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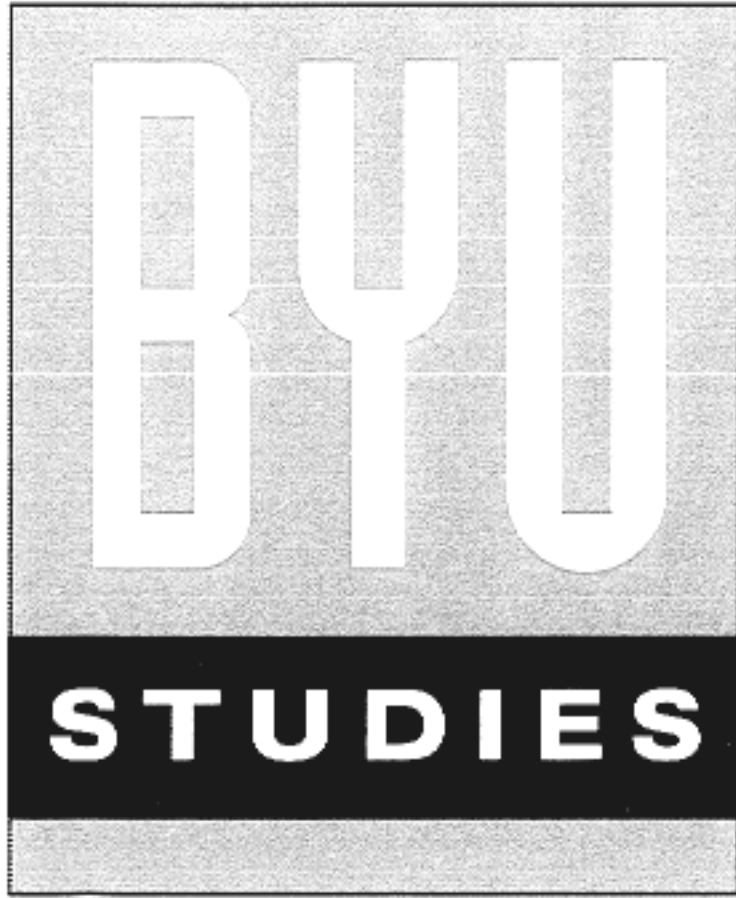
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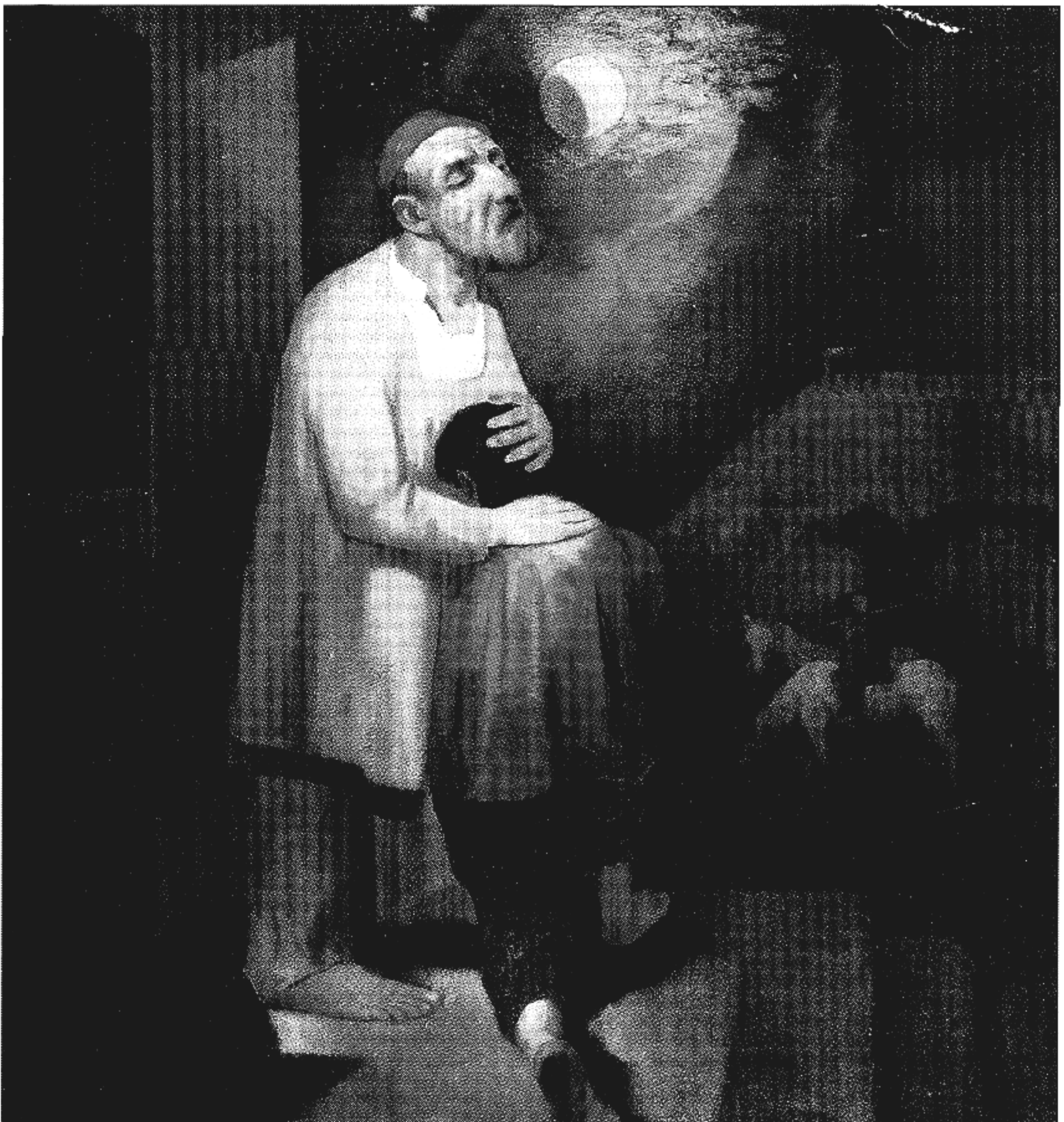
TRUMAN AS A MODERN CYRUS

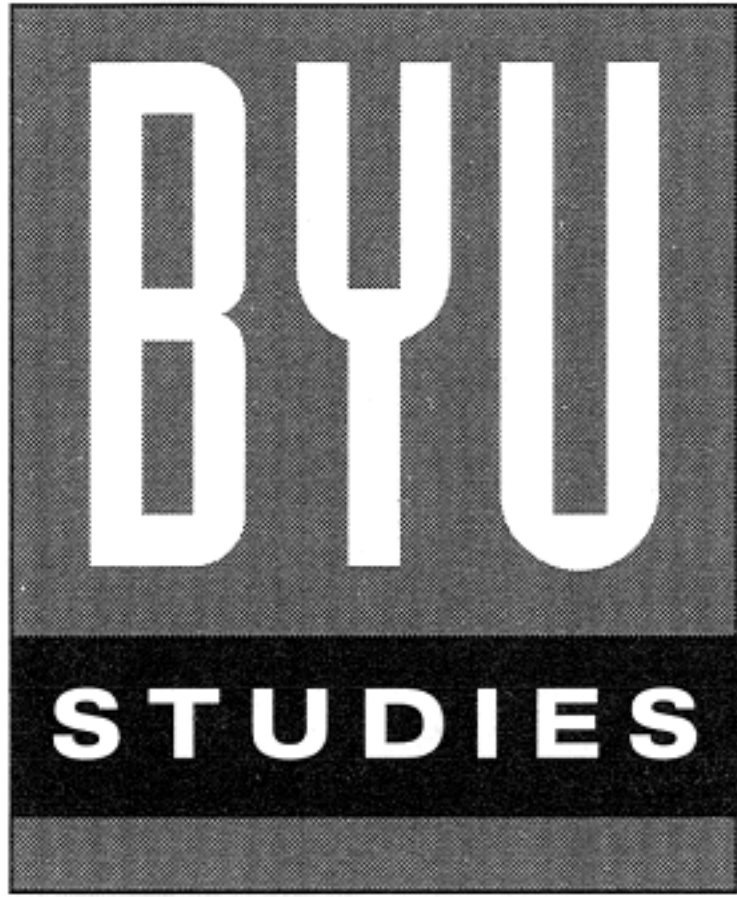
BORGES ON ART AND RELIGION

RESPONDING TO THE WILDERNESS

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE NAUVOO THEATER

MORMON BIBLIOGRAPHY 1993





A MULTIDISCIPLINARY
LATTER-DAY SAINT
JOURNAL

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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 are complementary and fundamentally harmonious avenues of knowledge. This periodical strives to explore scholarly perspectives on LDS 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).

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Harry S. Truman with Chaim Weizmann. Truman officially received Weizmann on May 25, 1948, the first time the head of the new Jewish state was received by a U.S. president. On that occasion, Weizmann acknowledged Truman's role in the recognition of Israel by presenting him with a set of Torah scrolls. Abba Eban recalled that Truman was not fully briefed by his staff. Not understanding what was within the purple velvet covering, Truman responded, "I've always wanted a set of these." Courtesy of The Bettmann Archive.

Harry S. Truman as a Modern Cyrus

Despite concerted opposition from his advisors, who saw the move as strategically unwise, Truman ignored strategy and recognized Israel for humanitarian and religious reasons.

Michael T. Benson

Without question the “puzzle of Palestine” (as Secretary of State Dean Acheson referred to it) “posed singular difficulty” for the administration of President Harry S. Truman “in terms of humaneness, conscience, diplomacy, strategy, intrigue, oil, domestic politics, prejudice, and personal pressure.”¹ Notwithstanding many mitigating factors, the historical record reveals that Truman’s decision to grant recognition to the nascent Jewish state was based primarily on humanitarian, moral, and sentimental reasons, many of which were an outgrowth of Truman’s religious upbringing and his familiarity with the Bible. His controversial action to grant recognition was subsequently “sanctified” by foreign policy officials at the State Department for strategic reasons. Given the similar strategic motivations of both the United States and Great Britain in the Middle East, parallels are readily evident. In adopting the Balfour Declaration, which restored to the Jews their ancient homeland, the British were compelled by dual considerations: first, a debt of conscience owed to the people of the Bible, and second, a strategy of empire which required that the British establish a presence in Palestine.²

In conversing with me about the above conclusions, John Lewis Gaddis, the visiting Harmsorth Professor of Modern History at Queen’s College, Oxford, remarked that such a thesis is on the right track. Nevertheless, he noted, one *must* emphasize the religious nature of Truman’s decision and the ways his actions diverged

from typical policy making. Otherwise, there is no way to explain why Truman did what he did, because his decision to grant recognition is an aberration when viewed within the historical context. Examining the president's actions through the prism of politics, strategy, or common sense renders the decision inexplicable.³

At the time, I did not mention a Mormon elder by the name of Orson Hyde, his mission to Palestine, and the way Harry S. Truman's recognition of the nation of Israel in May 1948 might be viewed as a partial fulfillment of Hyde's 1841 dedicatory prayer.

Elder Hyde's Mission to Palestine

Sometime after Orson Hyde's baptism, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave Elder Hyde an extraordinary blessing:

In due time thou shalt go to Jerusalem, the land of thy fathers, and be a watchman unto the house of Israel; and by thy hands shall the Most High do a great work, which shall prepare the way and greatly facilitate the gathering together of that people.⁴

As a literal realization of that blessing, Elder Hyde set out nearly a decade later on what may be one of the most arduous missions ever undertaken by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. His harrowing voyage to Palestine via London, Rotterdam, Constantinople, and Beirut is a matter of record. On arriving in Jerusalem on October 21, 1841—after nearly nineteen months of travel—Elder Hyde recorded his first impressions of the Holy City: “My natural eyes for the first time beheld Jerusalem; and as I gazed upon it and its environs, . . . a storm of commingled emotions suddenly arose in my breast, the force of which was only spent in a profuse shower of tears.”⁵

Early on Sunday morning, October 24, 1841, Elder Hyde crossed the Kidron Valley and ascended the Mount of Olives; there he built an altar and “in solemn silence, with pen, ink, and paper” offered a dedicatory prayer.⁶ His prayer contained the following petition:

Thou, O Lord, did once move upon the heart of Cyrus to show favor unto Jerusalem and her children. Do Thou now also be pleased to inspire the hearts of kings and the powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye towards this place, and with a desire to see Thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto. Let them know that it is

Thy good pleasure to restore the kingdom unto Israel—raise up Jerusalem as its capital, and constitute her people a distinct nation and government, with David Thy servant, even a descendant from the loins of ancient David to be their king.⁷

Orson Hyde thereby enunciated a vision of the return of the Jews to their ancestral homeland fifty-six years before Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, convened the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland.

I should mention that I do not intend to discuss the policies of the modern state of Israel. Members of the Church have been counseled repeatedly to avoid taking sides in the apparently intractable Middle Eastern conflict. For example, President Howard W. Hunter observed: “We do not need to apologize nor mitigate any of the prophecies concerning the Holy Land. We believe them and declare them to be true. But this does not give us justification to dogmatically pronounce that others of our Father’s children are not children of promise.”⁸ Church leaders have continued to “plead for peace and for coexistence with all the peoples who lay claim to old Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and others.”⁹

Nonetheless, given the eventual unfolding of the Lord’s purposes in the Near East, the Jewish return to Palestine is an astonishing phenomenon which cannot be divorced from the events that prophecy has foretold will transpire there. Professor Daniel Peterson concludes, “We need only think for a moment about the sheer improbability of the whole thing to begin to see its miraculous character.”¹⁰

Some, however, are quick to note that a Jewish return to Palestine “should not necessarily be seen as a ‘fulfillment’ of the spiritual promises made through the ancient and modern prophets.”¹¹ “I have occasionally heard Western Christians, including Latter-day Saints,” records Peterson, “talk as if we must support every action and every policy of the government of Israel, because that government is the leadership of God’s chosen people. This is false. Worse, I believe it is idolatrous.”¹² Elder Bruce R. McConkie has been even more explicit:

Let there be no misunderstanding in any discerning mind on this point. This gathering of the Jews to their homeland, and their organization into a nation and a kingdom, is not the gathering

promised by the prophets. It does not fulfill the ancient promises. . . . This gathering of the unconverted to Palestine—shall we not call it a political gathering based on such understanding of the ancient word as those without the guidance of the Holy Spirit can attain, or shall we not call it a preliminary gathering brought to pass in the wisdom of him who once was their God?—this gathering, of those whose eyes are yet dimmed by scales of darkness and who have not yet become the delightful people it is their destiny to be, is nonetheless part of the divine plan. It is Elias going before Messiah; it is a preparatory work; it is the setting of the stage for the grand drama soon to be played on Olivet.¹³

Notwithstanding the disparate perspectives *vis-à-vis* the role of the establishment of Israel in the eternal scheme of things, one would certainly be hard pressed to disagree with this caveat: the establishment of the state of Israel represents a modern political miracle.

In this article, I will focus on the consummation of a specific plea in Elder Hyde's petition to the Almighty: "Do Thou now also be pleased to inspire the *hearts of kings and the powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye towards this place*, and with a desire to see Thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto."¹⁴ Neither time nor space will allow for the treatment of Great Britain's role in restoring the Jewish people to Palestine and the subsequent fulfillment of Elder Hyde's prophecy that "England is destined, in the wisdom and economy of heaven, to stretch forth the arm of political power, and advance in the front ranks of this glorious enterprise."¹⁵ Rather, I will focus on what might be considered a very unlikely means of fulfilling Elder Hyde's dedicatory prayer: the thirty-third president of the United States, Harry S. Truman.

I hasten to add that I am not the first to emphasize the significance to the Latter-day Saints of President Truman's role in restoring the Jews to their Zion. Eliahu Elath, former Israeli ambassador to the United States and president of the Hebrew University, made this interesting observation in 1977:

When Harry was sixteen, the Truman family moved to Independence, a small town in the western part of Missouri. During the 1850's [1830s], it had been one of the centers of activity of the Mormons. Joseph Smith, founder of the sect, insisted that it had been revealed to him in a dream that Independence was the site of the Garden of Eden. He changed its name to Zion. Mystics may discover a hint here of the historic role a son of Independence-Zion was to play in the restoration of Israel to its ancient homeland in Zion.¹⁶

Chief Executives and the Question of Palestine

The first chief executive to express a desire to see the Jewish people restored to their ancient homeland was John Adams. In an 1818 letter to Major Mordechai Noah, Adams wrote, "For I really wish the Jews in Judea an independent nation, for as I believe, the most enlightened men of it have participated in the amelioration of the philosophy of the age."¹⁷ "A century later Jewish nationalists would stir their faithful by recalling" Adams's message, "discreetly omitting" the concluding phrase: "Once restored to an independent government and no longer persecuted they would soon wear away some of the asperities and peculiarities of their character, possibly in time becoming liberal Unitarian Christians."¹⁸

While every American president beginning with Woodrow Wilson has gone on the record in favor of a Jewish national home, U.S. involvement in the Palestinian conundrum would begin in earnest with the administration of Harry S. Truman in the mid-1940s. Truman recalled in 1961 that the Palestine question was "an exceptional kind of a problem of a unique people and of a unique country" which, he contended, "could not be dealt with in the routine, customary manner in which subjects of a political character were generally treated."¹⁹ Ambassador Elath observed: "[Truman's] actions regarding Palestine, his support of the Zionist cause and the Jewish desire for statehood, were motivated by deeper, more noble considerations than mere political and personal gain."²⁰ White House Counsel Clark Clifford noted:

The ethical and moral, humanitarian and sentimental reactions that the President felt toward Israel were very, very important to him. . . . I know why he fought for Israel. I know that, for instance, he believed that in the Old Testament there were references to the fact that ultimately there would be a Jewish homeland. . . . He felt a desire to see that these people who had been so mistreated all through their lives and all through their history would be given a chance.²¹

Truman's Religious Upbringing and Studies of History

As a young boy, Harry, who was neither as athletic nor social as his fellow classmates or his younger brother Vivian, spent most of his time reading books. He especially liked a red-backed,

four-volume set of biographies by Charles Francis Horne, *The Lives of Great Men and Famous Women*. Recalled Truman, “When I was a boy I was something of a bookworm, in part because my eyesight kept me out of a good many games and sports. . . . By the time I was twelve or fourteen years old I had read every book in the Independence Library, including the encyclopedias.”²² Margaret, Truman’s only child, recorded: “My father’s second preference, after Horne’s biographies, was the Bible. By the time he was twelve, he had read it end to end twice and was frequently summoned to settle religious disputes.”²³ Young Harry’s regular Bible study instilled in him a seriousness quite marked for a boy his age. He could quote many verses at random, and “in a childlike way he knew their beauty and could understand the allegorical significance.”²⁴

Though he was a regular church attender before assuming the presidency (he retained his membership in the Baptist Church of Grandview, Missouri), Truman very rarely attended church during his seven years in the Oval Office, explaining that he attracted too much attention and distracted other worshippers.²⁵ Despite such irregular church attendance, Truman was a deeply religious man (the *Christian Century* called him “one of our more religious presidents”²⁶), and his biblical upbringing was clearly manifested in correspondence, speeches, and public statements. Many of these communications “exhibited distinct theological attitudes—reverence for the Holy Scriptures, belief in a Supreme Being, support for a spirit of toleration among the various religious faiths, and support for the ecumenical movement.”²⁷ Shortly after announcing his candidacy for the Senate in 1934, Truman wrote in his diary: “And now I am a candidate for the United States Senate. If the Almighty God decides that I go there I am going to pray as King Solomon did, for wisdom to do the job.”²⁸

Truman’s “later public addresses and papers are studded with Biblical references.”²⁹ His final address to the nation as president in January of 1953 is evidence of his deep-seated attachment to the Bible and his penchant for historical analogies:

Think what can be done, once our capital, our skills, our science—and most of all atomic energy—can be released from the tasks of defense and turned wholly to peaceful purposes all around the

world. There is no end to what can be done. I can't help but dream out loud just a little here. The Tigris and the Euphrates Valley can be made to bloom as it did in the times of Babylon and Nineveh. Israel can be made the country of milk and honey as it was in the time of Joshua.³⁰

In a 1959 interview, Truman observed, "As a student of the Bible I have been impressed by the remarkable achievements of the Jews in Palestine in making the land of the Holy Book blossom again."³¹

When asked about the numerous references to God and the Bible in Truman's addresses, White House aide and speech writer, George Elsey, answered that in this regard Truman led and his staff followed:

The staff certainly did not deliberately compose phrases or paragraphs of this sort, and inject them. This was very much a part of President Truman's own personal belief and feeling. Many of these phrases and sentences were added by him in longhand very near the final draft of a speech. . . . One could find long before he had ever had a staff helping him in matters, references of this sort, back in his early campaign speeches, in his senatorial days in the '30s and '40s, so this a reflection of Mr. Truman's own beliefs.³²

A Providential President?

Initially humble, insecure, and overwhelmed, Truman commented to reporters upon hearing of President Franklin Roosevelt's death: "Boys, if you ever pray, pray for me now. I don't know whether you fellows ever had a load of hay fall on you, but when they told me yesterday what had happened, I felt like the moon, the stars, and all the planets had fallen on me."³³ The unlikely chief executive from Independence expressed humility and self-deprecation so frequently that his own vice-president, Alben Barkley of Kentucky, finally "took him aside and told him to cut it out." The people of the United States, according to Barkley, "would lose all confidence in him if he did not show confidence in himself. 'God raises up leaders,' [Barkley told Truman.] 'We do not know the process, but in the wisdom of Almighty God, you have been made President.'"³⁴

Vice-president Barkley was not the only one to believe that Truman's assumption of office came about by providential intervention. Zionist leaders saw the failed Midwestern haberdasher as

the instrument whereby the Jews would attain their state. In a particularly terse letter to the president just weeks before Ben-Gurion's historic announcement of May 1948, Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, exhorted: "The choice for our people, Mr. President, is between statehood and extermination. History and providence have placed this issue in your hands, and I am confident that you will yet decide it in the spirit of the moral law."³⁵

One of the most revealing comments relative to Truman's providential role came from David Niles, a White House aide who worked for Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. On more than one occasion, Niles expressed doubts "that Israel would have come into being if Roosevelt had lived."³⁶ Indeed, Roosevelt's mercurial record on the Palestine issue has left more questions than answers. As a former State Department official summarized, "In many ways President Roosevelt's handling of the Palestine question remains an enigma. He left no coherent policy for his successor and some of his statements and actions are difficult to understand."³⁷ Conversely, Truman's continued support of partition and of the establishment of a Jewish state elicited some of the "bitterest, the most venomous" opposition he was to face during his time in the White House.³⁸

Opponents to Truman's Palestine Policy

Truman's support for a Jewish homeland is all the more astounding given the political climate of Washington in the late 1940s. Despite the unremitting pressure he endured from nearly every side, Truman held firm to the conviction that the Palestine issue was unique and would ultimately be decided by a different standard. When his secretary of defense, James Forrestal, reminded him of the critical need for Saudi Arabian oil in the event of war, Truman said he would handle the situation in the light of justice, not oil.³⁹ Forrestal continued to register his concerns about the accessibility of oil as late as the winter of 1948, arguing that without Middle Eastern oil the European Recovery Program [known as the Marshall Plan] had a very slim chance of success. In his opinion, as well as that of many others at Foggy Bottom, the United States simply could not supply the European continent

while meeting the demands for its own consumption.⁴⁰ Max Ball, director of the Oil and Gas Division at the Department of the Interior, insisted that Middle Eastern oil resources had to be developed as quickly as possible for “the supply of Europe, to prevent European industry from collapsing and falling to Communism or to the dogs.”⁴¹ Notwithstanding such dire prognostications, “oil meant less to Truman,” recalled Ambassador Elath “where human suffering and the future of a people depended upon the results of their desperate struggle for physical and national survival.”⁴²

White House counsel Clark Clifford recalled a conversation he had with Forrestal early in 1948:

We were talking together one time—I had breakfast with him every week. He said, “Clark, I don’t understand why you fellas at the White House view the Jewish problem the way you do.” I replied, “What do you mean?” He said, “Well, it’s very clear to us that there are 35 million Arabs and there are 400,000 Jews and the 35 million Arabs are going to push the 400,000 Jews into the Mediterranean. It’s just a question of numbers.” And I said, “Well Jim, with President Truman it is not a question of numbers. It is a question of the ethics and morality of the problem.” Forrestal just kind of shook his head.⁴³

Truman adhered to the belief that the Palestine issue should be decided on moral grounds.

However, State Department officials and military leaders thought in purely strategic terms, for which they cannot be faulted. Nonetheless, they tended to ignore humanitarian and moral considerations. Their assessment of the situation, as outlined by George Kennan, the director of the State Department’s policy planning staff, included strategic and economic politics and an interest in the world of *realpolitik*. The assessment was separate, Kennan argued, from the altruistic, moralistic, or humanitarian motives existing in American foreign relations.⁴⁴

All of Truman’s most trusted foreign policy advisers were absolutely opposed to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Truman faced the formidable front of General George Marshall, Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett, Secretary of the Navy (and later Secretary of Defense) James Forrestal, Policy Planning Staff’s George Kennan, State Department counsel Charles Bohlen, and Dean Acheson, who was Marshall’s successor. As Acheson stated: “I had learned to understand, but not to share, the mystical

emotion of the Jews to return to Palestine and end the Diaspora. In urging Zionism as an American governmental policy they had allowed, so I thought, their emotion to obscure the totality of American interests.”⁴⁵

These men argued that however humanitarian a Jewish homeland might seem, “it posed a real risk to United States national security.” Although some might “sense more than a whiff of prejudice” among these arch-WASPs, “it is probably more accurate to describe the attitude of Lovett and others as intellectually unsympathetic, not viscerally anti-Semitic. Pragmatists all, these men were really quite bloodless about an issue that aroused such passion in others.”⁴⁶ Former Israeli ambassador to the United States Abba Eban observed: “You would have expected with a president normally—for something so controversial—that the ‘Wise Men’ would be divided: some for and some against. But there was *nobody* for this issue in what I would call the influential group.”⁴⁷

The May 12 Oval Office Showdown

Several months after the United Nations’ vote to partition Palestine, Truman met with the “chemist from Pinsk,” Chaim Weizmann, on March 18, 1948. While the Truman and Weizmann accounts differ slightly on various points, both agree Truman attempted to emphasize that his “primary concern was to see justice done without bloodshed.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, as best as can be determined, Truman gave his pledge that if the Jewish state were declared, the United States would recognize the new state immediately. As Truman recalled: “And when [Weizmann] left my office, I felt that he had reached a full understanding of my policy and that I knew what it was he wanted.”⁴⁹ Weizmann confided to intimate associates that he had received a specific commitment from the President: Truman “would work for the establishment and recognition of the Jewish State.”⁵⁰ Indeed,

the move was typical of Truman, a statement of personal integrity and intent, uncluttered by bureaucratic options and provisos. It was the word of one amiable citizen to another, one from Independence, the other from Pinsk. Yet it was as binding as an act of state. Truman never notified the State Department of his promise.⁵¹

According to Clark Clifford, Truman told Weizmann, “You can bank on us. I am for partition.”⁵² Truman’s promise to Weizmann is all the more important when one considers the events that transpired shortly thereafter.

Due to a myriad of factors and events—among them Truman’s reticence to discuss with anyone his promise made to Weizmann—the political picture in Washington became more convoluted in subsequent weeks. The apex of the State Department’s opposition to Truman’s stated position and his support for Zionist aims occurred on May 12, 1948, in what Clark Clifford has called “The Showdown in the Oval Office.”⁵³ In attendance were President Truman; Secretary of State George Marshall; Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett; White House staff members Clark Clifford, David Niles, and Matthew Connelly; Fraser Wilkins of the Near East Agency; and Robert McClintock of the United Nations office.⁵⁴

Before the meeting, Truman issued this ominous warning to Clifford: “General Marshall is opposed to our recognizing Israel. He’ll bring his assistants with him. . . . I think that between the two of us maybe we can convince Marshall of the rightness of our cause.”⁵⁵ The president began the proceedings by saying that he was seriously concerned as to what might happen in Palestine after the scheduled departure of the British in two days. Undersecretary Lovett was then called on to present the State Department’s position of opposing any hasty recognition of the new Jewish state. Counsel Clifford was called upon next. His statement mentioned—explicitly and for the first time—recognition of the new Jewish state by the United States.⁵⁶

“As I talked,” remembered Clifford, “I noticed the thunder clouds gathering—Marshall’s face getting redder and redder.” By the time Clifford finished, “General Marshall’s face was absolutely beet-red. I think he had grave difficulty containing himself during the presentation.”⁵⁷ Clifford concluded by explaining the Balfour Declaration and quoting the following lines from Deuteronomy 1:8, verifying the Jewish claim to a homeland in Palestine: “Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.”

Lovett then offered a rebuttal to Clifford's presentation, arguing *inter alia* that premature recognition would be a blow to the prestige of the president and would signify a "very transparent attempt to win the Jewish vote."⁵⁸ To recognize the Jewish state prematurely would be the equivalent of "recognizing a pig in a poke." Lovett then "pulled out a file of reports suggesting again that large numbers of the Jewish immigrants were Communists or Soviet agents."⁵⁹ How did the United States know what kind of Jewish state would be established? The undersecretary concluded by reading "excerpts from a file of intelligence telegrams and reports regarding Soviet activity in sending Jews and Communist agents from Black Sea areas to Palestine."⁶⁰ "I felt that this was preposterous," recalled Clifford. "Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe in fact were specifically fleeing the Communists."⁶¹

Lovett's rejection of Clifford's proposal for recognition was merely a precursor to the blow yet to come from the "greatest living American," as Truman called General George C. Marshall.⁶² Immediately after the meeting, Secretary Marshall dictated from memory what he had said. He concluded:

The counsel offered by Mr. Clifford was based on domestic political considerations, while the problem which confronted us was international. *I said bluntly that if the President were to follow Mr. Clifford's advice and if in the elections I were to vote, I would vote against the President.*⁶³

Marshall's rejoinder, recalled Clifford, "was so shocking that it just kind of lay there for 15 or 20 seconds and nobody moved."⁶⁴ Needless to say, it brought the meeting to a grinding halt. In trying to evoke the feeling in the room at the time, Clifford would recall years later: "There was really a state of shock. The President, I think, was struck dumb by it. There was this awful, total silence."⁶⁵ This was as strong a personal rebuke as Marshall had ever tendered, given the tremendous respect both men had for each other, and was certainly not what the underdog from Missouri needed to hear in May 1948, just two months before a Democratic convention he did not yet control and six months before a presidential election which he appeared sure to lose.

