



FINDING MEANING IN SUFFERING
HEDONISM, SUFFERING, AND REDEMPTION
THE CHARACTER OF JOSEPH SMITH
JOSEPH SMITH'S PROCESS OF TRANSLATING THE BIBLE
AN EYEWITNESS OF THE KIRTLAND PENTECOST
LOVE IN MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY
THE AMBIGUITY OF LAUGHTER

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Pentecost Continued

A Contemporaneous Account of the Kirtland Temple Dedication

Steven C. Harper

The significance of what transpired at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple on March 27, 1836, is well established among Latter-day Saints. The historical record affirming an outpouring of divine manifestations is rich. Even so, precious few contemporaneous reports by observers are available. Recently, however, the richness of the historical record increased with the discovery of an eyewitness account of the miraculous Kirtland Pentecost penned by Benjamin Brown.

In November 2002, Mary Lee Burton, a descendant of Benjamin and Sarah Mumford Brown (fig. 1), learned that her mother, recently deceased, had possessed the document reproduced here. It had passed from Benjamin and Sarah Mumford Brown to their son Homer. He had entrusted it to his daughter Josephine Brown Quist, grandmother of Mary Lee Burton. Grateful readers may attribute access to this precious record of Pentecostal experience to Burton. “As I looked at the beautiful penmanship on the yellowing and fragile paper, I knew I was holding a priceless treasure,” Burton wrote, “and that [this document] needed to be in a safe place.”¹ Another Brown descendant, Sharalyn Duffin, a staff member at the Historical Department Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, arranged to transfer this document to the Archives.

1. Mary Lee Burton to author, January 12, 2003.

Description of the Document

Much about the document(s) presented here remains uncertain, including whether it should be treated as two documents or one. On a sheet of weathered, now-torn paper measuring nearly 12 x 8 inches, Benjamin began to compose a letter to his wife, Sarah. Though undated, an internal reference to “the sol[e]mn assembly which will be called next Sunday,” meaning March 27, 1836, narrows its composition to the week beginning March 20. As it continues, the writing on this sheet begins to sound less like a letter and more like a chronicle of events of that marvelous week of dedication. A second sheet of paper in much better condition and almost an inch and a half shorter seems to continue this account. Generally, it reads more like a journal than a letter, and no formal epistolary closing is evident, but some internal evidence suggests that Benjamin is still addressing Sarah and intending to send the letter by way of a neighbor.

Although the handwriting appears consistent throughout, a third-person reference to B. Brown toward the end of the document suggests the possibility that Benjamin did not write all of it himself. Whether Benjamin Brown intended that the two sheets form a coherent single document cannot be determined. That they both stem from an effort to record his witness of a Pentecostal experience is certain. Millennial, thoroughly biblical, and informed by the Book of Mormon, Benjamin Brown’s document serves well as a window into early Mormonism. On the back of one page are details of accounts and addresses, information needed to function in earthly time and space. Some contemporaries of Benjamin Brown considered the mixture of the mundane and the miraculous characteristic of Mormonism—a feature some loathed and others, like Benjamin Brown, cherished.² His documents, therefore, can be understood best, not only by assessing their physical characteristics, but by appreciating the world of their creator.

2. See Terryl L. Givens on this point in *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 88–93. For an example of the mixture of the miraculous with the mundane, see also Doctrine and Covenants 57, in which the Savior gives directions to the temple site in the New Jerusalem almost as if he were advising a lost pedestrian. In his journal entry for November 6, 1835, Joseph Smith noted a telling visit:

I was this morning introduced to a man from the east, after hearing my name he ~~replied~~ remarked that I was nothing but a man: indicating by this expression that he had supposed that a person, <to> whom the Lord should see fit to reveal his will, must be something more than a man, he seems to have forgotten the saying that fell from the lips of St. James, that

Benjamin Brown's World

One spring morning in 1835, a “large assembly” gathered in a barn in Westfield, Chautauqua County, New York, to hear three Mormon preachers. Thomas Marsh edified the congregation for nearly two hours on the covenants of God. David Patten followed for an hour, using Hebrews 11 as his text. Elder Marsh administered the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. William McLellin baptized five souls, including a forty-year-old farmer named Benjamin Brown. Some mischievous boys “acted very wickedly” until “finally one little fellow fell into the water.”³ The whole scene might have appeared quite usual, if comical, to observers.⁴ Here were ordinary people engaged in apparently familiar pastimes. Preaching, worshipping, even baptizing and mischief were common occurrences in Chautauqua County. But to Benjamin Brown this was no ordinary day. Here were *Apostles* explaining restored truth and administering restored ordinances of salvation.⁵ These otherwise everyday events connected Benjamin Brown to the first Christians and annihilated intervening years. The Apostles collapsed time, associating their auditors with Abel, Enoch, the Israelite patriarchs,

Elias was a man of like passions like unto us, yet he had such power with God that He in answer to his prayer, shut the heavens that they gave no rain for the space of three years and six months, and again in answer to his prayer the heavens gave forth rain and the earth brought forth fruit; and indeed such is the darkness & ignorance of this generation that they look upon it as incredible that a man should have any intercourse with his Maker. (Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92], 2:66)

3. Jan Shipps and John W. Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press; Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994), 175, 423. Brown was baptized May 10, 1835, though his later autobiographical account gives the date as May 15, 1835. Benjamin Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth* (Liverpool, England: S. W. Richards, 1853), 10.

4. See “I Certainly Should Have Gone into the Water,” in *Among the Mormons*, ed. William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1994), 63–65. Alexis de Tocqueville, accompanied by Gustave de Beaumont, keenly observed the American religious scene in 1831. See *Democracy in America*, ed. and trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

5. See Ronald K. Esplin, “The Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve to Mormon Leadership, 1830–1841” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1981), especially chapter 4, “Brigham Young and the Apostles: The Quorum Experience, 1835–1836,” 150–223, for a thorough treatment of the 1835 apostolic mission.

Moses, and the writer of Hebrews. Faith in Christ was their common bond, and in him they might be perfected together.⁶

Benjamin Brown had waited years for this day. His entire life pointed to it. The son of a Quaker father, Benjamin matured spiritually from his birth in 1794 until about his sixteenth year. “My ideas of religion,” he wrote reflectively in his 1853 autobiography, “were just those which are naturally instilled into the mind by the statements of Scripture, where no priesthood exists to pervert them, diminish their force, or cloud their meaning.” His sincere prayers were answered. “The idea that revelation from God was unattainable in this age,” he wrote, “never entered my head, until I gathered the notion from the creeds of churches with which I became acquainted in after years.” But like so many of Benjamin’s contemporaries, uncertainties were foisted upon him in the form of evangelical competition for his faith. He responded first with an adolescent mixture of doubt, contrariness, and susceptibility to trendy ideas:

I soon began to lose my pure, simple ideas of God, and imbibe[d] those more generally received, and, shortly after, by listening to the contending opinions of these parties, I found the hitherto simple Bible a perfect mystery.

I had previously been seriously and religiously inclined, but the jar-rings and uncertainty of my new ideas shook that simple faith which I had reposed in the Scriptures, and in God, until I began to mix with light or vain company.

Influenced by skepticism of scripture, Brown tended toward, but did not join, Universalism. He vacillated during his early adulthood between periods of “folly” and “deep anxiety . . . to find the truth.”⁷

Farming and his marriage to Sarah Mumford⁸ at age twenty-five gave Benjamin more to think about than salvation, but he remained preoccupied with spiritual matters. A vision of his deceased brother foreshadowed the Restoration. Benjamin envisioned his brother praying “with regard to

6. See Hebrews 11, especially verses 24–28, 40. On this point, see Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 133–52.

7. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 3–4.

8. Sarah Mumford was born April 20, 1795, in Granby, Hartford County, Connecticut, to Henry and Sarah Mumford. She married Benjamin Brown September 12, 1819. Susan Easton Black, comp., “Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1848,” 50 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 6:309–10, 7:33, 31:975.

the restoration of the Gospel gifts, the great work of gathering the Saints of all nations in the last days, and the fulness of the Latter-day glory.”⁹ Thereafter, Benjamin’s spiritual senses sharpened. His Bible was clearer. He had prophetic dreams at irregular intervals. Years passed, he wrote, “and I was still unconnected with any religious party.”¹⁰

Determined to follow the Lord’s leading, he tested the popular revival meetings but remained unfulfilled. He felt moved to reprove a minister, which prompted him to embark on an informal ministry of preaching, punctuated by powerful spiritual experiences:

A knowledge was given me that the ancient gifts of the Gospel—speaking in tongues, the power to heal the sick, the spirit of prophecy, &c., were just about to be restored to the believers in Christ. The revelation was a perfect knowledge of the fact, so sure and certain, that I felt as though the truth had been stereotyped upon me. I knew it from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot—in the whole of my system, being filled with the Holy Ghost!¹¹

Benjamin Brown’s Introduction to the Church

Benjamin shared his knowledge with a local minister but was rebuffed. “A few days after,” he wrote, “curiosity led me to visit the Latter-day Saints, amongst whom I witnessed a fulfillment of the prediction, for I beheld a manifestation of the gifts of prophesy and tongues.” Benjamin resisted an invitation to join the Church but “procured a Book of Mormon, and took it home to read, determined to investigate until [he] was fully satisfied.” He rejected the Book of Mormon “ere [he] had read ten pages” and “felt a similar dislike seize [him] towards the Bible.”¹² A foreboding sense followed, strong enough to persuade Benjamin to read the Bible again. He felt impressed to “behave as fairly” to the Book of Mormon and “soon repro- cured it.”¹³ Benjamin willed himself to read most of the book:

I came to that part where Jesus, on visiting the continent of America, after his resurrection, grants the request of three of the twelve whom he had chosen, to permit them to live until his second coming on the earth (like unto John spoken of in the Bible). Here my mind half yielded to the belief which arose within me, that perhaps it might be true, whereupon I

9. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 4.

10. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 5.

11. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 7.

12. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 7.

13. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 8.

took the book and laid it before the Lord, and pleaded with Him in prayer for a testimony whether it was true or false.¹⁴

The answer came in the form of two of the three Nephite disciples. They subsequently rebuked Benjamin for snubbing the gift of tongues (their tongue, he now recognized) he heard in his first meeting with Mormon missionaries. “Such a rebuke,” he wrote, “with such power, I never had in my life before or since, and never wish to have again.”¹⁵ This was evidence sufficient for Benjamin: “Thus I do *know* the truth of the Bible, as well as of the Book of Mormon, and I am a witness for both!” Still he deferred baptism, hoping Sarah would “comply with the same ordinance.”¹⁶ She did not until a confirming spiritual experience resolved her prejudice against unsophisticated Saints, but Benjamin could resist no longer. He overcame a last-minute attempt to dissuade him and submitted to baptism at the hands of Apostle William McLellin on May 10, 1835.¹⁷

Spiritual gifts and signs continued to follow Benjamin Brown, resulting in Sarah’s conversion and his miraculous healing at “the hands of the Elders”¹⁸ and culminating in the Pentecostal season centered in the Kirtland Temple. “There,” Benjamin wrote, “the Spirit of the Lord, as on the day of Pentecost, was profusely poured out. . . . We had a most glorious and never-to-be forgotten time.”¹⁹ For Benjamin Brown as for Joseph Smith, the renewal of biblical revelation solidified faith in the Bible. As the larger culture increasingly doubted the possibility of biblical miracles in modernity and, finally, even in antiquity, the Saints believed in the gifts of the Spirit and Pentecostal outpourings because they experienced them.

The Religious and Historical Context

One somewhat useful tendency of historians is to situate Benjamin Brown’s account of the “many Miraculous Experiences” and “many Visions told” as one example of a visionary subculture in the early American republic.²⁰ Brown’s faith can be understood in part as a believing

14. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 8.

15. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 8.

16. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 9.

17. Shipps and Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin*, 175.

18. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 10.

19. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 10–11.

20. Richard L. Bushman, “The Visionary World of Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 37, no. 1 (1997–98): 183–204, outlines this culture and lists several primary documents that might comprise a genre into which Benjamin Brown’s documents

response to skepticism, confirmed by intense personal experience with God. But Benjamin Brown and his fellow Saints also considered themselves exceptional. They believed they had more in common with the cast of Hebrews 11—with Israelite patriarchs and New Testament Apostles—than with contemporary visionaries. To them the Kirtland Temple made them heirs of the ancient covenants and the Apostolic Church, not a subculture defined by American time and space. Benjamin Brown and his fellow Saints regarded their experiences as a continuation of the Pentecostal experience recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

If anything, what occurred in the Kirtland Temple was, as Benjamin writes in this letter, “even greater than at the day of Pente[cost].” From this perspective, even criticism seemed to testify of the connection. John Corrill wrote of a meeting in the Kirtland Temple, “The sacrament was then administered, in which they partook of the bread and wine freely, and a report went abroad that some of them got drunk: as to that every man must answer for himself. A similar report, the reader will recollect, went out concerning the disciples, at Jerusalem, on the day of pentecost.”²¹

For his part, though he carefully recorded miracles and visions, Benjamin Brown did not overtly try to situate them historically. He assumed, instead, an affinity of understanding with the few who shared his experiences. In 1853 he wrote, “Such a chain of testimonies, and an interweaving of evidences, accompanied with that perception and comprehension which the Holy Ghost alone can give, none can realize, but those who have received that Spirit and revelations unto themselves. Such persons know just how it is.”²² On March 27, 1836, Benjamin Brown gathered in solemn

could be seen to fit. Similarly, see Larry C. Porter, “Solomon Chamberlin’s Missing Pamphlet: Dreams, Visions, and Angelic Ministrants,” *BYU Studies* 37, no. 2 (1997–98): 113–40. A fine study that, unfortunately, neglects Mormon visionaries entirely is Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). Taves is best at explicating how spiritual experience is rationalized. Similarly, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

21. John Corrill, *Brief History of The Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* (St. Louis: By the author, 1839), 23. In Acts 2:13, mockers explained the spiritual manifestations simply: “These men are full of new wine.” See William McLellin to M. H. Forscutt, October 1870, Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri; and William Harris, *Mormonism Portrayed* (Warsaw, Ill.: Sharp and Gamble, 1841), 136, for perpetuated rumors of drunkenness in the Kirtland Temple.

22. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 5.

assembly with “such persons” in the Kirtland Temple.²³ Revelation promised them that if they sacrificed to build the temple as commanded, they would be endowed with divine power to transcend the temporal and mortal.²⁴ They anticipated communion with heaven.²⁵

In the documents that follow, Benjamin Brown tried to capture the effulgence of that endowment. He largely succeeded. Though the letter has frustrating damage and other limitations, Brown confirms the general and specific testimonies of other participants of the Kirtland Pentecost. At times he captures more of that experience in his letter than Joseph Smith recorded in his characteristically understated journal entries. Where Joseph’s entry for the evening of March 29, 1836, says, for instance, “The Holy Spirit rested down upon us and we continued in the Lord’s house all night prophesying and giving glory to God” (see n. 39), Brown both confirms and enhances Joseph’s record by noting the ministering of angels, prophesying in tongues, and visions of the Savior and eternity as part of the “many Miraculous Experiences told [and] Many Visions told.”

In the transcription of the document that follows, the line endings of the letter where the letter was torn are preserved. Other line endings are preserved where possible. Editorial marks added include carets <> to indicate insertions made by the author of the document. Strikeouts are shown by ~~strikeouts~~. Brackets [] indicate editorial comments.

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23. Brown, *Testimonies for the Truth*, 10–11. An account of the events of March 27, 1836, is in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:191–203.

24. *Doctrine and Covenants* 38:32; 88:67–76; 95:2–8.

25. Joseph Smith to William Phelps, Kirtland, Ohio, January 11, 1833, in Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2002), 292–93.

Benjamin Brown Document

[see fig. 2] Dear wife I last night heard from you [page torn]
 which I thank the Lord, Brother Bovee²⁶ said [page torn]
 Gospel <to father> for which my heart rejoiced for [page torn]
 and great is thy reward. Rejoice in the Lord [page torn]
 Rejoice, let your moderation be known [page torn]
 Now be careful for nothing but in eve [page torn]
 [illegible] and with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to
 [page torn]
 [illegible] God, And the peace of God which passeth all understanding
 [shall] [page torn]
 fill your heart through Christ Jesus.²⁷
 Now to let you know a few of the thousand great things of God that is passing in this place, there has been no mobs as you have heard. But the work of the Lord is increasing daily. There has been from one to ten Baptized every day this week, some of the Elders have been out for a few days some have baptized 16 some five &c²⁸ [page torn]
 Elders still continue to come in and wash and anoint for the solemn assembly which will be called next Sunday for tithing [g] [page torn]
 & sacrifice with fasting & Prayr in the house of the Lord²⁹ fr [page torn]

26. Mathias M. Bovee (1796–1846) lived in Chautauqua County, New York, as the Browns did, and may have carried this letter to Sarah Mumford Brown on Benjamin's behalf. Black, "Membership," 6:309–10.

27. A reference to Philippians 4:7.

28. Joseph Smith's journal for the week of March 20–27 confirms many of the details Brown records here. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:190–91.

29. Stephen Post explained in his journal entry for March 27, 1836:

This day was appointed to be a day when the house of the Lord built by the Church of the Latter day Saints was to be dedicated unto the Lord of the whole earth: there was also to be a contribution; each individual as they came into the house of the Lord donated as they could in order to defray the expense of the building as the committee [see D&C 94] had incurred much expense above what had before been contributed. the doors were opened at 8 and to be closed at 9 A.M. however they were closed before 9 on account of the house being full. (Stephen Post, Journal, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City)

Joseph Smith's journal reports that probably five or six hundred Saints congregated outside the temple beginning "at about 7 o'clock one hour earlier than the

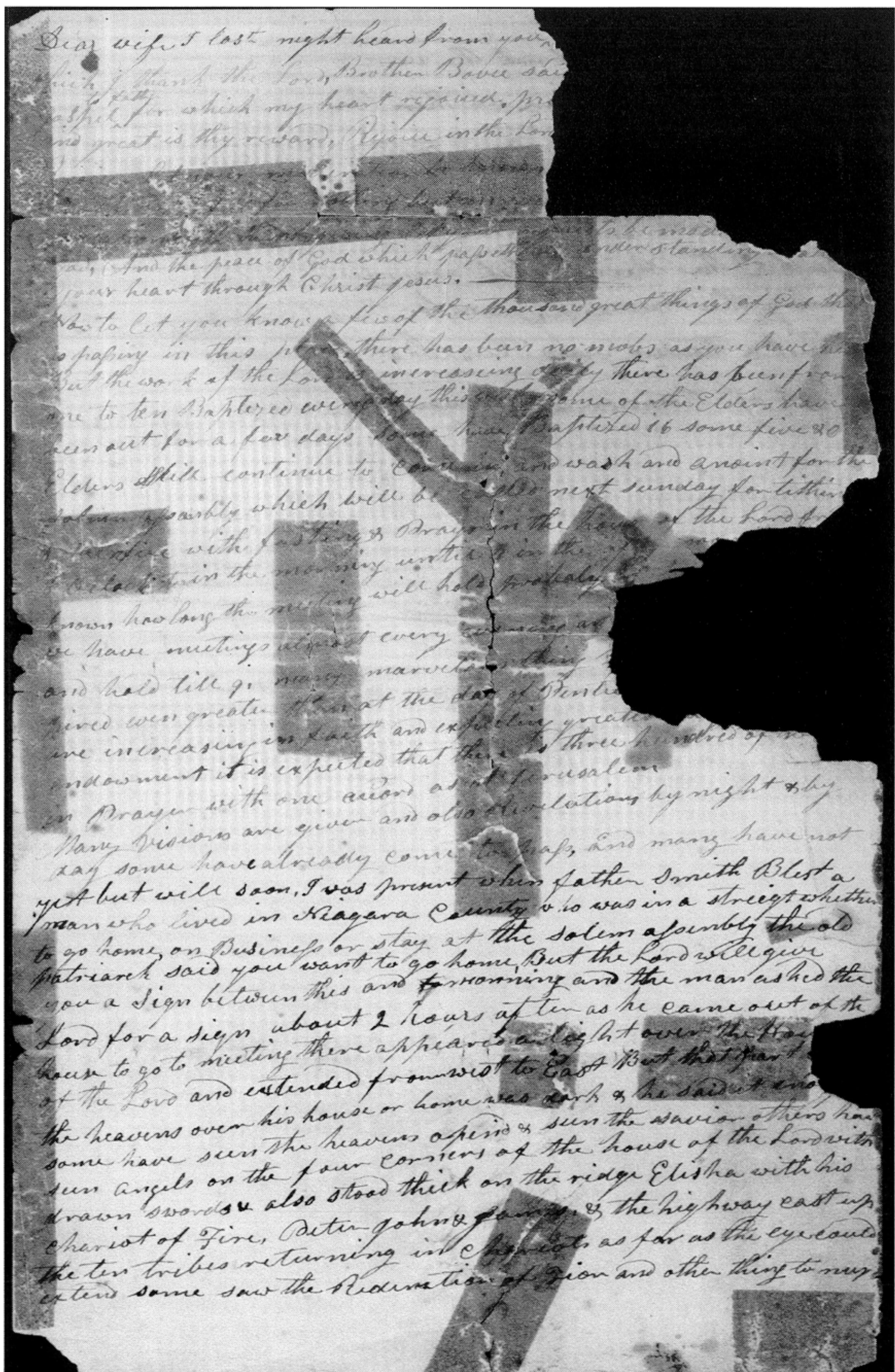


FIG. 2. The original paper on which the letter was written measured nearly 12 x 8 inches. Handed down in Brown's family, the letter was discovered in November 2002 by Benjamin's descendant Mary Lee Burton. It now resides at Church Archives. Courtesy Church Archives.

8 oclock in the morning until 4 in the afternoon [page torn]
 known how long the meeting will hold probaly [page torn]
 we have meetings almost every evening and [page torn]
 and hold till 9. Many marvelous things [page torn]
 transpired even greater than at the day of Penti[cost] [page torn]
 are increasing in faith and expecting greater [page torn]
 endowment it is expected that there is three hundred of [page torn]
 in Prayer with one accord as at Jerusalem³⁰
 Many visions are given and also Revelations by night & by day some have
 already come to pass, and many have no[t] yet but will soon.³¹ I was present
 when father Smith Blest a man who lived in Niagara County who was in a
 streight whether to go home, on Business or stay at the solem assembly the
 old patriarch³² said you want to go home, But the Lord will give you a Sign
 between this and ~~to~~morning and the man asked the Lord for a sign about 2
 hours after as he came out of the
 house to go to meeting there appeared a light over the Hou[se] [page torn]
 of the Lord and extended from west to East But that part [page torn]
 the heavens over his house or home was dark & he said it eno[ugh][page torn]³³

doors were to be opened." Moreover, the Church presidency "entered with the door ke[e]pers and aranged them at the inner and outer doors also placed our stewards to receiv[e] donations from those who should feel disposed to contribute something to defray the expenses of building the House of the Lord." Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:191–92. Both Joseph Smith and Stephen Post reported that hundreds were unfortunately turned away and that many of those turned away then gathered in the adjacent schoolroom in the printing office building for a meeting.

30. See Acts 2.

31. Besides the specific manifestations Brown goes on to document, other writers left contemporary accounts that confirm his general testimony of many visions and revelations. See, for example, Leonard J. Arrington, ed., "Oliver Cowdery's Kirtland, Ohio, 'Sketch Book,'" *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (1972): 410–26; and Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, "Spiritual Riches: The Huntington Sisters in Kirtland, 1836–38," in *Four Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 51–76.

32. Joseph Smith Sr. (1771–1840) served the Church as Patriarch beginning in 1833 and in that capacity offered inspired blessings and personal prophecies including the one documented here by Benjamin Brown.

33. A Joseph Smith Sr. blessing given to James W. Angel (probably Angell, born in North Providence, Rhode Island, on October 15, 1776, father of Brigham's wife Mary Ann Angell Young and Church architect Truman O. Angell), perhaps given early in 1836, includes a phrase that corresponds somewhat to the language of Brown's letter. It reads, "Thou shalt see many glorious scenes, the heavens shall

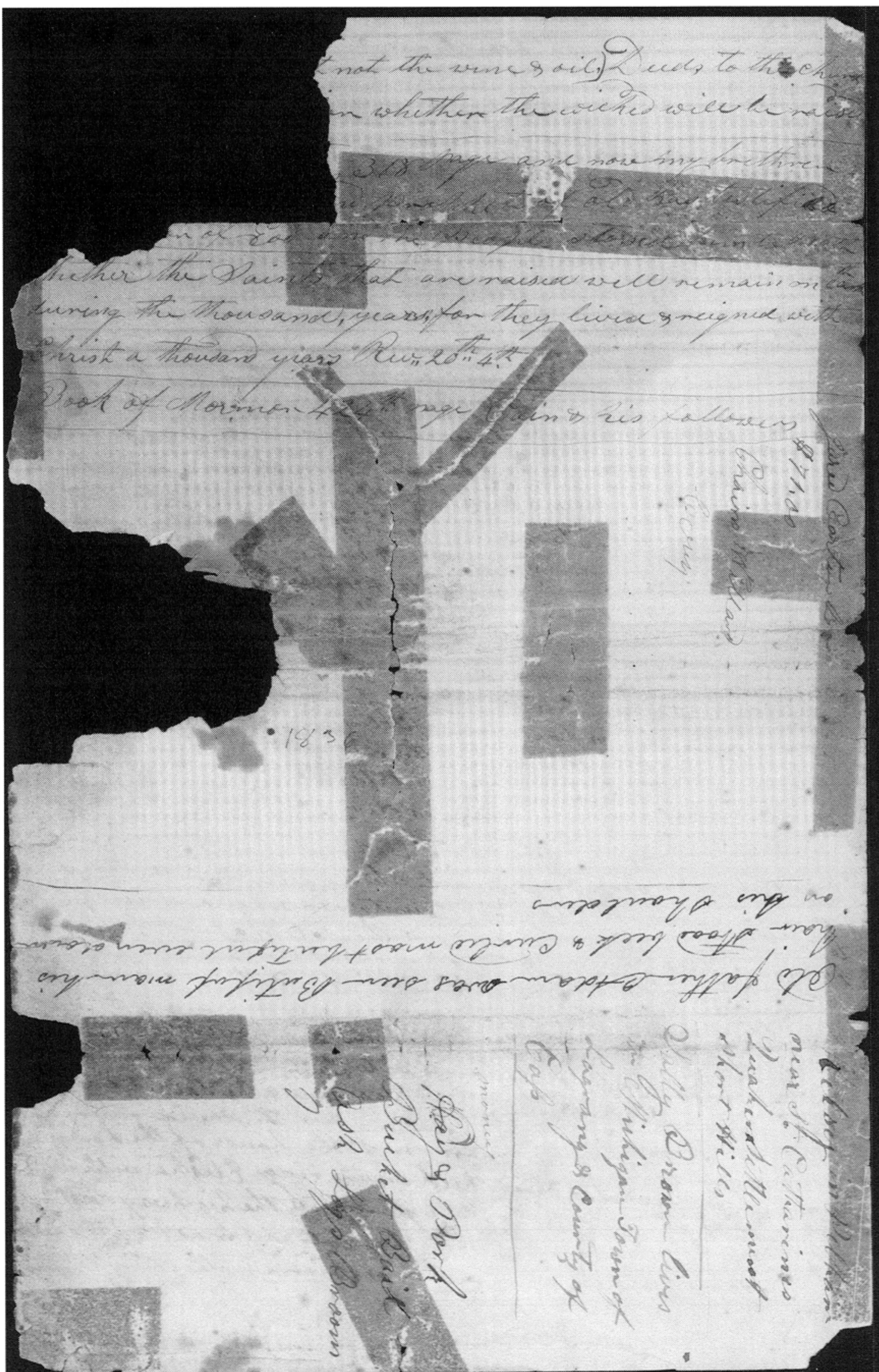


FIG. 3. Reverse of one page of the letter from Benjamin Brown to his wife, Sarah, March 27, 1836. The letter was folded, and notes have been written on this side of the page: "Sally Brown lives in Michigan Town of Lagrang & County of Cass." Other notes on the outside of the letter read much like a shopping list, such as "Hay & Pork." It is unclear whether Benjamin Brown or another person wrote these notes.

some have seen the heavens opend & seen the savior others have seen angels on the four corners of the house of the Lord with drawn swords & also stood thick on the ridge Elisha with his chariot of Fire, Peter John & James, & the highway cast up the ten tribes returning in chariots as far as the eye could extend some saw the Redemtion of Zion and other thing to num [p. 1]
 [see fig. 3] [page torn] not the wine & oil. Deeds to the church
 [page torn] [w]hether the wicked will be raised
 [page torn] 318 page and now my brethren
 [page torn]nd prophet of old has testified
 [page torn] of God and the people stoned him to death.
 [illegible]

Whether the Saints that are raised will remain on earth during the thousand, years, for they lived & reigned with Christ a thousand years Rev 20th 4th Book of Mormon 424th page Cain & his followers³⁴

Old father Adam was seen Butiful man his hair stood back & curled most butiful even down on his shoulders

Jared Carter Cr
 \$71.00
 Chains Willard Conn
 1836

Kelsey in Pelham
 near St. Catharines
 Quaker Settlement
 short Hills
 Sally Brown lives
 in Michigan Town of
 Lagrang & County of
 Cass

money
 Hay & Pork
 Bucket Bail
 Ash Logs Broom

be open unto thee and thou shalt say it is enough." The blessing is located in Church Archives.

34. Page 424 in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, to which Brown refers here, is now Helaman 6, especially verses 21–27.

Sunday Evening after Joseph spoke opened & told them the
day of Pentecost was continued the the Brethren began to
to prophesy many prophesied in the name of the Lord then
began speaking in Tongues and it filled as it were
the whole house, perhaps there were forty speaking at
one Cloven Tongue of fire was seen to sit on many
of them on hand was seen laid upon one when he
spake in Tongues to the Lamanites many visions
seen, one saw a Pillar of cloud rest down upon
the house bright as when the sun shines on a cloud
like as gold, two others saw three personages hovering
in the room with bright Keys in their hands, and also a bright
Chain in their hands. ~~the~~ I did not intend this for a letter
But this morning while waiting Brother Bower concluded to
start for home

Sunday March 27th 1836 the order of the House of the Lord
was there was no small children admitted, one woman
however not knowing the order brought her child about
2 months old she stood out of the door for a long
time, manifested a anxious desire to enter at length the
one of the Elders said Brethren we do not exercise
faith my faith is this child will not cry a word
in the House to day on this the woman & child ent
ered and the child did not cry a word from 8 till 4
in the afternoon, But when the saints all shouted
Hosanna the child was nursing But let go & shouted
also when the saints paused it paused when they shouted
it shouted for three times when they shouted Amen
it shouted also for three times then it resumed its
nursing without any alarm
Monday a young man fell and sprained his ankle
so as he could not stand the Elders laid hand on him
he was healed imediately

On the Pentecost evening the west end of the House
was illuminated by a light from heaven seen on the
outside by many

FIG. 4. As it continues, the writing begins to sound less like a letter and more like a chronicle of events of that marvelous week of dedication.

[see fig. 4] Sunday Evening after Joseph spoke opened & told them the day of Pentecost was continued³⁵ the the [sic] Brethren began to prophesy many prophesied in the name of the Lord then began speaking in tongues and it filled as it were the whole house, perhaps there were forty speaking at once Cloven tongues of fire was seen to sit on many of them an hand was seen laid upon one when he spake in tongues to the lamanites many Visions seen, one saw a pillow or cloud rest down upon the house bright as when the sun shines on a cloud like as gold, two others saw three personages hovering in the room with bright keys in their hands, and also a bright chain in their hands ~~the~~ I did not intend this for a letter But this morning while writing Brother Bovee concluded to start for home

Sunday March 27th 1836 the order of the House of the Lord was there was no small children admitted, one woman however not knowing the order brought her child about 2 months old she stood out of the door for a long time, manifested an anxious desire to enter at length one of the Elders said Brethren we do not Exercise faith my faith is this child will not cry a word in the House to day on this the woman & child entered and the child did not cry a word from 8 till 4 in the after noon. But when the saints all shouted Hosana the child was nursing But let go & shouted also when the saints paused it paused when they shouted it shouted for three times when they shouted amen it shouted also for three times then it resumed its nursing without any alarm³⁶

35. This was the evening of March 27, 1836. Joseph's journal for the events after the dedication that day includes this entry: "Met in the evening and instructed the quorums respecting the ordinance of washing of feet which we were to attend to on wednesday following." Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:203. Oliver Cowdery captured details of that evening in his contemporaneous "Sketch Book": "In the evening I met with officers of the church in the Lord's house. The Spirit was poured out—I saw the glory of God, like a great cloud, come down and rest upon the house, and fill the same like a mighty rushing wind. I also saw cloven tongues, like as of fire rest upon many, (for there were 316 present,) while they spake in tongues and others prophesied." Arrington, "Oliver Cowdery's Kirtland, Ohio, 'Sketch Book,'" 426. Stephen Post confirmed the events of that evening in his journal. He wrote that about 316 Saints gathered in the temple that evening, "and we received instruction from Joseph Smith Jr relative to our preaching and our endowment this eve the spirit of the Lord rested on the congregation many spake in tongues many prophesied, Angels were in our midst and ministered unto some, Cloven tongues like unto fire rested upon those who spake in tongues and prophesied." Stephen Post, Journal, March 27, 1836, Church Archives.

36. The rules of order to which Brown refers are in Joseph Smith's journal under January 14, 1836, and are published in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*,

Brother Benjamin Lewis laid hands on a boy that had his arm broken so as it laid back on his elbow. he placed the bones napped a rag around it his wife poured on some wine you he then asked the boy to move his fingers the boy did so this was at noon. the next morning the boy went to pulling weed in the garden with that hand no more trouble about it —

J. B. Brown heard Brother Colonel Parks of McEldoe testify that heard in the evening between 8 & 9 the Report of a rifle apparently about forty rods off then they began as in an action passing a long the road then took a turn came across the lot up to the house But the report grew more faint till it was nothing but a snap and the noise of a splash in the pan was heard by all of the family and ~~all~~ many of the brethren in that place the interpretation given to two present which was judgment of God on that place —

Father Stephens saw on sunday evening two rows of Angels through the house, at another time the glory of God came down on the Elders from the head down half way —

April 29th an angel was seen over the Elders of New Orleans as given & Speaking in tongues this 29th of March two Columns continued all night in the house the twelve guarded it the Heavens was opened two saw the savior some saw Char iots and other thing one lay about half an hour & drew from Eternity to Eternity many Miraculous Experiences to many visions to

FIG. 5. This page records miraculous healings, judgments of God, visions of angels, and speaking in tongues. Much about the document presented here remains uncertain, including whether it should be treated as two documents or one. Although the letter begins with "Dear wife," there is no closing or signature, an omission that may indicate this was a page from a journal rather than from a letter.

Monday a young man fell and sprained his ankle so as he could not stand the Elders laid hand on him he was healed imediately

On the Penticost evening the west end of the House was illuminated by a light from heaven seen on the outside by many

[page 2]

[*see fig. 5*] Brother Benjamin Lewis laid hands on a boy that had his arm Broken so as it laid back on his elbow. he placed the bones raped a rag around it his wife poured on some vinegar he then asked the boy to move his fingers the boy did so this was at noon. the next morning the boy went to pulling weed in the garden with that hand no more trouble about it —

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2:136–38. Eliza R. Snow confirmed this event. She adds that it was Joseph Smith Sr. to whom the unidentified woman came “in great distress, saying that she knew no one with whom she could leave her infant; and to be deprived of the privilege of attending the dedication seemed more than she could endure.” Father Smith, the Church’s Patriarch, “told her to take her child, at the same time giving the mother a promise that her babe should make no disturbance; and the promise was verified.” Snow continues, noting as Brown does that the “babe joined in the shout” as the congregation offered hosannas. See Snow’s account in Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877), 94–95.

37. Most likely William Parks (1787–1856), who was living in Uclid Cuyahoga County, Ohio, as of 1832. Black, “Membership,” 33:888–90.

38. Perhaps Abraham Stephens, about whom very little is known. Book of Patriarchal Blessings Index, 4:163, Church Archives.

some saw chariots and other thing one lay about half an hour & saw from Eternity to Eternity many Miracilous Experiences told Many Visions told³⁹

39. Here Brown initially writes April 29 instead of the correct date, March 29. The meeting that endured all that night was called by a revelation to Joseph Smith, whose journal for March 29 records:

The word of the Lord came to us through Presdt J. Smith Jun that those who had entered the holy place must not leave the house untill morning but send for such things as were necessary, and also, that during our stay we must cleans[e] our feet and partake of the sacrament that we might be made holy before Him, and thereby be qualified to officiate in our calling upon the morrow in washing the feet of the Elders.

Accordingly we proceeded and cleansed our faces and our feet, and then proceeded to wash each others feet. . . .

. . . The Holy S[p]irit rested down upon us and we continued in the Lords house all night prophesying and giving glory to God. (Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:204–5)

The Character of Joseph Smith

Richard Lyman Bushman

The title of this essay, “The Character of Joseph Smith,” may promise more than can ever be fulfilled. Joseph warned the Saints of the difficulty in trying to understand him. In the King Follett discourse given two months before his death, he told them, “You dont know me—you never will.” Another version of the same speech says, “You never knew my heart. No man knows my hist[ory].”¹ He seems to say that what we want to know most—his heart and his history—are not to be found out. No matter how much we study him, we must be cautious about believing we have comprehended him. There is too much there, and much of it is far beyond the ordinary. As he continues, “I dont blame you for not believing my history had I not experienced it [I] could not believe it myself.”²

And yet we still want to know what kind of a man he was: How would we experience him if we knew him? What was the feel of his personality? How did the visions and revelations affect his character? Was he lifted above human foibles and idiosyncrasies by his contact with the heavens? Was he a little magical?

In my opinion, Joseph Smith remained planted in the earth despite his visions. He was a sharply etched human individual with a personality of his own and a culture derived from his time and place. He was not molded into a timeless model of perfection. He remained Joseph Smith Jr., a son of Lucy Mack Smith and Joseph Smith Sr., and a son of New England and the nineteenth century. He had flaws and preferences and feelings like the rest of us. We could meet and know him like other personalities.

Were we to know Joseph well, we probably could compile a long list of his qualities: his good cheer, humility, kindness, friendliness, bravery, resolve, faith, and on and on; he was a multifaceted man. But without

claiming to be comprehensive, I would like to discuss four aspects of his personality that have thrust themselves upon me while I have studied his life. They are (1) his transparency, (2) his sharpness in rebuke, (3) his confidence, and (4) what I term his love but could also be called his enthusiasm or piety.

Transparency

The first of these aspects, transparency, became apparent while I was trying to evaluate the historical record left by Joseph Smith. Since we have *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, seven volumes of documents and diaries covering his life and the years immediately after his death, you would think we have plenty to go on. If a man does not reveal himself in seven volumes, what more can we ask?

The problem was, as I discovered, that this bounteous record can be misleading. The *History of the Church*—sometimes called the Documentary History—appears to be a collection of documents (letters, proclamations, speeches, revelations) tied together with a first-person narrative. Joseph tells the story of his life and then introduces key documents as they come along.

In actual fact, much of the first-person narrative was not written by Joseph at all. A large part was written by his clerks and others.³ The resulting history does not so much contain errors as it misleads us. These writings may have been approved by him, they may express his sentiments and ideas, but they are not his voice. We are not listening to words from his mind and heart when we read. Since we learn as much from how a story is told as by what it contains, this method of compiling the history makes the *History of the Church* less revealing than it seems at first sight.

This complexity, however, was precisely what led to my recognition of Joseph's transparency, as I am calling it. For in addition to this clerk-written material, we have a few letters and a few pages in his journal written in his own hand. In the *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*,⁴ these sections appear in bold type, so we know the words that did proceed from his mind and heart. Other parts were dictated and may have been written down pretty much word for word. These personal writings have been compiled and presented in one volume by Dean Jessee, the general editor of the Joseph Smith papers project⁵ and one of the Church's most useful and productive scholars.

These holograph writings are helpful because their tone differs so markedly from the clerk's writings. When Joseph wrote, the emotional level almost always was higher than in the clerk's writings. He seems always to have been open about his feelings. He had strong feelings about virtually everything, and these flow out onto the page. Sometimes he expressed his

love, but he was equally candid about his anger or disgust. He was a man of feelings, and he let his feelings show. You see this emotion in the little interjections in his diary: “Oh how marvellous are thy works Oh Lord and I thank thee for thy me[r]cy u<n>to me thy servent Oh Lord save me in thy kingdom for Christ sake Amen.” “Oh may God grant that I may be directed in all my thaughts. Oh bless thy Servent Amen.”⁶

After he learned of the ejection of the Saints from Jackson County in 1833, he wrote a letter filled with anguish for the plight of his brothers and sisters. He longed to be with them and to assure them all would be well in the end. “Never at any time,” he wrote, “have I felt as I now feel that pure love and for you my Brotheren the wormth and Zeal for you[r] safty that we can scarcely hold our spirits but wisdom I trust will keep us from mad-ness and desperation and the power of the Go[s]pel will enable us to stand.” He pled with the Lord on their behalf: “O Lord what more dost thou require at their hands.”⁷ When you read page after page in this vein, especially in contrast to the cooler style of the clerks’ writings, you begin to get a feeling for Joseph’s openness. He revealed himself in his writings, and one must assume in his speech, too. He did not conceal his inner self.

His letter from Liberty Jail in March 1839 reveals his habits of mind as well as any single document I know. He had been in jail for four months, part of the time jammed in a room with two small, grated windows and a ceiling so low he could not stand up straight. In early March, he received four letters on one day from his friends in Illinois. The input from outside sparked a desire to reply, and he spent the next day dictating one long rambling letter. Occupying seventeen printed pages, it must have taken at least the entire day to get down. The two-part letter consists of a single, unbroken text, flowing from one topic to another without paragraph breaks. At times Joseph speaks for the Lord in some of the most transcendent language in scripture; three of our revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants are taken from this letter. At other times, the letter gives practical advice or denounces the Saints’ enemies. It is filled with love, wrath, joy, gratitude, enthusiasm, and revulsion.⁸

I think of the Liberty Jail letter as a transcript of his mind. It shows no signs of calculation or political caution. He simply writes from his heart, letting every thought and feeling spill out. That is what I mean by transparency. I do not mean that Joseph did not have compartments where he stored experiences away from the gaze of the world. Some of his most thrilling revelations, such as the appearance of Christ in the Kirtland Temple, were held back from the Saints. He was also reluctant at first to talk about the First Vision. But outside of withheld revelations such as these, he spoke freely, spontaneously, almost impulsively.

We wonder, of course, how much this transparency reflected the necessity of being transparent before God. We can only conjecture if a person who was accustomed to revealing his heart to God, knowing that concealment was impossible, tends toward the confessional among his friends, or if our coming before the Lord consistently with real intent and full purpose of heart necessarily habituates us to transparency, or if the Spirit of the Lord also enlivens our feelings and intensifies our emotions, thus requiring greater expressiveness.

