

# Partaking of the Fruit of Ecological Wisdom: A Reading of Genesis 2–3 Applied to Environmental Education in Zion

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## Partaking of ecological wisdom: A soul-enlarging transformation

Genesis 2–3 can be interpreted as a narrative about the process of human individuals gaining ecological awareness and commitment. In a crash course on botany, zoology, gardening, and other topics, Adam and Eve sit at the feet of the Creator of the earth; among other roles, the Lord serves as an environmental educator. In Eden, Eve and Adam begin to gain ecological competence, or the personal feelings of care and knowledge needed to sustain the natural systems that provide for life. Greater responsibility for creation comes as they seek and partake of wisdom, or the fruit of knowledge. The choice to taste the fruit bears special significance in an ecologically oriented reading; it can be understood as a demonstration of desire to become faithful and wise stewards of creation. Willingness matures into commitment as they make covenants with God and leave the garden to cultivate life outside it. As I reread Adam and Eve's experiences, I will argue that the pursuit of ecological wisdom is an important reason why the fall can be understood to be a soul-enlarging transformation for humanity.

## Creator and creation as partakers of embodied knowledge

In Genesis 2–3 the Lord appears as an intimate, hands-on cultivator, partaker, and applier of knowledge in a physical world. He is a being with such rich understanding of anatomy and biological matter that he forms bodies with his hands like a potter and surgeon at once. He observes the opportune moment to create a living human soul, watching water flowing out of the ground onto the surface of the soil (Genesis 2:6). To him the dust covering the earth is a rich and valuable medium worth careful attention. He bends down and labors in it, gathering and generating form, color, function, and minute details. The Lord relates to earth as a caring, focused worker. He appears as someone who desires and needs to not only apply knowledge about how living souls work, but also create beings who can, like him, relate meaningfully in a physical world.

The Lord's creation of Adam marks humanity's utter reliance on the earth. Once formed, organic matter and water will cycle through his body continually to sustain life. The Lord brings in a last essential element, pushing his own breath into Adam's lungs with his mouth (Genesis 2:7). Respiration symbolizes another site of constant exchange between living souls and the earth's physical matter. This sharing of breath is also a marker of Adam's dependence on the Lord's voice and of other human needs that are to be met by the power of speech. While this breath of life is often explained using a body-soul approach that is dualistic, there is no need for such a distinction. Embodied lips, ears, and vibrating air particles are the workings of speech and breathing. The breath of life enlivens spirit *and* body, creating unified souls.

After Adam's creation, it would seem the two beings stand on a bare mud earth. The Lord has seen to it that there should be no rain or cultivated plant life until a human being is on the earth to till the ground (Genesis 2:5). Adam is to labor and care for creation in a way comparable to the Lord's own efforts. Like God, Adam will penetrate the ground with his hands, sowing and nurturing life. Adam's early creation grants him the privilege of witnessing the unfolding of life on earth. Just after Adam's body is formed, "the Lord God planted a garden" eastward on earth, in Eden (Genesis 2:8). With the slowness and simplicity of hand-sown seeds, mud, and sunlight, the Lord models his work of creating life.

Perhaps the cultivation of the garden, although hardly mentioned in the text at hand, should nevertheless be considered the primal and most intimate revelation of creation. The Lord introduces himself to Adam—as he later will to Moses, Enoch, and others—first and foremost as a creator and sustainer of natural and human life. Even baring soiled hands, the Lord shares some measure of his light and intelligence with Adam. When the Lord revealed himself to Moses, he showed him every soul on earth and even every “particle” of matter on the earth (Moses 1:27–28). The Lord explained that only through seeing all of these things could Moses witness his glory (Moses 1:4–5). The Lord is so enmeshed in his fields of labor that no words or image of self could adequately reveal him.<sup>1</sup>

Creation is like an extension of his soul beyond the boundaries of the body, or like a garment that clothes him with glory and light.