Nevertheless, Truman showed little emotion. He simply raised his hand and said that he was "fully aware of the difficulties

and dangers in the situation, to say nothing of the political risks involved which he, himself, would run.”⁶⁶ Seeing that his secretary of state was still quite agitated, Truman turned toward Marshall and remarked: “I think I understand the question involved and I think we need no further discussion of it. I think we must follow the position General Marshall has advocated.”⁶⁷ Clifford recalled: “Lovett, who felt as I did that this awful meeting should be ending as quickly as possible said, ‘Well thank you very much Mr. President. I think we’ve pretty well covered it.’ They got up and left.”⁶⁸ Truman turned to Clifford and said, “That was rough as a cob.”⁶⁹ The president told his counsel not to feel badly. As a trial lawyer who had lost cases before, Clifford confessed, “Well, I didn’t ever think I was going to win every case but I’m little afraid that I may have lost this one.”⁷⁰ To this Truman replied, “Let’s not agree that it’s lost yet.”⁷¹ The president continued, “I never saw the General so furious. Suppose we let the dust settle a little—then you can get into it again and see if we can get this thing turned around. I still want to do it. But be careful. I can’t afford to lose General Marshall.”⁷² Any leak—particularly in the midst of the most difficult months of the Cold War—of the astonishing events of that afternoon would have been catastrophic.⁷³

According to Fraser Wilkins, “the State Department representatives came away from the meeting . . . with the [distinct] impression that recognition of the new Jewish state would be put off indefinitely.”⁷⁴ However, Truman’s endorsement of the State Department’s position was—according to Clark Clifford—merely an attempt not to “embarrass General Marshall in front of the others.”⁷⁵ “Because President Truman was often annoyed by the tone and fierceness of the pressure exerted on him by American Zionists,” recalled Clifford on another occasion, “he left some people with the impression he was ambivalent about the events of May 1948. This is not true: he never wavered in his belief that he had taken the right action.”⁷⁶

Years after leaving the White House—and in typical Trumanesque fashion—the former commander-in-chief recalled:

I’d recognized Israel immediately as a sovereign nation when the British left Palestine in 1948, and I did so against the advice of my own Secretary of State, George Marshall, who was afraid that the Arabs

wouldn't like it. This was one of the few errors of judgment made by that great and wonderful man, but I felt that Israel deserved to be recognized and didn't give a damn whether the Arabs liked it or not.⁷⁷

As one can see, Truman had already made up his mind long before the now-famous May 12 Oval Office meeting.

Conclusion

Two days later, unbeknownst even to the American delegation at the United Nations, Truman had the United States be the first country to recognize the Jewish nation, reborn after two millennia. In speaking of his decision to recognize Israel immediately, Truman stated matter-of-factly in his *Memoirs*: "I was told that to some of the career men of the State Department this announcement came as a surprise. It should not have been if these men had faithfully supported my policy."⁷⁸ The president from Independence had kept his word to the chemist from Pinsk. "The old Doctor will believe me now," quipped Truman.⁷⁹

Harry S. Truman, according to one of his closest associates, was the "one American who had more to do with assisting in the creation of Israel than any other" individual.⁸⁰ For Trygve Lie, first secretary general of the United Nations, Truman's influence in the establishment of the Jewish state could not be overemphasized: "I think we can safely say that if there had been no Harry S. Truman, there would be no Israel today."⁸¹ To be sure, Truman has been eulogized by Jews around the globe for his instrumental role in recognizing the nascent state. He himself expressed some discomfort with the extent to which his name and actions were extolled. In a letter to a former staff assistant, Max Lowenthal, Truman—in his familiar deferential and self-effacing style—wrote: "You know how those Israelites have placed me on a pedestal alongside of Moses, and that is the reason I wrote you as I did because I wanted you to have the credit."⁸² Still trying to downplay his role, Truman told a large Jewish organization in 1952, "I take no special credit for having recognized the State of Israel. I did what the people of America wanted me to do."⁸³

Notwithstanding such attempts to discount the monumental role he might have played, an experience related by Israel's first

prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, highlights the sheer historical significance of Truman's courageous decision. A few years after retiring from public service, Ben-Gurion recalled:

At our last meeting, after a very interesting talk, just before [the president] left me—it was in a New York hotel suite—I told him that as a foreigner I could not judge what would be his place in American history; but his helpfulness to us, his constant sympathy with our aims in Israel, his courageous decision to recognize our new State so quickly and his steadfast support since then had given him an immortal place in Jewish history. As I said that, tears suddenly sprang to his eyes. And his eyes were still wet when he bade me good-bye. I had rarely seen anyone so moved. I tried to hold him for a few minutes until he had become more composed, for I recalled that the hotel corridors were full of waiting journalists and photographers. He left. A little while later, I too had to go out, and a correspondent came up to me to ask, “Why was President Truman in tears when he left you?”⁸⁴

Clifford believed he knew the answer:

I believe I know. These were the tears of a man who had been subjected to calumny and vilification, who had persisted against powerful forces determined to defeat him, who had contended with opposition even from within his own Administration. These were the tears of a man who had fought ably and honorably for a humanitarian goal to which he was deeply dedicated. These were tears of thanksgiving that his God had seen fit to bless his labours with success.⁸⁵

“Did Truman act out of—fundamentally in the long run—moral, ethical, historical principles?” asked David McCullough rhetorically. “Yes, absolutely.”⁸⁶

When Israel's chief rabbi paid President Truman a visit in early 1949 and told him, “‘God put you in your mother's womb so you would be the instrument to bring about the rebirth of Israel after two thousand years,’” tears rose to the president's eyes.⁸⁷ The rabbi then opened the Bible he was carrying with him and read the words of King Cyrus from the book of Ezra: “The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kindness of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah” (Ezra 1:2). One of Truman's aides present at the meeting, David Niles, thought the chief rabbi was “‘overdoing things, but when I looked over at the President, tears were running down his cheeks.’”⁸⁸ When I asked David McCullough about this incident

and the president's propensity for such public displays of emotion, he responded: "Truman was not a cry-on-the-spot kind of fellow. I have about three instances where Truman cried in public. They are very few and they are always real."⁸⁹

Shortly after leaving the White House in 1953, Harry S. Truman paid a visit to the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, accompanied by his former haberdashery partner, Eddie Jacobson. During a conversation with Professor Alexander Marx and seminary president Professor Finkelstein, Jacobson—"waving his hand toward Harry S. Truman—proclaimed: "This is the man who helped create the State of Israel." Without so much as a moment of hesitation, Truman retorted: "What do you mean, helped create? I am Cyrus, I am Cyrus!" thus "evoking the biblical imagery of Cyrus [the Great,] who made possible the return of the Jews to Jerusalem."⁹⁰ Subsequently, some within the Jewish intelligentsia have not been able to resist the historical parallels:

Harry S. Truman's name will go down in history as the man who knew the arrival of an historic moment and he linked it promptly with American history. He saw the emergence of an oppressed people as a free sovereign state, and he used his great office to extend to that people a friendly hand. For that reason, we say that he is The Modern Cyrus. . . . Cyrus's deeds are recorded in four Biblical books—Ezra, Isaiah, Daniel, and Second Chronicles. Truman's name is indelibly written in modern Jewish history, to be remembered by all generations to come.⁹¹

"The Jews who wish for a State shall have it," wrote Theodor Herzl in the summer of 1895, over a half-century after Orson Hyde's prophetic prayer offered from the Mount of Olives on October 21, 1841.⁹² And while Elder Hyde would probably never have thought that someone like the irascible "Man from Missouri" would someday help realize the petition that God "inspire the hearts of kings and the powers of the earth," history has confirmed that Harry S. Truman truly was a modern Cyrus.

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NOTES

¹Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 312.

²Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: How the British Came to Palestine* (New York: New York University, 1956), vii.

³Gaddis made these remarks during my doctoral qualifying examination at Oxford in November 1992. When I related this experience to Truman's most recent biographer, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough, his response was as follows: "I'm thrilled Gaddis reacted the way he did, because I sometimes think graduate students dehumanize these people. They suck all the warm blood out of them, somehow, in the process of getting their Ph.D.s., so that the human equation is never one to take seriously. Because sentiment and affection and memory and the chemistry of personality are always affecting how history turns. Always. And you can't measure it, you can't quantify it, you can't document it." David McCullough, interview by author, Martha's Vineyard, Mass., May 28, 1993.

⁴Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1949), 4:375 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

⁵Orson Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem* (Boston: Albert Morgan, 1842), 7.

⁶*History of the Church* 4:456-59.

⁷*History of the Church* 4:457.

⁸Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike unto God," *Ensign* 9 (June 1979): 74.

⁹Truman G. Madsen, "Zionism," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel Ludlow, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1626.

¹⁰Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided: An LDS Perspective on the Middle East* (Salt Lake City: Aspen, 1992), 357. See also the review of *Abraham Divided* in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

¹¹James B. Mayfield, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Mormon Dilemma?" *Dialogue* 4 (Summer 1969): 34.

¹²Peterson, *Abraham Divided*, 364.

¹³Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 229.

¹⁴*History of the Church* 4:457 (emphasis added).

¹⁵Hyde, *Voice from Jerusalem*, 14.

¹⁶Eliahu Elath, "Truman: The Man and the Statesman," lecture given at the Harry S. Truman Research Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus, Israel, May 18, 1977, Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace Library, 8.

¹⁷Max Kohler, "Some Early American Zionist Projects," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 8 (1900): 85.

¹⁸Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1983), 6.

¹⁹Elath, "Truman: The Man and the Statesman," 40.

²⁰Eliahu Elath, "The 14th of May 1948 in Washington, D.C.," in *Truman and the American Commitment to Israel: A Thirtieth Anniversary Conference*, ed. Moshe Máoz and Allen Weinstein (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 105.

²¹Clark Clifford, "Preserving the Free World," in *The Truman Presidency: Intimate Perspectives*, Vol. II of Portraits of American Presidents, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson (New York: University Press of America, 1984), 18.

²²Harry S. Truman, "Me and Libraries," *College and Research Libraries* 19 (March 1958): 99.

²³Margaret Truman, *Harry S. Truman* (New York: William Morrow, 1972), 52.

²⁴Frank McNaughton and Walter Hehmyer, *This Man Truman* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1945), 13.

²⁵Merlin Gustafson, "Harry S. Truman as a Man of Faith," *Christian Century* 90 (January 17, 1973): 75.

²⁶Gustafson, "Harry S. Truman as a Man of Faith," 75.

²⁷Gustafson, "Harry S. Truman as a Man of Faith," 76.

²⁸William Hillman, *Mr. President: The First Publication from the Personal Diaries, Private Letters, Papers and Revealing Interviews of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Farrer, Straus, and Young, 1952), 194.

²⁹Harold F. Gosnell, *Truman's Crises: A Political Biography of Harry S. Truman* (London: Greenwood, 1980), 9.

³⁰Harry S. Truman, *Public Papers of the President, 1953* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), 1201.

³¹Louis L. Gerson, *The Hyphenate in Recent American Politics and Diplomacy* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1964), 95.

³²George Elsey Oral History, 95-96, July 6, 1970, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri (hereafter cited as HSTL).

³³Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, 2 vols. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), 1:19-20.

³⁴Bert Cochran, *Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1973), 118.

³⁵Chaim Weizmann to Harry S. Truman, April 9, 1948, Z5/3141, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel. A copy of this letter was sent to General Marshall with accompanying cover letter; both are on file at Weizmann Archives, Rehovot, Israel. Weizmann received no reply from Truman.

³⁶Alfred Steinberg, *The Man from Missouri: The Life and Times of Harry S. Truman* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1962), 304; Evan Wilson, *Decision on Palestine* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, 1979), 56; and Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, 156.

³⁷Wilson, *Decision on Palestine*, 55.

³⁸*Congressional Record*, "Joint Meeting of the House and Senate Held Pursuant to the Provisions of House Concurrent Resolution 126 in Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Harry S. Truman," 98th Congress, 2d Session, May 8, 1984, vol. 130, pt. 8, p. 11330.

³⁹Henry Wallace, *The Price of Vision* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 607; and David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 597.

⁴⁰Steinberg, *The Man from Missouri*, 306-7.

⁴¹Michael J. Cohen, *Truman and Israel* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 94.

⁴²Elath, "Truman: The Man and the Statesman," 36.

⁴³Clark M. Clifford, interview with author, Washington, D.C., December 15, 1993.

⁴⁴George Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900 to 1950* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1952), 91-103.

⁴⁵Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 169.

⁴⁶Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 451.

⁴⁷Interview with author, December 19, 1993, New York, New York.

⁴⁸Truman, *Memoirs* 2:161.

⁴⁹Truman, *Memoirs* 2:161.

⁵⁰Abba Eban, "Tragedy and Triumph," in *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography by Several Hands*, ed. Meyer W. Weisgal and Joel Carmichael (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 306.

⁵¹Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, 278.

⁵²George Elsey Oral History, 95-96, July 6, 1970.

⁵³Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1991), 3-25.

⁵⁴Clifford, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, 9-10.

⁵⁵Clark Clifford, "The Unique and Inspiring Leadership of President Truman," in *Harry S. Truman: The Man from Independence*, ed. William F. Levantrosser (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 386.

⁵⁶Clifford remembered that no one during those days knew exactly what the name of the new Jewish entity would be: "We knew that it would not be called Palestine, but were unaware that the Jewish leaders were going to call their new country Israel. My information was that they were going to give it the name of Judaea." Clark Clifford, "Recognizing Israel," interview by Bernard A. Weisberger, *American Heritage* 28 (April 1977): 8-9.

⁵⁷Clark Clifford, "The Legacy of Harry S. Truman," interview by Walter Cronkite, HSTL; Crossroads Series, videocassette.

⁵⁸*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948*, 9 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), 5:975 (hereafter cited as *FRUS*).

⁵⁹Clark M. Clifford, "Factors Influencing President Truman's Decision to Support Partition and Recognize the State of Israel," in *The Palestine Question in American History* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 40.

⁶⁰*FRUS* 1948, 5:975.

⁶¹Clifford, "Factors Influencing," 40.

⁶²Robert G. Nixon (October 9-November 23, 1970), interview by Hess, Oral History Collection 6, HSTL, 927-28.

⁶³*FRUS* 5:975 (italics added). The confrontation between Marshall and Truman, according to McCullough, turned "on their terrible concern on what is going to happen in Europe. Where is the oil going to come from? And what about the Marshall Plan? It's going to fail!" McCullough interview.

⁶⁴Interview with Clifford.

⁶⁵McCullough, 616.

⁶⁶*FRUS*, 1948, 5:976.

⁶⁷Daniels, notes, 46.

⁶⁸Clifford interview.

⁶⁹McCullough, 617.

⁷⁰Clifford interview.

⁷¹McCullough, 617.

⁷²Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 15.

⁷³The Palestine predicament was hardly the only pressing international concern in early 1948. The fate of Czechoslovakia was sealed in February when a violent coup backed by the Red Army imposed a pro-Communist government in a matter of days. (See Bruce Evensen, "The Limits of Presidential Leadership: Truman at War with Zionists, the Press, Public Opinion and His Own State Department over Palestine," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 23 [Spring 1993]:269-81.) A feeling of revulsion swept much of the world, as it had only ten years previous when the Nazis had seized the same country; it appeared as if Italy and France were headed for the same destiny. The *New York Times* compared Russia's "imperialistic mission" to Hitler's quest for world domination in 1939 (*New York Times*, February 29, 1948, Sec. 4, 10E). Former British prime minister Winston Churchill could see "the menace of war rolling toward the West" (*New York Times*, March 7, 1948, 18). Senator Arthur Vandenberg, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urged immediate action "to avert a Third World War" (*New York Times*, March 2, 1948, 1). Truman wrote to his daughter, Margaret: "Things look black so that we are faced with exactly the same situation with which Britain and France were faced in 1938/39 with Hitler" (HST to Margaret Truman, 3 March 1948, cited in *Letters from Father: The Truman Family's Personal Correspondence* [New York: Arbor House, 1981], 108). On March 5, General Lucius Clay, U.S. military governor of the American-occupied zone in Germany, cabled the U.S. Army's director of intelligence in Washington to warn that war with the Soviets might come "with dramatic suddenness" (Jean Edward Smith, *Lucius Clay: An American Life* [New York: Henry Holt, 1990], 466-67). Columnists Joseph and Stuart Alsop reported that "the atmosphere of Washington today is no longer postwar. It is a prewar atmosphere" (cited in McCullough, *Truman*, 603). Truman even went so far as to reintroduce conscription in late March 1948. (Congressional Record, 80th Cong., 2d Sess., 1948, 94, pt. 3:3038.) This war-scare atmosphere in the United States projected relatively small Palestine onto the world stage, thus imbuing it with a symbolic meaning that ranged well beyond the eastern Mediterranean.

⁷⁴Wilson, *Decision on Palestine*, 143.

⁷⁵Clifford, "Recognizing Israel," 9.

⁷⁶Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 25.

⁷⁷Harry S. Truman, *Where the Buck Stops: The Personal and Private Writings of Harry S. Truman*, ed. Margaret Truman (New York: Warner Communications, 1989), 64.

⁷⁸Truman, *Memoirs* 2:164.

⁷⁹Eban, "Tragedy and Triumph," 312.

⁸⁰Trude B. Feldman, "Truman Was Israel's Friend," *Washington Star*, December 30, 1972, vertical file, Palestine, HSTL.

⁸¹"Credit for a New Nation," *Kansas City Times*, October 21, 1954, vertical file, Palestine, HSTL.

⁸²Robert Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Penguin, 1980), 402.

⁸³Quoted in I. L. Kenen, "Personal Reflections," in *Truman and the American Commitment to Israel*, 73.

⁸⁴Moshe Pearlman, *Ben Gurion Looks Back* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 116.

⁸⁵Clifford, "Factors Influencing," 45.

⁸⁶McCullough interview.

⁸⁷Steinberg, *Man from Missouri*, 308.

⁸⁸Steinberg, *Man from Missouri*, 308.

⁸⁹McCullough interview.

⁹⁰Moshe Davis, "America and the Holy Land: A Colloquium," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (September 1972): 43. The Cyrus analogy was certainly not lost on these Jews, who saw Truman's role as providential: "The Jewish Republic throughout history will recognize Harry Truman as its second Cyrus who helped its rebirth" (*Intermountain Jewish News*, January 22, 1953, 16, vertical file, Palestine, HSTL). In speaking of this incident, Clark Clifford recalled:

Harry Truman was a very modest man, even to a certain extent a humble man. The presidency certainly did not change him. But I think every now and again he allowed himself a little freedom to congratulate himself on important accomplishments. So this would be one of those rare instances in which he was perfectly willing to accept the commendation that had been offered him and to agree with it. (Clifford interview)

⁹¹Philip Slomovitz, "Harry S. Truman: The Modern Cyrus," *The American Jewish Outlook*, January 23, 1953, 11, vertical file, Palestine, HSTL.

⁹²Preface to *Der Judenstat* by Theodor Herzl, quoted in Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege* (London: Collins, 1988), 71.

Alexandria Bay, bibliophile

As a boy I used to marvel that the letters in a closed book did not get mixed up and lost in the course of a night.

—Jorge Luis Borges, “The Aleph”

Alexandria Bay is bibliophile—but
 anyone who’s anything-*phile* is out of date
 even if the passion’s timeless as it is
 Latinate, Greekate: philatelists, philologists,
 bibliophiles—alas! They’re as quaint
 as my saying “quaint” or “alas!”—anyhow,

Alexandria Bay loves books in a guts sort of way,
 but her brother, Ben, teaches her love for flow aesthetics:
 curling quotations, ligatures, pages without widows
 or orphans, words taken down in gorgeous fonts—
 and she worries, tries to outread acid death,
 nightmares libraries of ashes from internal fires.

Alexandria Bay turns to stacks, senses herself
 among temple columns etched with heiroglyph,
 gets this sort of reverent rush—careful not to spit,
 she blows bona fide dust off books, gentles them open,
 checks copyright dates, brain stumbling on spikes
 of Roman numerals—checks for *S*’s that look like *F*’s . . .

[as in “*f*pirit”]

Alexandria Bay's heart beats in her fingers
 as she touches a 1777 *Paradise Lost* safe inside leather,
 lost in the stacks like any other book—but Elder James E.
 Talmage's signature diagonals the flyleaf—and for the name's
 sake she escorts it to special collections, wonders
 if it's rare enough—but anything old is rare, she says.

Alexandria Bay buys, inherits, gathers remnant books:
 old grammars, readers, a book with Blake's *Milton*—

[Bring me my Bow of burning gold:

Bring me my Arrows of desire:

Bring me my Spear: O clouds, unfold!

Bring me my Chariot of fire]—

she buys a Herbert, its 1856 dust scenting her finger
 as she runs it over “The Altar,” over “A. Bay 1859”
 quill-scratched on a flyleaf—she wonders if it's a relative,
 if the book has “come home”—her grandparents' books have, anyhow—

including three volumes of the *History of Utah*—
 with wrinkled skin, gold tattoos on their backs and chests, their leather
 flaking like dry blood on her shelf, they smell faintly
 of maple sugar, remind her how they scented afternoons when sun
 focused shafts through window panes, warming her grandparents'
 books—and she loves them, Alexandria Bay, bibliophile.

—Casualene Meyer

“Alexandria Bay, bibliophile” won third place in the 1993 *BYU Studies* Writing
 Contest, poetry division.

Processional

“Why do we let school out for the deer hunt?” repeated
The principal when I asked him if he thought it was a good idea.
“So you’re a troublemaker,” he said as he got up
And came round the desk. It’s true, I thought:
I care about my children’s education.
As I turned, I wondered about that albatross
Coleridge’s old mariner killed and had to wear for a collar.
And I remembered the Buddhist story I read in Japanese
About a man who saved a spider and later it saved him
From Hell by spinning a thread down for him to climb out.
What if everybody had to wear what they killed?
I’m not talking about butchers, of course,
Or men like my father, who killed a steer in the fall
And a pig at Christmas in order to feed the family.
I’m talking about killing just to be killing—
For the fun of it. I can see old Ernest Hemingway
Toting a menagerie with a Cape buffalo on top,
And most of the autumn hunters carrying the meat out,
Not the way they planned, but staggering sideways.

One bunch was a special case; these were the guys
Who didn't go after wounded deer, or who left them
If it was uphill or any trouble. Now they were stuck,
Not only carrying their deer, but along with each
A black brother from Africa who starved in Somalia
The same day as the deer hunt. And all the safari
Dudes were there, several with lions on their necks
And a gorilla-like guy smashed flat under his elephant.
Women were there too, a passel of fashion
Models with whole carcasses of leopards on them,
And a bevy of beauties with egrets slung
From their shoulders as they wailed together like a Greek
Chorus: "But I didn't kill them; you can't say I did it."
How long does it last? I wondered. The old sailor
Had to come down a few pegs and admit his relation
To an ugly sea worm before he was purged enough
To see the value of all life. "So when's the hunt?"
I asked the principal gloomily as I walked out.

—Edward L. Hart

Richard Burde: Spiritual Reflections

Richard G. Oman and Doris R. Dant

When many Mormons think of modern religious painters, they think of illustrators Arnold Friberg and Harry Anderson. Others might name artists Minerva Teichert or Wulf Barsch. Relatively few have heard of Richard Burde, a shy, introverted man who does his painting quietly and without fanfare in his home. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1912, he has over the years produced numerous religious paintings but has exhibited his works in Utah only twice.

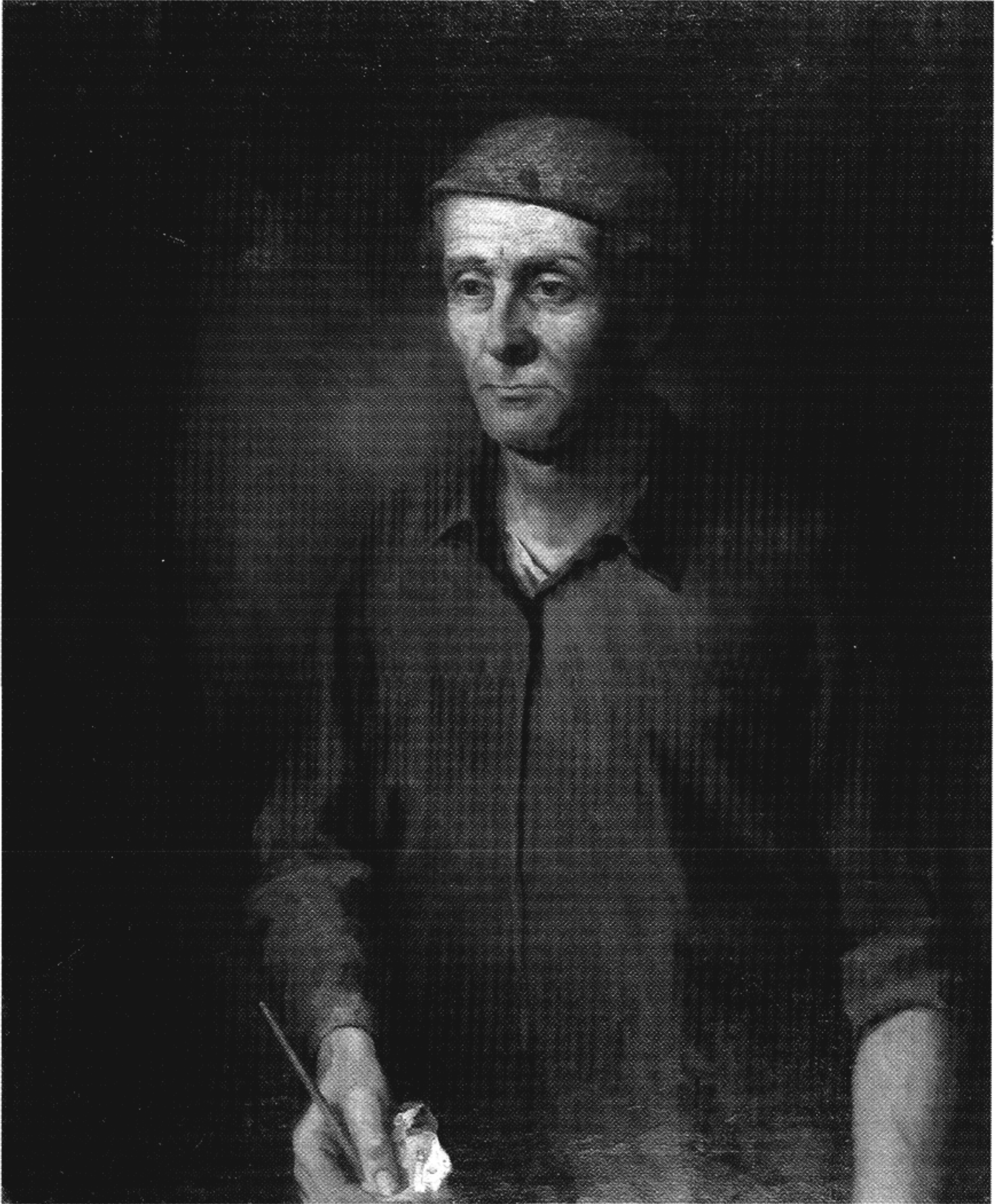
The paintings reproduced here and on the cover of this issue are typical of Burde's shifting style, which variously draws on the sharply contrasted lights and darks of the Dutch Baroque, the moons and skies of American Romantics, and the bold, brightly colored shapes of postimpressionism. Linking all his works, however, is humility and compassion, strikingly mixed with emotional intensity and spiritual courage.

Burde studied four years at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden. After being drafted into the German army, he fought on the Russian front, where he was severely wounded. In 1941 he was converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through the missionary efforts of a neighbor in Dresden. Later, he and his family escaped from East Germany and in 1952 made their way to the United States. Burde brought just a few paintings with him.

In America the artist was isolated from many of those around him by the unfamiliar language and culture, by his shyness, and sometimes by economics. However, he has maintained a regular study of the scriptures and of European and classical thought and cultural arts. The resulting introspection enhances the process of likening the scriptures to himself. Thus the Good Samaritan takes the traveler to a German inn, Mary and Joseph are a German peasant couple sharing an intimate moment with their new baby, and, in a painting not shown here, Joseph Smith is a German scholar studying the scriptures. We are invited to likewise reflect upon our relationships with the Lord and our fellow humans.

Richard G. Oman is Senior Curator at the Museum of Church History and Art. Doris R. Dant is Executive Editor of *BYU Studies*.

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Richard Burde, *Self-portrait*. Oil on canvas, 29" x 24 1/2", 1971. Courtesy of the artist.

Burde is dressed in the traditional costume of European artists.



Richard Burde, *Judith*. Oil on canvas, 29" x 24 1/2", 1972. Photograph is slightly cropped. Courtesy of the artist.