Sharpness in Rebuke

A second quality his friends noted in him emerged from his openness. Joseph himself called it “sharpness.”⁹ He was quick to reprove people he believed were in the wrong. On one occasion, he publicly reprimanded sluggish missionaries in the newspaper, publishing a rebuke of Orson Hyde and John Page in the *Times and Seasons* when they were slow to get on their mission to Palestine. “Elders Orson Hyde and John E. Page are informed that the Lord is not well pleased with them,” the article said, “in consequence of delaying their mission, (John E. Page in particular) and they are requested, by the First Presidency, to hasten their journey towards their destination.”¹⁰

Eliza Snow put it as tactfully as possible: “His lips ever flowed with instruction and kindness; and although very forgiving, indulgent, and affectionate in his temperament, when his God-like intuition suggested that the welfare of his brethren, or the interests of the kingdom of God demanded it, no fear of censure—no love of approbation could prevent his severe rebuke.”¹¹ Benjamin Johnson, likewise a great admirer, said, “Criticisms, even by his associates, were rarely acceptable, and contradictions would rouse in him the lion at once, for by no one of his fellows would he be superseded.”¹² The plain fact is, Joseph did not like to be crossed, and when he saw someone in the wrong, he told them so. This is what he meant by “sharpness.”

We can see in Joseph’s tendency to use strong speech signs of a person weighed down with his responsibilities. Some of the most forceful rebukes were recorded in fall 1835, when Joseph was looking forward to the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. He had been striving for years to prepare his people for the endowment of power, one of the most difficult assignments he had received from the Lord and one he took very seriously. He had been given quite common, ordinary people to work with, and somehow he had to shape them into a godly society able to stand in the presence of the Lord. Moses had failed in this assignment with his people, and Joseph did not want to repeat the mistake. One reason for his frequent rebukes, particularly

on the eve of the temple dedication, may have been his anxiety about the people's worthiness.

But I think this sharpness reflected something in his secular culture as well. Joseph Smith was not purely the product of his revelations; he came out of a particular culture—early-nineteenth-century, backcountry Yankee. Studies have brought to life a particular aspect of that culture that scholars call the culture of honor. This is a culture we glimpse through the legendary tales of duels and in the stories of feuding clans. It was a complex compound made up of equal parts of loyalty and resentment—loyalty to family and resentment of insult. Any personal hurt, any damage to reputation called for an immediate response. Vengeance was to be sought for a hurt, and no insult was to go unchallenged.¹³

Joseph showed that kind of quick response to anything he perceived as an insult. He wrote in fury to Thomas Sharp, the vitriolic editor of the *Warsaw Signal*, after Sharp published his first editorial against the Saints. Sharp had attended a Church meeting in Nauvoo and even dined with Joseph after the conference. But then Sharp returned to Warsaw and began the campaign that was to end in Joseph's murder in Carthage. After reading the critical editorial, Joseph wrote to Sharp:

Mr. Sharp, Editor of the Warsaw Signal:

SIR—You will discontinue my paper—its contents are calculated to pollute me, and to patronize the filthy sheet—that tissue of lies—that sink of iniquity—is disgraceful to any mortal man. Yours, with utter contempt,

Joseph Smith.

P. S. Please publish the above in your contemptible paper.¹⁴

One should not conclude from these instances that Joseph was always stubborn and assertive. There is evidence that Joseph learned to rein in his inclination to dominate. Peter Burnett, one of his non-Mormon attorneys in Missouri and later governor of California, said of him, "He was very courteous in discussion, readily admitting what he did not intend to controvert, and would not oppose you abruptly, but had due deference to your feelings."¹⁵ Apparently, Joseph taught himself to be moderate. He probably had this softening in mind when he said he was like a great, rough stone bumping down the hill, knocking off the sharp edges, and so gradually being polished.¹⁶

Moreover, if conflict was common in his life, it was not something Joseph enjoyed or sought out. Quite the reverse. He yearned for peace and harmony. It pained him terribly when he fought with people. He wanted peace as quickly as he could get it. If he rebuked people, he also quickly sought for reconciliation. He did not hide from his adversaries and let the

anger fester. His immediate impulse was to get the complaints out in the open and strive for an agreement. He wanted resolution as quickly as it could be had.

After a season of small altercations with the Twelve, he brought them together and pled with them to make peace. He acknowledged that a letter rebuking them “might have been expressed in too harsh language; which was not intentional and I ask your forgiveness in as much as I have hurt your feelings.” He wanted nothing more than to make peace. “Inasmuch as I have wounded your feelings brethren,” he implored, “I ask your forgiveness, for I love you and will hold you up with all my heart in all righteousness before the Lord.”¹⁷

Those words give us Joseph Smith’s style. He described himself perfectly in the letter to the Saints from Liberty Jail where he told them the method of the priesthood. That method entailed “reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou has reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy” (D&C 121:43).

Looking back now from the viewpoint of current cultural analysis, we can see that Joseph Smith stood on the boundary between the culture of honor and the culture of gentility.¹⁸ Honor required outspoken rebukes and strong reactions to insult and contradiction. Gentility favored polish and smoothness, what we call “nice.” I don’t think you could call Joseph “nice” in this narrow technical sense of always keeping things smooth and quiet. He spoke his mind and his heart—whether love and gratitude or anger and reproof. His was a much more open style than ours.

I do not say that his was the better way—it got him in trouble on many occasions—but it won him confidence and friendship. People knew exactly where they stood. They felt his wrath from time to time but also were enveloped in his love. They knew they were in the presence of what we would say now was a real *Mensch*. There was no phoniness, no concealment, no pretense, only real feeling, candid expression, and honest reactions.

I would add that we can see something of the personal meaning of Joseph’s doctrine in these qualities. He spent his life building a City of Zion. And what was its outstanding quality? People there would be “of one heart and one mind” (Moses 7:18). His revelations emphasized the importance of unity in the Lord’s people. Joseph rejoiced in those moments when the Saints were one. Perhaps we can hear in these doctrines echoes of Joseph’s own yearning to escape conflict. He wanted to rise above the evil-spirited, abrasive world of insults coming out of the culture of honor and move instead to a happy realm of gospel love and harmony. He dreamed of a society where contention would end.

Confidence

The third quality I wish to consider is Joseph's confidence and independence. If perfect peace eluded Joseph, he had greater success in overcoming a weakness the Lord saw in him early in his life. Section 3 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the first revelation he wrote down,¹⁹ chastises him for giving way to pressure. You "have gone on in the persuasions of men," he was told, and "feared man more than God" (D&C 3:6, 7). In other words, he showed too much regard for the opinions of others, something that he could not do if he were to speak for God. He had to be independent.

I would have to say that Joseph succeeded admirably in overcoming this problem. One of his strongest characteristics was that he remained autonomous and even dominant no matter with whom he dealt. He was never overwhelmed by more educated men or strong figures of any kind. Much more literate people than he joined the Church, and he frequently put them to work, as he did Sidney Rigdon. But none of them ever gained the upper hand. There was never the slightest question who was in charge.

Howard Coray, who was considered well educated among the early converts because he got so far as to apply to college (though he never attended) was impressed by Joseph's independence. Coray was Joseph's clerk and knew him well:

The Prophet had a great many callers or visitors, and he received them in his office, where I was clerking—persons of almost all professions—Doctors, Lawyers, Priests and people seemed anxious to get a good look at what was then considered something very wonderful: a man who should dare to call himself a prophet, announce himself as a Seer and ambassador [*sic*] of the Lord. Not only were they anxious to see, but also to ask hard questions, in order to ascertain his depth. Well, what did I discover? . . . he was always equal to the occasion, and perfectly master of the situation; and, possessed the power to make everybody realize his superiority, which they evinced in an unmistakable manner. I could clearly see that Joseph was the captain, no matter whose company he was in. Knowing the meagerness of his education, I was truly gratified, at seeing how much at ease he always was, even in the company of the most scientific, and the ready off hand manner in which he would answer their questions.²⁰

I think one of our strongest impressions of Joseph were we to meet him would be his dominance. He filled every room where he was present, no matter who else was there.

Josiah Quincy, the young Harvard graduate and soon-to-be mayor of Boston, noted this quality when he visited Nauvoo in spring 1844 with Charles Francis Adams, son of the former president John Quincy Adams. Quincy went away with a sense of Joseph's "rugged power." Joseph seemed to have a great vital force. Quincy compared Joseph to the Rhode Island

congressman Elisha Potter, whom Quincy met in Washington in 1826. The two of them, Quincy said, emanated “a certain peculiar moral stress and compulsion which I have never felt in the presence of others of their countrymen.” Quincy continued, “Both were of commanding appearance, men whom it seemed natural to obey.”²¹ Quincy thought Joseph was born to lead.

Others came away with the same impression. Sometimes visitors compared him to Sidney Rigdon, who was much better educated and far more polished as an orator. Joseph always deferred to Rigdon in giving sermons on great occasions, but despite Sidney’s accomplishments, visitors recognized Joseph’s superior powers. Peter Burnett said of Joseph, “Among the Mormons he had much greater influence than Sidney Rigdon. The latter was a man of superior education, an eloquent speaker, of fine appearance and dignified manners; but he did not possess the native intellect of Smith, and lacked his determined will.” Burnett was impressed that Joseph was absolutely rock hard in his resolve. “He possessed the most indomitable perseverance,” Burnett said. Joseph “deemed himself born to command, and he did command.”²²

Looking back now, we can see the necessity of having such a forceful and unyielding person at the opening of the last dispensation. Joseph was repeatedly asked to carry out incredibly difficult errands for the Lord. Like Frodo’s in *Lord of the Rings*, Joseph’s assignments were impossibly difficult—like translating the gold plates or building the city of Zion. These tasks would have defeated the most experienced and well-connected men. They were assigned to Joseph when he had nothing. Yet he simply went and did them. He let nothing stand in the way. For years the Church existed almost entirely in his mind. He had to compel it into existence by sheer force of will. That effort required a man of rock-hard determination.

One wonders how someone as ill-prepared as Joseph Smith was for leadership acquired this immense confidence. He was unschooled, was without social standing, and had no institutional backing. As one visitor to Kirtland said of him in 1832, he was “no more than any ignorant ploughboy.”²³ Everything he did, he did with precious little help. The Church was created out of nothing. Most religious reformers began with a church institution; Joseph began with nothing. And yet he forged ahead without hesitation, never wavering in the face of ferocious opposition. He was not cowed by learning or political position or social eminence. He seems to have been perfectly sure of himself.

Surely such confidence can arise only out of inner experiences so powerful they overwhelm everything else. Joseph could have acted so decisively and confidently only with the assurance that God was behind him. In this I think we can see the direct imprint of revelation on his character.

Love and Enthusiasm

Finally, I come to love and enthusiasm. I leave these for last in order to emphasize them. We frequently see Joseph in his leadership position exhibiting the strength that enabled him to prevail. Dazzled by his power, we may overlook his soft qualities: his inner yearnings, his deep affections, his love. Yet nothing comes through more forcefully in his personal letters—especially the ones he wrote home. Invariably the letters expressed his love for his wife and children. From his place of confinement at Richmond in 1838, after being torn from his family at Far West, he wrote of his yearnings: “Oh God grant that I may have the privaliege of seeing once more my lovely Family, in the injoyment, of the sweets of liberty, and sotia+al life, to press them to my bosam and kiss+ng their lovely cheeks would fill my heart with unspeakable great grattitude.”²⁴ He spoke frequently of his children in his letters. On his visit to New York, impressions of the city so flooded his thoughts he had to return to his room to calm his mind, and then thoughts of home came to him. He wrote his wife, “Thaughts of home of Emma and Julia rushes upon my mind like a flood and I could wish for [a] moment to be with them[.] my breast is filld with all the feelings and tenderness of a parent and a Husband.”²⁵ Virtually every letter to Emma expressed his affection and respect. While in hiding from the Missouri officers, he wrote to Emma after a visit, “Tongue cannot express the grati-tude of my heart, for the warm and true-hearted friendship you have manifested.”²⁶ His letter from Carthage on the eve of his death was no different: “May God Almighty bless you & the children & Mother & all my friends.”²⁷

His love went out to all his friends and brethren. Even in prison, he saw himself as bound in the bonds of brotherhood as well as captivity. In November 1838 after the militia occupied Far West, Joseph was imprisoned in Richmond, Missouri, where he and his fellow prisoners were chained to one another to prevent escape. Instead of complaining about their mis-eries, Joseph wrote to Emma, “Brother Robison is chained next to me he he has a true heart and a firm mind, Brother Whight, is next, Br. Rigdon, next, Hyram, next, Parely, next, Amasa, next, and thus we are bound together in chains as well as the cords of everlasting love.”²⁸

Along with his familial and brotherly feelings, I think Joseph also had more of a personal relationship with the Savior than we ordinarily see. I once had thought of Joseph as an external person. We see him receiving revelations, building the kingdom, and being active and extroverted, not reflective or internal. But his letters reveal his personal feelings for Christ.

In 1832 he was stranded for a month in a small Indiana town tending Newel K. Whitney, who had broken a leg after it was caught in the wheel of

a runaway carriage. During the wait, Joseph was forced into inactivity. Each day, he went into a grove outside town to think and pray. He was restless and eager to be on his way back to Emma. Writing home, he told her of his effort to be patient: “I will try to be contented with my lot knowing that God is my friend in him I shall find comfort I have given my ~~the~~ life into his hands I am prepared to go at his Call I desire to be with Christ I Count not my life dear to me only to do his will.”²⁹

I am not sure it is absolutely necessary that Joseph Smith should have been an admirable character. God no doubt can reveal his will to a perfect bear of a man. But I do think Joseph was a happy combination of power and love. He was forceful but openhearted. Under his strength was extraordinary humility and candor.

In December 1835, when he was preparing for the temple dedication, some friends in Kirtland cut wood for his family. He was deeply touched by this kindness and could barely find words enough to express his thanks: “I am sincerely grateful to each and every, one of them, for this expression of their goodness towards me.” Not content with that, he went on to record a long blessing on the friendly woodcutters. As he wrote, he moved from simple gratitude to an exalted view of the woodcutters’ possibilities. Reading the passage, you can follow the theological ascent:

In the name of Jesus Christ I invoke the rich benediction of heav[e]n to rest upon them ~~even~~ all and their families, and I ask my heavenly Father to preserve their health’s and those of their wives and children, that they may have strength of body to perform, their labours, in their several occupations in life, and the use and activity of their limbs, also powers of intellect and understanding hearts, that they may treasure up wisdom, ~~and~~ understanding, ~~until~~ and intelligence, above measure, and be preserved from plagues pestilence, and famine, and from the power of the adversary, and the hands of evil designing, men and have power over all their enemys; and the way be prepared before them, that they may journey to the land of Zion and be established, on their inheritances, to enjoy undisturbe[d] peace and happiness for ever, and ultimately to be crowned with everlasting life in the celestial Kingdom of God, which blessings I ask in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.³⁰

That desire to bless his friends ran strong in Joseph. He wanted them to thrive, but more than that, to be exalted. He began with the woodcutters’ health and ended with “everlasting life in the celestial Kingdom of God.” People loved him because he believed in them. Under the woodcutters’ shabby clothes and rough manners, he saw people on their way to godhood. They were, in his eyes, divine.

That unbounded love for his friends was probably the most compelling of Joseph’s qualities. The combination of personal warmth and elevated

doctrine made him irresistible. Five days after arriving in Nauvoo, English convert William Clayton wrote home about Joseph, “Last night many of us was in company with Brother Joseph, our hearts rejoiced to hear him speak of the things of the Kingdom, he is an affectionate man and as familiar as any of us. We feel to love him much and so will you.”³¹

One hundred and sixty years later, William Clayton’s expectation has been fulfilled in the lives of many Latter-day Saints, who, like the English Saints, love Joseph much.

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1. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 343, 355.

2. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 343.

3. On the composition of Joseph Smith’s history, see Dean C. Jessee, “The Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 439–73; and Dean C. Jessee, “The Reliability of Joseph Smith’s History,” *Journal of Mormon History* 3 (1976): 23–46.

4. Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002).

5. The Joseph Smith Papers project will publish all surviving documents that were part of Joseph Smith’s papers, including diaries, letters, revelations, and financial and legal records. Volumes will begin appearing in 2004.

6. Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 28, 2.

7. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps and others, Kirtland, Ohio, August 18, 1833, quoted in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 309, 307.

8. Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 430–46. The letter is discussed in Dean C. Jessee and John W. Welch, “Revelations in Context: Joseph Smith’s Letter from Liberty Jail, March 20, 1839,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 3 (2000): 125–45.

9. Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 441. See also Doctrine and Covenants 121:43.

10. *Times and Seasons* 2 (January 15, 1841): 287. Also in 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), 4:274.

11. Quoted in Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith: Prophet’s Wife*, “Elect Lady,” *Polygamy’s Foe*, 1804–1879 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 61.

12. Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs, 1903, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 4. Reprinted in E. Dale LeBaron, *Benjamin Franklin Johnson: Friend to the Prophets* (Provo, Utah: Benjamin F. Johnson Family Organization, 1997), 221.

13. The major explication of the culture of honor focused on the South with sidelong glances at New England. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). More recent studies are Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001); Douglas L. Wilson, *Honor's Voice: The Transformation of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1998); and Frank Henderson Stewart, *Honor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
14. Joseph Smith to Thomas Sharp, Nauvoo, Illinois, May 26, 1841, *Warsaw (Illinois) Signal*, June 2, 1841, 2.
15. Peter H. Burnett (1807–1895), *An Old California Pioneer, by Peter H. Burnett, First Governor of the State* (Oakland, Calif.: Biobooks, 1946), reprinted from *Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer* (New York: D. Appleton, 1880), 40.
16. *History of the Church*, 5:401.
17. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:146–47.
18. On this transition in another context, see Robert Shoemaker, “Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London,” *Social History* 26 (May 2001): 190–208.
19. Robert J. Woodford, “The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants, Volumes I, II, and III” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 1:116, 128.
20. Dean C. Jessee, “Howard Coray’s Recollections of Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 3 (1977): 344–45.
21. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past: From the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1892), 317, 279. See also Jed Woodworth, “Josiah Quincy’s 1844 Visit with Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 71–87.
22. Burnett, *Old California Pioneer*, 40.
23. Nancy Towle, *Vicissitudes Illustrated, in the Experience of Nancy Towle in Europe and America* (Portsmouth: John Caldwell, 1833), 157.
24. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, Richmond [Missouri], November 12, 1838, quoted in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 405.
25. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, New York City, October 13, 1832, quoted in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 278.
26. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, Nauvoo, August 16, 1842, quoted in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 554.
27. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, Safety [Montrose, Iowa], June 23, 1844, quoted in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 616.
28. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, Richmond [Missouri], November 12, 1838, quoted in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 406.
29. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, Greenville, Indiana, June 6, 1832, quoted in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 264–65.
30. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:99–100.
31. William Clayton to Edward Martin, November 29, 1840, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; quoted in George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 81 n. 82.

The Process of Inspired Translation

Two Passages Translated Twice in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible

Kent P. Jackson and Peter M. Jasinski

Since 1996, researchers from Brigham Young University—with the assistance of new photographs, scanned images, and much hands-on examination of the documents—have been engaged in a careful study of the text written on the original manuscripts of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. The work has yielded the publication of a large facsimile transcription of all the original manuscript pages and much new information about how Joseph Smith prepared the text.¹ Among the many new discoveries resulting from this research is an enhanced understanding of the sequence and chronology of the Prophet’s work.

A Brief History of the Joseph Smith Translation

Not long after the Church of Christ was organized in spring 1830, Joseph Smith began a revision of the King James translation of the Bible, a process that would engage hundreds of hours of his time and much of his energy over the next three years. This New Translation, as he and early Church members called it,² would be the source of much new revelation that would come to the Church in the form of improved and restored biblical texts. The process of translation began in June 1830 when the revelation now known as Moses 1 was received—a preface to the book of Genesis and thus to the entire Bible. Over the course of the following months, Joseph Smith continued to translate the Old Testament (Genesis 1–24, June 1830–March 1831). It is likely that he intended to go through the Bible from cover to cover, but a March 7, 1831, revelation instructed him to interrupt the Old Testament work and translate the New Testament (D&C 45:60–62). Upon completion of the New Testament (Matthew–Revelation, March 1831–July 1832), he

translated the rest of the Old Testament in order (Genesis 24–Malachi, July 1832–July 1833).

Aside from the cessation of translating the Old Testament while the New Testament was revised, the translation was a systematic process that took Joseph Smith from one end of the Bible to the other. The books and passages, chapters and verses were revised in sequence. But even while the original translation was under way, the Prophet made a second pass through many of the pages, often revising his earlier dictation with expanded or clarified meanings. Those later revisions were probably completed not long after the first revision was dictated. Both processes—the original dictating and the later revising—have become increasingly clear through recent research into the original manuscripts.³

Two New Testament Passages That Were Translated Twice

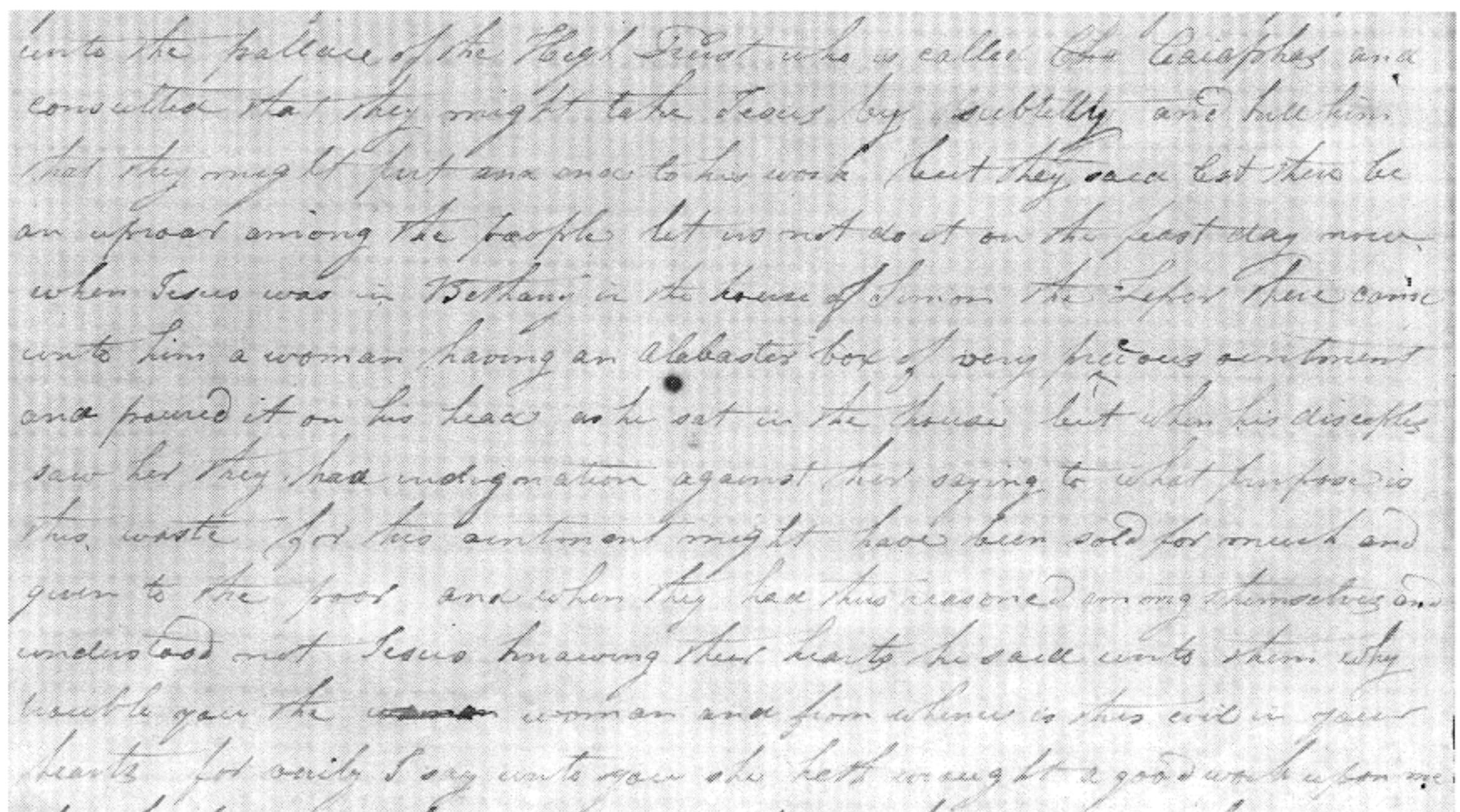
In light of what we know now about the creation of the New Translation, it is interesting to observe that, in two places in the Bible, Joseph Smith provided two original translations that vary from each other. The passages, one quite long (Matt. 26:1–71) and the other very short (2 Pet. 3:4–6), were translated twice, most likely because Joseph Smith had forgotten that he had produced the original translations and thus translated the material anew. In this article, we present the two versions of the translations, here published together in edited format for the first time, and we examine them to see what can be learned from them. In what ways are they different, and in what ways are they the same? What do the differences and similarities mean? From this unique situation—two prophetic revisions of the same biblical texts—we can learn much about how the Prophet fulfilled his calling to create his New Translation of the Bible for the Church.

Joseph Smith’s New Translation of Matthew 26:1–71

When Joseph Smith began the translation of the New Testament in spring 1831, he translated most of the Gospel of Matthew without major interruption. The manuscript produced by that original translation (figs. 1–2) has been designated by modern archivists as New Testament Manuscript 1 (NT1). John Whitmer later made a back-up copy of most of the NT1 material. That copy begins what would later be known as New Testament Manuscript 2 (NT2, in four folios), which became the working copy on which the rest of the translation of the New Testament was continued. To understand how Joseph Smith made two original translations of Matthew 26, it is necessary to understand in more detail the genesis of NT1 and NT2 and how the two manuscripts relate to each other.

62
man is thrown into the hands of sinners more often than he can
tell he is at hand that with the tetramon and while he sat upon
behold Judas one of the twelve came and with him a great multitude
with swords and staves having authority from the chief Priest and
the Elders of the people now he that betrayed him gave them
a sign saying whosoever I shall kiss the same is he that betrays me
and forthwith he came to Jesus and said hail master and
kissed him and Jesus said unto him Judas betrayest thou the
son of man with a kiss and Jesus also said unto the captain
Judas whence art thou come and then they came and laid
hands on Jesus and took him and behold one of them who was
with Jesus drew his sword and struck out his hand and
struck a servant of the High Priest and smote off his ear
then said Jesus unto him put up thy sword into its scabbard
for all they who take the sword shall perish by the sword
thirsty those that I cannot now say to my father and he
shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels
but how then shall the multitude be fulfilled that this it must
be and he put forth his hand and touched the servant and
said it was healed in that same hour Jesus said to the multitude
yea you come out as against a thief with swords and
staves to take me and out when I sat daily with you ~~teaching~~
teaching in the temple you laid one hold on me but
all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might
be fulfilled then all the disciples forsook him and fled and
he that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas
the High Priest where the scribes and the Elders ~~had~~ ^{had} assembled
but Peter followed him afar off unto the High Priest, bathe
and went in and sat with the servants to see the end now the
chief Priests and Elders sought council against Jesus to put
him to death but found none of a though among them with whom
came yet they found none to put him to death at the last came
two false witnesses and said this Jesus said I am able to destroy
the temple of God and to build it in three days and the
High Priest arose and said unto him wretched thou that
witnessest against me what sayest thou for thyself but Jesus held his
peace and the High Priest said unto him answerest thou nothing
but he answered nothing and the High Priest said unto him I say
unto thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the

FIG. 1. New Testament Manuscript 1, page 62, Matthew 26:45–63. Joseph Smith dictated this first translation of Matthew 26 in spring 1831. The handwriting here is that of his scribe Sidney Rigdon. All images in this article courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.



into the palace of the High Priest who is called Caiaphas and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. And they might put an end to his work. But they said Let there be an uproar among the people let us not do it on the feast day now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the Leper there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment and poured it on his head who sat in the house but when his disciples saw her they had indignation against her saying to what purpose is this waste for this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor and when they had thus reasoned among themselves Jesus understood not their hearts knowing their hearts he said unto them why trouble you the ~~woman~~ woman and from whence is this evil in your hearts for verily I say unto you she hath wrought a good work upon me

FIG. 2. Detail of New Testament Manuscript 1, page 60, showing Matthew 26:3–10; handwriting of Sidney Rigdon.

New Testament Manuscript 1 (NT1) is the original dictated text of Joseph Smith's New Translation of Matthew 1:1–26:71. It was begun on March 8, 1831, and probably was finished in June of that year. It was written in Kirtland, Ohio, in the hand of Sidney Rigdon, who served as the Prophet's scribe, recording his dictation. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon left Kirtland for Missouri on June 19, 1831, and it is likely that they finished NT1 before their departure.⁴ The text ends at Matthew 26:71 in the middle of a sentence and clearly not at a predictable stopping place. The abrupt ending suggests a date for Matthew 26 shortly before their departure, when they ran out of time. The NT1 text of Matthew 26 shows only minimal editing after its original writing. All of it appears to be in the hand of Sidney Rigdon, who corrected his own scribal and spelling errors at the time of the original dictation. There was not a second pass of revisions in this text.

Matthew 26 on NT1 differs in several places from the text of the King James translation. Most of the changes appear to be clarifications or rewordings of the existing English text, but there are also significant new insights.

On March 8, 1831, John Whitmer was appointed by revelation to transcribe for Joseph Smith (D&C 47:1). He first copied the Old Testament translation that had been revealed to that point. Then, as pages of the New Testament manuscript (NT1) became available, he transcribed them also. His copy of NT1 is identified as New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 1 (NT2.1). It does not reproduce all of NT1, however; it ends in the middle of verse 1 of Matthew 26.

How the Duplications Occurred

After spending most of summer 1831 in Independence, Missouri, Joseph Smith returned to Ohio and to his work on the New Translation. The Prophet reported that “the forepart of September was spent in making preparations to remove to the town of Hiram [Ohio], and [re]commence the translation of [the] bible.”⁵ From then “until the fore part of October,” he “did little more than to prepare to recom&mgt;ence the translation of the bible.”⁶ John Whitmer was now the scribe for the Joseph Smith Translation, recording the Prophet’s dictation on a new manuscript, today labeled New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 2 (NT2.2).

However, instead of recommencing the translation at Matthew 26:71, where he had stopped his translating before traveling to Missouri, the Prophet began at Matthew 26:1. Whitmer had made his copy only to the first verse of the chapter, and it appears that both he and the Prophet had forgotten that the translation had already progressed farther. Thus NT2.2 contains a second translation of Matthew 26. This translation was begun on September 26 and was probably completed within a day or two⁷ (fig. 3). The earlier translation appears to have been forgotten altogether, perhaps because NT1, the original dictation, had already been set aside and replaced by the folios of NT2 as the live text to which later material was added and on which later corrections and revisions were written. When the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ) prepared to publish Joseph Smith’s Bible translation in 1867,⁸ they

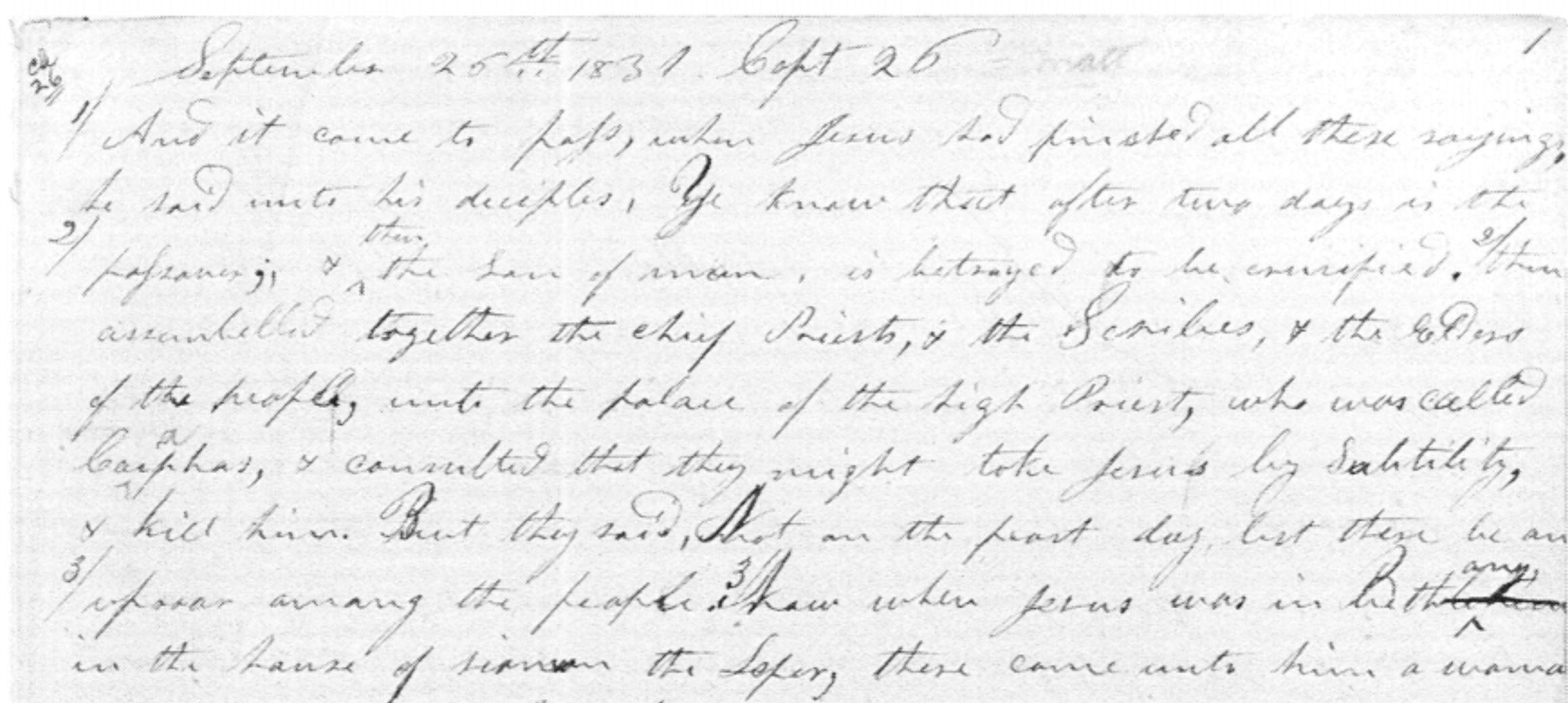


FIG. 3. Detail of New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 2, page 1, showing Matthew 26:1–7. This image shows part of the second translation of Matthew 26, dated September 26, 1831. The handwriting here is that of John Whitmer, who served as the Prophet’s scribe for this dictation. The archival notations (“Ch 26” and “=matt”), verse numbers, and capitalization changes are in unknown hands.

drew their text of Matthew 26 from the NT2.2 translation, and thus it is the one contained in the published *Inspired Version* today.⁹

The NT2.2 translation of Matthew 26, unlike that of NT1, shows a great deal of editing after the original dictation to prepare it for publication. While John Whitmer was serving as scribe, he corrected some of his own recording errors at the time of the dictation. In addition to those corrections, Joseph Smith undertook a later review of parts of NT2.2 with Sidney Rigdon as scribe. Corrections on the Matthew 26 pages that resulted from that review are few, and most are small clarifications and word rearrangements. Later hands added punctuation, although Whitmer had included some during the original dictation. Capitalization changes were made as well, and Whitmer's ampersands (&) were spelled out to "and" in most instances. Verse divisions and verse numbers were then added. The verses assigned in the JST manuscripts were not the short divisions we have in modern Bibles but paragraph-length verses that are less interruptive of the scriptural text.¹⁰ We cannot say when the changes in punctuation, capitalization, and versification were inserted. Our best suggestion is that they were inserted by clerks working under Joseph Smith's direction. This work may have been done in the 1830s after the translation was completed, but perhaps it took place in the early 1840s, when the Prophet was preparing his New Translation for publication.¹¹

Earlier historians have disagreed as to why there are differences between NT1 and NT2.2. In his early research on the Joseph Smith Translation manuscripts, RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard attributes the differences between Matthew 26 in NT1 and NT2.2 to John Whitmer's "copying and emending" of NT1.¹² He believes that as Whitmer was producing NT2.2, he "saw the need to clarify some passages in Matthew."¹³ Then, Howard suggests, Whitmer's emendation was revised further by Joseph Smith. Howard assumes that Whitmer was assigned not only to copy but also to emend, yet the JST manuscripts show that Whitmer was a faithful copyist whose transcriptions diverged intentionally from the originals only in very rare cases when he corrected what he apparently felt were grammatical or writing errors in the originals.¹⁴ Robert J. Matthews explains that NT2.2 is missing "two phrases that were actually a substantive part of the revision" in NT1.¹⁵ He proposes two possible explanations for their omission: they were either "carelessly transcribed" or "deliberately rejected" when NT2.2 was made.¹⁶

Our recent research has enabled us to obtain a clearer picture of the history of the New Translation and to reconstruct more accurately the generation of the two texts of Matthew 26. As we have described above, the NT1 text was translated by or in June 1831, and it appears that its existence

was overlooked when Joseph Smith began anew the translation over three months later. There is every indication that he made each translation of Matthew 26 with the intent of having it be part of the New Translation. Thus Latter-day Saints can welcome both readings as valued contributions to the Restoration, even if one was later forgotten and supplanted by another. Such a memory lapse is understandable. The process of translation was interrupted for at least three months between the two translations by the Prophet's first trip to Missouri and all the events associated with it: the rigors of travel in the 1830s, the dedication of land for building the city of Zion, the consecration of property for building a temple, and the preparations for gathering the Saints to that location.

The King James Version and the Two Joseph Smith Translations

Following, in parallel columns, are the King James Version text, as found in the current English Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible, and the texts of Joseph Smith's two translations of Matthew 26:1–71.¹⁷ The King James translation below includes all the italics that appeared in the 1828 H. and E. Phinney Bible that Joseph Smith used when preparing the New Translation.¹⁸ To the Joseph Smith Translation texts, we have added punctuation, capitalization, and spelling modeled after the King James Version. We have highlighted in bold type the changes that Joseph Smith made to the texts.¹⁹ Our commentary appears below the relevant verses.

KING JAMES VERSION	NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon	NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831) Scribe: John Whitmer
1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,	And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,	And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,
2 Ye know that after two days is <i>the feast of the passover</i> , and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.	You know that after two days is the passover , and the Son is to be betrayed and crucified.	Ye know that after two days is the passover , and then the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Verse 2. In the NT1 account, the Prophet changed the archaic pronoun “ye” to “you,” which he did a total of thirteen times in that account. In three other instances, he added new material that contains “you” where the King James translation would have used “ye.” In the NT2.2 account, only once did the Prophet add “you” where the King James translators would

KING JAMES VERSION	NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon	NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831) Scribe: John Whitmer
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3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*.

5 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people.

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

And then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who **is** called Caiaphas,

And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him, **that they might put an end to his work.**

But they said, **Lest there be an uproar among the people, let us not do it on the feast day.**

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.

But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

have used “ye,” and he did not change “ye” in any existing occurrence. This shows that on his second translation of Matthew 26, the modernizing of the pronouns was not as high a priority as it had been some months earlier.

In both translations, the Prophet removed the “*the feast of*” and made other editorial adjustments that make the text read more easily. These are typical of most of the changes in the two texts of Matthew 26, and they are typical of the majority of individual changes the Prophet made throughout the New Translation. NT1 changes “Son of man” to “Son.” This is the only such change in the chapter, and thus we cannot tell if it was a deliberate or an inadvertent omission.

Verse 4. This verse contains a significant revision in the NT1 narrative, an addition that provides a motive for the leaders of the Jews who opposed Jesus’ ministry: “that they might put an end to his work.”

Verse 5. The rewording for clarification in NT1 is typical of many other JST changes.

KING JAMES VERSION	NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon	NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831) Scribe: John Whitmer
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7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*.

8 But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10 When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat **in the house**.

But when his disciples saw **her**, they had indignation **against her**, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

And when they had thus reasoned among themselves and understood not—Jesus, knowing their hearts, he said unto them, Why trouble **you the woman? **And from whence is this evil in your hearts?** For verily I say unto **you**, she hath wrought a good work upon me.**

There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat **in the house**.

But when **some** saw **this**, they had indignation, saying, **Unto** what purpose is this waste?

For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

When **they had said thus**, Jesus understood **them**, and he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

Verse 7. Both versions change “*at meat*” to “*in the house*.” The Greek participle *anakeiménou*, “was reclining,” is used often in the context of eating but does not necessarily mean that the event occurred at a meal.

Verse 8. The NT2.2 version changes “*his disciples*” to the less definite “*some*,” and both accounts supply an antecedent to the italicized *it*. The NT1 account provides an object to the “indignation.”

Verse 10. This is one of several instances in which Joseph Smith made parallel content changes in both of the JST narratives. The NT2.2 translation rewords the introductory clause of the verse and makes it clearer (see fig. 2). The NT1 translation provides a much fuller revision and adds significant new insights. Among other things, it changes the subject of the verb “understood” from Jesus to his companions. The first part of the verse (“*And when . . . their hearts*”) provides a window into the thinking both of Jesus and of the others. The revised verse also provides additional dialogue, as Jesus asked his hearers, “*And from whence is this evil in your hearts?*”

KING JAMES VERSION	NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon	NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831) Scribe: John Whitmer
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11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

15 And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

For **the poor you have** always with you; but me **you have not always**.

This woman hath poured this ointment on my **body for** my burial.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, **shall this**, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. **For in that she hath done for me, she hath obtained a blessing of my Father.**

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

And said, What will **you** give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

For she hath poured this ointment on my **body for** my burial.

And in this thing that she hath done, she shall be blessed. For verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, **this thing**, that this woman hath done, **shall also** be told for a memorial of her.

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

And said, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

And from that time he sought opportunity to betray **Jesus**.

Verses 11–12. NT1 revises the syntax of both of these verses, making the reading clearer. NT2.2 does the same with verse 12.

Verse 13. The two translations insert the same addition to this verse, although not in identical words. It is a sentence spoken by Jesus promising a blessing for the woman who anointed him. The earlier translation places it at the end of the verse, and the later translation places it at the beginning of the verse.

Verse 15. The Prophet deleted “*unto them*” in both translations, thereby causing the readings to reflect more closely the earliest Greek texts.

Verse 16. The change in NT2.2 from “him” to “Jesus” is typical of other similar revisions in the Joseph Smith Translation in which pronouns are replaced by names to make antecedents clearer.²⁰

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)
Scribe: Sidney RigdonNT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)
Scribe: John Whitmer

17 Now the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

Now **on** the first day of the **unleavened bread** the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

And the disciples did as Jesus had **commanded** them; and they made ready the Passover.

Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

Now **on** the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came **unto** Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

And the disciples did as Jesus **appointed** them; and they made ready the passover.

Now when the **evening** was come, he sat down with the twelve.

And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

Verse 17. Both narratives insert the preposition “on” in the beginning phrase. NT1 deletes *feast of*, but NT2.2 includes it in the text.

Verse 19. Grammatical adjustments like the change in NT2.2 from “as Jesus had appointed” to “as Jesus appointed” are not unprecedented in the Joseph Smith Translation. In several such places, the Prophet selected a simpler grammatical form than that used by the King James translators. The change to “commanded” in NT1 more accurately reflects the semantic range of the Greek verb *suntássō*.

Verse 20. In the NT2.2 account, as in many other instances in the New Translation, Joseph Smith supplied a more contemporary term than that used in the King James Bible.

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)

Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if [he] had not been born.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said truly, **for thou art the man.**

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat **of it. And a commandment I give unto you, and this is the commandment which I give unto you, that as you see me do, you shall do likewise in remembrance of my body.**

NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)

Scribe: John Whitmer

And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

But the Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Then Judas, **who** betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, **and brake it, and blessed it, and gave to his** disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is **in remembrance of** my body, **which I gave a ransom for you.**

Verse 25. The change of relative pronouns from “which” to “who,” as here in NT2.2, is very common in the Joseph Smith Translation. NT1 expands on the last sentence to make Jesus’ response to Judas more emphatic.

Verse 26. The changes made in this verse are among the most significant of the chapter, and both translations make important contributions. In the four Joseph Smith Translation accounts of the sacrament at the Last Supper (NT1 Matthew, NT2.2 Matthew, Mark, and NT2.4 Luke),²¹ only NT2.2 Matthew corrects the order of events with regard to the bread: “Jesus took bread, and brake it, and blessed it.” This correction brings the order into harmony with Jesus’ pattern in the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 18:3). Both NT1 and NT2.2 add words to show that the bread was not Jesus’ body but “in remembrance” of it, something otherwise absent in the Matthew account.²² The words “which I gave a ransom for you” in NT2.2 provide

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)
Scribe: Sidney RigdonNT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)
Scribe: John Whitmer

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, **and blessed the cup**, and **gave to** them, saying, Drink **of it all of you**;

For this **you shall do in remembrance of my blood**, which is shed for **as many as shall believe on my name** for the remission of **their sins**.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I **shall come and** drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

For this is **in remembrance of** my blood of the new testament, which is shed for **as many as shall believe on my name**, for the remission of **their sins**. **And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall observe to do the things which ye have seen me do, and bear record of me even unto the end.**

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

the doctrinal foundation for the passage. In the NT1 narrative, Jesus commands his Apostles to do as they had seen him do—to bless and pass the sacramental emblems to others.

Verse 27. NT1 restores the information that Jesus not only gave thanks for the wine but also blessed it.

Verse 28. The changes in this verse do to the account of the wine what the changes in verse 26 do to the account of the bread. Both NT1 and NT2.2 replace “my blood” with “in remembrance of my blood.” Both accounts replace “shed for many” with “shed for as many as shall believe on my name.” And most significantly, the Prophet added to the NT2.2 narrative a commandment of Jesus to his disciples that they do as they had seen him do with respect to the sacrament. The NT1 narrative contains the same instruction, but there Joseph Smith inserted it into the account of the bread, not into the account of the wine.²³

Verse 29. The small change here in NT1 adds important information to Jesus’ promise that he will yet participate in the sacrament with his disciples. The insertion that he “shall come and” drink with them brings the doctrine into harmony with what we know from elsewhere in modern revelation. That event will take place not in heaven but “on the earth” (D&C 28:5).

KING JAMES VERSION	NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon	NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831) Scribe: John Whitmer
30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.	And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.	And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.
31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.	Then saith Jesus unto them, All you shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.	Then said Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.
32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.	But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.	But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.
33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all <i>men</i> shall be offended because of thee, <i>yet</i> will I never be offended.	But Peter answered and said unto him, Though all my brethren should be offended because of thee , I will never be offended.	Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee , I will never be offended.
34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.	Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.	Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Verse 30. The change in both texts from “an hymn” to “a hymn” is typical of other modernizations in the Joseph Smith Translation. Joseph Smith’s 1828 H. and E. Phinney Bible, the default King James Version text for the Joseph Smith Translation, has “a hymn” in this verse, and he read it as such to his scribes.²⁴

Verse 31. In many places in the New Testament, Joseph Smith changed the King James present tense “saith” to “said,” as he did here in the NT2.2 account.

Verse 33. Again the italicized words are changed in the New Translation. NT1 identifies the indefinite “all *men*” of the King James translation with the Twelve—“all my brethren.” The Prophet deleted the “*yet*” of the last clause in both translations. It is found in some Greek texts but not in the earliest manuscripts. The word order is changed in both translations to “I will.”

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)
Scribe: Sidney RigdonNT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)
Scribe: John Whitmer

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet **I will** not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit **you** here, while I go **yonder and pray**.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry **you** here, and watch with me.

And he went a little **farther**, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and **said** unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then **said** he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little **farther**, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **Oh** my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

Verse 35. As in both translations of verse 33, verse 35 of NT1 changes the archaic syntax “will I” to “I will,” another indicator that much of the work of the Joseph Smith Translation is modernization of the biblical language.

Verse 36. The changed syntax in NT1 reflects the word order of the Greek text more closely than does the King James Version.

Verse 39. In both translations, the Prophet dictated from his own Bible the more contemporary word “farther,” which differs from “further” as in the current Latter-day Saint edition. The NT2.2 translation (here and in verse 42) replaces the vocative “O” with the exclamatory “Oh.” This may simply be John Whitmer’s spelling and may not reflect a change in meaning.

KING JAMES VERSION

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could **you** not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray, that **you** enter not into temptation. **He said unto them**, The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and **take rest**; **and they did so**. **And when they awoke, Jesus saith unto them**, Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)
Scribe: John Whitmer

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and **he said** unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray **you**, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, **Oh** my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Then cometh he to his disciples, and **said** unto them, Sleep on now, and **take rest**: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Verse 41. The insertion of “He said unto them” in NT1 suggests that the Prophet viewed the following sentence as not necessarily connected with the preceding sentence.

Verses 45–46. In the King James text, Jesus instructs his disciples to sleep and then immediately instructs them to rise and “be going.” The Joseph Smith Translation supplies the missing continuity. In NT1 we read, “and they did so. And when they awoke, Jesus saith unto them.” NT2.2 expresses it differently: “And after they had slept he said unto them, Arise.”

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)

Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)

Scribe: John Whitmer

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

And while he yet spake, **behold**, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, **having authority** from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he: hold him fast.

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

And Jesus said unto him, **Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? And Jesus also said unto the captain**, Friend, wherefore art thou come? **And then they came**, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

And after they had slept he said unto them, Arise, and let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

And Jesus said unto him, **Judas, wherefore art thou come to betray me with a kiss?** Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Again, it is interesting to see that the Prophet inserted the same thought into each account, although not in identical words and not in the same location.

Verse 47. NT1 changes the more arcane “lo” to “behold.” The multitude came not only “from” the chief priests and elders but “having authority from” them.

Verse 50. Both accounts add to Jesus’ words an acknowledgment that Judas was betraying Jesus with a kiss: “Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?” (NT1), and “Judas, wherefore art thou come to betray me with a kiss?” (NT2.2). Both translations disassociate the word “friend” from Judas. The NT1 translation assigns “friend” to the captain of the force, and the NT2.2 translation removes it and replaces it with the name of Judas.

KING JAMES VERSION

51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

And, behold, one of them **who was** with Jesus **drew his sword, and stretched out his hand**, and struck a servant of the high **priest**, and smote off his ear.

Then said Jesus unto him, Put **up thy** sword into **its** place: for all they **who** take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? **And he put forth his hand and touched the servant's ear, and it was healed.**

In that same hour **Jesus said to the multitude**, Are **you** come out as against a thief with swords and **staves**

NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)
Scribe: John Whitmer

And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high **priest**, and smote off his ear.

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more then twelve legions of angels?

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

In that same hour said Jesus **unto** the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves

NT1 continues the process of modernization of syntax, changing “then came they” to “then they came.”

Verses 51–52. In NT1, modernizations are seen in the changes from “which” and “that” to “who” and in the change from “his place,” referring to a sword, to “its place.” Both narratives change “a servant of the high priest's” to “a servant of the high priest.”

Verse 54. In the King James text, only Luke records Jesus healing the ear of the high priest's servant: “And he touched his ear, and healed him” (Luke 22:51). In the Joseph Smith Translation, both the NT1 Matthew and the NT2.2 Mark add that event, but not in the same place in the narrative.

Verse 55. Clarification and modernization seem to be the Prophet's intentions in this verse, with revised syntax (“Jesus said” instead of “said

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)
Scribe: Sidney RigdonNT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)
Scribe: John Whitmer

take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

to take me? **And yet when** I sat daily with you teaching in the **temple, you** laid no hold on me.

But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Now the chief priests, and elders, **sought counsel** against Jesus, to put him to death;

But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, **yet they found none to put him to death.** At the last came two false witnesses,

for to take me? I sat daily with you **in the temple teaching**, and ye laid no hold on me.

But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, **they found none that could accuse him.** At the last came two false witnesses,

Jesus") and usage ("to" instead of "for to") in NT1. Both translations revise the last sentence to make it flow more readily, the NT2.2 revision reflecting more closely the Greek word order.

Verse 59. The NT1 narrative changes the meaning of the verse to highlight the conspiracy and plotting against Jesus on the part of the rulers.

Verse 60. Both accounts clarify the ambiguous King James reading, "yet found they none," but not in identical words.

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)

Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)

Scribe: John Whitmer

61 And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what

And said, This **Jesus** said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, **Seest thou what** these witness against thee? **What sayest thou for thyself?**

But Jesus held his peace. **And the high priest said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? But he answered nothing.** And the high **priest said** unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter **you shall** see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what

And said, This **man** said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? **knowest thou what** these witness against thee?

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus **said** unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what

Verse 61. Each narrative replaces “*fellow*.” NT2.2 inserts “*man*,” a word that is implicit in the Greek demonstrative pronoun *houtos*, a masculine singular. NT1 makes the matter clearer with the insertion of Jesus’ name.

Verse 62. Both revised accounts seem to result from the apparent incomplete sentence in the King James translation, with its string of three italicized words. The NT1 account adds a sentence at the end of the verse: “*What sayest thou for thyself?*”

Verse 63. Only NT1 changes this verse, and it does so significantly. A sentence removed from verse 62, “*Answerest thou nothing?*” is placed in the middle of verse 63, to which is added, “*But he answered nothing.*”

KING JAMES VERSION

NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831)
Scribe: Sidney RigdonNT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831)
Scribe: John Whitmer

further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

59 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

further need have we of witnesses? behold, now **you** have heard his blasphemy.

What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

But he denied before **all the people**, saying, I know [not] what thou sayest.

further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is **it** that smote thee?

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

Verse 66. The Community of Christ *Inspired Version* revises the awkward “guilty of death” to “guilty, and worthy of death.”²⁵ The revision is included in a footnote in the Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible. This insertion, however, does not come from the Prophet Joseph Smith or his scribes. It is a rare change written in pencil on the NT2.2 manuscript by the 1866–67 publication committee of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in preparation for the printing of their original *Inspired Version*. The change is in the handwriting of Joseph Smith III.

Verse 68. In his NT2.2 account, the Prophet replaced “Who is he” with the more idiomatic “Who is it.”

Verse 70. NT1 replaces “*them* all” with “all the people,” removing the italicized word.

In the second half of the verse, the NT1 manuscript reads, “I know what thou sayest.”²⁶ Although we cannot be certain, we are confident that Joseph Smith intended “I know not what thou sayest,” and thus we have

KING JAMES VERSION	NT1 (CA. JUNE 1831) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon	NT2.2 (SEPTEMBER 1831) Scribe: John Whitmer
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71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him,

And when he was gone out into the porch, **another** saw him,

And when he was gone out into the porch, **another** saw him,

inserted “not” in brackets in the edited text, above. Without the “not,” the sentence, which begins with “But he denied,” makes little sense. Unlike most of the other New Translation manuscripts, NT1 never underwent a later pass by Joseph Smith to make additional corrections, and it was not subjected to the scrutiny of later clerks who reviewed the manuscripts to insert verse breaks, punctuation, and revised capitalization. It seems likely that in those processes, the sentence would have been corrected with the insertion of “not.”

Verse 71. Both translations delete “*maid*.” The Greek indefinite pronoun *állē* is a feminine singular form, indicating that the referent was a female.

Joseph Smith’s New Translation of 2 Peter 3:4–6

A second, much shorter, translated text in two versions is found in New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 4 (NT2.4). This manuscript spans from Luke 19 to the end of the New Testament. Sidney Rigdon was the scribe for most of the manuscript, including both translations of 2 Peter 3. NT2.4 contains no internal dates, but related evidence places the translation of 2 Peter sometime between February 16 and March 24, 1832.²⁷ On page 145 of NT2.4, the Prophet translated 2 Peter 3:4–6, the only three verses in the chapter that he revised at that time (fig. 4). Later, when he was working on the following page, he decided to translate the entire chapter. He dictated a new full text of all eighteen verses (on pages 146–47). The new dictation includes a second translation of verses 4–6. In both cases, the handwriting is that of Sidney Rigdon, except for a few insertions of punctuation, capitalization, and verse numbers made by later editors. It is not certain in this case whether the Prophet forgot the first translation when he made the second one. It may well be that, when Joseph decided to retranslate the entire chapter, his scribe simply forgot to cross out the translation of the three verses already on the previous page. But because the second translation does not seem to rely on the first as its “rough draft,” we suggest that there probably was some passage of time between the two and that the earlier translation had been forgotten. The second translation is the one found in the printed Community of Christ *Inspired Version*.

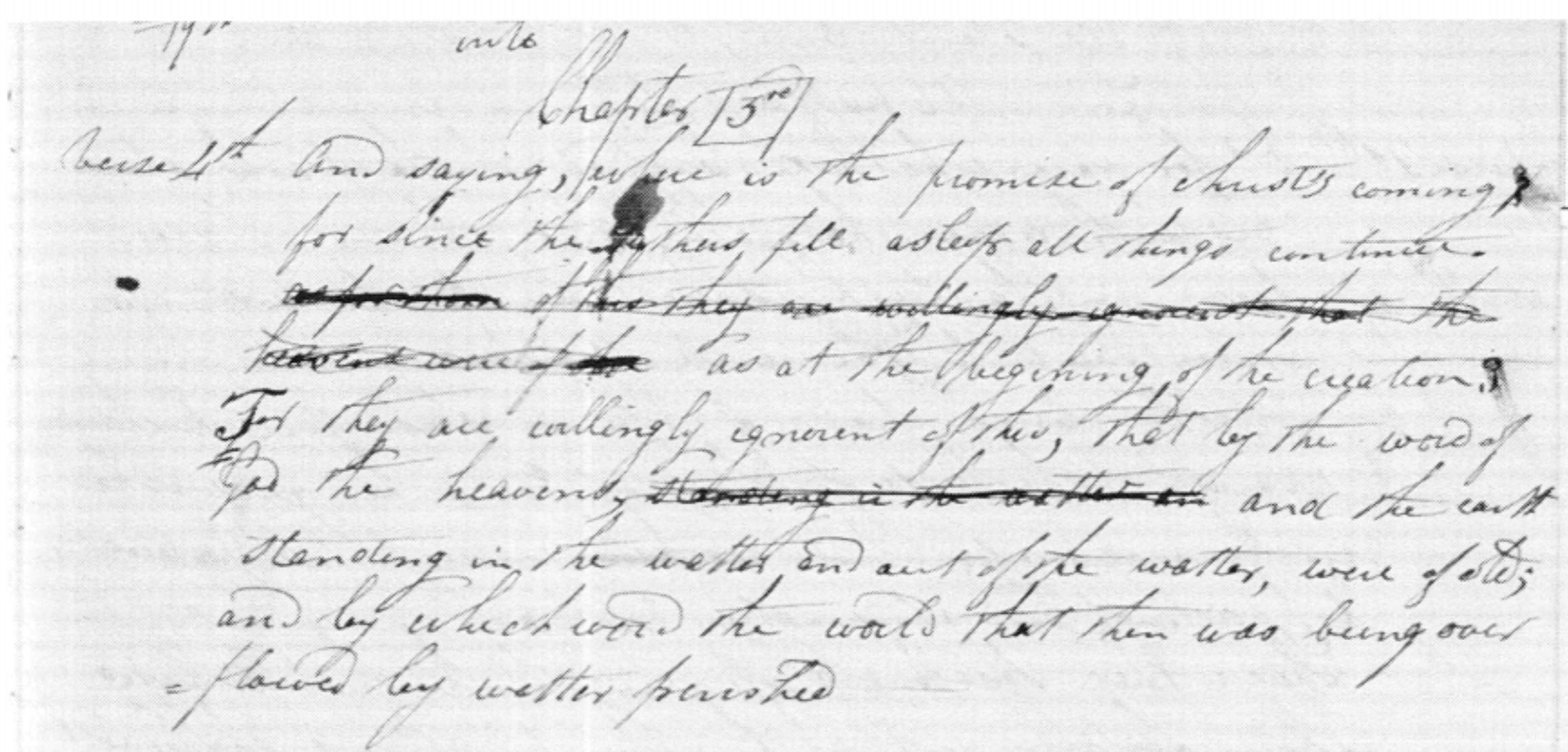


FIG. 4. Detail of New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 4, page 145, showing 2 Peter 3:4–6. This is the first translation of 2 Peter 3, probably March 1832, handwriting of Sidney Rigdon. Some time later, the Prophet retranslated this passage.

Following are the King James Version and the texts of Joseph Smith's two translations of 2 Peter 3:4–6, in parallel columns. The King James text shows the italics of the current Latter-day Saint English Bible.²⁸ To the Joseph Smith Translation texts we have added punctuation, capitalization, and spelling modeled after the King James translation. We have highlighted in bold type the changes that Joseph Smith made.²⁹

KING JAMES VERSION	NT2, FOLIO 4, PAGE 145	NT2, FOLIO 4, PAGE 146
4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as <i>they were</i> from the beginning of the creation.	And saying, Where is the promise of Christ's coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as at the beginning of the creation.	And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things must continue as they are, and have continued as they are from the beginning of the creation.
5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word	For they are willingly ignorant of this , that by the	For this they willingly are ignorant of, that of old the

Verse 4. The first account clarifies the wording by replacing “his” with “Christ’s.” Both translations make changes at the location of the two italicized words in the King James Version. The first does so by making the phrase more succinct, but the second expands on the phrase.

Verse 5. Both translations rearrange the word order of the verse considerably, but in different ways. The second translation follows the word

KING JAMES VERSION	NT2, FOLIO 4, PAGE 145	NT2, FOLIO 4, PAGE 146
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of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

word of God the heavens, and the earth standing in the water and out of the water, were of old:

And by which word the world that then was, being overflowed by water, perished:

heavens and the earth, standing in the water and out of the water, were created by the word of God.

And by the word of God, the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

order of the Greek text more closely than does the King James Version. The second translation includes “were created” in place of “were.”

Verse 6. Both accounts replace the word “whereby” with a clause that tells the power by which the world perished, namely the “word of God” alluded to in verse 5. This is an important change. Most Greek texts have the plural *di' hōn*, “whereby (pl.)” or “through which (pl.),” although the singular *di' hón* is a possible reading also.³⁰

Duplicate Revelations

The duplicate translation of JST material provides a unique opportunity to examine how Joseph Smith prepared his translation of the Bible. To a certain extent, we have in this situation the necessary components of a controlled test on how this kind of revelation worked—two independently produced prophetic revisions of the same texts. As we examine the changes that Joseph Smith made in those texts, we see three broad categories of revisions: rewording for clarity, modernizing of archaic King James translation language, and introducing new content.

In several cases, the Prophet reworded or rearranged the existing content in verses to make the text more easily understood. Examples include Matthew 26:5 and 51 in NT1, Matthew 26:12 and 55 in NT2.2, and both translations of 2 Peter 3:5. In some cases, he inserted new words to strengthen or clarify a passage, as in Matthew 26:25 and 29 in NT1 and in the second translation of 2 Peter 3:4. It is difficult to know in these instances whether the corrections represent the restoration of original biblical ideas or words or some other means of making the text more meaningful for modern readers.

Many of the changes in Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible are modernizations of the grammar, vocabulary, and syntax of the King James Version. Throughout the manuscripts, the Prophet made frequent changes

of this kind, replacing old forms of language with words and constructions that reflect more current usage. Most Latter-day Saints are unaware of this aspect of the Joseph Smith Translation because the footnotes in the Latter-day Saint Bible are generally restricted to those changes that make doctrinal or historical contributions. In many places in the manuscripts, the Prophet changed “ye,” “thee,” and “thou” to “you,” with plural forms being changed more frequently than singular forms. In many other places, however, those changes were not made. In the Matthew 26 translations, for example, he changed most archaic pronouns in the NT1 text but apparently did not have the same interest in the matter when he prepared the NT2.2 translation. The Prophet made frequent changes in archaic vocabulary and word usage also. In Matthew 26, the old word “even” is changed to “evening” (NT2.2 Matt. 26:20), and archaic word order is modernized in a few places (for example, NT1 Matt. 26:35, 50, 55). Joseph Smith followed his H. and E. Phinney Bible to use “a” instead of “an” before words that begin with a pronounced letter *h* (“an hymn,” Matt. 26:30). That he frequently changed “which” and “that” to “who” for the relative pronoun referring to humans is reflected in Matthew 26 (for example, NT1 Matt. 26:51–52).

But the most important changes in the Joseph Smith Translation are those that introduce new content or change a verse’s meaning. In several passages in the duplicate translations, we see the introduction of new content into the text—new thoughts that alter the meaning or expand the scope of the passage. A few of these content additions are found in only one of the translations:³¹

“that they might put an end to his work” (26:4, NT1)

“Why trouble you the woman? **And from whence is this evil in your hearts?” (26:10, NT1)**

“Jesus took bread, **and brake it, and blessed it” (26:26, NT2.2)**

“which I gave a ransom for you” (26:26, NT2.2)

“and gave thanks, **and blessed the cup” (26:27, NT1)**

“And he put forth his hand and touched the servant’s ear, and it was healed” (26:54, NT1)

Perhaps the most significant discovery in the duplicate translations is the fact that in the majority of cases in which substantive content was added to the text, similar information was added in *both* of the new translations. In the following passages, we see that in both translations the Prophet added the same thought, yet he rarely expressed that thought in the same words, and sometimes it was not even inserted at the same location in the text.

NT1

NT2.2

“And when they had thus reasoned among themselves and understood not—Jesus, knowing their hearts, he said unto them, Why trouble you the woman?” (26:10, NT1)

“Wheresoever . . . a memorial of her. For in that she hath done for me, she hath obtained a blessing of my Father.” (26:13, NT1)

“And a commandment I give unto you, and this is the commandment which I give unto you, that as you see me do, you shall do likewise. . . . And he took the cup, and gave thanks” (26:26, NT1)

“Take, eat . . . in remembrance of my body” (26:26, NT1)

“For this you shall do in remembrance of my blood, which is shed” (26:28, NT1)

“which is shed for as many as shall believe on my name” (26:28, NT1)

“Sleep on now, and take rest; and they did so. And when they awoke, Jesus saith unto them, Behold, the hour is at hand, . . . into the hands of sinners.” (26:45, NT1)

“And Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?” (26:50, NT1)

“And Jesus also said unto the captain, Friend, wherefore art thou come?” (26:50, NT1)

“though many false witnesses came, yet they found none to put him to death.” (26:60, NT1)

“And by which word” (2 Peter 3:6, first translation)

“When they had said thus, Jesus understood them, and he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman?” (26:10, NT2.2)

“And in this thing that she hath done, she shall be blessed. For verily I say unto you, Wheresoever . . . a memorial of her.” (26:13, NT2.2)

“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, . . . And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall observe to do the things which ye have seen me do, and bear record of me even unto the end.” (26:28, NT2.2)

“Take, eat; this is in remembrance of my body” (26:26, NT2.2)

“For this is in remembrance of my blood of the new testament, which is shed” (26:28, NT2.2)

“which is shed for as many as shall believe on my name” (26:28, NT2.2)

“Sleep on now, . . . behold, the hour is at hand . . . into the hands of sinners. And after they had slept he said unto them, Arise, and let us be going” (26:46, NT2.2)

“And Jesus said unto him, Judas, wherefore art thou come to betray me with a kiss?” (26:50, NT2.2)

“And Jesus said unto him, Judas, wherefore art thou come” (26:50, NT2.2)

“though many false witnesses came, they found none that could accuse him” (26:60, NT2.2)

“And by the word of God” (2 Peter 3:6, second translation)

The Lord stated with regard to the Joseph Smith Translation: “And the scriptures shall be given, even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine own elect” (D&C 35:20). In several revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, God endorsed the translation work and encouraged the

Saints to assist with it and embrace it (for example, D&C 43:12–13; 73:3–4; 90:13; 93:53; 94:10). Yet Joseph Smith never told the Church the means by which he prepared the translation, other than that it was “translated by the power of God.”³² It appears that the duplicate translations are telling us more about that process.

These manuscripts confirm that part of the Prophet’s calling was to modernize and clarify the text of the scriptures, something that is evident throughout the Joseph Smith Translation. The model of “plainness” that is presented in the Book of Mormon (see 2 Ne. 25:4, 7; 31:2–3) sometimes contrasts sharply with the language and style of the Bible, particularly the King James translation. Many individual Joseph Smith Translation changes are specific to the King James Version and are not suited to, or needed for, other Bible translations, whether in English or in other languages.

The changes made in Matthew 26 and 2 Peter 3 also suggest that Joseph Smith’s calling to modernize and clarify was a *general* mandate. It is our impression that God delegated the details of how to meet that objective to the Prophet’s own judgment and discretion, so he did not necessarily require unique revelation in individual cases. Thus the manuscripts show that his rewording of passages for clarification was not done with great consistency. He took greater interest in this work of modernizing and clarifying on some occasions than on others, and this can be seen not only in the two translations of Matthew 26 but elsewhere in the manuscripts as well.

But there are many changes in the Joseph Smith Translation that we firmly believe the Prophet was inspired to make in a much more specific way. A careful examination of the two texts of Matthew 26 and the historical circumstances in which they were produced leads us to rule out the possibility that either text influenced the writing of the other. Given that, we find most remarkable the clear evidence that Joseph Smith inserted parallel changes in both translations in most instances where substantive changes were made. Responding to spiritual promptings both times he translated Matthew 26, the Prophet’s thoughts frequently rested upon the same matters or concerns, and impressions came to him that passages needed to be revised or reinforced.

So why, then, were the changes usually not made in the same words and sometimes not inserted in the same locations? Joseph Smith taught that the Holy Ghost gives us “pure intelligence,” which serves in “expanding the mind [and] enlightening the understanding.”³³ Under “the Spirit of Revelation,” “you feel pure Intelligence flowing unto you” that can “give you sudden strokes of ideas.”³⁴ Perhaps it would be reasonable to propose that as Joseph Smith worked his way through Matthew 26, dictating the text to his scribe Sidney Rigdon in spring 1831 and again to his scribe John

Whitmer the next fall, impressions came to his mind in the form of pure intelligence, enlightened understanding, and sudden strokes of ideas—but not necessarily in exact words. Responding to those impressions, the Prophet himself supplied the words that corrected the problem or emphasized the point or otherwise caused the verse to express the ideas that the Lord wanted it to communicate. This suggestion may explain why the duplicate translations are verbally different.

We do not see this process as the model by which to understand the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants or the text of the Book of Mormon. In those cases, the Prophet was not beginning with another translation that needed consideration and possible revision, so the process was different. Nor do we suggest that this is the model for all the material in the Joseph Smith Translation. We see evidence in other parts of the translation where whole texts were revealed in English in verbal completeness with little or no influence from the mind of Joseph Smith (for example, Moses chapter 1).³⁵ But the duplicate translations of Matthew 26 and 2 Peter 3 provide an opportunity to see the hand of the Lord at work in a different way—in a way that may shed light on the genesis of other parts of the Joseph Smith Translation as well.

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1. See Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, forthcoming); see also Robert J. Matthews, “A Plainer Translation”: *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

2. See Doctrine and Covenants 124:89; “Books!!!” *Times and Seasons* 1 (July 1840): 140. See also 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), 1:341, 365; 4:164.

3. See the introductions to the various manuscripts in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*.

4. For the dates, see Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 1:356, 362.

5. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:363.

6. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:363.

7. The date is written at the top of the page, immediately before the translation of Matthew 26.

8. *The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer* (Plano, Ill.: The [Reorganized] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1867), commonly called the *Inspired Version*. The most recent edition was published in Independence, Missouri, in 1991.

9. The 1944 edition of the *Inspired Version* incorporated two NT1 readings into the text: “when I *shall come and drink*” (Matt. 26:29; *Inspired Version* 26:26) and “*go yonder and pray*” (Matt. 26:36; *Inspired Version* 26:33). They remain in the most recent edition (1991).

10. The verse numbers in modern Bibles were created by printer Robert Estienne in the sixteenth century. Versification in the printed Community of Christ *Inspired Version* follows the biblical model rather than the verse divisions that are written on the manuscript pages.

11. See Robert J. Matthews, “Joseph Smith’s Efforts to Publish His Bible Translation,” *Ensign* 13 (January 1983): 57–64.

12. Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of their Textual Development*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1995), 71.

13. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures*, 71.

14. For example, Whitmer corrected “These words *was* spoken” to “These words *were* spoken” (OT1, page 3, line 12; OT2, page 3, line 36).

15. Matthews, “*A Plainer Translation*,” 204.

16. Matthews, “*A Plainer Translation*,” 205.

17. Joseph Smith’s KJV Bible was published in 1828 by the H. and E. Phinney Company of Cooperstown, New York. See Kent P. Jackson, “Joseph Smith’s Cooperstown Bible: The Historical Context of the Bible Used in the Joseph Smith Translation,” *BYU Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 41–70. Oliver Cowdery purchased this Bible on October 8, 1829, at E. B. Grandin’s Palmyra Bookstore. The Bible is now housed in the Library-Archives of the Community of Christ in Independence, Missouri. The Phinney Bible differs in only a few words from that used in the current English Latter-day Saint edition. See note 24 below.

18. Italics in the King James Bible generally are used to identify words that are not found in the original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible but are helpful or even necessary to create complete sentences in English. The identifying of filled-in words in this manner was first done systematically in English Bibles by the translators of the Geneva Bible, and the process was followed by the King James translators. Some in Joseph Smith’s day, including some early Church leaders and probably the Prophet himself, viewed these insertions generally as unnecessary or as interpolations on the part of translators. Thus the Joseph Smith Translation manuscripts show that the Prophet sometimes made revisions at the locations of italicized words. See expressions of disdain for italics in the King James Bible in the *Evening and the Morning Star* 1, January 1833, 2; Not the Prophet, S. T. P., “To the Editor of the *Times and Seasons*,” *Times and Seasons* 4 (September 1, 1843): 318.

19. The NT1 text is from NT1, pages 59–63. The NT2 text is from NT2.2, pages 1–4. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 224–28, 305–9, used with permission.

20. See, for example, Genesis 18:32 (KJV “And he said. . . . And he said” = JST “And Abraham said. . . . And the Lord said”) and 2 Peter 3:4 (KJV “his coming” = JST “Christ’s coming”).

21. The Gospel of John does not have an account of the sacrament at the Last Supper.

22. The idea of remembrance is found also in Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25; 3 Nephi 18:7, 11; and JST, Mark 14:22.

23. On the manuscript, verse 28 of NT1 reads as follows: “for this you shall do in remembrance of my blood—this is the new testimony which you shall unto all men~~y~~ of my blood which is shed for ~~me~~^{as} many as shall beleive on my name for the remission of their sins.” Our best judgment is that the words “—this is the . . . my blood” were replaced by what follows but that the scribe failed to cross them out.

24. The H. and E. Phinney Bible has *a* before words that start with a pronounced letter *h* in virtually every instance. In this it differs from the edition of the King James Bible used by English-speaking Latter-day Saints today. See Jackson, “Joseph Smith’s Cooperstown Bible,” 55–56, 65. This and *farther* in verse 39 are the only differences in Matthew 26 between Joseph Smith’s Phinney Bible and the Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible.

25. *Inspired Version*, Matt. 26:67.

26. NT1, page 63, lines 11–12.

27. By February 16, 1832, the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon had arrived at John 5:29 (D&C 76:15–18, chapter heading). By March 24, they had completed the translation through Revelation 11:4, when the work ceased due to the attack at the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, and the subsequent travel of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to Missouri. See Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:374, 378–79, 382–84. At that point, Sidney Rigdon was replaced as the Prophet’s scribe for the translation, and his handwriting ends.

28. In these verses, the italics in Joseph Smith’s 1828 Phinney Bible are identical to those in the Church’s current printing of the Bible.

29. The originals are on NT2.4, pages 145–46. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 557, 559, used with permission.

30. See Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary Volume 50: Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1983), 296–302.

31. See the discussion of these and the following passages in the commentary under the relevant verses, above.

32. NT1, page 1.

33. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 4.

34. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 5.

35. Old Testament Manuscript 1, pages 1–3.

Salt Lake Tabernacle Interior Photograph

Sabbath School Union Jubilee, July 1875

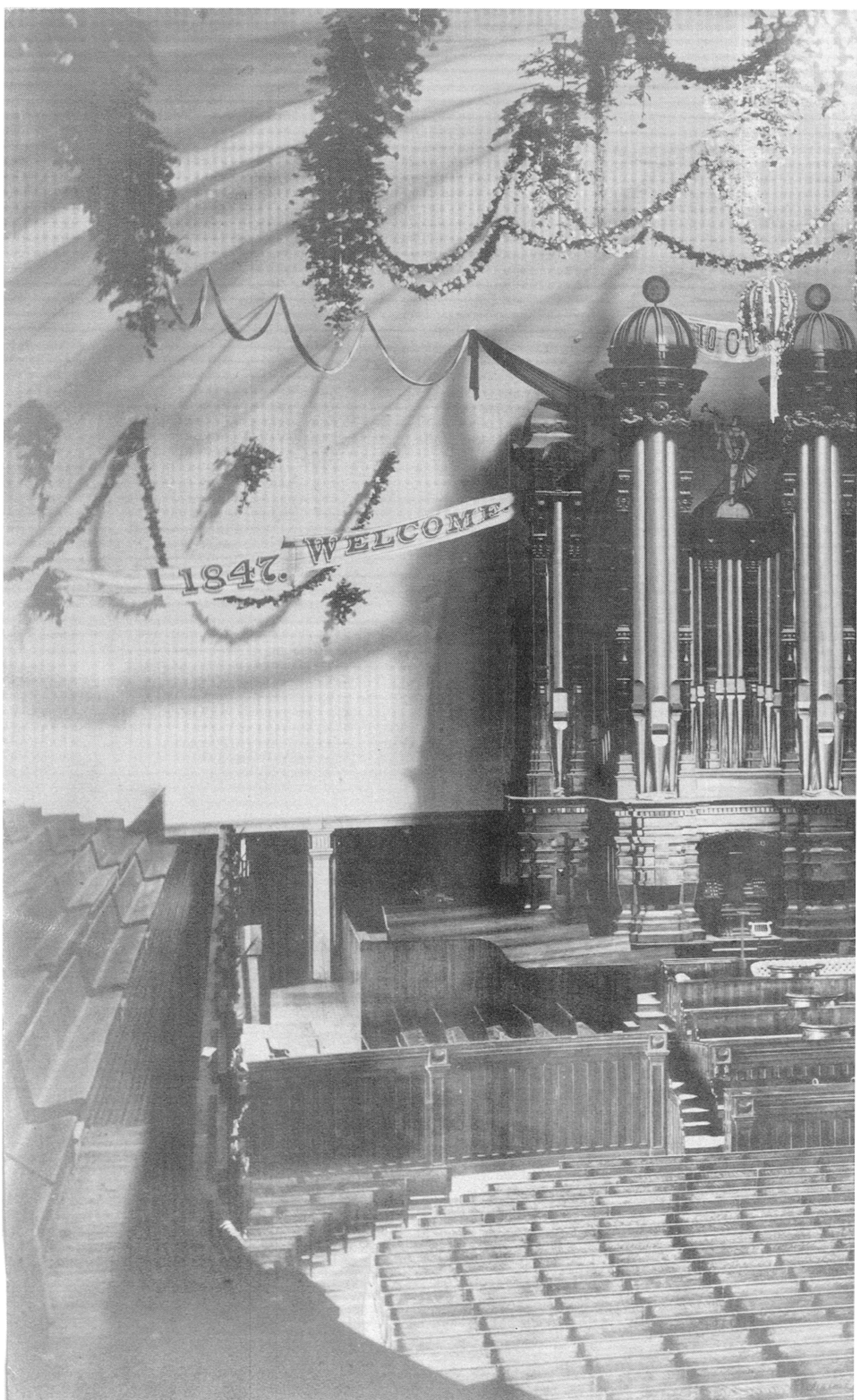
Ronald W. Walker, Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, and James S. Lambert

Most early photographs of the Salt Lake Tabernacle depict a huge, architecturally curious building with relatively few adornments on its exterior or interior. Its oddity sparked the delight of many and the chagrin of many more, causing some travelers and observers to remark that it resembled a large turtle that had lost its way in the desert.¹ However, any disagreement about the exterior of the tabernacle would be mediated by the view of the interior—Mormons and non-Mormons, residents and tourists alike agreed that in its first years the inside seemed gloomy and bare. One visitor described entering the Tabernacle as “entering a vault,” and several members of the Church remarked on the stark, colorless paint and the maze of lumber for the pews.²

However, in July 1875, the Tabernacle interior was transformed for a celebration of the twenty-eighth anniversary of the pioneers’ arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. Although a jubilee is often a fiftieth anniversary, the Saints called this celebration the Sabbath School Union Jubilee. The Tabernacle’s decorations for this event are shown in this rare and previously unpublished photograph (fig. 1). The photograph shows a distinctive and inventive decor that contrasts with the usual plainness of the Tabernacle interior. Specifically made for this jubilee, many of these adornments were in place for several years following.³ This photograph was probably taken only a few days before the July 24 jubilee.

The Discovery of the Photograph

A few years ago, the family of late BYU professor Stewart L. Grow approached Richard Neitzel Holzapfel about resurrecting Dr. Grow’s





Courtesy Stewart L. and Sarah Grow family

FIG. 1. Tabernacle interior, July 1875, $7\frac{7}{8}$ " x $9\frac{13}{16}$ ", photographed by Charles R. Savage. This photograph, originally printed in sepia tone, depicts the decorations for the Deseret Sabbath School Jubilee commemorating the twenty-eighth anniversary of the arrival of the pioneers in Salt Lake Valley. Although the Tabernacle was usually stark, this view of its interior shows a rare festive atmosphere. Note the evergreen trees hanging from the ceiling.

historical research on the Tabernacle in an effort to update Grow's important contribution on the history of this building. This update includes collecting a comprehensive nineteenth-century photographic record of the Tabernacle. While identifying important nineteenth-century images for this collection, Holzapfel found this beautifully preserved Charles R. Savage image of the interior (fig. 1). The image was purchased from an undisclosed owner with funds provided by the Grow family, which now owns the image.

Prominent Features of the Tabernacle Interior in the Photograph

Besides the decorations, the Tabernacle's two most prominent features in this photograph are the organ and the three-tiered stand, or pulpit. Although the organ was huge for its time, it did not yet have the two expansion wings on each side that can be seen today. The position of the organist is also different in the modern Tabernacle; in this photograph, the organist sits directly under the pipes with his or her back to the congregation in what appears to be an organist's alcove. This alcove was probably moved later so that the organist could see the conductor from where he or she was playing. This photograph was taken while someone was actually sitting at the organ keyboard; the organist is the only person visible in the image.

The other prominent feature of the Tabernacle's interior shown here is the three pulpits on three different levels of the stand (fig. 2). Some claimed that only Brigham Young and his counselors spoke at the top pulpit, that the Apostles and common Church members spoke at the second pulpit, and that the lowest pulpit was used for prayers and announcements.⁴ However, we are not certain whether this rule was followed strictly, and there was no official Church statement regarding it. The seating on each of the three tiers may have been organized in a similar manner, with the President, his two counselors, and speakers on the white couch on the top tier; the Apostles on the second tier; and the Seventies, bishops, and others on the two bottom levels. This configuration of pulpits and seating likely reflected a sense of authoritative hierarchy.