Adam’s soul, like the Lord’s, is to extend into the created world. Adam Miller recently focused on a concept expressed in George Handley’s book *Home Waters* as follows: “If the body is like a river, the soul is a watershed.”<sup>2</sup> Human souls, or spirits and bodies woven and growing together, are highly “porous” in relation to nature and each other. In flux biologically, culturally, and in countless other ways, human beings receive a constant flow of nourishment and detriment from the physical world. We are grown by interactions with all kinds of entities present and past. In turn, we carve out and sustain others. We are each rivers fed and feeding into the courses of other bodies of water.<sup>3</sup>

In that our souls are like watersheds, human beings are like the Lord. His creations are a vast watershed even more permeable and expansive than ours—a multitude of diverse sites of interchange. Each flows in and out of his thoughts, desires, and sensations. Eden could be considered a “watershed” prepared for Adam. Not only is there food to sustain his body, but also all kinds of creations to “enliven the soul” (D&C 59:19). George Handley borrows the term *home waters* from fly fishing to explain how personal relationships with natural places feed us in a variety of ways. Home waters quench the soul’s thirst for sensation, joy, strength, and healing. They sustain capacities to feel emotion, to create meanings, and to engage and produce art. They replenish spiritual sensitivity.

### Recompensing creation by sustaining and cultivating life

Having a watershed, however, requires much of us, as it did of Adam. Drinking from the springs and catching the fish of our home waters require living in committed relationships with places and their ecologies. Nature and its life-sustaining systems, Handley explains, can function only through balanced exchanges, or “recompenses.” Consequences, returns, and demands perpetually result from what is given and taken. We must sow in order to reap, and we will eat and drink of the same quality of recompenses we offer. Recompensing nature requires opening our eyes and consciously seeking greater knowledge of places, fishing for whatever unseen catches may pull our lines and prove to be important discoveries concerning the needs and unique features of our “home waters.”

The Lord sets the quintessential example of giving and receiving life-sustaining recompenses. His competence to create and support life is cultivated by intimate and thorough knowledge. “The Lord *by wisdom* hath founded the earth; *by understanding* hath he established the heavens” (Proverbs 3:19–20, emphasis added). He tells Moses that “all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine, and I know them all” (Moses 1:35). His eyes can pierce and his hands can hold all his workmanship (Moses 7:36). It seems consistent with the spirit of Christ’s teachings to neglect and exclude no one and to assert no unrighteous power in governing human and nonhuman life (Matthew 5:39–44). The falling of a sparrow is not excluded from his mindfulness, much less a human being who falters (Matthew 10:29). As a creator of earth as a new world in Genesis 2, the Lord is a pioneer and planter of new

knowledge, or an expander of the geographical bounds of his “watershed.” Creation is to him like a seedbed of intelligence, glory, and knowledge (D&C 93:36; Moses 1:39).

From the beginning of Adam’s time in Eden, his tasks on earth are knowledge oriented and ecological. We read that Adam is “put” in the garden “to dress it and to keep it” in the same short breath (Genesis 2:15). Thus, responsibility to learn about and sustain natural entities comes with entry to the garden, even before the increased responsibilities that will come after partaking of the fruit. Adam is not a mindless physical laborer as he puts his back into tilling and likely many of the other demanding and dirty jobs of gardening. He must also watch and learn in order to maintain the well-being of other living, developing creations; this is the “keeping” part of his stewardship. Only through purposeful observation can he learn to attend to the particular needs of his habitat and the plants and creatures within it. After Adam witnesses the creation of animals, the Lord asks him to choose suitable names, an assignment requiring both reason and imagination (Genesis 2:19). Adam’s practice must have been to him as challenging as that of any beginning bird-watcher, botanical artist, or zookeeper. His is the work of gaining ecological literacy, the personal, hands-on care and skill to sustain systems of life. To Adam personally, the Lord has demonstrated such skills in sowing and nurturing the garden and its animals. Adam is a partaker of knowledge concerning many other beings in his home waters.

