives, hereafter referred to as Netherlands Manuscript.

29. Seventeenth Ward Record of Members Collection, 1836–1970, Church Archives, page 15, line 557. "Record of members index," Church Archives, compiled by Minnie Margetts, points out that the N. Davis who performed these ordinances was Nathan Davis. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:647–48 notes that Davis served as first counselor from 1856–61, until he was called to replace Thomas Callister as bishop of the Seventeenth Ward on December 15, 1861. Bernhard was also at this time a member of the Seventeenth Ward, having been rebaptized and confirmed by Nathan Davis on October 19, 1861. See Seventeenth Ward Record of Members, page 17, line 619, and "Record of members index," as noted above.

30. Keith C. Warner, "History of the Netherlands Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1861–1966" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1967), 11. Anne Wiegers van der Woude anglicized his surname to Vanderwood sometime after 1863. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:358.

31. Bernhard Schettler, "Life of Bernhard Herman Schettler," 42.

32. Netherlands Manuscript, 1861.

33. Joseph Smith Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 4:495.

34. Zeist was settled by Moravians in the mid-eighteenth century. During 1872, Schettler and George A. Smith visited Schettler's relatives in Zeist. Smith wrote of Schettler's family, "Although they came from Germany, they have lived in Holland until they are thoroughly Dutch." Snow, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, 51–52. For more on Zeist, see Wright, *Meyers*, 2:1219.

35. "News From Holland," *Millennial Star* 23 (September 21, 1861): 614.

36. "News From Holland," 614.

37. Schettler's relatives in the community of Zeist apparently spoke both German and Dutch because of their German heritage and the close proximity of Zeist to German-speaking nations. Interestingly, Schettler translated these early tracts into German, his native language, rather than into Dutch. Perhaps he lacked practice or confidence in his capabilities in the Dutch language or because the families in the area read German better than Dutch. However, a month or two later he apparently began to translate the Book of Mormon and other tracts into Dutch.

38. "News from Holland," 822.

39. Warner, "History of the Netherlands Mission," 14. For similar opposition in other parts of Europe, see also Manuscript History of the Swiss, Italian, and German Mission, September 29, 1862, Church Archives; George A. Smith to Brigham Young, May 24, 1873, Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives.

40. A. W. van der Woude and Paul A. Schettler, "Holland," *Millennial Star* 23 (November 23, 1861): 759–60. For an interesting account of the first Mormons baptized in the Netherlands, see T. Edgar Lyon, "Landmarks in the Netherlands Mission," *Improvement Era* 39 (September 1936): 546–47, 573.

41. Netherlands Manuscript, 1861; January 29, 1862; February 1, 1862; May 10, 1862.

42. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:357.

43. "He commenced the work of translation on September 24th, 1861, and finished July 19th 1862; This translation has never been published, and the manuscript is understood to be now in Holland." "History of the Book of Mormon," *Contributor* 5

(September 1884): 443. The Netherlands Manuscript, September 24, 1862, explains the apparent controversy concerning why the translation was not used for publication:

The first Dutch edition of this sacred volume appeared in the year 1890, twenty-eight years later [after Schettler's translation], and then Elder John W. F. Volker's translation was used, and not Elder Schettler's. Elder Schettler's translation if he completed his undertaking apparently got lost in this long interval, or else, perhaps, his work was not considered to have enough merit to allow it to appear in print. As Elder Schettler was not a native Hollander there is much in favor of the latter viewpoint, as it is very doubtful that a foreigner in his first year in Holland could have rendered a meritorious translation of such a ponderous work as the Book of Mormon.

44. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:358. Van der Woude's journal, written in Dutch, is housed in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

45. Lawrence R. Flake, *George Q. Cannon: The Missionary Years* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 176–77.

46. "A Visit to the Missions on the Continent Continued," *Millennial Star* 24 (November 22, 1862): 744.

47. Dale Z. Kirby, "History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1971), 78.

48. There is evidence that Cannon sided with Schettler versus van der Woude. In a letter to Brigham Young dated November 1863, Cannon wrote:

I really wish there was a trustworthy Elder who could speak Holland Dutch here or that Bro. Schettler were beginning his mission instead of being so near the end, as I think great good could be done in that country at present. Enclosed I forward you a letter received from Bro. Schettler last summer. It explains itself, and shows the character of the man who has been laboring in Holland. (George Q. Cannon to Brigham Young, November 6, 1863, Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives.)

49. "A Visit to the Missions on the Continent Continued," 747.

50. Swiss, Italian, and German Mission Manuscript, November 19, 1862.

51. Swiss, Italian, and German Mission Manuscript, June 30, 1863, notes that the branches were Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchatel, Zurich, Thun, Landschlacht, Herisau, Toggenburg, Basel, St. Imier, Carlsruhe, Aichelberg, St. Germain, and Amsterdam.

52. Netherlands Manuscript, June 10, 1863; "Holland's Contribution to Utah," in *Heart Throbs of the West*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939–1950), 4:278–79; Swiss, Italian, and German Mission Manuscript, August 24, 1863.

53. Swiss, Italian, and German Mission Manuscript, October 24, 1862.

54. Swiss, Italian, and German Mission Manuscript, December 21, 1863.

55. Swiss, Italian, and German Mission Manuscript, February 28, 1864.

56. Kirby, "Latter-day Saints in Switzerland," 40.

57. Swiss, Italian, and German Mission Manuscript, October 6, 1863; George Q. Cannon to Brigham Young, November 6, 1863.

58. W. W. Ritter, "Swiss, Italian and German Mission," *Millennial Star* 26 (April 2, 1864): 223.

59. "Departures," *Millennial Star* 26 (April 7, 1864): 235.

60. Journal History, October 26, 1864, 3–9, Church Archives, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library. Schettler is mentioned in a number of accounts of this journey. The William Hyde Company, 350 members with 62 wagons, arrived in Salt Lake City

October 30, 1864. Craig S. Smith, "Joseph W. Young and the Mormon Emigration of 1864," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 1 (2000): 41, 43.

61. "At Rest," *Deseret News*, November 5, 1884, 668. Schettler's obituary notes that he began his duties as the treasurer of Salt Lake City in September 1864. However, the William Hyde Company, in which he served as clerk, did not arrive in Salt Lake City until October 30, 1864.

62. Carter, "Silk Industry in Utah," in *Heart Throbs of the West*, 11:55. In 1865, Brigham Young launched the silk industry in Utah, aimed at helping Zion in her desire for financial independence. Members were encouraged to take part in growing silk worms and mulberry trees. As sponsor of the silk program, President Young endorsed a series of lectures on the topic of sericulture at the School of the Prophets, a theological class for Mormon elites. By April 1868, the responsibility had been laid on the Relief Society. See Chris Rigby Arrington, "The Finest of Fabrics: Mormon Women and the Silk Industry in Early Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1978): 379, 382.

63. Today, a monument placed by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers marks the sight of Schettler's mulberry farm.

64. Margaret Schow Potter, "The History of Sericulture in Utah" (master's thesis, Oregon State University, 1949), 24; Deseret Silk Association Minutes, June 1875–October 1878, February 7, 1876, 23, microfilm, Church Archives; Louis A. Bertrand, "Sericulture: A Visit to President Young's Cocoonery," *Salt Lake Herald*, June 25, 1872, 2.

65. "Centennial Events and Territorial Activities," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–77), 20:5.

66. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 2:384–85.

67. Wilma B. N. Tilby, "Jakob Brand's Register of Dutchtown, Utah's Lost German Mining Colony," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (1994): 56.

68. "Old Salt Lakers," *Deseret News* 52 (September 20, 1902): 11.

69. Donald Q. Cannon, "Angus M. Cannon: Frustrated Mormon Miner," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (winter 1989): 37–38.

70. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:357; Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:309.

71. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 5:474, quoting George Albert Smith. A copy of the letter dated October 15, 1872, at Salt Lake City can be found in Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow: One of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1884; reprint, Salt Lake City: Zion's Book Store, 1975), 496–97.

72. For accounts of the Palestine tourists visiting silk production establishments, see Snow, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, 88, 90–91, 97, 149.

73. Snow, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, 168–69, 177.

74. Snow, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, 182–83.

75. Snow, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, 224.

76. George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 16:101, June 22, 1873.

77. Eliza R. Snow to Brigham Young, January 3, 1873, Brigham Young Incoming Correspondence 1839–77, Church Archives.

78. "Last Offices," *Deseret News*, November 12, 1884, 673.

79. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1890* (1958; reprint, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 323–33.

80. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah, 1540–1886* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), 359–63.

81. “A New Savings Bank,” *Deseret Weekly News*, August 27, 1843, 473.

82. “At Rest,” 668.

83. “Struck with Paralysis,” *Salt Lake Herald*, July 10, 1874, 3. Schettler may have been receiving electric shock treatment for his paralysis.

84. C. Arrington, “The Finest of Fabrics,” 387.

85. Deseret Silk Association Minutes, March 6, 1876, 27.

86. Deseret Silk Association Minutes, August 3, 1876, 57.

87. C. Arrington, “The Finest of Fabrics,” 391.

88. Bancroft, *Utah*, 726–27.

89. Josephine Schettler died on June 19, 1881. The official cause of death was listed as strangulation. Salt Lake City, Utah, Death Records book index, 1848 to 1884, no. 10161, 255.

90. “A Sad Event,” *Deseret News*, June 22, 1881, 329.

91. Schettler family genealogical data, under “Paul August Schettler,” compiled by Sandra Pitts, in authors’ possession.

92. Salt Lake City, Utah, Death Records book index, 1848 to 1884, no. 11614, 291. Occurring especially in young children, marasmus causes emaciation because of malnutrition due chiefly to faulty assimilation of food.

93. “Home Silk Goods,” *Deseret News*, May 14, 1884, 265.

94. “Those Who Are Coming and Going,” *The Salt Lake Daily Herald*, May 30, 1884, 8; Constance L. Lieber and Jon Sillito, eds., *Letters from Exile: The Correspondence of Martha Hughes Cannon and Angus M. Cannon, 1886–1888* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 60.

95. “At Rest,” 668.

96. “Last Offices,” *Deseret News*, November 12, 1884, 673.

97. “Last Offices,” 673.

Brothers across Enemy Lines

A Mission President and a German Soldier Correspond during World War I

Jeffery L. Anderson

The First World War destroyed millions of lives and billions of dollars' worth of property. In peacetime, each death is a tragedy, while in war the deaths of millions become a statistic.¹ One of the lives lost among the statistics is that of Wilhelm Kessler (fig. 1), a German citizen and Latter-day Saint who cut short his mission to enlist in the German army. His correspondence with his mission president, Hyrum W. Valentine, reflects both his patriotism and his love for the gospel and the Saints. Valentine's letters in return express his love for this young man, a love that transcended political differences and earthly conflicts.

At first glance, Kessler seems relatively ordinary by Latter-day Saint standards. Born July 23, 1887, in Neunkirchen, Germany, he was raised as a Catholic. He joined the Church in Karlsruhe, Germany, on June 29, 1907, the same year his older sister, Barbara, immigrated to Utah with her husband.² When Kessler arrived in Utah in 1910, he settled in Salt Lake City's Fourth Ward and became part of a large community of German-speaking people living in the Valley. Though the predominant population of his ward was English-speaking, there were also many German-speaking Latter-day Saints who attended, and the Valley featured German social organizations and a German-language newspaper, the *Salt Lake City Beobachter*. Trained in Germany in business, Kessler worked during

1. Alan Levy, *The Wiesenthal File* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 441.

2. Obituary of Barbara K. Kuhn, *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegraph*, January 22, 1953, B7.

his brief time in Salt Lake City as a bookkeeper, possibly for the Sweet Candy Company.³

In October 1912, Kessler was called to the Swiss-German Mission, where he served briefly as a proselyting missionary in Berlin. In March 1913, he was transferred to mission headquarters and became associate editor of the German-language Church periodical, *Der Stern*. While serving at mission headquarters, Kessler developed a close association with his mission president, Hyrum W. Valentine, and with Valentine's wife, Rose (fig. 2).

Hyrum Washington Valentine was born March 4, 1873, in Brigham City, Utah. From 1900 to 1903, he served as a missionary in the Swiss Mission. He married Rose Ellen Bywater, a local dentist, on August 17, 1905.⁴ In January 1909, he was appointed Box Elder School District clerk and four months later became the district's first superintendent. Valentine was employed in the fruit-growing business in Brigham City until 1911. He began his service as Swiss-German Mission president in December 1911.⁵ Valentine and his wife had no children at that time. Valentine's papers, however, reflect that he viewed his missionaries, particularly Wilhelm Kessler, as his own sons and appreciated the opportunity to have stewardship over them. While in Switzerland, the Valentines adopted a daughter, Basel, and after their return to the United States adopted a son, Dee.

The Swiss-German Mission headquarters was located in the city of Basel, which sits in Switzerland's northwestern corner, where the Swiss,



FIG. 1. Wilhelm Kessler, 1913. From *Der Stern* 45, no. 24 (1913): 382.

3. Little additional information is known of Kessler's business or Church activities. Ward records show him giving a prayer in priesthood meeting and speaking in the Sunday School prior to his November 1912 departure to serve his mission. Fourth Ward, Salt Lake City, General Minutes, September 18, 1911, and Sunday School Minutes, October 13, 1912, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

4. According to her autobiography, Rose Ellen Bywater was the only woman practicing dentistry in the state of Utah at that time. Rose Ellen Bywater Valentine, *Memoirs of Rose Ellen Bywater Valentine*, ed. Dale M. Valentine (n.p.: n.p., 1962), 19, 25.

5. Hyrum Washington Valentine, Biography 1947, Church Archives.

German, and French borders meet. During the war, trenches were located just a short distance from Valentine's home. Cannons could be heard regularly in Basel, and occasionally airplanes in battle could be seen in the distance. Moreover, the neutrality of Switzerland and its French- and German-speaking population and culture allowed Valentine a unique vantage point from which to observe events and read reports on the war. Valentine's personal opinions favoring American neutrality in the war closely reflected those of his own countrymen, and his letters to friends and family manifest those feelings.⁶

At the war's outbreak, Kessler deemed it his duty to support his native country and quickly left the mission for service in the German army. President Valentine and Hyrum Mack Smith, the European Mission president, were in Germany touring the mission. Kessler sent Valentine a telegram seeking counsel regarding the matter, but conditions were such that Valentine thought it best not to respond.⁷ Sister Valentine spoke with the departing missionary. "There are rumors of war in Germany," she wrote. "Bro. Kessler (a Zion Elder born in Germany) [is] worried."⁸



FIG. 2. Hyrum W. Valentine and Rose Ellen Bywater Valentine, 1913. From *Der Stern* 45, no. 24 (1913): 382.

6. Family members who knew Valentine in later years were surprised to learn his early letters reflected neutral opinions. Apparently, the two great wars of the twentieth century changed his attitude about American neutrality.

7. Swiss and German Mission Journal 1898–1920, August 2, 1914, Church Archives. Because of the mobilization and general confusion, sending a telegram from Germany to neutral Switzerland could have exposed Valentine to scrutiny by German officials. Valentine at the time was strongly isolationist. A missive from Valentine urging Kessler to stay out of the war could have been used by German authorities as evidence that Valentine and Smith were, if not spies, at least opposed to the German government. It is also possible that the telegraph system was so tied up by the military that it would have been difficult for Valentine to have sent a message.

8. Switzerland Zurich Mission Manuscript History and Historical Report, July 25, 1914, Church Archives, cited in Rose Valentine, *Memoirs*. The location of the original journal is unknown.

Kessler hastily typed two letters to Valentine dated July 31, 1914. On August 3, 1914, Kessler reported for duty in the German Army in Lörrach, Germany. That day he penned a letter in German to Valentine.

Because of wartime confusion, troop movements, and even a brief arrest after being accused of spying for the British,⁹ Presidents Valentine and Smith did not return to Basel until August 12; Valentine could not have read Kessler's letters before that date. Given Valentine's sentiments regarding the war, he might have attempted to dissuade Kessler from joining the military had he received the news before Kessler left.

Valentine and Kessler corresponded regularly through April 1916. Wounded twice in battle, Kessler was awarded the Iron Cross second class. He continued his correspondence with Valentine from the hospital where he was recovering from wounds received in September 1914. In his letters, Kessler described some of his experiences in the war and expressed his longing to be reunited with the Latter-day Saints, especially his beloved mission president.

But the longed-for reunion would never take place. In July 1916, Valentine received news he had hoped he would never have to read. After serving for nearly two years in the German army, Kessler had fallen on July 1, the first day of the first battle of the Somme—one of the most devastating battles of the war—near the city of Mametz, France.¹⁰

Valentine was released as mission president on December 1, 1916. He reported his experiences in general conference on April 8, 1917,¹¹ two days after the United States declared war on Germany in response to Germany's commencement of unrestricted submarine warfare:

I want to say a word about Brother Kessler, one of your citizens of this city. He was sent over there to edit the mission paper. A more faithful man was never sent to us to perform missionary work, and he found himself in a most difficult position. On August 1, 1914, President Hyrum M. Smith and I were out in the mission traveling through Germany. The war came like a thunderbolt. We never had a word of warning of it at all.