The 1875 Deseret Sabbath School Union Jubilee

To commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the pioneers' entrance into the Salt Lake Valley, the Deseret Sabbath School Union Jubilee on Pioneer Day was held at 11:00 A.M. on Saturday, July 24, 1875. The jubilee was heavily advertised in the newspapers of Salt Lake City, and people came from all over the area. The youth and children of the Church

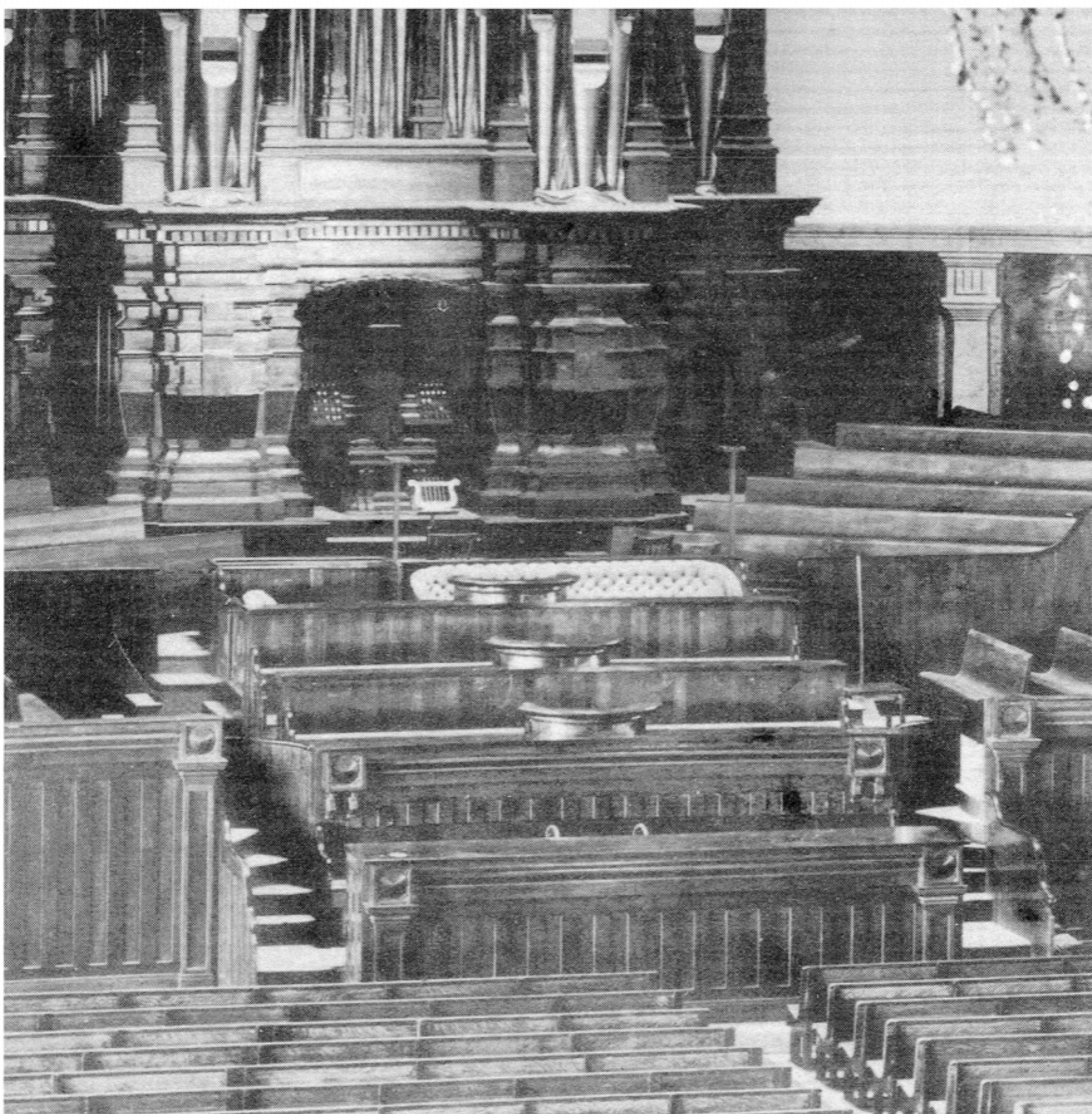


FIG. 2. Tabernacle organist and general authority pews, July 1875. Detail from a photograph by Charles R. Savage. An organist sits at the keyboard directly under the organ pipes. The three tiers of pews on the stand were probably for the First Presidency, for the Apostles, and for the Seventies and bishops, respectively.

made up most of the congregation during the celebration, but the Tabernacle was reportedly filled with people of all ages after the doors were opened at 10:30.⁵ The First Presidency of the Church were present, including Brigham Young, and the event was to “consist of singing, reciting, and speeches, to be participated in by several thousand children, and some grown people.”⁶ Records show that over 12,000 children were in the audience. After the opening chorus, entitled “Come Join Our Celebration,” Elder John Taylor gave the opening prayer. A martial band then played several hymns, including “America,” during which a six-foot-two-inch tall woman dressed as the “Goddess of Liberty” arose, armed with the sword of

Justice, “making a majestic and imposing appearance.”⁷ The rest of the meeting consisted of two poetry readings written for the July 24 celebration and other minor speeches.

However, the buzz after the celebration centered around not the performances and speeches but around the decor. Elder Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal that he was impressed by the 750,000 artificial roses strung upon three miles of cord in the Tabernacle.⁸ The *Deseret Evening News* remarked before the event that “the interior of the building has been decorated in a manner far surpassing in elaboration and beauty those arranged for a similar occasion last year,” and that a “large body of children [would render] a more attractive interest to extensive assemblages than any other element.”⁹

The Jubilee Decorations in the Tabernacle

The elaborate jubilee decorations were widely and publicly praised following the event. The subsequent articles about the event in the *Deseret Evening News* and the *Salt Lake Herald* devote the majority of their coverage to descriptions of the decorations. The *Herald* gloated, “The arrangement and execution of the decorations are simply perfect, and the magic-like grandeur of the mammoth interior peculiarly striking,”¹⁰ while the *Deseret News* gave a detailed description of the peculiar arrangements, exclaiming that they were “far ahead of anything ever seen in this part of the country.”¹¹ Apparently the decorations were admired so much that most of them remained for several years following, and certain decorations later served functions other than aesthetics. A closer look at the many decorations from top to bottom yields interesting anecdotes.

The Ceiling Adornments. The high-domed blank ceiling was adorned with wreaths, garlands, cut-paper flowers, and real evergreens to appear like an “inverted garden.”¹² Streamers and ribbons were festooned across the walls from one end to the other, and the “mammoth centerpiece artistically formed of deep evergreen and bright flowers”¹³ hung like a kind of chandelier from the apex of the ceiling (fig. 3). Ribbons were draped from the ceiling to form bows at the tops of the organ pipes, and a banner announced, “1847. Welcome to our Jubilee. 1875.” The last part of the banner is obstructed by the large garland centerpiece in this photograph. The many ceiling decorations were popular with the locals; perhaps this popularity explains why the decorations were apparently left in place for more than a decade. The pine trees and garlands on the ceiling were described almost ten years after the jubilee as “old and withered,” but they may have been left to muffle the echoing acoustics of the building.¹⁴

The Statue. Almost nothing is known about the angel statue that stood between the two major organ pipe towers during the jubilee (fig. 4). So far, no other Tabernacle interior photograph taken before or after the jubilee has been found that contains the statue. The *Deseret Evening News* described it as a “gilded and shaded figure of an angel sounding the gospel trumpet, to ‘every kindred, tongue and people.’”¹⁵ The paper also reports that during the jubilee, several children from each of the countries where the gospel had been preached sat on the stand directly underneath the angel statue, signifying the spreading of the gospel. The angel statue has a trumpet in his right hand and a Book of Mormon in his left, much like the Moroni statue that later adorned the top of the Salt Lake Temple. No certain connection has been made, but perhaps this jubilee angel served as a model for the later Moroni statue.¹⁶

The Fountain. One of the most spectacular decorations for the jubilee was the fountain placed in the center of the main floor (fig. 5). This white fountain rose high above each bench; its base was probably fifteen to twenty feet long on each side. It was said to have represented the “living water” of the gospel. The fountain “attracted great attention” for its unusual look and placement.¹⁷ Water sprayed upwards and landed in the large basin, which contained live water lilies. Surrounding the fountain on each corner lay four sculpted lions, evoking President Brigham Young’s reputation as the “Lion of the Lord.”

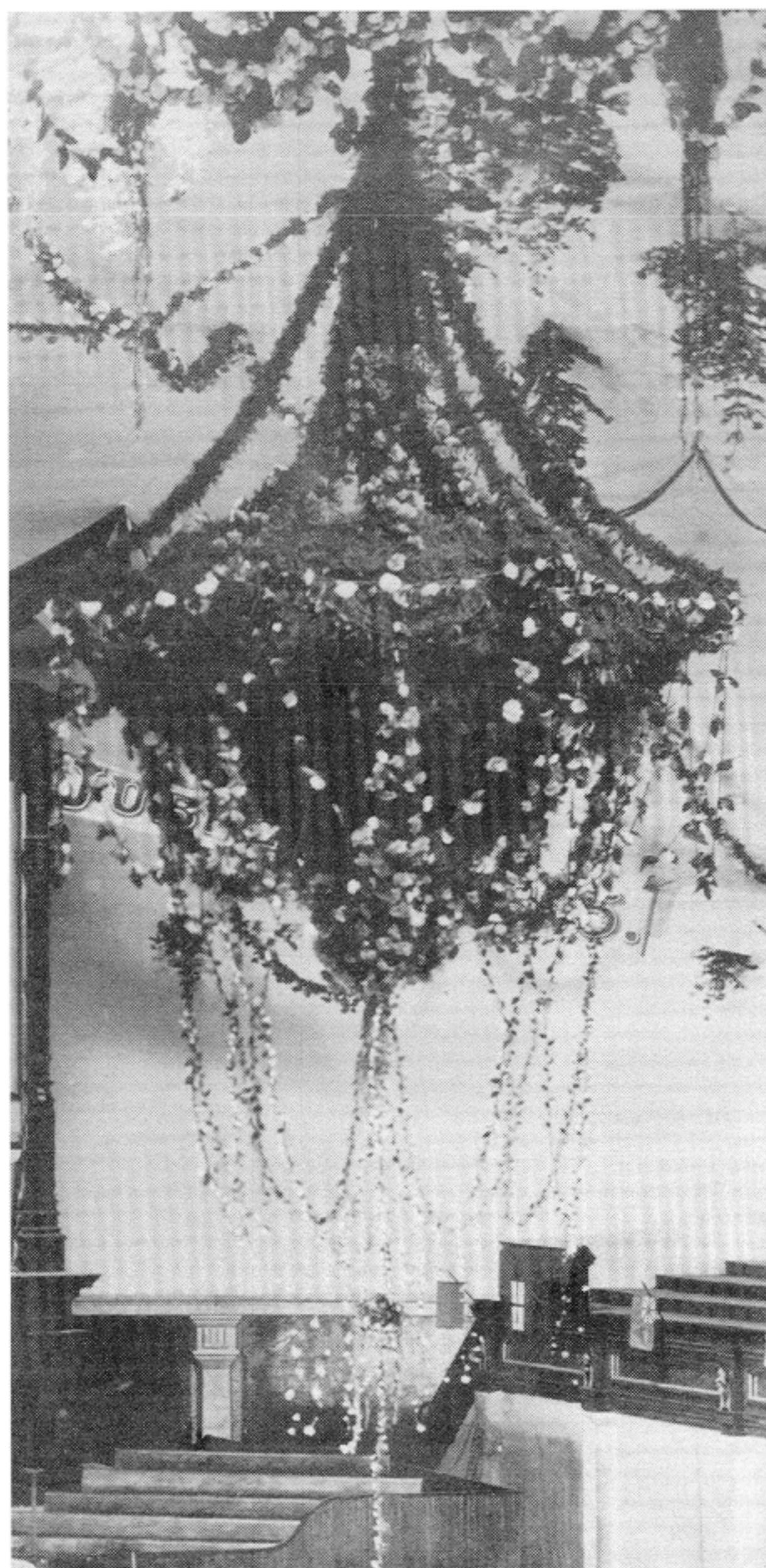


FIG. 3. A “mammoth centerpiece” formed of evergreens and flowers hung like a chandelier from the ceiling of the Tabernacle for the Sabbath School Jubilee. Detail from a photograph by Charles R. Savage, July 1875.

The *Herald* claimed the lions were “chiseled from Utah stone,”¹⁸ but the lions were actually plaster of paris and probably prone to damage by the spraying water.¹⁹

During the jubilee, four children dressed to represent the four quarters of the globe (Europe, Asia, Africa, and America) straddled the lions. The *Deseret Evening News* called two of the children “genuine specimens” of

FIG. 4. Angel Moroni. Detail from a photograph by Charles R. Savage, July 1875. Apparently, this statue of Moroni was created and placed atop the central organ pipes in the Tabernacle specifically for the Sabbath School Jubilee. So far, no other Tabernacle interior photograph taken before or after the jubilee has been found that contains the statue. Like the golden figure of Moroni so familiar now, this statue holds a trumpet in his right hand and a Book of Mormon in his left hand.



FIG. 5. Fountain, Tabernacle interior, July 1875. Detail from a photograph by Charles R. Savage. Part of the decorations for the 1875 Sabbath School Jubilee, this large fountain amid the pews in the Tabernacle featured live water lilies and four lion statues made of plaster of paris. During the Jubilee, four children dressed to represent Europe, Asia, Africa, and America straddled the lions. This fountain remained on the floor of the Tabernacle for several years.

their ethnicity, black and Native American.²⁰ The unusual fountain remained on the floor of the Tabernacle for several years after the jubilee. Although the reason is not evident, perhaps the mist's cool air or the charm of the fountain influenced its longevity there.

Importance of the Photograph

Because of this unusual photograph, we can now determine several features of the 1875 Pioneer Day Sabbath School Union Jubilee. Even more importantly, we can identify evidence of the Saints' creativity and interest in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. The Tabernacle has always been remarkable; the fountain of living water, the angel with the gospel trumpet, and the inverted garden only add to its colorful history. Through the preservation of old and modern photos, significant historical and sociological phases can be recorded and illustrated for the future. This photograph of the Tabernacle interior in July 1875 gives us a unique glimpse of the culture of the early Church.

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3. Walker, "Nineteenth-Century Metaphor."

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5. Journal History of the Church, July 24, 1875, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

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8. "Pioneer Day," 3; *Journal History of the Church*, July 24, 1875.
9. "Pioneer Day," 3.
10. "The Jubilee," *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, July 24, 1875, 3.
11. "The Jubilee," *Deseret Evening News*, 3.
12. "The Jubilee," *Deseret Evening News*, 3. Although probably not intentional, the placement of garlands and inverted pine trees could allude to the Saints' expression of holiness in the tabernacle. David Chilton mentions that plants and trees were hung in the ancient Temple of Solomon to evoke the sense of a holy place or mountain of the Lord. David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Tyler, Tex.: Dominion Press, 1987), 439–40.
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16. See Florence S. Sears and Jack Sears, "How We Got the Angel Moroni Statue," *Instructor* 88 (October 1953): 292–94; and L. E. Young, "The Angel Moroni and Cyrus Dallin," *Improvement Era* 56 (April 1953): 234–35, 268.
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Why Bad Things Happen at All

A Search for Clarity among the Problems of Evil

John Sutton Welch

In college I lost my faith—not completely and not for long. But that moment impacted my beliefs deeply. I was standing in the back of a theater watching a scene unfold, waiting for my cue to enter. On the stage, my character's parents, farmers during a war depicted in Bertold Brecht's *Mother Courage*, realize that the army impressing my character into service is about to descend on their farm and then on the nearby village.¹ Alone and defenseless, they beg God to save them. As I watched this pathetic pair plead for rescue, a thought occurred to me that drove itself like a wedge into my faith: This is a prayer that has been offered up prior to the slaughter of God's children for thousands of years and often has gone unanswered by God for just as long. God must be unwilling or unable to help them. In either case, who needs such a god?

Since that moment, I have struggled to make sense of what I think is an inescapable problem for the believer: Why does evil, suffering, or injustice exist in a world created and watched over by a benevolent, omniscient, omnipotent god? He says, "I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance" (D&C 1:31), and yet he has created a world where his children suffer under relentless exposure to these very forces of evil.

The persistence of this stubborn quandary is highlighted by the fact that the attempt to resolve the logical incongruity between an omnipotent, benevolent God and a world full of evil has a name: *theodicy*. This conundrum is sufficiently unsettling that in a survey of beliefs among scientists, the problem of evil was one of the most important reasons given for not believing in God.² I, too, find it difficult to come to terms with God's interest in our welfare, as I, a Latter-day Saint doctor, reflect on the myriad

forms of birth defects, on the tragic and unpredictable physical and mental illnesses we live with and die from, and then on the repeated acts of cruelty from the Crusades to the genocides of the twentieth century. I remain haunted by my memory of the solemn corridors of Buchenwald (one of the early camps for housing Jews, Communists, and other enemies of the Nazi party), where I stood and grasped for divine purpose amidst the piles of children's shoes and old men's glasses.

But this problem is nothing new. Before the time of Christ, the problem of evil was distilled into three well-known incompatible propositions by the Greek philosopher Epicurus, and more recently this conundrum has been rephrased and reexamined by Scottish philosopher David Hume, Elder B. H. Roberts, and many others: "1) Is God willing to prevent evil but not able? Then he is impotent. 2) Is God able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent! 3) Is he both able and willing? Then why is evil?"³ Given that evil exists, God must be either not omnipotent or not benevolent. But this conclusion does not describe the God who kept his promises to the children of Israel and delivered them from Egypt, who delivered the people of Alma from bondage, and who sent his Son to save humanity from sin and death.

Being neither a philosopher nor a theologian, I do not intend to summarize or critique the myriad attempts that have been made over the centuries to cut the knot of theodicy. Readers may turn elsewhere for those machinations.⁴ Rather, I begin with two recent observations by Latter-day Saint philosopher David Paulsen. First, the problem of evil is really three problems: a logical problem (how might I reconcile evil in a world watched over by a benevolent, omnipotent being?); a theological problem (does my understanding of the gospel provide a sufficient reconciliation of justice and mercy in the context of the universality of sin and suffering?); and an existential problem (how can I respond to evil experiences?). Second, an alternative solution exists to the logical problem of evil described by Epicurus. God logically can be omnipotent, omniscient, *and* benevolent, provided he prevents all the evil he can without, in the process, obstructing some greater good or causing some greater evil, and thus his nature is consistent with the natures of eternal existences.⁵

While Paulsen's helpful analysis provides a logical reconciliation, his insights invite further reflection about the meaning of God's omnipotence and the essential purpose provided by evil that would justify God's benevolence despite his unwillingness to eliminate evil. Thus, two questions become crucial: What does omnipotence mean? And what greater good might be lost if evil, suffering, and injustice were removed from our world?

Turning these problems over again, this essay explores a few ideas I have encountered while engaged in scientific research and medical practice. Rejecting the notion of a static God who is alien to time and space, I first turn to the idea that our creation by God, described in Genesis and in the Book of Moses, is, in an important sense, still ongoing. By seeing that the Earth's creative cycle has not ended and that we are still in its sixth creative day, we can situate God's omnipotence in this temporal world. God may be able to do all things, but he need not do them all at the same time. This world's creative cycle has its appropriate times and seasons when certain tasks will be performed. A time will come when chaos and evil are made subject to God's will, but that time has not yet arrived. During the present creative time, these elements may, and in some cases must, operate in certain ways independent of God's personal will.

An answer to the second question of what greater good might be lost if evil were removed from our world—why God would place us in a world that permits so many forms of evil and why we ourselves would have willingly entered such a world—can be found by considering the kinds of virtues that are developed only in the presence of evil and through the voluntary choices that come in evil's aftermath. Slowly but surely I have seen, in case after case, how evil, suffering, and injustice serve as essential creative conditions that allow us to develop nearly every Christian virtue, creating opportunities for goodness and the grace of the Atonement to cure us. The development of such interpersonal virtues as forgiveness, mercy, generosity, compassion, and charity logically requires the prior existence of some form of evil, suffering, or injustice. But divine meaning and purpose emerge from the ashes of sin, suffering, or misfortune only when human confederates engage the healing power of the Atonement in becoming more sympathetic, forgiving, and compassionate.⁶

Evil is experienced personally. Bad moments jolt each of us to reformulate our beliefs in God and our relations to those around us. Because this confrontation is deeply personal, different explanations for the problem of evil will work for different people. Some resolutions, even if they are logically or theologically unstable when pressed to their natural ends, still provide genuine comfort to people facing evil's grim stare. Reverend Frederick W. Schmitt has rightly described the encounter with theodicy as a lifelong process of trying out different explanations and justifications, keeping some and later rejecting others.⁷ The solvents I pour out on the following pages have not dissolved my existential anguish over human suffering, but they help me to see a bit beyond certain commonly stated logical and theological absolutes. Embracing temporal and relational factors has, ironically, projected me more toward eternal factors, with

greater compassion and purpose, to “mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:9), in other words, to become, in modest ways, more like God.

Free Will, Chaos, and Ongoing Creation

A key source of tension in the paradox of theodicy is a belief that God is somehow responsible for everything that happens on earth. He either causes each event to happen directly or watches these events and does nothing to stop them. But can such global responsibility be laid at God’s feet? Is it possible that free will and random elements of chaos extend beyond the present exercise of God’s power, even acting at times in opposition to God’s will?

Experience as well as Church doctrine confirms for me that God allows free will, even if its consequences will result in evil or suffering. He does not stop me from sinning against my brother. He does not stop children from saying cruel words to each other on the playground, nor does he stop adults from killing each other or my patients from harming themselves. Experience also tells me that chaos, in the form of natural disaster, unintentional and unforeseeable consequences of my actions, and illness and ultimately death, strike the elderly and young alike with seeming indifference to circumstance.

The results of free choices and the random elements of chaos surround me. My city, San Diego, has chosen to conduct nearly all transportation by individual automobiles on high-speed freeways. Each morning on the way to work, I listen to the radio announce where the traffic accidents are. I do not listen to see *if* any have occurred, but rather I listen to see *where* the three to five accidents have taken place. Residents of San Diego have accepted that about five people per day will be involved in these automobile accidents, making a concession so that the city can get to work by personal automobile. By living in this city and driving to work on these freeways, I am party to this risk and must accept that people will be involved in accidents and that I may be one of them. Can I expect God to carefully select the five people most deserving of or ready for an automobile accident in the city of San Diego every day and to make sure they are the ones who crash? Or should I expect these events to be controlled by such forces of free will as poor driving and such random conditions as unforeseeable obstacles and road hazards?

These lessons about free will and randomness were starkly presented to me during my first clinical rotations as a medical student. During surgery, I worked in the burn unit. There I saw adults and children suffering

from tragic misfortune or foolish error. Even with the liberal use of narcotics during dressing changes, many of these patients released the most horrible shrieks of pain I hope ever to hear. One of the first children I helped care for was a boy who had been badly burned at a family barbecue. The briquettes had been soaked with gasoline, and he was given the honor of lighting the fire. The briquettes exploded, badly burning much of his face and arms. While I might understand the tragic chain of events leading up to his injury as simple cause and effect, it was in fact a combination of poor judgment and unfortunate conditions that resulted in the injury of a child who was largely a bystander. This injury could have occurred to his cousin, his uncle, or any other member of the family. But he was given the match, and the conditions were right for calamity. Was this horrible accident meant for him, or did it occur as the result of free will and random circumstance?

One of the most tragic memories I have of my pediatrics rotation is of a six-month-old girl who was brought to the hospital because of brief spasms marked by shrill shrieking and arching of her back. After a number of tests, my team had the burden of telling her parents that their otherwise healthy child had a genetic defect called *tuberous sclerosis*, that our best medication had numerous side effects, and that despite treatment she might never learn to walk or talk. This was the first time I had to deliver such terrible news to a loving family, and it was difficult for me to find purpose in this tragic random defect of molecular biology. Although I recognize as a scientist that randomness is necessary to generate and sustain genetic diversity in any population, this time it had gone terribly wrong for this dear infant.

Scripture describes a *future* subduing of God's enemies. Psalm 110 begins, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool." Doctrine and Covenants 76:61 affirms that man should "glory in God, who *shall* subdue all enemies under his feet." That work will not be completed until "the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet" (D&C 76:106). Is it possible that among those enemies are voluntary evil as well as involuntary random events and chaos, which currently operate independent of God's will?

In *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*, Rabbi Harold Kushner provides an insightful reading of the creation story in Genesis. He argues that the creation has not yet ended, that we are still somewhere in "day six," and that "pockets of chaos remain."⁸ For me, as a Latter-day Saint, this argument is very interesting because this reading is even more *a propos* of the creation account in the Book of Moses than it is of the account in

Genesis. The Book of Moses account begins with the earth being “without form and void” (Moses 2:2). Chapter 2 recounts how God created all things during days one through six and then rested. However, all stages of the creation described in chapter 2 were “spiritual,” as chapter 3 continues:

For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them; . . . spiritually were they created and made according to my word. (Moses 3:5–8)

The description next cycles through the physical creation of the earth, with the actual watering of the earth (Moses 3:6) and the physical creation of Adam and Eve (Moses 3:7–25). The Book of Moses then continues on into the history of humanity, stopping with the story of Noah in Moses 8.

It is significant, however, that the Book of Moses never describes or mentions “day seven” a second time. The book ends, not with the completion of humanity and God resting from his labors, but with the commandment to have faith, repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost: an invitation to become perfected and completed in the future. This need for further completion characterizes the moment I find myself living in. Judgment has not yet come, evil and disorder still exist to some degree in this world, day six of the creation is ongoing, and there are still many wonderful possibilities of this creation left to be completed.⁹

Day seven, the day when God will rest from his labors (Moses 3:2), is known in the Book of Moses primarily because of its description as part of the spiritual creation of this earth. The implication is that the seventh day has not yet come to pass in the physical creation. Only the spiritual portion of the seventh day of creation was finished when God had “ended [his] work” (Moses 3:2) and rested for a season. Thus the scriptures describe the beginning of an ongoing creative period in which God’s children remain surrounded by the continuing possibilities of growth and corruption on the pathway to redemption and completion. Day seven in the physical creation is yet to come in the millennial or celestial age.

The current exposure of mortals to the randomness of natural elements during an ongoing creative process may also be seen in some of the sayings of Jesus. One man builds his house on a rock; the other builds on the sand. But the same catastrophic calamities struck each: “the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew” (Matt. 7:25). The trials we face may not be tempered to the level of our preparation. Creative forces of both disorder and divine purpose can strike anywhere, to our growth or detriment.

A similar suggestion of perfection pending is found in the parable of the wheat and the tares. The man's enemy sows tares into his field the night after it had been planted. The next day, the man's servants ask if they should "go and gather [the tares] up" (Matt. 13:28), but the man lets the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest, when the tares will be gathered together first and burned (Matt. 13:30). As a missionary, I spent nearly a year cycling between outlying German villages surrounded by fields of wheat. In the spring, the fields were thick and green. As the summer waxed, the wheat heads grew fat and began to bend under the weight of the ripe grain. The tares, however, did not grow heavy with seed but remained tall. By late summer before harvest, the wheat kernels had all drooped down, leaving the tares standing several inches taller than the wheat. Even from the far side of the field, we could easily distinguish the wheat from the tares as we rode by. As the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one, symbolized by the wheat and tares, we all live together in the same field. We are all blessed together with the same sunshine and the same rain (Matt. 5:45). We suffer together the same wind and the same hail. Justice cannot be meted out—yet. We live in too close a proximity and are not yet ripe; we cannot yet be truly differentiated. I cannot expect that hail will fall only on the tares or that sun will shine only on the wheat so long as time is yet allotted for the growth of all the grain in the field. And even when evil choices appear unmistakably heinous, God still allows people to complete their wicked acts so that "the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just" (Alma 14:11).

Understanding Omnipotence in Time

Because God truly respects the free agency of his children, he willingly limits himself in the ways he will control their lives at this time. If chaos and evil exist as unfinished parts of my creation, then God does not take complete control over these parts of my life. I am accustomed to think about God's power in terms of "omnipotence," but how should one understand God's omnipotence in light of the paradoxical existence of random elements and free agency as well as evil in this world?

Scriptural descriptors of God's power proclaim him "almighty" (Gen. 28:3; 49:25; D&C 84:96, 118), "omnipotent" (Rev. 19:6; Mosiah 3:5), and as having "all power" (Mosiah 4:9; Alma 26:35; Ether 3:4). They speak of God as not facing anything that is impossible (Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37; 18:27; 1 Ne. 7:12). Yet Latter-day Saint scriptures contain a unique understanding that God voluntarily operates within certain limitations. There are things God must choose not do, lest he "cease to be God," such as

“destroy the work of justice” (Alma 42:13). “God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7), and the prophets describe God’s creation as a process of separating beings into things that “act” and those that “are acted upon” (2 Ne. 2:13), so that we are free agents capable of acting independently of God’s will. Although God can command enormous entities—the earth, the sun, mountains, valleys, rivers, and seas—he cannot compel obedience or love from his children, and thus he cannot save the unwilling or unrepentant man (Alma 11:34–37). For this reason, scripture proclaims that God’s power must be maintained through appropriate actions, as “no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge” (D&C 121:41–42).

This contradiction resides, at a deeper level, in God’s incapacity to do *all* things, as illustrated by the child’s question “Can God make a stone so big that he cannot pick it up?” God cannot do everything, for doing some things requires not doing others. God cannot both grant us our free agency and control our lives. God cannot, in our current world, both feed the lion and protect the lamb. Most importantly, without the intercession of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, God cannot satisfy both justice and mercy. On a number of instances, God is presented with two mutually exclusive tasks and chooses to complete only one of them. To Nephi, God says, “It is better that one man should perish, than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief” (1 Ne. 4:13). In powerful submission to this very mentality, God himself later gives his only begotten Son to enable the redemptive Atonement for the remainder of his children. That is why, although God’s power has been described with terms such as “almighty,” “omnipotent,” and “capable of all things,” I do not believe that God is unlimited in the things he will do or in the ways he will accomplish them. God’s priesthood, like ours, requires that it be exercised in the appropriate time and manner.

In his book *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis explains the paradox of an ostensibly omnipotent person being unable to do the impossible or to complete mutually exclusive tasks. He reasons that God’s

omnipotence means power to do all that is intrinsically possible, not to do the intrinsically impossible. You may attribute miracles to Him, but not nonsense. There is no limit to His power. If you choose to say “God can give a creature free will and at the same time withhold free will from it,” you have not succeeded in saying *anything* about God: meaningless combinations of words do not suddenly acquire meaning simply because we prefix to them the two other words “God can.” It remains true that all

things are possible with God: the intrinsic impossibilities are not things but nonentities. It is no more possible for God than for the weakest of His creatures to carry out both of two mutually exclusive alternatives; not because His power meets an obstacle, but because nonsense remains nonsense even when we talk it about God.¹⁰

Neither C. S. Lewis nor I will say that tasks that appear impossible to us are impossible to God. Miracles occur. The dead have been raised, the sick healed, the helpless protected, and the captive astonishingly released. But we risk frustrating our faith by expecting God to perform impossible tasks. Although I consider God to be omnipotent, I cannot confuse his omnipotence with a power to do *all* things, both those possible and those impossible, both those compatible and those mutually exclusive.

Here again time plays a role. While it is impossible for God to do two mutually exclusive things at the same time, he can do them at two different times. Here Latter-day Saint theology stands at a distinct advantage over traditional Christian views that remove God from space and time. Is it possible that God's power or willingness to circumscribe or punish evil in our world should be seen as operating over time? If this world is still evolving toward completion and the full measure of its creation, it seems only reasonable that some, if not most, of its elements will still have rough edges and imperfections, particularly when my own disobedience creates some of those rough edges. The moment when God will file off the imperfections of mortality and polish out the final burrs of independence lies in a creative future. Like the completion of a large and complex stained-glass window that draws an image out of light and dark, justice and mercy cannot coexist in this world before each piece of creation is cut, polished, and fitted into the entire work. Until that moment, the window lacks integrity, unity, and strength, and does not yet "answer the end of its creation" (D&C 49:16).

As I stare into a microscope revealing a medical catastrophe or into the blistered face of a burn victim, the tension I feel between God's omnipotence and human suffering at the hand of evil lessens when I see these tragedies as part of a temporal work in progress. God can accomplish marvelous things, but creative tasks exist in time only as they come into being. They must be performed with appropriate seasonality. Free will and chaos are part of this creative season. Order and justice will coexist with free will only when each of us chooses to accept God's principles that allow for justice and order. Until that time, evil and suffering will remain as essential parts of our existence. However, we are promised, someday this creative cycle will be completed, and the elements of evil, chaos, and injustice will be defeated for our ultimate good.

Good from Evil

After surviving internment at both Auschwitz and Dachau, psychiatrist Viktor Frankl concluded, “Man’s main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life.”¹¹ I have been unable to explain away evil, suffering, and injustice, or their tragic consequences. They exist. But by giving meaning to their existence, I begin to understand God’s purposes in allowing these elements to enter our lives during this creation, and I can understand my own willingness to have entered this mortality at this time. By knowing the good from the evil, one can also draw good from evil.

One purpose of such knowledge is protective. For example, physical pain serves an important function. We all need pain to maintain a healthy body and to protect ourselves from more severe harm. The necessity of pain is underscored by the fact that we consider the inability to feel pain to be pathological. When I was a first-year medical student, I met a man with stocking-glove syndrome. As a result of long-standing diabetes, he had lost feeling in his feet and was beginning to lose feeling in his fingers. Since he could not feel his shoes fitting poorly, it was easy for him to wear shoes that rubbed. On such days, his feet would often suffer bleeding blisters. He had found by unfortunate experience that his feet required vigilant daily attention just to keep the toenails cut right and to prevent his shoes from causing blisters. After seeing the results of life without pain in only one part of the body, I realized that pain plays an essential and purposeful role in my entire life.

Do other forms of suffering, evil, and injustice serve similar essential purposes in my life? At one level, they help me recognize their opposites. Lehi states, “There is an opposition in all things. If not, . . . all things must needs be a compound in one” (2 Ne. 2:11). Life truly depends on duality. I know that something is alive only if I know about death; I understand corruption because I have seen incorruption.

But can I know happiness only if there is misery? Is the quality of my happiness proportional to the misery that I experience? If I were raised well and never exposed to misery, would I be unable to be happy? Or will I be truly happy only after my brother suffers a violent death? Perhaps the value of these experiences lies in comparison. Until I have been sick, I have little appreciation for being well. But how much pain is needed to accomplish this result? Is it sufficient to peek over the cliff of illness to value standing on secure ground, or do I need to be dangled precariously over the edge to grasp its potent meaning? The extremes of sorrow, intractable pain, tragic loss of a child, and the odious consequences of heinous deeds seem a high price to pay for an appreciation of well-being.

In *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, B. H. Roberts—a man who suffered greatly during his life, having been persecuted as a missionary and later losing his leg and eyesight to diabetes—writes a chapter on the problem of evil. He claims that evil is a necessary part of the universe, and without it God would cease to exist. For Roberts, God embodies the good, selected out of possible evils. If there is no evil as a background, then what would it mean for God to be good? In this treatise, Roberts makes a claim similar to Lehi's: a happy world can exist only if it coexists with sorrow and pain. Roberts quotes John Fiske, who writes, "It is an undeniable fact that we cannot know anything whatever except as contrasted with something else. The contrast may be bold and sharp, or it may dwindle into a slight discrimination, but it must be there."¹² Evil and suffering must exist as a background on which God can paint goodness and happiness. The sharp contrast between the two dimensions gives definition to both, allowing us to discriminate the dualistic pairs.

Roberts ultimately takes the necessity of evil so far as to suggest something very interesting: "By the side of the virtue of courage lurks the evil of danger, without which courage would be unknown. In the same way, good must have its background of evil, else it would never be known."¹³ There are many virtues that require the presence of a vice to act as a sharp and distinctive background to make clear by contrast the characteristics of virtue.

But danger does not serve simply as a background in contrast to courage. Danger is a creative force that impels the existence of courage. Until the tiger of danger leaps into my face and I am forced to react, either to engage or to withdraw, I am neither a courageous nor a cowardly person. It may seem a good idea to protect my child from all danger, but if she never faces a dangerous situation that truly threatens her, she will never experience courage or cowardice and can never develop into either a courageous or a cowardly woman.

Many virtues intimately linked to the plan of salvation are such virtues; they depend on the prior existence or even coexistence of a vice. I can forgive someone only if I have first been sinned against. Even though forgiveness is a beautiful virtue, its existence requires the coexistence and not merely the contrasting background of vice. Likewise, unless I am allowed to sin against my brother, I will never have the opportunity to experience forgiveness from him.

Most of the attributes praised by Jesus in the Beatitudes and required for membership in the Church by Alma at the waters of Mormon are virtues whose very existence depend on the preexistence of vice. We can bear each other's burdens only if such burdens exist. We can be comforted

only when we sorrow. We can be generous only if there is someone in need. Mercy can be granted only to someone who is undeserving. Peacemakers can exist only in a world of conflict. Reconciliation can occur only where there is contention. Even though these virtues are the pillars of Christianity, they depend on the coexistence of a vice. Remove the evil, the suffering, or the injustice from this world and these virtues have no place.

Just as God's word distinguishes light and dark out of the formless void, so these evils reveal new axes of moral development and force my maturation down one of two pathways. Want allows me to be either generous or miserly. Conflict forces me to become forgiving or unforgiving. Suffering offers fleeting opportunities for compassion or indifference. Without these axes, I would be, as Lehi writes, a "thing of naught" (2 Ne. 2:12), "a compound in one" (2 Ne. 2:11), and God himself, let alone my progress toward godliness, would not be. Even the Atonement requires both the Fall and personal transgression for healing grace to be brought into effect. It is only when I find myself outside the circle of God's love that I can seek him out and find his compassionate forgiveness.

It is evident that certain things can be learned only in this temporal realm. Patience is a divine virtue. But patience has meaning only when time is scarce and precious. Courage is another godly trait. But because threats to the existence of an immortal being must be extremely rare, courage would be hard to learn in an immortal sphere. In this mortal existence, however, losses, both perceived and real, constantly threaten to invade my life.

Moreover, these virtues are not to be learned for our personal benefit alone. The purpose of this creation, from God's perspective, is not so much to create individuals as to redeem his entire family of children. One of the fundamental principles at the core of the restored gospel is that the children of God have never lived alone. The purpose of this creation is to bring about the immortality and eternal life of all humanity. In Genesis, the word *adam* can refer to a single man, but it also denotes all mankind.¹⁴ In our postenlightenment culture, where the individual is the fundamental unit of society, it is easy to focus on the Creation as the creation of a single person, Adam, who later generates society as his family grows.¹⁵

It changes my understanding if I recognize that God's Creation is not focused on my creation but rather on the creation and redemption of an entire community. This view transforms the problem of "why is this happening to me?" to "why is this happening to us?" It is conceivable that God could have created a world in which I would suffer in total isolation. But he created one where I suffer together with an extended family. Not surprisingly, the Christian virtues required for admission to the kingdom of God are those that allow free-will-possessing individuals like me to enter into a

godlike collective: compassion, forgiveness, mercy, generosity, and love. I can obtain none of these virtues if I remain isolated; they must be experienced in the context of other people. This principle is especially true in confronting suffering, evil, and injustice. Mourning with those who mourn and suffering with those who suffer make it possible for me to become a more sympathetic, forgiving, and connected person.

Conclusions

The incongruity of the existence of suffering, evil, and injustice and a world created by a benevolent, omnipotent, omniscient god is one of the most difficult and persistent problems for the believer to reconcile. In an effort to resolve these paradoxes, I have rethought two fundamental theological axioms to arrive at somewhat novel resolutions.

First, I have suggested that the divine creative process is ongoing. It is open in time. The record of Creation in the Book of Moses describes the creative cycle twice. However, day seven, the day that follows the completion of Creation and God's rest, is described only once. This text suggests that, in real time, day seven has not yet arrived; that I live in day six; and that the creation of humanity is unfinished. This understanding of my creation leads to an alleviation of tension surrounding the existence of chaos and injustice; I cannot expect God to enforce order and justice prematurely when he has not yet finished my creation through the final redemption. And because it is ongoing in time, this process has a diachronic nature. In any creative cycle or process, there will be times and seasons when certain tasks must be performed and others may not. This helps resolve the paradox of God's omnipotence, which does not include the power to do all things at all times.

Second, God's Creation was not intended to fashion and redeem me alone but rather as a part of an eternal community. His work is eternal and involves the creation of open-ended and eternal relationships. Understanding this goal shifts my focus away from trying to give meaning to individual trials experienced by individual people and moves my attention toward the necessity of such experiences in the creation and development of collective virtues and the love of the others.

These ideas help me respond to trials by bearing them courageously. By "courageously" I do not refer to the stoic tradition of suffering silently and with a stiff upper lip. Rather, these trials may become potent moments for me to feel the healing power of God and to bond with my fellow human beings. In moments of great fear or suffering, the Lord and my fellow sojourners have fleeting opportunities to comfort and heal me if I will look

to them for that comfort. As the world watched the terrible news on September 11, 2001, redeeming elements were visible even in the midst of that extreme pain—the solidarity, kindness, and openheartedness of those who turned to help. Instead of being downtrodden by this tragic attack, many people reached out to each other, comforted each other, helped each other, bore each other's burdens, and clung to each other compassionately.

One of the great moments in the life of Alma and his people came after they had suffered at the hands of Amulon and other Lamanite oppressors, when the Lord's voice came to them in their afflictions:

Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage. And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage . . . that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions. (Mosiah 24:13–14)

I am changed by these words and events. I yearn to ease such burdens. Like Alma and his people, I am drawn to God for help, comfort, and support in such moments of pain and agony. Not only do our hardships allow us to empathize with each other and draw closer to one another, but they also allow us to do the same toward him, seeing him not as a cruel schoolmaster but a loving parent: proud of each of us, willing to support us, sharing our successes and disappointments, and even, like Jesus with Lazarus's sisters, weeping with us.

As I am putting the final touches on these pages, I have just received a telephone call from a friend. An hour before, a sixteen-year-old boy in his ward was killed in a single-car accident in the desert. He was driving and missed a sharp turn. Two were thrown from the vehicle as it rolled off the highway. One was killed; the other survived. The news is stunning. I do not know which arms of comfort or words of explanation will help us stare this real-life theodicy in the face: perhaps we will be strengthened by the iron sinews of Paulsen's logic, or by the postponed comfort of someday understanding, or by the stringent rigors of seeing ourselves in the throes of a divinely customized test, or a blend of all three. But my faith survives this misfortune best by seeing it in the context of creative conditions of willing creators and progressing creatures, by seeing misfortune as an outcome of choices, risks, and random events that necessarily arise in an imperfect, fallen, and as yet still unperfected world. My testimony rallies around this poignant opportunity to grow closer to those family members who are desperately in need of friends and loved ones to walk by their side through the coming hours, cherishing with them the memory of their son. I regain my

faithful bearings, knowing that I have willingly subjected myself, and those I love, to this world of sorrows, in order to have the opportunity to see cowardly, unforgiving, selfish, merciless, base people become divinely transformed in due time into souls with all the admirable qualities that God himself possesses.

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1. Bertold Brecht, *Mother Courage*, scene 11.
2. Edward J. Larson and Larry Witham, “Scientists and Religion in America,” *Scientific American* 281 (September 1999): 90–91.
3. B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology*, ed. John W. Welch, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994), 339, citing Epicurus.
4. *The Problem of Evil*, ed. Mark Larrimore (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001), and Joseph F. Kelly, *The Problem of Evil in the Western Tradition: From the Book of Job to Modern Genetics* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), provide good overviews of writings on theodicy throughout history. For Latter-day Saint writings on this topic, see Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980); Robert L. Millet, *I Will Fear No Evil: How the Lord Sustains Us in Perilous Times* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2002); and Wayne E. Brickey, *Making Sense of Suffering* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), who all approach the existential problem of evil. David L. Paulsen, “Joseph Smith and the Problem of Evil,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 1 (2000): 53–65, and Kathleen Flake, “Evil’s Origins and Evil’s End in the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis,” *Sunstone* 21, no. 3 (1998): 24–29, both approach the theological problem of evil from a Latter-day Saint perspective. Paulsen’s essay has appeared in an expanded form as “Sin, Suffering, and Soul-Making: Joseph Smith on the Problem of Evil,” in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2002), 237–84.
5. Paulsen, “Joseph Smith and the Problem of Evil,” 60. Paulsen shows that Latter-day Saint doctrine defuses the theological or soteriological problem of evil through baptism for the dead and the preaching of the gospel in the afterlife to those who did not receive it in mortality on earth, thus giving all people a full opportunity for salvation.
6. As John Cobb and Truman Madsen describe, in Latter-day Saint thought humans individually share “creative complicity” with God in our earthly trials and sufferings because we each made an active choice in the premortal life to enter this mortal realm. John Cobb Jr. and Truman G. Madsen, “Theodicy,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1473–74.