### The knowledge paradox surrounding the tree of knowledge

Yet God warns Adam that the richest source of knowledge in Eden, a fruit-bearing tree, is dangerous. Adam is now faced with a paradox: living with the Lord within the garden requires him to gain and apply knowledge, but the attainment of knowledge will separate him from God. Another facet of this contradictory relationship with knowledge is that although Adam and Eve are intended to find joy in the garden while learning to care for each other and the creations there, love and joy are fed by knowledge. We cannot properly care for or enjoy what we do not know. Only by forsaking life in Eden could Adam begin to pursue its full enjoyment and responsibilities. Perhaps the basic reason behind the paradox is that the process of gaining knowledge necessitates an indefinite state of partial knowledge. Partial knowledge is partial darkness. In this condition individuals become accountable while, at the same time, errors and unwitting violence offensive to God and harmful to life become inevitable.

Although he warns against the dangers of the tree, the Lord is nevertheless its planter and keeper. Perhaps the tree is present, in part, because he eats of it himself. Variations of this tree may spring up wherever he sets foot. Considering his prohibition to Adam, it is as if the fruit ripens in Eden prematurely, before an intended time when the Lord might have guided or commanded Adam to taste it.

### Knowledge as fruit

How does plucking and eating fruit resemble learning experiences? First, fruit and knowledge are often both deliberately sought and chosen. We single out particular fruits in a way that’s not possible when inhaling air or drinking water from a flowing source. The pursuit of knowledge, at least some kinds, is comparable to seeking a vibrant and enticing object like fruit.

Second, fruit and knowledge often involve comparing tastes and ripeness. We learn to judge quality—to tell which sources of knowledge are metaphorically bruised, pest-ridden, or so overripe they should be cast away. We choose our branches of study as a matter of taste and personal preference, while also rejecting what is unappealing or out-of-date.

Third, knowledge is partaken of multiple times and preserved. Knowledge, like food, nourishes and needs to be continually replenished. One harvest will lead to the plucking, consuming, and storing of other harvests. Knowledge can be processed in a variety of ways for preservation, a skill learned through attentive trial and error.

If uncared for and unused, knowledge will rot and mold; seasons bear time-sensitive fruits. Even when we *do* succeed at storing up knowledge, we are never finished with this task; we will labor with our fruit trees as they bear again.

Fourth, fruit contains seeds. We cannot foresee what may grow and where once we spit out or digest them. One taste of knowledge might be the beginning of generations of other trees that sustain us and our communities. We can even attempt to create new cross-pollinated varieties. We plant and breed seeds of trees we particularly love, like preparing resources and spaces for future learning. We know trees by their fruits (Matthew 7:20). To taste and judge a fruit is to judge a tree and to create a relationship with that species. We decide whether to plant and fertilize, ignore, or destroy trees' respective seeds and saplings. We cast away bad branches, striving to cultivate the variety of fruits we prefer and desire. As with fruits, the process of cultivating knowledge is always beyond the horizons of our mastery; we cannot force knowledge to bear truths or evidence according to our will.

Fifth, we cannot know the taste of fruit or its effects on our bodies until we consume. Partaking entails risk. Through experience, we grow leery of the worms in apples and the markings of toxic forest berries. Some fruits are indeed poisonous enough to cause death. The pursuit of knowledge, too, sometimes carries personal moral dangers that we learn to guard against.

Last, like gathering and eating food, the cultivation and partaking of knowledge engages our faculties holistically—eyes, noses, thoughts and desires, hands, stomachs, and other hidden workings of our bodies and spirits all move in this process. It is a fully embodied and mindful event of perceiving, judging, partaking, and transforming. Knowledge is internalized in us and becomes a source of energy and action. For good or bad, its flesh becomes our flesh. Knowledge fuels the actions we take in the physical world. Knowledge nourishes the fruits, or the works that our lives bear up, whether unto life or death (Helaman 14:31).