9. Jeffery L. Anderson, "Mormons and Germany, 1914–1933: A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany and Its Relationship with the German Governments from World War I to the Rise of Hitler" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1991), 42–43.

10. By the mid-November 1916 end of the battle, both sides together had suffered about a million casualties. The Germans lost 500,000 men; the British, 400,000; the French, 200,000.

11. Hyrum W. Valentine, in *Eighty-Seventh Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1917), 145–51.

Brother Kessler said: "I carry in my pocket a sworn statement, an oath that I will be ready at the moment they call for my help." He said: "I could not look my countrymen in the face and stand here when they call for me to render assistance." He said, "It is true I have been sent here to do missionary work, and I have enjoyed my work most exceedingly, but I can't edit the paper any longer, there is nothing here but turmoil. We will not be able to cross the boundary; I can't cross the boundary; if I do, I will be taken as a deserter and cast into prison and possibly shot. I don't know but that tomorrow the French will rush over the boundary here into Basel; they will discover that I am a German citizen, and I will be taken a prisoner of war and interned. I don't know but tomorrow the Germans themselves will cross over the boundary here and come riding in a street car. They could come in a street car and ride into the city of Basel, and they could come here and take me as a traitor to my country. I may be cast into prison, I may be executed. It matters not," he said, "but I feel I must go!" In the anguish of his soul, he went to serve his country, and there is no criticism.¹² Oh, I know the anguish of his soul, many days after he had gone into the war, how he felt what a burden he had taken upon himself. He might have waited. I have often said he might have waited eight days and President Smith would have been there and he might have counseled with him. I don't think the result would have been any different, but he would not have had the burden resting on his shoulders. I want to say to you, he was just as true a servant and a soldier in his country's army as he was a servant of God in our midst. We know of his example from the letters we received from the officers in the army, in the regiment, in the division where he served, and he is a credit to our people. My brethren and sisters, he died as he lived,—a faithful Latter-day Saint, a soldier of the Cross though enlisted for the time being with his country's army.

The fact that Valentine made statements in support of this young man who had given his life fighting for the enemy of the nation to which Valentine and most of his listeners held citizenship is significant. It reminds

12. Valentine here gives the impression that Kessler departed the mission field under some duress, feeling that he would not be physically safe if he were to remain on his mission. This does not reflect the patriotic sentiment contained in Kessler's extant letters, but it may reflect other correspondence that has not survived or conversations between Kessler and Valentine's wife, Rose, before Kessler's departure. Rose Valentine kept a diary in which she possibly recorded these matters, but that document has been lost or destroyed. The surviving documents provide strong evidence that Kessler did not like the notion of killing anyone. Kessler's patriotism seems to have been overshadowed by his Latter-day Saint faith and personal moral convictions that led him to espouse peace and love for all. While Valentine might have accurately represented Kessler's views, it is also possible that he emphasized some of Kessler's feelings and de-emphasized others because of the United States' declaration of war on Germany.

Latter-day Saints that, first and foremost, we are all brothers and sisters, regardless of nationality. It is also a manifestation of Valentine's love for the German people, especially Kessler, in spite of the international political situation that made their nations enemies. It stands as a witness to the belief that Latter-day Saints, even in times of war, are "subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (A of F 12). Valentine and Kessler gave allegiance to the same faith but owed allegiance to a different earthly master. It is to Valentine's credit that he withheld criticism of the German Saints who fought for their fatherland.¹³

The following letters are the correspondence between Wilhelm Kessler and Hyrum W. Valentine in July and August 1914. Also included is a letter from President Valentine notifying Kessler's home-ward bishop, Charles H. Worthen, of Kessler's death.¹⁴ Overstrikes and typos have been omitted for the sake of clarity, though misspellings are retained.

13. Seventy-five young men from the nearly seven thousand Latter-day Saints living in the German-speaking missions are listed in mission histories as being killed in battle during World War I. Anderson, "Mormons and Germany," 212.

14. All letters are found in Hyrum Washington Valentine, Papers, 1911–1940, Church Archives.

The Kessler-Valentine Correspondence

Basel, Den 31. Juli 1914.¹⁵

Dear President/Valentine,
my dear father:—

Before I leave to give satisfaction to my final and only destination as a German man and soldier, I want to say Good bye! to you. I rather would have shaken your dear hands once more, but nevertheless do I feel your sympathy.

From the bottom of my heart do I thank you for your love and fatherly guidance. May the Lord repay you and bless you for all your direct and indirect good counsels and your correct conduct unto me.

I will think of you and mother [Rose] before I fall asleep; my heart will be tender when I feel your prayer, for which I will long as a child longs for food.

I won't be of any service to the church under the circumstances existing at the present time, but yet of a little to my beloved country. I can truly say that/in my soul I [feel] a firm conviction that this step that I am making is not a wrong one.

God be with us till we meet again!—

Good bye!

Your loving and devoted son

W^m Kessler

[Continuation of letter:]

Dear President:—

If you would like to do me a favor then I might ask you the following:

If I should not retourn then please notify the Authorities of the church in my name, to pay to Elder Geo. Kuhn, my brother in law, 408 Post Street, Salt Lake City, the sum of 200 Dollars, money I ow[e] him.¹⁶ He has a son on a mission at the present time, is a very good Latter-day Saint and not a

15. The original letter, measuring 29.2 x 22.4 cm and typewritten in English, appears on Kessler's personal letterhead. In this letter, the date, all slashes (/), and Kessler's signatures were written in longhand with black ink. It looks like two letters, the second part undated, but obviously written on or near the same day.

16. This refers to Johan (John) George Kuhn (1865–1915). Kuhn and his wife, Barbara, who both immigrated to Utah in 1907, lived in the Twenty-Fifth Ward in Salt Lake City. Obituary of John George Kuhn, *Deseret Evening News*, April 26, 1915, 14. Valentine subsequently wrote to President Joseph F. Smith and the Presiding Bishopric, asking that the Church take care of the matter. Hyrum Valentine to Presiding Bishop's Office, July 22, 1916; Valentine to Joseph F. Smith, July [August] 1, 1916, Valentine Papers.

wealthy man at all.¹⁷ He was perfectly willing to postpone due repayment till my mission was over and would not accept any interest on the money, although he could need it.

Please, write to Bishop [Charles Herbert] Worthen of the fourth Ward in Salt Lake City and tell him that I tried to represent his Ward well; tell him also the reason, why I did not write as frequently as I should have done.

Please, visit my Sister and my Brother in Law in Salt Lake City, when you come there and give them my love.

Have a kind word for me when you write to the Presidency of the Church. Assure them of my respect and love and adoration. In all my troubles [I] will not forget to pray for these/noble men.

Please, Forgive me, if my behavior has not always been as it ought to have been—I regret every thing that might have hurt your feelings in any way.

And, please, don't argue with yourself that I did wrong; consider my patriotisme, my rights I am fighting for, my religious view on the subject, my believe in heavenly protection and the oath that I have spoken with a conscious German heart when called to the army.

I thank you, dear President Valentine, for these favors you will do for me, in advance. I am only sorry that I haven't met you before I went.

Love to you and Sister Valentine for all what you have done for me. The Lord bless you.

I remain as one of your many boys and your Brother in the glorious cause
W^m Kessler



Lörrach, the 3. Aug. 1914.¹⁸

My Dear Ones:

The deep impressions of my difficult departure from Basel reside with powerful resonance in my soul. The tears of the Church members in behalf of the departing brethren were for my tender heart as an edifying rain of love, which gently cooled the burning glow of excitement for my fatherland

17. Rudolph Philip Kuhn (1891–1944) served in the Northern States Mission, 1913–14.

18. This is a translation from the original German text. This, as well as all other translations, were done by the author with significant help from Matthew K. Heiss and Ingrid K. Hersman. It should be noted that the German version manifests Kessler's fine command of the German language. The original is written in longhand with black ink, except for two postscripts written in pencil upside down at the top of page one and at the bottom of page three. The letter is folded to make four pages and, when folded, measures 11.9 x 17.9 cm.

without diminishing the warmth. Again, many thanks to all for their manifestation of heartfelt, sympathetic feelings; my soul is filled with emotion.

At one o'clock we arrived in Lörrach; we thought it wise first to have a good lunch because we were unsure if, after registering, we would or would not be swiftly moved elsewhere. After we made ourselves known to the authorities we were given leave till five o'clock. Brother Zimmer and I made good use of the time.¹⁹ Being outside of the city, and indeed on the edge of a stream near a meadow, in the shadow of a magnificent apple tree we took an idyllic siesta and dreamt that we were again at fast meeting. Deepest rest and most splendid peace prevailed. Indeed, upon our entry into the city, we felt the surprisingly peaceful and measured mood of its joyous residents. No agitation was evident. The silence of the meadow was only interrupted occasionally by marching troops chanting a spirited war song. Flawless order overall! Later we were quartered here during the night. My hosts were two wonderful older folks. At midday we also found Brother Ed. Rudolf in the registration office.²⁰ That was on Sunday. Yesterday noon Bro. Z., Br. R., and I and one other comrade took a refreshing bath in [the stream near] the great meadow and then one hour of refreshing sunbathing.²¹ Who said war? [In English.] I cannot yet give you an address because I do not yet know which infantry battalion I will be assigned to.

4 Aug. 1914. Evening. Still here.

Brother Zimmer left, probably to Freiberg. The infantry must still wait. We are becoming impatient. However, early in the morning we expect to receive our orders. I also met Brother Färber and we were glad to see one another.²² Unfortunately, we were soon separated. I spent last night with 14 men quartered under cannon fire! [We were] in our clothes on the bare floor, no blankets, just tablecloths. But that creates courage! Brother Rud was also there.²³ Nevertheless, we were in the best of spirits. I also met the

19. Several individuals could be the "Brother Zimmer" mentioned here. It is not, however, Max Zimmer (1889–1957). At this time, Max Zimmer, who was also serving in the mission in Tilsit, Germany, near the Russian border, had been, or soon would be, taken captive by the Russians. He was not released until several weeks later. See Anderson, "Mormons and Germany," 42–43. Eventually, this Max Zimmer replaced Kessler as associate editor of *Der Stern*.

20. I have not been able to identify this Ed. Rudolph.

21. Kessler is likely referring to the aforementioned Ed. Rudolph and Brother Zimmer.

22. This is probably Alfred T. Färber (1882–1966), who was born in Berlin, Prussia, but apparently immigrated to Utah before returning to Germany, where he died.

23. It is not known who Brother Rud is, unless this is a reference to the Rudolph mentioned above.

young blond student from Basel and had a deep and serious discussion with him; we parted promising after our return to meet again. During formation on the first evening, there stood on my left side a Salvation Army officer, and the second man to my right was a teacher from the Kreschona. At noon today in great haste I had three teeth temporarily filled. This evening we were quartered at a miller's. All others drank the beer provided by our host, but I did not touch it. I am in excellent spirits and wish the same for you.

Greetings to all. Give special greetings to Papa Fink²⁴

Sincerely yours,

Corporal Wilhelm Kessler

[Written upside down at top of page 1]

On the bookshelf in the office is a letter rack labeled "private letters" that should also be sent to me. Many thanks for sending it in advance.

[Written at bottom of page 3]

I wish with all my heart that you are in good spirits. Write me as soon as I send you my address. I think often about all of you!!



Basel, Aug. 20, '14²⁵

To Mr. Wm. Kessler,

Sargent, 3, Comp. E, Reserve Battalion

Dear Brother:

You should not have the impression that I am unhappy with your actions, or that I am indifferent to your fate²⁶ because you had to leave us. I have, however, felt that whatever I write or what I may say, would not leave much of an impression on you, while everything associated with you seems so strange to me and especially in this regard I have nothing that I wish to say.

I thought that you might go, as soon as I learned that there may be war and had I received the dispatch in Dresden, only then would it have been

24. This is probably Joseph Finck (1870–1955), who was born in Erstein, Alsace-Lorraine, but later immigrated to Salt Lake City, where he died a member of the Riverview Ward. Obituary of Joseph Finck, *Deseret News–Salt Lake Telegraph*, September 24, 1955, 4B.

25. The 27.9 x 21.4 cm letter is a carbon copy of the original and is on tissue paper.

26. The German here reads "Schicksal," which I have translated as "fate."

possible to give you an answer. But because the news came to me after the meeting on Sunday evening in Chemnitz, I realized that a response would be of no use.

Several of the German brethren are going to war to defend the Fatherland with a clear conscience and a prayer in their hearts[;] we pray continually that they may be returned to us unharmed and unwounded. We shed tears when we read your letter[;] our grief could not have been greater had you been our own beloved son. We are happy to be permitted to have such a realistic parental feeling toward a worthy son. All of your requests made in your letter will be gladly fulfilled should you fail to return to us. You only need to make it known to us should you have anything else in your heart that we could do for you, and it will be gladly done for you. Also, we want to ask that we may continue to be considered as your beloved parents and that you inform us of anything that might befall you.

The confusion and excitement has become very great, but until now, no one has suffered at all [in Basel], however from now on there will begin a struggle for bread among the poorer people but with the help of God and with the support of the branches and the help of the rich it will not be necessary for anyone to suffer from hunger. Many missionaries have been released and a few in their confusion traveled to Rotterdam and could not come back so they were therefore released from our mission. Still others will be released in the ensuing days. Now we hope that in all branches in these difficult times a few [missionaries] can be retained so that our members do not have to feel abandoned.

With *Der Stern* nothing has been done so far, but we have decided, as soon as possible, to bring that to order, and in the meantime, where possible, to publish *Der Stern* in Basel.²⁷ We will bring Brother Zimmer to Basel to take on this work. We had a very successful visit with Pres. Smith and he has already gone to Liverpool. Things go well in the branches and among all of the people is a visible disposition for the word of God, so in spite of how the conflict is resolved, between the various nations the truth will win.

May God protect you our son!

Brother and Sister [Valentine]



27. With Kessler's departure and the confusion associated with the war, no issue of *Der Stern* was published until October 15, 1914.

Basel, July 22, 1916.²⁸

Bishop Charles H. Worthen,
256 West 7th, South St.,
Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dear Brother Worthen:—

It is with a good deal of sadness that I convey to you the mournful news, that our beloved Brother, Elder William Kessler, was slain in the Battlefield July, 1, 1916. He performed a most excellent Mission in this land and we feel that our Grief and sorrow could scarcely be greater if we had been called upon to part with one of our own sons.

I am very pleased to quote the paragraph of his letter which has reference to his home ward as follows:

“Please write to Bishop Worthen, of the Fourth Ward in Salt Lake City and tell him that I tried to represent the ward well; tell him also the reason, why I did not write as often as I should have done.”

The call “To Arms!” came to us all very suddenly, and the soul of Elder Kessler was sorely tried, President Hyrum M. Smith and myself were away on a tour of the mission at the time and before we were able to return he was away. He has been very close to us all the time and we have been in constant communication with him until April 23, last since which time due no doubt to regulations we had heard nothing from him direct. On June the 23 I felt uneasy about him and wrote his sister who promptly responded that all was well with him, this was under date of June 28, and under date of July 10, which we however did not receive until the 20th, she conveyed to us the sad tidings that he had sacrificed his young life in the battle-field, in obedience to the call of his country.²⁹

28. This letter is a two-page, typed carbon copy on 27.3 x 21.3 cm tissue paper.

29. Kessler's regimental commander, Colonel von Bammbach, notified a German cousin of Kessler, a Mrs. Schott, of Kessler's death, charging her with informing the rest of the family. The letter from Kessler's commanding officer is a typewritten copy of the original. Obviously copied by Valentine or his staff, it is on mission letterhead and measures 22.2 x 28.7 cm. The original text is in German. In English translation, the body of Von Bammbach's letter reads as follows:

I assume the painful responsibility of informing you of the death of your cousin Lieutenant Kessler. With many of his brave comrades, he died a hero's death on July 1, 1916, defending an onslaught by the English. On June 26th he received a commission as an officer. Unfortunately, this happy news came after his regiment's battle and could not be awarded to him prior to his death.

Please notify the relatives of Lieutenant Kessler concerning his death. The entire corps of officers regrets the loss of a gallant and dashing comrade

Got³⁰ bless his memory, and his many friends and Brethern in his home Ward and in the city generally, he was a noble son and an energetic defender of the faith and the Right. We are indeed sad to contemplate the possibilities of this young life blasted in the very bloom, and for naught, one is wont to say. But God doeth all things well, and even though Death and Hell array themselves against him yet shall they not prevail. I believe firmly the end of this terrible struggle will be in accordance with the Will of the Almighty God, and that even gloomy as this struggle [is] it will not and must not be in vain.

Freedom and Truth must rise from the ashes of the Men and Millions who have been swept away through the carnage and cruelty of this most inhumane warfare.