7. Frederick W. Schmidt, *When Suffering Persists* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Morehouse, 2001).
8. Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Avon Books, 1981), 51–52.
9. The Book of Abraham refers to the creative days as “times,” which are measured “after the Lord’s time . . . for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning” (Abr. 5:13). Latter-day Saint doctrine does not subscribe to the traditional Christian idea that God created the entire cosmos in a single creative stroke but rather sees the creative process as involving many times and seasons, phases and stages, not only on this world but on worlds without number as well. F. Kent Nielsen and Stephen D. Ricks, “Creation, Creation Accounts,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:340–43.
10. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: Collins, 1940), 16.
11. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (New York: Washington Square, 1984), 135.
12. John Fiske, “The Mystery of Evil,” in *Studies in Religion, Being the Destiny of Man; The Idea of God; Through Nature to God; Life Everlasting* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1902), 242–43, 249–52, quoted in Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 335.
13. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 337.
14. William Smith, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1948), 18.
15. Modern descriptions of the genesis of society generally start with the individual. Society is generated later as individuals band together for protection against other individuals. Two influential examples include Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* and Thomas Hobbes’s *The Leviathan*.

Hedonism, Suffering, and Redemption

The Challenge of Christian Psychotherapy

Edwin E. Gantt

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

—Matthew 26:38

Few questions have so animated the discourse of the philosopher and the priest, the physician and the poet, as why it is we suffer and what our suffering might possibly mean. Of course, the question has never been solely the province of the scholar or the professional, as can be attested by any parent who has had to look on helplessly as a young child wastes away in a hospital bed. The implications of how this most pressing question of life is answered are profound. As Truman Madsen has noted, for some “the most staggering objection to belief in a personal God is the ugly, tragic, overwhelming fact of human inequality and suffering.”¹ Paradoxically, others have found in suffering not only the most divine assurances of God’s enduring love but also the overpowering call to brotherhood and full humanity. Mother Teresa, for example, taught that “in the slums, in the broken body, in the children, we see Christ and we touch him.”² Clearly, in addressing the question of suffering, we are not just playing with some “academic toy”³ but are dealing with an issue of immense and potentially soul-rending human significance.

Despite a lengthy, rich, and sometimes contentious history of literary, philosophical, and theological inquiry into the problem of human suffering, our modern world has increasingly come to rely on psychological and psychotherapeutic explanations of suffering’s origins and meaning. Indeed, many scholars have argued that psychology has come to compete

for and in large measure usurp the cultural and intellectual space once occupied by religion, literature, and moral philosophy.⁴ It has become commonplace in our society to believe that psychologists not only hold the keys that will unlock the mystery of suffering but also possess the techniques necessary for eliminating it. Because of this assumption, psychologists are often afforded the sort of status and respect that was in earlier times reserved for priests and prophets, sages and shamans.

I intend to argue, however, that contemporary psychology's conception of suffering is very much at odds with the understanding provided by both modern and ancient revelation and is, thus, for Latter-day Saints deeply problematic both intellectually and spiritually. Though seldom explicitly acknowledged, many of the theories and practices of modern psychotherapy are undergirded with a philosophy of hedonism. That is to say, much of the modern psychotherapeutic enterprise is informed by the "doctrine that pleasure is the good" and that the maximizing of individual pleasure is "what we ought to pursue."⁵

One result of this commitment to hedonism in psychology is, I will contend, that human emotional, psychological, and moral suffering often are regarded only as obstacles to our attainment of happiness and the good life. Indeed, many in contemporary psychology hold that suffering is tragically pointless and unnecessary, the unpleasant by-product of some impersonal pathological process, defect of rationality, or biochemical deficiency. As such, it is "without intrinsic meaning" and is "seen as some sort of absurdity."⁶ It is with this view that psychotherapists so often set their agenda solely in terms of how to most effectively mitigate—if not terminate—the various forms of psychologically relevant human suffering. That such suffering may have profoundly spiritual and moral meaning receives little attention.⁷

In what follows, then, I hope to show that, although this sort of psychotherapeutic project seems morally sound, it fundamentally misses the point of suffering—particularly when understood from within the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Insofar as psychology's hedonistic conception of suffering is mistaken and insofar as we therapists endorse that conception in either our theories or our practices, we may hinder our clients from developing a morally deep and spiritually significant life. By minimizing or neglecting the inherent meaningfulness of human suffering, we may prevent our clients from coming to understand, in the words of Viktor Frankl, that "*human life can be fulfilled not only in creating and enjoying, but also in suffering!*"⁸ (italics in the original) and that "life can reach nobility even as it founders on the rocks."⁹ Ultimately, I will propose that, while the call to alleviate suffering is undoubtedly central to both the

theory and practice of psychotherapy, there is a spiritually deeper and more pressing call to which we as therapists must first give heed: the demand for us to suffer with our clients in their suffering, to “watch and pray” (Matt. 26:41) as they experience the agonies of their own Gethsemanes.

The Intellectual Roots of Hedonism

The roots of our Western intellectual tradition begin with the Greeks—and thus the roots of hedonism do also. The individual most often affiliated with the hedonist position is Epicurus, who contended “that all men, at all times, pursue only their own pleasure”¹⁰ because “pleasure is the first good and natural.”¹¹ Interestingly, however, Epicurus was not the first to advance the notion that we are by nature selfish and seek only after our own personal pleasure. An earlier advocate of hedonism was Thrasymachus, a contemporary of Socrates and Plato, a man dubbed by one noted historian of philosophy as the “brutal champion of the rights of the stronger.”¹² Unlike Epicurus, who would suggest that the greatest pleasure was to be found in moderate living aimed at minimizing pain, Thrasymachus argued a “might-is-right” approach to justice and ethics, maintaining that because personal pleasure is the ultimate good those with the means to get what they want should in fact do just that.¹³

Ironically, even Socrates, who consistently sought to counter this sophistic equation of physical pleasure with the ultimate good, still maintained at the core of his teachings the notion that conduct is governed by a concern for matters of personal pleasure. Socratic doctrine held that acts that produce pleasure are always to be judged in light of their ultimate rather than immediate benefit. Because the unreflective pursuit of pleasure may lead one only to future misery, the relative worth of a given course of action should be determined by whether or not it provides long-term or ultimate benefit (that is, pleasure) to the person. Thus, as Guthrie has noted, in the Socratic or Platonic system, “acts which in themselves give pleasure can be referred to the question of ultimate benefit as to a higher standard, while still maintaining the attitude of pure self-interest.”¹⁴

In the end, then, for the ancient Greeks, though they disagreed continually and vehemently about the proper means of its achievement, the ultimate goal of life was always the pursuit and maximization of pleasure for oneself. Even Aristotle, who questioned the thinking of his predecessors and contemporaries in many profoundly insightful ways, nonetheless held that our most committed and concerned friendships were in reality just the outgrowth of a more fundamental love of self.

Although eclipsed somewhat by intensive theological speculation, various versions of the hedonist doctrine continued to inform philosophical thought in significant ways throughout the medieval period. A great deal of intellectual effort during this time was devoted to demonstrating how service to God and obedience to his commandments were, when considered most broadly, really just matters of self-interest. For example, St. Augustine argued, “For, that man might be intelligent in his self-love, there was appointed for him an end to which he might refer all his actions, that he might be blessed. For he who loves himself wishes nothing else than this. And the end set before him is ‘to draw near to God.’”¹⁵ St. Augustine urged his fellow Christians to ask themselves what earthly and transitory pleasure could possibly compare to the eternal rewards of heaven that are to be made available to the obedient and dutiful. Christians should then ask whether it is in their own best interests to do all they can to secure such eternal bliss for themselves.

Indeed, as St. Thomas Aquinas later reasoned, if contemplation of ultimate reality is the greatest good and God is the ultimate reality, then our greatest opportunity for the single-minded contemplation of God is in the afterlife, and the more single-minded our contemplation, the greater our joy.¹⁶ The individual who settles for the evanescent pleasures of mortal flesh is a fool who will fail in the end to secure that which is the most truly gratifying of all pleasures: eternal communion with God.

Interestingly, despite this tradition of assuming self-interest to be central to human endeavor, it was not until the Enlightenment that hedonism achieved a nearly undisputed predominance in explanations of human motivation and behavior. Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, for example, offered an account of human motivation wherein self-preservation and self-aggrandizement were not only right but natural and absolute. He contended that we are naturally constituted to seek to ensure our own survival and pleasure, regardless of the costs to others. In fact, Hobbes maintained that our natural inclination as human beings is to wage unrestrained war on one another so as to maximize material acquisitions and power.¹⁷ Furthermore, if not for the controlling influence of a powerful and organized state capable of imposing its will on the individual via the threat of force or the promise of security, the “life of man [would be] solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.”¹⁸ The impact of this Hobbesian doctrine for later political, social, and intellectual developments can hardly be underestimated.¹⁹

One profound consequence of the modern advancement of the doctrine of hedonism is that hedonism has, in many ways, come to be identified with rational thinking. Henry Sidgwick, for example, felt that it was

hardly going too far to say that common sense assumes that “interested” actions, tending to promote the agent’s happiness, are *prima facie* [at first sight] reasonable: and that the *onus probandi* [burden of proof] lies with those who maintain that disinterested conduct, as such, is reasonable.²⁰

Ayn Rand argued that the rational person “sees his interests in terms of a lifetime and selects his goals accordingly. . . . [This] means that he does not regard any moment as cut off from the context of the rest of his life, and that he allows no conflicts or contradictions between his short-range and long-range interests.”²¹ Thus, to be rational is to seek after one’s own interests in a manner as careful, consistent, and efficient as possible.²²

To fall short in the realization of this ideal—or, even worse, to reject it outright—is by definition to be irrational. Indeed, as Nathaniel Branden, one of Rand’s collaborators, explained, “To sacrifice one’s happiness is to sacrifice one’s desires; to sacrifice one’s desires is to sacrifice one’s values; to sacrifice one’s values is to sacrifice one’s judgment; to sacrifice one’s judgment is to sacrifice one’s mind.”²³ Given this sort of intellectual presumption, it should not come as too great a surprise that one of the most explicitly hedonistic of all our modern theories of human action, and one of the most widely endorsed in both the humanities and the social sciences, is known as Rational Choice Theory.²⁴

Hedonism, Psychotherapy, and Suffering

As a product of modern philosophical thought, psychotherapy often reflects a strong intellectual commitment—both in terms of its theories and its practices—to the epistemology and ethics of hedonism. Because psychotherapy has, in many ways, become the major modern attempt to address the question of the good life, it has been intimately concerned with the question of human emotional, spiritual, and moral suffering. As mentioned above, our modern world has increasingly come to look to psychologists for answers to questions about the meaning of life and suffering. The therapist, as a highly trained expert in human affairs, is often thought to be uniquely situated to offer not only rationally based explanations for the presence of suffering but also empirically defensible counsel on how best to achieve happiness in life.²⁵

In close connection with this assumption is psychotherapy’s long-maintained belief that the personal views and values of clinicians and therapists have little direct effect on clients, at least insofar as those values are conscientiously set aside in the therapy hour by the careful employment of established methods and techniques of treatment. It was thought that the

therapist could be “a kind of horticulturist engaged in bringing out the true nature of each client by encouraging a process of unfolding along pre-determined lines.”²⁶ This assumption, however, has been convincingly proven to be fallacious, as many authors have shown the inextricable connection between moral values and therapeutic practice.²⁷

Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere,²⁸ clients come away from therapy with a good deal more than a simple, value-free cure for their psychological ills. During the course of most psychotherapeutic treatments, clients are initiated into the language, customs, assumptions, values, and practices of an entire moral order within which they are encouraged to make sense of themselves, their symptoms, and the world. This initiation is not simply an academic or intellectual exercise, however. It is, rather, “an active moving into and shaping of [the client’s] life in the light of the therapist-patient dialectic.”²⁹

Clearly, one of the most profound ways in which therapists give shape to the moral and psychological landscape of their clients’ lives is the way in which they help clients to articulate and pursue a particular vision of the good life. Unfortunately, there is an astonishing lack of sustained or critical discussion concerning the various metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical presuppositions inherent in psychotherapy’s often hedonistic conceptions of the good life. Therapists seem content simply to iterate, in various ways, the fundamental virtues of self-fulfillment, self-expression, self-esteem, self-discovery, self-love, and self-acceptance. Suffering, in the broad spectrum of its psychologically relevant manifestations (for example, depression, anxiety, fear, shame, grief, guilt, and regret), is usually conceived of as an obstacle to the realization of individual potential. As such, suffering is seen to constitute a sort of barrier that must be overcome if individuals are to attain a maximal degree of happiness and contentment in their lives.³⁰

Because the various psychological forms of suffering are so often viewed as pathological or irrational in nature, psychotherapy’s commitment to eradicating their effects in as efficient and timely a manner as possible is seldom held up for critical scrutiny.³¹ Rather, the issue that seems to have most fully captured the discipline’s attention is the more methodological one of how best to reduce or eliminate the unpleasantness of those pathological conditions from which clients happen to be suffering.

Given the vast and varied nature of the landscape, it would be all but impossible in the limited space available here to even begin adequately identifying the many ways in which hedonistic assumptions suffuse contemporary psychotherapy. Therefore, rather than reel off some comprehensive,

but only marginally informative, list of schools and practices, I will attempt a more in-depth look at a few of the more widely practiced modern therapies. In particular, I will examine Albert Ellis's school of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), the Client-Centered Therapy of Carl Rogers, and, finally, certain trends in contemporary drug therapy. Although I realize the limited scope involved in such an analysis, I nonetheless feel strongly that each of these traditions can be seen to be exemplars of the larger discipline of psychotherapy.

Albert Ellis, Hedonism, and Suffering. Perhaps one of the clearest modern exponents of the notion that suffering is irrational—and, by implication, pointless—is Albert Ellis, who maintains that “one of the basic philosophic aspects of rational-emotive therapy . . . is an emphasis on hedonism, pleasure, and happiness.”³² Ellis has stated that, at least in this regard, his Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is no different from most other forms of therapy in that

just about all existing schools of psychotherapy are, at bottom, hedonistic, in that they hold that pleasure or freedom from pain is a principle good and should be the aim of thought and action. . . . The rational-emotive therapist, therefore, is far from unique when he accepts some kind of a hedonistic world-view and tries to help his patients adopt a workable hedonistic way of life.³³

Although he has repeatedly asserted that his main therapeutic goal is to minimize the irrational anxiety, depression, and anger his clients feel, Ellis is not content with merely a negative definition of psychological health and well-being. Rather, in a more positive vein, he argues that the rational-emotive therapist should encourage clients to adopt the notion that “it is good for me to live and enjoy myself” and decide to “strive for more pleasure than pain.”³⁴

Because hedonism is assumed to be identical with rationality in this system of therapy, suffering, in whatever psychological form it might take, is *ipso facto* irrational, the product of an inappropriately directed style of living and reasoning. Because suffering is irrational, it is also pointless and unnecessary. The solution to the dilemma of suffering is to simply adopt a more “healthy” and rational style of living and thinking, one that will prove to be more personally satisfying and self-enriching.

Ellis does not, however, advocate a “short-range, self-defeating hedonism of a childish variety.”³⁵ Rather, that immature form of hedonism is spurned in favor of a more long-range form of hedonism, one that is clearly reminiscent of that found in ancient Stoic philosophy. Borrowing terminology from Freud, Ellis suggests that “the reality principle of putting off

present pleasures for future gains is often a *much saner* course to follow than the pleasure principle of striving only for present gains.”³⁶ In short, Ellis argues for

the philosophy that one should primarily strive for one’s own satisfactions while, at the same time, keeping in mind that one will achieve one’s own best good, in most instances, by giving up immediate gratifications for future gains and by being courteous to and considerate of others, so that they will not sabotage one’s own ends.³⁷

This philosophy of long-range hedonism is “consistently stressed in RT”³⁸ so that clients will come to understand that the unhappiness they are experiencing is ultimately the result of failing to engage in the rational calculation and pursuit of their own long-term self-interest. As Ellis has stated, “The main aim of RT is to help the patient to clearly see what his own basic philosophic assumptions or values are and to significantly change these life premises.”³⁹ If these irrational values are not “significantly changed” (that is, abandoned in favor of a philosophy of long-term hedonism), however, the client’s “underlying anxiety and lack of self-confidence will not be greatly ameliorated.”⁴⁰

Carl Rogers, Hedonism, and Suffering. In contemporary psychotherapy, Ellis is, of course, not the only major voice advocating the notion that suffering is irrational, pathological, and pointless. Carl Rogers, too, offers an essentially hedonistic answer to the questions of suffering and the good life. For Rogers, achievement of the psychological good life is understood in terms of becoming a “Fully Functioning Person.”⁴¹ This is a person whose self-concept is congruent with his or her inherent tendency to value positively those experiences that increase personal fulfilment and satisfaction, a person who is “open to the wide range of his own needs” and who is a full “participant in the rationality of his organism.”⁴² Such a person is creative, sensitive, and thoughtful, a being whose feelings and reactions “may be trusted to be positive, forward-moving, and constructive.”⁴³ In short, because the fully functioning person “does not have to satisfy the introjected standards of other people, he or she is guided entirely by the organismic valuing process and enjoys total self-acceptance.”⁴⁴

Clearly, in this particular scheme, the basic nature of humankind is held to be constructive, trustworthy, and rational. In response to the Freudian notion that human beings are basically irrational and governed by aggressive and destructive impulses that must be controlled, Rogers argued that “man’s behavior is exquisitely rational, moving with subtle and ordered complexity toward the goals his organism is endeavoring to achieve.”⁴⁵ In the fully functioning, genuinely rational person, there is a

“natural and internal balancing of one need against another, and the discovery of behaviors which follow the vector most closely approximating the satisfaction of all needs.”⁴⁶ Unfortunately, according to Rogers, “the tragedy for most of us is that our defenses keep us from being aware of this rationality, so that consciously we are moving in one direction, while organismically we are moving in another.”⁴⁷ Only when the individual manages to overcome irrational defensiveness and embrace a genuine openness to experience will behavior “come as close as possible to satisfying all his needs.”⁴⁸

Therapy, then, is about assisting the suffering client in overcoming the burdensome weight of irrational defensiveness (that is, conditions of worth) so that “he would continue to move toward becoming himself, and to behave in such a way as to provide the maximum satisfaction of his deepest needs.”⁴⁹ Suffering, as understood in the Rogerian framework, is capable of only two meanings: symptom and obstacle. Suffering, in its various forms, represents a symptomatic expression of an underlying incongruence or disharmony in the individual’s life and organismic experience. Likewise, as symptom, suffering points to the presence of a barrier obstructing the achievement of the individual’s natural and rational pursuit of his or her own self-interest. The role of the therapist is not to assist the client in exploring the existential significance and possible moral meaningfulness of suffering but rather it is to help the client “to consider each stimulus, need, and demand, its relative intensity and importance, and out of this complex weighing and balancing, discover that course of action which would come closest to satisfying all his needs in the situation.”⁵⁰

Psychopharmacology, Hedonism, and Suffering. At the opposite end of the therapeutic spectrum from both the REBT and client-centered approaches is an increasingly popular way of understanding and treating human suffering and distress: psychopharmacology. Rosenzweig and Leiman have pointed out that

although in the past many psychiatric dysfunctions have been approached from an exclusively psychological framework, current efforts have developed a distinctly biological orientation. This orientation is leading to progressive refinements of the categories of mental disorders such as schizophrenia and anxiety. This accomplishment is aiding not only understanding but also therapeutic interventions.⁵¹

One of the most obvious ways in which such biological “refinements” have impacted clinical theory and practice in recent years is seen in the astonishing rise of both the use and the acceptance of medication for the treatment of emotional, social, and interpersonal problems. Indeed, it was only a decade ago that Peter Kramer, a psychiatrist at Brown University,

coined the troubling phrase “cosmetic psychopharmacology”⁵² and, thereby, ushered in a new era of psychopharmacological hedonism.⁵³

For Kramer and like-minded others,⁵⁴ human emotional and interpersonal suffering is at root an expression of an underlying medical condition. That is, suffering is in reality just the symptomatic manifestation of a disturbance in the neurochemical activity of the individual’s central nervous system. The brain, Seward tells us, “has one extremely important characteristic: it is capable of emotions.”⁵⁵ Those emotions that the brain creates for us, however, are often unpleasant and distressing and, thus, less than desirable. The most appropriate remedy for such a situation, then, would seem to be a chemical one.⁵⁶ After all, as Nancy Andreasen suggests, emotional and psychological suffering are diseases and “should be considered medical illnesses just as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer are.”⁵⁷ It is in this sense that Goodwin asserted that not only is talking therapy of little real value when compared to drug therapy but it can even make “people feel worse; talking about the problems reminds them of them.”⁵⁸

In its most basic sense, psychopharmacological intervention involves altering an individual’s neurotransmitter activity to reduce or eliminate the patient’s presenting symptoms.⁵⁹ Symptom reduction has long been—at least in psychiatry—the primary (if not the only) standard for judging the worth or success of a particular therapeutic treatment.⁶⁰ Indeed, Shorter noted in his widely cited history of psychiatry that “lifting symptoms rather than cultivating a sympathetic rapport in the office [has] remained the ultimate therapeutic objective.”⁶¹ In this model, the patient’s presenting symptoms—the experiential features and enactments of his or her suffering—constitute a sort of diagnostic signpost that points toward some more basic, underlying biochemical dysfunction that is the real source of the patient’s problems. The medical model reduction of the complex experiential meaning of suffering to the status of symptom is almost never questioned, and neither is the notion that the first order of therapeutic business is the elimination of such symptoms. Suffering is not to be taken at face value, nor is it thought to possess any intrinsic meaning or significance. Rather, it is seen merely to be an unfortunate outcome of fundamentally impersonal and mechanical biological processes operating out of the individual’s awareness and beyond his or her control.

Despite a number of glaring differences in terms of both theory and practice, the psychopharmacological perspective clearly shares with its humanistic and cognitive cousins a commitment to the philosophy of hedonism. As Shorter and others have noted, “Psychiatry [has] nurtured a popular culture of pharmacological hedonism”⁶² in which millions of

people (both clients and professionals) have come to see drug therapy as the ultimate technological solution to the problems of everyday living. Evidence for this claim can be found in Kramer's international bestseller, *Listening to Prozac*, the principal message of which seems to be that personal contentment and self-confidence can, indeed, be found in a pill.

For example, Kramer offers the following story to illustrate the promise of pharmacological solutions to the problems of human suffering:

After about eight months off medication, Tess told me she was slipping. "I'm not myself," she said. New union negotiations were under way, and she felt she could use the sense of stability, the invulnerability to attack, that Prozac gave her. Here was a dilemma for me. Ought I to provide medication to someone who was not depressed? I could give myself reason enough—construe it that Tess was sliding into relapse, which perhaps she was. In truth, I assumed I would be medicating Tess's chronic condition, call it what you will: heightened awareness of the needs of others, sensitivity to conflict, residual damage to self-esteem—all odd indications for medication. I discussed the dilemma with her, but then I did not hesitate to write the prescription. Who was I to withhold from her the bounties of science? Tess responded again as she had hoped she would, with renewed confidence, self-assurance, and social comfort.⁶³

This account clearly implies that the only genuinely rational and moral response to Tess's unhappiness and dissatisfaction with her life was to provide a biochemical means of replacing her pointless suffering with a chemically induced sense of satisfaction.⁶⁴ Kramer further argues that drug therapy "simply gives anhedonic people access to pleasures identical to those enjoyed by other normal people in their ordinary social pursuits."⁶⁵ Notice the rhetoric of normality and rationality at play in this pronouncement. Anxiety, depression, and isolation, it is assumed, are really just non-rational, biomechanical conditions that can be fairly easily swept aside if we just deliver the proper dosage at the proper time. As in Ellis's and Rogers's models, suffering in itself is pointless and unnecessary. Indeed, it is abnormal and dysfunctional. The maximization of individual pleasure is the point of our existence—or so we are told—and, in this case, psychoactive medication the most rational and efficient means for its achievement.⁶⁶

The Christian Alternative

It is instructive to contrast these psychotherapeutic conceptions of suffering with those articulated in the canons of revealed Christianity. Holy scripture clearly teaches that suffering is not "some sort of absurdity"⁶⁷ bereft of any genuine meaningfulness, a sort of accident to be overcome or managed or even anesthetized. Rather, scripture teaches us that suffering is

a challenge to be lived, an obligation to be shouldered, a meaning to be found. For example, in the biblical account of Job, we are confronted with a righteous man's struggle with a bewildering array of afflictions. While the story of Job does not provide a single, simple answer to the question of human suffering, it does suggest "that affliction, if not for punishment, may be for experience, discipline, and instruction."⁶⁸ Likewise, while unjustly imprisoned in Liberty Jail, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned that his suffering had both meaning and purpose when the Lord stated that though "the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee . . . all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).

As Christians, we acknowledge that suffering is an obvious feature—and, perhaps, in some ways an unavoidable feature—of our mortality. We also maintain that suffering can play a vital role in our salvation—though not merely as a test of moral character or of the capacity for endurance. Rather, for the Christian, suffering is a powerful way in which one can come to understand and experience the depth of Heavenly Father's love for his children. Suffering, though not something to seek for its own sake,⁶⁹ nonetheless can provide—in some small and incomplete way—insight into the infinite suffering experienced by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on our behalf, as well as a clearer understanding of the infinite love that motivated such suffering. This understanding is never solely intellectual but rather is also deeply and profoundly experiential and, thus, deeply and profoundly spiritual.

Because we recognize the intrinsic meaning and importance of suffering, we Christian therapists are in a position to see that there is a deeper issue involved in the question of suffering than simply how it can be most efficiently alleviated. For the Christian psychotherapist, then, the fundamental moral question incumbent in the suffering of our clients is not how it is to be alleviated but first *how it is to be addressed* in the community of faith. How are we as practicing psychotherapists—and, more fundamentally, as disciples of Christ—to understand and respond to the suffering of others?

I am not suggesting, of course, that as Christians we are not concerned with alleviating suffering. Quite the contrary. The proper way to address the suffering of others may be, in many instances, to do all we can to ease it. After all, Isaiah demands that we "relieve the oppressed" and "plead for the widow" (Isa. 1:17), while Alma commands us to "mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9). However, we should be careful not to read into these and other prophetic injunctions a simplistic—and ultimately hollow—hedonism. Instead, we must realize that mourning with those who mourn and comforting those

who stand in need of comfort may well involve a great deal more of us than alleviating their suffering. It may also involve a commitment to suffer with them in their trials as they struggle to find meaning in them.⁷⁰ It may demand that we truly do take upon ourselves one another's burdens and thereby open ourselves to the glorious possibilities of a genuinely loving and Christlike relationship.

One of the clearest and most poignant modern examples of one who was “willing to mourn with those that mourn” (Mosiah 18:9), one who had, in the words of Jude, “compassion, making a difference” (Jude 1:22), was Mother Teresa. Here was a woman well acquainted with the faces and demands of suffering in all its painful and disheartening forms, a woman whose life was spent tirelessly ministering to the needs and wants of her brothers and sisters amidst the most horrifying and piteous conditions imaginable. Here was a woman whose life has much to tell us about how the Christian should address the suffering of others. Speaking of her work among the poor and helpless in the ghettos of Calcutta, Mother Teresa said:

Without our suffering [here], our work would just be social work, very good and helpful, but it would not be the work of Jesus Christ, not part of the Redemption. Jesus wanted to help by sharing our life, our loneliness, our agony, our death. . . . We are allowed to do the same; all the desolation of the poor people, not only their material poverty, but their spiritual destitution, must be redeemed, and we must share it, for only by being one with them can we redeem them, that is, by bringing God into their lives and bringing them to God.⁷¹

One of the most striking aspects of Mother Teresa’s comment is the way she completely identified the work of Christ with suffering with others in their suffering. Indeed, she suggested that sharing in the suffering of others is not so much a duty or an obligation or even a commandment as it is an opportunity and a blessing. We are allowed, she said, to live the way our Savior did, to be with and for others as he was. The redeeming work of Christ, she taught, takes place in the concrete moment of suffering and in the compassionate sharing of that suffering. For us to truly participate in the work of Christ, it is never enough to just follow the commandments and be morally concerned for the welfare of others—especially if our moral concern is enacted only in a detached or abstracted fashion or only when we find it convenient or personally profitable. For Mother Teresa, the work of Christ is to share in the loneliness, the pain, and the fear of those sufferers who confront us.

As Christ bore the afflictions and sufferings of all mankind, we, too, are called upon to bear the burdens of our brothers and sisters who, in their suffering, call upon us for aid. All the while we should remember that, no

matter how much we give of ourselves or how deeply we share in another's pain, the real miracle of redemption is ultimately the product of Christ's loving sacrifice. And while we may be called to participate in the work of redemption, in the end it is the Master whose work it is, and it is to him and him alone that we must direct those for whom and with whom we would suffer.

One further feature of Mother Teresa's comments deserves attention. In her mind, the compassionate service she and her fellow nuns were rendering to the poor, the sick, and the needy in the streets of Calcutta was in some way very different from what she called "social work." It is not that social work—what will be taken here to include psychotherapy—is necessarily detrimental or unhelpful but rather that, at least as traditionally conceived, it is not the work of God.

I am quite convinced that she is right on this point. I am not fully convinced, however, that such a distinction is a fundamental one—that the social work of psychotherapy cannot also be the (social) work of God. Indeed, I sincerely believe that not only can it be the work of God but it must be the work of God. Expendng our efforts in any other work is ultimately a waste of time—our own, our clients', and God's. I am convinced that the gospel of Jesus Christ calls upon us to radically reconceptualize and reenvision the project of psychotherapy—from the ground up—so that it can become yet another means by which we can accomplish the work of God here among his children.

Although admittedly sketchy and in need of further development, the point I wish to make most strongly here is that we need to reenvision psychotherapy as first and foremost a way of responding to the call to suffer with our clients in their sufferings rather than think of therapy as only an educational vehicle for the identification and satisfaction of individual desires.⁷² Prior to entertaining the question of how to most efficiently meliorate our client's suffering, or whether we should even do so, we need to seriously entertain the question of our client's suffering itself—its possible meanings, purposes, and our own and our client's moral responsibilities in the face of it. The fruit of such consideration would likely be the recognition that suffering is not something to be dismissed out of hand as a pointless obstacle to personal fulfillment but is something that can be embraced on its own terms and whose meaning can be explored and articulated. We might also learn that our discipline's desire to relieve suffering as efficiently as possible actually short-circuits an important existential and spiritual process intended to bring souls to Christ.

By focusing so intently on symptom reduction and assuming that the rational calculation and pursuit of self-interest is synonymous with the good life, modern psychotherapy may have robbed many people of the

opportunity of developing a morally deep and spiritually significant relationship with both their fellow beings and their Savior. As President Kimball taught:

Being human, we would expel from our lives, sorrow, distress, physical pain, and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort. But if we closed the doors upon such, we might be evicting our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery. The sufferings of our Savior were part of his education.⁷³

If suffering is one way we can come to Christ, to experience the miracle of the Atonement by coming to learn the meanings his atoning sacrifice has for us, then any therapy that denies the importance or meaning of suffering or seeks to minimize it prematurely is in need of our most serious reevaluation.

Some Clarifications

At this point, to avoid some possible misunderstandings, I will clarify what is *not* being suggested in this analysis. First, the point that alleviating suffering is still an important goal of psychotherapy bears repeating one more time and in a bit more detail. Although it is possible to vigorously debate the appropriateness or the viability of some of the therapeutic means that have been suggested for alleviating suffering, it would be farcical to debate the importance that the alleviation of suffering has for the psychotherapeutic enterprise. I am not proposing that psychotherapists need not be concerned about relieving the suffering of those who seek out their services. Rather, my proposal is that we subordinate the noble desire to alleviate suffering to the more fundamental moral demands to share the suffering of others and to care for the redemption of their souls. We should pay careful heed to the hedonistic origins of many of our traditional psychological conceptions of suffering, of its origins, nature, and meaning. We should respond to such conceptions by more explicitly addressing the question of suffering from within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ—a framework that is fundamentally antithetical to that of hedonism.

Second, I am not suggesting that the job of the therapist is to advocate suffering or to encourage others to indulge in it. That would simply be to assume the hedonist argument in reverse. Casting the psychotherapist as sadist is not the solution I seek. As Broderick notes in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*,

Latter-day Saints do not believe that pain is intrinsically good. In their teaching there is little of asceticism, mortification, or negative

spirituality. . . . If benefit comes from pain, it is not because there is anything inherently cleansing in pain itself. Suffering can wound and embitter and darken a soul as surely as it can purify and refine and illumine.⁷⁴

The key for us as Latter-day Saint therapists, then, is not to encourage our clients to glory in their suffering, as though the mere experience of anguish were sufficient to sanctify and cleanse the soul, but rather to help them appreciate that their suffering can have meaning and that in their suffering they are never alone or bereft of hope. Despair is never the answer. Thus, we cannot teach that suffering is something to be sought or celebrated for its own sake. Rather, it is something that must be accepted, at least for a time, and something that we must strive to endure with a “steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men” (2 Ne. 31:20).

Of course, not all forms of suffering are of the same sort, and not all forms of suffering should be addressed in the same manner. As Broderick again notes,

as a social being, man is vulnerable to emotional suffering that often rivals physical pain—anxiety, rejection, loneliness, despair. Among the sensitive there are also other levels of profound suffering. They may relate, for example, to the awareness of the effects of sin or the anguish of the abuse or indifference of one’s loved ones. And there is vicarious suffering in response to the pain around one and the sense of the withdrawal of the Spirit.⁷⁵

It is important to add that there are those who choose to suffer because they derive some perverse joy from it, either from the attention they may receive or the guilt and sympathy they may induce. Addressing such suffering clearly requires more of the therapist than simply “playing along.” Conversely, there are those who suffer in innocence, the helpless and tragic victims of others’ violence, greed, and hatred. To such we must offer, without reservation, the hand of fellowship and the healing balm of Gilead (see Jer. 8:21–22).

It is also important that there be no confusion regarding what is meant by the concept of suffering with others in their suffering. This concept, at least in this article, should not be taken to be synonymous with either condescending pity or despairing commiseration. To genuinely suffer with another does not mean that I allow you to “cry in my beer” while I cry in yours as we both self-servingly bemoan the miserable cosmic unfairness of our lot in life. That sort of “sorrowing of the damned” has no part whatsoever in the authentic therapeutic encounter. Neither is suffering with another a means of justifying or excusing the often immoral and sinful

behaviors that lie at the root of many forms of suffering.⁷⁶ To truly suffer with another requires far more than convenient co-misery, simplistic sympathy, or a readiness to excuse. Rather, in suffering with another we willingly and selflessly take upon ourselves their pains and torments so that the burdens they bear may be lightened. To suffer with others is to offer oneself wholly and unreservedly to another, a gift of the fullest and sincerest compassion.⁷⁷

Obviously, in a philosophical or conceptual exploration such as this, it is difficult to spell out exactly what suffering with another might look like in any given therapeutic encounter. What is being proposed here is not so much a technical approach to the practice of therapy as it is a fundamental mind-set of openness and Christlike compassion and, thereby, a framework for re-envisioning the entire therapeutic process. Thus, there are probably many different ways in which a particular therapist might suffer with a specific client in a specific therapeutic moment. At the very least, however, genuinely suffering with a client would seem to require a willing suspension of the therapist's professional detachment and value-neutral stance towards that client's suffering. Further, it would most certainly require the therapist to be deeply attuned and responsive to the whisperings of the Spirit so that he or she might know in any given moment how to respond to the client as Christ himself would respond. Relying solely on technique and abstract treatment strategy will almost certainly short-circuit the real healing that comes through a genuine encounter with Christ that is facilitated by a therapist willing to serve him. Perhaps, in the final analysis, what matters is not the "how" of therapy but the "why" that lies behind whatever action the therapist feels called upon to take.

Still, it might well be asked, What are the practical benefits and advantages of suffering-with over other possible approaches to therapy? Such a concern is, however, rooted in the hedonistic understanding of psychotherapy being called into question here. The point of suffering with clients is not that it results in improved therapeutic outcomes or more efficiently speeds clients back to health and productive contentment. It is that we fulfill the sacred duty we have been enjoined by Christ to take upon ourselves.

As Christian therapists, we offer ourselves to our clients, because they are, in fact, our brothers and sisters and because doing so is right and good and true. The willingness to make such an offering arises out of the spiritual desire to do all we can to serve our brothers and sisters and, thereby, glorify God. Indeed, as Joseph Smith taught, "The nearer we get to our

heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls; we feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our backs.”⁷⁸

This should not be taken to mean, however, that the therapist is the transformative agent in the life of the client or that the discovery of meaning in suffering is the result of the therapist’s having shared in the client’s pain. To assume such would be to engage in a particularly pernicious form of priestcraft wherein the therapist is set up as a savior and mediator of the sufferings of others. Our call as Christians and as therapists is not to set ourselves as “a light unto the world, that [we] may get gain and praise of the world” (2 Ne. 26:29), but rather to attend to the needs of others as they work out the meanings of their relationship with God. Only insofar as our willingness to emulate the Savior by sharing in the suffering of another serves to point them toward deeper possibilities of knowing God, his love for them, and their own complete reliance upon the power of his saving grace will our therapeutic efforts be genuinely therapeutic. I do not believe this point can be emphasized too much or too strongly. We must never lose sight of the fact that it is only in light of the infinite and atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that our clients will be able to come to find meaning in their suffering and, even then, only insofar as they allow him to instruct them in its meaning.

As Alma the Younger taught, Christ took upon himself our pains and afflictions “that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, *that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people* according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12; italics added). Thus, as therapists we must never forget that Christ understands the suffering of our clients in ways that we, even at the best of times, can only barely begin to imagine. Nonetheless, we have an absolute obligation to take up their sorrows, to share in their suffering, and to do all we can to help make a space in our clients’ lives wherein they can experience the atoning love and healing power of the Master. Ultimately, it is only insofar as we heed this call and shoulder this sacred obligation that our work as psychotherapists can cease to be mere social work and truly become the redeeming work of God.

It is also important to recognize I am not proposing a therapeutic technique here, as though suffering with others in their suffering were just some new treatment strategy that could be employed over the course of a given therapy to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. Suffering with others is not “a channel by which the therapist communicates a sensitive empathy and an unconditional positive regard.”⁷⁹ This is not to say that technique is never warranted in therapy or that it has no place or purpose in our therapeutic endeavors. Neither does it mean that medication

has no role to play in therapy. Rather, it is only to say that the call to suffer with others in the moment of their anguish is morally prior to the implementation of any treatment method or technique. Method and technique must always be guided by and subordinated to our fundamentally moral responsibility to the client in his or her suffering. Only as psychotherapy comes to admit this moral priority will it become truly therapeutic in the fullest and richest sense of that word.⁸⁰

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1. Truman G. Madsen, *Eternal Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 53.
2. Malcolm Muggeridge, *Something Beautiful for God* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1971), 114.
3. Madsen, *Eternal Man*, 53.
4. See, for example, R. (Reijer) Hooykaas, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972); Thomas Stephen Szasz, *The Myth of Psychotherapy: Mental Healing as Religion, Rhetoric, and Repression* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978); B. Vandenberg, "Piaget and the Death of God," *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 11, no. 1 (1991): 35–42; and Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977).
5. J. Gosling, "Hedonism," in *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2000), 336.
6. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion*, 103.
7. Compare P. Young-Eisendrath, "What Suffering Teaches," in *The Couch and the Tree: Dialogues in Psychoanalysis and Buddhism*, ed. A. Molino (New York: North Point Press, 1998), 344–53.
8. Frankl does not say that suffering can be "fulfilling" in human life, but he does state that in suffering human life can be "fulfilled." He is not suggesting that suffering is a fulfilling way to live one's life, as though it were just one more possible method or means of achieving some level of personal satisfaction or contentment. For Frankl, we are all, by virtue of being human, called to fulfill our lives, as we would a duty or an obligation, without regard to the degree or amount of personal satisfaction to be garnered. Indeed, for Frankl, finding meaning in our lives, whatever our circumstances might be, is our ultimate duty—to ourselves, others, and God. It is vital to keep this distinction clearly in mind to see how Frankl avoids falling into one or another of the more traditional forms of egoism.
9. Viktor E. Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 106.

10. Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 245.
11. Epicurus, “Pleasure Is the Highest Good,” in *Concise Readings in Philosophy*, ed. William H. Halverson (New York: Random House, 1981), 294.
12. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Book 1 (New York: Image Books, 1985), 95.
13. Compare Plato, *Republic: Book 1*, trans. Paul Shorey, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato: Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 588–89.
14. William Keith Chambers Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 103.
15. K. Rogers, *Self-Interest: An Anthology of Philosophical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 60.
16. See Rogers, *Self-Interest*, 61–73.
17. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968).
18. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, part 1, chap. 13, p. 186.
19. For example, by deftly mixing the influences of Hobbes and Epicurus, Jeremy Bentham was able to assert that “nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure” (Jeremy Bentham, *A Theory of Legislation* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914], 1) and that “each individual always pursues what he believes to be his own happiness” (Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 775). Based on this fundamental assumption of self-interest, Bentham then proposed what has come to be known as the utilitarian system of rationality and ethics, a system that has proven to be enormously influential in contemporary law, politics, economics, and philosophy. Following closely in Bentham’s footsteps, John Stuart Mill wrote, “Of the social virtues it is almost superfluous to speak; so completely is it the verdict of all experience that selfishness is natural. . . . [The people we regard as moral are simply selfish in a different way;] theirs is . . . [a] sympathetic selfishness” (John Stuart Mill, “Three Essays on Religion,” in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. J. M. Robson, 20 vols. [Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1969], 10:394). By the middle of the nineteenth century, particularly with the advent of Darwinian evolutionary theory and subsequent biological accounts of human behavior, hedonism had clearly begun to take center stage in the political, moral, and social thought of the West. Compare Michael Ruse, *Mystery of Mysteries: Is Evolution a Social Construction?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); R. Smith, *The Norton History of the Human Sciences* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).
20. Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), 120.
21. Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (New York: Signet Books, 1964), 51–52.
22. Compare Robert Shaver, *Rational Egoism: A Selective and Critical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
23. Nathaniel Branden, “Mental Health Versus Mysticism and Self-Sacrifice,” in *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism*, Ayn Rand (New York: Signet Books, 1964), 41.
24. Compare Gary Stanley Becker, *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); James S. Coleman and Thomas J. Fararo, eds., *Rational Choice Theory: Advocacy and Critique* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992).