To save her besieged city, the beautiful widow Judith put herself in the hands of the Lord and made her way to the enemy camp. Bedecked in her finest, she gained entrée to the tent of the general, Holofernes. Here she is shown calmly holding Holofernes' weapon just prior to cutting off his head. When the general's death was discovered, the army was so demoralized it fled, and Israel was saved. Along with Esther, Judith is a hero of the Jewish people.

Burde used his granddaughter as a model for Judith.



Richard Burde, *The Prophet Elijah and the Priests of Baal*. Oil on canvas, 15" x 17", 1946. Courtesy of the artist.

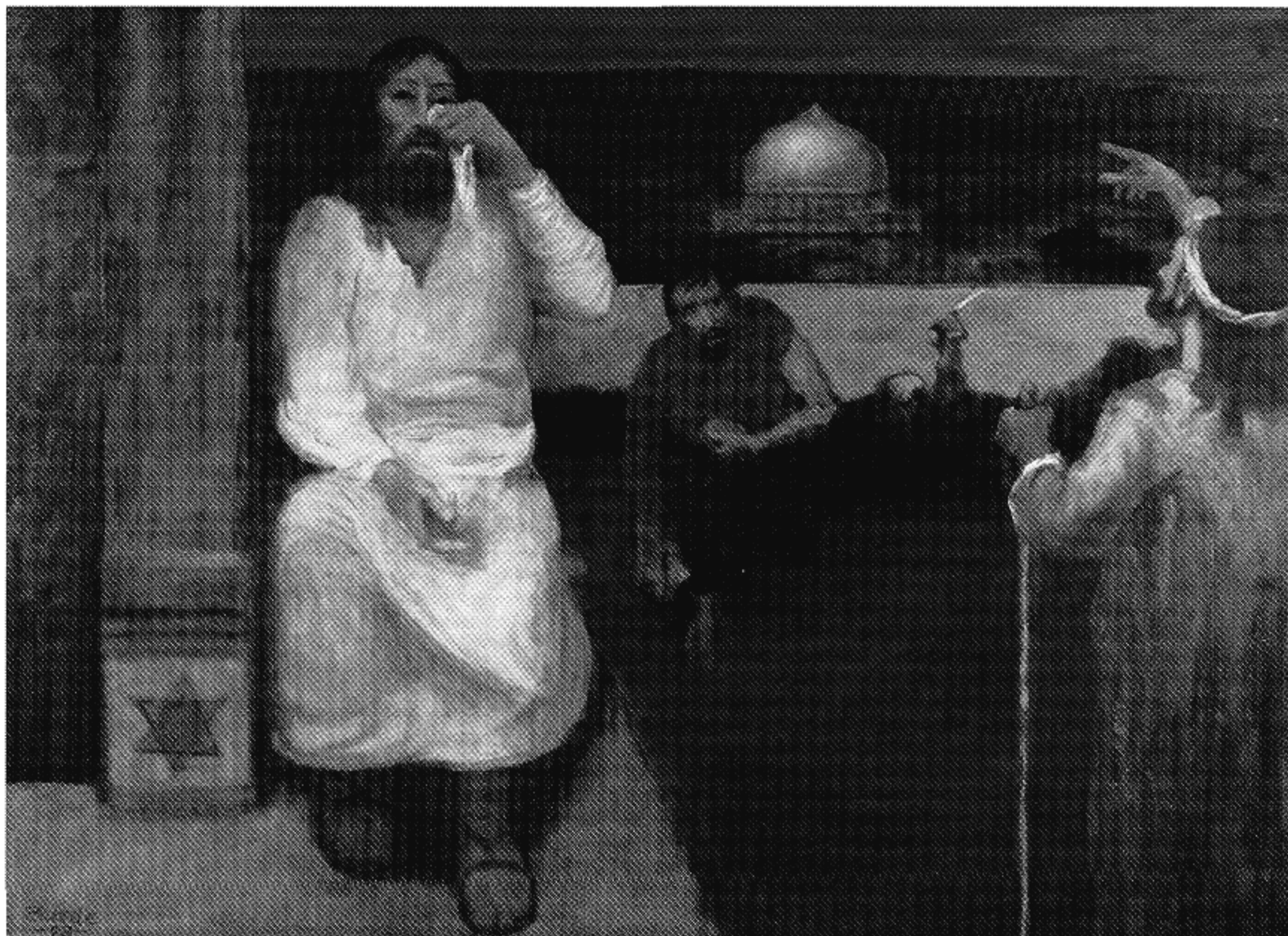
Burde captures the climax of the contest between Elijah and the priests of Baal to prove whose god is the true God. In answer to Elijah's prayer, Jehovah sends lightning to consume the thrice-soaked sacrificial offering, the wood, and even the altar stones.

This painting is one of the few that the artist brought with him to the United States when he immigrated.



Richard Burde, *"Thy Sins Are Forgiven."* Oil on board, 11 1/2" x 16", 1969. Courtesy of the artist.

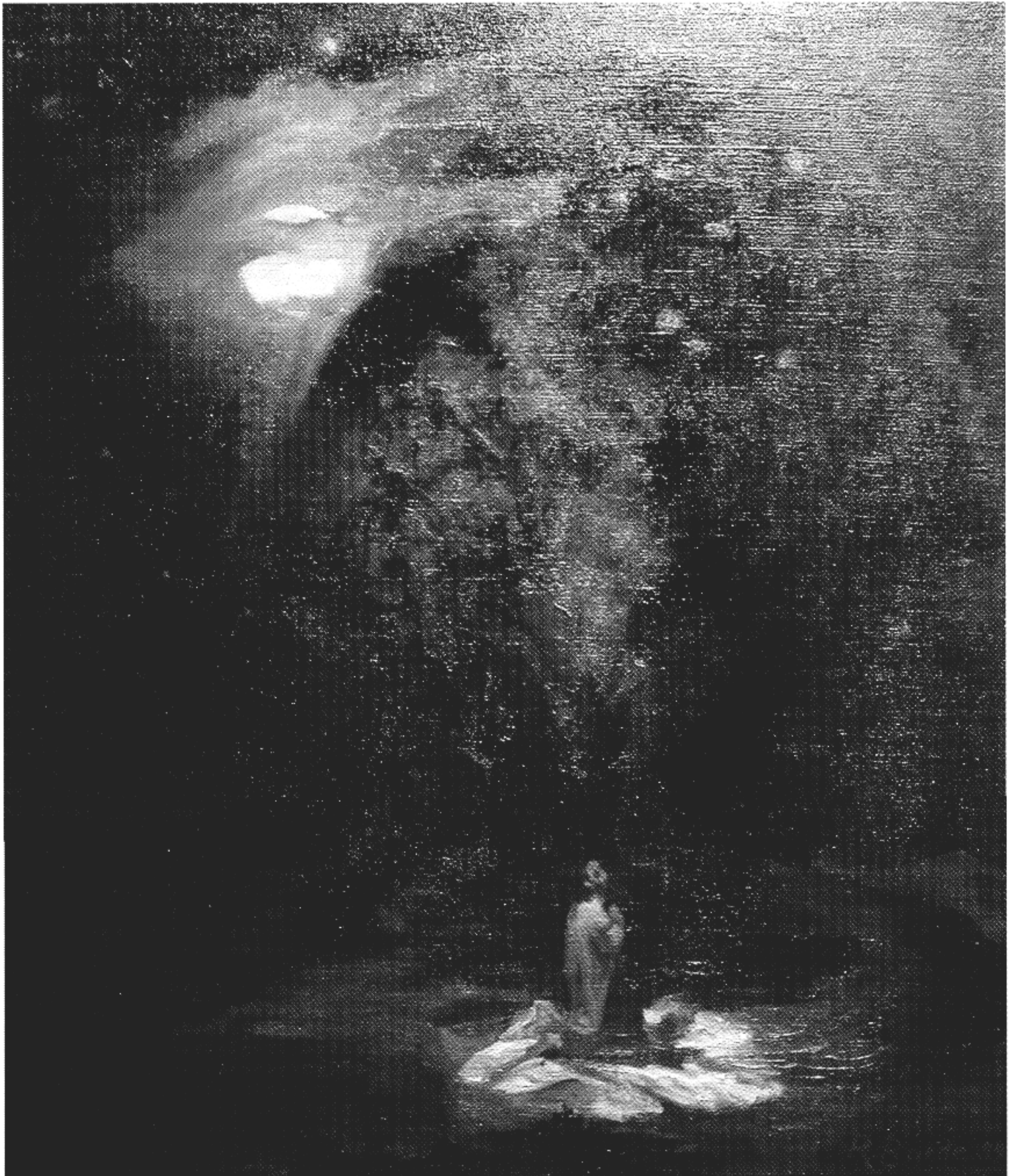
Simon the Pharisee has accused Christ of allowing a known sinner to touch him, for she has washed Christ's feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. Christ responds, "I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." Just as much of the world disregards Christ's message of salvation, the serving woman has turned her back to this drama.



Richard Burde, *Christ Lamenting Jerusalem That Kills the Prophets*. Oil on canvas, 35" x 48", 1993. Courtesy of the artist.

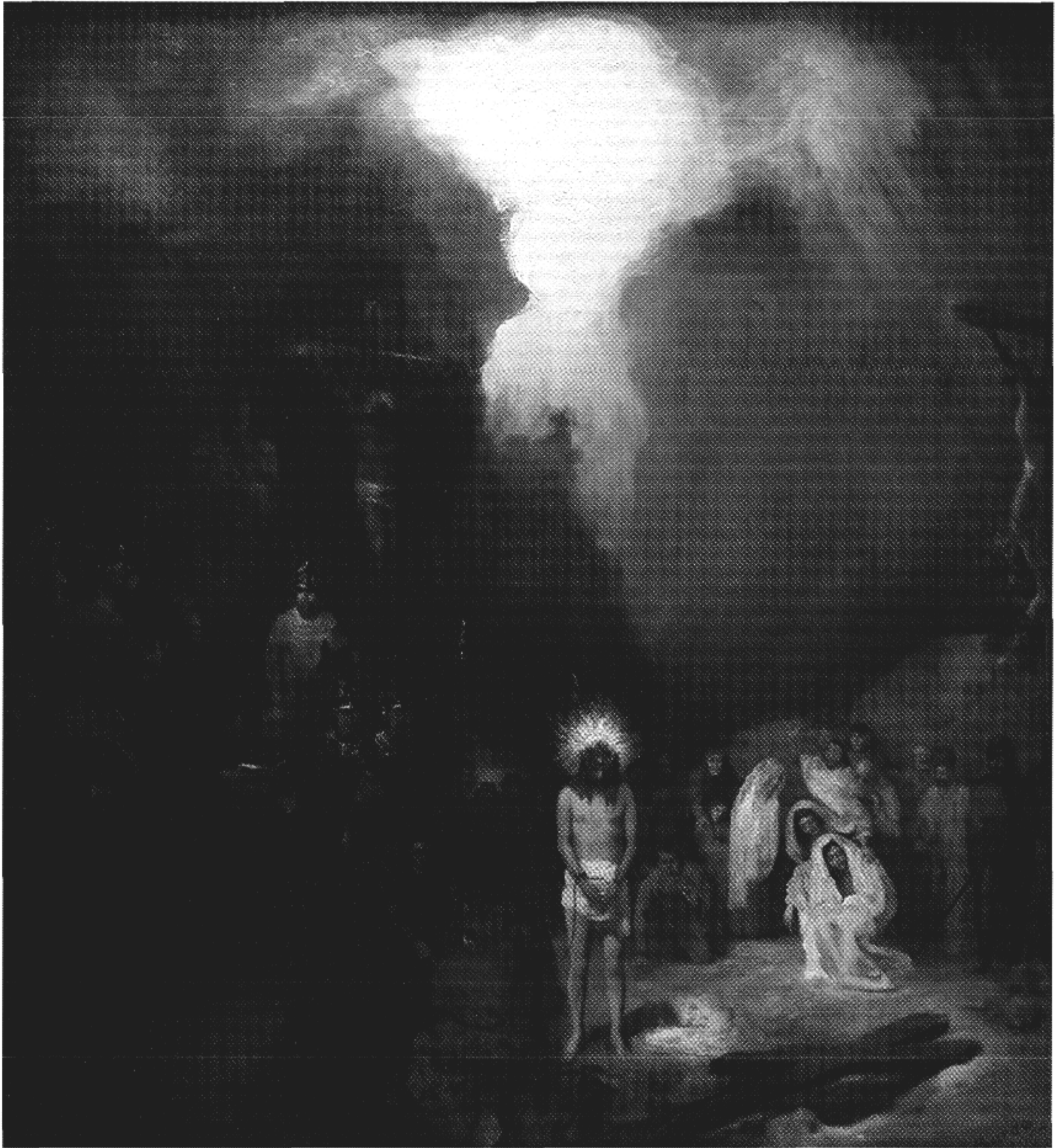
This painting is based on Matthew 23:37–38, where Christ prophetically laments, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

Rather than depicting the Jerusalem of Christ’s time, the artist has painted a later Jerusalem, where other buildings are erected but the destroyed temple is left desolate. The physical resemblance between Christ and the man with the stone—Christ’s spiritual brother—underscores the contrast in their earthly actions.



Richard Burde, *Christ in Gethsemane*. Oil on canvas, 10" x 15", 1959. Location unknown.

The only one who could atone for human sins, Jesus Christ is shown isolated, with the universe weighing upon him. The photograph reproduced here is apparently the only surviving image of Burde's conception of the Lord's agony in Gethsemane.



Richard Burde, *Christ in Majesty*. Oil on canvas, 41 1/2" x 37 3/4", 1967. Courtesy of Museum of Church History and Art.

Through the dramatic use of light, shadow, and composition, Burde masterfully focuses on the heroic quality of Christ in chains on Calvary. The artist has placed the forces for evil in the dark and the forces for good in the light with Christ at the boundary between light and darkness.

This work of art expresses the artist's profound religious faith and his European cultural heritage. Showing an excellent understanding of seventeenth-century Dutch Baroque art in the style of Rembrandt, this is perhaps Burde's finest painting.



Richard Burde, *The Nativity*. Oil on canvas, 10" x 14", 1968. Photograph is cropped. Courtesy of Pamela Oman.

Mary and Joseph are painted as a German peasant couple in a German barn. Burde is following a tradition in German art of localizing a scriptural story to help people personally relate to it.

Nursing Jehovah

Humble handmaiden,
how does it feel to nurse
the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
at your breast?

He who fed your fathers
for forty years in the wilderness
tugs at your nipple. You center it on his tongue
so he doesn't bite. The Lion of Judah
nurses like a lamb.

Sweet milk drips
from the corners of his puckered mouth.
He eagerly drains this cup.

—Trenton L. Hickman

Advent

tonight the moon
hangs like a censer,
sifting clouds of prayer.
The stars swarm
as if to a fire
outshinning themselves.
Hold this night
to your ear,
like a shell:
you can hear
cherubs
strumming the pastures
to fresh tunes,
blowing the seas
to praise.

The day will soon follow:
barns will unlatch,
the inn will empty
like a tomb.
But tonight, angels
dishevel the dark,
scouring the air
with music
whose chamber is
the universe,
where it is
always
night.

—Michael Hicks

Die Mauer

Scott R. Parkin

Though he is only forty, Dieter looks much older. He is thin—almost emaciated—and his stomach growls from lack of food, but he doesn't eat because he doesn't feel hungry. Instead, he takes a draw on the fat, hand-rolled cigarette he holds pinched between his thumb and forefinger. He inhales the smoke and holds it for a long moment, then lets it hiss out through tightly pressed lips. When his lungs are empty, he savors the oily-sweet aftertaste of the tobacco and waits until his head goes light before letting himself take another breath.

He finishes the cigarette and stares out the window at the Wall—*die Mauer*. It has been months since the reunification and the end of East Germany, but this part of the Wall still stands. Light glints through a fist-sized hole about halfway up—the result of some Berliners' joy at the news it would be torn down. Dieter watched the three of them beat on it with sledgehammers and a chisel for a half hour before they finally made that tiny hole; then they gave up, happy with their little victory. They took pictures and grabbed some bits of broken concrete from the Wall and went away.

Now the whole thing looks old and dingy. Even the graffiti is faded and dull; it's meaningless to write new slogans on the relic of an old complaint. In better parts of the city, the Wall has already been torn down—the east side of the wall came down within a week. But the tourists somehow forgot that the wall went all the way around Berlin, so out here on the west edge—the part of the city tourists rarely visit—the Wall remains whole. Dieter frowns. Now that the Germanies have reunited, maybe this part of the Wall will be torn down as well.

Pain flares in the stump of his right leg, and Dieter rubs it. Soon the pain subsides to its regular dull itch, and he flexes the

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short stub that remains below the knee. The doctors worked hard to save that stub; they told him that as long as his natural joint was functional, he would be able to walk normally with rehabilitation and a prosthetic. So they took exactly as much of it as they could and still leave a working knee, resulting in a painful infection that required six months of regular visits to the doctor to have the wound lanced and the infection drained away.

Dieter makes a new cigarette, piling the tobacco in the middle of the paper so that when he rolls it, it looks like a joint or a piece of hard candy twisted in cellophane. He would rather buy normal cigarettes, but he cannot afford them on the small check he gets from the government. So he buys cut tobacco in a big bag and rolls his own. He sighs and examines his stub, checks to see that there is no new irritation or rash. When he is satisfied, he leans back and lights his cigarette, drawing the strong Turkish tobacco deep into his lungs.

He is annoyed that the doctors never asked him what he wanted. He would have told them to take as much of the leg as they needed to ensure a quick and painless recovery. It wouldn't have mattered if he had a limp—he would have preferred it. He is not embarrassed by his injury and doesn't especially want to walk normally. He doesn't want to pretend that nothing has happened. He doesn't want to pretend he hasn't lost his leg.

Dieter smokes the cigarette down until his fingers burn from the heat. He is one of the last to escape over the Wall from East Germany—only months before the border was opened. But no one is interested any more in those like him who risked their lives to escape the East. Where he would once have been a hero, Dieter is now only a disfigured reminder of a time his new countrymen wish to forget. Now the talk is of healing and reunification; victims of the past are tolerated, but they are no longer extolled. The new Germany doesn't want to be reminded of the years of tension and hate that once separated East and West; history is to be ignored, and the past forgotten.

But Dieter doesn't want to forget.

He stands up and grabs his crutches, then hobbles to the front door. His apartment is on the second floor, so he has to thump his way down to the first floor to check his mail. He opens

the rusted box and curses; the *Sozial Amt*—the welfare office—has sent him another complaint. He tears the envelope open and stares at the short letter inside, slowly closes the box, and starts back up the stairs.

When he makes it back to his apartment, he drops into his chair and rolls another cigarette with shaking hands. When he has smoked it and rolled another, he picks up the short letter and reads it again, then lets it fall through his fingers to the floor. The welfare office has cut off his support. They claim he has been employable for six months but has made no serious attempt to find work, so they are cutting off his weekly check until he can show proof that he has either found a job or has been repeatedly turned down.

Dieter stares out the window at the Wall. Has it been that long since the escape? He tries to remember the passing of time, the progression of days to weeks to months, but all he can remember is the hospital, then the apartment. He tries to recall going to the store and buying food, but all he remembers is his living-room window and its view of the steadily decaying wall.

The Wall—*die Mauer*. Twelve feet high and rounded on top to keep escapees from getting a good grip to pull themselves over. Surrounded by a “dead zone” of raked dirt that covered antipersonnel mines and hid trip wires that fired fragmentation grenades. Guard towers every two hundred meters, dogs every four hundred meters; an electric fence around all of it, with *Stalingrass*—large steel grates with two-inch nails sticking up—hidden in the underbrush.

The Wall. The object of his scrutiny for months before the escape; the focus of his life for the past two years. A barrier that cost him his leg, his homeland, and his wife.

And then East Germany opened the barrier, the Germanies reunited, and his sacrifice was made meaningless.

He picks up the letter from the *Sozial Amt* and stares at it. He had a good job in Potsdam before the escape; he was the foreman of an assembly line in an electrical appliance factory. It was good work and had good benefits. His superiors had been willing to look the other way when a finished refrigerator or washing machine was found to have a “serious and previously undetected manufacturing defect” and he took it home as salvage. His workers were good and life was satisfactory, if not overly full.

Then his wife started asking questions about the West. He humored her at first, tried to answer her questions as well as he could. But the questions became more insistent and more probing, and he had taken her aside and talked with her.

“What are you trying to do to me? Do you want to escape to the West? Why?”

She blinked at him, abashed at his vehemence. “I . . . Yes, I think I do.”

“Why? What is so bad about our homeland that you think we need to leave it?”

She stared at him for a moment, and Dieter was surprised at the coldness in her eyes. “We have no life here. They won’t let us live like human beings.”

Dieter snorted. “We have a fine house and good jobs. What else is there?”

“Fine jobs? You’re a factory worker for heaven’s sake! You are no more than a common laborer! We could be so much more in the West.”

Dieter winced. “I have nothing to be ashamed of. My position as foreman is an honor. I worked hard to earn it.”

She put her hand on his arm. “You work hard; I know that. But you could have done so much more if you had been allowed to go your own way. You could have been an engineer had they let you.”

Dieter shook his head. “No. I am not smart enough. I took the same tests as the others and did poorly. They put me where I belonged.”

“They chose your life when you were nine years old!”

Dieter pulled away. “That is the way of it. I had the same chance as the others; I just didn’t do as well.”

“You were a child! How can you tell me that you believe they were right? I see the things you make in your spare time; they’re wonderful things, useful things. You could do so much more if only they’d let you.”

Dieter shook his head. “No. This is the life I have, and that is the way of it. As they say, ‘Order is the half of life.’”

“That is pure nonsense! In the West you could go to school; you could learn more and become an engineer.”

“Leave me alone! Do you think I haven’t wondered about that? Do you think I am so stupid that I haven’t thought about what we could have there? Yes, I wish we lived in the West, too. But we don’t, and unless we want to go there so bad that we are willing to suffer, we can’t even think about it. Unless you’re prepared to try and fail—unless you’re willing to lose everything we have—there is no way we can even try.” He looked down at his hands. “I have thought about the West until I thought I would go crazy from frustration. Our country is divided, and I can’t change that. Please don’t make me think about things I cannot change.”

It was the one thing Dieter had never been able to answer satisfactorily. He could not explain why Germany should have two parts that excluded each other. He could not understand why his government was so jealous of the accomplishments of that other Germany. And he could not understand why he was not allowed to visit that place that claimed the same name as his own country.

Dieter couldn’t remember when they had started making plans. He never made the conscious decision, but there didn’t seem anything else to do. They surveyed the Wall, looked for weaknesses. They drew plans and discarded them, and Dieter hoped that that would be enough to satisfy his wife—and himself. But the days and months passed, and they refined the plans and checked them over, and eventually he and his wife had prepared themselves as much as they could. There was nothing left to do but go; Dieter could think of no more reasons not to.

They chose the west edge of Berlin—south of the border crossing at Heer Strasse, near Gatow. The Wall ran through a marshland at that point; there would be no dogs, and the electric fence would be turned off where it ran through the water—West Berliners had complained that the fence was killing the marshland, so the East had turned it off to avoid meaningless argument. They would be able to make it under the outer fence there, then move along it until they reached more solid ground. If they slogged through the muck at the edge of the marsh, they figured to avoid the mines found in drier parts of the dead zone. If all went well, they would make it all the way to the barrier wall before a guard could even see them.

They left early in the morning on Dieter's day off, taking some of his tools from the factory, and arrived at the Wall at daybreak. Dieter waded through the chest-high marsh and approached the fence. He felt what must have been Stalingrass a few feet from the fence, but time had blunted the sharp nails and mud had worked up through the grate so that it felt like nothing but a corrugated floor when he stepped on it. Still, he was careful to stand flat on his feet and use the buoyancy the water gave him to put as little weight on the Stalingrass as he could.

The fence rose high over the water; there was no way they could go over it without exposing themselves. So Dieter probed the surface of the fence below the water. The fence went all the way to the bottom of the marsh—and beyond. He went under the water and probed the soft muck at the base of the fence, but he could not dig his way under.

He waded back to shore and got the bolt cutters he had brought from the factory. He felt vaguely guilty for taking them; it was the only pair the factory had, and it was notoriously hard to get good hand tools. It would take them months and reams of paperwork to replace it. The fence was little more than a thin steel grate, and he was able to cut an opening in it in only an hour. He slipped through it, then motioned for his wife to follow.

They worked their way along the inside of the fence until the brush along the bank began to thin. Dieter motioned for his wife to stop and waded carefully out to survey the area. A guard tower stood fifty meters from the edge of the marsh—about two hundred meters from where Dieter watched. The guards looked north, toward Heer Strasse; most of the escapes in this sector came from the direction of the road. The guards turned only occasionally to look south and then only for a moment.

He returned to where his wife stood neck-deep in the water. He looked at her and nodded but said nothing. They had decided beforehand that no words would be spoken until they were in free West Berlin. Though there was little chance that the guards would hear them, there was no reason to take that chance; if they were to be caught, it would be for a better reason than because they couldn't keep their mouths shut.

The day wore on and the sun rose high. It was August—the hottest time of the year—and there was no cloud cover. Mosquitoes and water skeeters buzzed around them, and nameless creatures bit at them under the water, but Dieter and his wife did nothing. At one point, Dieter barely stopped himself from yelling out when a thumb-sized leech latched onto his arm. He pulled it free, worrying for only a moment about whatever infection he might get from the acrid water around him. He turned to his wife, and she smiled at him reassuringly and shrugged.

Time passed slowly until the sun began to fall from the sky. They watched it dip toward the horizon. When it finally winked out, they started to move.

The whole area faded into the shades of twilight. Lights snapped on but did nothing to penetrate the monochrome gray of falling night. Dieter and his wife moved quickly toward the barrier wall and solid ground. They would have only ten minutes before the cover of twilight would be gone, but that should be enough.

They stayed low in the water as the marsh solidified under their feet, finally crawling out of the water on hands and knees. They held their breath as the guards—now only a scant fifty meters away—turned to look in their direction. A searchlight beam touched the ground nearby, but came no closer, and after a moment the searchlight swung away, back to the north.

They forced themselves to wait for a ten-count before they got to their feet and ran. The barrier wall was only twenty meters away. It gleamed a shining white invitation to them as they ran across the newly raked dirt. They were almost free.

Dieter pushed his wife out in front, placing himself between her and the guard tower. He was eight or nine meters away from the barrier wall when he felt the gentle tug of the tripwire on his foot. He barely had time to push his wife down before the concussion hit.

He felt his body lift and move through the air toward the barrier wall. He landed with a hard thud and scrambled to his feet as soon as he could. He was only five meters away from freedom. He stepped toward the barrier wall, but his right leg refused to take his weight, and Dieter fell facedown in the dirt. He heard a bullet ricochet off the wall as he struggled to his feet again.

He looked up and saw his wife stumble and fall, then rise again. He stood and ran toward the Wall, ignoring the pain that shot through his right calf, trying not to think of the damage that made him stagger drunkenly, his right leg inexplicably shorter than his left. When he finally did look, he saw only a ragged stump where his right foot should have been. He stared at it as he ran, tried to decide what it meant. But he did not stop.

The Wall loomed high in front of him, and he planted his left foot and leaped. He caught the rounded top of the Wall with his fingertips and felt himself slip. Panic surged through him, and he pulled himself up with a strength that he had not known he possessed.

As he rolled up onto the top of the Wall, he looked down and saw his wife silhouetted in the glow of the spotlight. She was only three meters away, and he reached his hand down to her. She smiled at him as she reached out, then her forehead blossomed in a fountain of crimson spray and she flopped to the ground.

Dieter heard his own screams as if from a distance and let himself fall over the Wall. He never felt himself hit the ground.

#

Dieter looks away from the Wall, his heart thundering in his chest, sweat dripping from his face in the stifling August heat. He feels the ache in his chest and his eyes burn, but no tears come. It was her fault. If he had not let her talk him into that insane escape attempt, they would both be alive today. They would have lived in Berlin, just as he did now. They would have walked freely through the border crossing at Heer Strasse. They would have been happy.

He straps his prosthesis on and gets dressed. Everything would have been perfect if they had waited only a few more months. He would have gone to school to learn to be an engineer. They would have had a fine house and fine friends. They would have had children who grew up knowing limitless opportunity.

If only they had waited. Only a few more months.