With kind regards to you, dear Bishop, and the Saints in general of the Ward which was so dearly loved by our Noble Brother and Son, we remain your Brother and Sister in Christ,³¹

and charming human being. I personally learned to appreciate him in the fall offensives of 1914, where he was, prior to his being wounded, assigned to my personal staff and lament the loss of a young officer whose special steadfast character personified the officer corps and was a credit to his unit.

30. The German word for “god” is “Gott.” Valentine’s use of the German word, though it is misspelled, indicates that he was having a hard time keeping the German influence out of the English letter he was typing. In German all nouns are capitalized, explaining the many capitalized common nouns in the letter.

31. There is no signature on this letter from Valentine to Worthen. It is a retained copy, and though Valentine often signed his retained copies, this one was not signed. I assume from the context that the statement “your Brother and Sister in Christ” was followed in the original by the signatures of both Hyrum and Rose Valentine.

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New under the Sun

Awaiting a Birth

One could say in this night sky
can be seen the birth of stars, but
who can tell in the stellar dust
what's coming to light
or leaving?
The shape of that dim nebula
is like pale shadows we celebrate
in my daughter's womb: discernible
fingers and hand, the faint umbilical reach
toward connection.

I have thought these things during routine
tasks—shaking a tablecloth in the night yard,
washing dishes, sweeping.
In the dailiness of the living, the mind leaps,
say, at the glint of a glass,
the sudsy water, or dust motes
that join something past to this moment—
like the blind stitch that holds the hem.

Our grown daughter's voice reaches me
from across a room, and I feel salt
behind the eyes. Out of tones
of a family gathering: a sudden perception
of what a memory weighs.
How I've kept a face not seen for months
safe from time and strain, eyes clear
and intense. How my son's jump from a tree
years ago with an open umbrella—
of which I've just learned—occurs not then
but now: I see his staunch curiosity poised
on the branch, simultaneous with my smile
at one more experiment survived beyond my knowing.

The sunmelt of days sears
to these moments . . .
but what rises in the heart is light.

My Family, My Friends, My Faith

Marjorie Newton

It is the Sunday before Christmas in Sydney, Australia. During sacrament meeting, I survey the assembled ward members from my vantage point on the stand, where I sit to conduct the congregational singing. With something of a shock I realize how few of them I really know and how little of their lives I share. There, in their accustomed pew, are my mother and aunt, my husband, and our adult daughters. There are Ellen and Heather, Geoff and Thelma, all good friends with whom we have shared good and bad times for nearly half a century. There on the stand is our bishop, Indonesian-born Dutch, survivor of World War II internment during his childhood; and in the congregation is his wife, my childhood friend and Primary classmate Marie. These people are part of my past as well as my present.

But the others? I know their names and a little about them, but apart from sitting in meetings together, we have little interaction. There are Gina and Nick, and Peter and Rozina and their children, all from Fiji. There are George and Eleanor and their little grandson; Delice and her boys; Andy and Repekah and their grandchildren, as well as young adults Victoria, Gaylene, and David, all quietly proud of their New Zealand Maori heritage. There is Annie from the Cook Islands, and there is Tina from Samoa. There are Brother and Sister Cheon from Korea, with their six-year-old twin sons, sweet-faced and serious and so alike that my daughter, who teaches the CTR class, ran into great difficulty during a lesson that stressed how every single child of God is unique. The twins, who can't be told apart by anyone except their parents, couldn't think of a single difference between them, not even a mole, and were hugely intrigued when Jenny, suddenly inspired, told them about fingerprints.

But I don't know them, or many others seated in the rosewood pews, as I knew the members of this same ward when it was a little mission branch whose people and programs shaped my childhood and youth. Now, as the Christmas service proceeds, the words of beloved and familiar scriptures take me back to Christmas Sunday in 1940 in this same Church unit.

It is a different building, of course: a little weatherboard and fibro hall, its hard wooden benches assembled to face the stand and its portable pulpit for 10 A.M. Sunday School and 7 P.M. sacrament meeting and then ranged round the walls for Tuesday night's MIA and Saturday night's social. There is no public address system, and we "air condition" the building by opening all the windows and double doors each side so that the breeze, if any should stir on a humid December day in Sydney, can pass through.

I see my seven-year-old self sitting on the stand on that long ago hot Christmas Sunday—not, as now, in a cushioned choir seat, but on one of a row of hard dining-room chairs. My best dress—blue flowered organdie, stiff and prickly—sticks out each side of my skinny legs. I proudly toss my beribboned hair just to feel the Shirley Temple curls bob round my neck. My hair is as straight as a straw broom, and the curls were achieved by my mother tightly winding the wet strands round long strips of rag the night before, so uncomfortable to sleep in but so gratifying next morning, as others of my generation also attest. I am on the stand because I have to give my first scripture recitation. No scripture readings for us. We were assigned to give scripture recitations, and recitations we gave, memorized and rehearsed at the kitchen table each night for weeks before.

The stand on which my childhood self is sitting doubles as stage and covers the font. There is a wide crack all around the removable section of the floor. The first time my newly converted father had to give a talk, he dropped his notes as he stood to go to the pulpit, and they slipped through the crack into the dark void below. He was so nervous that he couldn't speak without his notes and had to sit down again. In the thoughtless way of children, we giggled. Remembering, more than half a century later, my adult emotions churn in belated sympathy, and other memories of the old font surface. I was baptized in it one freezing July day, six months after that Christmas program when I gave my first scripture recitation. I recall my sister and my friends leaning over the edge and sniggering at my goose-pimples as I edged toe by toe into the icy winter water.

They were dark days, those years of war. The missionaries were gone before my baptism, evacuated in October 1940, thirteen months after Britain (and Australia and New Zealand) declared war on Germany. Australian Latter-day Saints today can scarcely comprehend the shattering impact that the departure of the elders had on the dozen-and-a-half struggling little

mission branches scattered round the edge of our island continent, an island as large as the continental United States. Flung back on their own resources for leadership, some of the branches withered as not only the missionaries but many of the local men sailed away to active service. With the help of the men who stayed—those in essential occupations, the elderly, and the medically unfit—most of the branches, including ours, survived.

We children were evacuated to Grenfell on February 18, 1942—a wholesale uprooting, organized by the mission president. Grenfell was 240 miles west of Sydney, distant enough, President Orme hoped, to keep the children of the New South Wales District safe from the inexorable Japanese advance. Not everyone felt the evacuation was necessary; when, a few months later, Japanese midget submarines penetrated Sydney Harbour and shelled waterfront suburbs, President Orme felt vindicated. Meanwhile, he called plump, motherly Annie McCoy Smith (“Auntie Anne”) to lead the group and my real aunt and uncle to assist. Anne’s husband was overseas with the Australian army, and she and her two children were living in a boarding house. It was easier for her to leave than it would have been for most other women in the branch.

I was only eight and had a broken arm firmly encased in plaster that I picked at and crumbled when no one was watching. I don’t remember being told we were going or the packing or the parting from my parents. I do remember the train journey, all night in a crowded steam train that labored up the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, down the other side to Lithgow and on across the great western plains. Now, in my mind, I am in that jolting, noisy, grimy train again. Blackout restrictions are enforced through the night, blinds down and lights turned out when we stop at nameless stations (all signs have been removed) to disgorge or take up passengers and freight or water for the engine. Some of the older children sleep on the overhead luggage racks. Suitcases are packed between the facing bench seats and we little ones are stretched across, head-to-toe, head-to-toe. Tired and dirty, fretful and homesick, we tumble out next morning onto the anonymous platform at Grenfell when the guard tells us we have arrived. We walk in crocodile, two by two, twenty-seven children clutching battered cardboard cases, down the wide main street to two empty shops that have been rented to house us. As we settle into our new homes that February day, Japanese bombs are falling on Darwin, Australia’s northernmost city.

Auntie Anne and her helpers are everywhere at once. Boys sleep in one shop, girls in the other. Straw mattresses are stretched side by side along the ground floor of each shop. Huge tin and enamel cooking pots and pans are waiting in the kitchen of the girls’ home, with cases of pears and apples and

other provisions donated by local farmers. Soon we settle into a daily routine. Wash in two inches of tank water in a tin basin (New South Wales in 1942 is in the middle of a fierce drought), dress, and eat breakfast. Walk to school. Home for lunch, back to school. Home for homework, “tea” (supper) and games, prayers, and bed. On Sundays we have Sunday School, with sacrament blessed by my uncle, then a long afternoon walk followed by stories or a sing-along. The weeks go by. American forces arrive in the South Pacific, and the Battle of the Coral Sea turns the tide of the war. In dribs and drabs, we are collected by our parents and taken back to the city. But the war drags on.

Looking back, I marvel at the tenacity of the Relief Society women in our branch. For six years, sick with worry about the safety of husbands and sons at the battle front, they carry the burden of much of the work of the branch as well as supporting the local Red Cross. They take first-aid courses and prepare surgical dressings; they knit warm garments for servicemen and women in Europe and provide “comforts” (afternoon tea and homemade cakes; books, magazines, and games) for convalescent soldiers billeted in a makeshift hospital in what had been our municipal swimming pool. They pack “Bundles for Britons” (clothing parcels for victims of the Blitz) and dig up their front lawns to plant potatoes. When Sister Gray dies suddenly, her husband at sea with the Royal Australian Navy, they take her six children in and care for them for several years.

In my modern-day ward, the Primary children sing a bracket of carols. As they file back to their places, a little noisy and excited because it is now school holidays and almost Christmas, I remember my own schooldays and the excitement of “breaking up” for the long Christmas holidays in 1944, a landmark summer vacation between primary and secondary school. During the intervening days before Christmas, the shops are crowded despite rationing and shortages, and the days are blazing hot. Early on Christmas Eve, Dad sends me on several errands to deliver dressed “chooks” from our own hen run, potential Christmas dinners placed carefully in the basket on the handlebars of my bicycle. A haversack on my back holds home-grown lettuce and tomatoes and runner beans, crisp and fresh. It is only now, looking back, that I realize that the recipients were the branch widows, and my deliveries were part of an unorchestrated but unfailing support system of the branch. There was no welfare program. Not one family in the branch owned a refrigerator or a car or had a telephone. If there was a car parked outside the chapel when we turned the last corner after our two-mile walk to church, we knew the mission president was visiting.

My mind reverts to my eleven-year-old self and contemplates other Sundays, other meetings. Fast Day. Testimony meetings, two hours at least (no time limits in those days), unvaryingly divided among three elderly widowed brethren. Just once in a while one of the three is absent, and someone else gets a turn. I see my perspiring childish self sitting on a hard form, feel once again my bare legs sticking to the varnish while I gaze out the open side door to where the Brennans, who live next door to the chapel, are drinking icy-cold beer on their front verandah. *They* won't go to the Celestial Kingdom, I think smugly. I wonder what we will have for tea when we break our fast that evening. I wonder what will happen to the chapel when "the call" comes to gather to Zion in America and we all sail away. To me and the other children, this long-expected event was always just around the corner, though we knew quite well "the call" wasn't going to come in wartime.

One of the brothers is up to the part where 'e is a 'umble man, uneducated, and not really fit for his 'igh and 'oly calling (of Sunday School superintendent), but that the Prophet Joseph was a 'umble, uneducated man too. I am just getting old enough to work out for myself that the Prophet Joseph may have been uneducated when he was called but did not forever stay that way, certainly not for the number of years that I have been listening to this brother repeat these sentiments each Fast Day. Two of the Gleaners sitting behind me groan. "'im and 'is 'umble 'ide!" one fumes. "How long do we have to go on listening to him?" It wasn't all that much longer. I must have been about twelve or thirteen when he caught pneumonia and died. We all missed him dreadfully. Testimony meetings were never the same again, but strangely, they weren't better without him.

At last the six years of war, which had seemed interminable, are over; the "boys"—boys no longer, but hard, seasoned men—are beginning to come home from those faraway places, unimaginable to Australian war-time children, but with names as familiar as the next suburb: El Alamein and Tobruk; Crete and Italy; Malaya and Changi and Port Moresby and the Kokoda Trail. No longer do the aged, the infirm, and the women have to run the branch.

A year after VJ Day, American missionaries begin to return. Shipping is still scarce, berths hard to obtain, but gradually they come. There is great rejoicing in the Australian Mission. But these missionaries are not quite the same as their brothers and cousins and friends who were here before the war. These are veterans with a maturity not simply the result of their extra years but born of their experiences in battle. Unlike many of their predecessors, their testimonies are strong before they begin their missionary service. We who knew them think there has never been another generation of missionaries like them.

The branch begins to grow. We welcome the new members who come in a steady stream over the succeeding years. More branches are organized, and we children grow up and marry the new converts rather than each other as we had childishly planned. “The call” never does come. Instead we are counseled to remain and build up the Church in Australia and are promised that every blessing of the restored gospel will be ours if we do so. Most of us stay, and the blessings come. New commodious brick chapels, with recreation halls and classrooms, are built; priesthood quorums and stakes, seminaries and institutes, and family history libraries are organized; two Church Presidents and countless General Authorities visit; and finally, gloriously, a temple is built.

But we have lost something, too. I sit on the stand and mourn our missing feeling of community and wonder what we can do to regain it. Three wards meet in our chapel now. We can’t come early to socialize because we have to wait for the ward before us to leave; because of the exigencies of the block program, there is no time for fellowshiping between meetings; because another ward is waiting, we can’t reproduce the after-church hymn-singing sessions round the organ that I enjoyed so much as a child. Inflated land prices have driven most of the young families away, and street after street has been transformed into low-priced, medium-density apartment blocks. Few members of our multicultural ward stay more than the time it takes them to save enough to move on to a pleasanter area.

There must be something I can do. As I ponder the universal message of Christmas, I know that I must reach out. I must not live in the glow of what was but try to make today as meaningful as yesterday. I look lovingly and with new eyes at my ward members, the preponderance of dark eyes and black hair symbolizing a new Australia. They are different from the fair-haired, blue-eyed congregation I remember, but they are enriching our country and our culture and revitalizing our ward with their energy and their testimonies. As the familiar Christmas scriptures wrap us in love, I catch Delice’s eye and she smiles at me, and I realize that these, too, are my family, my friends, my faith.

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Photographs of Church Meetings among the U.S. Military in World War II

Robert C. Freeman, Dennis A. Wright, and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel

In the dark days of World War II, U.S. service personnel found themselves suddenly far from home, uprooted not only from the physical safety of their native soil but also from the nourishment of loved ones and religious fellowship. In the spiritual desert of war, Latter-day Saints in the military did what they could to tap into the wellsprings of their faith, as these photographs of Mormon meetings attest.

The war that brought about unparalleled devastation around the world also resulted in unparalleled numbers of photographs, making World War II the best-documented event up to that time in history. Of these millions of photographs, the most familiar are the shocking images such as those of the attack on Pearl Harbor, which will be forever printed on the public consciousness. However, even in the midst of the brutality, some happy moments were recorded on film. We present here a few of those hopeful images, now returning to light from dusty albums, old trunks, and long-forgotten personal records, images memorable as testimonials to faith that shines through the long night of war.

Historical Context of the Photographs

All the branches of the military immediately established services to document every theater of war. The United States armed forces recorded every aspect of recruiting, training, deployment, and combat activities. Additionally, the U.S. Government allowed more magazines, newspapers, newsreel producers, news photo services, and wire services to cover the war than in World War I. Finally, individual service personnel also documented their own activities.

In this context, Latter-day Saints in military service made their own record. In the midst of the great conflict, members of the Church gathered to pray, sing, and perform the ordinances of the gospel, overcoming obstacles by ingenuity and faith.

Provenance of the Photographs

The images printed here come from an increasingly large collection resulting from the Saints at War project. This collection includes records in various media of the life stories of Latter-days Saints who served in the military during World War II.

The Saints at War project began two years ago when two faculty members in the Church History and Doctrine Department at Brigham Young University were moved by the work of recent historians retelling the story of World War II veterans. Professors Robert C. Freeman and Dennis A. Wright wanted to honor war veterans of their own acquaintance, including former scoutmasters, bishops, home teachers, schoolteachers, and owners of hometown businesses. Many of these were faithful Latter-day Saints who, after the war, returned home to build productive lives for themselves and their families.

The Saints at War project is the largest attempt to collect the stories of Latter-day Saint service personnel in World War II. The chief objective of the project is to create an archive at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections housed in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University. This archive will preserve the personal histories, journals, letters, photographs, and other documents contributed by the veterans and their families. More than 1,400 life stories have been documented in the project; when cataloging is completed, the collection will be available to researchers. Some of the images from the collection were published in 2001 in the book *Saints at War*.¹

The images that follow give us glimpses of the worship and activities among Latter-days Saints that provided light to penetrate the daily darkness known as World War II. These photographs show soldiers and support personnel attending baptismal and sacrament meetings, conferences, and holiday gatherings. Published here for the first time, these images show some gatherings that may not have been noted by anyone besides the attendees and those who knew them.