### Partaking of the fruit of ecological wisdom

Every fruit in the garden could be said to impart some form of knowledge; every embodied event and action offers fragments of intelligence about the workings of creation. The physical world satisfies hunger for understanding. Adam keeps the prohibition concerning the tree of knowledge for a time. After Eve is created in the garden, he continues to labor there, and he shares with her the warning given to him from God. This seems apparent when Eve shares a slightly altered version of the prohibition with the serpent: Adam and Eve must not even touch the tree's fruit, lest they suffer death (Genesis 3:3). Eve senses that knowledge is indispensable to embodiment; even just to touch something is enough to gain some understanding of it and form a consequential relationship. Tasting might not even be necessary in order to be influenced by this tree. Adam and Eve initially refrain from partaking of the tree's fruit, but haven't they been gaining knowledge of the physical world all along as they worked in the garden? As they labor and watch, they have been recompensed with the beginnings of understanding. Eve and Adam have entered states of partial knowledge even before they partake of the forbidden fruit.

If, as I suggest, all fruits in Eden impart knowledge, what is special about the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil? Assuming Eve already has access to other flavorful varieties of knowledge, what motivates her to taste this particular fruit? Her motivation seems not so much the temptations of Satan as what she sees by closely observing the properties in the fruit. Drawing near the tree, she judges that the fruit is good for food, beautiful, and capable of imparting wisdom (Genesis 3:6). This last property, wisdom, distinguishes the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil from all else the garden provides.

Wisdom is a qualitatively distinct form of knowledge. If knowledge is the tree of embodied human experience, wisdom is its crowning and sweetest fruit. Wisdom happens when knowledge-imparting experiences grow into a

capacity to exercise moral judgment. Wisdom is knowledge applied to the actions that sustain life. It is possible to partake of knowledge without seeking and partaking of wisdom, just as it was possible to hold many other kinds of fruit in Eden without touching the tree of knowledge of good and evil or its fruit.

Eve's desire for wisdom is pertinent to the ecological knowledge Adam and Eve are gaining in the garden. How might we define ecological wisdom? Wisdom in relation to nature involves something beyond understanding how the physical world works and what it needs, even in great detail. Ecological wisdom involves the ripening and outgrowth of knowledge of the natural world into commitment and love. It is faithful stewardship and charity offered to creation and all living things. Even before partaking of the fruit, it appears knowledge has already begun to enlarge Adam and Eve's capacities to feel invested in other souls and entities of creation. Through knowing, they are empowered to love. Adam's experience naming the animals, for example, allows him to gain familiarity with and affection toward God's creations.

Eve also must have learned to love the living things and beauties in Eden. I imagine Eve partaking of the fruit hoping for greater joy, skill, and understanding in her efforts to cultivate life on earth as both a parent and a steward. We should not separate her desire for motherhood from ecological stewardship. To raise a family is to establish an interdependent relationship with the physical world. Parenthood necessitates becoming more responsible for the maintenance and future well-being of natural systems and the water, air, plants, and relationships that allow human bodies to survive with health.

Perhaps Eve consciously aspires to become like God and to walk in the confidence, light, and intelligence he walks in as both Father and Creator. Hunger for wisdom and sheer curiosity outweigh impending dangers in her judgment. She is not certain death will come, how the fruit will taste, or what its effect on her body will be.

Her response to tasting the fruit is significant. Wisdom is not only good for food but also unusually delicious. There is no doubt that she will hunger for it again or that Adam will also enjoy it. She wants wisdom as a staple in their diet. We often imagine the partaking as one small juicy bite for each person, but perhaps they ate several fruits apiece and picked a bushel. The fruit is like an alternative version of the "fruit tree of life." It nourishes capacities to perceive, feel, and know. It is a staff of life. As Eve offers the fruit to Adam, I imagine him gauging his levels of commitment to her and feeling conflicted. Refraining from the fruit was easy when he was alone and less experienced, but now that he has formed interdependent relationships with Eve and other living beings in the garden, he is shaken. He trusts Eve's judgment and taste and allows her to prick his appetite. Adam and Eve have developed some degree of loyalty; he is more willing to partake knowing that Eve has tasted and may be separated from him.