In his text *Theory and Progress in Social Science*, James B. Rule identifies three essential tenets of the Rational Choice school of thought. First is the notion that “human action is essentially *instrumental*, so that most social behavior can be explained as efforts to attain one or another, more or less distant, end[s]” (James B. Rule, *Theory and Progress in Social Science* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 80; italics in original). Second, individual actors “formulate their conduct through *rational calculation* of which among alternate courses of action are most likely to maximize their overall rewards” (p. 80; italics in original). The third and final tenet of Rational Choice Theory is that “large-scale social processes and arrangements—including such diverse things as rates, institutions, and practices—are ultimately to be explained as results of such calculation[s]” (p. 80). This last point, according to Rule, is a crucial claim for adherents of the theory, in that the “doctrine provides the indispensable analytical tools for relating aggregate events and processes to the microworlds of face-to-face interaction and individual decision making” (p. 81).

25. Compare Edwin E. Gantt, “Utopia, Psychotherapy, and the Place of Suffering,” in *Psychology for the Other: Pursuing a Psychology of the Ethical*, ed. Edwin E. Gantt and Richard N. Williams (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001); Frank C. Richardson, Blain J. Fowers, and Charles B. Guignon, *Re-Envisioning Psychology: Moral Dimensions of Theory and Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

26. Michael A. Wallach and Lise Wallach, *Psychology’s Sanction for Selfishness: The Error of Egoism in Theory and Therapy* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1983), 17.

27. See, for example, Allen E. Bergin, I. R. Payne, and P. S. Richards, “Values in Psychotherapy,” in *Religion and the Clinical Practice of Psychology*, ed. Edward P. Shafranske (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1996), 297–325; William M. Kurtines, Margarita Azmitia, and Jacob L. Gewirtz, eds., *The Role of Values in Psychology and Human Development* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1992); George S. Howard, “The Role of Values in the Science of Psychology,” *American Psychologist* 40, no. 3 (March 1985): 255–65; R. L. Woolfolk, *The Cure of Souls: Science, Values, and Psychotherapy* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

28. Gantt, “Utopia, Psychotherapy, and the Place of Suffering.”

29. Anthony Barton, *Three Worlds of Therapy: An Existential-Phenomenological Study of the Therapies of Freud, Jung, and Rogers* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing, 1974), 238.

30. Young-Eisendrath, “What Suffering Teaches.”

31. A few notable exceptions to this rule are Alfie Kohn, *The Brighter Side of Human Nature: Altruism and Empathy in Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Wallach and Wallach, *Psychology’s Sanction for Selfishness*; Vitz, *Psychology as Religion*; George Kunz, *The Paradox of Power and Weakness: Levinas and an Alternative Paradigm for Psychology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); and Richardson, Fowers, and Guignon, *Re-Envisioning Psychology*.

32. Albert Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1962), 336.

33. Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, 363.

34. Albert Ellis, *Humanistic Psychotherapy: The Rational-Emotive Approach*, ed. Edward Sagarin (New York: Julian Press, 1973), 23.

35. Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, 336.

36. Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, 363; italics added.

- 37. Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, 134.
- 38. Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, 363.
- 39. Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, 348.
- 40. Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, 349.
- 41. Carl R. Rogers, "A Therapist's View of the Good Life: The Fully-Functioning Person," in *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 183–96.
- 42. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 194, 195.
- 43. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 194.
- 44. Robert B. Ewen, *An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, 5th ed. (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998), 396.
- 45. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 194–95.
- 46. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 195.
- 47. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 195.
- 48. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 190.
- 49. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 194.
- 50. Rogers, "Therapist's View of the Good Life," 190.
- 51. Mark R. Rosenzweig and Arnold L. Leiman, *Physiological Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1989), 600–601.
- 52. Peter Kramer, cited in Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 314.
- 53. Interestingly, Kramer's phrase appeared in print at roughly the same time as President George H. Bush's congressional resolution declaring 1990 to be the first year of the Decade of the Brain.
- 54. P. D. Kramer, *Listening to Prozac: A Psychiatrist Explores Antidepressant Drugs and the Remaking of the Self* (New York: Viking, 1993). See, for example, M. T. Banich, *Neuropsychology: The Neural Bases of Mental Function* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); and B. Kolb and I. Q. Whishaw, *Introduction to Behavioral Neuroscience* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 2000).
- 55. Paul N. Seward, "Why Do We Have a Brain?" *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 19, no. 1 (spring 1999): 33.
- 56. Jack R. Cooper, Floyd E. Bloom, and Robert H. Roth, *The Biochemical Basis of Neuropharmacology*, 7th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- 57. Nancy C. Andreasen, *The Broken Brain: The Biological Revolution in Psychiatry* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 29.
- 58. Donald W. Goodwin, *Anxiety* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 107.
- 59. R. S. Feldman, J. S. Meyer, and L. F. Quenzer, *Principles of Neuropharmacology* (Sunderland, Mass.: Sinauer Associates, 1997).
- 60. Lester Luborsky, Barton Singer, and Lise Luborsky, "Comparative Studies of Psychotherapies," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 32 (August 1975): 995–1008.
- 61. Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry*, 314.
- 62. Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry*, 324.
- 63. Kramer, *Listening to Prozac*, 10.
- 64. The most disturbing feature of this account is, at least for me, the fact that, despite the obvious dilemma involved here, when the moment for action came Dr. Kramer did not hesitate to provide a chemical solution. Indeed, it almost seems as though Kramer feared the guilt that might ensue should he violate the

hedonistic imperative to provide Tess with some quick chemical relief from the stresses and strains of her life. The presumption seems to be that a man of science ought to do all he can to assist his patient in the pursuit of maximum pleasure and self-satisfaction—particularly if the means of procuring such satisfaction is as simple as the dash of a pen and the filling of a prescription.

65. Kramer, *Listening to Prozac*, 265.

66. For many today, particularly third-party payers, the efficiency and speed with which psychopharmacological interventions work is the strongest argument in their favor. After all, why waste all those months working to establish an environment of trust and care and openness in the consulting room when a prescription treatment regimen can be implemented and significant symptom reduction observed—in just a few visits?

67. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion*, 103.

68. “Job, Book of,” in Bible Dictionary, appendix to *The Holy Bible* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 714.

69. One obvious counterexample that might be offered in objection to this claim is fasting. As commonly understood, fasting is a sort of self-imposed suffering wherein one abstains from food and drink for a given length of time. However, a careful reading of modern revelation teaches that fasting is a form of prayer and communion with God, the real purpose of which is not suffering but rather comfort and communication. For example, Hills suggests in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* that “a person may fast when seeking spiritual enlightenment or guidance in decision making, *strength to overcome weakness or endure trial, comfort in sorrow, or help at other times of special need*” (Dawn M. Hills, “Fasting,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. [New York: Macmillan, 1992], 2:501, italics added). Clearly, fasting is not so much a matter of suffering for its own sake as it is a divinely inspired means whereby we may commune with Deity—especially in times of suffering and hardship. It is interesting to note also that in Doctrine and Covenants 59:13–15 the Lord explicitly identifies fasting not only with prayer but also with joy and rejoicing.

70. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:25–26. See also Edwin E. Gantt, “Levinas, Psychotherapy, and the Ethics of Suffering,” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 40, no. 3 (2000): 9–28.

71. Mother Teresa, as quoted in Robert Inchausti, *The Ignorant Perfection of Ordinary People* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 67–68.

72. Gantt, “Levinas, Psychotherapy.”

73. Edward L. Kimball, ed., *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 168.

74. Carlfred Broderick, “Suffering in the World,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3:1422.

75. Broderick, “Suffering in the World,” 3:1412.

76. On this point, President Spencer W. Kimball taught, “There are many causes for human suffering—including war, disease, and poverty—and the suffering that proceeds from each of these is very real, but I would not be true to my trust if I did not say that the most persistent cause of human suffering, that suffering which causes the deepest pain, is sin—the violation of the commandments given to us by God” (Kimball, *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 155).

77. Obviously, the question of therapist “burnout” could be raised here. Emotional fatigue among therapists has not only been a long-standing problem in the profession but also in recent decades has become a growing one. See, for example, Wanda C. McCarthy and Irene Hanson Frieze, “Negative Aspects of Therapy: Client Perceptions of Therapists’ Social Influence, Burnout, and Quality of Care,” *Journal of Social Issues* 55, no. 1 (1999): 33–50. It might be argued that, should therapists follow my suggestions in this paper and truly suffer with their clients, the likely outcome would be an increase in the incidence of therapist burnout. Unfortunately, space limitations will not allow for an adequate response to such questions. Nonetheless, I will voice my suspicion that most therapist burnout might be explained by the fact that, relying on secular and self-oriented models of therapy, many therapists have only their own, finite emotional resources to draw upon in dealing with the often overwhelming suffering they encounter in the consulting room. The Christian therapist, however, recognizes that his or her own resources are far too meager for the momentous task at hand and that ultimately it is Christ’s infinite love and compassion upon which he or she must draw in order to truly suffer with a client. By fully and unreservedly relying upon the Lord in conducting his or her therapeutic work, the Christian therapist will most certainly be sustained, sanctified, and renewed in that work. One is reminded, for example, of the Lord’s support of Alma and his people in their bondage to the Lamanites: “And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15).

78. Joseph Smith, *Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 270. See also Isaiah 38:17.

79. Howard Kirschenbaum and V. L. Henderson, eds., *The Carl Rogers Reader* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 233.

80. The Greek word from which we derive the term therapy is *therapeia*, a term that denotes service or attendance as well as healing. Additionally, it connotes an act of service, or “tending to,” which is freely and devotedly given rather than forced or purchased. For a more detailed treatment of this point, see Richard N. Williams and James E. Faulconer, “Religion and Mental Health: A Hermeneutic Reconsideration,” *Review of Religious Research* 35, no. 4 (1994): 346.

Light-Mindedness versus Lightheartedness

Conflicting Conceptions of Laughter among Latter-day Saints

Diana L. Mahony and Marla D. Corson

Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter . . . and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings.

—D&C 88:121

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

—Prov. 17:22

These two scriptures illustrate the conflicting messages about laughter that exist not only in scripture but in the culture of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our interest in this subject was piqued by the comments of two Church members. The first, a temple sealer, remarked that anytime he laughs loudly he feels guilty because he believes such behavior is unrighteous and inappropriate. He reports being perplexed by this feeling because he is a cheerful individual who smiles and laughs readily. The second man, a bishop for many years, commented that he always “feels a twinge” whenever the injunction about laughter in Doctrine and Covenants 88:121 is mentioned because it has never seemed quite right to him. The purpose of our study is to discover whether the guilt and confusion expressed by these two men is anomalous or representative of other active Church members.¹ We will begin by discussing a language-based problem with the term *laughter* and then give some references to and instruction concerning laughter in scripture and other Church writings. We then present our survey of attitudes about laughter among Latter-day Saints of different ages and levels of experience with Church doctrine.

The Ambiguity of *Laughter*

The problem with talking about *laughter* is that the word is used to mean many different things, some of which are diametrically opposed to each other. These differences include a broad range of acoustical properties, causes, internal states, spiritual attitudes, and social and psychological functions. For example, laughter can refer to sounds which are loud or soft, high or low pitched, shrill or bubbling, a short burst or a gradual crescendo. Laughter can be caused by humorous stimuli but also by tickling, breathing nitrous oxide, or psychosis. It can reflect internal states of amusement, nervousness, embarrassment, tension, relief after tension, or a sudden sense of exhilaration and well-being.

Human ethologist Robert Provine reports, on the basis of twelve hundred observations, that more than 80 percent of laughter that occurs during conversation is not “a response to . . . a formal attempt at humor.” He reports further that in conversation the speaker laughs more frequently than the audience and that laughter may serve to “modify the behavior of others by shaping the emotional tone of a conversation.”²²

From a spiritual perspective, laughter can accompany an attitude of joyful and reverent lightheartedness or irreverent light-mindedness. Socially, laughter can function to deride and humiliate or to cheer and encourage; to define group membership; to strengthen or weaken a group’s identity or its hierarchy; to include or exclude individuals from the group; to enforce conformity to group mores; to facilitate criticism, apologies, or the introduction of a serious or delicate topic; and to satisfy the need for play. Psychologically, laughter can serve to reduce stress and anxiety or to provide a socially acceptable outlet for aggressive or sexual impulses (“I was just kidding!”). Laughter may be an expression of derision, triumph, or amusement.

Without adequate context, one cannot know which function the laughter serves and, more importantly, whether the laughter is a reflection of the “merry heart” recommended in Proverbs 17:22 or a species of the “wicked doings” proscribed in Doctrine and Covenants 88:121. In high-context situations such as conversation, there is rarely confusion because only one interpretation is reasonable. However, in low-context situations or in general statements about laughter quoted apart from their context, this linguistic underdifferentiation can be the source of much confusion and heated disagreement. The problem results not only from the ambiguity itself but also from persistent lapses in awareness of that ambiguity (for example, the lapses of aggressive ticklers who believe and insist that their

protesting victims are actually enjoying themselves, as evidenced by their hysterical laughter).

This tendency to ignore the different meanings of laughter influences both the conception and the perception of laughter. The disparate causes, intentions, and functions of laughter do not come readily to mind. Instead, laughter is often conceptualized as the expression of a single state of being, and most, if not all, instances of laughter are then perceived and remembered as evidence of this state. There is considerable disagreement, however, about what this state is and about its desirability. The views cluster around opposite poles of the positive-negative dimension. While laughter is seen as one concrete concept, views about what that concept is and means are polarized.

Influences on Church Members' Attitudes

Church members are often confused because popular psychology expounds on the benefits of laughter while scriptures are mostly negative about laughing. Modern Church teachings give both positive and negative aspects of laughter.

Popular Psychology. The popular psychology of humor and laughter began unofficially in 1979, with the publication of *Anatomy of an Illness*, Norman Cousins's description of the role of "humor intervention" in curing himself from a serious and painful collagen disease.³ During the two decades since then, there has been a proliferation of workshops and seminars, occupation-specific magazines and newsletters, trade books, videos, and tapes that promote the benefits of humor and laughter in every possible activity or event from spilling a drink on one's host to coping with the discovery of a malignant tumor. A brief inspection of the periodicals on sale at any supermarket will yield at least one article on how to use humor and laughter to strengthen a marriage, communicate with teenagers, or improve the functioning of one's immune system.

Ancient and Modern Scriptures on Laughter. The term *laughter* or *laugh* appears in twenty Old Testament verses and in five New Testament verses. In these twenty-five occurrences, the term has a positive meaning in three verses, a neutral or ambiguous meaning in three verses, and a negative meaning in the remaining nineteen verses. In the topical guide to the scriptures, the entry "Laughter, Laugh" is cross-referenced with the terms happiness, levity, and scorn.⁴ Scorn and derision are the most frequent intents of laughter recorded in the Bible. The following examples are representative:

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. (Ps. 2:4)

He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. (Matt. 9:24)

With the exception of Ecclesiastes 3:4, “a time to weep, and a time to laugh,” there is no information or instruction in the Bible about the place or appropriateness of laughter in religious life.

The term *laugh* indicates scorn in the only two Book of Mormon verses (Alma 26:23; 3 Ne. 9:2) and in the single Pearl of Great Price verse (Moses 7:26) where it appears. The term refers to levity in Doctrine and Covenants 45:49, similar to the majority of references to *laughter* in the Bible. However, in contrast to the Bible, there are three verses in the Doctrine and Covenants containing direct instructions concerning laughter:

And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance . . . the fulness of the earth is yours. (D&C 59:15–16)

Remember the great and last promise which I have made unto you; cast away your idle thoughts and your excess of laughter far from you. (D&C 88:69)

Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings. (D&C 88:121)

These proscriptions against laughter are contained in instructions on Sabbath observance (section 59) and on reorganizing the School of the Prophets, contexts not always known or remembered by Church members when they encounter these verses in isolation.

Modern Latter-day Saint Teachings on Laughter. In *Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R. McConkie writes, “Joyful laughter meets with divine approval, and when properly engaged in, it is wholesome and edifying.”⁵ The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article on light-mindedness by William N. Fillmore, quoted below in its entirety, is a concise explication of the difference between light-mindedness and lightheartedness and summarizes the body of statements by Church leaders on the topic:

Modern scripture deals with “light-mindedness” as trivializing the sacred or making light of sacred things. Latter-day Saints were admonished early in the history of the Church to “trifle not with sacred things” (D&C 6:12, 8:10). At its worst, light-mindedness may become ridicule and then sacrilege and blasphemy—a deliberate irreverence for the things of God.

Divine personages and their names, temple ceremonies, the priesthood and its ordinances, and the saintly life, for example, are intrinsically holy. Other things are holy by association. The Lord has said, “That

which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63: 64). The Saints were warned against "excess of laughter," "light speeches," and "light-mindedness," yet were taught to worship "with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance" (D&C 59:15; 88:121).

In practice, Latter-day Saints distinguish light-mindedness from lightheartedness; the latter is a triumph of the zestful, joyful spirit of the gospel over life's trials. Such cheerfulness and good humor do not preclude, but rather can complement, spirituality. While imprisoned in Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith wrote that the things of God are only made known to those who exercise "careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts" (*History of the Church* 3:295); yet he later spoke of himself as "playful and cheerful" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 307). The Church counsels against a light-minded attitude toward sacred matters but encourages joyfulness in worship and wholesome pleasure in recreation.⁶

During the last two decades, the Church magazines have published an increasing number of articles praising the positive values of laughter and humor, particularly in the development of character, in friendship, and in family life. The following excerpts from the *New Era* and the *Ensign*, respectively, are typical:

The ability to laugh at yourself and display a good sense of humor helps to ease painful or difficult situations, and is usually welcome anytime.⁷

Humor is a sensible, intelligent way to diminish tension and stop overrating the trivia of daily living. The family without it need not be, and the family with it is better fortified for tomorrow.⁸

It should not be surprising that Church teachings about laughter should reflect to some extent the popular attitudes and use of language current at the time of their writing. These articles would be no different from the bulk of those found in current popular literature were it not for the fact that most Church articles contain a caveat and often a list of types of humor and laughter that are inappropriate. While some contemporary comedians and comedy writers take the position that nothing is sacred and thus exempt from becoming the subject of a joke, the message in Church publications has been that "while the gospel is sacred and serious, sometimes we take ourselves a little too seriously."⁹

The *Church News*, in selecting excerpts from speeches and interviews, has also focused on the theme that we, as a people, need to "lighten up." The following example cites Hoyt Brewster at a 1985 Brigham Young University symposium:

I am concerned that in our desire to be serious about the saving principles of the gospel, we mistakenly take ourselves too seriously. I am not suggesting that we become jolly jesters in the courts of the world nor sup-

porters of spectators of slaphappy or sordid sideshows. However, I believe appropriate humor is an integral part of God's "great plan of happiness." (Alma 42:8)¹⁰

And a 1995 *Church News* interview with President Gordon B. Hinckley quotes him saying, "We need to have a little humor in our lives. We better take seriously that which should be taken seriously, but at the same time we can bring in a touch of humor now and again. If the time ever comes when we can't smile at ourselves, it will be a sad time."¹¹

In *Church News* summaries of conference talks, descriptions such as the following are commonplace: "Both speaker and audience joined in laughter, before he continued the discussion more seriously."¹² "Sensitive and solemn moments—with occasional laughter prompted by informal quips—highlighted a gathering of priesthood bearers."¹³ Such statements send the unmistakable message that the ability to intersperse serious topics with humor and laughter is a praiseworthy trait in Church leaders.

The Study

Church members are exposed in varying degrees to these seemingly contradictory laughter messages. We wished to discover whether the resulting confusion we have noticed is measurable and whether that confusion is consistent in various demographic groups.

Purposes. Our primary purpose was to investigate the extent of feelings of confusion and guilt concerning laughter in a sample of active Church members. Additionally, we wished to identify variables in individuals' lives that might be related to the presence or absence of these feelings. We expected that age would be an important variable for several reasons: First, as we have noted, popular psychology promotes laughter as an aid to good relationships and to general well being. Young adults have been immersed in the pervasive messages and values of popular psychology's current promotion of laughter for their entire lives, while their parents and grandparents were first exposed to it during adulthood. Second, we had observed that throughout the twentieth century there were a large number of more gradual changes in social norms including those governing the acceptability of humor and laughter in various situations. We expected that the older a person is, the more likely it is that a puritanical attitude about laughter prevailed in the home, school, and religious training of his or her childhood.

A second potentially relevant variable is the amount of exposure to Church teachings about laughter and also the depth of study and understanding about these teachings. We expected that mere familiarity or a first exposure to the three Doctrine and Covenants verses containing

instruction about laughter without a thorough understanding of their context and intent and without the mediation of other Church statements about laughter—such as those in the Church magazines and other Latter-day Saint resources—might also contribute to feelings of confusion and guilt.

Participants. The three populations we selected to sample differ, on average, in the two variables we investigated: participant's age and participant's training in the context of Doctrine and Covenants 59:15, 88:69, and 88:121. The first group consisted of undergraduate students from a variety of majors at Brigham Young University—Provo and Brigham Young University—Hawaii. Students on the Provo campus were volunteers from several religion classes; they were not primed in any way. Students on the Hawaii campus were enrolled in introductory psychology and volunteered to participate as an option for completing the methodology requirement for the course. The second group were senior missionaries: retired couples serving full-time missions in the Laie Hawaii Temple and Visitors Center, the Polynesian Cultural Center, and Hawaii Reserves Incorporated and full-time education missionaries at BYU—Hawaii. The third group were full- and part-time religion faculty at BYU—Provo and BYU—Hawaii. A total of 220 completed surveys were returned: 145 from students (mean age = 21.9 years), 43 from missionaries (mean age = 65.2 years), and 32 from religion teachers (mean age = 53.5 years).

We anticipated that the religion faculty would better understand the context of the proscriptions against laughter in the Doctrine and Covenants; as noted earlier, section 59 gives instructions for appropriate Sabbath observance and section 88 contains the instructions for organizing the School of the Prophets. There is no suggestion that these proscriptions apply to all laughter in all situations. We expected that this understanding would lead the religion teachers to indicate the least confusion and guilt. We expected that the senior missionaries would be less likely to remember the context of these scriptures. Thus we anticipated that the senior missionaries would indicate feeling the most guilt and confusion of the three groups not only because they are the oldest but also because they would be less likely to think of the Doctrine and Covenants statements in their contexts. We anticipated that a large number of the young students' responses would reflect the current popular attitudes about laughter.

The Survey. Participants provided demographic data and rated their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of nineteen statements on four-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = mildly disagree, 3 = mildly agree, 4 = strongly agree). The three statements in table 1 concern their beliefs about the compatibility of laughter with heavenly places and beings.

TABLE 1

Percentage of BYU–Hawaii and BYU–Provo Students, Senior Missionaries, and BYU–Hawaii and BYU–Provo Religion Faculty Agreeing with Statements 1–3

Statement	Stu- dents	Sr. Miss.	Rel. Fac.
1. There will be some laughter and playfulness in the Celestial Kingdom.	97	93	100
2. Heavenly Father laughs heartily on occasion.	96	84	94
3. The Savior laughs heartily on occasion.	96	81	94

Participants were asked to consider sixteen quotations that embody the philosophy of the current popular view toward laughter. Here is a representative sample of the statements:

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people. —Victor Borge

The person who can bring the spirit of laughter into a room is indeed blessed.—Bennett Cerf

A person who belly-laughs doesn't bellyache.—Susan Thurman

If you can laugh together, you can work together.—Robert Orben

If you can't make it better, you can laugh at it.—Erma Bombeck

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the five statements (4–8) in table 2 about the quotations.

The three Doctrine and Covenants verses containing instruction about laughter (59:15 and 88:69, 121) were next presented in the survey. Participants were asked to consider the verses and then rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the seven statements (9–15) in table 3.

The entire *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article on light-mindedness (see pages 118–19) was then presented in the survey. Participants were asked to carefully read and consider it and then rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the four statements (16–19) in table 4.

Statistical Analyses for Group Differences. T-tests were used to compare mean responses of missionaries to those of the religion faculty and then to compare the responses of participants over age fifty to responses of those under age fifty. Results indicated five statistically significant differences between the missionaries and the religion teachers (see table 5): Compared to the religion faculty, the senior missionaries were more likely to indicate that the Church teaches that laughter is unrighteous, that the

Doctrine and Covenants verses about laughter contradict their own views, that they have felt confused about how to interpret these Doctrine and Covenants verses, that they were less familiar with the distinction between lighthearted and light-minded as presented in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article, and that they were less in agreement that this distinction is correct. These results suggest that, as we expected, the religion teachers have a greater familiarity with and understanding of the context of the cited Doctrine and Covenants teachings about laughter than do their near contemporaries.

Results indicated seven statistically significant differences between age groups (see table 6): Compared with participants age fifty or younger, participants over age fifty were less in agreement that either Heavenly Father or the Savior laughs heartily on occasion. These participants judged that the individuals who raised them would not agree with the popular quotations about laughter. Participants over age fifty were more familiar with the Doctrine and Covenants verses about laughter, were more in agreement that these verses contradicted their own views, and more frequently reported feelings of guilt and confusion because of these verses. One possible explanation for these differences is that many of the older individuals

TABLE 2

Percentage of BYU-Hawaii and BYU-Provo Students, Senior Missionaries, and BYU-Hawaii and BYU-Provo Religion Faculty Agreeing with Statements 4-8

Statement	Stu- dents	Sr. Miss.	Rel. Fac.
4. The ideas expressed in the quotations, taken as a group, are true.	98	100	97
5. The ideas expressed in the quotations, taken as a group, are in harmony with the spirit of the gospel.	96	95	97
6. Gordon B. Hinckley would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	98	98	97
7. Most of the church leaders and religion teachers I have been personally acquainted with would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	97	88	94
8. My parents (or the people who raised me) would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	95	81	88

TABLE 3

Percentage of BYU–Hawaii and BYU–Provo Students, Senior Missionaries, and BYU–Hawaii and BYU–Provo Religion Faculty Agreeing with Statements 9–15

Statement	Stu- dents	Sr. Miss.	Rel. Fac.
9. The Doctrine and Covenants is the revealed word of God.	97	98	100
10. I was already familiar with the general content of these scriptures concerning laughter prior to reading them right now.	75	95	97
11. It is the position of the church that laughter is unrighteous.	9	16	0
12. The statements about laughter in these scriptures contradict my personal views about laughter based on my life experience.	39	49	9
13. There have been times when I have laughed loudly, then thought of these scriptures (or of teachings in the temple) and felt a bit guilty about my laughter.	24	44	38
14. I feel, or have felt, confused about how to interpret these scriptures and apply them to my life.	44	44	16
15. These scriptures refer only to certain types of laughter in limited situations, but not to all laughter in all situations.	97	93	97

reflect the more negative attitudes about laughter we assume were prevalent during their youth.

Participants' Comments. At the end of the survey, space was provided for feedback. Participants were invited to share comments, insights, or experiences they had on the topic or about the survey. The bulk of the students' comments clearly reflected the influence of the current popular trend in favor of laughter and showed a level of sophistication that we did not anticipate. Many shared anecdotes illustrating the important role of laughter in their relationships with family and friends and in coping with everyday stresses. The phrases "I love to laugh" and "Laughter is the best medicine" appeared again and again. Others reiterated the distinction between light-heartedness and light-mindedness and emphasized that they understood the distinction before participating in the survey. Several

implied that they view laughter and spirituality not only as compatible but as belonging together. A twenty-two-year-old male in Provo wrote, “I can’t imagine the Savior being with children and not laughing with them.” Many referred to President Hinckley as a model for righteous humor and laughter. Several comments were amusing. A twenty-four-year-old Samoan woman wrote, “As a Latter-day Saint, I am aware of the importance to avoid loud laughter . . . [but] if some people have larger vocal cords, is it their fault?”

All the religion teachers except one wrote comments. Several wrote “Mormon jokes”; one teacher wrote a detailed account of the historical contexts of the Doctrine and Covenants verses. A fifty-five-year-old male wrote, “How can I lighten up and learn to laugh more? Are there exercises a person can do?” A fifty-one-year-old male wrote, “I would be unhappy if the Celestial Kingdom was a realm without a good sense of humor.” We conclude that these comments reflect the two competing influences of the impact of their generation and the depth of their Church education. Overall, the religion teachers endorsed lightheartedness as enthusiastically as the students did.

The responses of the missionaries showed the greatest diversity.¹⁴ One missionary made a verbal comment when returning the survey, asking how we could even pose questions suggesting that Heavenly Father might ever laugh. A sixty-seven-year-old sister missionary wrote, “I cannot imagine

TABLE 4

**Percentage of BYU–Hawaii and BYU–Provo Students, Senior
Missionaries, and BYU–Hawaii and BYU–Provo Religion Faculty
Agreeing with Statements 16–19**

Statement	Stu- dents	Sr. Miss.	Rel. Fac.
16. I understand the distinction made in this article [in the <i>Encyclopedia of Mormonism</i>] between light-mindedness and lightheartedness.	94	93	100
17. The views expressed in this article are correct.	97	88	100
18. Knowing the distinction between light mindedness and lightheartedness can relieve much of the guilt and confusion many people feel about laughter.	96	91	97
19. I was already clear about the distinction between light-mindedness and lightheartedness prior to reading this article.	78	81	97

the Lord heartily laughing.” But others endorsed a lighthearted approach to life. Several expressed regret that they had not laughed more during their life.

A religion teacher and a student shared what can only be described as testimonies of heavenly laughter. The religion teacher, a forty-year-old woman, wrote, “I have shared a laugh with Heavenly Father often over my own foibles or incidents that have given me pleasure. And I believe the laughter was shared.” The BYU–Hawaii student, a forty-six-year-old woman from the U.S. mainland, wrote, “I also had an experience where I *know* that Heavenly Father was chuckling at something I did. I will always remember the feeling of surprise I felt.”

Summary and Conclusion

A majority of the Church members we surveyed expressed a love of joyful laughter and an understanding—in many cases probably only intuitive—of the crucial differences between types of laughter.¹⁵ Nevertheless, we found that feelings of confusion and guilt about laughter are not uncommon, particularly among older members. Their situation was summarized by a sixty-two-year-old sister missionary:

I feel this study is of real importance to members of the church. Many of us are confused with what seem to be contradictions with how we were raised, the scriptures, and the ways of the world. I need to learn to use humor more in my life. I feel it is a real stress reliever and wish I had learned to use it appropriately as a young woman.

At first glance it would appear that the younger generations have a healthier and better-informed conceptualization of laughter. However, there are two problems with this conclusion. First, popular attitudes prevalent during youth are a major factor in shaping the lifelong attitudes of each generation, and popular attitudes swing widely and are rarely gospel attitudes. So while many older individuals in the Church may have a bias that discourages laughter, many younger individuals may have a bias that permits too much laughter. Second, the relationship between laughter and spirituality is complex. Recitation of the distinctions detailed in this article does not imply a meaningful or useful understanding of them. We concur with the religion teacher who wrote, “It takes some spiritual growing up and some life experience and coming to know the Lord better to come to understand what such words as ‘excess of laughter,’ ‘light-mindedness,’ and ‘soberness’ mean.”

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1. We use the term “active Church member” to refer to individuals who regularly involve themselves with Church activities and functions and have, therefore, been exposed to Mormon culture; we are not inferring anything about their level of spirituality. Also, we are not suggesting that the sample of active members who participated in this study represent the entire active membership of the Church.

2. Robert Provine, “Laughter,” *American Scientist* 84, no. 1 (1996): 41, 42.

3. Norman Cousins, *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration* (New York: Norton, 1979).

4. “Laughter, Laugh,” in “Topical Guide,” appendix to *The Holy Bible* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979).

5. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 432.

6. William N. Fillmore, “Light-Mindedness,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:836–37.

7. Chris Crowe, “A Good Sense of Humor,” *New Era* 16 (May 1986): 36.

8. Eileen Gibbons Kump, “A Year’s Supply of Humor,” *Ensign* 13 (August 1983): 67.

9. Glenn L. Pace, “Follow the Prophet,” *Ensign* 19 (May 1989): 26.

10. “It’s OK to Be Spiritual and Still Have Fun,” *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, March 10, 1985, 11, quoting Hoyt W. Brewster Jr., speech given at the Sidney B. Sperry Symposium on January 26, 1985, at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

11. “Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley,” *Church News*, February 3, 1996, 2.

12. “Accepting Divine Parentage Leads to Greater Purity,” *Church News*, October 14, 1984, 15.

13. John L. Hart, “Familiar Voice, Familiar Words,” *Church News*, April 14, 1985, 14.

14. It is axiomatic in lifespan psychology that older groups show greater diversity than do younger groups.

15. We base our conclusions only on the responses of the sample we surveyed and do not suggest that they necessarily apply to other samples or to the Church membership as a whole. We invite other researchers to use our survey with other samples of Church members in other locations.

TABLE 5

Summary of T-tests for Difference in Mean Scores of Senior Missionaries (N=43) and Religion Faculty (N=31)

Survey Item	Sr. Miss.		Rel. Fac.		<i>t</i> -value
	mean	SD	mean	SD	
1. There will be some laughter and playfulness in the Celestial Kingdom.	3.81	(0.40)	3.61	(0.76)	1.41
2. Heavenly Father laughs heartily on occasion.	3.44	(0.62)	3.41	(0.91)	0.18
3. The Savior laughs heartily on occasion.	3.34	(0.97)	3.41	(0.62)	0.33
4. The ideas expressed in the quotations, taken as a group, are true.	3.77	(0.43)	3.81	(0.40)	0.40
5. The ideas expressed in the quotations, taken as a group, are in harmony with the spirit of the gospel.	3.62	(0.54)	3.65	(0.49)	0.21
6. Gordon B. Hinckley would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	3.79	(0.42)	3.71	(0.46)	-0.74
7. Most of the church leaders and religion teachers I have been personally acquainted with would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	3.45	(0.67)	3.45	(0.57)	-0.01
8. My parents (or the people who raised me) would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	3.29	(0.92)	3.48	(0.68)	1.01
9. The Doctrine and Covenants is the revealed word of God.	3.88	(0.50)	4.00	(0.00)	*
10. I was already familiar with the general content of these scriptures concerning laughter prior to reading them right now.	3.56	(0.73)	3.75	(0.62)	1.19
11. It is the position of the church that laughter is unrighteous.	1.43	(0.77)	1.09	(0.30)	-2.33†
12. The statements about laughter in these scriptures contradict my personal views about laughter based on my life experience.	2.29	(1.09)	1.34	(0.83)	-4.08§
13. There have been times when I have laughed loudly, then thought of these scriptures (or of teachings in the temple) and felt a bit guilty about my laughter.	2.26	(1.16)	2.06	(0.91)	-0.78
14. I feel, or have felt, confused about how to interpret these scriptures and apply them to my life.	2.21	(1.15)	1.56	(0.84)	-2.70‡
15. These scriptures refer only to certain types of laughter in limited situations, but not to all laughter in all situations.	3.74	(0.54)	3.84	(0.58)	0.81
16. I understand the distinction made in this article between light-mindedness and lightheartedness.	3.67	(0.57)	3.88	(0.033)	1.84
17. The views expressed in this article are correct.	3.61	(0.63)	3.88	(0.34)	2.16†
18. Knowing the distinction between light-mindedness and lightheartedness can relieve much of the guilt and confusion many people feel about laughter.	3.71	(0.56)	3.75	(0.51)	0.34
19. I was already clear about the distinction between light-mindedness and lightheartedness prior to reading this article.	3.33	(0.87)	3.75	(0.51)	2.40‡

* Data insufficient for analysis; † $p < .05$; ‡ $p < .01$; § $p < .001$

TABLE 6

Summary of T-tests for Difference in Mean Scores of Participants Ages 50 or Younger (N=145) and Ages over 50 (N=75)

Survey Item	Age \leq 50		Age $>$ 50		<i>t</i> -value
	mean	SD	mean	SD	
1. There will be some laughter and playfulness in the Celestial Kingdom.	3.81	(0.46)	3.69	(0.62)	1.59
2. Heavenly Father laughs heartily on occasion.	3.65	(0.57)	3.42	(0.79)	0.50*
3. The Savior laughs heartily on occasion.	3.65	(0.57)	3.37	(0.83)	2.95†
4. The ideas expressed in the quotations, taken as a group, are true.	3.74	(0.47)	3.78	(0.41)	-0.73
5. The ideas expressed in the quotations, taken as a group, are in harmony with the spirit of the gospel.	3.54	(0.57)	3.63	(0.51)	-1.21
6. Gordon B. Hinckley would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	3.66	(0.52)	3.75	(0.43)	-1.26
7. Most of the church leaders and religion teachers I have been personally acquainted with would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	3.54	(0.60)	3.45	(0.63)	1.02
8. My parents (or the people who raised me) would agree with the ideas expressed in the quotations.	3.37	(0.58)	3.37	(0.83)	3.08†
9. The Doctrine and Covenants is the revealed word of God.	3.88	(0.49)	3.93	(0.38)	-0.78
10. I was already familiar with the general content of these scriptures concerning laughter prior to reading them right now.	3.06	(1.07)	3.64	(0.69)	-4.28‡
11. It is the position of the church that laughter is unrighteous.	1.39	(0.78)	1.28	(0.63)	1.04
12. The statements about laughter in these scriptures contradict my personal views about laughter based on my life experience.	2.20	(1.05)	1.88	(1.09)	2.13*
13. There have been times when I have laughed loudly, then thought of these scriptures (or of teachings in the temple) and felt a bit guilty about my laughter.	1.76	(0.96)	2.17	(1.06)	-2.89†
14. I feel, or have felt, confused about how to interpret these scriptures and apply them to my life.	2.32	(1.05)	1.93	(1.07)	2.55*
15. These scriptures refer only to certain types of laughter in limited situations, but not to all laughter in all situations.	3.70	(0.58)	3.78	(0.56)	-1.07
16. I understand the distinction made in this article between light-mindedness and lightheartedness.	3.68	(0.63)	3.76	(0.49)	-0.88
17. The views expressed in this article are correct.	3.78	(0.48)	3.76	(0.53)	0.75
18. Knowing the distinction between light-mindedness and lightheartedness can relieve much of the guilt and confusion many people feel about laughter.	3.72	(0.52)	3.73	(0.53)	-0.14
19. I was already clear about the distinction between light-mindedness and lightheartedness prior to reading this article.	3.13	(0.96)	3.51	(0.76)	-2.98†

* $p < .05$; † $p < .005$; ‡ $p < .001$

Conjugation

Once we get things sorted out, and time
is no more, the sun comes up white as stone.
We bow before the last dance can begin.
I take your hand in mine to lead you home.

Who said the past must be conditional?
or who decreed perfection should be now?
Step-by-step the dancer shows us how.
We twist and turn, we rise each time we fall.

The shadows by the river fade away,
and flowers bloom, each one a separate hue.
I pluck one and place it in your hair. You
proffer fruit full ripened from the tree.

With grace we pledge to never be alone,
to cleave together flesh to flesh as one.

—Donnell Hunter

“Miles to Go before I Sleep”

Brett Walker

Cold days were the hardest for her. A skiff of snow on the ground would mean that the air would pack around her instantly and invade every part, no matter how well insulated. She'd lose her breath for a few seconds. She'd have to watch where she stepped and let each foot fall sort of floppily just to test the ground for slipperiness before she put any weight on it at all.

“I hate living where it's cold. I want to move somewhere warm.” But she didn't really want to leave the mountains, the good schools, the community, her friends.

We first bought an electric blanket with dual controls. My side was never turned on. Then she bought a heating pad to clutch to her stomach the way a football player would take a hand-off. Later, I added a heated cover, also with dual controls, for our king-sized mattress. The thermostats on our walls rarely registered below 74 degrees. I slept under a sheet and the thin layer of the electric blanket, never turned on, folding the down comforter and bedspread across her side. “Where are you under there?” I joked about her being so small and barely making a bump at all under the covers.

“I'm freezing” were her two most common words.

“You have no body fat,” I'd say.

She missed the last part of summer and fall altogether, the time when the aspens turned yellow, the squaw bush and scrub oak orange, the rocky mountain maples red. You could see the change along the top edge of Squaw Peak first, then watch it creep down the shallow draws along the front of the mountain and finally into the foothills. We had usually gone to a place where the fall colors were amazing—up and over Pole Canyon and along a dirt road to a picnic area in a bowl at the base of Windy Pass. All that was too bumpy for her now.

One year we'd taken pictures of the kids there, four-year-old Cassidy sitting in the yellow elm leaves and tossing them in the air above the wispy blonde hair that barely covered her head. "Look here, Sweetie," my wife had said over my shoulder as I aimed the camera. "One. Two. Three."

The boys had run from the wasps that had found nectar in our peanut butter and jelly, pests that annoyed her no end.

"Why do they come around us?"

"We're sweet. They like us."

"Can't they just leave us alone for a minute?"

I laughed. "Just ignore them. If you wave your hands, they'll just notice you more. If you run, they'll want to play with you just like a dog does. Just ignore them."

Everyone sat still for as long as they could, not daring to bite their sandwiches for fear they'd consume a wasp. That was before she got so cold.

I took her place on a school field trip because her strength was lagging.

"Mom would have loved this," my youngest son had said. We'd hiked up a steep path for a mile and a half to Timpanogos Cave, coaxing other fifth-graders along. The trail was slick with rain, and I thought of her. My hood collected my thoughts as they tried to work their way out and sent them back to be thought again:

She was warm once. Pink and rosy. Wrists I could not wrap my fingers completely around, before four kids—a gradual sacrifice of body and soul. She was healthy then. I miss the healthy her.

Once we took a blanket to the top of Squaw Peak, past where people supposedly park to kiss and to a spot I knew about, where we'd parked the car and walked over a small rise to the brink of the valley. We'd sat and tried to find our house, using our fingers like the cross hairs of a scope, and felt as if we looked like Ralph Lauren models, only not nearly as maudlin—happy instead to know that we'd be together even after the pose was over.

That was then.

Her changes were very gradual. The birth of each child brought changes—a penicillin allergy, gall bladder surgery, a thyroid condition, and then more pain. Test after test, poking, prodding. A good doctor applying everything he knew, and people in the wings contributing. A full skeletal x ray showed something nonskeletal, a pooling.

The doctor explained it this way: "Radioactive tracers flow through the body outlining structures that can't otherwise be seen with x rays. With her it pooled too early. We think there's an obstruction."

The long arm of science reached into a hat and finally pulled something out. "We've got it." It was her liver, now made miserable by primary sclerosing cholangitis, a disease with no known cause and no cure.

“Basically, her liver is failing. The bile duct normally looks like a tree with a trunk that drains toxins into the intestines. Hers is starting to scar closed. First the fine branches way up in the liver and eventually the trunk itself.”

“How long?”

“It’s mostly just painful for now. Seven or eight years from now and you might need a new liver.”

“A new liver? How do you get a new liver?”

“From a donor . . . someone who has been declared brain dead with a family that decides to donate that person’s organs.”

“Okay, what if you don’t want a new liver?”

“Then ten years and you’re done.”

We wondered later that night how all this would happen. Even after a couple of trips to the pharmacy, we started to feel that seven or eight years was much further away than it had seemed at the doctor’s that day.