However, at least two of the meetings shown here came to the attention of Church leaders in Salt Lake City. A small congregation of Saints stationed near San Francisco received a surprise visit from a General Authority (fig. 13). And, after reading a report of a 1944 conference in Foggia, Italy (fig. 5), the First Presidency sent a letter to four Latter-day Saint

chaplains in the European theater, praising them and blessing them. Presidents Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, and David O. McKay wrote:

We rejoice in the loyalty and the steadfastness of you brethren who are in the Armed Forces and who are remaining true to your principles and to your covenants. We invoke upon your heads the blessings of our Heavenly Father and ask Him to bestow upon you His Spirit to help and to guide you. We pray that you may have the peace of the Master.²

In these photographs we see men and women caught up in a worldwide war, yet seeking the peace of the Master in worship, wherever they were.

FIG. 1. Vernon Cooley and Eldin Ricks. Along with at least one other chaplain, they had stewardship over 2,000 Mormons in the European theater near the end of the war. They were involved in the 1944 conference at Foggia (see fig. 5). As part of their duties, the chaplains wrote newsletters filled with encouragement and spiritual advice to the Saints stationed in Europe.

They also wrote to the families of those in their charge: “The fact that many L.D.S. men seemed to ‘take the Church for granted’ at home may not necessarily be an indication of their attitude now. Many have *found* themselves overseas.” They even gave advice on how to support the troops. For example, reading the scriptures on the same schedule as their loved ones in the military “shortens the miles separating them.” Eldin Ricks, R. G. Gibbons, and V. A. Cooley, letter “To the Family and Loved Ones of the L.D.S. Man over Here,” no date. Photo electronically repaired.



Courtesy Saints at War archive, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

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We would like to thank Karen Todd for her important contributions in the writing and editing of this article.

1. Robert C. Freeman and Dennis A. Wright, *Saints at War* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2001).

2. Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, and David O. McKay, letter to Chaplains Eldin Ricks, R. G. Gibbons, Timothy Irons, and Vernon A. Cooley, December 27, 1944.



Courtesy Saints at War archive



Courtesy Saints at War archive

FIG. 2 (left top). Latter-day Saints at a church meeting in France, winter 1944–45. Sitting, left to right: PFC Merle R. Lindsay, Pvt. Murrie Godfrey, George A. Lund, PT Reed R. Burr. Standing, left to right: Pvt. William G. Rollins, Pvt. Albert Haskell, Pvt. WW Guarld Obray, TEC 5 J. M. Heslop, Carlos L. Dodge, and Pvt. Henry L. Barber. All except Heslop were members of the 318th Signal Service Battalion.

FIG. 3 (left bottom). Latter-day Saint chapel, B-26 Marauder Base, Sardinia, 1944. Ken Earl recounts the resourcefulness of his comrades in building this chapel:

Each week everyone was issued cigarette rations, beer rations, and if available, some candy or other goodies. We usually gave the contra-Word of Wisdom items to friends, but then in January 1943, we had the bright idea of using them to build an LDS Chapel down at Decimo where the 319th and 320th were located. We got permission for a particular location, and then traded our cigarette and beer rations in return for labor, brick, mortar and a tile roof. When the building, which was probably 12 x 20 feet in size, was completed in April 1944, I invited LDS Chaplain Eldin Ricks to come over from Naples on one of our B-26's and dedicate the chapel. He did so and we had a large turnout of LDS servicemen from the three groups for the dedication. We used it for our services from then on until we moved to Corsica. (Ken Earl personal history, Saints at War archive, 34)

FIG. 4 (below). Latter-day Saint soldiers holding church services in a field near Salerno, Italy, late July or early August 1944. Led by Chaplains Vernon Cooley and Eldin Ricks, this meeting took place just before the division left for the Southern France invasion. Four of these men, pictured in front of a jeep named “Deseret,” can be identified: Albert Huber (back row, far left), Elmer Picket (back row, second from left), J. L. Crawford (first row, far right), and Lt. Rex Oxford (first row, second from right), a nonmember friend of Crawford’s. It was not uncommon for nonmembers to attend meetings with their Latter-day Saint friends during wartime.





Courtesy Saints at War archive



FIG. 5. Latter-day Saint conference, Foggia, Italy, December 1944. Evidence of war clearly shows behind the men and women assembled here. Despite the gloom of their surroundings, those who attended felt “all the joy that can come from an L.D.S. gathering” during the two-day conference.

Over a hundred men and about twenty women attended the “dancing party” held on Saturday night. In a newsletter from Church headquarters in Italy, one observer wrote, “The conduct of the party resembled those of a Priesthood quorum dance at home. Nothing but the OD uniform reminded one of the real world that the men had left.”

At the first conference session on Sunday morning, 131 men and women heard a chaplain advise them to “trust in the Lord with all thy heart” and “keep your powder dry.” That evening, “ladies presented in MIA fashion a lively program in word and song.” One of the men in attendance said, “These meetings are not only a pleasure, but a necessity.”

The newsletter reporting this conference also shows details of weekly Church meetings at four European locations, including Florence and Marseilles. Letter from LDS Headquarters, Italy, December 7, 1944.



Courtesy Saints at War archive

FIG. 6. Latter-day Saint conference, Kunming, China, 1945. “A two-day program of services and reunions,” this was the first church conference in China. In the spirit of volunteer service typical of Latter-day Saints everywhere, three enlisted men, all returned missionaries, came forward to conduct the meeting when the chaplain assigned to the conference did not arrive. The attendees, who arrived “by airplane, truck and jeep,” were granted special weekend furloughs by their commanding officers. “China Scene of Conference,” *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, October 20, 1945, 12.



Courtesy Saints at War archive

FIG. 7. Latter-day Saint conference, Kunming, China, 1945. “Saturday evening there was a banquet in an army mess hall which was brightly decorated with Chinese lanterns and evergreens. A short entertainment was presented.” “China Scene of Conference,” *Church News*, October 20, 1945, 12.

Courtesy Garry Marshall and Saints at War archive



FIG. 8. Latter-day Saint religious service in the sail locker room of the U.S.S. *Tulagi*, Sunday, February 18, 1945. The ship had been anchored at the Ulithi Atoll for almost two weeks while waiting for the marine landing on Iwo Jima. Jack Marshall, Navy machinist mate 3rd class, personal history, Saints at War archive, 32–33.

Courtesy Saints at War archive

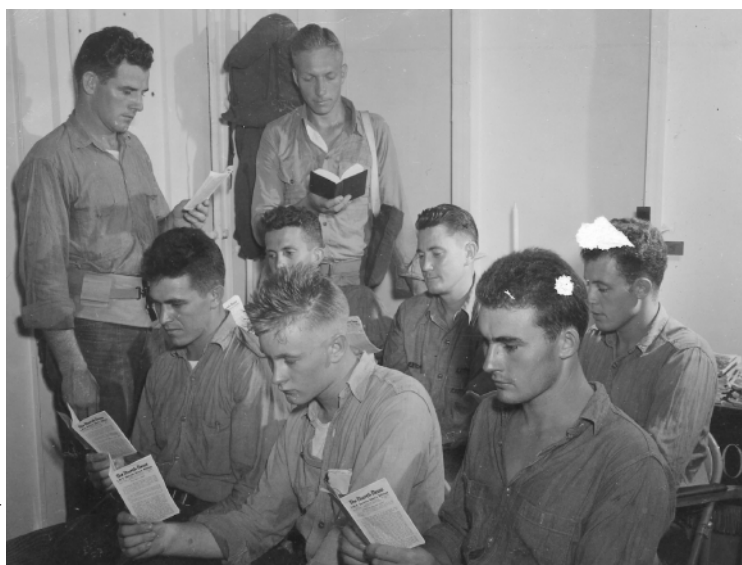


FIG. 9. Aboard the U.S.S. *Block Island*, August 1945, reading a pocket-size edition of the *Church News* printed for the military. Don Arlo Taylor (standing, far left) served as the group leader of seventeen Latter-day Saint men on the aircraft carrier. Curtis Butler (second row, far right), was a Methodist. The only other person identified in this photograph is Charles Pierce (first row, far left).



Courtesy Earl S. Duerden and Saints at War archive

FIG. 10. Latter-day Saint meeting, Leyte, Philippine Islands, November or December 1944. Earl Duerden is third from left, second row. Charles Soberg is standing, back row, wearing a cap. Maxine Tate (Grimm), middle front row, of Tooele, Utah, was the only female member of the Church in the Philippines at that time. By assisting in organizing church meetings and area conferences, she gave “hundreds of LDS soldiers a chance to gather for Sunday meetings.” An American Red Cross worker assigned to boost troop morale, she carried “her portable pump organ throughout the country, eager to provide music for Church meetings.” Soon after the war, Sister Tate was instrumental in reopening the Philippines for official missionary work. Sheridan R. Sheffield, “‘A Genuine Pioneer’ in the Philippines,” *Church News*, February 13, 1993, 11–12.



Courtesy Earl S. Duerden and Saints at War archive

FIG. 11. The first Latter-day Saint conference in the Philippines, 1944. Earl Duerden is the blond, fourth from the left on the second row.

Courtesy Evelyn Fink and Saints at War archive



FIG. 12. Baptism in the ocean at Saipan, summer 1945.

Courtesy Evelyn Fink and Saints at War archive



FIG. 13. Latter-day Saints meeting in the base chapel at Alameda Naval Air Station near San Francisco. Evelyn Fink (second row, far left) expresses what were undoubtedly the feelings of all those who attended such wartime gatherings, either at home or abroad: "We were all going through a trying time in our . . . lives and found strength in meeting and praying together." This small congregation received an unexpected visit from Elder Harold B. Lee. "How did he know about our little group?" Sister Fink later wrote. "Were the Brethren in Salt Lake City mindful of us? How wonderful it was that he would come all the way from Salt Lake City to bless our little group with his presence." Letter to Saints at War archive from Evelyn Fink, December 6, 2001.

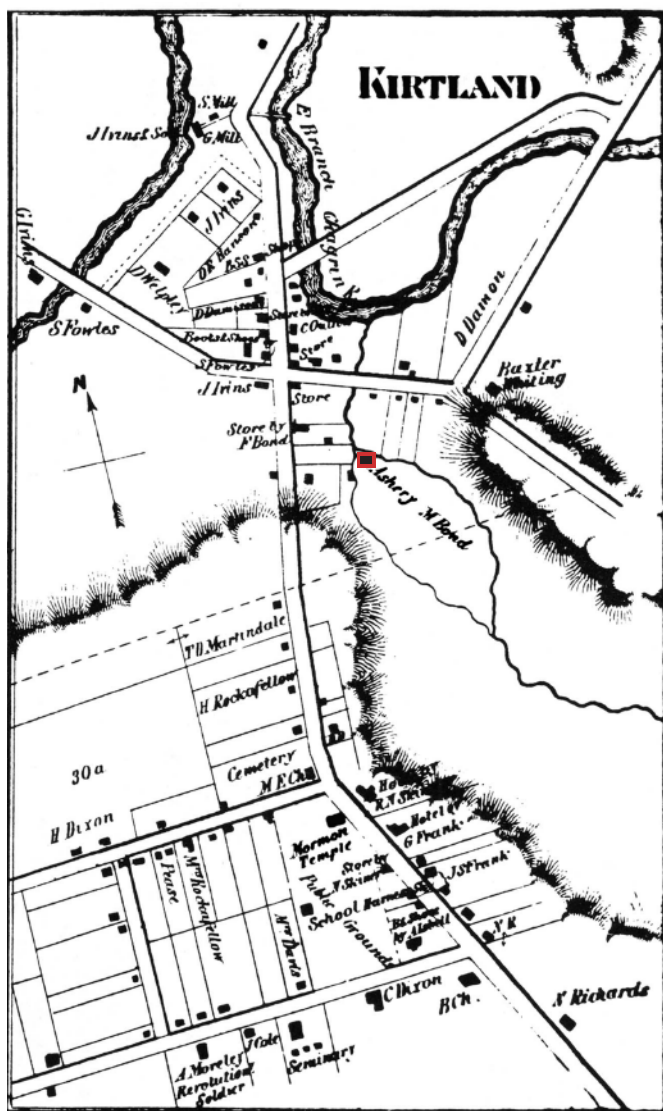


FIG. 1. Kirtland in 1857. This map defines the lowland area (the “Flats”) around the East Branch of the Chagrin River. Note the markings indicating the higher elevation to the north and south of the river. Newel K. Whitney built his ashery (designated by the red rectangle) in the Flats, next to the brook. That the ashery is marked on this 1854 map nearly twenty years after the Saints left demonstrates the ashery was still a viable business at that time. *Map of Geauga and Lake Counties, Ohio* (Philadelphia, S. H. Matthews, 1857), 17. Image courtesy Geauga West Branch, Geauga County Public Library.

An Introduction to the Kirtland Flats Ashery

Benjamin C. Pykles

Reflecting a recent resurgence of interest in one of its most important historic spaces, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is currently restoring a number of historic structures in Kirtland, Ohio, including buildings in the lowland area known as Kirtland Flats (fig. 1).¹ These buildings are part of a major restoration plan designed to significantly increase the quantity and quality of historical interpretation at the site by introducing visitors to the major doctrinal and historical developments of the Church during the seven years its followers resided in Kirtland (1831–1838).

One of the buildings being restored is the ashery, where ashes from hardwood trees were used to make an alkali important to many industries. Selected for restoration because of its significance to the early economic programs of the Church and its association with prominent Church members, the ashery will help tell the story of the Latter-day Saints in Kirtland. Overlooked by most casual readers of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Kirtland ashery is mentioned in a revelation given to Joseph Smith in spring 1834:

And again, let my servant Newel K. Whitney have appointed unto him . . . the lot on which the ashery is situated . . . for his stewardship, for a blessing upon him and his seed after him, for the benefit of the mercantile establishment of my order which I have established for my stake in the land of Kirtland. (D&C 104:39–40)²

That this obscure industrial building of the nineteenth century is included in canonical text alludes to its significance for the Church and its history. Unfortunately, until now the role of the ashery in this history has been largely ignored.³

Without question, the ashery played an important role in the efforts made by the Latter-day Saints to build the kingdom of God while in Kirtland. However, to thoroughly understand the significance of the Kirtland Flats ashery, it is first necessary to understand the industrial processes involved in an ashery complex, as well as the history of the industry.

This study, therefore, will rely on historical data to illustrate the significance of the ashery industry to early American enterprise. Then, having established a historical framework in which to place the Kirtland Flats ashery, the importance of this structure to the Church and the community will be discussed in more detail.

A Brief History of the American Potash Industry

An ashery was a place where an alkali called potash was produced.⁴ In chemical terms potash is simply a form of potassium hydroxide (KOH).⁵ It was made from the ashes of hardwood trees. Ashes were generated in a wood-burning kiln or collected from local settlers. The ashes were then leached with water, and the resultant highly caustic lye was drained off. Subsequently, the lye was boiled down or evaporated in iron kettles, resulting in a blackened residue known as black salts. Lastly, the salts were subjected to intense heat in large cauldrons until they fused into a continuous molten mass, which, when cooled, became a solid grayish-pink substance. Potash could be further refined in a specialized oven to produce a product known as pearl ash.

Historically, potash was an important element in the manufacture of alum, saltpeter, soap, glass, tanned leather, gunpowder, paper, bleached cotton textiles, and various woolen goods.⁶ In modern times, potash is mined from the beds of ancient evaporated seas and continues to be essential in these and other industries.⁷ Because of its value in these industries, it has been produced, to varying degrees of success, since the very beginnings of the American economy.

America first entered the potash scene one year after members of the London Company founded Jamestown in 1608. Eight skilled Poles and Germans were sent to the new colony with instructions to produce, among other things, “soap ashes,” which were shipped to England, where they were converted into the precious alkali.⁸ Further developments came in 1631 in connection with the construction of the first colonial sawmill near Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Potash was explicitly listed as a by-product of the operation a few years later.

In time, colonial governments began to encourage the production of potash, realizing that the profits could be lucrative.⁹ South Carolina led the

way with their attempts to produce the commodity in 1707, 1711, and 1712. However, due to inadequate resources (having softwood instead of hardwood trees), all three undertakings failed.¹⁰ The same was not true for the New England colonies, which boasted thick forests of hardwood trees. Massachusetts was the first to initiate government-sponsored efforts to produce the commodity in the North. Connecticut and other colonies soon followed. When compared to the attempts made by the South, these Northern enterprises experienced moderate success. However, when compared to the amount of alkalis (or “Baltic Ashes”¹¹) exported from Russia, Naples, and eastern European countries, the contributions of the colonies were insignificant. One manufacturer asserted that the meager production was due to difficulties in shipping, adding that there was an insufficient quantity of skilled workmen and supplies for his operation to function properly.¹² More truthful, perhaps, in explaining the poor results is that these early colonists’ facilities were expensive to build and operated inefficiently.