He picks up the letter from the *Sozial Amt* and reads it again, and this time the words seem angry, accusatory. As he reads, he feels his own anger build. *They think I am a bum. They think I have no pride and no ability. They are laughing at me.*

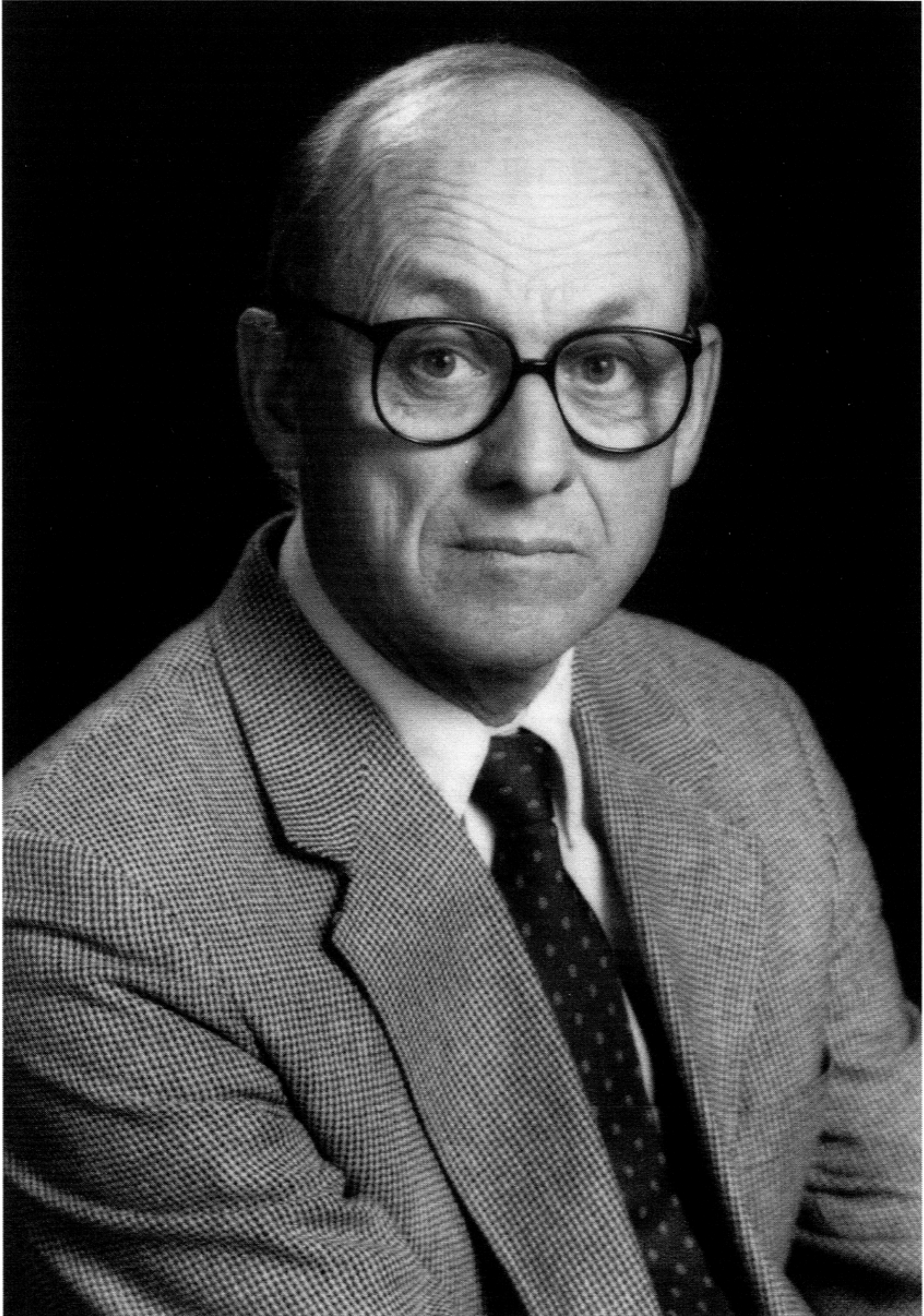
Dieter sees his reflection in the mirror and stops. He doesn't recognize the face he sees there; instead of his own face, Dieter sees the visage of an old man, a downtrodden bum, a victim. He stares at the face for a long time, tries to find a hint of himself in the features, but Dieter sees only dead eyes that stare back at him.

He turns away, looks out the window at the Wall. Sunlight glints through the fist-sized hole about halfway up. Vines have begun to work their way up its face, and the whole thing looks old and dingy. He hears the sound of heavy equipment; they are finally going to tear it down.

East and West are gone. There is only Germany.

Dieter stares at the Wall for a long moment, and the tears finally come. When they pass, he turns his back on the Wall and picks up the letter from the *Sozial Amt*. He reads it one more time before he wads it up and throws it in the trash. *I am not a bum*, he thinks. *They will not dictate what I can do, who I can be. I will make a living on my own terms, in my own way.*

I am free.



Douglas Thayer (1929-) in 1987
Author of *Mr. Wablquist in Yellowstone*

Douglas Thayer's *Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone*: A Mormon's Christian Response to Wilderness

Thayer's stories reveal the perils of seeking a secular salvation in the wilderness and explore how humans might relate to nature without desroying it or being pulled into a nonhuman existence.

Eugene England

Much of the tragic in American experience comes from what we and the wilderness have done to each other, and Douglas Thayer conveys that tragedy as well as any contemporary western writer. His second collection of stories, *Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone*,¹ gives us a remarkable range of insight into the particular history of that destructive relationship in the West, from the arrogant, self-defeating mountain men of the 1830s, intruding into lands and cultures they could not comprehend, to modern men and boys who try, at great cost to themselves and others, to recapture the wilderness and merge with the primitive. This book places Thayer² in the top rank of western fiction with Levi Peterson, whose *Canyons of Grace* explores the values as well as the dangers of wilderness as a place for modern people to seek salvation.

From the first, the Puritans saw the wilderness west of them as the dark abode of witches and Indians, literally the devil's territory, which they must subdue—even slash and burn and kill—in order to expand their little plantations of light. With the opening up in the early 1800s of *the West* by Lewis and Clark and the fur traders who followed them, religious myth and national purpose became fused in our “manifest destiny” to conquer all for American civilization, from sea to shining sea. But both Puritans and mountain men were aware that they had a mighty and mysterious, as well as strangely and terribly attractive, adversary. The early ministers and

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missionaries, “called” into the wilderness, gave the devil his due and often loved unto despair both the noble “savages” and the Edenic wilderness they found themselves destroying.

Americans are still living out in life and literature the consequences, in guilt and fear and yearning, of this paradoxical attraction and destruction. We continue to sentimentalize Native Americans while we marginalize their descendants. We spend enormous resources to preserve wilderness on the one hand and wantonly destroy it on the other. Many Americans still seek to find some central meaning to their lives, even some ultimate healing, in a “return” to nature, to the primitive that is best encountered, they naively believe, in wilderness, in the simple, clean life of the desert survival trek or the fall hunt.

Douglas Thayer’s collection ridicules much of this view, both directly and with fine subtlety. His stories demonstrate the consequences of our continuing destructive relations to wilderness and gently point to some alternatives in mature, family- and community-centered living. Thayer grew up in the Rockies, like some of his protagonists, killing whatever wildlife he could, running wild, and swimming naked along the margins of Mormon villages. His conversion came through education and writing, the maturing of his own Mormon faith, and marriage and family late in life.

Thayer did his graduate work at Stanford under Yvor Winters, perhaps the most powerful modern voice against Romantic optimism—and blindness—about nature. Thayer’s early stories reveal a constant and increasingly successful effort, as Bruce Jorgensen showed in an excellent study published in *Western American Literature*, to adopt the major Romantic lyric form, a self-educative meditation in or upon a wilderness setting, “to western Mormon experience and consciousness, but in ways that also question and undercut this form.”³ Thayer’s mature work also reflects a similar undermining of the typical secularized Romantic lyrical *content*: Thayer makes it Christian by turning it from the naturalized supernaturalism of a merely self-imagined interior education or wholeness “back towards the sacred narrative sequence of fall and redemption that it once derived from.”⁴

Thayer has now produced a whole collection of stories with the qualities Jorgensen most praises, beginning with what I believe

is his masterpiece to date, “The Red-Tailed Hawk.” Since it appeared in *Dialogue* in 1969,⁵ this story has seemed to me one of the finest stories I have ever read and has continued to live in my mind with the constancy and power of genuinely great works of art. Seeing it in connection with four other stories of similar theme, I find its power enriched, as I realize more fully how effectively it deals, as most fine literature does, with some central human paradox—in this case, the one that informs the best work of the “high” Romantics, particularly Coleridge and Keats: How can we respond adequately to the pull of nature—the nonhuman—and still remain human? Specifically, how can we relate to the wilderness and not destroy or be destroyed by it?

“The Red-Tailed Hawk” provides an even more decisive and moving critique of Romanticism and of secular modes of salvation, it seems to me, than the stories from Thayer’s first collection that Jorgensen analyzed. While it uses a similar meditative mode, the story is more fully and effectively plotted. Perhaps more important, while many Thayer stories use some form of limited-omniscient central consciousness within the present action for gaining sympathy and revealing complexity of feeling, this one uses an older first-person narrator looking back in clear-eyed judgment on his unredeemed self and on the infusion of grace and the subsequent action that led to his salvation. This device demands of the reader a better, more moral, balance of sympathy and judgment.

But before I discuss this remarkable story in detail, comparing it in theme and quality to one of the greatest Romantic poems, Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale,” I will briefly review all the stories in Thayer’s second collection, indicating how their central concerns are connected to this story and give it a worthy setting.

“The Gold Mine” explores the paradoxical question, What is it that attracts civilized people to the wilderness edges of life, where we are likely to get killed? But this story only *hints* at a possible solution. Like “The Red-Tailed Hawk,” it uses an effective formal device to support its theme: the story is “about” the preservation and transportation through decomposing heat of the body of a young teenage hellion, who has been killed while exploring a mine in the Nevada desert—where his parents have sent him to be rid of him but also where they hope he might possibly be “saved.”

But this narrative actually derives its moral and spiritual life from Maude Miller, the central consciousness whose humanely garrulous and community-building words make up most of the story. She uses the fortuitous object lesson of the death to try to save from isolation and silence another young man, Carl, the discoverer of the body, who has chosen to live alone in the desert and faces, Maude tells him, a similar fate to the boy's:

"You'll die and won't even know it. That sun will bloat you up just like a dead sheep. How do you expect to live on canned beans and stay healthy? . . . Mae and me invited you to our Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners both years. You didn't come, though. If I could drive, I'd have been up that canyon after you. You've never come to any of our parties or to church at the junction. . . . Mel says you never get any letters and nobody ever comes to visit." (28)

The sheriff—like the one in "Red-Tailed Hawk," a symbol of imperfect, but real and redeeming, human community—adds some straight talk of his own:

"This desert ain't no place to try to live without friends and family. . . . Why, I've seen men go completely nuts after a year or two of living alone up one of these canyons. They stop eatin' any decent food, and then they stop talking. . . . They start hugging trees and listening to rocks. They talk to squirrels and magpies. But it's when they start making pets out of Gila monsters and rattlesnakes, they find out this desert ain't the Garden of Eden. There was only one of those, and it didn't last long." (33-34)

Carl says only a few words in the story, words like "He's dead" and "No." As Maude talks to him and takes him to his cabin, where she prepares the body for transport, we learn that he has steadily resisted her efforts to include him in her little desert community, that he has steadily withdrawn into a world without church, holidays, even language or consciousness of time, and that he tries to hold to that alienation. But we see him gradually brought into the necessity of helping, finally even to the point of enjoying eating with another human and to some small hope he may return to a human world.

"The Rooster" is Thayer's slightest story here, but it is perhaps his most devastating translation of the brute mountain man into the brute modern suburban American. His protagonist is still trying to live out a fantasized wilderness connection on weekend

hunts but is so enslaved to habits of drink and self-gratifying eroticism that he not only fails as husband and father, but also turns the necessary, even perhaps heroic, hunting rituals of primitive humans into failure and squalor. Thayer confronts us not only with the sad joke perpetuated in the Great Fall Hunts of men and boys throughout America, especially his own Mormon Utah, but also with the degrading horror of misplaced sexuality and related violence. After a morning hunting pheasants without “luck,” the protagonist revisits the swimming hole of his youth, considers swimming naked in it again, but first builds a fire and roasts a rabbit he has killed. He reflects on his forced marriage and decaying body, steps back from the too-cold water, and is turned by Thayer into a grotesque parody of his primitive ancestors:

He took [the rabbit] off the spit and began to eat, breaking the parts off with his fingers, tasting the burned outside flesh. . . . The grease and juice smeared his hands, and small drops fell on his paunchy stomach, catching in the body hair. Naked, crouched there, he ate the whole rabbit, throwing the white bones into the fire, where they smoked and turned brown. (66)

In contrast, Mr. Wahlquist, of the title story, turns his hunt in modern Yellowstone into the tragic rather than the trivial. The narrator, a young, unconverted version of Thayer who, like him, worked one summer as a park ranger, gives a sympathetic, even seductive, view of old Mr. Wahlquist, who has spent most of his life wishing he could have been a mountain man or, better, a Crow Indian. As a boy in Kansas, he began collecting artifacts and visiting the sites of battles and buffalo slaughters; he has read all he could on the early West and the Native Americans and even learned to speak Crow. He believes, and the narrator agrees, “They should never have let Lewis and Clark go up the Missouri. . . . The land was sacred” (85). Now he comes to Yellowstone each year to be as close as possible to wilderness as it was and makes the narrator a disciple:

Mr. Wahlquist saw and heard things I didn’t. He took me to see rock graves, old fishing camps, and black ledges of basalt from which the Indians had made weapons and tools. It was as if what he looked for, and the only thing that could make him happy, was finding a band of Crows still living in the park. . . . And he would see them across a meadow or on a hill, and they would signal him to come, and he would leave me, . . . vanish into the surrounding mountains. (86)

Though quite taken in with this sentimental vision of his mentor, the narrator allows us to hear, occasionally, the cynically humorous and sensible voice of an older ranger that is much like Thayer's present, post-Romantic, ironic one: "Barney said if the Park Service closed the dump, the grizzlies would move into the campground to forage. 'That ought to add to the general merriment around here.' He shook his head. 'Wonderful'" (90-91).

The story is the narrator's day-long reverie as the rangers search for the missing Mr. Wahlquist. When they find him, inevitably destroyed by his quest—killed by a grizzly he had attacked with a Crow lance from his collection—the narrator is quite sobered, still yearning for the vision but conscious of how it is vanishing into the approaching winter storm.

An approaching storm hangs over the last story, "Dolf," as well. But here, in the 1830s, the mountain men and Crows are real enough—as well as the fiercely destructive Blackfeet. Dolf and his cousin Gib leave Providence, Rhode Island, to travel up the Missouri with one of the early fur-trading companies, just twenty years after Lewis and Clark. Gib, especially, senses a "last chance" to be part of the incredible, raw westering that they have heard about and that is already vanishing toward civilization, and he indeed goes "native." He kills animals wantonly and an Indian savagely, scalping and mutilating the body. He fathers children upon Crow women. He pushes for an opportunity to trap beavers over the winter in an untouched valley—untouched because it is too close to dangerous Blackfoot country; and he refuses to leave immediately when a Blackfoot hunting party comes into the valley.

Gib pays for his arrogance with his life, and the story is about Dolf's heart-pounding run for his own life, his ingenious trapping and killing of most of the Blackfeet, and his ultimate destruction in the wilderness through his own tragic mixture of arrogant strengths and blind weaknesses.

Dolf's mistakes include leaving "Providence" (clearly a symbol of the family and of civilized, even sanctified, human community that for Thayer is the only salvation) and eventually succumbing to Gib's temptations of primitivism, violence, and irresponsible sexual behavior. But his more intellectual pretensions of learning the Crow language like Mr. Wahlquist and "thinking" his way through

the adventure with his supposedly superior white-man's rationality are also mistakes which combine to tempt him to extreme and violent actions—cutting his arm to leave a blood trail to bait his trap and with screamed insults goading the last Blackfoot to unnecessary hand-to-hand combat—actions that at first seem to save, even exalt, but finally undo him:

The knife struck him in the stomach again. Falling, he hit on his side, so that he saw the high, grey mountains for that moment when he still had vision. Through the dark he heard the man scream words, the scream becoming a chant. He felt his long hair being twisted, tightened, his head lifting from the ground.

He did not understand the words. (153–54)

In these last words of the book, Thayer shows himself fully sensitive to the Romantic poets' fearful awareness of a tragic paradox about experience and words: that the very unity with nature they so much yearned for, the very merging into wilderness and the primitive that so attracted them, inevitably meant enormous loss—not only of the higher consciousness that they found so alienating from nature and wished to leave behind, but also, as an inevitable result, of language, of poetry itself, of the very *means* for exploring and expressing their yearning. Language, understood and well used, is essential for understanding the values, as well as the dangers, of wilderness; and it is what succumbing to wilderness, as Dolf does, will inevitably destroy—we literally lose understanding of the words.

The storms that darken three of these stories and close in upon Dolf at the end of the book to obscure life as well as vision are, of course, supreme symbols of the destructive, life-ending force of wilderness. This symbolism is clearest in "The Red-Tailed Hawk," where the protagonist, much like that of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," is tempted toward a kind of suicide—a literal merging of body and mind into unconscious unity with nature—and nearly "succeeds" in a terrible storm.

"The Red-Tailed Hawk" deserves close analysis. It not only follows the strategy of what M. H. Abrams calls the "Greater Romantic Lyrics"; it also conforms to Abrams's description, in *Natural Supernaturalism*, of the characteristic Romantic effort to find salvation. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats hoped to

bridge the fundamental void between ego and non-ego through a self-educative “circuitous journey” out from perplexity and alienation into a meditation on the natural scene and then back to a higher form of unity with the primal essence from which we have emanated. The young protagonist of Thayer’s story powerfully experiences the Romantic temptations to deify nature and attempt to lose one’s alienating self-consciousness by merging with nature, even, if necessary, in death. The mature narrator, clearly a voice for Thayer himself, is able, in looking back, to give us sympathetically the boy’s meditations, to still feel deeply the temptation. But he is also able, first in imagery and then in described action, to give us the profound, tragic awareness of the high Romantics: that the human mind is finally entirely separate from nature and can cross the void only in death or oblivion and thus by the loss of the very ability to perceive and be tempted by nature—to feel or express anything.

In his “Ode to a Nightingale,”⁶ Keats, speaking to the bird in the first-person present, creates in language and rhythm the same feeling of painful ease that the bird’s song induces—ease because the poet is pulled for a time away from man’s “fever” and “fret” (“What thou among the leaves hast never known”) but increasingly painful through an implicit sense of the cost of such a journey. The first four stanzas continue this typical Romantic nostalgia, using the poetic devices of fantasy, witty comparison, and consciously hypnotic imagery and rhythm to evoke that alien realm and the desire to enter it. But there is the latent irony that both the language capable of such invention and the very feeling of nostalgia itself are possible only to the conscious human mind. That irony emerges into a direct facing of the pain as the fantasy reaches a crescendo of awareness of the consequences of actually joining the nightingale: “Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain— / To thy high requiem become a sod.” The bird would go on singing, but the poet, reduced to mere dirt in the decay of death, would hear nothing.

The mind draws back from merging because it sees that means the mind’s dissolution. The remainder of the poem is a gradual withdrawal from the “perilous” realms Keats has voyaged upon, realms that include an imagined extending of the bird’s song

back into prehistory and toward the primitive in man where the unity with nature might have been possible. The poet realizes that those realms, “faery lands forlorn,” are, like death, no longer real alternatives to man: “Forlorn! the very word is like a bell / To toll me back from thee to my sole self!” Thus Keats explicitly recognizes he must remain alone, “sole.” He must be inescapably alienated in the self-consciousness of rational thought and language if he is to be able even to yearn for the nightingale’s song and seductive nonhuman ease, including its release from moral responsibility (“No hungry generations tread thee down”).

However, the nostalgia remains. The yearning to know the nonrational and subhuman, the fascination with loss of painful identity, the desire to leave behind the grief and despair and responsibility and to merge fully with nature—all are fully felt and continue. But the poet makes a deliberate choice to refuse the temptation, even insists that he has been only “half” in love with easeful death—that it had only *seemed* rich to die. Nature is fascinatingly beautiful and temptingly mysterious, and death and the primitive, which are part of nature, constantly encroach upon us unless consciously resisted. To yield to them in the hope of perfect understanding and unity, in the desire to escape our painful self-awareness and experience of loss and change, is a delusion: the merging will cost everything, including the yearning and the hoped-for understanding.

This remarkable poem recognizes that the basic Romantic impulse to integrate the self with nature is a false and dangerous hope; any paradise thus regained is merely death. No matter what form the Romantic myth of salvation took, at its end lay some form of identity-destroying Unity that doomed the very values and meaning and means of the journey. Growth, education, higher consciousness, language, poetry—all were lost.

The greatest Romantics, like Coleridge and Keats, understood the dilemma and accepted the tragedy, affirming as primary the journey itself—the *process*, not the end. They accepted self-consciousness and language, despite the pains and limitations of both, as necessary accoutrements of the journey—and as possible sources of joy and growth and meaning. Keats achieves his best liberation from human mortality and alienation not when, in the

first part of the “Ode,” he seeks to *leave* the world of actual process, but when, in the last part of the “Ode,” he *accepts* that world, however regretfully. His perception is made perfectly explicit in a letter written a year later: “I wish for death every day and night . . . and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains which are better than nothing. Land and Sea, weakness and decline, are great separators, but death is the great divorcer for ever.”⁷

Thayer’s protagonist in “The Red-tailed Hawk” makes his similar discovery in almost the same language, which is the language, of course, of the grown man thinking back to his moment of grace and resurrection when he was a boy at the point of near death from freezing:

Snow filled the wrinkles of my coat; I was turning white.

All summer the [dead] cows had been vanishing, the wire-hung birds [I had killed] too, the carp, the little buck. And I had no name for it, only vanishing, knew only that it was not swimming, not running naked in the moonlight, not embracing trees, not soaring. It was not feeling. I grew whiter, saw myself vanishing into the snow. I watched, and then slowly, like beginning pain, the terror seeped into me, the knowing. I struggled up, fled. (16)

The story opens with images of cold: the icy alarm clock the boy grabs and keeps under the covers so as not to wake his disapproving mother, the winter chill on his clothes, thoughts of the icy river, and a connection in his thoughts to the mystical chill of nature that draws this young Romantic: “I was going after geese. . . . The great grey Canada birds were fantastic, huge almost, wild and free, with a clamorous gabbling that made me *shiver*. Yet I had never killed one” (1; italics added). The irony here, which we can see is working both consciously and unconsciously in the older, reflecting protagonist, is, of course, apparent most on a second reading; it is *then* that we (with him) know a different connection between cold and geese and death than the boy now can imagine.

However, the boy does have an imaginary life: “I wanted to be left alone, wanted that fiercely, didn’t want anybody around me, touching me. I wanted to be alone like the birds. Birds were alone” (2). He cuts himself off from the human, the touch and company

of his younger brother, the discipline of his father (“I hated him . . . for kicking me in the butt hard, for always shouting that I was a fool. But I never cried. He couldn’t make me” [2]), the solicitous love of his mother (“[She] might wake up and, because of the storm, change her mind about me going, or make me take Glade” [4]). Instead he kills and stuffs birds, hangs them on wires in the barn, suspended as if in flight, the prize “a large red-tailed hawk, wings spread, soaring” (2), hanging from the ceiling over his bed: “Birds could fly wherever they wanted, could be alone. Nothing touched them but the air” (2).

The boy not only wants, with his stuffed birds, to isolate, to fix and preserve, the flux of random particulars that makes up the nonhuman realm, but he wants to merge into that realm himself:

I would sneak off my pajamas and curl tight under the blankets but not really feel them in the darkness because they were warm like my skin, like air. And that summer often I lay on top of the covers spread out, stared up at the hawk, lifted my naked arms. (2)

But these fantasies are not merely erotic: “Mostly I dreamed other dreams, dreams of flying, soaring, lifting away from the earth, being an eagle or a hawk, vanishing into the yellow sun” (3). He lets kites go to escape into the wind, sails his model glider off a cliff into the thermals until it disappears into the sun, stands with arms raised as if he, too, would glide away. He dreams of having a room alone, putting all his birds there as if they were flying, with a breeze through the open window to stir them: “I would be in a flock of birds” (3). He lives in the river bottom, swimming, fishing, hunting, soaring on the great rope swing, running naked through the green willows, lying spread-eagled under the sun: “I was always hiding from Glade and the others, the sheriff when he came down to see if we wore swimsuits; always driven, I reached out for something infinite, not knowing what it was, but feeling myself drawn to it, some final feeling beyond the earth in the yellow sun” (5).

This imaginative quest finally becomes terribly real. It is three days before Christmas, at the winter solstice, when the sun is at its lowest southern arc but when, from ancient times, humans have detected the turning point of its journey back, its resurrection, and have made celebration, even transposing the birthday of the Son of

God to that season. At the beginning, the boy is still in decline, determined to make his ultimate quest though he knows a storm is coming, alienated from his father, resenting the music and people and gift-giving of Christmas, reaching away from family and human community toward the clean chill of the nonhuman: “Through my cotton gloves I felt the cold metal of my shotgun, a double-barrel. I didn’t care if they all woke up to a cold house. My father was on graveyard shift at the dairy” (4).

The developing plot is interspersed with reflections placed in the boy’s mind, but, as we are sufficiently reminded, these are actually the words and understanding of the older narrator, the future man who developed from this boy and who begins to include images of death in the boy’s paradise that were, in his earlier, fallen state, incomprehensible to him:

I would see only the few starved-out horses left in the fields to winter. Sometimes the horses died, froze icy, the legs sticking straight out. When the snow melted, the magpies flocked out of the willows to feed on them. (5)

. . . A magpie flew over me and dropped into a field with a dozen others and some crows near the partially covered skeletons of three cows killed by lightning that summer. (6)

The depths of the boy’s moral confusion, in his surrender to the seductions of imagined existence in free and irresponsible nature, are revealed in his own words—but, again, selected by the older, more fully understanding and more self-revealing, self-condemning narrator. As he comes to a creek, intending to jump shoot ducks on his way down to the river, he finds that two men have already gone ahead in a boat, spoiling the shooting and solitude for him: “I cursed, the words steady and half silent, like a hiss” (6). He follows the men, vainly hoping to get a straggler from one of the flocks they raise, then sneaks up close as they rest before returning—and hears one bragging about his shooting: “I aimed first at him, centering the bead on his head. A little closer, I could have blown big holes in the boat the same way I blew holes in sheds and wooden fences. . . . I clicked my safety back on, turned and started down the river” (7).

Thayer works constantly with plot as well as theme and imagery. The journey proceeds, with specific details about vistas and landmarks,

to establish precise locales and distance—and to prepare us for the long, desperate, agonized return journey in the storm. Meanwhile, the interspersed reflections flesh out fully the boy's world of daring, isolated, almost desperate immersion in nature:

I had been first across the swimming hole that April, Glade shouting for me to come back, not to try it, that it was too cold, too swift. They'd had to lift me out, build a fire for me. I vomited, blacked out, but I had been first across. (7-8)

Then again:

In the summer, alone, my swimming suit hung in a tree, wearing only my Keds, I liked to stand in the willows and let the fluttering green leaves touch me. Rifle in hand, I hunted unseen, alone, sometimes naked except for my feet, shouts drifting to me from the swimming hole. When a thunderstorm came over the west mountains, and the farmers, afraid of being hit by lightning, left the fields, I sneaked out to stand in the belly-high green wheat, watch the great flashes of light, hear the roar and rumble of thunder, feel the wind, the wheat waving against me. Or I climbed high in the bending trees, wrapped my arms and legs around the limbs, squeezed until the rough bark hurt, rode the trees. (8)

The narrator constantly intrudes upon his own ambivalent nostalgia with his present sense of what for the boy should have been a warning. He reports it as mere observation, but we increasingly, especially on a second reading, feel it with the proper force of premonition:

If I tired of hunting birds, I shot the surfacing carp, watched them fade into the deep grey water, . . . followed them, walked slowly into the river . . . until the water was over my head and the slow summer current carried me. I spread my arms and legs to touch the flesh-warm water, became nothing, only part of the water. . . . Then I lay in the yellow sun, looked at it through the cracks between my fingers, tried to see what it was. (8-9)

In his further reflections part of the mystery of the sun's meaning is revealed—naively, it would seem, except that the narrator's adult awareness is implicit in the selection of detail and color: "Days later I saw the carp near the edge of the water, bleached yellow-white and pecked by magpies" (9). The image of the yellow sun, center of the attractive mystery of life in nature, is transmuted into the yellow carp, corrupted in death by that same sun and the boy's unholy quest for its "mystery."

The theme of human alienation—and the paradoxical quest for perfect life and freedom through killing and pretending—is continued right to the denouement of the story. The boy remembers (that is, the narrating man recreates remembering) that he had pretended not to know where the young spruces in the river bottoms were and so refused to get one for Christmas at his father's request: "I didn't want to cut a tree, drag it up to the house, hang it with tinsel . . . didn't want to watch it turn brown" (10). But juxtaposed to that memory is this one of another form of his dishonesty—his trying not to look clearly at the death he causes:

A hundred yards back from the spruces, under the snow, were the bones of a little spike buck I had killed a year earlier in August. . . . I shot him through the eye with my .22, watched him until he was quiet, and then turned him over so he didn't look hurt. I went back three times that day, squatted down by him, brushed off the ants. The second day the magpies were on him. (10-11)

Late in the day, later than he has ever stayed and than his parents would allow, he has his final fantasy, remembering the huge cottonwood, the rope tree where he had climbed higher than anyone, then had intentionally tipped out and barely caught himself ("I liked the feeling, the shiver" [11]). He remembers swinging, then letting go:

And for that one moment I flew, saw everything below me, soared, hovered. Then I dropped, felt the tingling in my crotch, felt the air, the rushing, heavier water. And I stayed under until they all thought I had drowned. I was both bird and fish. If anybody climbed as high as I had, I would climb higher, swinging again and again, falling until my nose bled . . . so that I looked wounded. The letting go, the soaring, was the very best part. I wanted to feel like that forever. (11)

Seeking the limits of that sensation, the boy had gone out at night, run naked down the sandy path, then ventured into the swimming hole:

The dark air over me, I floated, tried not to move, the water fusing with the darkness. . . . The second night, in a wind I rode the trees, the high limbs, heard a million leaves, screamed into the sound. And when I swung on the rope it was fantastic because I couldn't see where the water started. The tingling went from my crotch clear to my skull, and I reached out to a world I had never known, something inviting me, as in my dreams. (13)

This passage is fully believable in context as the protagonist's personal memory, and it is also a precise and sophisticated statement of the fundamental Romantic yearning toward the seductive, but impenetrably alien, natural world.