Choosing the fruit demonstrates a comparable oneness with and loyalty to creation. It is as if by eating the fruit of knowledge, Eve and Adam accept and embrace earth and their embodied life for all it is and all it offers—every recompense both gifted and required, every ray of knowledge, emotion, and sensation.

### Sweet, bitter, and soul-enlarging effects of the fruit

However, besides the profound sweetness of eating, other initial effects of the fruit are bitter. Ignorance distinguished Adam and Eve from God even before partaking. But now they become more keenly aware that they have long been ignorant and are still partially ignorant. What they see first is what is most immediate and personal—their own nakedness. They grow fearful of the gaps that differentiate them from the glory and wisdom that clothes the Lord. Both parties draw veils: Adam and Eve in hiding and attempting to clothe themselves with fig leaves, and the Lord in barring them from the tree of life and Eden (Genesis 3:7–8, 23–24). Perhaps the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a fig tree. This would enhance the potency of these leaves as a symbol of

knowledge and make the choice of Adam and Eve to independently partake of the tree obvious as they stand before the Lord.

Distance from the Lord is unpleasant, but it also makes visible new possible paths toward progression. The knowledge gap was always there, but now Adam and Eve are empowered to deliberately address it. Unexpectedly, it is sometimes our very awareness of a veil between us and the Lord that makes it possible for us to receive the Lord's grace and draw closer to his presence. Veils invite us to see and confess our weakness before God, and this prepares us to receive his counsel and strength.<sup>4</sup>

Adam and Eve receive strength in this moment of weakness by speaking with the Lord. God's words enlarge their willingness to become faithful and wise stewards into full accountability and commitment before him. God imparts a bitter and sweet helping of wisdom concerning what is to come on earth. Adam and Eve are promised the joys and sorrows of marriage, parenthood, hard work, growing food, creating homes, facing chaos in the natural world, and death. Having digested the seeds of wisdom, they are now free to plant and nurture new sources of this substance with the Lord's assistance from afar. In order to plant their own gardens, they return to the muddy grounds where God created Adam. This is a much greater trust than Eden; the potential bounds of home and sources of knowledge expand from one section of the river flowing through a garden to the river's sources, its four branches, and all distributaries. Even more of the knowledge of God can be obtained here than in Eden if they will actively seek it. God's fruit of wisdom proves to be the substance of mortal life. Opposition imparts wisdom and resilience against the deceptions of Satan (Genesis 3:15–19). Through faithful stewardship and endurance, they may be recompensed with knowledge in every harsh and mild season on earth. The Lord dresses them with knowledge and wisdom much as he clothes them with apparel that compensates for the limitations of their fig leaf aprons (Genesis 3:21).

### Parting veils of ignorance as stewards

Veils of human ignorance about how to care for creation can be parted through the humble pursuit of ecological wisdom. Approaching such barriers is pertinent to building communities in the Lord's way. As we do so, we can be filled with a greater measure of the Lord's knowledge and compassion.

In the midst of establishing Zion, the prophet Enoch experienced two soul-enlarging visions that revealed human evil and its impact on creation. The Lord weeps while witnessing the violence with Enoch. He explains that he gives his children knowledge and agency so that they might love and care for others; nevertheless, many of his children choose hatred (Moses 7:32–33). Enoch witnesses how "all the workmanship of [God's] hands" grieve with God. Even the soul of the earth itself suffers. All is sentient. Enoch is saturated with charity for all forms of life, human and nonhuman. Enoch "wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook" (Moses 7:41). He recognizes the extent of his entanglement in the events in the vision. These are his relatives, he indicates (Moses 6:43). This burdened earth is his home, even the lifeblood of Zion.