Fortunately for the colonists, the economic conditions accompanying the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, coupled with the simplification of the potash manufacture process, created an atmosphere that inaugurated a boom in the American potash industry (table 1). One scholar has noted, “In the fifteen years before the Revolution the American [potash] industry rose from insignificance to become the principal supplier of the British market.”¹³ So great was Britain’s industrial need for alkalis that all duties were removed from colonial imports. At the same time, the production of potash shifted to the frontier. As homesteaders realized the manufacturing process could be simplified by using equipment common to any frontier home, the wooded land that had to be cleared for farming acquired new significance.¹⁴ Asheries began to spring up in every frontier town. Some individuals made potash their entire business, buying up ashes from other settlers to supplement their own. Fre-

TABLE 1

Tons of Potash and Pearlash Imported into Great Britain, 1760–1811

	1760	1763	1765	1770	1775	1780	1792	1800	1806	1807	1811
Total Imports	2,424	1,727	1,624	2,826	2,159	1,839	6,444	9,028	8,060	7,249	8,927
From N. America	10	50	596	1,728	1,429	2	5,428	7,504	6,245	5,447	6,595
% from N. America	.5%	3%	37%	63%	66%	1%	84%	83%	77%	75%	74%

Statistics for years 1760–1800 are adapted from William I. Roberts III, “American Potash Manufacture before the American Revolution,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 116, no. 5 (1972): 390. Those for 1806 to 1811 are taken from T. C. Barker and others, “The Origins of the Synthetic Alkali Industry in Britain,” *Economica* 23 (May 1956): 163.

quently, however, it was the local merchant who found it profitable to add an ashery to his enterprise, using ashes he generated along with those he took in trade to supply the manufacturing process.¹⁵

Thus, potash, or any of its less refined forms (such as black salts or untreated, raw ashes), became a literal cash staple of the American frontier. Homesteaders, being limited in ways to make money, were provided the financial means by which they could subsist during the first few years of settlement. Moreover, the simplification of the manufacturing process allowed hundreds of individuals to contribute to the industry, thereby supplying the market with enough alkali to satisfy Britain's great demands.

For obvious reasons, American potash production and exportation severely declined with the onset of the Revolutionary War. Nonetheless, Britain again depended heavily on American potash for its supply of alkalis after the war. In fact, in the years following the war, American potash exportation to Britain reached unprecedented levels.¹⁶

State government officials from the newly created United States of America were quick to take advantage of the profitable market. Some viewed it as a fortuitous opportunity to overcome the postwar financial instability from which they were suffering.¹⁷ Thus, potash production on American soil began to be encouraged like never before. American innovation soon became apparent: indeed, in 1790, Samuel Hopkins, a resident of Philadelphia, obtained the first ever U.S. patent, issued for an improvement in the manufacture of potash and pearlash.¹⁸ Another significant milestone was reached in 1807, when American potash production exceeded one million dollars in total revenue.

Just when output reached that mark, the Embargo Act was passed, banning American ships from foreign trade. Needless to say, the embargo critically damaged the American potash industry.¹⁹ Some manufacturers of potash managed to survive by smuggling their potash into Canada, from whence it was shipped to England. When the embargo was finally repealed in 1809, potash exports' value surpassed one and one half million dollars, the highest to date. One scholar has attributed these figures to the anxiety felt by manufacturers "to increase shipments before a threatening restriction of commerce."²⁰

It was only a few years later that the War of 1812 posed another constraint on the potash industry. Naturally, potash production and exportation significantly decreased during this time. But, similar to the events that took place after the Revolutionary War, the industry skyrocketed immediately following the war, approaching the two-million-dollar mark.

The next decade witnessed what some economic historians have recognized as the beginning of the end for the American potash industry. In

1823 manufacturers in Britain initiated large scale production of synthetic soda using the Leblanc method, which had been developed over thirty years earlier in France.²¹ Although this “new” technology satisfied much of the demand for alkalis in the industrial realm, it did not altogether obliterate the need for vegetable-based alkalis. In fact, even though overall exports to Britain declined after 1825, American-produced potash retained its significant role in the British chemical industry “because of its high caustic content and low contamination by any of the sodium salts[,] . . . properties [which] simplified [the] processes of conversion to a wide variety of special salts.”²² Alternative alkalis from Europe and Russia could not boast such properties and, therefore, were the first to decrease in significance.²³

Contributing to the survival of the potash industry was the fact that as the demand for synthetic soda rose, so did its price. Thus, potash, being the less expensive of the two, was substituted wherever possible.²⁴ Moreover, the growing New England textile industry began to provide greater demand for American potash, thereby compensating for some of what was lost in overseas business.²⁵ In fact, it was not only the New England textile industry that was experiencing growth, but the entire region and all of its enterprises. The Industrial Revolution had made its way across the Atlantic and was now pumping change and development into the United States.

Of particular significance to potash manufacturers and other industries was the construction of the Erie Canal (see fig. 13). Completed in 1825, the canal provided easy and affordable access to the profitable markets on the eastern seaboard. Indeed, “the first eastbound freight on the Erie Canal . . . was divided about equally between potash, wheat, and whiskey.”²⁶ Advancements in transportation contributed, for a time, to the continued success of the American potash industry.

Ironically, advancements in transportation eventually led to the demise of the American potash trade. As railroads and canals made it easier and cheaper to transport commodities that were previously too bulky or expensive to freight, frontier settlers were able to expend their energies and resources in producing heavier goods that commanded higher prices.²⁷ Instead of burning forests for potash, the trees were cut for lumber. Cleared land was no longer simply farmed for one’s subsistence but utilized for large-scale agricultural and livestock programs. Essentially, new transportation networks connected people and places in such a way that venues of commerce previously limited to specific geographical areas became lucrative multiregional enterprises. These new connections, coupled with the advent of synthetic alkalis such as soda, reduced the once-thriving American potash industry to a type of specialized craft of minor importance.

Of course, there were those who continued faithfully in the old tradition, supplying the natural alkalis to a specific niche in the American economy. Yet even that production came to an end when the first massive deposit of mineral potash was discovered in Germany in 1861. These new-found naturally occurring alkalis, the remnants of ancient evaporated seas, completely eliminated the industry of manufacturing potash from wood ashes. Since then, potash mines have been opened up in Canada, England, and numerous other locations. Today, mined minerals supply the entire globe with the alkalis necessary for fertilizers and “the essential operations of metallurgy, electroplating, and photography,”²⁸ to name but a few uses. The asheries, in which the industry has its roots, have become little-known relics of the past.

The Ashery in Kirtland

With an overview of the American potash industry in place, it is possible to view in context the role the alkali played in the community of Kirtland and, in particular, within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Background. The city of Kirtland is located near the shores of Lake Erie in the midst of the densely wooded hills of northeastern Ohio.²⁹ Originally the area was part of the Connecticut Western Reserve. Through it runs the East Branch of the Chagrin River, a substantial source of water power that made the area especially appealing to early settlers. The city was named after Turhand Kirtland, a purchasing agent for the Connecticut Land Company who, with another agent, Joshua Stow, was given the responsibility in the late 1790s of surveying the land on which the city now resides. It was this Joshua Stow who, in 1811, traded land in Kirtland for a farm in Massachusetts. The owner of that farm, Christopher Crary, who arrived in Kirtland later that year, became one of the city’s first permanent settlers. Others soon followed, and in a relatively short period of time Kirtland developed into a substantial village. In fact, as late as 1830, Kirtland boasted a population (1,018) equal to that of Cleveland (1,075).³⁰

One of those settlers who chose Kirtland as their home was Newel K. Whitney. Whitney was a young veteran of the War of 1812 who had developed some business interests in the years following the conflict. He had spent some time in Wisconsin trading with the Indians, but by 1822 Whitney arrived in Kirtland.³¹

On September 5, 1822, soon after his arrival, Whitney purchased sixty-five hundredths of an acre from Peter French.³² This property was located near the brook that runs through the flood plain (or “flats”) of the East Branch of the Chagrin River, eventually emptying into the same. It was on this piece of land that Whitney built his ashery. On the same day, French

NOTICE,
THE subscriber will pay CASH, and the
 highest prices, for Wheat, Rye, Corn, and
 Pork, and *Salts of Lye*, delivered at his store
 in Kirtland.
 He also takes this method to inform all per-
 sons indebted to him, either by note or book ac-
 count, that unless payment is made, by the first
 of February next, they will be indiscriminately
 prosecuted, as he is determined to effect a set-
 tlement of his outstanding debts.
N. K. WHITNEY.
 Jan. 14, 1824. 3 27

FIG. 2. Newel K. Whitney's advertisement in the *Painesville Telegraph*, January 14, 1824. This ad is the first evidence of Whitney's involvement in the potash industry.

leased Whitney the rights to some of the water from a natural spring on the hill south of the Flats region.³³ This contract granted Whitney "the privilege of conveying said water on a direct line to any part of the lot of ground" he had purchased from French that same day.

It is difficult to say exactly when the ashery was built. Nonetheless, it is clear that by 1824 Whitney had a mercantile establishment in Kirtland and an interest in the potash industry. (At a later time Whitney and Algernon Sidney Gilbert were partners in the store.) On January 14, Whitney solicited in the local newspaper that the highest prices would be paid in cash for "*Salts of Lye*" and other goods that were delivered at his store (fig. 2). This suggests that the ashery was built and in operation by this time.

Orson Hyde states, "When winter came on, I went into Gilbert and Whitney's store again, under moderate wages, and continued there until the spring. Then in 1827, business being rather slack in the store, I went to work for the same parties, making pot and pearl ashes."³⁴ That Whitney, a frontier merchant, would supplement his store with a complex in which he could produce potash was very common for the time. Hardwood ashes played a critical role in any frontier economy, and it was the mercantilist who often managed their circulation.

For the merchant, the potash trade provided an opportunity to produce a highly sought-after commodity from an abundant supply of naturally occurring resources. For many settlers, it provided a source of income for the first few years of settlement when their primary task was to clear the

land on which they would later farm.³⁵ Hence, in exchange for their hardwood ashes, Whitney would give his customers the goods they needed or desired.³⁶ He would then convert the ashes into the profitable alkali. With the cash and goods he received from its sale or trade, Whitney's store would be replenished. It was an economic cycle perfectly suited for the frontier, and Whitney was not the only one taking advantage of it. In Geauga County (in which Kirtland was located) alone there were at least three other asheries and eight additional mercantile establishments involved in the industry at the same time Whitney's ashery was in operation.³⁷

Because of the minimal information known about Whitney's ashery, it is only possible to reasonably speculate about its appearance. Nineteenth-century asheries exhibited considerable variation in design and construction, ranging from simple to complex. However, each ashery had certain essential components, including a storage area for ashes and/or wood, a number of leaching vats, and a boiling area; a simple ashery required a roof but may have lacked walls (fig. 3). Some sophisticated operations included an oven in which the alkalis could be further refined (fig. 4).³⁸

The original ashery structure in Kirtland was probably simple. However, there is good evidence that the Kirtland ashery was modified over time, eventually evolving into a more sophisticated structure.³⁹ Nevertheless, every ashery, whether simple or complex, required relatively few resources to successfully operate. Furthermore, the small community of

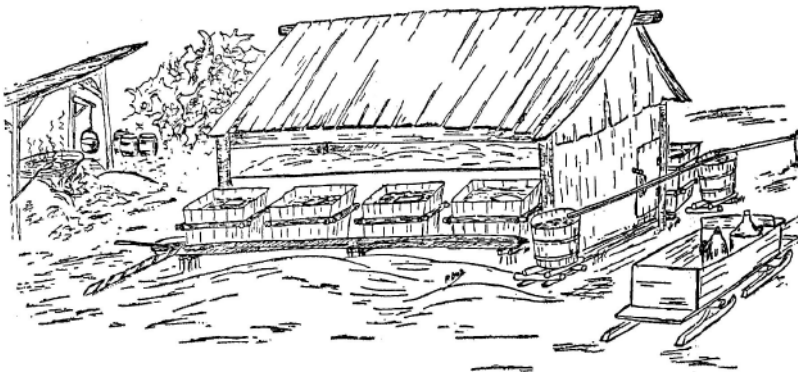


FIG. 3. A typical ashery of simple construction, complete with storage area for ashes, leaching vats, and boiling area. From Dominique-Marie Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse, au Canada et spécialement à Saint-François de Beauce," *Les Archives de folklore* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1949), 35. Used by permission.

Kirtland, Ohio, was an ideal setting for potash production in the early 1800s. Living on what was then part of North America's frontier, residents of Kirtland could obtain all four of the essential resources needed to operate a successful ashery of that day.

Hardwood. Of great importance were the wood resources found locally. As noted above, good potash could be derived only from the ashes of hardwood trees, those ashes containing a much greater percentage of natural salts than those of any softwood species. One tradesman's guide noted, "In the Northern, Middle, and Western

States, where a great proportion of the timber is beech, maple, and elm, great quantities of ashes are obtained."⁴⁰ Located in the midst of the dense vegetation typical of the Great Lakes region, Kirtland had an abundant supply of such hardwood trees. Natural hardwood resources would duly supply a local ashery with a quantity of ashes from which to make potash.

During the nineteenth century, wood ashes for potash were produced in three predominate ways. First, during the early spring and late summer, wooded land was cleared for farming. The felled trees were left in the fields to dry all summer long. In the fall, wood that was not needed as lumber for construction was burned. A certain degree of variation existed between individuals regarding how to properly burn the vegetation. Nevertheless, it was important that great care be taken so that as little adulteration took place as possible. That is, the more foreign material (such as dirt and rocks) present in the final ashes, the poorer quality of potash the ashes would produce and, hence, the less money paid in exchange (fig. 5). One observer gives this description of the burning process:

Once the trees, both large and small, cut into lengths of from ten to eleven feet, had been stacked upon each other in order to form piles about seven to eight feet high and from ten to twelve feet wide, mixed with bushes

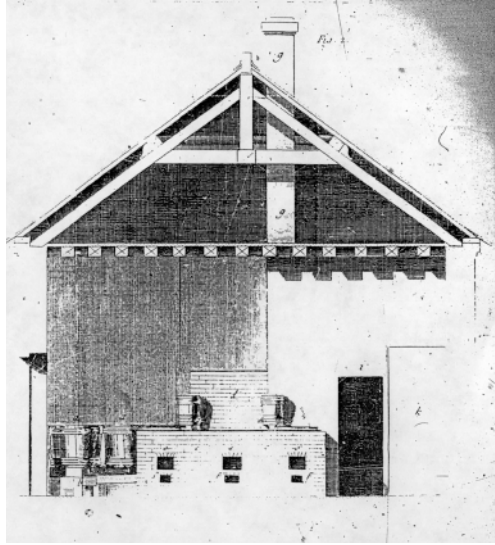


FIG. 4. An example of a more sophisticated and complex ashery. From Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, *The Art of Manufacturing Alkaline Salts and Potashes* (Philadelphia: n.p., [1785?]), plate II, figure 2.

Ashes ! Ashes !
EWARD BREWSTER will pay 8 cents
 per bushel for house, and 5 cents for field
 ashes, delivered at Varney Prouty's ashery in
 Concord, or at Alvaro Bebee's ashery, in Men-
 tor, in goods at reduced prices.
 April 30

FIG. 5. Advertisement for ashes from the *Painesville Telegraph*, April 30, 1825. Notice the difference in price between field and house ashes. Notice also that ashes were to be delivered at either of two asheries in Geauga County.

and brush and bits of wood of all sorts, all that was left to do was light the fire. Then when the fire had consumed most of this enormous heap, a second and sometimes even a third step was taken, by gathering all the remains of the huge trunks that the initial fire had not completely consumed, as well as the charcoal, the wood shavings, and in other words, anything that could still burn and increase the amount of ashes that could be gathered. . . . This last part of the work . . . required the greatest care, and they could not stop before the work was finished because the least amount of rain falling on the ashes had the effect of destroying a large part of their value.⁴¹

The entire burning process could take as long as a week to complete. Once finished, however, the resulting immense pile of ashes was scooped up into baskets or wagons to be carted off to the ashery or local mercantile establishment where they were exchanged for cash or other goods.⁴² If the gatherer did not have a wagon, he could fashion a backpack-like box from bark and roots in which he would carry the ashes to the ashery.⁴³ Once at the ashery, the ashes were heaped up in large but simple storehouses that would protect them from the rain.