But now the mature narrator recreates for us the fated end of such a quest: with all things dead around the boy, and the storm and cold and darkness descending, the geese finally come. Thayer has prepared us well with his carefully plotted suspense and also the carefully imaged paradox that in seeking ultimate being and integrity the boy both causes death and tries to ignore its reality. Earlier in the day the boy had killed a hen mallard,

dropping it dead, ragged, where I could drag it out with a stick, glad it didn't float away out of reach. Sitting in my blind again, I arranged the feathers, stroked them, touched the velvet green head. . . . The winter before on Christmas afternoon I had killed a mallard banded in Alaska. I made a ring out of the aluminum band, which I touched in school, in church, took off, read. Ducks could fly wherever they wanted to, up above everything, just in the air with nothing else around them, never touched by anything except water and air. (9)

Now the implicit contradiction in this identification with the ducks he kills—in the attempt to capture their envied perfect existence in pure water and air by stilling them and fixing them on a wire—is brought to a climax in the disparity between his *imagined* kill of the geese (“I would . . . bring them crashing down with perfect head shots” [10]) and the *actuality* (“I shot, missed, shot again, and the lead goose turned completely over and fell broken-winged, crashing into the water” [14]).

Only wing shot, the goose swims beyond reach and the boy has to kill it with another shot, then unhesitatingly strips and swims for it, bringing it back to shore only to find his left glove and shirt blown into the water. The imagery is increasingly ominous as the two beings come together; the yellow of the mysterious sun is now focused in the goose's broken wing—image of the failed dream of a perfect kill—and the warmth of life is literally ebbing for both the goose and him: “Yellow, the broken wingbone stuck out through the feathers. I picked up the goose again and hugged it to me, felt the still-warm body against my numb skin” (15).

The boy tries to dry himself and dress and heads back toward home, into the teeth of the storm, carrying the goose with his

ungloved hand—and soon (as the hand turns to “metal,” picking up the earlier images of the cold, metallic gun and the duck band made into a ring) it is clear that the ultimate unity he had sought with the bird will cost him hand for wing—and will perhaps be death for death. The boy, lapsing toward literal unconsciousness, finally begins to *experience* (not merely imagine) the ultimate sensation of merging he had always sought:

I floated, left the ground, rose, hovered, and it was a sensation I had never known before. . . . I was becoming something beyond myself. I felt no limits, nothing stopping, nothing touching me, as if I were rising alone into light, rising, never falling back, the sensation never dying. (16)

But we (and the narrator to whom Thayer has given that sober and ironic pun about “never dying”) know very well that rather than the sensation never dying, he is feeling precisely the sensation *of* dying, and that will end *all* sensation. At this moment, the lowest possible in the boy’s spiritual fall, as he literally “fell forward into the soft snow, where I lay on my side not caring, the snow not cold anymore” (16), he sees the horn and half-head of the lightning-killed cow he has stumbled over and with his “dead hand” pushes back the snow to see the “empty eye socket, the bone skull.” He realizes that it, and all the dead things, including those *he* had killed, are slowly vanishing—and that he will, too; the merging with nature will not mean heightened being and awareness but the opposite: “I had no name for it, only vanishing, knew only that it was not swimming . . . not embracing trees, not soaring. It was not feeling” (16). And he leaves the gun and the goose and flees for his life.

The boy is saved by the sheriff, sent by his parents’ pleas to look for him—the sheriff, representative of civilized order, society, who had earlier been seen by the boy merely as an intruder on his natural world but is now an instrument of grace and a bridge back to the human community. The boy loses his fingers and nearly dies of pneumonia. He comes up periodically into consciousness within an oxygen tent, which “is like being under water,” either to his mother or to his father, waiting alternately through the nights by his bed. He is terrified of sleep, that little death, and stops his pain shots so he can use the hurt to keep himself awake. He is

taken home to find his family dressed up for a late Christmas they have saved for him and then lies in his bedroom, warm with a new oil heater, looking up at the red-tailed hawk.

But now, like Keats, the boy sees the bird with new understanding of death and of the impossibility of entering its realm—and also of the corruption he had created by trying to capture death: “The yellow glass eyes looked down, the bird motionless, dusty, suspended from a wire. Out in the barn the hanging birds were dusty too, some of them splotted with pigeon droppings” (19). He gets his mother to let his brother Glade sleep with him rather than on the couch and accepts the quiet, sober ministrations of his father before he goes on his graveyard shift.

Then, in a powerful flash forward, the narrator tells of the devastation of later seeing his hand for the first time without bandages, of hiding it, quitting gym so others would not see it, crying to God, making promises, awaking afraid to look. He tells of his father making him start gym again, making him do chores, “no matter how many things I broke or spilled, and although he shouted at me sometimes, swore, he never again hit me” (20). The father tells him, “You can’t hide; you have to live with it.” And of course, it is *literally* life he can and must now live with. As the narrator who makes that pun has since learned well, such acceptance of limitation and responsibility is in every sense true living—the very opposite of vanishing into cold nature. And the narrator returns to the boy lying in bed on that late Christmas, the hawk above him fading, becoming “indistinct” as he “moved closer to Glade, touched him” (20). The final image is the narrator’s conscious recognition (through another double meaning) of the divine and human grace that had saved him: “I had received the most presents.”

An important measure of Thayer’s achievement is the extent to which, like Keats, he is able to embody the full Romantic dilemma, as well as to give it a Christian, even a particularly Mormon, resolution. He suggests, and makes us feel, not only that the central Romantic emotion of attraction to nature and away from the conscious and civilized can be inimical to life itself, as well as to one’s humanity—but he does so without denying the power of that attraction. Though the narrator is a new creature, both fallen from

Eden and redeemed by grace beyond the temptation to return to Eden, he can evoke with lyric nostalgia the still-precious emotions attendant on his youthful closeness to that realm.

Thayer's achievement is supported, I believe, by his Christian faith as a Mormon, which posits—and finds supporting evidence in human experience and the achievements of human language—that there is genuine ontological connection between the mind and the world. A rational basis for this faith is the concept of a God who is not mere allegory, but a moral, personal being who has created man in his image and formed nature after the images in his divine mind—a mind to which man's mind is thus in turn related. God is not a vague “ground of being,” but an actual user and teacher of language himself who can aid in the process of using language to find genuine meaning and to live by it. And nature is not some contingent realm created *ex nihilo* by God, but something with necessary and eternal existence, operating through its own laws that demand respect and offer destruction to those who refuse that respect.

Thayer's protagonist in “The Red-Tailed Hawk” has not merely been true to post-Enlightenment skepticism about the mind's separation from the world and shared the Romantic temptation to merge with it, while finally pulling back from the inhumanity and death such a temptation can lead to. He has also experienced the fortunate fall from Eden's naive, static wholeness; has entered the moral universe of separateness and potential growth or decline; has sinned against the human community and himself; has reached the depths of awareness and accepted his sinful, alienated condition; and has there found and accepted grace sufficient to bring him back into atonement with his human self and other humans, if not fully with the blank, terribly non-human, and dangerous world of nature.

“The Red-Tailed Hawk,” besides being a fine initiation story, is, like Keats's “Ode to a Nightingale,” a rich, sophisticated parable that teaches us in our bones the truth expressed precisely in Emily Dickinson's little verse about “Nature” from “What mystery pervades a well”:

To pity those that know her not
 Is helped by the regret
 That those who know her, know her less
 The nearer her they get.⁸

But Thayer also shows how to move firmly past that dilemma and its regret: his protagonist, who gets too close to Nature to know her well, still finds a way, through grace and the restoration of human forms and connections, to retreat and yet bring with him into his new wholeness some of the knowledge and emotion that can be found only in such realms—realms that are perilous and forlorn, but also potent, full of mysterious beauty and saving grace.

Though the older narrator is now a new creature, both fallen from Eden and redeemed by grace beyond the temptation to return to Eden, he can evoke with lyric nostalgia the still-precious emotions attendant on his youthful closeness to that realm. Even at the point of recalling how close he once came to paying literally with his life for letting himself be seduced too far toward that ultimately blank and silent world of pure animal existence, the destructive power of natural wilderness, he is able to evoke the wilderness animals with undiminished adult lyric beauty—as well as with a sophisticated Keatsian undertone of foreboding:

Low, gabbling, three great Canada geese flew out of the greyness below me, shadows, but then blacker, coming right at me in good range. Big, bigger than I had ever thought, beautiful, somebody pounding me over the heart. I watched through a hole in the blind. “Wait, wait,” whispering, “not too soon. Big. Wait, wait.” The gabbling grew louder—marvelous the wings, the long necks, the rhythmic birds. (14)

This is excellent writing, fiction—whether Mormon, western, or whatever—at its best.

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NOTES

¹Douglas Thayer, *Mr. Wablquist in Yellowstone and Other Stories* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1989).

²See my “Wilderness as Salvation in Peterson’s *The Canyons of Grace*,” *Western American Literature* 19 (Spring 1984): 17–28.

³Bruce W. Jorgensen, “Romantic Lyric Form and Western Mormon Experience in the Stories of Douglas Thayer,” *Western American Literature* 22 (Spring 1987): 34.

⁴Jorgensen, "Romantic Lyric Form," 47.

⁵Douglas Thayer, "The Red-Tailed Hawk," *Dialogue* 4 (Autumn 1969): 83-94.

⁶Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁷Bate, *John Keats*, 508.

⁸Emily Dickinson, *Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems*, comp. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961).

Brilliance

I have seen fierce stars against the black
and shifting countenance of space;
have watched the edge of shadow sliced away
by moonrise on new snow, and I have paced
a sheen of desert in the press of sun.

I have felt the pulse of unborn thoughts
quicken in my brain; have changed strains
of genius from a violin
into poems patterned in my mouth.

I have watched the flame devour air
and burst the heart of wood to free the fire;
have caught wild lightening in a wire
to ignite the wick of lamps within my walls
and send the dark suddenly away.

There is another flaming not of Earth,
of magnitude beyond a sea of suns.
It is the glory that I long to taste
when God at last unwraps to me His face:

Unnumbered burnished trumpets sound the blare
and celebrate with rich and shimmering psalms;
their honey, holy-sweet, upon my tongue
makes all of vibrant Earth seem bare beside
the nurturing of angels in the blaze
and brilliance of His white, delicious light.

—Pamela Hamblin



Ted Lyon and Jorge Luis Borges in conversation. This photograph was taken during Borges's 1976 visit to Brigham Young University. Courtesy Ted Lyon.

An Interview with Jorge Luis Borges: Conversation and Commentary on Art, Strength, and Religion

Ted Lyon

“BORGES FULFILLS DREAM, VISITS UTAH.” Local papers praised his presence. Largely as a result of the following interview, world-renowned Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges twice visited Utah. He came in 1972 and 1976, hosted by the University of Utah and Brigham Young University, and spoke to eager overflow audiences who applauded his candor and thrilled at his self-effacing humility. Students, faculty, and visitors felt a mystic, almost spiritual rapport with Borges. After his visit I asked him:

“How did you react to Utah, Borges?”

“I was disappointed; it wasn’t what I expected.”

I worried that we had been poor hosts, that he had taken offense at some inadvertent omission on our part.

“It’s not at all like Mark Twain portrayed. Brigham Young and his Mormon Church do not control everything; I smelled cigar smoke. And I felt so perfectly safe on the streets. The women seemed so charming, so attractive, not at all like Twain said. But that was his way to make humor, no? Salt Lake City seemed like any other modern city to me. People were so kind. I don’t know quite what I expected, but it just wasn’t the same; I suppose that things have changed since Twain visited Utah. A professor at BYU [Ed Hart] even wrote a wonderful poem to me; could you imagine such a thing in Mark Twain’s day? No, no, not at all. Yes, I was disappointed, but what a nice disappointment, no?”

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Jorge Luis Borges

Jorge Luis Borges is likely the single most influential Latin American author of the twentieth century. He was born in Argentina in 1899 and died in Switzerland in 1986. As a child, he learned English from his British grandmother and from his father's library. He began his writing career at the age of nine. He is best known for his 1940s collections of short stories—*Fictions* and *The Aleph*—as well as hundreds of poems and insightful essays from the 1920s all the way through the mid-1980s. American and British critics and writers “discovered” him in the early 1960s and helped disseminate his works and influence throughout the world. Borges's concerns extend beyond the physical and social problems of Argentina and Latin America to the more universal metaphysical relationships of humanity with deity, time, and death.

The Interview

I first met Borges on September 3, 1968, on the second floor of the old maze-like Argentine National Library in Buenos Aires. He stepped out of his spacious office and extended a somewhat flowery greeting, while Chilean poet Waldo Rojas nervously introduced us in Spanish. As soon as Borges learned that I had come from the United States, he spoke only in English—his own calm and quiet blend of British English, mixed with a very slight Argentine accent. Borges seemed to be an integral part of this impressive, high-ceilinged, Renaissance building—both classic holdovers from earlier times. He commented on the irony that what is now the National Library had once been the National Lottery—an obvious indication that “humanity is truly making progress, that is, when lotteries become libraries.” We strolled into his leather-lined office and sat down. Borges paid little heed to my Chilean friend (who spoke no English) but with his lifeless eyes focused his face and words toward me.

Borges: And welcome to my Argentina.

Lyon: Thank you, Mr. Borges; allow me to introduce myself. I am Ted Lyon; I teach at the University of Oklahoma.

Borges: I am delighted to meet you. But please just call me Borges; I prefer that, you know. And what is your specialty in English literature, Professor Lyon?

Lyon: Well, um, it's not English literature. I am a professor of Spanish, and I teach Latin American literature. In fact, I often teach the stories and poetry of a certain Jorge Luis Borges.

Borges: Oh, that's all too bad; everything that's good in literature has been written in English, you know.

This statement truly caught me off guard. Was Borges's comment about literature in the English language to be taken seriously? Was he merely jesting? Or, was he somehow testing me? Should I—supposedly the formal interviewer in this verbal exchange—follow up on this dogmatic assertion about writing in English? I already knew of Borges's love of things British, but should I directly challenge the validity of his categorical and blatantly incorrect statement? Or, should I simply ignore it? I quickly opted for a courteous, evasive approach, but at that moment I realized, and had frequent confirmation during the next ninety-five minutes of the interview, that he was a master of the put-on, of playing verbal games with the interviewer. He often controlled the direction of the interview more than I. I quickly stammered,

L: Well, I, uh, quite enjoy the stories that you write; they are very good.

B: Thank you, but they are of very little worth, I'm sure.

L: May I record our conversation here today?

B: Yes, yes, of course, but I won't really say anything important you know, so why would you want to record my words? Perhaps recording . . .

L: As I said, I have come from the University of Oklahoma, and we would like to invite . . .

B: Oklahoma! *Oklahoma*. That is such a round word, a complete word, made almost perfect by the repetition of the same vowels—*O-a-o-a*; such a poetic word! I was in Texas in 1961,

and I recall many people talking about Oklahoma. It's an Indian word, no? What a fine word it is. And what does it mean?

L: It's a composite word from a native language that means something like the "place of the people." *Okla* means "people," I believe; *homa* or *humma* means "red." So, it's something like "Home of the Red People."

B: Yes, yes, that's lovely. *Oklahoma!* Then there's *Potomac*, *Chicago*, *Michigan*, and *Wisconsin*. What pleasant sounds. English is such a good language for assimilating other languages. Where it came in contact with the Indian languages it was so much better prepared than Spanish. It reproduced the native sounds much better. The Indian words [in English] are beautiful, no? Not at all like the harsh, rather ugly, sounds of words like *Jujuy* or *Chapultepec* or *Mapuche* in Spanish. No, no. They are too abrupt, too chopped—unpleasant words, don't you think? English just sounds so complete.

L: Well, I guess so. As I was saying, we'd like to invite you to come . . .

B: And the American poets have captured all this so well. Walt Whitman loved the native words:

Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born . . .
Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods . . .
Chants of the prairies,
Chants of the long-running Mississippi, and down to the
 Mexican sea,
Chants of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and
 Minnesota,
Chants going out from the centre from Kansas.

I think Whitman used Long Island as a microcosm for all the United States, no? Perhaps it was unconscious, but it was his starting place. Do you like Whitman? He's one of our great poets.

L: Yes, I do, but I can't recite his poetry from memory like you can.

B: But you must know "Pioneers! O Pioneers"; it's one of his best-known poems. He uses many Indian words in that fine poem—*Nebraska*, I believe.

L: Yes.

B: And Carl Sandburg and Robert Frost—they also loved their land, their country, deeply and captured it so well in verse. Have you read them?

L: Yes, I once heard Carl Sandburg read his own poetry when I was a college student. I was surprised at how big, how tall he was; his hands seemed so large, so masculine. I didn't see how he could be a poet with such big hands; my misconceptions, I suppose.

B: But that's just the point. American poetry is *sturdy, hearty*; these are powerful men, and they used powerful words, no? It [North American poetry] praises the land and the people who settled it. I like Robert Frost very much, but not the commonplace poetry that everyone quotes about two roads. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall, / That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it." Frozen-ground-swell—that is strong; I would like to be able to write verses of such power.

L: Yes, I've seen Frost on television. He was a friend of John F. Kennedy and died in the same year Kennedy was killed, I believe.

B: So many of your great poets come from New England. That must be where they get the toughness. It was a center of great thinkers. It was the center of thought in America. Maybe the weather made them hearty.

L: Yes, I'm sure.

B: And what a fine word. You know, I hadn't thought of this—the word *hearty*. It's from the word *heart*, but it doesn't mean soft or full of emotion; it means tough, healthy, or strong, or something like that.

I was raised at a time when it was fashionable to praise the United States and its writers. I was raised on a steady diet of American writers, especially the nineteenth century. We loved the poetry, America. [Argentine President Domingo Faustino] Sarmiento brought eighty schoolteachers from New England, mostly old maids, I suppose, to establish normal schools in Argentina. You can still go out on the pampa¹ to this day and find a "Betsy Brown" school, named for the fine women who came here to Argentina. We owe a debt to the

United States. But now it is very much in vogue to be angry. The Argentine young people find so many reasons to criticize. They want to attack; their teachers cause them to hate America. But they have not read Whitman and Frost.

If you teach Latin American literature, you must read [Horacio] Quiroga, no? Well, people compare him to Edgar Allan Poe, but there's no comparison. Quiroga



was just an imitator, a copier. He was a good follower, but I don't think he had a bone of originality in him, not one. You have read [Poe's] "Tell-tale Heart." He showed such an insight, originality, not at all like Quiroga. And the color white was a sign of evil for Poe. Now how curious, because we usually think of white as pure, as good. But not Poe. White was evil for him, maybe for all the writers of that time. I think of Melville. His whale is white, you know—an evil thing, a destroyer, not only of the body, but also of the soul. Now why should white symbolize evil? We think of it as something good or clean or maybe positive. And I think Poe's "Narrative of Gordon Pym" is a fine novel. At the end, there appears a great white monster, a white thing coming out of the snow or the mist. It is terrible. White is evil; like the whale, it is filled with destruction.

*At this point, I realized that we had strayed a long way from my intention to invite Borges to the University of Oklahoma. He seemed more interested in merely talking to someone in English, in extolling the literature of my country, in sharing his experience with North American literature. I knew that he was a teacher of various world literatures, and had just recently published *Introducción a la literatura norteamericana (An Introduction to North American Literature)* (1967) in collaboration with Esther Zemborain de Torres. In this introductory book, he had examined the origins of North American literature*

and devoted special chapters to Poe, Cooper, Whitman, and Melville, authors whose works and words he was now quoting to me. The book also contained a section on U.S. science fiction, detective and western literature, and the oral poetry of the "Redskins." I knew Borges had a reputation as an avid reader of world literatures, but I was simply unprepared for his thorough knowledge of my country's literature, for all the poetry he had obviously memorized. He continued:

B: Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and
 weary,
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a
 tapping . . .
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of
 yore.

L: Yes, that's Poe's "The Raven."

B: Rather overdone, don't you think? All that alliteration. But the bird is black; perhaps that should symbolize goodness. But no—that is also evil, foreboding. Yes—another fine English word—*foreboding*. I was just re-reading the poem a few days ago and it was on my mind.

L: But Borges, how do you read now? You said you were just re-reading. What is the process?

B: Well, of course, I don't really read as I used to. My eyes don't work anymore. But I am a professor of literature, you know. Every day I have students who come to study with me in the morning. They read to me; I have taught them to read and pronounce English and even Old English and now they read to me. Then I discuss the texts and teach them. It's a good relationship; we have read many things together. They seem to like it; I am a teacher, you know. The students come right here to my office. Just a few days ago we finished our study of Old English. I think I have now read all of the poetry that exists in Old English, all of it now. And the students, they are very intelligent, very well prepared. When we were reading this morning, we bumped into the word *aefentid*. And what a fine word it is. It was used in the ninth century; it's the

word for that poetic time of day, towards night, something like *eventide*, of course. Can you imagine—Spanish didn't have anything like it until at least the thirteenth century. And then they created such an unpleasant word—*crepúsculo*, no? The accent on the third syllable [from the end] is so striking, unpleasant for such a lovely time of day, no? Spanish just did not develop the poetic qualities that English already showed so early.

L: The way you pronounced that word in Old English reminded me of my old Scottish uncle in Salt Lake City, his accent . . .

B: And he must be a Mormon, I'm sure.

L: Yes, he was.

B: And you are a Mormon?

L: Yes, I am; I was born in Utah.

B: I know Utah. I know it very well. I have never been there, but I would like to visit Salt Lake City sometime. I have been fascinated with it ever since I read Mark Twain's, *Roughing It*, no? I think Mark Twain really liked it, don't you? He was awfully cruel to [Mormon] women, I think. But I think he really liked Utah, would have liked to stay longer. I have been to Utah through Mark Twain. Someday I would like to go there and see Twain's Utah. Argentine writers also wrote about Mormon Utah.

Borges became very excited. Not only did he have the full attention of a North American in his office, but a Mormon from Mark Twain's Utah. Without announcement he rose and, needing no direction or assistance, walked briskly some fifteen feet to a revolving bookstand in the far corner of his huge office. I followed him. His hands searched with a memorized knowledge of the feel and location of each of two or three hundred books. In a few seconds, he grasped a blue-covered, soft-back book, the Book of Mormon.

B: How interesting. Two boys, young men, came to my apartment several years ago. They gave me this book; it is in English. I did not have to pay for it, I believe.

L: And have you read it?

B: No, no, not the whole thing. I am blind, you know. But Mark Twain talked about the book. What did he say? I don't remember. But because of Mark Twain, I became fascinated with the Mormons. I read a good biography of Joseph Smith, *No Man Knows My History*, I think. Now what a strange title. And I saw why the religion is so strong because Joseph Smith was so strong. He also came from New England, I believe. He was hearty, no? And he had such hard-working companions, don't you think? And I don't know why he died; I don't recall. But I cried when I read that the Mormons had to leave their homes and cross the Mississippi River—yes there's another lovely Indian word in English—*Mississippi*—when they had to leave that fine town, what was it called?

L: Nauvoo.

B: Oh yes, that is also an Indian word?

L: No, no; Joseph Smith said it was a Hebrew word that meant "City Beautiful" or something like that.

B: When they left on foot and had to cross the ice of the Mississippi River, tears came to my eyes. It was like that slave girl crossing the river in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And all of this because they believed in Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. It seems so amazing, no?

L: Yes, it is amazing. And I'm surprised to hear you use that word, *amazing*. In your own stories you often bring in *mazes*, labyrinths; now you use the word to describe Mormons or Mormonism.

B: Well, I suppose anyone who has sincere religious faith is amazing, no? Filled with mazes. But what do Mormons believe that would make them do so much for Joseph Smith? Is the faith still the same as it was in the last century? Do Mormons still honor Joseph Smith?

L: Well, yes. We don't worship him at all, but we respect him very much. One of his unique ideas is that anyone can improve or perfect himself to the point that he too can become a god. Of course, I don't mean on this earth, or in this life, but in a life hereafter.

B: Oh, I don't think I should like that!

L: Yes, it probably sounds like heresy to most people.

B: Bernard Shaw, I believe, said "God is in the making," and we are the making. Now, does that mean that God is still in the process of making himself or that we make him up as we exist? In English, I think it may mean both. But in Mormonism there may be many gods then?

L: Yes, in a way, but we only worship or honor God and Jesus Christ.

B: You are very much like the Roman Catholics then. My mother is a true believer. She prays every night. But I am not; I was raised in a house where one grandmother was Catholic and



the other Methodist. My mother is Catholic, but my father was a very strong-willed man, *librepensador*, a free-thinker, if you will, an agnostic. And I, like he, have been very happy. I think all religions are a part of one single truth, no? When I die, I want to die wholly, my body, my soul. I hope that after I die I will be forgotten, completely. I certainly hope they will never name a street or something after me. I want to cease being Borges.

No, I don't have a religion, but this doesn't mean that I do not believe in a meaning to the universe—my individual destiny is not important, but perhaps someone or something needs me to fill some mysterious purpose. Then when I've filled that service, I will die. There will be other destinies or mysteries that will take my place. I want to cease being Jorge Luis Borges. I'm tired; I'm tired of being someone. I am not a religious man; I am merely a collective hallucination, no?

L: That seems rather pessimistic. My religious faith gives me hope, something to work for, or work on, for eternity.

B: Yes, but you'll get very tired through all that time, no?

- L: We do not view heaven as a place of rest. Perhaps this, too, is heresy for many, but we believe that we'll keep working, progressing, forever perhaps, until we may become gods.
- B: Then you could be creators of new worlds?
- L: Yes, just like some of your characters are god-like creators—the originators in “*Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*,” Pierre Menard, or the dreamer in “*The Circular Ruins*,” for example.
- B: Yes, of course. There may be many gods. I have been told by a very good professor that the Hebrew version of the Bible says that “In the beginning the *Gods* created the Heavens and the Earth.” Is that true? I do not know Hebrew. Now maybe *Gods* refers to the Holy Trinity, I do not know. But maybe there were many gods or a god that was so complex that he had to be referred to by a plural noun. A plural subject and a singular verb, I think. The gnostics postulate a single, absolute god at creation, but from him another divine creature is formed, and so on, until there are 365 divine creations. In the Old Testament, God is very personal, he talks to people, is interested in their families, in their lives. “This world is so strange that anything is possible,” my father used to say. So God is still creating worlds and people?
- L: He may indeed be.
- B: Then if you are to be a god, could you create your own heaven and earth? You could choose the vegetation, the animals, the plants, people; maybe you could even invent a new sex. Everything would be possible, no?
- L: Yes, I suppose, but perhaps within some limits. It's a doctrine not fully worked out in the Church.
- B: Very fascinating. Is this from the Book of Mormon, from Joseph Smith?
- L: Well, no, not really in the Book of Mormon, but Joseph Smith taught it.
- B: And did your ancestors know Joseph Smith? Did they live in that city on the Mississippi River?
- L: Well, just one of my great-grandfathers, from England, lived with his family in Nauvoo; he died there. But his wife

and children had to get out of the town, cross the river, and go west.

B: Was he Scottish?

L: No, my Scottish ancestors came to the United States later, in 1853, I believe.

B: And have you been to Scotland? It's such a lovely place. I think Edinburgh is the most beautiful city in the world.

L: No, but it [Scotland] is a large part of our family tradition.

At this point, I realized that the interview had become a friendly chat, almost a casual conversation between two new friends—there was no structured direction as I had unwisely intended. Borges had put me at ease by asking questions of me, by showing interest in my background, by his free-wheeling thoughts and comments. I would have preferred to continue talking about my religious convictions, but Borges was in control, and perhaps feeling uncomfortable talking about gods, he was now linked to Scotland.

B: So you surely know the poetry of Burns, Robert Burns. He wrote:

And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway
 And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
 Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray . . .
 They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright.

I guess for Burns I “gang astray.” But I’m a happy man.

L: I only know the one [poem] about “My love is like a red, red rose.” In school we also studied his poem “To a Mouse.” I recall the line about “the best laid schemes o’ mice an men / Gang aft a-gley.” There’s that word *gang* again. I also recall some moralizing lines about “O wad some Pow’r the giftie gie us / To see oursels as others see us.”

B: Yes, yes, the fine language of Scotland.

L: I think Burns has a poem to haggis. Have you ever eaten haggis?

B: Yes, and that short bite is still lasting me and will for my entire life.

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin-race!

Why do you suppose they like this awful dish? It's not possible to eat. How can such an unlikely-tasting thing go along with the beauty of Scotland, so green, so friendly, such wonderful buildings, such delightful language?

I had no answer, but was amazed that Borges continued quoting so much poetry in English. We walked back toward the massive desk and our chairs. I could tell that Borges was not completely blind; he looked up and smiled, awkwardly, at the afternoon sun coming through the high windows. He looked toward me.

B: But come now; you must have Scandinavian blood in you, too; you are so tall and blond.

L: Yes, my mother's family is from Sweden. We hail back to the Isle of Gotland. A cold place, I suppose.

B: No, no. That's the home, the place where Beowulf lived. Amazing. Yes, that's the spot he sailed from to free the Danes:

Pæt fram hām gefrægn	Higelāces þegn,
gōd mid Gēatum,	Grendles dāda;
sē wæs mon-cynnes	mægenes strengest.
<i>(Far off in his homeland</i>	<i>Hygelac's thane,</i>
<i>good man of the Geats,</i>	<i>heard about Grendel;</i>
<i>he was the stongest</i>	<i>of all living men)</i>

Do you remember, recall Beowulf?

L: Well, yes.

B: The poem says they were strong, valiant men, men of the sea:

Hæfde sē gōda	Gēata lēoda
cempan gecorone	þāra þe hē cēnoste.
<i>(The mighty man</i>	<i>had carefully chosen</i>
<i>from tribes of the Geats</i>	<i>champions, battlers)</i>

Gēata, men from Gotland, remember?

L: Yes, but . . .