With two words, ten intervening years came crashing around us.

“I’m bleeding.”

For twelve days before Thanksgiving, we sat in a room at the hospital where she was hooked to a line dripping donated blood into her arm. No one could figure out why she was bleeding. I prayed, and everyone prayed, and we watched her slipping away.

One night after midnight, she almost left me, said she saw a light. A frenetic technician came to take her down to repeat a test that had turned up nothing a day or two earlier. We helped her into a wheelchair and took her out the door. *Stop. No, go*, I thought. (Her face was white, and she slumped to one side. Even though beads of perspiration dotted her forehead, she shivered without a blanket.)

We needed to know how this was happening so that the doctors could stop it. All internal parts except fifteen feet of her small intestine had been viewed through one means or another: x rays after swallowing barium, fluoroscopy, EGD, ERCP, colonoscopy, CT scan. They gave her medicines, an attempt to slow the leak that reduced blood pressure in the gut and that made her look and feel pregnant. Still, no one knew just where the leak was.

“We should go. We have a small window of time to try to get a picture of this.”

“Okay, let’s go.” We walked fast and poked at the elevator button until it arrived and walked fast again, her head to the side as we turned corners in the dark and eerily quiet hospital.

“Help . . . me!” Her words were barely audible.

The technician provided guidance. “Lift her feet. We’ve got to get her on the table.”

I kissed her forehead and tried to assure her. “Hold on. Hold on. Don’t go anywhere. Squeeze my hand. Squeeze my hand. Do it now!”



That Thanksgiving, my family gathered to share their most cherished blessings. My wife was at the dinner, our hospital stay miraculously over. So many people had prayed and touched her life. My head was still confused by what seemed like a quick exit from the hospital after begging the doctor to try just one more thing: take her off all her medicines and not transfer her to Salt Lake for exploratory surgery. Miraculously, the leak stopped. No explanation as to why. No discoveries. Only a doctor who admitted to practicing medicine the best he could, a doctor who, in a sacred moment over the telephone, had trusted my recommendation.

Because of her bad liver, she was turning yellow. She had taken to wearing purple-tinted sunglasses wherever she went to avoid the stares and hard-to-answer questions. In the right light, her skin looked tan, more acceptable than the yellow haze that coated her eyes. The word *jaundiced* stood out in any conversation, sounding blasphemous and insensitive.

Just before Christmas, we drove up the canyon, parked, and walked down the trail, the wind whipping around us and flinging snow inside our hoods. She walked tentatively, snuggled in her warmest ski coat and gloves, her semi-elegant ski cap down around her ears, covering her tiny head down to her eyes. She shivered uncomfortably but tried to be a good sport.

“Your head is no larger than a cantaloupe.” She was getting smaller all the time. Her liver was not doing its job of synthesizing proteins and cleaning her blood and producing chemicals critical to digestion.

Winter solstice. We’d always gone to feed the birds on this day. She loved this celebration of winter. The boys dragged wood, and we scraped the snow back. Within moments a fire roared and pushed the night farther into the falling snow. We sprinkled seeds far and wide, especially around the trunks of trees where the grass still showed through. The kids pinned slices of bread to the branches they could reach and began tossing bread like awkward Frisbees into the higher branches. Peanut butter was generously coated on sticks and trunks, a sloppy feeding for future friends.

“Whose woods these are, I think I know. His house is in the village, though. He will not see me stopping here to watch his woods fill up with snow.” My recitation of Frost’s wintry poem seemed apropos—especially

the ending. "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep. And miles to go before I sleep. And miles to go before I sleep." I looked at her. "You have miles to go, Sweetie. For better or worse. But you'll make it. I know you'll make it."

"I'm glad we're here," she said, sipping a mug of hot chocolate in futile defiance of the cold. I put my arm around her, compressing the down of her jacket until I found her tiny, shivering frame under it all. "Oh, there you are."

"Why can't I just get better?"



I found her sobbing when I came home for lunch. "I've prayed. I've gone to church. Does Heavenly Father really care about me?"

I tried to calm her down first with the party line. "Of course God cares. But miracles work on his schedule, not ours."

That didn't address her feelings. She was much sicker now. Her skin itched unbearably from toxins normally processed by a healthy liver. For weeks, fingernails and then a hair brush were inadequate for scratching until they put her on a medicine used to treat tuberculosis. "It works and we're not sure why," the doctor explained.

That helped her sleep a little better at nights. But our morning greetings shifted from "How'd you sleep?" and "Good morning" to "Hey, it's Mom!" and "I'm sorry to squeeze you so tight" and "Were you warm enough?" and other things that neither of us had wished to build into our daily greetings.

Despite all of this, she had never complained, never looked to the heavens with confusion and pain. Until now she had borne her illness like Job. And her concerns were not selfish. She didn't want to get well for wellness' sake alone.

"I want to get better. Now! I'm missing out on raising my children. I can't help at school. I can barely cook dinner. The house is a mess. Everything is falling apart . . ."

"You will get better. You just need a new liver."

"I don't want someone else's liver. I just want the one I have to work again."

"I want it to work, too." I'd tried to do my part but was feeling overwhelmed.

I buried my head in her arms and we cried together. "What do we do? How will we . . ."

Tears and honesty have an amazing effect on the heart. Despite the calm reassurance I'd had from her initial diagnosis until now, a reassurance that everything would work out, that she would walk through this fire and come out refined in some divinely understood way, I was still scared.

"Maybe the miracle you're looking for will happen differently than you would have it happen. Maybe you just need a new liver."

For the first time in years, she looked at me with the acknowledgment that she was sick.



"She's moved up the list to number two."

We repeated this to friends and family members many times. After a two-year wait to get "sick enough," she'd been officially listed for a liver transplant in early January. Now she was closer to winning a lottery for which she hadn't even wanted to buy tickets.

We had to wait for a donor. And since this was a liver, finding a donor meant that someone else had to die—a tragedy whose only positive outcome was a gift of life for us. It was too hard to talk about that. But a few times as we'd go to bed, she'd say, "I want them to call with a liver."

May sixth, ten fifty-eight P.M., the phone erupted in its stand. I answered it the best way I could through the haze of deep sleep. The bed shuddered as I said, "Yes . . . Yes . . . We can be there by three o'clock."

She was shaking. "I never . . . I don't . . . what . . . I . . ."

Calls were made. "We're going to the hospital to get a liver" were harder words to say than I had imagined. I sobbed on the first few utterances, but telling more people made them easier.

There, nurses prepped her and brought warm blankets for the endless cold that only she felt. At seven that morning, we were informed that the donor's liver was a match and that it was time to go.

"I love you. You're so brave. I'll be praying. You'll live forever." *Miles to go*, I thought.

"They're ready for her" cut off any other words we might have had. With a squeeze of hands and a kiss, she was wheeled away. I could have wept except for the exhaustion that poured over me. I wanted to cry, but I didn't.

The sixth-floor waiting room would be my home that day. Calls every two hours were promised to keep us posted on her progress. The first three calls all said the same thing: "They're removing the old liver and getting her ready." Finally, around noon, we were told the new liver had arrived. I'm not sure what I expected, but the idea of removing the old liver without the

new one standing by was simply overwhelming. By early afternoon, they were finally putting the new liver in.

Around four, the doctor came.

“She’s done. She did well. You’ll be able to see her soon.”

I went in to see her at six that evening. Intensive care can be a scary place—meters, hoses, darkened rooms that seem quiet despite the noises coming from them. She was stirring and recognized my voice. Her eyes and face were swollen from the fluids she’d received during surgery, making her nearly unrecognizable. Her arms were tied to the rails of her bed so that in her sedated state she wouldn’t pull out the breathing tube, the lines going in at her shoulders and directly to her heart, and the other monitors.

“Hi. You did well.”

She nodded. She pried her mouth open beyond the tape, gagging a bit on the breathing tube and trying to say something. When they finally removed it at nine that night, her first words to the technicians were “I love you guys!”

She was back.

By nine the next morning, she was sitting up in a chair, cheeks pinker now. The nurses kicked me out of intensive care so they could make changes and help her with a sponge bath.

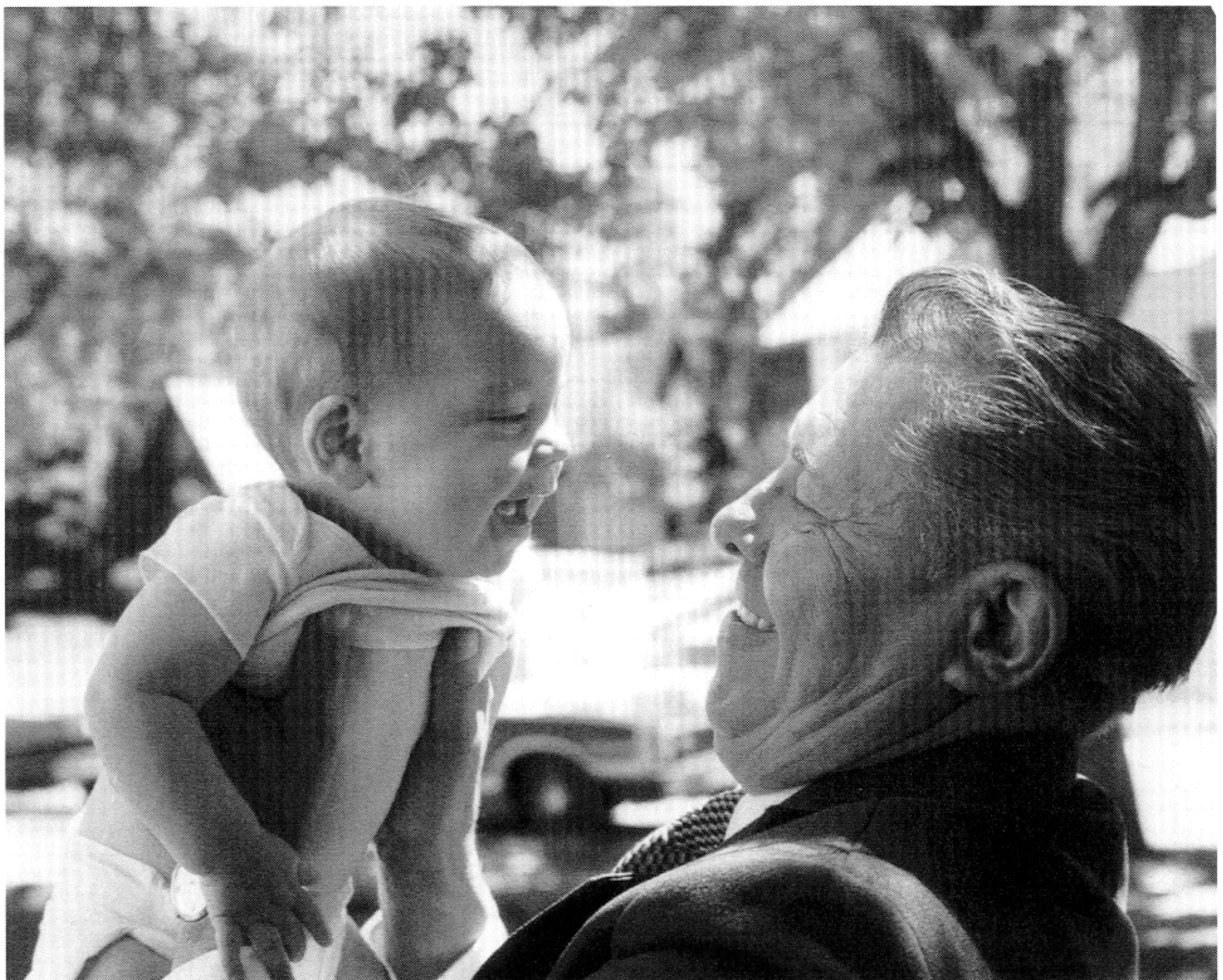
When I came back, a large fan was blowing across the cold linoleum floor in her room. For the first time in a long time, I was cold. *They’re freezing her out*, I thought.

“How are you doing?” I gripped my shoulders with my hands, wishing I’d brought a jacket and an extra blanket, maybe a heating pad, for her.

And then words that I hadn’t heard for years. My wife’s words, made possible by the altruism of the family of a forty-six-year-old Idahoan, a family mourning their loss while we were beginning to see the life-restoring value of their donation. In a few simple words, she rolled the past ten years together and clearly declared that there were still miles to go.

“It’s too hot in here.”

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Ben Bergin with one of his grandsons, Spokane, Washington, summer 1974. This photograph from Allen Bergin's family album illustrates not only familial love but also the concept of generativity, or influence for good across generations. Generativity can extend to the larger community as well as to our descendants. Courtesy Allen E. Bergin.

Love and Intimacy in Family, Kinship, Friendship, and Community

Allen E. Bergin and Mark H. Butler

In addition to gospel principles, concepts from secular research can help us move closer to ideal relationships. Drawing on current research from the social sciences that is in harmony with gospel principles, this article, which is taken from a chapter of a new publication entitled *Eternal Values and Personal Growth: A Guide on your Journey to Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Wellness*, explores ways people can become more Christlike in marriage, in friendships, and across generations.

THE ECOLOGY OF INTIMACY

Our identities are part of a social ecology—a complex system of adaptation and accommodation that occurs in all living systems, including human relationships. Newly married couples, for example, experience a period of adjustment analogous to the way biological organisms in an ecosystem adjust to the introduction of a new species. As each partner becomes aware of elements in the relationship that do not coordinate, the bliss of courtship and early marriage is challenged. For example, a husband might discover that his idea of closeness requires that the couple spend much more time together than his wife's idea of closeness does. She might find that he does not want to talk as much as she does. Both might realize they have different criteria for deciding how to spend money. Their new living system must be coordinated if it is to survive and thrive.

In nature the more powerful members of a living system defend their existence by brute force and compel others to adapt to them. In plant ecology, for example, some more powerful species overshadow and even

strangle their weaker host. The most fit survive while the less fit die. But in marriage, a power-based approach can be lethal to the entire system. At best it creates debilitating conflict. At worst it kills the marriage. In some power-based marriages, a coordinated interaction of dominance and submission does develop, but it is a sham intimacy. Even pathological relationship systems, such as violent marriages or families, can achieve a crude, adaptive ecology over time, just as some plant and animal ecosystems can survive by being parasitic and exploitive.

In healthy, godly intimacy, each partner makes a deliberate choice to consecrate himself or herself to the welfare of the marriage by caring for, celebrating, and enlarging each other. When both partners are able to make this commitment, they experience gradual development of a balanced marital ecology. This process entails coordination of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and behaviors that in turn become a springboard for deeper intimacy.

Rebirth through Healthy Relationships: The Wellspring of Christlike Love and Intimacy

The experience of a healthy marital or family ecology can give birth to a stronger self that is increasingly able to sustain Christlike thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. To understand this process, we must first review the basis of identity.

When you were born, your identity began to form in a developmental process that extends throughout your life. As a newborn infant, you were the world and the world was you. At first there was no distinction between your hand and your mother's breast or your father's caress. Within a few months, you began to discern your separateness and began to understand your bodily self as an autonomous identity. Physical boundary, then, is the initial marker of identity.

With further development, you perceived that you were not only physically separate from others but also mentally and spiritually separate. You became differentiated from others by how you processed information, by the choices you made, by how you used and shared your resources (such as talents, energy, possessions), and by what groups you chose to join. You experienced yourself as a unique identity through awareness of your and others' different thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, worldviews, and interpretation of events. During adolescence, you might have audaciously, maybe even rebelliously, asserted your uniqueness to ensure that everyone around you knew that you were an independent being.

You also experienced yourself as a unique identity in terms of autonomy and self-regulation. Things you had immediate control over comprised

your *self*, while things that acted independently of your will comprised *other*. As you grew, these boundary markers defined and expressed your identity.

As a developing identity, you also exercised agency to direct your own development. But you were not self-sufficient. You experienced need for connection, interaction, and interdependence with others. In time, these feelings and experiences aroused a desire for and attempts to secure close relationships. These attempts began in your family of origin. They continue their mortal expression in marriage, family, and close friendships. Their ultimate consummation is Christlike love and connection with all of creation.

When a person chooses marriage, experiences begin that have the potential to fulfill the ultimate formulation of identity—the dialectic of the *I* and *we*. The term *dialectic* refers to two entities that co-exist in tension with one another yet together form an integrated whole. If either entity is lost, the other and the whole are harmed. For example, joy co-exists in dialectic relationship with pain. We cannot have the joy of intimacy without taking the risk of being vulnerable to rejection and pain. In intimate relationships, without the *I* there is no *we*, although too dominant an *I* threatens the *we*, and too dominant a *we* threatens the *I*. *Self* must be subsumed, to one degree or another, to belong to something larger. In this act of self-sacrifice, the *I* is not destroyed; rather, paradoxically, it is enlarged.

It is within the crucible of this *I-we* dialectic that full intimacy develops. As a committed couple, we have experiences that blur the boundaries and markers of our autonomous self, which in our youth we so boldly affirmed. Marriage and family therapist Terry Hargrave, in a comment on his own marriage, captures the idea of true intimacy when he says, “I don’t like ballet, but *us* does.”

In “us” intimacy, experience becomes collaborative, not independent. We cope and manage our turmoil and torment; we magnify our euphoria and joy; we live and experience life as much through and with our partner as by ourselves. At times a wife may understand her husband’s experience more clearly than he does himself. A husband may at times empathetically articulate his wife’s concerns better than she does. Spouses increasingly experience things similarly. When they do not, they seek for convergence through dialogue. The common experience of one spouse finishing another’s sentences is an example of this convergence. Beliefs and worldview become more and more shared through innumerable conversations and experiences.¹ Shared belief systems, in turn, redefine the boundary of self.² I am no longer self-contained. My thinking, feeling, and knowing are interdependent with another.³

Our experience of autonomy and self-regulation also changes within the intimate borders of marriage. Decision making is shared; consensus is

sought; activities and schedules are negotiated rather than entirely self-determined. Self-mastery, too, including repentance and recovery from serious problems, is relationship based. We are not the maverick captains of our souls. Our surviving and thriving are interdependent.

The parameters of resource allocation shift as well. We learn that our own welfare and the welfare of our spouse are inseparable—to nourish our partner is to nourish ourselves. We have become functionally, ecologically, one. As the Savior has told us, “Give, and it shall be given unto you. . . . For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

Identity, Intimacy, and the Rebirth of Self

As interdependence matures in marriage and families, we may experience a new sense of self. We may view anew the hive, not the bee; the colony, not the ant. We may perceive a more socially vital self that lives, breathes, and has an existence that transcends our former individuality. This rebirth of self can profoundly alter our understanding of the distinction between self and other, as Bahr and Bahr have noted:

The assumption of a separate and separable self is not shared by all peoples of the world. In alternative conceptions, the self is seen as open and continuous with others. In this view, as one shows respect for another, she necessarily respects herself. If through her actions she injures or harms another, she also injures herself. And if she gives of self in appropriate interaction with others and with the intent of fostering the growth of another, her own growth is enhanced. Conversely, a refusal to sacrifice self-interest may impoverish the self.⁴

When self is reborn in this communal sense, self-sacrifice and altruism become second nature. Consecration of ourselves to the growth and well-being of another, together with our own, becomes the natural consummation of our own life and happiness. Understood in this manner, intimacy is the celestial behavior that arises from a celestial comprehension and expression of our true, relational identity.

As we approach this celestial intimacy, we discover that we have received a new heart constructed in the image of God. We are capable of promoting, nurturing, and sustaining eternal relationships that are joyful, fulfilling, and enlarging. This new heart is given as a gift of the Spirit (Moro. 7:47–48). It leads us to the kind of life that God lives (John 17:3), which includes eternal relationships, eternal progression, and eternal increase.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: PHASES AND STAGES

If marriages were static—a “snapshot” of two people in the perfect pose of affection, like an engagement photograph—there would be no need for covenant commitment and Christlike consecration. People could ensure marital success by searching carefully until they found “the one,” the perfect fit, the missing piece to their puzzle. Relationships would endure and thrive because of simple compatibility. Such a relationship would be easy indeed, as the work of marriage and intimacy would be completed during the searching stage.

But basing a marriage decision on an overly idealistic compatibility wish—that we can find “the one”—poses substantial risk. When difficulties in a marriage arise, the logical conclusion is that the selection process was faulty. The next step is either resignation to living with a mistake or divorce and a renewal of the search. Neither remedy is appealing. The resignation response leads to a lifeless marriage, a mere husk without the heart. The search-some-more response leads to unstable and soul-damaging serial monogamy.

Covenant Relationships

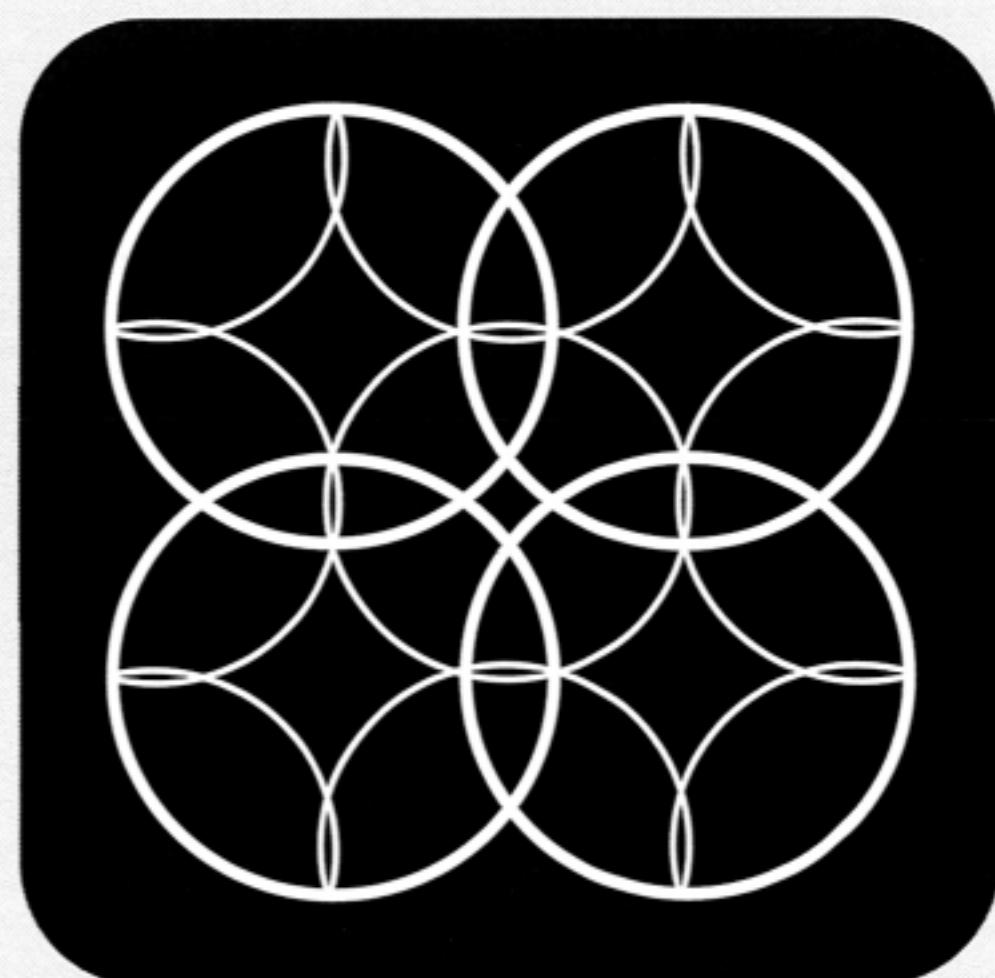
by Mark Butler

Once, while in the temple, I was struck by the beautiful pattern of needlework on an altar and its symbolism of covenant relationships (a similar pattern is represented below).

View each circle as an identity. As your eye moves from identity to identity, you can see that each is whole, but at the same time each is formed in part through a shared connection. The portion of identity shared with another does not encroach on or diminish the other. Each identity remains complete and whole, both as a singularity and as an element of a larger pattern.

Further, no identity is lost in the larger pattern, though by focusing on any given point you may “see” one element for the moment and not another.

So also are covenant relationships—marriages and families are bound together through time and eternity across generations, but individual identities are preserved. Independence, connection, and interdependence intermingle in perfect balance and harmony. None overshadows any other. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



The perfect compatibility ideal is therefore untenable. Marriages are not static but ever-changing. They are a living ecology of two people whose lives are intertwined in an intimate system maintained ultimately far more by covenant and consecration than by an easy fit of compatibility. It is not a matter of finding two puzzle pieces that fit together perfectly, but a matter of two people, full of Christlike love, under covenant and committed to puzzling through the various shapes and circumstances of their lives, creating and re-creating, fitting and refitting a loving and eternal union.

A *covenant-and-consecration model of marriage* is reflected in the temple marriage ceremony itself, where individuals signify in the presence of witnesses their free-will choice to receive their partner in marriage. They make a commitment that is unqualified in any way, including what the future may reveal about whether the chosen partner really was the “right person.” In marriages anchored this way, partners make a choice based on their best judgment. More importantly, they commit themselves to stand by their choice and *make* it the right choice through effort and throughout all the seasons of life. Then, when differences and disappointments arise, there is a basic anchor of commitment that sustains the marriage by problem-solving efforts.⁵

Marital Life Cycle

Researchers have found that most intimate, enduring relationships experience typical cycles. By carefully observing marriages over many years, researchers have identified four *seasons of love* (Eros, romantic love, friendship, and agape) and four *seasons of marriage* (visionary, adversarial, dormant, vital).⁶

Seasons (Stages) of Love

It appears that all enduring intimate relationships pass through the seasons of Eros, romantic love, friendship, and agape. However, the length of seasons varies from relationship to relationship. Young, sometimes newly married university students often ask, “Do all couples have to go through all these stages, or can they skip some?”—usually meaning themselves. The answer is that, like the seasons of the year, seasons of love are an inevitable part of life.

Eros. Eros is sexual attraction and desire. It is biological in origin and operation. Its primary function is to ensure perpetuation of the human family through both reproduction and strengthening the binding tie between husband and wife. As husbands and wives commit to and maintain fidelity in their sexual relationship, Eros draws them to each

other and encourages them to work diligently for a satisfying, enduring relationship where sexual desire remains strong and is regularly expressed.

As a form of love, Eros alone is highly conditional and self-oriented. While sexual expression between two people can and should include love, respect, and nurture, these are less self-focused than Eros. Consequently, by itself Eros is potentially dangerous because it does not consider the restraints on its expression that are essential for the full, multidimensional experience of love.

Romantic Love. Romantic love is psychological in origin and operation. It is characterized by infatuation and mutual ego-affirmation. One or both persons experience an obsession-like attraction based on an idealized image of the other person. When someone is attracted to us and “in love” (or “in worship”) with us, we feel euphoric. A romantic link is forged, a sort of quid pro quo connection: if you’ll be my perfect partner, I’ll affirm (worship) you, and vice versa. It is a tenuous link because idealized imagery always erodes. No two people can be brought into close quarters for very long before the idealized person fades and is replaced by the reality of flawed humanity.

Those addicted to the rush of romantic love often become serial romantics, hanging on to a relationship only until they have captured the object of their infatuation or have achieved the “token” they need from another’s infatuation with them. The token may be sex, clinging emotional dependency, or the experience of a conquest. As soon as that token is obtained, the adrenaline rush disappears. The relationship is cast off, and the headlong rush into the next romantic experience begins again. The word “experience” is critical here, because the serial romantic does not love people but rather is addicted to an experience that involves people. Thus romantic love, valuable as it is, if untempered by other types of love, can lead to instability and emotional devastation.

Serial romances can arise during the difficult middle years of marriage, when the buildup of stresses begins to wrinkle and gray one partner’s view of the other, and some wonder if they could have chosen better. Those who succumb often go through multiple brief relationships, leaving behind broken hearts and shattered lives, all the while telling themselves that the next one will be the “right one.” But they will never find someone who will remain eternally infatuated with them or with whom they will be eternally infatuated. True intimacy is about choosing, covenanting, and then becoming.

Couples should be forewarned against building a marriage relationship on either Eros or romantic love alone. These stages of love may get things going and heat things up, but they are not sustainable. Nevertheless,

Eros and romantic feelings can both survive and thrive in marriages that are anchored in *friendship* and *agape*.

Friendship. Friendship love is social in origin and operation. It is based on compatibility. Unlike Eros love and romantic love, friendship love thrives in an atmosphere of security, commitment, and safety. It is not awakened or intensified by the uncertainty of “the chase.” In the day-to-day interaction of marriage, friendship plays a vital role. It ensures complete safety and is a sound basis for healthy interaction. Friendship love can include similar beliefs and values, shared interests and activities, and the shared stewardship of a family.

Friendship love is strikingly different from Eros and romantic love in at least two respects. First, friendship love is less conditional on what we are “getting” from the relationship. Second, friendship love is more other-oriented. In its highest expression, friendship can be completely unconditional and other-consecrated. The pinnacle example of such friendship is Jesus Christ. At the last supper, Jesus invited his disciples to be his friends and foreshadowed that he would lay down his life for his friends (John 15:12–14). He then invited them to love one another in the same way he loved them. This ultimate willingness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of others merges into godly love.

Agape. Agape love is God’s love. In all its expressions, the mark of agape love is a fundamental regard for the welfare of all creation. Agape expresses itself as “I love you simply because you are, and because you are, I desire to help you become.” Agape is pure in its intent, uncompromising in its motives, and singular in its purpose. It acts for the growth of all things, that all things might fill the measure of their creation and find joy. Our Father in Heaven expresses this love to us, his spirit sons and daughters, in the covenantal assertion, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Agape is love and kindness without ulterior motive. It is not fawning adoration and naive worship but fully informed, I-love-you-anyway caring, helping, and generosity. Agape is experienced less as an intense feeling than as an abiding yearning for the other. It consumes one’s life and actions in service. Agape is altruism in action. It is charity, the pure love of Christ (Moro. 7:47).

As with most things of great value, agape love is difficult to achieve. This holy love can be nurtured by effort but cannot be earned, for it is a gift of God by the ministration of the Holy Spirit. We must “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ” (Moro. 7:48). Without agape, our lives and loves are mere “sounding

brass" and a "tinkling cymbal" (Moro. 7:46; 1 Cor. 13:1). Relationships cannot thrive and abide, mortally or eternally, without agape, because it includes the necessary ingredients to enduring connection and commitment: repentance, forgiveness, healing, redemption, patience, long-suffering, service, self-sacrifice, and devotion beyond recompense. In marriage and family, such charity is the ultimate and unbreakable binding tie, for it places off limits all thoughts, expressions, and actions that could hurt or harm and seeks in every way the growth and happiness of one's partner, one's family, and all others in one's domain of care and concern.

We see agape love commonly in the self-sacrificing, nurturing relationships between parents and their children. Human history is replete with unassuming accounts of mothers and fathers who have laid down their lives for their loved ones. Some have done so in one desperate, heroic moment, but most lay down their lives one day at a time, wearing out their bodies and their hearts in yearning and acting for the welfare of their beloved ones. One day at a time, this love takes its bearer on a journey to a new place and a new way of being, where, paradoxically, the body may be spent but the soul is enlivened.

Reflections on the Four Stages of Marital Love

Eros love and romantic love are kindling to the fire of relationships—that important spark. They may get things going, but they burn hot, burn fast, and burn out. For the relationship to endure, Eros love and romantic love must very soon be merged into and integrated with friendship love and agape love. Friendship love is the large, heavy log that fuels the fire of a marriage relationship. This log, once lit, can abide occasional inclement weather without being extinguished.

Agape love might be represented by the rocks that encircle the fire. These rocks enclose passion within safe boundaries, preventing a stray spark from igniting a fire outside the circle. These rocks also soak up the heat and energy of the fire, retaining it and radiating it back as needed. As anyone who has doused a campfire knows, rocks heat up to their core and can still be warm to the touch even after a thorough drenching. Like children at a campfire, we may enjoy watching sparks fly up as kindling is added from time to time. But the adults standing around are well aware that the heat needed for cooking, warmth, and protection from storms comes from the less spectacular coals forming beneath and from the rocks that radiate all night long. Agape love is like these rocks that keep couples and families warm through storms and the changing seasons of life.

Seasons (Stages) of Marriage

The four seasons or stages of marriage are the visionary, adversarial, dormant, and vital. As with the seasons of love, these stages follow predictable patterns in every marriage, although the dormant stage may not occur if the couple resolves conflicts well. The degree of distress during the adversarial stage and the degree of isolation during the dormant stage can be intensified or diminished by each partner's measure or lack of Christlike love, compassion, commitment, patience, and longsuffering. These stages of marriage were originally developed by S. Miller and others.⁷ We have adapted their work for our purposes here.

Visionary Stage. During the visionary stage, a married couple idealizes their relationship. They expect a blissful future together, and the focus is on "us" and what "we" will do and become together. On the positive side, the visionary stage gets the relationship off to a good start and with high energy. On the negative side, the couple discounts or ignores traits of each partner and of the relationship that are incongruent with the idealized image. Conflict and differences are stowed away rather than acknowledged and resolved. This stage is illustrated in the following report from a student:

We have been married for almost six months. For every day that goes by, I love him more and more. I feel that nothing can break us apart as long as we adhere to the covenants we promised in the temple and the covenants we renew every Sunday. My love for my husband is real. I feel that his happiness is my happiness and vice versa. Not in a total loss of ego boundaries, but in that I want to give him everything that is in my power to give. Our marriage is a union between us and God, which no man can destroy as long as we do our part in keeping the commandments. We are a total union of our hearts, our hopes, our lives, our love, our future, and our everything. . . .

What seems to make the difference between my infatuation with John and my true love with George is that with George I am real. I am myself. We included Christ and our Heavenly Father in our courting. We love our Heavenly Father and trust him to help us in need. I believe that is a big strength in our relationship. . . .

Our marriage is based on commitment to the Lord, each other, and the family. . . . The reward of one hundred percent commitment is a healthy family that will branch and give birth to other healthy families.

As tranquil and beautiful as the above relationship sounds, inevitable pressures will build in the background. Eventually this pressure, like water behind a dam, compels some degree of acknowledgment of problems, either to oneself or within the relationship.

Adversarial Stage. As the spouses encounter real-life challenges, they usually experience disillusionment, disagreement, and conflict. Concealed, unacknowledged conflict breeds resentment and prevents the relationship from growing. Partners often fear that their negative feelings signal possible failure of the marriage, so they let disagreements build like water behind a dam. When the dam bursts, as it inevitably does, the ensuing discord becomes confirmation of their worst fears. They may conclude to try even harder to hold back conflict, not recognizing that this “solution” is part of the problem. The repetition of such a pattern can lead to the serious marital distress they had feared. Overt conflict, too, if not handled carefully, can be damaging. But if disagreements are handled with maturity and commitment and without pretense, greater intimacy can develop over time.

When the idealized image of marriage begins to erode, partners often begin attempting to change one another. Internal dialogue might go something like this: “Well, I see now that he’s not perfect, but that’s okay. I can rebuild him.” This common approach damages the relationship because the other person feels unaccepted. Resentment typically follows. The relationship can be at great risk at this stage unless both partners dedicate themselves to working through problems. In some cases, one or both partners cannot endure the shattered ideal image, and they may pursue the ideal in a new relationship where reality is again obscured by the dynamics of the idealized visionary stage.

Such dire consequences can be avoided if marital partners understand that disagreements should be expected, acknowledged, and approached. Gospel perspectives (for example, Matt. 5:23–24; D&C 42:88), clinical wisdom, and empirical research⁸ all clearly confirm that conflict is inevitable and can be handled successfully by applying proven skills. Numerous communication skills and conflict resolution strategies, guidelines, and assessments are available.⁹ Therapists can offer recommendations, and local libraries have many resources. Becoming skilled at intimate communication helps couples maintain and strengthen their intimate connection.

A BYU student wrote about how his parents weathered storms and forged an even stronger commitment:

My parents are not perfect, and neither is their marriage. But that is what makes them the ultimate example of the ideal. Without rough times, they would not be as strong today. Victor Brown said that time is the ultimate test of commitment. Ten years ago things were extremely stormy. My dad was between jobs and my mom was dissatisfied with who knows how many things. At one point my dad asked my mom if she

wanted a divorce. As Brown said, “Family living is not for emotional weaklings,” but because of their commitment to God and their covenants, today, despite arguments, they boast that they’ve never been happier and more content with life and with one another. They are not content because they have done everything right, but because they did the *most important things* right: working unselfishly toward improving their whole relationship (no fragmentation). Both were willing to sacrifice, exercise self control, and risk everything, and now they are enjoying the fruits of their efforts.

Dormant Stage. If healthy problem-solving does not occur and the couple remains together, exasperation and exhaustion set in. Spouses can become frustrated that their efforts do not produce change—“It seems he can’t be changed. Maybe he is just defective.” Partners may surrender in an uneasy truce and live more quietly together, though there is no true peace. Conflict diminishes, and the dormant stage of the relationship begins.

Partners in this stage withdraw from one another emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Outsiders may observe a loss of vitality, energy, and life in the relationship. Lacking are the living marrow and sinew that make an intimate relationship joyful. Hobbies, civic service, children, church service, and work may be used as substitutes for lost intimacy.¹⁰ The focus shifts from the relationship to me—my interests—and allowing freedom for my partner to do the same.

In some cases, during this stage partners renew their individual development and growth, reducing pressure on the marriage to meet all needs. But in most cases, partners simply avoid issues with each other and go their own way, shutting out the other. “Living under the gradually accumulating layers of hurt and pain over the years,” families petrify and hearts turn to stone.¹¹ When partners give up on each other in this way, the relationship is at greatest risk.¹²

Stonewalling—the refusal of one or both spouses to talk or relate in any meaningful way—is an important sign that the relationship has reached this critical point. In some instances, one or both partners may indulge in extramarital emotional or sexual substitutes for lost intimacy. Relationships that reach the nadir of the dormant stage likely will disintegrate in time.

Dormant relationships are in need of healing that moves them toward a reborn, vital relationship. If couples are faithful to their covenants, faithful to the Lord, and prayerful, they will be able to renew their relationship.¹³ Marital therapy research has identified *softening, forgiveness, and acceptance* as important components in this process. It requires a couple’s best efforts and divine assistance. “Without the kind of forgiveness that

stems from the Atonement—that pays the demands of justice and fully heals all family members—there is no eternal family. . . . The Atonement of Christ redeems us—redeems us individually, and redeems our relationships.”¹⁴

Vital Stage. In the vital stage, both partners consciously recommit energies to the relationship, eventually forming a stronger bond than in any of the previous stages. The begrudging resignation of the dormant stage yields to acceptance and genuine care. Partners seek to actively nurture each other’s welfare within the framework of their partner’s goals and definition of growth, not their own. High value is placed on blending as a pair and balancing similarities and differences. The goal becomes to forge a lasting and powerful relationship that creates a synergy—a whole greater than the parts—from the unique contributions of two individuals.

As these changes take root, the relationship experiences wholeness and radiates vitality. The couple typically maintains strong boundaries and for the sake of the relationship contains resources, information, and decision making within the relationship. The report of a married student reflects these principles:

As our relationship continued to grow, we shared more and more experiences with one another. He saw me at what I still consider my worst. I saw him when he was not his best. We never put up a front, and we were entirely open with one another. He shared experiences and feelings that, had I been using him or the relationship for my own gratification, I would have ended it because of the discomfort they brought to me. He suffered with me through some of my greatest miseries. Yet neither of us ever felt fear of rejection or any desire to end the relationship because we had developed a true love for each other and our relationship was based on a real intimacy. We chose to invest ourselves for the relationship. We backed this investment with the commitment of a marriage we consider eternal.

I shared my innermost self with him in a way that left me vulnerable to rejection and heartbreak. He did the same. Without this risk, we never could have gotten to know each other so completely and experienced the joy of true intimacy. . . . My total acceptance of his self, faults and all, was essential to my learning about him. Had I rejected him for his flaws, he would have stopped risking exposing them to me, and I would have known only the man he wanted me to know. This is why so many marriages fail: the partners feel cheated at not receiving the whole other person instead of just the rosy side they knew about before the marriage.

Because we have been exposed to one another’s flaws and know that we cannot change those flaws in the other person, we realize that there will be difficult times ahead. We have seen times when we may not have particularly liked a side of the other person, and we know that will continue until both are perfect, so we need to make the conscious decision to actively work on ourselves and our relationship to keep it alive.

Faithful, Christlike intimacy is fully realized by a husband and wife who have stayed the course until they bring to fruition the vital stage of their marriage. Stability, commitment, and satisfaction typically are at their highest point during this stage. The partners fully accept each other with genuinely unconditional, Christlike love. They are grateful for one another. They regard the other's well-being and happiness as their highest aspiration. They regularly ask what the other wants and needs from them. They are not simply revisiting their first honeymoon but have created a second honeymoon. Their reward now is a relationship that is fully knowing and fully loving. Their relationship is deeper, more complete, and more intimate than at any other time.

Reflections on the Four Seasons of Marriage

This model is potentially a powerful tool for couples. Understanding each stage can temper its challenges. For example, couples can see the Eden-like visionary stage as satisfying to a degree but lacking in the experience, depth, and satisfaction that come only with knowledge and experience. They can perceive the work and struggle of the adversarial and dormant stages as necessary to attaining the exalting pinnacle of the vital stage. The vital stage is a very real redemption of the relationship, but it is not a return to the pristine, ignorant bliss of the visionary Eden. It is mature, stable, committed, nurturing, and loving, with full knowledge and without illusions. It is fully realized intimacy.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES ON THE MARITAL LIFE CYCLE

Marital success requires learning how to manage the adversarial and dormant stages, which means learning how to communicate and how to resolve conflict, according to research spanning twenty years by Notarius and Markman. They tracked 135 engaged couples yearly for two decades and found that *couple communication and conflict management patterns are the best predictors of marital success*. “What predicts the future of a relationship is . . . how couples handle differences, conflicts, and disagreements,”¹⁵ not the existence of conflicts per se. They found that poor communication and conflict management reliably predict divorce.

Two of the danger signs Notarius and Markman looked for were *escalation* and *husband withdrawal with wife pursuing*.¹⁶ Escalation patterns, where negative feelings about differences intensify, signal an acute and destructive symptom of the adversarial stage. Withdrawal and stonewalling, symptoms of the dormant stage, often follow. The husband's withdrawal or stonewalling coupled with the wife's pursuing is highly predictive of

divorce.¹⁷ In other words, the wife pursues interaction in an attempt to reengage the husband, but the result is often further hostility. This quiet stage in a relationship might look more peaceful to outsiders than the conflict of the adversarial stage, but the relationship is actually at greatest risk, either for legal divorce or emotional divorce.