The second way ashes for potash were produced was by burning wood in domestic stoves and hearths. A person known as an ash-man⁴⁴ gathered these types of ashes in exchange for cash or other needed commodities. Although it is possible that ash-men were collectors acting as independent middlemen between the homes of the community and the ashery itself, it is equally likely that they would have been employed by the owner of the local ashery. Remembering such events in connection with the ashery on the Flats, one Kirtland citizen reminisced, "There was an Ashery on that creek where they did a thriving business making potash. They sent out teams all over the country gathering up the ashes only paying a few cents per bushel."⁴⁵

Burning wood in a kiln was the third way that ash for potash was produced in the nineteenth century. Apparently, some asheries had their own kiln. These kilns have been described as being "usually a small building laid

up with stone, sometimes no larger than six by ten feet, with an opening near the top to stoke the wood, which was fired on a grade, and a hole underneath to rake out the ashes.”⁴⁶ The kilns were built to generate a more pure, less adulterated ash by providing an enclosed environment in which wood could be burned. Although it is not entirely clear whether or not Whitney’s ashery utilized a kiln of this kind, there is some evidence indicating that wood was being consumed at the ashery site: early settler Christopher G. Crary recounts an incident when he “paid Whitney with wood at his ashery”⁴⁷ for goods he had acquired from Whitney’s store. It is possible that an oven utilized to make pearlash also generated ashes that were used to manufacture potash.

Water Supply. A productive ashery also needed an adequate supply of water. Water’s primary purpose was to leach the ashes. In the early nineteenth century, ashes were leached with water either in an ash hopper or a leach barrel⁴⁸ (fig. 6). An ash hopper was an inverted pyramidal container constructed from common lumber.⁴⁹ The opening at its top was a few square feet in dimension, and the receptacle’s sides narrowed to a small opening at the bottom that emptied into a length of pipe made from a hollowed log.

A leach barrel, on the other hand, was no more than a bottomless barrel normally situated on some type of “leach stone” or “lie stone”⁵⁰ in which a circular groove was chiseled, securing the barrel’s position. A narrow channel was also carved in the stone, extending from the circular

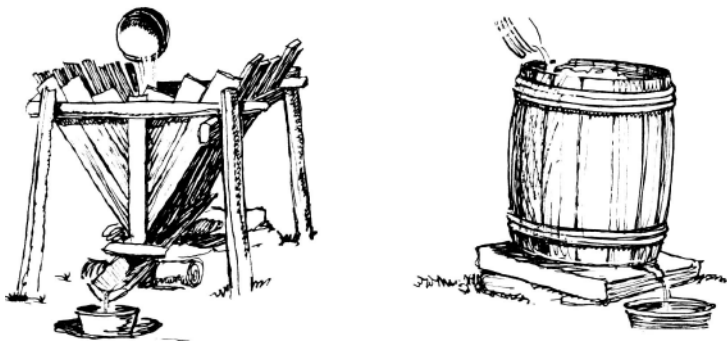


FIG. 6. A typical nineteenth-century ash hopper, left, and leach barrel. Drawings made by and taken from Eric Sloane, *The Seasons of America Past* (New York: Wilfred Funk, 1958), 105.

groove to the stone's edge, and served as a gutter through which the liquid lye could drain. Some of these repositories could hold between sixty and seventy gallons of material.⁵¹ The number of leaching vats an ashery possessed depended on the size of the complex and the ambition of its operators.

Although it varied over time and according to place, the leaching process was rather simple. In the bottom of the ash hopper or leach barrel was placed a network of small sticks and a layer of straw several inches thick, which served as a sieve and ensured that no large pieces of ash material would seep through. The vessel was then filled with wood ashes, packed down for maximum capacity. Sometimes a measure of wet lime was added to increase the causticity of the resultant lye.⁵² A few inches of open space near the top of the receptacle was reserved to hold the several buckets of water that were poured over the compressed wood ash at timely intervals, each time filling the container to its brim.⁵³ One woman noted, "Sometimes it took all day for water to run through and come out at the bottom."⁵⁴ The resulting amber fluid that percolated out through the lower orifice was caught in a smaller container that sat underneath either of the larger receptacles. This was the potent potassium lye that was to become the treasured potash. If not satisfactorily strong, the first run-off of lye could be poured again over the same ashes or over a fresh batch, thus increasing its causticity. The ashes, on the other hand, although now deficient of most of their potassium and other natural salts, could be sold, used for fertilizer, or simply discarded.⁵⁵

Because water was an essential ingredient in the manufacturing of potash, most asheries were located near a convenient water source. One late-nineteenth-century account speaks of water being brought in from a nearby well through long wooden piping made from hollowed out trees (fig. 7).⁵⁶ A different description mentions "twelve to eighteen of these [leach] tubs placed in a line, over which a trough is placed, and a hole with a plug in each over every tub."⁵⁷ The ashery at Kirtland Flats was placed on the south bank of a brook that emptied into the East Branch of the Chagrin

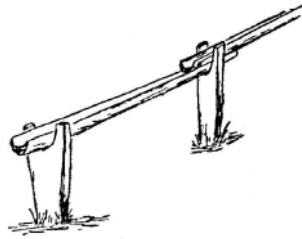


FIG. 7. Wood piping, or pump logs, commonly used to convey water to an ashery. From Dominique-Marie Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse, au Canada et spécialement à Saint-François de Beauce," *Les Archives de Folklore* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1949), 38. Used by permission.

River, a seemingly appropriate location. It is not clear, however, if Newel K. Whitney ever used the water from the brook to leach the ashes in his ashery. More likely, he used the water from a natural spring on the hill to the south of the ashery. Whitney leased the rights to this water from Peter French on September 5, 1822, the same day he purchased the ashery property from French. Why he did not use the water from the brook remains a mystery; but, it could have been due to the facility of running water downhill to his ashery, rather than bringing it up from the brook.

From a deed dated February 8, 1853, we learn that similar conditions prevailed several years after the Latter-day Saints left Kirtland. In it, Isaac Sherman and wife, then owners of the ashery, sold Daniel Bliss a piece of land and the rights to keep an open ditch “on the West End of said Ashery to Brook for the purpose of a trail race.”⁵⁸ However, the Shermans were explicit in “reserving the privilege of laying pump logs and the privilege of water from said ditch for the use of our Ashery.”⁵⁹ Since “pump logs” are logs “suitably bored or hollowed out for making a pump or for a water pipe,”⁶⁰ it is clear that even as late as 1853 the Kirtland Flats ashery was drawing on sources other than the brook itself for its supply of water.

Potash Kettle. One scholar has argued that “the commercial success of those frontier establishments [asheries] was dependent on the reliability and long life of their one major facility—the cast-iron pot ash kettle.”⁶¹ In the northeastern United States, these kettles were normally a simple bowl with diameters ranging between forty-two and fifty-four inches. As they were cast in iron one to one-and-one-quarter inches thick, an ordinary potash kettle weighed somewhere between four hundred and one thousand pounds (fig. 8).⁶² Because of their size, potash kettles were seven to ten times more expensive than other cast-iron ware, making the manufacture of potash a specialized industry.⁶³ The most important step in the manufacturing process took place within these kettles.⁶⁴

In a sector of the ashery sometimes referred to as the “boiling camp,” the kettle was mounted approximately two feet above the ground on a circular

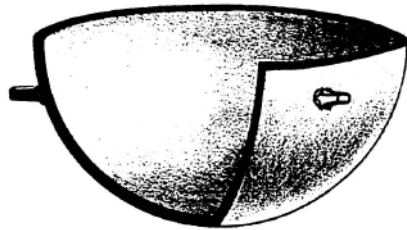


FIG. 8. Cross section of a typical bowl-shaped cast-iron potash kettle. From Harry Miller, “Potash from Wood Ashes: Frontier Technology in Canada and the United States,” *Technology and Culture* 21, no. 2 (1980): 191. Reprinted by permission of the Johns Hopkins University Press. © Society for the History of Technology.

support known as an “arch” made of brick or stone, under which a substantial fire could be maintained. On one side there was an opening at ground level through which the fire was stoked. On the opposite side there was a smaller opening that served as a vent and provided a cross draft for the fire. Once potassium lye was leached from the ashes as described above, the amber liquid was poured into the kettle, where it was boiled down to a dark, syrupy residue known as “black salts,” “salts of lye,” or simply “salts.” Undoubt-

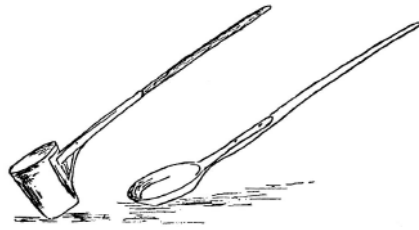


FIG. 9. Examples of ladles commonly used in the manufacture of potash. From Dominique-Marie Doyon, “La Fabrication de la potasse, au Canada et spécialement à Saint-François de Beauce,” *Les Archives de folklore* (Quebec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1949), 38. Used by permission.

edly, mixed in with the salts were bits of charcoal, soil, and other polluting material left over from the burning and leaching processes. The salts at this point were ladled (fig. 9) into a number of nearby smaller cauldrons called “coolers,” which sometimes hung from a wooden frame above the boiling area by hinged arms able to swing to and from the larger potash kettle.⁶⁵

In reality, this initial step of the boiling process did not have to be done in the expensive potash kettles of the asheries. Salts could be produced in a kettle of any size or shape. For this reason, settlers would often produce salts themselves and sell or exchange them to the ashery or merchant. One man involved in a potash operation noted, “Our people have got into the way of making up their own ashes into salts in the kettles they get to make sugar in and they find they turn their labor as well as their ashes into money so there is no getting their ashes.”⁶⁶ Another contemporary observed, “Very few of the settlers have an ashery, as it is called, in which the whole process of making either pot or pearl-ash is performed. They usually sell the black salts to the store-keepers in their neighbourhood, who complete the process of the manufacture.”⁶⁷

Thus, in the nineteenth-century newspapers we see advertisements for ashes as well as advertisements soliciting domestically produced salts (see figs. 2 and 10).⁶⁸ It is interesting to note that in many of these ads the merchants were willing to “pay a part cash” for the salts, whereas for other commodities only “the highest price in Goods” would be paid.⁶⁹

After several days of incessant lye boiling, enough salts to fill the potash kettle had been produced. The next and most important step was to

heat the kettle to a temperature of "red heat" (usually around 1,000° F), which caused the salts to fuse into a boiling molten mass. In order to maintain the temperature necessary for the scorching, the fire beneath had to be continuously fed from the piles of wood gathered beforehand. It took between two and four hours of constant heat and boiling until the polluting material had burned off and "the bubbles . . . erupted from every point on the liquid's surface. . . . [This] was the sign that the potash was cooked."⁷⁰ During this cooking phase, a crust of thick foam that formed over the surface of the liquid was skimmed off periodically. If the bubbles of the boiling mass were not able to break through this crust, the potash could not be completed, and the batch was abandoned and reused at a later time.⁷¹

During this phase potash kettles were at the greatest risk. Due to the extreme stress, heat, and corrosion to which they were ceaselessly subjected, it was not uncommon for kettles to be ruined by large cracks in their bases. Apparently, this was frequently the case in the northeastern United States before the 1830s because of the inferior casting techniques available at the time.⁷² However, once technology improved, the life span of potash kettles increased considerably.⁷³

After the liquid had sufficiently boiled, the molten potash was ladled into the same coolers as before, only this time the smaller vessels were preheated to minimize sudden ruptures. By the fol-

**SAWYER, GOODMAN,
& CO.**

HAVE just received a fine & general
assortment of

SPRING GOODS,

Which they are ready to *hand over* on the
fairest terms.—Their **DRY GOODS**
consist in part of Blue, Black, Brown, Ol-
ive, Green and Mixed Broad Cloths, Fan-
cy Cassimers, light and dark Satinets,
Beaverteens, Bangups, Rouen Cassimers,
Merino do. London Drilling, French prin-
ted Muslins, (an elegant article for Ladies
dresses,) black, white, pink, orange and
straw, striped and plaid *Ginghams*, Cali-
coes, Stocks, Collars, Caps, Palmleaf hats,
Cravats & cravat-stiffeners—a great variety
of *Fancy* articles including Millinery, &c.
&c.—Also bleached & brown

Shirtings & Sheetings,

Ticking,	Batting,
Wicking,	GROCERIES,
HARDWARE,	Cutlery,
CROCKERY,	Glass-ware,
Paints,	Dye-stuff's
Iron, Steel,	Nails,
Glass,	Leather,
Salt,	

Mill & cut Saws, &c &c.

**N. B. The highest price
paid for Pot, Pearl Ashes,
& Salts of Lye.**

CHAGRIN, June 1, 1832.

FIG. 10. An 1832 advertisement showing the distinction made between potash, pearlash, and salts of lye. *Painesville Telegraph*, June 7, 1832.



FIG. 11. Chunks of potash produced by the author following the process described herein. Photo by Benjamin C. Pykles.

lowing day, the potash had solidified into an extremely hard, gray mass. The mass was then broken up into chunks with an ax, revealing its pinkish interior (fig. 11). The chunks were then tightly packed into large wooden barrels and shipped to the markets of the East Coast or Great Britain to be sold.⁷⁴ In order to preserve its causticity and, therefore, its use as an industrial alkali, the potash was sometimes tightly packed in crushed lime.⁷⁵ This causticity posed a formidable

threat to those handling the solidified potash. Although the potash was cooled, it could still scorch the skin, especially when the skin was moist with perspiration.⁷⁶ Workers took precaution by wearing long-sleeved clothing, aprons, and long mitts while preparing and packing the potent alkali.⁷⁷

While a large and expensive kettle was needed to manufacture potash in the manner described here, and thus only an ashery could complete the process, a less refined version of the alkali could be produced by any settler owning a basic kettle. This less refined version of potash was commonly called *pearlash* (confusingly, this was not the same product also known as *pearlash* that was a highly refined alkali produced in more sophisticated ashery operations). Numerous advertisements in a local newspaper suggest that ordinary settlers were producing the alkali in its various forms. That local mercantile establishments were distinguishing between “Pot, Pearl Ashes, & Salts of Lye” is clearly seen in figure 10. It is difficult to say, however, exactly how these distinctions were made. Several historians have mistaken the raw *pearlash* of the frontier for the more refined alkali. The more refined *pearlash*, produced in the more advanced asheries, was made from potash baked in a reverberatory oven, producing a white, granular substance.⁷⁸ At times this more refined *pearlash* commanded a higher market price than potash (see graph 1). As indicated above, it is possible that Whitney had a reverberatory oven as part of his ashery complex.⁷⁹

The less refined frontier *pearlash* was apparently made in the settlers’ own cast-iron vessels by cooking and heavily stirring their homemade salts at temperatures below the red heat fusion point.⁸⁰ The scorched material

could then be dissolved in water, have its impurities skimmed off, and reboiled down to a more purified form.⁸¹ The result was a granular, yellow-gray pearlash. Without doubt, this substance was of an inferior quality to the potash and pearlash produced in the asheries with an oven, but the crude material evidently secured a price suitable enough to encourage the merchants' soliciting. What these merchants were seeking when advertising for domestically produced "Potash" is not clear. It is possible, however, that some ordinary folk owned potash kettles of their own or risked their smaller, thin-walled kettles in which they produced a shoddy yet marketable form of potash.

In Kirtland, potash kettles most likely were obtained from one of the few major iron works in Geauga County. In 1825 a local newspaper announced the discovery of an extensive deposit of iron ore found in the vicinity of Painesville Township.⁸² The year following, three major iron works were listed in the same paper: the Geauga Iron Company in Painesville, the Rail-Road Furnace in Perry, and the Concord Iron Works in Concord.⁸³ Although only one of the three specifically advertised the manufacture of potash kettles, it is likely that all supplied the market with their own castings. In later years, other iron works were established in the county, supplementing the supply of cast-iron hollow ware⁸⁴ available to the settlers (fig. 12).

Transportation. The fourth and final element of a truly successful frontier ashery

Arcole Iron Works.
(MADISON, GEAUGA CO. OHIO.)
WILKINSON, SEELEY & CO.
proprietors of the *Arcole Furnace*
having recently built and put in operation
an additional Blast Furnace, are now prepared to furnish dealers with

CAST IRON,
in all its various forms. Comprised in the assortment of Stove patterns, are
James' & Wilson' Cooking Stoves, Camboos, Hall, 7 & 10 plate, Franklin, Coal and Box STOVES,
Of every size and form, from eastern patterns, as light as Philadelphia plates,
And every description of
HOLLOW WARE,
From the *Carron* form of patterns, (as light as Jersey ware)
Comprehending in the assortment
3 sizes of Cauldrons,
6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 24, 30, 40, 50, and 70 lb
KETTLES,
3 sizes Tea Kettles,
7 sizes Pots, 3 sizes Bake Ovens,
6 sizes Spiders,
2 sizes portable Furnaces,
3 sizes Griddles, Basins
Gridirons, Stew Pots, Spanish Pot,
Also 5 sizes Fire Dogs,
60, 90, 110 & 120 gallon Potash Kettles,
Mill Irons, Fuller's Irons,
Gudgeons,
Wagon Boxes, Fanning-mill Irons,
Plough Irons, &c. &c.

FIG. 12. An 1831 advertisement of the Arcole Iron Works, located in Madison, Geauga County, Ohio. Notice the variety in size of potash kettles offered. *Painesville Telegraph*, July 19, 1831.

was access to affordable means of transporting potash to the various markets. This access, perhaps, was the principal reason that a great number of frontier mercantilists established asheries: they were already involved in the networks of transportation.