Enoch's bitter knowledge is a soul-gorging fountain of information, sensation, and feeling. He despairs, but then the Lord commands him to rejoice as he shows him the ministry of Jesus Christ. In the process of witnessing Christ's atonement, Enoch responds with joy, crying, "The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world; and through faith, I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me" (Moses 7:47). Facing the minutiae and totality of evil on earth fills him with more complete knowledge of the expansiveness of Christ's suffering and redemptive powers. Enoch comes to know that Zion must aspire to live and labor in ways that rise above all forms of violence. He sees that it is only through Christ's great recompense

that humanity can become wise. Enoch's heart expands in charity toward the infinity and eternity of God's creations.

We can be strengthened by Enoch's example of resisting any temptation to block the flow of knowledge of the physical world. Ignorance would have stunted his mission to clothe and beautify Zion. Today, our souls are fed by watersheds that are global, opaque, and confusing. It is tempting to let capacities to observe relationships in the physical world atrophy. Yet such neglect can impede the expansion, charity, and joy of our souls. If we cultivate self-image rather than knowledge and charity, we starve ourselves of sustenance and invite harmful recompenses of any unwitting violence.<sup>5</sup> Self-imposed veils<sup>6</sup> of ecological ignorance cannot block the ebb and flow of the surging world that shapes us. We, like Enoch, are free to deliberately choose to seek to part such veils and let our hearts expand with charity through knowledge.

### Stewardship: Bitter cup or sweet fruit?

Too often environmental stewardship has been pushed aside like an undesirable or bitter cup in Latter-day Saint families. In Utah Valley, for example, a lack of informed and committed stewardship has led communities to neglect and harm life-sustaining resources. Receding, contaminated, and overused freshwater supplies call into question the sustainability of communities in the valley.<sup>7</sup> Air pollution continues to worsen, adversely affecting quality of life and health for all.<sup>8</sup> In relation to such crises, we fail to appreciate two things about bitter cups: first, they are usually unavoidable; and second, as for Enoch, such cups are soul-enlarging experiences. We forget that "to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet" (Proverbs 27:7).

Instead of being a bitter cup, could environmental education and stewardship become something more like partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge? Through closer study, could we as communities in Zion discern that it is "good for food," "pleasant to our eyes," and "desirable to make us wise"? (compare Genesis 3:6). If we pay greater attention to the fruits of ecological wisdom and how they might draw us and future generations closer to the Lord, might we discover that our souls are famished for this substance? Committed stewardship is a more abundant source of sustenance for human souls than we have imagined. This neglected field in Zion holds the promise of veil-parting experiences, greater knowledge of God, and greater charity for us and our children.

Greater knowledge and commitment as stewards might help us have a greater appreciation of the Lord's role as a creator and sustainer of life, even though such knowledge can bring pain and difficulties. As we see in Enoch's vision, sustaining the Lord's creations doesn't bring only peace and joy to the Lord. Enoch witnesses how the Lord doesn't shield himself from a full knowledge of his creation or the emotions that come with these relationships. The Lord's way of life is not centered on efficiency, convenience, or comfort. Perhaps he frequently partakes of bitter gushes of the knowledge of violence that he shared with Enoch, while yet being recompensed by fruits that affirm his consistent preference for life and light. So it can be for us as builders of Zion today. Our souls can be enlivened even in the midst of clouds of darkness and the indifference of natural forces. Even negative consequences we reap from others' past mistakes can lead to increased compassion and understanding.<sup>9</sup>

### Environmental education in Zion

Teaching private practices of recycling and decreased consumption is not enough to provide children with spiritual hope and competence as future stewards. Children need our help in preparing to address environmental challenges with knowledge and skill on personal and community levels.<sup>10</sup> Leaders and parents in Zion will need to enrich and augment environmental education for youth. Like Adam and Eve, children need guides who are wiser and more prepared than they are. With our help, they can partake of soul-enlarging learning experiences at school, as they serve the greater public society, and as they labor in Zion.