Notarius and Markman note that awareness of threats most couples experience can help couples reduce their risk, because with awareness they can take preemptive measures. For example:

1. Disagreements in relationships are natural, even inevitable, and how they are handled determines how much of a threat they are. If they are not handled well, they gradually erode intimacy, love, affection, and attraction. “Happy couples have a way of controlling . . . negative behaviors and not letting them get out of hand. Unhappy couples tend to go into a pattern of escalation or withdrawal in the face of those negative behaviors. Over time, that takes a tremendous toll on relationships.”¹⁸

A preemptive measure is to learn principles of conflict management, as mentioned above. Couples who take the time to do this show a 50 percent lower rate of separation and divorce.

2. Reciprocating a negative comment or behavior threatens marriages. Gottman found that domestically violent couples, not surprisingly, have excessive negative exchanges.¹⁹ Once one partner initiates negative interaction, the other tends to respond in kind, creating a feedback loop that can escalate to emotional, spiritual, and sometimes physical violence.

Conversely, Gottman found among nonviolent couples that both partners have the ability to resist reciprocating a negative behavior or comment from the other. In gospel terms, we might say they “[put] off the natural man [or woman] and [become] a Saint through the atonement of Christ” (Mosiah 3:19), turning the other cheek (Matt. 5:39) for the sake of their relationship. *A preemptive measure, therefore, is to return good for evil—a hallmark principle of Christian relationships* (Matt. 5:38–48) and of Christlike charity (1 Cor. 13; Moro. 7:45–48).

A recent informal observation of couples in therapy found that one partner often was able to meet a negative comment from the other with a conciliatory, nonescalating response at least once and often twice. But a third negative comment typically began a tit-for-tat cycle. Thus, it seems reasonable to identify a “three strikes” principle as an important signal of danger to the relationship.²⁰

3. Failure to understand that men and women handle conflict somewhat differently can threaten a marriage—“Men and women fight using different weapons but suffer similar wounds.”²¹ Learning about these differences and becoming sensitive to them is characteristic of successful couples.

Men, for example, handle conflict better when there are rules to regulate the process. They also find the physiological arousal that accompanies conflict more painful than women, which in turn can make them more likely to avoid conflict in the future. They require more time to recover after conflict than do women.²² A preemptive measure is for couples to become aware of these differences and to set up rules to regulate their conflict.

4. Many couples experiencing problems in their marriages erroneously assume that monumental effort and changes are required to make a difference. They may become discouraged about even trying, further threatening the relationship. Research, however, indicates that “small changes make a big difference.”²³ The scriptures teach the same principle: “By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6, 7; 1 Ne. 16:29). A preemptive action, therefore, is for each partner to focus on making small changes in his or her own behavior.

A Reservoir of Hope

No matter how bad things may look in a relationship, the potential for change, healing, growth, and happiness is almost always present. “Every relationship contains a reservoir of hope,” say Notarius and Markman.²⁴ During every stage of a marriage, but perhaps especially during the adversarial and dormant stages, hope is a powerful motivator to work on the relationship. Couples should do everything they can to search for evidence, past or present, that can keep the flickering flames of hope alive and then to express that hope through both words and concrete actions. As they approach their seasons of marriage with an abiding, eternal perspective (“This, too, shall pass”), they are more likely to be optimistic about their future together.

GENERALIZING THE MODEL: SEASONS OF ALL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

The “seasons of a marriage” model provides a general guide for the stages we can expect for all our intimate relationships. With realistic expectations, we can better manage the pitfalls along the way and deepen our connection to parents, siblings, close friends, and even God. With more information about how we developed patterns in our families of origin, self-understanding and adaptability can grow.

Parent-Child Seasons of Intimacy

Visionary Stage. Both parents and children often experience a visionary stage in their relationship. Young children in particular, who are

developmentally and experientially naive, tend to idealize their parents. Some parents are also naive about their children, thinking they are incapable of the lapses considered normal for other people's children.

Adversarial Stage. Over time, the visionary stage breaks down. Children observe and become victims of their parents' mistakes and transgressions. Parents discover that their children are not the last remaining innocents but have as many weaknesses and imperfections as their peers.

Beginning at about age ten and continuing through adolescence, most children feel some degree of disillusionment, disappointment, resentment, and anger at what they view as their parents' betrayal: "You were supposed to be perfect, and you're not. You've hurt me and damaged me." Disagreements, tension, and conflict ensue. Parents, too, may feel disappointed in children who do not measure up to their idealized expectations. Some parents, especially in religious communities, may resent children who sabotage their attempts to project a perfect family image to the outside world.

Christlike acceptance of one another is essential for getting through this stage without serious rupture of relationships. This burden rests more heavily upon parents, since children are developmentally less capable of bearing it. Parents' acceptance and understanding of children's developmental stages can lead to interaction that is focused on gradual growth rather than on pressure to conform to unrealistic demands and expectations for immediate change.

Often, though, both parents and adolescents set about to change the other. As in the adversarial stage of marriage, resulting tension may sour the relationship. Perhaps a few parents and children are able to prevent the conflict typical of this stage, but most families experience enough friction to move them into the dormant stage.

Dormant Stage. As parents and children become exhausted by conflict, they may avoid one another or create emotional distance. Some families may give up on each other or even reject one another out of frustration or fatigue. As with marriages, parent-child intimacy is at risk during the dormant stage. Covenant families, however, remain committed to Christlike love for one another, a love that does not make the relationship contingent on the other person's coming around to "my" point of view. Parents and children in covenant families stand with open arms, ready to receive one another in love.

Even under the best circumstances, when children eventually leave home, both they and their parents typically confess to some measure of relief. Soon afterward, children and their parents stop trying to change one another and begin to show the acceptance that is easier to extend

from a distance. Reunions may bring renewed complaints and insistence on change, but they usually dissipate more quickly and with less conflict. A return to the idealized imagery of the family may even occur from a distance. Additionally, as adult children observe families more closely and talk with siblings about their own families, appreciation for their family of origin often increases. In time, these experiences may promote transition to the vital stage.

Vital Stage. In the vital stage, children see their parents as fallible human beings but accept them as brothers and sisters who were given a stewardship and are trying to do their best. When adult children become parents, their own mistakes and lapses further increase sensitivity to their parents' experience. Aging parents similarly accept their children's developmental struggles. Parents and children relate less in terms of expectation, entitlement, and demand and more in terms of support, nurture, and encouragement. Like married couples beginning the vital stage, parents and children increasingly focus on changing themselves, not others, and on helping one another in love.

Just as in marriage, critical to this process are softening, forgiveness, and the renewal of trust—all aided by the Atonement of Christ and the influence of the Holy Spirit. With this sustenance, parents and children can heal, reconcile, and renew their relationships. They begin to cherish and celebrate one another, rejoicing in the uniqueness and individuality of the other.

Deity-Disciple Seasons of Intimacy

As developing disciples, our progression from conversion to reconciliation with our Father in Heaven also has its seasons. Our initial conversion may be *visionary*—idealized and naive. As the demands of discipleship press us to our limits and we experience the painful stretching of divine chastening, we may become disillusioned with God or angry with him, beginning the *adversarial* stage. The power of covenant commitments can compel us to forego retreat and resist temptations during this stage. As the stresses of this stage take their toll on our emotional and spiritual energy, we may retreat from discipleship's daunting demands and begin a *dormant* stage. And finally, when we accept anew the demands of discipleship as the unavoidable prerequisites to reconciliation with our Father, we enter the exalting *vital* stage. The Atonement of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit, and the Savior's grace are essential to the softening, forgiveness, and deepening of trust that are necessary to reach this stage.

LOVE AND INTIMACY IN FAMILY, KINSHIP, FRIENDSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

Intimacy is not reserved for husband and wife, nor is it only physical. Love and intimacy also occur in the broader realm of kinship and friendship. The social, emotional, and spiritual connectedness of extended family members and close friends can have a crucial influence as we face life's problems. The principles of Christlike love apply in these relationships just as they do in marriage, parent-child relationships, and our relationship with Deity. We can do justice here to only a few concepts that focus on the broad scope of love in human relationships. We have chosen to discuss two universal themes: *transitional persons* and *generativity*.

The Transitional Person

When we face particularly difficult problems created by imperfect parenting, even several generations back, it is helpful to examine our “emotional genealogy.” Researching personal and family histories from an emotional perspective can reveal past patterns that affect us currently. This research includes reviewing journals, reviewing family histories, and interviewing key living relatives who may have information or insights about maladjustments in our emotional family tree. Once we are aware of unhealthy family patterns, we are better equipped to reverse their effects in our own lives. When we do this, we can become “transitional persons.”

A transitional person is one who rejects the unhealthy or evil family patterns of previous generations and sets a new course for future generations by adopting healthy and godly patterns. Transitional persons are gifts to themselves and potentially to thousands of progeny, with effects rippling across time and social networks. The transitional person exemplifies Christlike love by becoming a participant with the Lord in helping to redeem others.

In the late 1970s, the BYU Values Institute Theory Group²⁵ explored the idea of the transitional person from social science, philosophical, and religious perspectives. The Theory Group concluded that a person can enact a “saving” or redemptive role in the mental and spiritual health of others, particularly family members. While we cannot atone for the sins of the human family in the same way the Savior did (Alma 34:10–12), we can become redeemers within our families by sacrificing personal need on behalf of others (John 15:4–5, 10–13; D&C 4; D&C 97:8–9) and by reversing sinful traditions to create a righteous heritage for succeeding generations. The Theory Group discussed the influence of many converts on their families as a specific example and applied the term “transitional figure” to their

experience. Speaking for the group at a BYU gathering, I described the therapist's role in helping clients become transitional figures:

Since many psychological problems are, in effect, the burden of sins laid upon the person due to generations of unrighteous acts and conditionings, the therapist teaches the individual to become a *transitional* [redemptive] figure in the history of his family. [The counselor] shows the person how to compensate for and overthrow the effects of generations of sins upon his [or her] psyche and behavior. [The client] thus begins to reverse the trends in his [or her] emotional genealogy, clears [his or her] consciousness of self-deceptions, and initiates a benevolent cycle in his [or her] functioning [in the family network and] as spouse and progenitor. . . . By accepting the role of making up both for [one's] own sins and those of [one's] parents (cf. D&C 98:47–48), the individual adopts . . . Christ-like behavior . . . [and] is then aided by the saving, healing power of Christ.²⁶

This psychological saving process parallels the effort to spiritually save forebears through genealogy and temple work, that is, to do for them what they could not do for themselves. It requires giving up the personal need to reject or retaliate against those, living or dead, who have contributed to our emotional problems by perpetrating offenses against us. Forgiveness is a first step, which may call for wrenching changes in attitude and behavior.

As innocent victims choose forgiveness and healing, they sacrifice themselves for the welfare of the extended family. This principle of sacrifice was first taught to Adam and Eve (Moses 5:6–8). It has been taught throughout scriptural history that our own sacrifices are symbolic of the sacrifice by the Son of God.²⁷ Sacrifice is an expression of love: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). When we sacrifice, our capacity to love is expanded (Alma 7:11–12).

Family life is our first and most important laboratory for the development and practice of such intimate, Christlike regard for others. But over time, those touched by the spirit of our eternal family find that the definition of “who is my neighbor” (Luke 10:29) expands beyond familial, regional, national, racial, religious, and all other boundaries to include the entire family of God and all his creations (see Luke 10:30–37). Christ expressed this expansive scope of intimacy when he taught his disciples, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12–13).

Envisioning intimate relationships as including saving influence in one another's lives and across generations elevates intimacy to a truly celestial concept. Christlike intimacy makes sobering demands on us, but to reach so deeply, lovingly, and redemptively into one another's souls is the hallmark

of divine intimacy and the core of meaningful relationships. Surely one of the highest callings in life is to rise to the challenge of becoming transitional figures in the lives of friends and family.²⁸

Over the years, these ideas about transitional persons have been shared with professional audiences as an example of how spiritual approaches can aid in psychotherapy. For instance, in a gathering of mental health professionals, the Theory Group explained how the transitional person concept might help a client who had been abused:

The person is encouraged to see himself or herself as at a crossroads in his or her family history. . . . Although he or she has been the victim of pathologizing events in life, . . . it is important to adopt a forgiving attitude. . . . The release of aggression against the victimizing agents, although it may be important at certain therapeutic junctures, is not healing in a deep and lasting way.

We introduce . . . the concepts of sacrifice and redemption that are common to great religions, especially the Judeo-Christian tradition. . . . Sometimes it is important to absorb the pain that has been handed down across generations . . . to stop the process of transmitting pain from generation to generation. Instead of seeking retribution, one learns . . . to be forgiving, to try to reconcile with forebears, and then become a generator of positive change in the next generation . . . by resisting the disordered patterns of the past, exercising [a] . . . healing impact, and then transmitting . . . a healthier mode of functioning.²⁹

A member of the Theory Group, Victor L. Brown Jr., provided an example of a woman who had severe emotional problems because of abuse from her father and who decided to employ the transitional figure concept:

After learning about the transitional figure idea, she was encouraged to go back to visit her father and, instead of confronting him with the pain he had caused, to invite him to tell her about his history and to do a family history interview. She was not to ask him about his dynamics or disturbances and the consequences, but instead, about his identity, experiences, and so forth.

The result of doing this, including tape-recording and transcribing the interviews with her father, caused a dramatic reconciliation between the woman and her father and a merging of perceptions of painful [abusive] events that had occurred. It stimulated her father to face certain realities he had never faced. This was, however, a gentle experience occurring in a forgiving atmosphere. As a result, he was able to lower his defenses, apologize, and seek to make up for his past conduct. The changes in both client and father as a result of this encounter seemed to be dramatic and more profound than the changes that had been occurring through regular treatment. . . .

As in religious tradition, sacrifice was required on the part of the client; that is, she gave up the need for retribution and separation from the past family network. Furthermore, the sacrificial act, consisting of self-denial and forgiveness, yielded ultimate benefits to all parties that more than compensated for the sacrifice.³⁰

Case Studies of Transitional Characters

Roberta Magarrell examined from a Latter-day Saint perspective case studies of “transitional characters.” Her work began with a BYU doctoral dissertation in family science and continues in an ongoing research program. Her observations are based on in-depth interviews with six persons who grew up in abusive environments and became transitional persons, often without therapy. These individuals faced every kind of problem, including emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, character assassination, mental cruelty, neglect, abandonment, emotional isolation, sexual promiscuity, adultery, incest, manipulation, and scapegoating. All six had in common the question, “How do I reject a family of origin lifestyle that is harming me and build a growth producing lifestyle for myself and for my future family?”³¹

Magarrell found that all six of her subjects developed a determination to discard the dysfunctional aspects of their families and to create a new way of life. This sense of mission provided motivation for both personal change and reform of their family situations. Through *enlightened understanding*, the sense of mission ultimately evolved into a *transitional leap* that yielded a new way of seeing things. This altered perspective occurred at differing ages, ranging from youth through young adulthood.

The six subjects began their journey toward becoming transitional characters in a general state of confusion. They asked painful questions such as “Why did my dad desert us?” “Why don’t we have more food?” “Why doesn’t my mother love me?” “Why can’t my parents get along?” “How can I get out of here?” “What needs to change?” This questioning eventually led them to see new options, such as “Life is going to be different for me, for us” and “I’m going to do the things that I need to make that happen.”³² Many realized after the questioning process that they wanted almost the opposite of what they had previously wanted. Where before they wanted almost any way to escape their pain, they now desired a close-knit family, caring, understanding, a strong and supportive father, fun, safety, respect, encouragement, and opportunities to work together and to develop talents.

As they attempted to achieve these new desires, they experienced painful trial and error and alternation between progress and backsliding. One participant described this process as follows:

It isn't just a [simple] change, it's moving up a hill, moving away from whatever's here, then you go over the hill and you can see things differently . . . a fresh view. . . . You can suddenly see things differently and then you can choose which direction you're going to go. But initially, you're just climbing out of it.³³

The process of coming out of confusion into enlightenment and eventually into the leap toward a transitional role was helped along by several influences. All six subjects reported that at least one and sometimes more than one significant person outside of their immediate family gave them steadiness, security, and a belief that they could move toward a new future. In five out of the six cases, a grandparent was one of these significant persons. Other influences included education, exposure to new environments, a questioning attitude, and a sense of responsibility to self and family members. In some cases, formal counseling or a self-help group were critical factors.

Another vital aspect of the change process was the ability to communicate, including conversation with significant others, self-talk, self-reflection, talking to God, talking to a pet, and journal writing. This self-expression helped the six subjects reinterpret their experiences, gave them new perspectives, and imparted comfort.

The growing sense of enlightenment was often accompanied by spiritual feelings and insights. Gradually a sense of mission emerged that they should and could make a difference. They began to believe that freedom from the past and new choices were truly possible. In some cases, this new belief came like a spiritual revelation that showed them a re-visioning of themselves as a person and as a new and different part of an old social system.

The next phase, *the transitional leap* from victim to healer, also was often accompanied by a powerful spiritual experience. It occurred gradually and ultimately yielded a liberating view of the problems in their family of origin.³⁴ One of the subjects said, "There is a freeing up to let go of the past and to look to the present and to the future. . . . [It was a time of profound alteration,] a critical juncture . . . [a major forward thrust] as if one is catapulted across a gulf that would be difficult for anyone . . . to cross back over."³⁵ The subjects also let go of anger, relinquished excessive responsibility for family problems, and forgave. One subject described a "healing power to transcend, absorb the . . . emotionally destructive

environment.”³⁶ The transitional leap experience also imparted a sense of being a person of great worth, of being in a place of safety and having feelings of substance.³⁷ *The six subjects perceived that God loved them, which was a particularly powerful insight.*

Finally, they saw themselves as individuals who could make a difference, not only for their own sakes, but also for the sake of their family members. They then were able to begin influencing their extended families and the next generation to shed dysfunctions and be open to new possibilities. Many of them used phrases that countered the negative, even evil, trends in their families, statements such as “I will never be a deadbeat dad”; “I cannot imagine being unfaithful to my spouse”; “I want my family to be close-knit and caring, and we will work together to make that happen”; “I will never abandon my children”; “I will not use alcohol or drugs”; “I will not use violence in disciplining my children”; and “I will encourage the development of my children.”

Magarrell notes that the sequence of events she outlined does not necessarily occur in a linear way. The transitional person may cycle through different phases at different times and, often, more than one time.

Reading Magarrell’s account of the transitional characters is an exhilarating experience. It shows that people can heal from even the worst environments and become integrated, loving individuals.

GENERATIVITY:

KINSHIP AND COMMUNITY VS. STAGNATION AND SELF-ABSORPTION

Generativity is influence for good across generations. Erikson defines it as “the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation.”³⁸ It is the “antithesis of . . . self-absorption and stagnation . . . [and] . . . encompasses procreativity, productivity, and creativity, and thus the generation of new beings.”³⁹

McAdams and de St. Aubin describe generativity as “commitment to promoting the next generation, through parenting, teaching, mentoring, and generating products and outcomes that aim to benefit youth and foster the development and well-being of individuals and social systems that will outlive the self.” Adults who take on generative endeavors “serve as norm bearers and destiny shapers in families, schools, churches, neighborhoods and the workplace.”⁴⁰

Generativity research has shown that people who believe their influence can extend into the future feel a responsibility to love others far beyond immediate kin. As part of a larger society under God, they reach out from the nuclear family to the world community and from earthly time into

eternity. Intergenerational concern and care builds their personal identity and strengthens their bonds with others as they identify with a larger whole.

For Latter-day Saints, temple work for the deceased (who live on elsewhere) is a vivid example of this truth. Temple participation anchors us in a transcendent network of emotional and spiritual ties with other people who have meaning for our own existence. A professor recently reported the depth of personal change that occurred after an experience in the temple where he felt a vivid spiritual connection with individuals on the other side of the veil. His extensive research into personal and family history had already produced many emotional experiences as he discovered the identities and lives of his kin, both living and dead. As he pondered this experience in the temple, he felt love for and closeness to these people, and he realized that he was part of a much greater whole—a universal, caring, and eternal network that was invisible yet felt vibrantly real. His identity became shared. He felt a oneness with a benevolent system of related eternal identities who shared in his history, his genetics, and his future.

As this experience occurred, his sense of self was transformed. Old insecurities began to dissolve. His identification with a shared community reduced his anxiety and the secret internal loneliness he had felt. After this experience, he found that kinship commitment was healing and energizing to his life at home and at work. He decided that his personal history, family genealogy, and vicarious temple ordinance work⁴¹ were far more significant than he had ever realized. He began to believe that deeply felt familial connections are the most important thing, maybe the only thing, that matters, for they redefine “self,” extending it to the family of all God’s creations. (See D&C 110:13–15; 128:15–18.) Such peak intimacy demonstrates that the higher realization of self and identity involves “becoming one” with significant others.

Family closeness, unity, righteousness, and intimacy, endowed by the Lord’s spirit and covenant bonds, are our primary protection and salvation from the spiritual, moral, and social smog that surrounds us. McAdams and de St. Aubin explain generativity’s powerful impact on all those we influence:

I am what survives me. I am my children, in their manifold incarnations: my sons and daughters, students, and protégés; the babies I care for in the nursery where I work; the kids on the Little League team I coach; the parishioners in the church I serve; but also the business I started, the neighbors I helped (and hurt), the institutions I influenced (for good and for ill), the organizations for which I volunteered, the poems I wrote, the quilt I made, the jokes I told, the words of advice I gave, the examples I set for others, my reputations, how others think of me, how others will remember me. As adults, we all *generate* legacies, even unwittingly so.

We all find ourselves caring for and contributing to the next *generation*, even if the contributions are tiny, indirect, or negative, and even though we never know, and can never know, what impact our efforts will have in the long time that is ahead of us. As adults, we all come to know the challenges, rewards, and frustrations of *generativity*.⁴²

Stagnation, on the other hand, consists of giving in to ease and withdrawing from the effort required to care about and care for the succeeding generation. The dynamic energy of identity development becomes stuck in midlife and progresses no further. Sadly, stagnation usually breeds tendencies toward self-satisfaction, shallow intimacy, self-preoccupation, and rejection of those in need.

Examples of Generativity

Examples of generative kinship, family, and social influence are abundant in the scriptures and in the history of the restored Church. Family prayer, family scripture study, family home evening, priesthood blessings, parent-child conversations, church service, community service, family traditions, and family reunions are all generative acts. Photographs, diaries, journals, biographies, letters, genealogy, and family history work anchor these efforts in documents, data, and personal experience of intergenerational connection. The Spirit of Elijah is a generative and transitional spirit (Mal. 4:5–6; D&C 110:13–15; D&C 128:15–18). It turns the hearts of the children to their fathers, forefathers, mothers, and foremothers; and it turns the hearts of forebears to their progeny.

“Generative parenting” is parenting enriched by special care in which members of the older generation extend themselves to transmit strength, wisdom, security, and opportunity to the rising generation. Generative mothering has always been a strong tradition, and increasingly society is recognizing that generative fathering is equally important.⁴³ As full commitment to fathering becomes the norm among righteous people, its effects prevent or cure many of society’s ills, defeating Satan’s plan to destroy the family and civilization. A student reported how the influence of his parents generated a model for his own ideal of marriage and family:

I recall at a very young age, probably age 7, hoping that someday I’d be able to raise a family in the same way my parents were raising us kids. I also recall hoping that I would be able to find someone to love and serve as my dad did with my mom. I think that they have an ideal marriage, one that I will take from and institute into mine when I have one. They demonstrated respect for each other, exemplified the sharing of roles, and provided support for mutual growth and personal identity development.

I also learned from them that love needs to be nourished, just as a flower needs attention to flourish. They taught me that when trials and disagreements occur in my own marriage, we will need to renew our commitment to each other. “Benevolent intimacy” will be the highest common denominator, as I put my loved ones first in my life.

Exceptional family patterns have been and are being set by latter-day prophets such as Joseph F. Smith, David O. McKay, Ezra Taft Benson, and their wives and families. Other leaders and millions of Saints have followed these modern models of kinship, fidelity, and generativity. The family and community influence of any of the recent or current First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve with their wives and families could be studied with benefit. In the autobiography *From Heart to Heart*,⁴⁴ we learn about the family of Elder Russell M. Nelson and Sister Dantzel White Nelson, where each person’s heart and core motivation is turned inward toward each other and then outward toward the larger world. The lives of Elder Neal A. Maxwell and Sister Colleen Hinckley Maxwell provide another exemplary pathway to generative influence.⁴⁵

The scriptures are also filled with powerful stories that set a standard for us and help us establish life goals. The pattern can be continued in our individual lives through personal adherence to the restored Church’s plan of youth activity and service, priesthood advancement, missions, temple marriage, and children born in or adopted into the covenant. Daily scripture study and regular study of the *Ensign* magazines will help the reader understand both ancient and modern applications of the concept of generativity within a gospel context.

Generative influence is not restricted to those who have children. Many great personalities throughout history have changed the world for the better, even though they did not have biological progeny. Many were women, such as Mary Magdalene, Joan of Arc, and Mother Teresa. Anna Freud, the renowned child psychoanalyst, was once asked how she could possibly understand and therapeutically help children when she had never been a wife or mother. Ms. Freud, however, had numerous children vicariously because of the great work she did to support and heal their mental disorders. Indeed, her clinic in London was a fertile center for generating positive change in the lives of thousands and, indirectly, even millions of children. Through her practice and teaching, generations of professionals learned to care for the welfare of future generations.

Intimate friendships are also an important generative influence. As older people reflect back upon their younger years, they often can identify a turning point in their lives that centered around an intimate friend. For instance, a successful middle-aged counselor reported that his life course

took an important turn in his late teens as the result of a conversation with a close high-school friend. He and his friend were both ambitious intellectuals with strong academic and political interests. During one of many long personal conversations, the friend, the son of a clergyman, made a statement that had a powerful impact upon the future counselor. He said, “Whatever I do in the future, I want to do something that will benefit the world and make a difference.” The future counselor realized that such an idea had never occurred to him before. He had previously been preoccupied with making a career choice that would be interesting and bring him an adequate income. His friend’s statement shook the foundations of his assumptions about what a career should be. A desire to do something good for the world—to consecrate his life and his work to the benefit of the community at large—seemed to erupt from some hidden reservoir within him. From then on, important decisions were informed by this newfound value. The counselor reported that these decisions led to a lifetime of deep satisfaction in work that might never have occurred otherwise.

Sometimes intimate relationships help heal a personal dysfunction. Such influence can reverberate throughout a person’s life and is part of the web of love that keeps individuals and society integrated rather than disintegrated. In the example below, a college professor becomes a pivotal person for one of his female students, who had become too intimate with a boyfriend and felt guilty and confused when the boyfriend left on a mission:

While he served his mission, I was enlightened by the wisdom of my professors concerning the true meaning of love. One of them helped me understand Christ’s love for us, which gave me more insight than I ever had before. Centered around developing this ultimate love, he explained that every relationship should be aimed at building the spirituality of both persons. I knew then, clearly, that we are the literal offspring of God and that he loves us with boundless love. This gave new direction and happiness to me and those I am close to.

When my friend returned from his mission, our reunion brought incredible change to my life and my understanding of love. I am more able to give selflessly without seeking physical or instant gratification, and this has brought about much happiness. My professor had a decisive influence in bringing about my changes and the consequences I now enjoy.

CONCLUSION

Christlike love extends intimacy to our social systems. All faithful Latter-day Saints are transitional persons in the sense that all come from imperfect families and social contexts and thus all have the opportunity

to reject dysfunctional or sinful patterns and pass on a healthier, more righteous heritage. All generations of the past and the future make a transition through each person, for each is an inheritor and a progenitor. Those who never procreate are progenitors in that their influence on past, present, and future may be felt just as strongly as those who physically produce progeny.

From a Latter-day Saint perspective, a transitional person is one who knows the doctrines of the Restoration, abides by its covenants, and follows the Savior by witnessing and living according to the gospel he taught and exemplified. Anyone who does these things brings out transitional dynamics automatically.

Generativity can become a valued life goal and lifestyle pattern. Such kinship ideals are based on interpersonal fidelity and personal integrity. From this orientation to life comes the power to affect the family and the larger world in a benevolent way.

We recommend the writings of Erik Erikson, the father of the modern social science concept of generativity, and those of his students who are carrying on this professional tradition that complements the principles and practices of the restored gospel and Latter-day Saint culture.⁴⁶ We conclude this section by again quoting from Erikson:

Generativity, we said, encompasses procreativity, productivity, and creativity, and thus the generation of new beings as well as of new products and new ideas, including a kind of self-generation concerned with further identity development. A sense of stagnation, in turn, . . . can totally overwhelm those who find themselves inactivated in generative matters. The new “virtue” emerging from this antithesis, namely, Care, is a widening commitment to take care of the persons, the products, and the ideas one has learned to care for. All the strengths arising from earlier developments in the ascending order from infancy to young adulthood (hope and will, purpose and skill, fidelity and love) now prove, on closer study, to be essential for the generational task of cultivating strength in the next generation. For this is, indeed, the store of human life.⁴⁷

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18. Notarius and Markman, *We Can Work It Out*, 10.
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22. Gottman, "Theory of Marital Dissolution and Stability"; Gottman, "Predicting the Longitudinal Course of Marriages," 6.
23. Notarius and Markman, *We Can Work It Out*, 10.
24. Notarius and Markman, *We Can Work It Out*, 11.
25. The BYU Values Institute met in 1977 to discuss ideas and practices that might form a framework for a gospel-centered approach to human behavior. Among the members of the institute were Truman G. Madsen, C. Terry Warner, Victor L. Brown Jr., Stephen R. Covey, and Allen E. Bergin.
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35. Magarrell, "Becoming a Transitional Character," 62.
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37. Magarrell, "Becoming a Transitional Character," 63–64.
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39. Erik H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 67, italics in original.
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47. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, 67.

Errata

We wish to correct an editorial error that appeared in *BYU Studies* volume 4, number 1. On page 161, this sentence appears in Paul H. Peterson’s review of *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*:

Bagley faults Brooks for her overly sympathetic treatment of Lee (most historians would agree that Brooks’s corrective was in order), her shallow treatment of the background of the emigrants, and her acceptance of some of the slanderous tales implicating both the emigrants and the Paiutes.

The sentence should read as follows:

Bagley faults Brooks for her overly sympathetic treatment of Lee (most historians would agree that Bagley’s corrective was in order), her shallow treatment of the background of the emigrants, and her acceptance of some of the slanderous tales implicating both the emigrants and the Paiutes.

We apologize for any confusion this error may have caused.

—Editors, *BYU Studies*

Jessie L. Embry. *Asian American Mormons: Bridging Cultures*.

Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies,
Brigham Young University, 1999.

Reviewed by David A. Allred

In his famous address about those of “the last wagon,” J. Reuben Clark paid tribute to the Latter-day Saints who are recorded only in the margins of history, if at all.¹ Jessie L. Embry’s *Asian American Mormons* grows out of a similar desire to represent the experiences of common Latter-day Saints. The third book resulting from the Redd Center’s Oral History Program,² *Asian American Mormons* presents interviews of 108 Latter-day Saints with Asian backgrounds.³ Drawing from interviews conducted in Utah, British Columbia, Virginia, and California from 1991 to 1995, Embry’s book is notable in the way it provides a space for ordinary Mormons to reflect on their experiences as members of the Church.

One of Embry’s most important chapters is the first one, where she sets forth the methodology and scope of the project and explains its limitations. She clearly acknowledges that her sample is not representative: all the interviewees are active in the Church, women interviewees outnumber the men almost two to one, over two-thirds of the interviewees live in Utah, and over a third of the interviewees were students at Utah Valley State College in Orem, Utah, or Brigham Young University–Provo (10). Also, no Filipinos were interviewed, even though the Church is growing quickly in the Philippines (9). Therefore, one must keep in mind the ways in which limited research could affect Embry’s conclusions. Still, one cannot fault the book because of the unrepresentative sample. Embry explains that the sample problems resulted from limited funds and time (10). Furthermore, even with unlimited resources a perfectly representative sample would be impossible.

Of the seven other chapters in *Asian American Mormons*, three take up the issue of ethnic congregations. The remaining four chapters examine

how Asian members feel about being lumped into a single group, how they feel about their interactions with European-Americans, and how they “describe their lives in the United States as they mediate triple identities—ethnic [Asian], Mormon, and American” (4). The book also brings up the issues of interracial dating (54–59), racial attitudes among Church members (116–26), and cultural differences among Church members (83, 100, and others). On the whole, the book begins to delve into these issues, but it also shows the need for further study.

Throughout the book, Embry presents the collected data by providing contextual and biographic information and liberally quoting from the interviews. In this way, she is able to portray a range of opinions about the subject at hand. As would be expected, the interviewees often contradict one another, and thus Embry is able to present varied perspectives on being Mormon and Asian American.

Embry’s method of integrating interview material into the book can be seen from this representative paragraph:

A few interviewees’ families responded positively [to the interviewee joining the Church]. Henry H. Kwok, a former American embassy employee who joined the Church in his late twenties just before he left Vietnam in 1975, felt that his family accepted his decision. “All my relatives know that we are Mormons, and they look at us differently. They know that we don’t drink” and prevented other people from offering Kwok and his family alcohol at parties. (25)

The basic structure of this passage appears regularly in the book. Herein lies a weakness in the rhetoric: the paragraph structure often becomes formulaic. Embry is right to attribute the information to a real person, not just an anonymous “interviewee,” but she could allow people like Henry Kwok to “speak” more in the book by providing more direct quotations. Doing so would shake up the paragraph structure and also give a better sense of what each individual has to say about his or her own experiences.

Overall, I see Embry’s project as an important and bold one. The Oral History Project is meant to document the experiences of minorities within the Church so their perspectives are not lost or overlooked,⁴ and Embry’s book brings attention to the complex experience of being a Mormon while balancing other identities (something all Mormons must do). Furthermore, the Church’s expansion into a worldwide religion may yet prove to have as great an effect on Church culture as the exodus of the Saints to the West. By focusing attention on the experiences of these Asian American members, Embry helps show how intertwined American culture is with Mormon popular culture as well as the difficulty conversion sometimes entails.

While the book succeeds in examining many issues of race, culture, and religion, readers expecting an extended and analytic treatment of the issues will find this book disappointing. Embry points out that “other researchers might find subtle differences in the interviews that [she] missed” (5) and leaves up to folklorists, sociologists, and historians the further analysis on these experiences of Asian American Mormons. But the book is successful in Embry’s stated purpose, which is to “preserve the ‘personal voices’ of singular Church members, allowing those members to talk openly about their experiences and feelings as Latter-day Saints.”⁵ Thus, if one desires to learn what ordinary individuals, who often have remarkable experiences, think about their membership in the Church, this book can be rewarding.

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1. J. Reuben Clark Jr., “They of the Last Wagon,” *Improvement Era* 50 (November 1947): 704–5, 747–48, reprinted as “To Them of the Last Wagon,” *Ensign* 27 (July 1997): 34–39.

2. The other two books are Jessie L. Embry, *Black Saints in a White Church: Contemporary African American Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994); and Jessie L. Embry, “*In His Own Language*”: *Mormon Spanish Speaking Congregations in the United States* (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, 1997). In these books, Embry uses the problematic term “ethnic Mormon” to describe the Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Polynesian Americans, and Asian Americans who have been interviewed by the Redd Center. This term is misleading because it suggests that, unless otherwise noted, Mormons are Caucasian. Furthermore, Euro-American Mormons obviously have ethnicities. Although the term “ethnic Mormon” may be useful as a descriptor, it marginalizes the groups that Embry is striving to represent.

3. Embry acknowledges that the term “Asian American Mormon” ignores the diversity and complexity of Asian cultures; she justifies using this paradigm in her introduction (5).

4. Jessie L. Embry, “Speaking for Themselves: LDS Ethnic Groups Oral History Project,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25 (winter 1992): 99–110.

5. Embry, “Speaking for Themselves,” 102.

Condolence

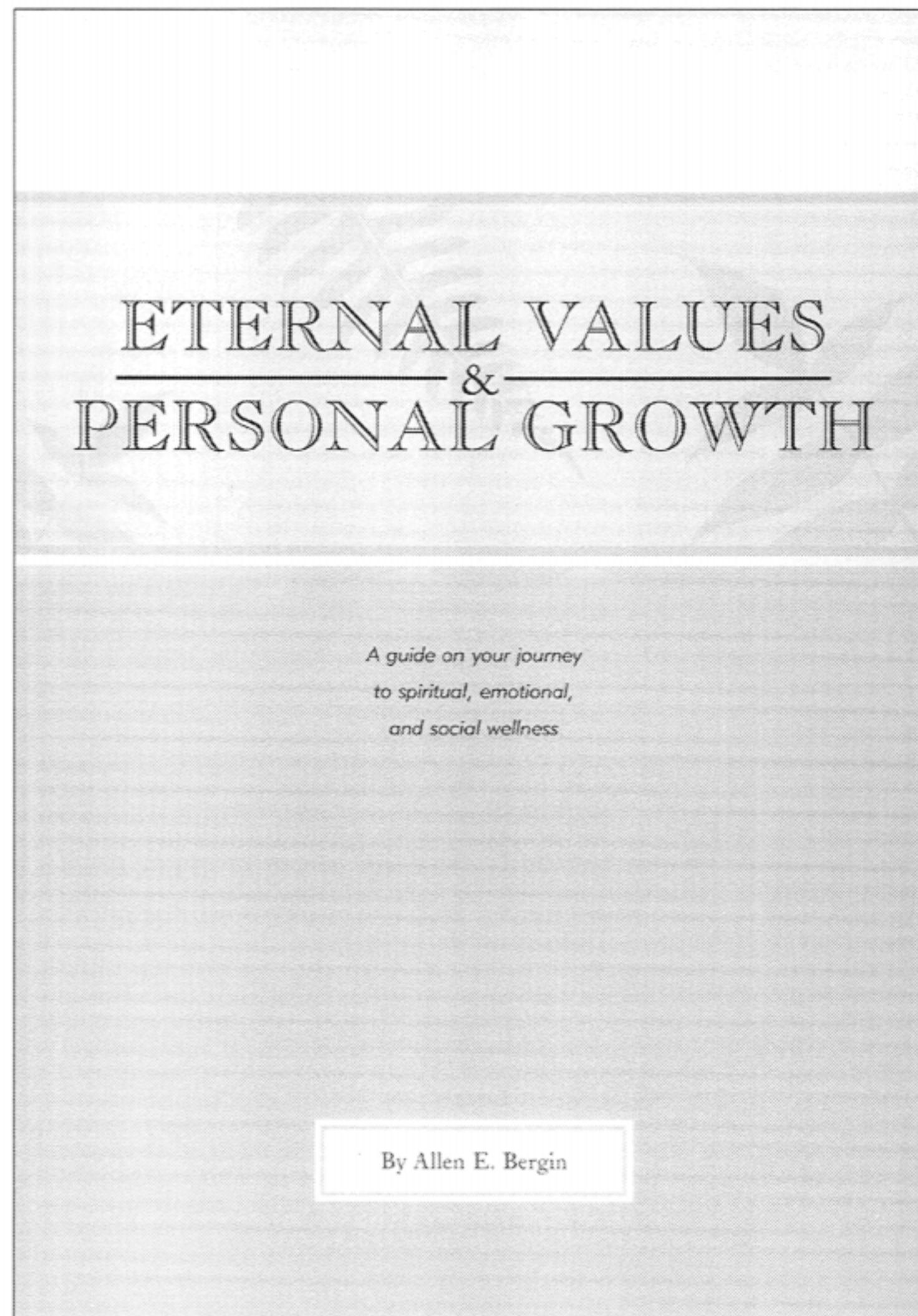
Patrick Devonas

No matter how strong evil becomes, it can never destroy hope and beauty.
—ten-year-old boy viewing *Condolence*

On September 11, 2001, for the first time I felt connected with fellow humans across the globe. There it was: an unmistakable ability to see myself in others and others in myself. Oddly, such collective pain and compassion has something incredibly hopeful about it. Being an artist, I went to work to preserve what I felt and give voice to the transformation that took place inside of me. I am sharing what I intended when choosing the visual images presented in this painting. The symbols, however, may (and perhaps should) have different meanings for you.

The young girl pays tribute to children in the world who lose their support system due to violence. The sculpture reminds us of innocent victims of crime and destruction and honors specifically the man and woman who, hand in hand, jumped to their deaths. They will never experience old age, yet their act seems to triumph over death and despair—thus the circular composition of this sculpture, the circle being a symbol of eternity in most cultures. I put the mask in to remind us of those who lost their lives; in the nineteenth century, it was a common practice to take a plaster cast of the dead in order to remember them. What some viewers will perceive as “ribbons” are the representations of bent metal pipes. When I went to Ground Zero right after the 9-11 disaster, I saw metal pipes as far as the eye could see.

The curious shapes suggest a transition between the organic and inorganic. Life, though it can be temporarily terminated, will spring up again. The city skyline merging with the mountainous landscape is meant to suggest that anything manmade is subject to entropy. Disaster occurs when this natural process of decay rushes all at once upon the innocent. A determination to endure such events in a dignified manner is sustained only by compassion. The flowers symbolize hope and an active heart and mind, willing to live and create regardless of circumstance.



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A new book assembled by an eminent Latter-day Saint psychologist guides the reader on a journey of self-improvement. *Eternal Values and Personal Growth* can help you grow spiritually, emotionally, and socially using gospel principles and the results of solid research. Explanations and exercises in each chapter provide tools to make positive and lasting progress toward realizing your eternal potential. Chapter eight appears in this issue of *BYU Studies* as a representative sample.

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—Kim Mercer, graduate student, and Steve Mercer,
graduate, University of California, San Diego

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BYU Studies is dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and the intellectual can be complementary and fundamentally harmonious avenues of knowledge. This periodical strives to explore scholarly perspectives on Latter-day Saint topics. It is committed to seeking truth “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118) and recognizes that all knowledge without charity is nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). It proceeds on the premise that faith and reason, revelation and scholarly learning, obedience and creativity are compatible; they are “many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20).

Contributions from all fields of learning are invited. *BYU Studies* strives to publish articles that openly reflect a Latter-day Saint point of view and are obviously relevant to subjects of general interest to Latter-day Saints, while conforming to high scholarly standards. *BYU Studies* invites poetry and personal essays dealing with the life of the mind, reflections on personal and spiritual responses to academic experiences, intellectual choices, values, responsibilities, and methods. All personal essays received will be entered in our annual personal essay contest. Short studies and notes are also welcomed.

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CONDOLENCE
BY PATRICK DEVONAS

OIL ON CANVAS, 52" X 72", 2003
COURTESY MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

TURN TO PAGE 174 FOR ARTIST'S DISCUSSION OF COVER



FIG. 1. *Left:* Sarah Mumford Brown (1795–1879). *Right:* Benjamin Brown (1794–1878). Benjamin Brown witnessed the Pentecostal events at the Kirtland Temple on March 27, 1836, and wrote a letter shortly afterward describing those events in detail to his wife, Sarah. That letter has recently been discovered and is published here for the first time. Both photographs 2.5" x 4", Edward Martin, photographer, date unknown. Courtesy Barbara Evans Duffin.