Potash produced in Kirtland would have been shipped both locally and to the eastern seaboard. The need for alkali within Geauga County itself would have been great enough to warrant the shipment of Kirtland potash to some of the local glass works and carding mills. Potash transported by wagons would have satisfied these demands. However, the demand for potash on the East Coast in the early nineteenth century was much greater than that of the local economies. Not only were the New England glass and textile industries beginning to grow, but brokers purchasing goods to be shipped to England were also snatching up potash for the booming cotton and wool industries there. Canada's eastern ports were likewise centers of great potash exportation.

No doubt Kirtland was founded in part due to its convenient access to the major waterways of the Northeast. From Kirtland it was a relatively short wagon ride to Fairport Harbor, a major port of Lake Erie at that time. From there, potash and other goods could be shipped to Buffalo. Before the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, the commodities would then have had to travel by wagon to Albany where they could make their way to New York via the Hudson River or to other Eastern ports by way of land travel. Another option was to head northward towards Lake Ontario, where the goods could reach the port of Quebec via the St. Lawrence River.

Obviously, when the Erie Canal connected Buffalo to Albany, the shipping scene changed dramatically. Now, Kirtland goods could reach the markets of New York almost entirely by boat—a much quicker and cheaper means of transportation (fig. 13). A year after the canal was finished, the *Painesville Telegraph* noted the improvements in transportation costs: “In 1819 the transportation of goods from the city of New-York to this place, was *four dollars twenty five cents* per hundred: now we pay *one dollar and thirty seven cents* per hundred—a distance of six hundred miles.”⁸⁵ Of course, there were other canals besides the Erie that contributed to these advantages as well. By October 1833, Kirtland businesses had access to Southern markets via the Ohio and Erie Canal,⁸⁶ which connected Cleveland to the Ohio River at Portsmouth.

Merchants soon realized, however, that not all industries profited equally from the improved travel route. Increased access to the markets of the eastern seaboard meant increased competition as well. Perhaps it was this competition that caused a local newspaper to note in 1829 that “a small decline has taken place in Pot and Pearl-ashes, since the opening of river



FIG. 13. The Erie Canal. Finished in 1825, the Erie Canal became the primary route from Kirtland to the East Coast markets.

navigation.”⁸⁷ Graph 1 illustrates the trend in potash and pearlash prices at the time this statement was made.

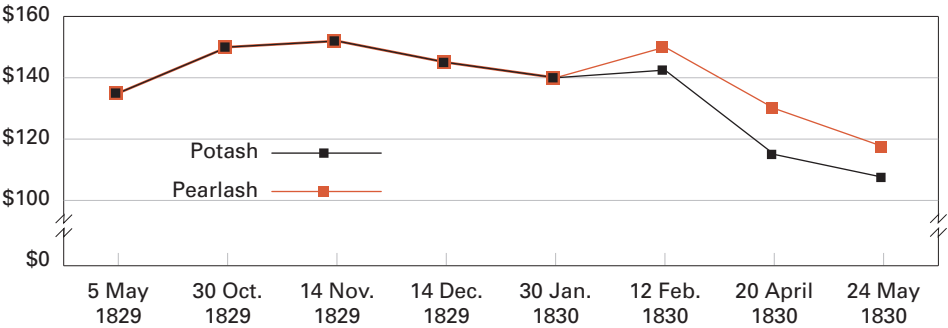
It was not only the Erie Canal that induced the decline, but the extensions of railroads also. In 1835 it was advertised that two new railroads would soon connect Painesville to Richmond and Fairport.⁸⁸ Such improvements in transportation made it profitable to ship goods that were previously too expensive to cart over land, and many people began to utilize their resources in different ways. Such was the situation with wood, which received a higher price as lumber than it did for ashes. The result is obvious; the potash industry began to dwindle. Yet even as late as 1840, potash was one of the two major manufactures in Lake County, Ohio. That year alone 153 tons of the alkali was produced.⁸⁹ No doubt the ashery in Kirtland contributed to this total.

Significance to the Church

In spite of the challenges posed by the improvements in transportation, the Kirtland Flats ashery continued to operate for several more years. In fact, the 1830s were a significant time in the history of the Kirtland ashery. During this time the ashery became uniquely involved with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney heard about the Church when the first Latter-day Saint missionaries came to Ohio in 1830, only months after the Church was organized. These missionaries preached in the vicin-

GRAPH 1
Decline in Potash and Pearlash Prices in the New York Market, 1829–1830



Figures taken from monthly reports found in the *Painesville Telegraph*.

ity of Kirtland and baptized many. Newel and Elizabeth were among the first converts, receiving baptism in winter 1830. A few months later, in February 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, arrived in the small town. In a short time, Kirtland became the administrative headquarters of the Church and remained so until 1838.

One of the first revelations received by the Prophet in Kirtland outlined the Lord’s plan for the economic organization of the Church and was later known as the law of consecration. Essentially, the law required that each Church member “consecrate” or deed all of his or her property to the bishop of the Church, who then would grant an “inheritance” or “stewardship” to every family from the properties received, according to the wants and needs of each particular family.⁹⁰ The stewardships could be anything from a farm to a building lot; whatever it was, the family was expected to consecrate annually their surplus production to the storehouse of the bishop. This surplus, in turn, was used to assist those who, for whatever reason, were unable to sufficiently provide for their own wants and needs.⁹¹

Five days before the revelation containing the law of consecration was given, the Lord indicated his will that Edward Partridge be “ordained a bishop unto the church” (D&C 41:9). A short time later, Bishop Partridge was commanded to relocate his family to Jackson County, Missouri, where he would keep the storehouse of the Church and manage the affairs of Zion (D&C 58:24–25). As a result of Bishop Partridge’s removal, the Lord called Newel K. Whitney as second bishop of the Church, appointing him to manage the storehouse and other affairs in Kirtland (D&C 72).

In April 1832, in an attempt to alleviate the temporal responsibilities of the two bishops, a “Central Council” of five (later seven) men was created to supervise the business affairs of the Church in both Missouri and

Ohio.⁹² Bishop Whitney was one of those chosen to comprise this council. Immediately, the Central Council established what was called the United Firm.⁹³ This was “a joint-stewardship of the members of the council with the responsibility of holding properties in trust, assisting the poor, and supervising the establishment of merchandising stores in Ohio and Missouri.”⁹⁴ Because of the potential of Bishop Whitney’s ashery to help fulfill these objectives, the council adopted the business as one of the properties to be owned in trust.

The fact that a cash staple such as potash could be produced from the simplest and most abundant resources of the frontier made the ashery an ideal selection for the United Firm. With the annually consecrated resources of Church members in Kirtland, which presumably included their hardwood ashes, the ashery could produce the profitable potash. From the sale or trade of the potash manufactured in the Kirtland Flats ashery, the Central Council could provide for the needs of the poor within the Church. Moreover, the profits would assist the council in their efforts to establish stores where Church members could procure essential goods. Perhaps most importantly, the assets earned from the ashery operation could be used toward the Church’s efforts to establish the kingdom of God on the earth, including the construction of the Kirtland Temple. All in all, the ashery was an ideal asset to the Church’s attempt to be unified and self-sufficient in their economic and religious pursuits.

For various reasons, but mostly because of hardships caused by the persecution of Saints in Missouri, the law of consecration was suspended about two years after it was established. The economic law would be re-implemented in numerous venues in the future, but it was no longer practical under the circumstances the Latter-day Saints faced in 1834. In the same revelation suspending the law of consecration came the mandate to dissolve the United Firm. Each of the properties previously owned in trust were assigned to individual agents. The Kirtland Flats ashery was returned to Newel K. Whitney “for his stewardship, for a blessing upon him and his seed after him, for the benefit of the mercantile establishment of my order which I have established for my stake in the land of Kirtland” (D&C 104:40). As mentioned in the introduction to this study, this constitutes the only scriptural reference to the Kirtland ashery.

Property Ownership

The history of the Kirtland Flats ashery becomes very vague after this time. Apparently, Newel K. Whitney retained the ashery property until February 1837, when he sold it to Jacob Bump for \$400.⁹⁵ Two months later,

Bump sold the property to Jonathon Holmes for the same amount.⁹⁶ After this point, the property changed size and hands numerous times, making it difficult to construct a continuous chronology of property ownership.⁹⁷

From a relatively obscure deed documenting the sale of a small piece of land from Isaac Sherman to Daniel Bliss in February 1853, it is known that Sherman and his wife were operating an ashery at that time. Apparently the ashery owned by the Shermans was located on the same piece of property on which Whitney had run his operation.⁹⁸ An ashery appears, at the same site as Whitney's ashery, on a map of Kirtland made in 1857 (see fig. 1). Furthermore, an ashery is repeatedly referenced in various property descriptions from 1864 to 1869.⁹⁹

In November of 1870, 1.77 acres of land was sold in the Flats region for "the sum of Five hundred Dollars and the payment of a mortgage of three hundred Dollars."¹⁰⁰ Seven years later, the same property was sold again for \$125. In the deed for this last transaction, the property is described as "the old Ashery lot."¹⁰¹ Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that by 1877, the Kirtland Flats ashery had finally ceased to exist. Considering the significant decline of the potash industry throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the life-span of the Kirtland complex was remarkable indeed.

Conclusion

Although the Kirtland Flats ashery was not built until the early 1820s, it was part of an ongoing legacy of potash production in North America that began with some of the first Europeans to establish themselves on the continent. In this sense, the ashery is symbolic of the innovation and hard work of those who settled the North American frontier. It also represents the efforts of one young man who had the courage and vision to seek a profitable living in the small village of Kirtland. Perhaps most importantly, it symbolizes the faith and devotion of a religious community in their attempt to establish an economic order that would enable them to be self-sufficient and unified in their efforts to build the kingdom of God.

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1. "Church to Restore Historic Landmarks in Kirtland," *Ensign* 30 (July 2000): 78.
2. In early editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, the ashery was given the code name "the Shule" (D&C 104:39). Some names of people and places mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants were, in the earliest editions, referred to by code names to protect their identity. In the earliest editions only the code name was given, but subsequent editions gave the real name along with the code name. Since 1981 code names have not been given. See the introduction to Doctrine and Covenants 78 in recent editions.
3. The standard work on the history of the Latter-day Saints in Kirtland is Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983). Backman's work, however, will undoubtedly be enhanced by the great amount of historical data amassed by staff at the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City as part of the Kirtland restoration project.
4. Historically, the alkali was sometimes spelled "pot ash."
5. Harry Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes: Frontier Technology in Canada and the United States," *Technology and Culture* 21, no. 2 (1980): 198 n. 23.
6. For a brief explanation of how potash and its derivatives were used in each of these commodities, see Dorothy S. Brady, "Relative Prices in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Economic History* 24 (June 1964): 166-67.
7. Theodore J. Kreps, "Vicissitudes of the American Potash Industry," *Journal of Economic and Business History* 3 (1930-31): 630.
8. Kreps, "American Potash Industry," 632; C. A. Browne, "Historical Notes upon the Domestic Potash Industry in Early Colonial and Later Times," *Journal of Chemical Education* 3, no. 7 (1926): 749.
9. For a detailed summary of the first government-sponsored attempts, see William I. Roberts III, "American Potash Manufacture before the American Revolution," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 116, no. 5 (1972): 383-95.
10. Kreps, "American Potash Industry," 633.
11. See Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 199 n. 25.
12. Roberts, "American Potash Manufacture," 389. The manufacturer was Charles Dick, who was in charge of a potash production facility in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Undoubtedly, part of Dick's frustration stemmed from inadequate local wood resources.
13. Roberts, "American Potash Manufacture," 390.
14. Roberts, "American Potash Manufacture," 392.
15. Roberts, "American Potash Manufacture," 392. See also Laurence A. Johnson, *Over the Counter and on the Shelf: Country Storekeeping in America, 1620-1920*, ed. Marcia Ray (New York: Bonanza Books, 1961), 13.
16. Further advancements in the Industrial Revolution provide an explanation of this unique growth. The need for vegetable-based alkalis for the British cotton and soap industries was greater than it had ever been. The country's lack of native wood resources forced manufacturers to seek for alternative sources of alkali. Two variants in particular were utilized to supplement the importation of both American and Eurasian produced potash. Kelp, native to the shores of Britain and whose ashes contain high levels of salt, was used to produce a type of alkali. For a treatise on the history of kelp, see Archibald Clow and Nan L. Clow, "The Natural and Economic History of Kelp," *Annals of Science* 5 (July 1947): 297-316. For similar reasons, Spain exported barilla, an alkali made from the ashes of their coastal vegetation. Together, kelp and barilla constituted a significant supply of Britain's alkalis. Nevertheless, as suggested in table 1, after the Revolutionary War, the demand for American potash quickly surpassed that for alternative sources, including the potash produced in eastern Europe and Russia.
17. Browne, "Historical Notes," 753.

18. David W. Maxey, "Samuel Hopkins, The Holder of the First U.S. Patent: A Study of Failure," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 122 (1998): 3–37; David W. Maxey, "Inventing History: The Holder of the First U.S. Patent," *Journal of the Patent and Trademark Office Society* 80 (1998): 155–70; Henry M. Paynter, "The First U.S. Patent," *American Heritage of Invention and Technology* (fall 1990): 18–22.

19. Among the "ashery men" who suffered greatly as a result of the embargo was the father of future Church leader Heber C. Kimball, then residing in Vermont. Heber wrote, "About the time of the embargo, before the last war with England, my father lost his property, as it was invested in salts, potash and pearlash; the embargo, having shut down the gate of commerce between the United States and England, left his property in his hands without much value." As quoted in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball, An Apostle: The Father and Founder of the British Mission*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1945), 4.

20. Browne, "Historical Notes," 755–56.

21. Nicolas Leblanc was granted a patent in 1791 for a method of producing soda from ordinary salt. See T. S. Patterson, "Nicolas Leblanc and the Founding of the Soda Industry," *Chemistry and Industry* 62 (May 1943): 174–77.

22. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 199; see further at that location (Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 199 n. 25) for a description of "Important Nineteenth-century potassium compounds for industry, pharmacy, etc."

23. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 197–98. Further, footnote 22 at that location states that "kelp and barilla, made from ashes of vegetation grown in or near salt water, had resulting high sodium-alkali concentrations, i.e., soda. Those commodities faced the earliest competition from the new synthetic alkali . . . [whereas] Pot ashes, which were all made by burning inland vegetation, were predominantly potassium-base salts."

24. T. C. Barker and others, "The Origins of the Synthetic Alkali Industry in Britain," *Economica* 23 (May 1956): 166.

25. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 194 n. 10.

26. Brady, "Relative Prices," 167.

27. Kreps, "American Potash Industry," 646–47.

28. Kreps, "American Potash Industry," 630.

29. Kirtland was in Geauga County until 1840, when Lake County was created; Kirtland is now in Lake County.

30. Anne B. Prusha, *A History of Kirtland, Ohio* (Mentor, Ohio: Lakeland Community College Press, 1982), 4–16, 32.

31. Whitney's wife, Elizabeth Ann, later reported, "Shortly after entering my twenty-first year I became acquainted with a young man from Vermont, Newell K. Whitney, who, like myself, had left home and relatives and was determined to carve out a fortune for himself." Edward W. Tullidge, *Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877), 34.

32. Deed Records, 1818–22, Geauga County, Ohio, 8:427–28, microfilm, Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. The deed states that "Newell K. Whitney" paid twenty-six dollars for his sixty-five hundredths of an acre and that he received "the premises as a good indefeasible estate in fee simple." The deed was recorded in Geauga County Records on October 18, 1822. A copy of the deed is available from the author upon request.

33. Deed Records, 1818–22, Geauga County, Ohio, 8:429. The deed states that "Newell K. Whitney" paid Peter French ten dollars for "the privilege of conveying said water on a direct line to any part of the lot of ground . . . for the period of nine hundred

and ninety nine years." This deed was also recorded in Geauga County Records on October 18, 1822. A copy of the deed is available from the author upon request.

34. Orson Hyde, "History of Brigham Young," *Millennial Star* 26 (November 1864): 743.

35. Edward Hazen, *The Panorama of Professions and Trades; or, Every Man's Book* (Philadelphia: Uriah Hunt, 1839), 20.

36. Brady notes that "the prices of wood ash were, apparently, between ten and fifteen cents per bushel throughout the first half of the century." Brady, "Relative Prices," 167.

37. Data taken from advertisements in the *Painesville Telegraph*, 1825, 1828–35.

38. A reverberatory oven was used to bake the alkalis, resulting in the more refined form of pearlash.

39. Additional data regarding the appearance of the ashery will no doubt be revealed upon completion of the archaeological investigations undertaken by the Museum of Church History and Art.

40. Hazen, *Panorama of Professions and Trades*, 20.

41. Jean Rivard, *défricheur* [Jean Rivard, settler], 1877, 83, as cited in Dominique-Marie Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse, au Canada et spécialement à Saint-Francois de Beauce," *Les Archives de folklore* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1949), 27–41; translated into English by the translation department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; copy in research files of the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City. For a similar description this process, see Hazen, *Panorama of Professions and Trades*, 19–20.