I tried to tell Borges that I had studied only a modern translation of this early epic poem in a high-school English class, and

here he was, in Argentina, freely reciting lines in Old English! I did not even understand most of the words, but Borges was filled with fire, the fire of finding a compatriot of Beowulf. His spirited recitation drowned my timid excuses.

B:	ofer swan-rāde māerne þēoden, (<i>the warrior-king,</i> <i>across the swan's riding</i>	sēcean wolde, þā him wæs manna þearf. <i>famous ruler,</i> <i>since he needed men.)</i>
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Do you remember that?

No, I didn't really remember it at all. But I suddenly realized what was happening. Borges had considered my lineage from Gotland and in his mental associations had linked me mystically to Beowulf. I understood that he was not just asking if I remembered the lines of the poem; he was really querying me about Beowulf himself. Did I recall the hero, the individual? Did I know him? Certainly I must have known him since my very distant ancestors were there, may have even sailed to Denmark with him. For Borges one man could be all men. I was not only Ted Lyon sitting in an awe-inspiring library office in Buenos Aires, I was also a knowledgeable companion to my countryman, Beowulf. And I began to realize that for Borges the world of literature was every bit as real as the chair in which he was sitting, the desk, the disappearing sunlight, my blurred, nearly nonexistent face. Perhaps his blindness gave even more reality to the literary world than to his physical surroundings. At this moment, he was definitely back in early medieval Gotland and Denmark; I had to be there, too, because I was most assuredly acquainted with Beowulf.

B: The *swan-road*, of course, the sea, the water. The poet also describes the *wave-road*, and the *sail-road*, all wonderful metaphors for the sea. Very powerful. Kenning. And do you like *word-board*, a simple, beautiful metaphor for speech? Yes. I have recently begun to study old Norse, as I have studied Old English. I suppose I shall read all that I can find

- of it in this country. The *Volsunga Saga* of Iceland also talks, so poetically, of the strong men, the hearty ones, heroes.
- L: Some of your poetry talks of your strong, valiant ancestors. Is this a major concern for you? Are you like them?
- B: Oh no, not at all. I am a coward. No, no. I admire men of power, hearty men, courageous; these are necessary virtues for life. Our literature extols this type of life. Remember—Frost, Sandburg, Lincoln; Mark Twain traveled all across the Great American Desert. But not me; no, I am a coward.
- L: Borges, thank you. I'm sorry to change the subject, it's been delightful, but it's getting late, and I really want to extend an official invitation to you from the University. We would like you to come to Norman [Oklahoma] for two or three weeks next year, to teach a class, and to receive an honorary award from the university.
- B: That would be very nice, but you know, I am a poor man, just a librarian. I cannot afford to travel to the United States.
- L: We will pay your air fare of course, as well as a very worthy honorarium for your teaching. We would also like to hold a conference . . .
- B: I recall the first time I went to the United States. My mother and I took a plane to Texas. And we loved the coffee they served us on the plane; we knew we were in the United States as soon as we tasted the coffee. I cannot stand the "slop" passed off as coffee in Argentina. I shall look forward to the coffee and the conference. Please excuse me, I shall have to call my wife to tell her this very good news.

Borges scooted his office chair over to a smaller desk, picked up the black telephone, and dialed. He spoke in Spanish with Elsa, his wife of just a year; this was his first marriage, her second. He acted almost like a giddy teenager, not revealing the reason for his joy. He told her to meet him at a favorite restaurant near the library later that evening because he had a surprise for her. She apparently pushed him to tell her what it was, but he cautiously evaded giving any details. "But you

might want to prepare for a trip,” he teased in English; she did not understand. Borges was now jovial, excited, buoyant. He called his male secretary, who had been waiting outside the door, and gave him an order. He then asked my Chilean companion, in Spanish, if he wanted tea or coffee and, in English, gave me the same option.

B: Elsa will be so surprised, so excited. She also loves the United States. We have just been married a short time, you know; my “childhood sweetheart,” you might say.

L: We, of course, will pay for her to accompany you when you come to Oklahoma.

B: Yes, she functions as my eyes, but also as my heart, you might say.

L: It’s curious to me that in the stories you write, perhaps even in the poetry, there are almost never any women. Can you tell me why?

B: Very simple, “elementary,” as Holmes might say—I have not known any women, or, many women. Of course, my mother and my grandmother. My mother accompanied me on many trips, but now Elsa fills that role. We have been married only a short time. But I did not write about women because I did not know women, but now perhaps I will.

L: A writer should only write about what he has experienced, about what he knows directly?

B: Of course, that is logical.

L: But then how do we explain science fiction, fantasy? You certainly haven’t experienced all the things that happen to your characters; you haven’t been to all the places that appear in your stories. Many consider you a writer of fantasy; you have the wonderful ability to project much beyond the limited time and space in which you live.

B: What happens to my characters has happened to me. They think my thoughts, or I think theirs. Also, I have read; through reading I know the world—*One Thousand and One Nights*, Utah, Billy the Kid. And I am part of that very wonderful world.

At an inopportune moment, just as I was about to pursue the topic of why Borges had read about women but had not incorporated them into his stories, the secretary brought in some dry Argentine cookies, lemon tea for me, and coffee for Borges and Rojas. It was the same type of coffee that had so recently suffered debasement. We sipped together, chatting in Spanish and English about Argentina, Chile, poetry, food. Our cordial conversation had already gone on for more than an hour, but I sensed no urgency on Borges's part to end it, nor to get to any more pressing matters which might be awaiting him on his nearly paper-free desk.

B: I have some problems with the young writers of Argentina. Many are so shallow, so showy. You know, I am a man of the nineteenth century. I was born in 1899. I do not feel comfortable in this century.

L: But Borges, you only lived a few months in the 1800s; everything you've written has been part of the twentieth century.

B: Yes, but the writers [of the twentieth century] have no depth. Ezra Pound, for example. I have tried to read him, but I can't. When he was in London, he dressed up as a cowboy and swaggered around from bar to bar. I believe he had a large bullwhip and cracked it everywhere he went. He made quite an impression. But it's all show. I doubt he will have any lasting value. And T. S. Eliot always leaves me with the feeling that at any moment he'll run dry, run out of things to say. Very little substance, I feel. My readings come mainly from the last century, my century.

L: Have you read H. G. Wells?

B: Yes, yes. I think I've read everything he wrote, or at least published.

L: Did he influence your writing?

B: Well, I suppose so, but I don't know how. I have read Ray Bradbury as well, but I do not find him enjoyable—shallow, incomplete.

L: In the United States, you have sometimes been compared to [Vladimir] Nabokov. I believe you were both born in the same year. Do you think there's a direct influence or relationship?

B: Oh, I shall have to confess the doctrine of infallible ignorance; I have never read him!

Sensing that my leading questions on literary influences were too direct and were not producing any great insights at all, even perhaps bothering Borges, I ceased. Borges was much happier, more congenial, more animated, when he was directing the interview. And he was most expansive when he was in medieval England, Scotland, or most especially, in Gotland. I marveled, was amazed at the amount of poetry he had stored in his head—in just a few minutes of interview, he had quoted Old, Modern, and Scottish English; Whitman, Frost, Poe, Burns, and Beowulf (in its original or very early form)! I thought I'd try a few lines from one of my favorite minor poets, Robert Service, and quoted a couple of memorized stanzas from "The Spell of the Yukon." Borges chuckled and mentioned that he knew of Service, that the Yukon bard, like Twain, had traveled through the West, even to the same Salt Lake City we'd mentioned earlier, and then had gone to Alaska or Canada. Once again, I was shocked—was there a writer in the English language that Borges did not know?

Despite his casual banter, which put me so much at ease, I felt that Borges certainly must have other things to do; I tried to excuse myself. But it became increasingly difficult to escape the magical, magnetic web of Borges. Only when I told him that I had to catch a bus for the airport in forty minutes did he seriously settle on a few final details regarding my invitation to come to Oklahoma.

B: Yes, yes, November, or early December, next year. My secretary will write it down and schedule for me. We can escape the heat of Buenos Aires, no? And we would like to go back to Texas; it is close, no? They treated me so well there, too

well perhaps. They gave me the key to the city of Austin, you know. Thank you. I don't know why you want to invite me to the United States. I thank you for spending this delightful afternoon with me. Thank you. I have enjoyed it. Thank you. I will see you in the "home of the people," Oklahoma. Strong people, I'm sure.

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NOTES

¹The pampa is an extensive grass-covered plain in Argentina. It is characterized by a rural life-style, and its inhabitants have often been used in literature as archetypes for the Argentine spirit.



The Restored Cultural Hall in Nauvoo. Also known as the Masonic Hall, the Cultural Hall was the scene not only of theatricals and meetings of the Masonic Lodge, but also of court sessions and funerals. The hall is located on Main Street. 1991 photograph.

A Note on Nauvoo Theater

A little-known letter from Joseph Smith reflects his openness to professional drama in Nauvoo and his reluctance to interfere with the Saints' individual choices.

Noel A. Carmack

Drama was a favorite social event in the activities of the early Mormon village. Though Brigham Young was credited with cultivating theatrical affairs in territorial Utah, the inception of such entertainments took place much earlier, with Joseph Smith's endorsement.

Like many other Mississippi river towns, Nauvoo attracted a number of traveling shows, circus performers, and acting companies. Of the many social entertainments the Saints enjoyed in Nauvoo, drama appears to have been a favorite—even for the Prophet Joseph Smith. For instance, in July 1842 a group of actors performed in the upper room of Joseph Smith's red brick store. A brief entry in Joseph's journal on July 17 records the engagement: "At dusk, evening, a theatre in the store chamber; Mr. Chapman¹ and suite, actors."² The fact that Joseph attended the production is of interest because it indicates his approval of theater. This is the earliest known reference to professional actors making an appearance at Nauvoo. Regrettably, the diary gives no further elaboration in regard to Chapman or his group of strollers.

The inauguration of Mormon theatricals came during the spring of 1844, after the conversion of Thomas A. Lyne, a professional actor from Philadelphia.³ Lyne, acting on an appeal by his brother-in-law, George J. Adams, contributed his experience and talent for the benefit of the financially encumbered Prophet. Following the April conference, a playbill announcing a "Grand Moral Entertainment" in the Masonic Hall was distributed. Richard Sheridan's *Pizarro or The Death of Rolla* was to be performed on

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April 24, 1844. According to the playbill, this production was intended “to aid in the discharge of a debt, against President Joseph Smith, contracted through the odious persecution of Missouri, and vexatious law suits.”⁴

Although heavy rains postponed the performance until April 26, the unfavorable weather did not inhibit Nauvoo citizens from enjoying the first of several productions under Lyne’s direction. The newspapers reported that even the Prophet appeared “highly gratified” by the participants and expressed “no small amusement” regarding their performance.⁵ The cast included Brigham Young as the high priest, Heber C. Kimball as Gomez, George A. Smith as the old blind man, Erastus Snow as Alonzo, and Amasa Lyman as Las Casas. A young Hiram Clawson was given a small part throwing down fire from the heavens.⁶

The positive reception of Lyne and his debut production of *Pizarro* prompted other plays to be presented through the remaining weeks in April and early May. These included *Damon and Pythias*, *Douglass*, *Therese or The Orphan of Geneva*, and *Idiot Witness*.⁷ As in the production of *Pizarro*, a number of notable figures took part. A few who made their acting debut were Jeremiah Hatch, John Fullmer, and William H. Folsom. Helen Mar Kimball, a young girl at Nauvoo who took the role of the countess in *The Orphan of Geneva*, later recalled, “There was some good acting done—some so life-like, that at times nearly the whole audience would be affected to tears. Joseph did not try to hide his feelings, but was seen to weep a number of times.”⁸

Perhaps it was this sentiment that resulted in carrying the productions further. On Saturday, May 11, Joseph recorded in his journal that he “had a conversation with Mr. Lyne on the theatre.”⁹ This conversation probably included a cordial plaudit from Joseph. But given Lyne’s responsive activity, the Prophet may have also proposed sending the dramatic group beyond the limits of Nauvoo. Soon after the discussion, Lyne and Adams organized the Nauvoo Dramatic Association, a small company of strollers who made appearances at port stops along the Mississippi River. Little is known concerning these appearances, but at least one performance was reported to have taken place in Burlington, Iowa.¹⁰

The productions were suspended, however, when libels mounted and threatened the safety of Joseph Smith and his followers. In the days leading up to the Prophet's incarceration and subsequent murder at Carthage, Lyne and Adams had little time to continue promoting the theatricals. Answering charges of treason for the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, the Prophet and other leading men agreed to surrender on June 23. Not only were Lyne and Adams named as witnesses for the defense,¹¹ but Lyne was also numbered among those who attended the Prophet on the road to Carthage the morning of June 24. When Joseph decided that it was not necessary that such a large retinue accompany him, Lyne and others were ordered to return to Nauvoo. "Right or wrong I would not go," Lyne recalled. "His life was all they wanted, not justice, knowing this would be the result."¹²

Immediately following the murders of Joseph and Hyrum, Lyne and Adams were dispatched with the charge to call home the Apostles laboring in the East. During their extended stay in New York and Boston, Lyne became openly critical of Adams and other local Church leaders. On October 26, 1844, Lyne was excommunicated for not sustaining Church authorities.¹³ In consequence, he remained dissociated from the Saints until he returned in 1862 to live among them and teach the stock company in Salt Lake City, Utah.

While Lyne was certainly the most impressive actor to make the Prophet's acquaintance, another can be added to the few who made efforts to bring theatricals to Nauvoo. A year previous to Lyne's tenure in Nauvoo, an itinerant actor named Lyman Powell¹⁴ petitioned Joseph Smith for permission to perform in the city. Although Powell's written request is not extant, Joseph's corresponding letter, as dictated to William Clayton, is found in the Newell K. Whitney Collection at Brigham Young University.¹⁵ This little-known letter, dated April 1, 1843, reveals not only Joseph's amenity toward theatrical amusements, but also his reluctance to interfere with the Saints' individual choices. The letter also serves to document an early attempt at professional theatricals among the Mormon community. Unfortunately, it is uncertain whether Mr. Powell ever made an appearance in Nauvoo, since such an engagement went unrecorded in contemporary diaries and newspapers.

The letter to Lyman Powell is printed below. Conjectural material and notation is enclosed in brackets. Original spelling, punctuation, and grammar are retained.

Nauvoo April 1st 1843

Sirs:

Your letter of the 20th Ult. has been received and duly considered. In answer to which I have only to say that so far as I am concerned I have not any objections to your visiting Nauvoo. The citizens of this place are a free people and [suspects ?] theatricals or anything else not repugnant to good order and decency can act as they think proper I do not wish to restrain nor interfere with their liberties it will be seen by an ordinance of the city Council passed July 5th 1842¹⁶ that full permission is granted to any public shows, theatricals or other public amusements of a [“]moral character” but immoral or indecent exhibitions are strictly prohibited as well as drunkenness. By the same ordinance the cost for license is left discresonary with the Mayor not however to exceed fifty dollars, and the recorders fee for writing the same one dollar

I have therefore no objection to you visiting our City. [*several words illegible*] of persecution but that is a matter which you probably understand consequently [*two lines faded and illegible*] much encouragement.

yours very resp[ectfully,] Joseph Smith
by Wm Clayton Scribe [p. 1]

Copy of a letter
to Lyman Powell
Galena [p. 2]

Noel A. Carmack is Conservator at Merrill Library, Utah State University.

NOTES

¹The personal name of “Mr. Chapman” cannot be determined from known records. It is likely, however, that Mr. Chapman was one of two surviving sons of

William Chapman, Sr., the founder of Chapman's *Floating Theatre*. After William Chapman's death (ca. 1839), his two sons, William B. and George C., along with his two daughters, Caroline and Theresa, continued their acting careers on the showboat and in the far West. See Philip Graham, *Showboats: The History of an American Institution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951), 9-21; George D. Ford, *These Were the Actors: A Story of the Chapmans and the Drakes* (New York: Library Publishers, 1955), 115-31; Helen Throop Pratt, "Souvenirs of an Interesting Family," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 7 (1928): 282-85, 406; Wayne H. Claeren, "Pittsburgh and the First Showboat: A New Angle on the Chapmans," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 59 (April 1976): 231-39; *Daily Alta California*, November 9, 1857, 2; and *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 15, 1924, 11.

²Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1949-50), 5:512 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*); Willard Richards to Brigham Young, July 19, 1843, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). Chapman's performances were reported to have taken place on July 15, 17, and 18. Evidently, Joseph Smith was in attendance on July 15 and 17 (see *History of the Church* 5:510).

³See John S. Lindsay, *The Mormons and the Theatre* (Salt Lake City: Century Printing, 1905); also, Carma de Jong Anderson, "Theater in Nauvoo, in a Milieu of Cultural Arts," (paper presented at the Nauvoo Sesquicentennial Symposium, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, September 21, 1989). Lyne's conversion is documented in Noel A. Carmack, "The Seven Ages of Thomas Lyne: A Tragedian among the Mormons," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 14 (1994), forthcoming.

⁴Stanley B. Kimball, "Discovery: Also Starring Brigham Young," *Ensign* 5 (October 1975): 51-52.

⁵*Warsaw Signal*, May 15, 1844, 3; and *St. Louis Daily Evening Gazette*, May 31, 1844, 2.

⁶Hiram Clawson, "Theatricals in Utah," *Minute Book* 2 (January 23, 1907): 57, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City; and George Pyper, *The Romance of an Old Playhouse* (Salt Lake City: Seagull Press, 1928), 27-28.

⁷*History of the Church* 6:350, 361-62; "Nauvoo Theatre," *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1 (May 1, 1844): 2; and "Communications," *The Prophet* 1 (June 15, 1844): 2.

⁸Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo," *Woman's Exponent* 11 (November 15, 1882): 90.

⁹*History of the Church* 6:363; and Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (May 11, 1844), microfilm copy, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁰*Nauvoo Expositor* 1 (June 7, 1844): 3. The lists of passengers and goods shipped on the *Maid of Iowa* for May and June did not reveal any names associated with the Nauvoo Dramatic Association, suggesting that they traveled aboard another steamboat or were ferried across and traveled by horseback.

¹¹*History of the Church* 6:576, 596-609.

¹²T. A. Lyne, *A True and Descriptive Account of the Assassination of Joseph and Hiram Smith, the Mormon Prophet and Patriarch at Carthage, Illinois, June 27th, 1844* (New York: C. A. Calhoun, 1844), 6. See also Mary

Audentia Smith Anderson, ed., "The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith (1832-1914)," *Saints' Herald* 83 (February 25, 1936): 225.

¹³*The Prophet* 1 (November 2, 1844): 2.

¹⁴Although the author was unable to locate biographical information on Lyman Powell, it is possible that he was the same "Mr. Powell" who had been in partnership with Thomas Lyne at Chicago's Rialto Theatre in 1842. See J. H. McVicker, *The Theatre: Its Early Days in Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1884), 48-49; Robert L. Sherman, *Chicago Stage: Its Records and Achievements, Volume One, 1834-1871* (Chicago: By the author, 1947), 67-77, 447.

¹⁵Newell K. Whitney Collection, Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

¹⁶"An Ordinance in relation to public shows and exhibitions," *The Wasp* 1 (July 16, 1842): 4; Nauvoo City Council Minutes (July 5, 1842), LDS Church Archives. An almost identical ordinance had been enacted by the council on November 27, 1841 (see "An Ordinance in relation to hawkers, pedlars [*sic*], and public shows and exhibitions," *Times and Seasons* 3 [December 15, 1841]: 637).

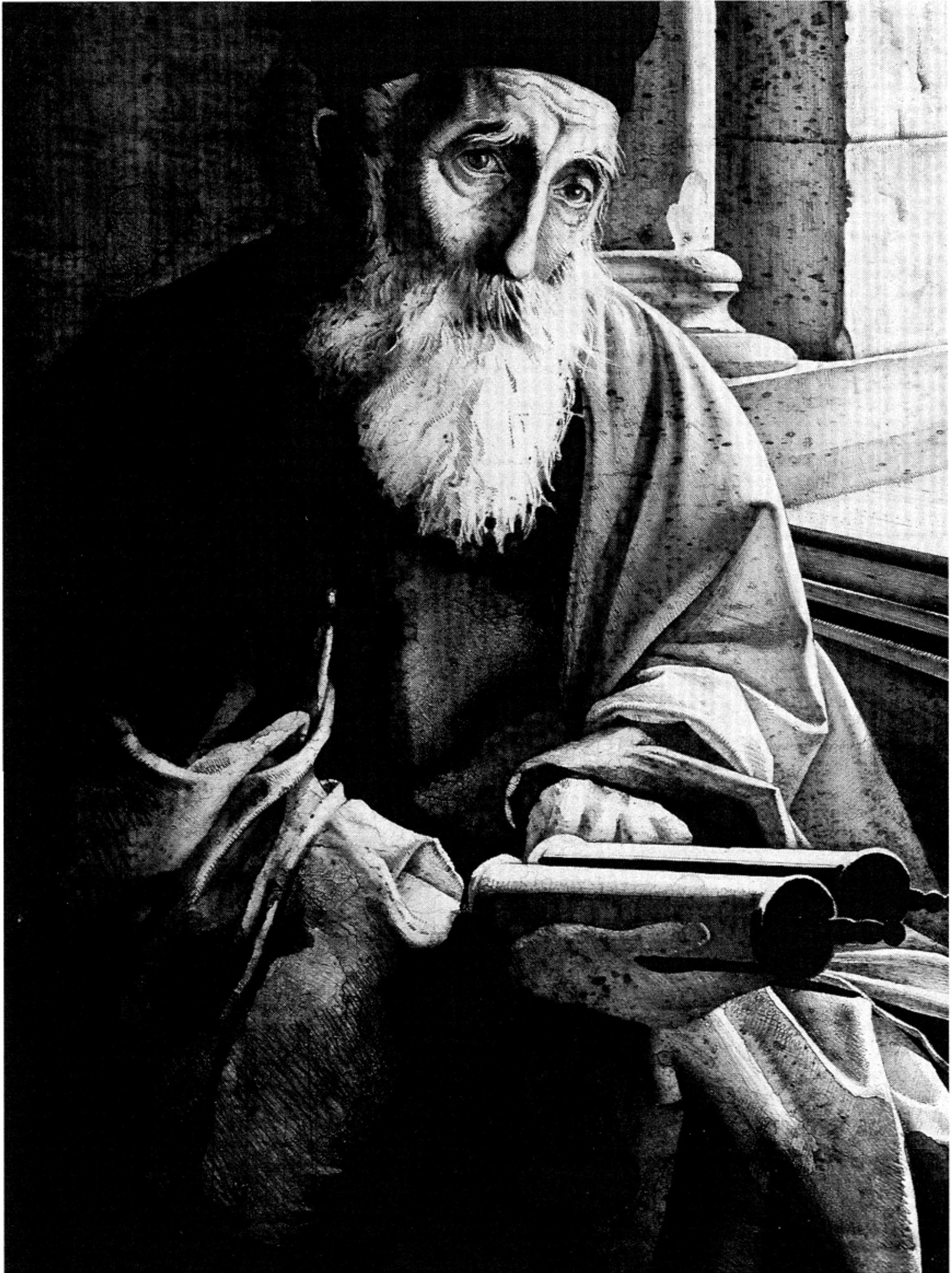
Detour

Before we left our mapped route to take in
 Yosemite, I dreamed that visit
 in grey and white like Ansel Adams' photography—
 those Titanic slabs of granite I'd seen
 in books. The road simply extended
 to one such pale bulk and ended.
 We all got out of our dark, shiny car
 confused. With their arms entwined,
 the three girls looked oddly the same age and size,
 the boys tramped at once back to a dropoff:
 grey pines so far below
 they looked like grass sod.

Perhaps it was Ansel's tin moon
 that made me look up to the cliff top
 above the car: I was not startled
 to see my youngest there in shorts
 and knee socks—which he never wore—
 and how he got suddenly to the top
 I didn't wonder; he was simply there and already
 I knew he would fall: hurling down
 toward the car with a face
 that held no surprise, only apology.
 It was over in a moment, but we could not
 find his body—no vegetation to hold him.

In the heat of California's drought
 some of us voted *no* to the detour.
 We drove into the dull greens and dying grass
 of Yosemite, into the thin moonlight
 that would touch us before we could leave,
 and I wondered which waiting bodies among us
 were stained as wholly
 by memories of places we have never been.

—Dixie Partridge



Hagen Haltern, *Jeremiah Contemplates the Destruction to Come*. Watercolor and graphite on paper, 8" x 10", reversed, 1980. Collection of the Museum of Church History and Art.

Book Reviews

DANIEL C. PETERSON. *Abraham Divided: An LDS Perspective on the Middle East*. Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992. 374 pp. Index. \$12.95.

Reviewed by James A. Toronto, Assistant Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University.

The Holy Lands of the Middle East have long held a particular fascination for Latter-day Saints. From Joseph Smith's time to the present, numerous LDS tourists, scholars, and Church officials have visited biblical sites in Palestine (present-day Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip), Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey. Several of these Mormon pilgrims have written about their experiences and expressed their views on the relationship between the restored gospel and contemporary events in the modern Middle East. Since 1948, when the state of Israel was created, the amount of LDS writing about the Middle East has increased significantly. Such writing received an additional impetus in 1969, when the first BYU study-abroad program in Jerusalem was established.

Most of the LDS literature about political and religious issues in the Middle East is narrow in scope and superficial in analysis. The majority of authors since 1948 have sought to show (primarily on the basis of their interpretation of LDS scriptures) that Israel's emergence as a nation and her military victories against neighboring Arab countries are the modern fulfillment of ancient prophecies about the gathering of the Jews. A major leitmotif has been that the creation of Israel is a modern replay of the Old Testament epic: God sustaining his covenant people against their enemies in a miraculous and successful bid to build a home in the promised land. Such reasoning leads to the conclusion that Israelis are good guys, God's people; Arabs and Muslims are bad guys, God's enemies; and the

LDS Church and its doctrine provide unwavering support for the former in their struggle against the latter.¹

The paucity of careful, well-informed writing by Mormon authors about the modern Middle East makes Daniel Peterson's book *Abraham Divided* a welcome addition to the corpus of LDS literature on the subject. It is an ambitious, groundbreaking effort to place the Arab-Israeli conflict in its historical, political, and religious context and to provide a comprehensive and balanced analysis from an LDS point of view. Because Peterson brings to his task a rare combination of academic training, linguistic skills, gospel knowledge, and in-country experience that few previous LDS writers have possessed, the book succeeds overall in presenting a timely, provocative, and convincing message.

Peterson's main point is that Latter-day Saints, if they are to fulfill their destiny as peacemakers in the region, must understand and respect all the peoples of the Holy Land—Jews, Christians, and Muslims. He develops this theme by analyzing the historical, political, and religious factors that lie at the root of the Middle East conflict. Two key arguments emerge from this analysis: (1) a proper understanding of Middle Eastern history and of Islamic religion and civilization in particular will help us develop the same kind of respect and admiration for Muslims we traditionally accord the Jews; and (2) LDS doctrine does not advocate taking sides in the Arab-Israeli struggle but encourages a compassionate, impartial approach in our dealings with both Jews and Muslims.

Abraham Divided has something to offer any reader interested in Middle Eastern issues and comparative religion. Its comprehensive examination of religion, philosophy, and politics will enlighten the novice. Its in-depth discussion of Islamic history and doctrine will yield insights for the informed observer. And its methodology, which emphasizes comparison and contrast, will help readers, LDS or non-LDS, who want some basic knowledge of similarities and differences between Judaism, Islam, and LDS Christianity.

It is crucial, however, to keep in mind that this volume is an introductory survey and that its intended audience is primarily Latter-day Saints with little specialized knowledge of Middle Eastern studies. The book assumes a basic familiarity with LDS history

and scripture and little or no knowledge of the religious and political history of the Middle East. Knowing these limits will help both those who might be frustrated by constant allusions to, and parenthetical comments about, Mormon doctrine and those who might be expecting a more scholarly treatment of the subject. Given the book's lay readership, though, its approach is the most appropriate one. Peterson writes in an engaging, informal style and provides a serious, thoughtful analysis of complex issues without getting mired in academic hairsplitting and detailed documentation.

The main strength of the book lies in its perceptive discussion of two interrelated topics: the important contributions of Islamic doctrine and civilization to world history and the relationship of Mormonism to religious and political issues in the contemporary Middle East. In developing these themes, Peterson displays an impressive breadth of knowledge from a variety of academic disciplines. He includes frequent citations of historical and scriptural sources from Jewish, Islamic, and Christian traditions; theological and philosophical arguments from various authors; linguistic insights gleaned from comparisons of cognates and etymologies in Arabic, Hebrew, German, Greek, and Latin; and allusions to classical and popular literature (for example, Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*). The wealth of information that undergirds the analysis is presented in elegant, lucid prose liberally sprinkled with witticisms,² all of which makes this a pleasant, stimulating book to read.