Latter-day Saint communities already cultivate many of the essential ingredients of environmental education among youth, including the application of problem-solving skills in local communities and empathetic imagination. There are two specific practices we have not yet adopted, however, that are essential if we are to become wise and informed mentors of children as environmental stewards: (1) the active, curious, and joyful pursuit of ecological understanding; and (2) the application of charity and empathy to environmental problems, toward both human and nonhuman life. Personal empathy for natural life and personal understanding of how ecosystems sustain life form the backbone of moral competence in caring for the natural world.<sup>11</sup> Paired with service, sacrifice, and leadership skills, greater spiritual and intellectual mindfulness of the workings of life and ecology is needed. Deliberately cultivating these values can empower us and future generations to become more assertive, informed, and spiritually minded stewards of creation in every level of society we labor in.

As we seek to become more attentive to the natural world, we will each see that we are not yet fully clothed with as much knowledge or charity as we need. While such realizations are never comfortable, we should celebrate our efforts to learn. Adults can find great joy in experiencing childlike curiosity and wonder about natural systems *with* children.<sup>12</sup>

Humble openness to new perspectives is key to becoming true stewards and mentors. Throughout *Home Waters*, George Handley describes how learning to care for natural habitats requires deliberate “receptivity.” We should willingly seek to expose our lives to whatever may prove relevant to sustaining the unique gifts of our natural water-sheds. This pursuit is akin to fishing. We cannot foresee what particular encounters, stories, or observations may suddenly pull our lines and prove provident. Family histories, for example, may strengthen our capacities and commitments as stewards. Yet stories outside our personal heritages also play crucial roles in shattering complacency and false assumptions. In order to effectively care for the land, scientific understanding and practical skill should also be sought and utilized. We should know the names and needs of species sustained by local natural systems and how human actions affect these habitats.<sup>13</sup> Simple changes in our minds and hearts can make what was imperceptible visible and tangible. Gaining knowledge, we increase in our competence to “prepare every needful thing” (D&C 109:8) to fulfill our purpose to enjoy life on earth with gratitude and integrity.

As we taste the fruits of ecological wisdom, we will perceive the unique ways these fruits have developed and sweetened in our dispensation. Although being enmeshed in global communities burdens us heavily as stewards, it also expands the watersheds that sustain our souls. To relate to more of the Lord’s beloved creations with open eyes, ears, and hands is to witness and receive more of his glory (Moses 1:5). Our yoke can be made easy (Matthew 11:30); sweet and joyful recompenses will come if we take up this fruit with charity and the desire to become more like the Lord. Cultivating “faithful and wise” stewardship among ourselves and our youth may empower them to become vital beacons of hope and exemplars of good stewardship in generations to come (Luke 12:42–43).

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## NOTES

1. James E. Faulconer, “Self-Image, Self-Love, and Salvation,” *Latterday Digest* (1993), [http://jamesfaulconer.byu.edu/papers/self\\_image.pdf](http://jamesfaulconer.byu.edu/papers/self_image.pdf).



2. Adam S. Miller, *Rube Goldberg Machines: Essays in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), 50.
3. George B. Handley, *Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2012), xvii; Miller, *Rube Goldberg Machines*, 101–102.
4. Miller, *Rube Goldberg Machines*, 101–102.
5. Handley, *Home Waters*, xii.
6. Miller, *Rube Goldberg Machines*, 105.
7. Handley, *Home Waters*, 14–16.
8. Handley, *Home Waters*, 89.
9. See Louise Chawla and Debra Flanders Cushing, “Education for Strategic Environmental Behavior,” *Environmental Education Research* 13/4 (2007): 437–52.
10. Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett, and Zenobia Barlow, *Ecoliterate: How Educators Can Cultivate Emotional, Social, and Ecological Intelligence* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 7.
11. Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008).
12. Handley, *Home Waters*.