42. Hendrik Booraem V, *The Road to Respectability: James A. Garfield and His World, 1844–52* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 1988), 16.

43. Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 34.

44. William A. Craigie and James R. Hulbert, eds., *A Dictionary of American English*, 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 1:85, s.v. "Ash-man."

45. Hadden Scrapbook, 27, microfilm, Family History Library. (I thank Mark Staker for providing this reference.)

A comparative look at the price of ashes during the Latter-day Saint occupation of Kirtland is found in a ledger from Turin, New York, that spans from 1825 to 1841. It records wood ashes being purchased for \$.06 to \$.12 a bushel. Johnson, *Over the Counter*, 13.

46. Johnson, *Over the Counter*, 13.

47. Christopher G. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences* (Marshalltown, Iowa: Marshall Printing, 1893), 49. (I thank Mark Staker for providing this reference.) Crary does not give a date for this occurrence, but if read in context it appears to have taken place during the early 1830s.

48. Eric Sloane, *The Seasons of America Past* (New York: Wilfred Funk, 1958), 105–6.

49. A few accounts describe ash hoppers being made from strips of elm bark. Harry Miller, "Canada's Historic First Iron Castings," Information Circular IC 209 (Ottawa: Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Mines Branch, December 1968), 70 n. 12. It is assumed that the use of elm bark was the exception and that hoppers constructed from boards were more commonly used.

50. Johnson, *Over the Counter*, 13.

51. George Francis Dow, *Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967), 97.

52. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 187; Sloane, *Seasons of America Past*, 106.

53. Some accounts relate that boiling water was used in the leaching process. It seems that this was merely a matter of personal preference. See Hazen, *Panorama of Professions and Trades*, 20.

54. Agnes Adele Kinsbury, as quoted in Johnson, *Over the Counter*, 62.

55. Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 40.

56. Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 37.

57. M. Parker, *The Arcana of Arts and Sciences, or Farmers' and Merchants' Manual* (Washington, Penn.: J. Grayson, 1824); reference obtained from the research files of Dean Zimmerman.

58. Deed Records, 1851–55, Lake County, Ohio, vol. J, 422, microfilm, Family History Library.

59. Deed Records, 1851–55, Lake County, Ohio, vol. J, 422.

60. Craigie and Hulbert, *Dictionary of American English*, 3:1859, s.v. "Pump log."

61. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 189.

62. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 191, fig. 3. "Flared lip" kettles were also used, but apparently more so in Canada than in the United States. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," nn. 77 and 78.

63. Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 134.

64. An announcement for a "Sheriff Sale" in the *Painesville Telegraph* on August 16, 1833, mentions an ashery in Thompson, Ohio that had "two POTASH KETTLES, standing in an arch." Apparently, a larger ashery complex could have as many kettles as they saw fit. Unfortunately, it is unknown how many kettles Newel K. Whitney had at the Kirtland Flats ashery.

65. Miller, "Canada's Historic First Iron Castings," 18–19; Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 39.

66. Letter of Joseph Locke, March 19, 1771, to Oliver Wendel, Wendel Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, quoted in Roberts, "American Potash Manufacture," 392.

67. Hazen, *Panorama of Professions and Trades*, 20.

68. *Painesville Telegraph*, April 4, 1828; December 12, 1828; July 28, 1829; November 17, 1829; May 11, 1830; June 7, 1832; October 24, 1834; July 31, 1835; and September 4, 1835.

69. *Painesville Telegraph*, April 4, 1828, 4.

70. Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 39.

71. Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 39; Miller, "Canada's Historic First Iron Castings," 19.

72. When molten iron is poured into a mold of some kind, the poorest quality metal, being lighter than the rest, rises to the top of the mold. Before the 1830s, American foundries could offer only vessels cast in the "bottom-up" posture. This meant that the poorest quality iron ended up being in the bottom of the kettles, or the highest part of the mold. The result was metallurgically weak kettles that often broke during the cooking phase of potash manufacture. It was not until after the 1830s that molds using the "bottom-down" posture began to be used in North America. A kettle cast in this fashion had the weakest metal in its flared lip and the soundest metal at its base, making it a more stress-resistant vessel overall. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 200–202.

73. Miller argues that the improved technology came after the northeastern United States potash industry had become obsolete, and that Canadian asheries were the only ones to benefit from the enhanced flared-lip kettles. Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 194–96. The evidence he uses to support this statement is weak, being based on

his limited search for existing kettles in the New England region. It seems possible that the demand for such vessels could have been greater in Canada than in the U.S., but to suggest that they did not exist at all is unreasonable. Even a town such as Kirtland would have had access to kettles produced with the new technology, either directly from England where the improved technology was first used, or from a local foundry using the same techniques. However, there is no evidence that indicates the Kirtland Flats ashery ever had such a kettle.

74. The Canadian government regulated the weight of potash barrels, ensuring they weigh approximately five hundred weight (560 pounds). Miller, "Canada's Historic First Iron Castings," 19.

75. Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 40.

76. That the early Latter-day Saints and their contemporaries were aware of the potential harmful effects of potash and its derivatives is evident in an account of a tar and feathering incident that took place in Jackson County, Missouri, told in Joseph Smith, "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 6 (March 15, 1845): 832. Speaking of Bishop Edward Partridge, a victim of the mob, the author writes: "there [he was] . . . in the midst of his family, with a few friends, endeavoring to scrape off the 'tar,' which, from eating his flesh, seemed to have been prepared with lime, pearl-ash, acid, or some [other] flesh eating commodity."

77. Doyon, "La Fabrication de la potasse," 40.

78. Hazen, *Panorama of Professions and Trades*, 20.

79. Archaeological investigations at the ashery site, when completed, may be able to shed further light on this issue.

80. Miller, "Canada's Historic First Iron Castings," 66 n. 2; Miller, "Potash from Wood Ashes," 198 n. 23.

81. For a similar description of this process, see *Chambers's Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*, rev. ed., 10 vols. (London: W. and R. Chambers, 1878), 7:710, s.v. "potash and pearl-ash."

82. "Glass Factory," *Painesville Telegraph*, February 26, 1825, 3. Painesville, approximately ten miles northeast of Kirtland, was Kirtland's largest neighboring town and closest commercial center.

83. *Painesville Telegraph*, June 30, 1826, 3.

84. "Hollow ware" was the term applied to bowl-shaped dishes made of metal, pottery, or glass in the nineteenth century, including cast-iron cauldrons. Hollow ware ranged in size from the smallest cooking pot to the massive potash kettles.

85. "Course of Trade," *Painesville Telegraph*, July 28, 1826, 3.

86. The Ohio and Erie Canal was historically also referred to as the Grand Canal. John Kilbourne, *The Ohio Gazetteer* (Columbus: John Kilbourn, 1826), 25.

87. "New-York Market," *Painesville Telegraph*, May 5, 1829, 3.

88. *Painesville Telegraph*, April 3, 1835, 3. It is assumed that both "Fairport" and "Richmond" were cities in Ohio. One was likely Fairport Harbor on the shores of Lake Erie; Richmond is probably what today is known as Richmond Heights, which has been subsumed by the city of Cleveland.

89. Robert L. Layton, "Kirtland: A Perspective on Time and Place," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 434.

90. Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 15. For the exact wording of the revelation in which the program is outlined, see Doctrine and Covenants 42:30–35.

91. Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 16.

92. Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 31.
93. The United Firm was later known as the United Order.
94. Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 31.
95. Deed Records, 1836–37, Geauga County, Ohio, 23:446, microfilm, Family History Library.
96. Deed Records, 1836–37, Geauga County, Ohio, 25:4–5.
97. The author has compiled a possible chronology of what is thought to be the Kirtland Flats ashery property, available upon request. Additional historical research is currently being done by staff at the Museum of Church History and Art.
98. Deed Records, 1851–55, Lake County, Ohio, vol. J, 422.
99. Deed Records, 1864–65, Lake County, Ohio, vol. U, 562; Deed Records, 1865–67, Lake County, Ohio, vol. W, 393, 394, 605; Deed Records, 1868–72, Lake County, Ohio, 1:562, 563; Deed Records, 1867–72, Lake County, Ohio, vol. Z, 201; Deed Records, 1868–72, Lake County, Ohio, 2:493; all microfilm, Family History Library.
100. Deed Records, 1868–72, Lake County, Ohio, 2:493.
101. Deed Records, 1876–79, Lake County, Ohio, 7:532.

Learning to Float

Rebecca W. Clarke

Kneeling across from my fiancé, I searched his face for some sort of sign. I looked for the answer in the people behind him. I tuned out the words of the sealer so as not to miss the answer that God must be waiting to give me after all my diligent and dutiful searching. I kept waiting and waiting and waiting for something magical to happen.

“But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea” (Matthew 14:24–25). Sounds sublime. But then, my life feels closer to Peter’s version: “And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:29–30).

And then it was Sam’s turn and he said yes, and then it was my turn and I turned to the sealer, who was silhouetted by the light pressing in behind him—certain that he would let me know what I needed to say—but he said nothing. His eyes said nothing; he didn’t nod, didn’t smile, didn’t raise his eyebrows, didn’t lean in just a bit to encourage an answer. He just stood there, hands behind his back, looking down at me, waiting like his ride wasn’t coming anytime soon. I looked at my brother’s face, at his wife’s face. They were smiling. Everyone was smiling, apparently unaware of the sense of nothingness I was dangling over.



I’ve seen Eliza dangle there. Eliza looks like a bright orange armadillo, chubby legs jutting out from under the protective shell of the life jacket and

poking into the water. I am standing in the shadow made by the edge of the Seven Peaks swimming pool, holding my twenty-month-old in front of me. She can say *orange* now.

I lean my head back into the water while continuing to hold her up. Eliza says to me, “Hair wet?” After I realize that’s not a description of me but a request for her, I carefully lean her back and dip her head into the water. This is the move she refused to allow in parent-tot swimming lessons when she was nine months old. Now, at almost two, she’s still tentative.

I don’t blame her. Leaning back into things, into unknown waters, requires so much trust. I was frustrated when she was at the lessons, all the other kids kicking back, even eagerly. I felt the accompanying sideways glances from other mothers I imagined to be taking secret pleasure in Eliza’s noncooperation.

We went to lessons for six successive Thursdays. As much as she loved the water, there would be nothing of floating for Eliza. The slightest list backwards was immediately halted by grasping and screaming. Today at Seven Peaks I am not here to teach her anything. We are simply spending time together until Daddy comes home.



I had struggled for the answer I was seeking at the altar. During our four-month engagement I initiated many fasts; I intimated to God that I’d keep on fasting until I got a clear sign—which apparently wasn’t a big enough threat to worry him much. I prayed and I prayed and I prayed. I dedicated myself to one side of the decision, in keeping with instructions in the Doctrine and Covenants, telling myself that I truly had decided on *this*, and then searched for signs of approval from God. The next day I would dedicate myself to the opposite side of the decision with an equal amount of zeal. I read my scriptures with marriage in mind. I ate, I went to work, I attended church, I painted my toenails, all the while attempting to keep my spiritual antennae sharply focused and ready to feel the slightest, lightest urging from God. But I couldn’t get that sense of yes-ness I was desperately searching for, no breeze from heaven to point my weather vane. Nor could I get a hint of no.

The words that kept coming to my mind were from my mission exit interview with the mission president, the ones I recorded in my mission journal verbatim: “There will be times in your life when you will feel the Spirit depart from you, because we are here to learn to make decisions on our own.” I asked my father for a blessing, and in it he told me exactly

what I didn't want to hear, what I already knew he would say: "This decision is up to you."

But I couldn't make this large a decision on my own. If God would refuse to help, I would seek advice elsewhere. I read my horoscope. I turned my attention to the people around me. They were a lot more opinionated than God had been, and much more willing to share. I asked friends, co-workers, and people I barely knew their theory of how you know who you should marry. One lady in my ward told me in a most solemn voice as she pressed my hand and looked right into my eyes, "You will just know. Don't do *anything* until you truly *know*."

In the Bride's Room, my mom helped me pin the high lace collar to my lower-cut one and long sleeves onto my short ones. All the while I wondered if God were planning a surprise for me. I desperately hoped that my story would be one of the stories where I would "know" at just the right moment.



Eliza surprises me by asking again, "Hair wet?" I lower her back again, my forearm running the entire length of her spine, her legs straddling at my elbow, the back of her bony head in my hand. I leave her there a little longer this time. She looks up into the air and from side to side with her dark eyes; then, realizing I am not in her line of vision, she contracts as quickly as a potato bug, limbs clamoring desperately for me.

We repeat this, every time the leaning back lasting a little bit longer. Each time she lets go more willingly of me, and I feel more of her body trust in the water and in the life jacket, and I am exhilarated with the risk she is taking. The seventh time she leans back, I let go of her completely. Leaning back, she can't see me, her arms are outstretched, and her ears are underwater; she can see only sky, and all sounds are muted. Eliza floats.

As Eliza relaxes on this perfect-weathered day with the crowds around us, I consider the moment when I leaned back, listing into the unknown, and decided to see what it would be like if I trusted in the air around me, and in the goodness of the person across from me, and in the words my mission president said to me, and in the blessing that my father gave me, and in my own willingness to make things work, and in the molecules of goodness and magic and strength that are constantly surrounding us and that will buoy us up if we surrender.

I have not yet, in the fourth watch of the night, walked on the sea. I have not so much as walked on the water momentarily, as Peter managed. But I have leaned back into the water. I've let go of the safety of the edge and

drifted from the side without the assurance of hands to hold me, without even an orange life jacket to buoy me up. I'm learning to relax, to lean back and float. I like floating.

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Jorge Iber. *Hispanics in the Mormon Zion, 1912–1999*.

College Station: Texas A&M University, 2000.

Reviewed by Mark L. Grover

Residents of the state of Utah will readily recognize that during the past few years there has been a significant change in the state's ethnic makeup. Manifestations of change can be seen in the increasing number of restaurants specializing in a variety of Latin American foods, designed to serve Latino palates and not the majority population. Families from Latin America are moving into all neighborhoods in the state. Though Mexicans continue to be in the preponderance, many immigrants are from Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, and other parts of the region. Many are two or three generations removed from the immigration experience and are coming from other states in the southwest United States. The majority are not Mormons but Catholics, with a surprising number of Pentecostals as well. This visual demographic change is making people in Utah more aware of neighboring countries to the south.

Most residents are not aware, however, that this demographic change is not a new phenomenon. Though Utah has never had a high percentage of Latinos, there has always been an important and influential Hispanic population in Utah. The history of this community has been examined only superficially by historians, in part because of the challenge of working with non-English documents. An appreciation of this Latino population has finally been chronicled in *Hispanics in the Mormon Zion, 1912–1999*, by Cuban-born Jorge Iber, Professor of History at Texas Tech University. Iber's doctoral dissertation became the foundation for this book. For his documentation, he used the considerable source materials accumulated by the American West Center of the University of Utah, much of them collected through federal grant money in the 1960s and 1970s. Especially valuable in the documents were oral histories of early Hispanic pioneers and records of Hispanic organizations.

The result is a fascinating analysis of the evolution of this minority community. The book compares the development of Latino communities in the state of Utah with such communities in the rest of the Southwest. Iber concludes that, though there are numerous similarities, the fundamental difference in the evolution of the Utah Latino community was the role of religion in the state. Even though the majority of the Latino population in the state was Catholic, a significant Latino Latter-day Saint population affected the development of the Hispanic community, particularly due to the distinctive relationship that Latter-day Saint Hispanics had with the majority population, affording help not available to the rest of the Latino population.

Iber examines what occurred during the Great Depression. When difficult times hit the state, job procurement and basic assistance were available in a greater degree to the Latter-day Saint Latinos through their Church contacts. The immediate consequence was a Latino community divided along lines of religion. A more subtle and long term effect was pressure on other churches, primarily the Catholic Church, to provide similar services. The impact was an interesting parallel evolution of the two religious groups. Iber stresses that the special relationship between Latter-day Saint Hispanics and the majority population did not eliminate racism or prejudice against the Latino population, but Latino members of the Church were able to use the connection to advantage.

Regardless of the word *Zion* in its title, this book is not a history of Hispanic Latter-day Saints in Utah. It is a cultural and organizational history of the Latino population in the state. Iber offers just as much information on Catholic organizations and activities as Latter-day Saint organizations, along with considerable analysis of secular social organizations such as the important Spanish-Speaking Organization for Community Integrity and Opportunity, the first statewide Latino advocacy organization. Iber also suggests that, even with similarities in race and language, the Latino community was not homogeneous. His final chapter laments an end to a period of political activism by Latinos in the state and calls for further study and research.

This book received an award from the Mormon History Association and the Editor's Choice Award from the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. More importantly, it was recently approved by the Utah State Board of Education for use as a teachers' resource. This volume is an important addition to anyone's understanding of the evolution of minority communities within a predominant host culture.

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