An Islamicist myself, I found Peterson's discussion of the early Islamic period interesting and persuasive. He is especially adept in his use of original Islamic sources—the Qur'an, Hadith, and early biographies of Muhammad—to inform his analysis of Muhammad's prophetic career and the development of Islamic doctrines and institutions.³ The book is particularly helpful in discussing some key points that are often slighted in introductory surveys of Islamic religion: the "Arabicness" of the Qur'an (130–32), the salvation of righteous non-Muslims (139), Islamic eschatology and afterlife (139–45), and the Islamic legal system (187–92). With his audience in mind, Peterson is always careful to avoid terminology and explanations that are too pedantic, and readers will appreciate his efforts to

provide reasonable transliterations and pronunciation hints for Arabic words. I enjoyed the thoughtful discussion of similarities and differences between Mormonism and Islam (158–76) and the effective use of Arabic poetry in the chapter on the modern Middle East to capture the pathos and passion of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The final chapter, “The Church in the Near East,” offers the most enlightened, insightful analysis of Mormonism’s relationship to the contemporary Middle East that can be found in LDS literature. This chapter alone makes the book worth its purchase price. Peterson’s long experience studying and living among the peoples of the Middle East has engendered a balanced, compassionate perspective that is evident in his portrayal of the challenges and opportunities facing the Church in its dealings with Jews and Muslims. He begins with an informative discussion of a forgotten chapter in LDS Church history: Mormon missionary efforts in the Middle East.⁴ Throughout this chapter (and the previous one on modern Middle Eastern history), Peterson takes pains to be evenhanded, pointing out that both the Jews and the Arabs have legitimate rights of inheritance in the Holy Land, both have been the victims of terrible suffering over the years, and both have been guilty of atrocities, hostage taking, and deceitful maneuvering in their struggle to reconcile conflicting claims. Peterson’s balanced approach is reflected in this comment:

If anything should be gained from a consideration of this painfully difficult dispute, it is that there is no easy answer, and that both sides will need to give and to forgive, to repent and reform, before Jerusalem shines with the full glory it is destined to have. We must never lose sight of that fact. We must never forget the complexity of the issues. (303)

Peterson eloquently and persuasively argues a point that has usually been ignored or misrepresented by Mormon authors—that LDS doctrine advocates an attitude of impartiality and compassion on the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict:

There is no such thing, in this terribly complex matter, as “the Lord’s side.” Neither side is without sin, and neither side is without just cause. As a Church, we must attempt to steer a neutral course between various factions. As Latter-day Saints, we must hold ourselves and everyone who would seek our support to the standards of justice and charity that the gospel mandates. . . . The Lord’s

justice and mercy extend to all peoples of the earth. Every human individual of every race is his child, and the object of his love. Our task as individuals is to emulate that divine love. (367)

While the book's message and methodology as a whole are laudable, a few aspects detract from the otherwise high quality of analysis and could benefit from some fine-tuning in future revisions. First, some ideas and conclusions are less convincing because they seem hastily drawn or inadequately developed. One example is found in the discussion of Arab-Muslim influences on European civilization. The author avers that the Italian bell tower, or *campanile*, "seems to have been inspired by the Islamic minaret or prayer tower" and that "the multicolored marble that is so unusual and so characteristic of the churches in Florence, Italy . . . may owe its inspiration to the earlier multicolored buildings of Cairo" (220). While there are unquestionably some Islamic influences in the art, literature, and architecture of Italy, the two argued for here are not among them. Bell towers and multicolored marble buildings were present in Italy long before the advent of Islam in Arabia and therefore do not reflect Islamic motifs. In these two instances, the pattern of cultural borrowing would more likely have been just the opposite.

At times, Peterson's intellectual curiosity takes him beyond the solid ground of rigorous analysis onto the shifting sands (to use a Middle Eastern metaphor) of speculation. For example, he postulates that "the great and spacious building" of Lehi's dream "seems very like the ancient 'skyscraper' architecture of Yemen" (65); that the ravens who fed Elijah in the wilderness "may well be the Bedouin Arabs of the region" (69); that LDS teachings about Moses' father-in-law holding the priesthood are supported by "Arabic tradition, which seems to know Jethro under the name of Shu'ayb, whom it views as a great prophet" (69); that the Qur'anic figure Idris "is certainly to be identified with Enoch" (158); and that "our farewell 'So long!' derives from the Arabic *salaam*" (226). Each of these assertions contains an element of plausibility and adds spice to the reading, but each is controversial and impossible to substantiate. I am not arguing against the use of knowledgeable conjecture, especially in an informal work like this, but

I believe the speculative nature of these ideas requires more detailed substantiation than is provided.

I was puzzled to find that some topics of central importance to the book's theme are given only cursory treatment. The basic beliefs of Islam—the Five Pillars—are covered in five pages (151–56), with almsgiving described in two sentences and fasting in two paragraphs. Peterson's discussion of the two issues in Islam that are the hardest for a Western audience to understand and respect—the role of women and the concept of *jihad*—is far too abbreviated to effectively address the biases and distortions in most readers' minds. The section on “Treatment of Women” (149–51) is helpful but too brief to adequately explain some of the complicated and controversial issues that are raised, such as “paradisiacal *houris*,” distinctive gender roles, and seemingly discriminatory inheritance laws. The discussion of *jihad*—a term that has unfortunately become associated in the West with the idea of violence and “holy war” against non-Muslims—deals effectively with the concept of a “just war” in Islam. It fails, however, to point out the broader significance of *jihad* in Islamic piety: the “inner struggle” to overcome human pride and to obey God's will. In a volume dedicated to sensitizing its readers to negative stereotypes about Muslims, these crucial ideas deserve more attention.

Another area of concern has to do with stylistic and organizational features that undermine the book's thematic unity and clarity. The title and cover art are attractive but ambiguous. Readers may misunderstand or miss completely the connection between the two men (one old and one young, each holding a baby) and the title, *Abraham Divided*. Is one man Ishmael and the other Isaac? Is one a Muslim sheikh and the other a Jewish rabbi? Or does one represent the younger Abraham holding Ishmael and one the older Abraham holding Isaac (probably the artist's intended interpretation)? Key issues related to the theme of *Abraham Divided*—how and why the division between Ishmael and Isaac occurred; how this family split is interpreted variously in Islam, Judaism, and Mormonism; and what the division's implications are for interfaith dialogue—are not addressed directly and thoroughly.⁵

While the prologue is interesting and informative, readers would likely benefit more from a traditional introductory chapter

that clearly sets forth the central theme, provides a context and rationale for it, connects it to the book's title and cover design, and outlines related questions and issues to be addressed. Much of the prologue material is helpful in this regard, but most of it could be placed more profitably in the final chapter dealing with the Church's role in the Middle East. At times I found it difficult to understand the organizational logic and proportionality of chapters.⁶ A major technical flaw that the publisher must remedy in future editions is the index: it is an exercise in frustration trying to use it for cross-referencing or looking up even the most basic terms (for example, *Allah*, *Muhammad*, *Abraham*, *Jerusalem*, *Orson Hyde*, and *Gathering of the Jews* are cited once or not at all). The purpose of these comments and recommendations is to point out that a very good book can be made even better by sharpening its thematic focus and clarifying its organizational logic.

My concerns about *Abraham Divided* are relatively minor and are more than compensated for by the impressive breadth of coverage and depth of insight the book provides for the reader. *Abraham Divided* is to be greeted with enthusiasm by all LDS observers of the Middle East as a seminal work that will become a basic reference for all future efforts to explore issues related to Mormonism and modern Middle Eastern politics and religion. It lives up to its billing as "a fresh voice" (see the book's back cover) in the ongoing task of helping the LDS community better understand the sensitivities and vagaries of the Middle East problem. Daniel Peterson succeeds admirably in his aim to promote more awareness of and appreciation for the grandeur of Islamic civilization and for the complexity of the historical, political, and theological issues that lie at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We finally have a reliable volume that can confidently be recommended to readers interested in an LDS perspective of the Middle East, one that highlights the unique teachings of the restored gospel and presents a more broadly informed, evenhanded approach than has heretofore been available in the pro-Israel writings of most LDS and fundamentalist Christian writers.

In sharing a sympathetic view based on years of experience within the Middle East, Daniel Peterson has made an invaluable

contribution to the LDS community and to the broader discussion of Mormon-Muslim-Jewish relations. The book's lucid writing style, synthesis of information from a variety of academic disciplines, and wealth of perceptive ideas and interpretations, together with its wit and intelligence, make it a pleasurable must-read for every member of the Church interested in studying or visiting the holy lands of the Middle East.

Editorial Note: A revised edition of *Abraham Divided* is forthcoming.

NOTES

¹There are some exceptions in LDS literature about the modern Middle East. Over the years a handful of LDS authors have provided a more evenhanded analysis of issues related to Mormon doctrine and the Middle East: for example, James B. Mayfield, "Ishmael, Our Brother," *Ensign* 9 (June 1979): 24-32; Howard W. Hunter, *All Are Alike unto God*, Brigham Young University Devotional Speeches (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1979), 32-36; Spencer J. Palmer, ed., *Mormons and Muslims* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1983); and Joseph B. Platt, "Our Oasis of Faith," *Ensign* 18 (April 1988): 39-41. See also various Middle East-related articles in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992).

²One of my favorites is Peterson's description of why Mongol armies were so successful in combat:

Medieval sources report that the Mongols considered water so sacred that they refused to soil it by bathing in it. Instead, they anointed themselves in horse butter. Now, imagine. After, say, thirty years of horse butter anointings, the typical Mongol of the thirteenth century must have been a fairly potent individual. (All a Mongol army had to do was to get upwind of a town. The place was almost certain to surrender). (239)

³See, especially, pages 104-6 and the section entitled "What Are We to Make of Muhammad?" on pages 117-21 for examples of insightful observations from an LDS perspective about Muhammad's life and place as a prophetic figure.

⁴A more detailed rendering of this episode in Church history can be found in Steven W. Baldrige, *Grafting In: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Branch, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989). But the most thorough study is Rao H. Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Near East, 1884-1929" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958).

⁵The only mention of this point is found on page 90, where, from the Islamic perspective, the question of which son was nearly sacrificed by Abraham and where the event took place is briefly touched upon. Peterson points out that the Qur'an never mentions the name of the son to be sacrificed and that, as a result, "classical Muslim writers are evenly divided on the question." But his conclusion that it is "wrong" to "think that Muslims believe it was Ishmael, and not . . . Isaac" does not, in my view, adequately reflect how thinking on this subject has evolved. While this question was a point of debate in the classical period of Islamic history, it has ceased to be so in recent history. The nearly universal view in the Islamic world today, as reflected in Muslim print media, scholarly commentaries, popular literature, and Friday sermons, is that Ishmael is the subject of the Qur'anic story. The only controversy in Islam these days is whether the event took place on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem (as the Bible says) or near Mecca where other events of the Abraham-Ishmael-Hagar saga unfolded (as most modern Muslim writers hold).

⁶For example, almost half (15 of 37 pages) of the first chapter, "After the Testaments," focuses on historical developments in the period *before* the end of the testamental period. In the section on "Mathematics" (207-9), a discussion of Arabic influence on the Spanish language is initiated without a new heading. Given the focus of its content, the section entitled "Israel" (284) would more logically be labeled "Israel and Palestine" or "Israel and the West Bank/Gaza." The "Word Sampler" segment (220-27) is fascinating but at seven pages seems disproportionately long, especially when the Five Pillars of Islam, as noted before, received only five pages.

BEN C. OLLENBURGER, ELMER A. MARTENS, and GERHARD F. HASEL, eds. *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Old Testament Theology*. Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, vol. 1. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992. xii; 547 pp. Bibliography, indexes. \$29.50.

Reviewed by Dana M. Pike, Assistant Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University.

The Flowering of Old Testament Theology is a reader designed to delineate “not only the issues but the progress and the achievements” of Old Testament theology during the twentieth century (ix). This purpose is accomplished by introducing readers to the major scholarly views on Old Testament theology and to the most influential scholars through excerpts from their writings. *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology* is the first volume in a series recently initiated by Eisenbrauns publishers.¹ The focus of this series is to provide general students of the Old Testament with the opportunity to “interact with foundational works firsthand” (vii).

The Old Testament is much more of a theological scrapbook than a textbook, containing no systematic discussion of doctrines and religious practices. Scholars have therefore attempted to delineate the major theological views of ancient Israelites, the development of those views, and the ways they were understood and applied by communities of believers from ancient times to the present. Not surprisingly, the variety of religious and academic orientations among modern scholars has produced an array of opinions not only about the major theological components in the Old Testament, but also about the definition of Old Testament theology.

As evidenced by the designation “Old Testament theology,” this field of study is mainly Christian in orientation. It took root and flourished primarily in the soil of European and American Protestantism and has historically excluded from serious consideration Jewish traditions and the views of Jewish scholars on the contents of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.²

The three editors of this reader share about sixty years of collective involvement in teaching and publishing in the area of Old Testament theology. As noted in the foreword, the editors of this

volume have made “an attempt to orient the student” to the major issues and “varieties of perspectives” found in the area of Old Testament theology (ix). They have admirably fulfilled the purpose they set for themselves in compiling this reader. The real virtue of this volume is that one is introduced to this area of study through samples of the work of the major scholars in the area.³ Each of the scholars whose work is sampled is the author of an introduction to Old Testament theology. While this compilation does not replace those extended, individual volumes, it allows a student to sample the work of these scholars and to compare them to each other and to additional approaches.

The Flowering of Old Testament Theology is divided into three parts. Part I, “Setting the Stage,” begins with a chapter by editor Ollenburger that reviews the historical development of Old Testament theology from the late 1700s to 1930. This chapter is followed by two programmatic statements on what Old Testament theology is and is not according to two German scholars who had a major impact on Old Testament studies during this century: Otto Eissfeldt, a historian of religion, and Walther Eichrodt, a theologian. These articles, originally published in German in 1926 and 1929, respectively, appear here in English for the first time. The different perspectives of these two scholars serve to highlight the variegated conceptions of the goals and substance of this area of study, and they provide a good foundation for the second part, which is the heart of the book.

Part II, “Sampling Old Testament Theology,” begins with an editorial essay by Martens that reviews the results of Old Testament theological study from 1930 to 1990. Fourteen chapters then survey the range of thought regarding Old Testament theology and sample the most representative work of those figures who have been particularly influential in the field. These chapters average 20–25 pages in length. A two-page introduction at the beginning of each of these chapters generally consists of three types of information: a “theological synopsis,” in which each scholar’s work and its impact is summarized by one of the editors, information on the career of the individual, and a list of major publications by (and occasionally about) each scholar. These introductions are very helpful, especially for those who have “heard his name” but are

not well acquainted with these men and their work (yes, they are all men). Following these introductions, each chapter contains two selections from the publications of these scholars: one conveys their general views on Old Testament theology, and the other represents the major emphasis of their work. For example, the chapter selections on Walther Eichrodt focus on covenant because he championed the idea that the concept of covenant, more than anything else, was the undergirding feature of Israelite religion. To him, covenant “enshrines Israel’s most fundamental conviction, namely its sense of a unique relationship with God” (58). These excerpts are designed not only to introduce, but to whet one’s interest in further study; none are intended to provide a comprehensive view.

The list of scholars represented reads like a “who’s who” in Old Testament theology. Among those whose writings are represented in part II are W. Eichrodt on “Covenant,” G. E. Wright on “God the Warrior,” G. von Rad on “Eighth-Century Prophecy,” C. Westermann on “God’s Judgment and God’s Mercy,” B. S. Childs on “Canon,” and P. D. Hanson on “The Community of Faith.” Admittedly, the choices represent the work of only western European and North American males. This situation is recognized by the editors (x), who rightly cite liberation- and feminist-oriented theologies as examples of less-than-mainline aspects of Old Testament theology that receive no attention in part II. Their choices do, however, represent the major work done in the area of Old Testament theology during the majority of the twentieth century. But times are changing, and so are people and the theological work they are doing. Thus the third part is directed toward reviewing the recent developments in, and the indicators of the future of, Old Testament theology.

Part III, “The Way Forward: Old Testament Theology in the Twenty-first Century,” begins with an essay by editor Hasel that surveys current trends and future prospects in this area of study. Six chapters then introduce and excerpt the theological writings, for example, of W. Brueggemann on “A Shape for Old Testament Theology,” J. D. Levenson on “Creation and Covenant,” and Phyllis Trible on an “Overture for a Feminist Biblical Theology.”

One of the enjoyable aspects of this compilation is the opportunity to learn of the variety of backgrounds represented by these twenty-plus scholars. For example, J. L. McKenzie was a U.S. citizen associated with the Roman Catholic (Jesuit) tradition (169–70); R. E. Clements is English with a Baptist orientation, including ministerial service (211–12); C. Westermann is a German Lutheran with pastoral experience (276–77); and E. A. Martens is a Canadian with an evangelical orientation and a long association with the Mennonites (298–99). Also of interest is the correlation, or lack thereof, between the background of these scholars and their scholarly views. For example, J. L. McKenzie held that “the study of the theology of the Old Testament has never been advanced by the Christianization of the Old Testament” (169), while T. C. Vriezen (83–84) and others proceeded from a diametrically opposite position (i.e., that much of the Old Testament not only can, but must be viewed as culminating in the saving ministry and sacrifice of Jesus).

Although none of these scholars is a Latter-day Saint and while there are views expressed in this compilation that do not accord with Latter-day Saint doctrine,⁴ there is much of value here for Latter-day Saints. Experiencing the ways in which those who do not enjoy the advantage of latter-day revelation have wrestled with the central themes of the Old Testament and their value in our time is worthwhile in and of itself. Also, Latter-day Saints should remember they are not alone in seeking to better understand the scriptures and their role in developing a relationship with the Lord. Many people from various backgrounds, including an academic one, have exercised sincere efforts to this end. In addition, many statements contained in this compilation will extend the thinking of Latter-day Saint readers. Consider these observations of G. E. Wright regarding God as a warrior:

A most pervasive Biblical motif is the interpretation of conflict in history as owing to the sin of man, against which the cosmic government and its Suzerain [= God] take vigorous action. Since so much of history is concerned with warfare, it therefore must be expected that one major activity of the Suzerain will be the direction of war for both redemptive and judgmental ends. That is, a major function of the Suzerain will be understood to be his work as Warrior.

Yet in our time no attribute of the Biblical God is more consciously and almost universally rejected than this one. The reason is that theologically we are unable to keep up with our emotional attitudes towards war. The latter are so shocked by the savage horror of war that it is most difficult to see any positive good in this type of conflict. (110)

[However,] God the Warrior is the theme that furnishes hope in time. . . . Wars and rumors of wars are a Biblical reality, a present reality, and we see no immediate surcease of them in the future. Yet the strong, active power given language in the Warrior-Lord means that there is a force in the universe set against the forces of evil and perversity. Life, then, is a battleground, but the Divine Warrior will not be defeated.

Now if one thinks this type of language is too strong, let him only remember that God the Warrior is simply the reverse side of God the Lover or God the Redeemer. The seeking love of God is only one side of the Suzerain's activity, because, to change the figure, divine love is a two-edged sword. (115)

Consider also Vriezen's observations:

There are many voices to be heard in the various writings [of the Old Testament], but the speakers and singers all want to proclaim one and the same God. He is the one focal point of all the Old Testament writings, whatever their literary character, whatever their period of origin. (85)

All this means complete absorption in the voices which bear witness in the Old Testament to the work of God and so to Him in the course of history, and this is not merely a philological and historical exercise but also a personal exercise in listening and spiritual understanding. (84)

Any student of the Old Testament who is interested in increasing his or her exposure to an understanding of the major, often competing, twentieth-century scholarly ideas on the dominant theological themes of the Old Testament will find time spent with this compilation both interesting and rewarding. Given the intended audience, the editors could have included a glossary with terms such as "salvation history," "dogmatics," and "systematic theology" for the convenience of those who have not yet mastered the jargon of this area of study. This, however, is a minor complaint. *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology* is an enjoyably different introduction to Old Testament theology. I recommend it.

NOTES

¹All the volumes in this series are hard bound with a plasticized cover.

²This situation has been addressed recently by Jon Levenson, for example, whose comments on this problem are summarized on page 427 of *Flowering*.

³All of the material quoted in these excerpts has been retypeset, not merely photocopied from the original sources. This gives the book a unified, well-produced look. Conveniently, the editors have included in brackets in the text the page numbers from the original publications. Previously published English translations of material originally in non-English form are the sources for the excerpts of the work of several European scholars.

⁴For example, without the revealed knowledge that the gospel of Jesus Christ was known on the earth as early as the time of Adam and Eve, many people view the law of Moses as a step upward in the relationship between God and his people (as is apparent in Eichrodt's comments on Moses [73-74]). In contrast, Latter-day Saints view the law of Moses as a lesser law, not as the full order previously known to the patriarchs nor as the full embodiment of the possibilities available at Sinai (Joseph Smith Translation, Ex. 34:1-2; D&C 84:23-27).

JAMES R. BAKER. *Women's Rights in Old Testament Times*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992. xii; 186 pp. Index. Paperback. \$17.95.

Reviewed by Camille S. Williams, Instructor of Philosophy at Brigham Young University.

In this book, Salt Lake attorney James R. Baker attempts to bridge the considerable gap between general readers, who are vaguely acquainted with Old Testament narratives, and the specialized worlds of ancient law, biblical studies, and women's studies. Utilizing the surviving legal codes from city-states in the Near East, c. 2200 B.C. to A.D. 200–600, and drawing on the work of modern biblical scholars, particularly Raymond Westbrook and Bernard Jackson, Baker retells the stories of various biblical characters in light of his reconstruction of the legal and social context of their times.

The stories of Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Joseph, David, Cain, and Abel are recounted in view of ancient laws governing herding- and animal-keeping contracts. Events in the lives of Jacob, Leah, Rachel, and Rahab (the harlot of Jericho) are set against the laws of metronymic marriage, according to which the groom joined the household of his father-in-law. The stories of Rebekah, Sarai, Hagar, Michal, Bathsheba, and David's daughter Tamar are explained in relation to ancient laws governing slavery, marriage, levirate marriage for the purpose of raising up sons for a deceased brother, and punishment of sexual activity outside of marriage. A discussion of ancient inheritance laws is the backdrop for the stories of Ruth and Naomi, Tamar and Judah, and the daughters of Lot. Activities of Dinah, Pharaoh's daughter, Zipporah, and an unnamed concubine are treated in a concluding miscellany.

Believing that he has "discovered a void," Baker attempts to decode the "puzzling social and historical context of Hebrew women," who, though "partly concealed by the patriarchal emphasis of the Bible, . . . exerted considerable influence in their communities and were often adept at working the law to their advantage" (ix). Given the relative lack of general knowledge about the lives of women in ancient times, this study should have incorporated

more of the growing body of scholarship on the subject, especially from women scholars. Baker admits that he is “not a student of feminist theory” (xi), but he hopes that his work may be useful for women’s studies. Nevertheless, I had difficulty shaking the impression that this book began as a more general work that was partially rewritten or adapted to appeal to the women’s studies market. In its retelling of these women’s narratives, the book is reminiscent of Edith Deen’s *All of the Women of the Bible* and Jerrie Hurd’s LDS volume, *Our Sisters in the Bible*; it does not match the rigor of Judith Romney Wegner’s analysis of Jewish law, *Chattel or Person?*, nor does it exhibit the hermeneutical skill of Phyllis Trible’s *Texts of Terror*.¹

The book’s introduction to the codes is well written but would have benefitted from a fuller treatment. Baker asserts that “ancient legal codes are rough compilations of legal abstracts of the king’s rulings or those of his courts recorded to show posterity that the king had fulfilled his mandate to bestow justice and equity upon the poor, the widowed, the orphaned, and the enslaved” (1-2), which may or may not be an adequate definition. He does not explicitly compare contemporary notions of individual rights with those ideas he considers inherent in ancient law. Consequently, his conclusions and asides often betray a contemporary preference for individual natural rights rather than offering a more complete explication of ancient law and society on its own terms. Ancient laws were grounded in the individual’s social, economic, political, and marital status in ways quite foreign to many current readers. Additional explanation at the outset might have increased reader awareness of ancient values without sacrificing interest in the stories of individual women in the Bible.

Baker’s cursory treatment of the Near Eastern law codes may merely reinforce stereotypes of ancient cultures by reducing the complexity of those societies to a near-caricature in which women are treated with capricious harshness and subjected to “the life-and-death power of a father over his family” (10). Some ancient laws were undoubtedly harsh; however, their harshness extended to men as well as to women. Contrary to an impression Baker gives, the laws sometimes limited a father’s ability to impose punishment until either the judges or the king had heard the case,

and punishment was then administered in the presence of the judges. Such provisions may have either tempered the actions of an irate patriarch or increased his ire. But the point not to be missed is that punishment was frequently a public act rather than a private right.

Summarizing law codes spanning thousands of years and several cultures is problematic enough under the best of circumstances, but this book's discussion is further weakened by giving inadequate attention to ancient beliefs. For example, justice could be administered by the swearing of oaths, by ordeal, or by divine judgments. To the modern mind, these methods may seem absurd; to the ancients, cases which could not be decided by the rational means of witnesses or documents could be decided by extrarational means, such as throwing the accused into the river, thereby bringing divinity into the legal investigation. Baker, however, simply calls the river ordeal for a wife accused of adultery "bizarre and the harshest for women" (3). Moreover, he does not mention that men accused of certain crimes could also be subjected to the same ordeal.

Some of the examples of ancient laws highlighted in this book seem to have been selected for their shock value—and some are shocking. However, emphasizing the provisions that seem unfair to women without explaining the legal system as a whole presents a distorted view. For example, it would have been helpful to discuss more ways in which those societies were apparently moving from the practice of punishing whole families for the crime of one member to limiting punishment to the perpetrator alone.

Baker's descriptions are sometimes conflicting or confusing: "Bilhah was a victim" (56) yet an "errant concubine" (58); Leah's "female-initiated fornication" (47) with Jacob "may have been morally reprehensible" but was probably "no crime or tort" (48); and Rebekah's efforts to secure the birthright blessing for Jacob were "deceitful and fraudulent" (114), though Baker underscores "the importance of women asserting themselves in the face of opposition" (177).

Although Baker deals with interesting subjects, his coverage is uneven. The omission of three of the Bible's most politically powerful women—Vashti and Esther, who were queens, and Deborah, who

was a judge and military leader—because they “do not involve legal issues” (x) is puzzling; as is the lack of an overall conclusion to the book. While readers will find some useful information here, they will want to consult the primary sources, additional biblical texts, and further commentaries for a fuller understanding of ancient law as applied to the women of the Bible.

NOTE

¹Edith Deen, *All of the Women of the Bible* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955); Jerrie Hurd, *Our Sisters in the Bible* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983); Judith Romney Wegner, *Chattel or Person?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

JAMES B. ALLEN, RONALD K. ESPLIN, and DAVID J. WHITTAKER. *Men with a Mission, 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992. xix; 460 pp. 84 illustrations, 7 maps, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$24.00.

Reviewed by Ronald G. Watt, an archivist working in Salt Lake City.

My first reaction to this book was to wonder whether I could learn anything new about the mission of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to the British Isles. However, I found myself captivated by the work of James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker. The authors' careful interpretation of the men and the mission is interesting and enlightening. The book provides, as promised in the preface, "a depth and richness never before available" (xvi), enlarging our understanding of more Church history than the book's four-year focus would suggest.

Each of the three authors of this volume brings his own expertise to the book. James Allen has written a monumental work on the early English convert William Clayton. David Whittaker has centered much of his work on the history of early Mormon publications and has read widely in British history sources. Ronald Esplin wrote an excellent dissertation on Brigham Young and has also published material concerning the women who were left at home.

The authors have several purposes to promote. According to the dedication page, they want to impart their own "commitment to the missionary spirit." They write for both scholars and "the general readership of the Church," employing scholarly tools and expertise to mine "the rich treasure trove of journals, letters, and other documents," which tell a "momentous story in the history of Mormon missionary work" (xv-xvi).

The central purpose of *Men with a Mission*, though, is to show how the mission brought a spirit of unity to the nine members of the Twelve who served in the British Isles. (There were only eleven members of the quorum during this period and two, pleading poverty, did not serve missions abroad.) The four-year experience transformed the group of nine dedicated missionaries into a quorum which could function effectively as a body and assume its important role in the organization and history of the Church.

The book provides a detailed chronological account of the work of the Apostle-missionaries in Great Britain. The first of thirteen chapters introduces the men and the land in which they served. Subsequent chapters deal with Heber C. Kimball's and Orson Hyde's first mission to England during 1837-38; happenings in Missouri, Illinois, and England before the nine Apostles traveled various pathways to Liverpool during 1839-40; missionary work in the British Isles from January 1840 to March 1841; and the return to America in 1841. Most of these chapters treat short periods of time—in two instances the period is just four months—enabling the authors to unfold the fascinating story of the work, often day by day. Personal glimpses of those whose lives were touched by the missionaries further enrich the narrative. We learn, for example, that a little over a week after Kimball and Hyde arrived in England in 1837 they baptized their first converts. One of the first nine converts was Elizabeth Ann Walmsley, “a frail consumptive not expected to live, who was carried to the water by her husband. Elder Kimball had promised her that if she would repent and be baptized, she would be healed” (35-36). She lived and emigrated to Utah, where she died years later at the age of eighty-two (36).

Three topical chapters discuss missionary life, the publication program of the Apostles in the British Isles, and the experiences of the Apostles' wives who remained in Nauvoo—adding significant detail and analysis to the chronological narrative. The chapter entitled “What It Meant to Be Missionaries” explains that in the 1830s and 1840s the elders went without purse or scrip. Generally, they made contacts by preaching in the streets or speaking in rented halls. At times they spoke in temperance meetings. The missionaries held both preaching and prayer meetings, yet the congregation did not partake of the sacrament at every meeting or even every week.

Because the authors use some sources which refer to the drinking of alcoholic beverages by the Apostles, they make sure the reader knows that the Word of Wisdom in that day was not understood to require total abstinence. Other topics are also discussed honestly and with sensitivity. Gifts of the Spirit, the authors explain, “abounded both with the apostles and among the Saints generally” (93). Healings, speaking in tongues, visions, dreams, and prophecies—carefully recorded in diaries and

letters—“were viewed as sacred and deeply personal, not to be touted as part of the missionary message or used as evidence for unbelievers” (92).

The authors give good explanations of the political happenings and social conditions in nineteenth-century Britain. Some of this background is provided to offer context for the responses of the missionaries to the country and its culture. For example, the missionaries could recognize the poverty and riches, but most could never comprehend the social class system because nothing like it existed in frontier America.

The chapter, intriguingly titled “To ‘Hurl Truth through the Land’: Publications of the Twelve,” concerns the Apostles’ ambitious program for publishing abroad the word of God, including the Book of Mormon, the *Millennial Star*, and a host of other materials. Abundant and detailed footnotes enlarge an informative discussion of the work of the “Apostle-writers.” In fact, sometimes the footnotes are more interesting to read than the text.

The heart of the book describes the nine Apostles’ work in the British Isles during 1840 and 1841 in terms of where each went, what each experienced, and what contributions each made. I had heard many times about the work of Wilford Woodruff in Herefordshire, and that is detailed here, but I learned about others whose experiences were less familiar to me. George A. Smith labored in Staffordshire in the Potteries, where he “experienced a rude awakening to the difficulties of working men and women” (161). Orson Pratt “organized the first Scottish branch of the church at Paisley” (163) and then moved on to Edinburgh, whose intellectual climate perfectly suited the Apostle, who would later become a mathematician and philosopher. The authors observe that “the ideas he came across there [in Edinburgh] had important influence on his later publications” (165).

Orson’s enthusiastic and skillful brother Parley P. Pratt “was the natural choice for editor” of the Apostles’ monthly periodical, the *Millennial Star*, which Parley announced “would be ‘devoted entirely to the great work of the spread of truth’ and would stand aloof from the common political and commercial news of the day” (252). Willard Richards labored in Preston and Manchester, balancing the pressing demands of missionary and emigration work with his obligations to Jennetta, the wife he had courted and married in England in 1838. In Liverpool, Ireland, and the Isle of

Man, John Taylor presented, to audiences ranging from six to fifteen hundred people, lectures which “generated both interest and opposition” (176). Elder Taylor “confronted every challenge head on” (179), responding in print to anti-Mormon newspaper articles and pamphlets and entering into a formal debate on the Isle of Man.

Building up the branches he had established during his 1837–38 mission, Heber C. Kimball encouraged and instructed new local Church leaders. With characteristic emphasis on the human element of their story, the authors explain that “depending upon the Saints for his livelihood . . . was emotionally draining” for Heber, who “cried inwardly at the poverty he saw among his friends. His heart melted when those who treated him so well on his first mission felt hurt because now they could not even feed him” (140–41). Orson Hyde, devitalized by both illness and disaffection following his first mission to England, rejoined his brethren there as they were preparing to return to America, receiving their collective blessing in April 1841 preparatory to his missionary work in Palestine.

Overseeing the men and the mission was Brigham Young, senior Apostle and President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He was responsible for administering not only missionary labors, but also the emigration of British Saints to America and a publishing program which produced the Book of Mormon complete with index, a new hymnal, and the *Millennial Star*. His decisive strength is evident in this narrative, as is his humor and humanity: “Be careful not to lay [my] letter with the new testament wrightings,” he wrote to Willard Richards, for “if you doe som body will take it for a text after the Malineum a[nd] contend about it” (158).

After the Twelve had obeyed the word of their Prophet and had built up the Church in Britain, Joseph Smith was ready to teach and prepare them for the mission of running the Church. While he would be teaching them up until the time of his death, their responsibilities and authority expanded significantly within weeks of their return from the British Isles. Wrote Willard Richards in his diary on August 16, 1841: “Conference: business of the Church given to the Twelve” (316).

The authors did not leave out the Apostles’ wives. A chapter entitled “Meanwhile, in Nauvoo” takes us back to America to see

what their wives were doing. After reading it, I wished there had been more on the wives and their problems and sacrifices. My wish was fulfilled, in part, in appendix B, which includes twenty-five important documents selected by the authors. Not often is the reader able to study the sources and make his or her own interpretation. One of the most poignant documents is a letter from Vilate Kimball to her husband, Heber C. Kimball, on September 21, 1839. She writes: "To day I have not ben able to do any thing. I was taken early this morning with a shake, and shook about an hour and a half as hard as I ever saw any body in my life, and then weltered under a fever and extream pain until almost night" (356).

The authors first conceived this book as being a book of documents. They made an excellent decision to write a narrative and include some of the best examples of the sources in an appendix. The source documents in appendix B give the reader just enough first-person perspective.

Appendix A is an excellent article by Malcolm R. Thorp about the social and religious backgrounds of the people who were converted to Mormonism, but it is out of place. This fine work should be in a journal, where it could be appreciated for its own sake.

The book is well footnoted. However, the location of the cited documents is mentioned not in the footnotes, but in the bibliography. The index is generally well done, providing listings under names, places, titles, and topics, but it occasionally misses a page. For example, Theodore Turley is listed as being on page 181 but not on page 182, though he appears on both pages. The maps and illustrations are also excellent.

This is a fine work of history, and the authors and publisher are to be commended. They have made an important, first-rate contribution in educating readers about the Church in the 1840s.

JENNIFER MOULTON HANSEN, ed. *Letters of Catharine Cottam Romney, Plural Wife*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. xvii; 317 pp. 24 illustrations, 3 maps, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

MARIA S. ELLSWORTH, ed. *Mormon Odyssey: The Story of Ida Hunt Udall, Plural Wife*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. xiv; 296 pp. 9 illustrations, 4 maps, 2 appendixes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

STAN LARSON, ed. *Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Ruder Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993. x; 256 pp. 15 illustrations, 4 appendixes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Reviewed by Kathryn M. Daynes, Instructor, Department of History, Brigham Young University.

While a considerable corpus of works on plural marriage already exists, the number continues to multiply. The three works under review, each detailing the life of a polygamist or plural wife, reveal the diversity of experience in plural marriage, a diversity that partly explains the continuing fascination with the subject.

In general, works about polygamy deal with its most dramatic and problematic periods—its controversial origins in Nauvoo or its demise at the end of the nineteenth century, entailing flights from U.S. marshals, life on the underground, time in prison, and secrecy. These three books concern the latter period.

To be sure, the period has been covered elsewhere, including B. Carmon Hardy's recent *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*.¹ Some primary documents from the period have also been published, such as the oft-quoted autobiography of Annie Clark Tanner.² The edited journals, memoirs, and letters being reviewed are significant additions to the body of published primary works.

Two of the books portray the experiences of plural wives, while the third describes prison life for a polygamist. That the three books be reviewed together is fitting, not only because the subjects of these books were contemporaries, but also because their lives intersected. The two plural wives, Ida Udall and Catharine Romney,

fled together from St. Johns, Arizona, to hide from U.S. marshals, and later Ruder Clawson took a daughter of Ida's husband, David Udall, as a plural wife.

Mormon Odyssey tells the story of Ida Hunt Udall, who became the second wife of David K. Udall in 1882. Her birthday book provides an overview of her life, while her 1882–86 journal, including excerpts of her correspondence with her husband, details the early years of her marriage. The remainder of Ida's life—about a fourth of the text—is supplied by Maria Ellsworth, who is thus not only editor but also author.

Unlike Ida Hunt Udall's journal, Catharine Cottam Romney's letters, dating from 1873 through 1917, cover the entire period of her plural marriage to Miles P. Romney, although not evenly. Because most of the letters are addressed to her parents and siblings, the ten years Catharine lived in St. George after her marriage are treated only in brief sections provided by the editor, Jennifer Moulton Hansen. Additional brief sections fill in other gaps or provide historical background.

Ruder Clawson's memoirs are limited to the three years he spent in the Utah penitentiary. (His diaries from 1898 to 1904, also edited by Stan Larson, have recently been published.³) Clawson revised his prison memoirs several times. The editor mainly relies on the last version, typed in the 1930s, although he incorporates portions of earlier manuscripts in this published version. The descriptions of prison life—the noxious odors, the noise and confusion, the inedible food, the hungry bedbugs—are vivid. At least as compelling are the seventeen well-chosen, chaste, yet passionate letters from Clawson to his wife Lydia.

A question frequently asked about polygamy is, How happy were plural families? Catharine Romney's letters shed light on how one plural wife found happiness, or at least uncomplaining contentment. She endured many trials—unremitting hard work, dire poverty, and separation from her husband—but she persisted in looking for whatever was positive in her situation. After writing her parents from Mexico that water was scarce, that their garden had frozen, and that seven horses had been stolen, she concluded:

Truly there are many things to discourage the people here, as well as some to encourage. . . . People who have been struggling on here

for two years and over and living on faith as it were, have to continue to so live, seeing but a short distance ahead of them at a time but still I have no doubt but there will be a brighter day in the near future. (125)

Discouragements abounded, but she refused to be discouraged. Such optimism also pervades her accounts about her husband and sister-wives. Her only complaints were about separations from them. Having gone into hiding to avoid U.S. marshals in 1884, she wrote that her absence from loved ones was “a long *long* four months,” a mild complaint indeed (99). Such optimism characterized all her letters, not only to her monogamist parents, to whom she may have wanted to show the best side of her polygamous marriage, but also to siblings and close friends.

Ida Udall was not so consistently cheerful. When her husband’s first wife, Ella, resented Ida’s and David’s marriage, Ida lamented in her journal:

Oh! if she could only feel happy and reconciled, I should feel that my life was indeed a happy one. Why is it, that in carrying out the commandments of God, his children need be so sorely tried? (55)

Her greatest trial, however, stemmed not from plural marriage itself, but rather from the legal attempt to disrupt it. During her two-and-a-half-year exile while she hid from marshals, her journal was scattered with phrases like “depression of spirit” (133), “sadly depressed” (106), and “thus cruelly exiled, banished” (146). She even got angry, not at Ella, but at David when he canceled a long-anticipated visit, although she soon repented of her anger. Yet except for this brief, if notable, outburst, Ida simply described events if she could not write glowingly of her sister-wives, their children, or her husband. She praised Ella’s willingness to nurse her through a difficult illness, grieved when Ella’s daughter died, and worried that Ella worked too hard. To her husband, she wrote letters full of love and devotion. Happiness in plural marriage came by emphasizing whatever was good and overlooking—or at least quickly forgiving—the slights, the differences, and the difficulties.

The reader might well question, however, how happy Ida’s marriage was. Particularly in that portion written by the editor, Ida is depicted as lonely, overworked, and unfairly treated. Undoubtedly

Ida lived a difficult life, but the complaints about her problems came from her daughter Pauline, not from Ida. The statement, for example, that David Udall bought an organ for Ella but that Ida had to pay for her own is based solely on information from Pauline (195, 273n). Pauline is undoubtedly reliable about Ida's finances, but whether she was so intimate with the facts about Ella's finances is questionable, especially when Ella earned money at various endeavors to help support the family. Relying on Pauline's statements, the author (Pauline's daughter) also claims that after Ida's disabling strokes Ella was kind to Ida but never took personal care of her (222). Pauline's brother Don, however, wrote that Ella "graciously waited on Ida and gave much time and attention to her needs."⁴ Children's perspectives on plural marriage are important, but they are not necessarily those of the parents, or even of other children.

Beyond their insights about plural marriage, these books also provide a wealth of information on everyday life. Housing (from wagon boxes and tents to bungalows), food (mostly homegrown), and clothes ("good Salt Lake shoes are a treasure," Hansen, 86) are only a few of the topics addressed. Although neither editor puts her subject into a national context, the Udall and Romney families clearly were organized to produce rather than consume. Even with children working from a young age on the farm or in other family enterprises, neither family had the resources to buy many consumer goods. With their many children, these plural families continued to produce most of their own food and clothing, thus remaining outside the consumerism enveloping turn-of-the-century America.

These firsthand accounts may at times seem repetitious, but the frequent references to illnesses, work, and visits reveal much about the quality of these women's lives. Even without the methods Laurel Thatcher Ulrich used so skillfully to analyze Martha Ballard's diary,⁵ readers of these two books can discern that sickness was ever present, finances were ever meager, and work was never done.

Equally revealing about everyday life are Clawson's memoirs describing life in prison. In his introduction to the memoirs, Stan Larson fits the document into the genre of prison literature, although

unfortunately the publisher omitted the endnotes for that section. While Larson does not compare the Utah Territorial Prison to other late nineteenth-century prisons, he puts Clawson's memoirs into the context of other polygamists' prison experiences, using their journals to amplify a topic or give further examples. In addition, he includes lists of all prisoners from 1884 to 1895 incarcerated for LDS plural marriage and also of their most important firsthand accounts of prison life—a valuable contribution to those wanting to pursue the subject.

In many ways, Clawson's experiences represent those of other prisoners. All endured the monotonous routine, ate the same unpalatable food, wore the same striped clothing, were punished in the same sweatbox, and longed for home. Clawson's experience was unique, however, because he was the first polygamist to enter the Utah penitentiary. No friendly face greeted him with sympathy; instead, his fellow prisoners welcomed him with phrases like "get the rope" and "hang him" (42). His experience was also unusual in its length: most served less than a year, while he served more than three.

How representative Ida Udall and Catharine Romney are is more difficult to assess. Certainly, many other plural wives similarly pioneered new regions, and the broad picture of hard work and poverty sketched by Ida and Catharine was typical of life on the frontier. In terms of harmonious families, these two women were also in the majority *if* Kimball Young is right in judging that 53 percent of plural families were highly or reasonably successful.⁶ Indeed, of the combined eight wives of Romney and Udall, only one obtained a divorce (in a much larger study, 18 percent of plural wives divorced⁷) and that one divorce took place before Catharine married into the family. The Romney and Udall families, whatever their problems, were apparently more compatible than many others.

Ida and Catherine also differed from their husbands' other wives—and from all of Clawson's wives—in that they came from monogamous families (Ida's father entered polygamy after her marriage). Neither Ida nor Catherine had her parents' experience, for good or ill, to guide her. Indeed, Ida had an idealized view of plural marriage based on one journey she took with a Church leader and

his wives. What both Catharine and Ida did have when they married was romantic love for their husbands. Neither was like Mary Linton Morgan, Udall's third wife, whose marriage was brought about by Church leaders who asked Udall to marry and take care of her after her first husband's death. Nor did either suffer the stigma of being "a Poor sewing Girl" (Larson, 4) whose father was dead, as did Lydia Spencer, Ruder Clawson's second wife. Clawson's mother broke off his engagement to Lydia when he was single but apparently had no objection to her becoming his plural wife. Catharine and Ida chose to become plural wives. Most Mormon women, particularly in the 1880s, participated in plural marriage reluctantly.⁸ Indeed, some believed plural marriage was suitable only for those women who would otherwise not get married.⁹

To be sure, neither these plural wives nor this prisoner represents the average, yet their writings depict with compelling immediacy the trials—and joys—experienced by plural families during polygamy's slow and painful demise. Although these three books differ in form, each provides an important and intimate biographical study, and together they enlarge our understanding of Mormon plural marriage in the 1880s and beyond.

NOTES

¹ B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

² Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography*, 1st ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1973).

³ Stan Larson, ed., *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Ruder Clawson* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

⁴ Don Udall, "Ida Hunt Udall," in *Arizona Pioneer Mormon: David King Udall, His Story and His Family*, ed. David King Udall and Pearl Udall Nelson (Tucson, Ariz.: Arizona Silhouettes, 1959), 266.

⁵ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

⁶ Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt, 1954), 56.

⁷ Kathryn M. Daynes, "Plural Wives and the Nineteenth-Century Mormon Marriage System: Manti, Utah, 1849-1910" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1991), 251.

⁸ Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review* 10 (Summer 1956): 232, 239; see also Daynes, "Plural Wives and the Nineteenth-Century," 160-62.

⁹ Martha Cragun Cox, "Autobiography," photocopy of holograph, 1928, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 126.

Brief Notice

1 Kings to Malachi, vol. 4 of *Studies in Scripture*, edited by Kent P. Jackson (Deseret Book, 1993)

About a decade ago, a series was initiated “to point readers to the scriptures themselves.” This new volume may be the finest in the series. It contains forty-four chapters, each usually devoted to a single biblical book. LDS readers will benefit from many of the insights into the Old Testament that are presented here, especially those drawn from latter-day revelations and the Joseph Smith Translation.

The chapters are written by twenty-one contributors. Jackson wrote seven, while David Rolph Seely wrote nine. Unlike the authors of some of the earlier volumes in this series, the men and women who contributed to this book are nearly all recognized teachers and researchers in Old Testament materials and have brought linguistic, historical, and geographic insights to this work. Seely’s contribution is especially substantial. His historical notes, explanation of Hebrew words, and doctrinal insights engage the lay reader as well as the scholar, particularly in his explanation of the formulas used by the author(s) of the book of Kings.

Five chapters touch on more general themes. For example, the chapter by Catherine Thomas blends the pattern of Old Testament apostasy directly into the New Testament experience in a thought-provoking way. However, generalizations about Jewish theology are not easily formulated, since no monolithic Judaism has ever existed.

Jackson’s explanation of biblical chronology is a fine treatment of a subject that haunts biblical scholars and frustrates most readers of this ancient scripture. Jackson’s humility in acknowledging the ambiguity of dates prior to Abraham’s time is commendable, although his charts are difficult to follow in spots.

While this volume does not offer the kind of comprehensive treatment of the text that one finds in a verse-by-verse commentary, it is a commendable addition to serious LDS literature on the Old Testament. The very brevity of its chapters becomes an asset for the lay reader.

—Ann N. Madsen

Mormon Bibliography 1993

Ellen M. Copley

INTRODUCTION

The Mormon bibliography for 1993 is a selective bibliography of publications about Mormons and Mormonism. Although every attempt has been made to include all aspects of Mormonism, we have purposely excluded some types of items. For instance, newspaper articles and articles published in the official magazines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are well indexed by the Church itself and are not reiterated here. However, the individual poems, short stories, and other such works from these official magazines have been retained and are listed in the arts and literature section of the bibliography. The arts and literature section also includes every item of this kind which was written by a Mormon author. The other sections (and the critical essays in the arts and literature section) include only articles and books written with a specific Mormon focus and theme.

As do compilers of any bibliography, of course, we constantly fear not knowing of a publication and therefore leaving it out. Readers who know of publications that should have been included in this Mormon bibliography are asked to contact either Ellen Copley or Scott Duvall, Department of Special Collections and Manuscripts, 4040 HBLL, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602-6835. We will include those publications in the 1994 Mormon bibliography.

This bibliography begins with a list of abbreviations and is broadly organized into the following sections: Arts and Literature, Bibliography, Biography and Autobiography, Contemporary Issues, Doctrine and Scripture, History, and Inspiration. Within each section, the works are listed alphabetically by author.

BYU Studies 34, no. 1 (1994)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for Mormon-content periodicals and anthologies that have been analyzed by chapters.

Mormon-content Periodicals

- AMCAP* *AMCAP Journal* 19 (1993). Published by the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists for AMCAP members. Issue centers on homosexuality.
- BH* *Beehive History* 19 (1993). Published annually by the Utah State Historical Society.
- BYM* *Brigham Young Magazine* 47 (1993). Published four times a year by Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Continues *BYU Today*. Includes feature articles, news items, and columns.
- BYU Studies* *BYU Studies* 33 (1993). Quarterly publication at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Cameo* *Cameo: Latter-day Women in Profile* 1 (1993). Published monthly in Orem, Utah. Volume 1 premiered in November 1993.
- CC* *Chronicles of Courage*. Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1993. Published annually.
- Dialogue* *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (1993). Published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation, Logan, Utah.
- Digest* *Latter-day Digest* 2 (1993). Published eight times in 1993 by the Latter-Day Foundation for the Arts, Orem, Utah. Premier issue was November 1992.
- Ensign* *Ensign* 23 (1993). Published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Only poetry is included; for articles, consult the yearly indexes published by the Church or the index in the December issue.
- Exponent II* *Exponent II* 17-18 (1993). Published quarterly by Exponent II, Inc., Arlington, Massachusetts.

No official connection with the LDS Church. Issues 2-4 of volume 17 and issue 1 of volume 18 are the only 1993 issues.

Inscape

Inscape (1992). A forum for student fiction, published semiannually by the Brigham Young University English Department and College of Humanities, Provo, Utah. Only the second 1992 and the first 1993 issues were available at time of compilation.

Insight

Insight 8-9 (1993). A forum for nonfiction writing, published once each semester by the Brigham Young University Honors Program, Provo, Utah.

Insights

Insights: An Ancient Window 86-91 (1993). Published six times a year by The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.), Provo, Utah.

JBOMS

Journal of Book of Mormon Studies 2 (1993). Published twice yearly by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.), Provo, Utah.

JMH

Journal of Mormon History 19 (1993). Published semiannually by the Mormon History Association.

JWHAJ

The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal 13 (1993). Published annually by the Association, Lamoni, Iowa. Deals with Reorganized Latter Day Saint history.

MBN

The Mormon Bibliographic Newsletter 2 (1993). Published four times per volume by Orrin Schwab-Books, Logan, Utah. Two issues published in 1993, final issue published in 1994 as volume 2, number 4. Short articles, as well as early Mormon bibliographic citations.

MHAN

The Mormon History Association Newsletter nos. 87-90 (1993). Published quarterly by the Mormon History Association.

Nauvoo Journal

Nauvoo Journal 5 (1993). Published biannually by the Early Mormon Research Institute, Hyrum, Utah.

- New Era* 23 (1993). Official monthly publication for youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Only poetry and short stories are included; for articles, consult the yearly indexes published by the Church or the index in the December issue.
- New Perspectives* 10 (1993). Published semiannually by Ricks College, Rexburg, Idaho. [The first 1993 issue was not available at time of publication]
- RV* 87-92 (1993). Published six times per year by Cumorah Books, Independence, Missouri. No official connection with the RLDS Church. Most articles are reprints from the *Saints' Herald*. Included in this bibliography are only articles of a historical nature pertaining to the period of time before the separation of the RLDS and LDS churches.
- Saints' Herald* 140 (1993). The monthly family magazine published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with headquarters in the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.
- Sunstone* 16 (1993). Four issues published in 1993 by the Sunstone Foundation, Salt Lake City. Although volume 16 spans parts of 1992-94, this bibliography lists only the 1993 issues.
- This People* 14 (1993). Published quarterly by Utah Alliance Publishing Inc., Salt Lake City. Contains feature articles and columns exploring LDS issues and personalities.
- UHQ* 61 (1993). Published quarterly by the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
- Witness* nos. 80-83 (1993). Published quarterly by the Foundation for Research on Ancient America, Independence, Missouri.
- WRI* 2 (1993). A semiannual Mormon literary journal dedicated

to creative writing which in some way explores the Mormon culture. Published in Orem, Utah.

ZA *Zion's Advocate* 70 (1993). Published monthly. The official publication of the Church of Christ, with headquarters on the Temple Lot, Independence, Missouri.

ZR *Zarahemla Record* nos. 65-70 (1993). Published bimonthly by the Zarahemla Research Foundation, Independence, Missouri. Number 70 not available at time of publication.

Anthologies Analyzed by Chapter

Approaches Metcalfe, Brent Lee, ed. *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993.

Confronting Horton, Anne L., B. Kent Harrison, and Barry L. Johnson, eds. *Confronting Abuse: An LDS Perspective on Understanding and Healing Emotional, Physical, Sexual, Psychological, and Spiritual Abuse*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.

DLLS *DLLS Proceedings 1993: Proceedings of the Deseret Language and Linguistics Society 1993 Symposium*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1993.

DS *Brigham Young University 1992-93 Devotional and Fireside Speeches*. Provo, Utah: University Publications, 1993.

Harmony Sessions, Gene A., and Craig J. Oberg, eds. *The Search for Harmony: Essays on Mormonism and Science*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993. [Several previously published essays by David H. Bailey; James L. Farmer, William S. Bradshaw, and F. Brent Johnson; Gary James Bergera; Dennis Rowley; Richard Sherlock; Richard Sherlock and Jeffrey E. Keller; Edward L. Kimball; Steven H. Heath; Duane E. Jeffery; Eldon J. Gardner; Morris S. Petersen; Keith E.

Norman; R. Grant Athay; Richard Pearson Smith; William Lee Stokes. Two essays published for the first time by L. Mikel Vause; Craig J. Oberg and Gene A. Sessions]

Heavens

The Heavens Are Open: The 1992 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.

JS

Black, Susan Easton, and Charles D. Tate Jr, eds. *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, the Man.* Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1993.

Mothering

Cannon, Elaine. *Mothering.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.

Restored

The Restored Gospel and Applied Christianity: Student Essays in Honor of President David O. McKay. Provo, Utah: Center for the Study of Christian Values in Literature and Religious Studies Center, 1993.

Riches

Challis, John K., and John G. Scott, eds. *Riches of Eternity: Twelve Fundamental Doctrines from the Doctrine and Covenants.* Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1993.

Sharing

Sharing the Light in the Wilderness: Favorite Talks from Especially for Youth. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.

3 Nephi 9-30

Nyman, Monte S., and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds. *The Book of Mormon: 3 Nephi 9-30, This Is My Gospel.* Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1993.

Washed

Bell, M. Shayne, ed. *Washed by a Wave of Wind: Science Fiction from the Corridor.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993.

Why

Wright, Randal A. *Why Say No When the World Says Yes: Resisting Temptation in an Immoral World, Essays on Morality.* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.

Women

Anderson, Dawn Hall, Susette Fletcher Green, and Marie Cornwall, eds. *Women and Christ:*

Living the Abundant Life: Talks Selected from the 1992 Women's Conference Sponsored by Brigham Young University and the Relief Society. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.

ARTS AND LITERATURE

Novels, children's books, short stories, plays, poetry, critical essays, personal essays, music, and articles about the arts written by or about Mormons.

Art

- Dant, Doris R., and Linda Jones Gibbs. "Harwood and Haag Paint Paris." *BYU Studies* 33 (1993): 754-56.
- Friberg, Arnold. "The Spirit of a Picture." *Digest* 2 (September 1993): 24-29. [Reprinted from *The Artist*, October 1986]
- Gibbs, Linda Jones. "Visual Narratives from the Life of Christ." *BYU Studies* 33 (1993): 468-79.
- Haltern, Hagen G. "Celestial Aspects of Art." *Digest* 2 (March 1993): 42-50. [Some material taken from his *Art Integration*. Orem, Utah: H and H Book, 1989]
- Johnston, Jerry. "Al Rounds' Watercolor Memories." *This People* 14 (Spring 1993): 40-45.
- Lawrence, Elizabeth. "An International Tribute to Women through Sculpture." *Digest* 2 (January 1993): 66-71.
- Lile, Karen E. "Lord, Touch These Stones . . ." *Digest* 2 (November 1993): 85-87.
- Nixon, William. "Art of Truth." *Digest* 2 (December 1993): 9-19.
- . "The Purpose of Art." *Digest* 2 (March 1993): 1-11.
- "An Open Letter to LDS Artists and Patrons of the Arts." *Digest* 2 (September 1993): 12-13.
- Utah: State of the Arts*. Ogden, Utah: Meridian International, 1993.

Children's Books

- Bagley, Pat. *Hana: The No-Cow Wife*. Illustrated by Will Terry. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.
- . *Where Have All the Nephites Gone?* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.
- Bagley, Val Chadwick. *I Love the Temple: A Coloring and Activity Book*. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 1993.
- Crockett, Maline C. *Stories to See and Share*. Book 3. Illustrated by Nina Grover. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.

- Crowther, Jean D. *Growing Up a Mormon*. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1993.
- Dean, Bessie. *Let's Learn of God's Love*. Rev. ed. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1993.
- . *Let's Learn the First Principles*. Rev. ed. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1993.
- Erickson, Karla. *AJ's Best Friends*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.
- Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel, and T. Jeffery Cottle. *In the Days of Joseph Smith: A Child's Story and Picture Book to Bring Church History to Life*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.
- Hughes, Dean. *Lucky in Love*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.
- . *Nutty's Ghost*. New York: Antheneum, 1993.
- Littke, Lael. *Star of the Show*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.
- Mangum, Diane Lofgren. *Carry On, Caroline*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.
- Molgard, Bette. *The Best Baptism Ever: Jake's Story*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.
- . *The Best Baptism Ever: Jenny's Story*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.
- Morgan, Cleona D. *Daniel Meets a Lion: Activity, Song, and Gospel Story*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.
- Voros, J. Frederic, Jr. *The Stones of the Temple*. Illustrated by Kathleen B. Peterson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.
- Yorgason, Margaret. *All about Birthdays*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.
- . *All about Easter*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.

Critical Essays

- Alexander, Thomas G. "A Mixed—But Generally Open—Bag: The Historical Articles in the *Encyclopedia*." *Sunstone* 16 (November 1993): 39-42.
- Barlow, Philip L. "Wanted: Mormon Theologians. No Pay, Great Benefits: The Theological Articles in the *Encyclopedia*." *Sunstone* 16 (November 1993): 32-38.
- Cracroft, Richard H. "Attuning the Authentic Mormon Voice: Stemming the Sophic Tide in LDS Literature." *Sunstone* 16 (July 1993): 51-57.
- Cutler, Christine Lynne. *Trailing Clouds of Glory: Wordsworth and the Latter-day Saint Conception of Man*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1992. [Honors thesis]
- Jorgensen, Bruce W. "To Tell and Hear Stories: Let the Stranger Say." *Sunstone* 16 (July 1993): 40-50.

- Mauss, Armand L. "Marching down the Mormon Middle: A Review of the Social Issues in the *Encyclopedia*." *Sunstone* 16 (November 1993): 43-48.
- Metcalf, Brent Lee. "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity." *Dialogue* 26 (Fall 1993): 153-84.
- Mulder, William. "Telling It Slant: Aiming for Truth in Contemporary Mormon Literature." *Dialogue* 26 (Summer 1993): 155-69.
- . "Wallace Stegner." *Sunstone* 16 (November 1993): 9-10.
- Smith, George D. "Orthodoxy and Encyclopedia: The Book of Mormon in the *Encyclopedia*." *Sunstone* 16 (November 1993): 48-53.
- Zimmerman, David Dean. *The Mormon View of Milton's God*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1993. [Honors thesis]

Drama

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