



SOCIALITY:  
PLURALISM, CONFLICT, AND LOVE IN THE  
VISION OF JOSEPH SMITH, JR.

CHARLES RANDALL PAUL  
FOUNDATION FOR RELIGIOUS DIPLOMACY

*We shall see [the Savior] is a man like ourselves. And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy.*

—D&C 130:1–2 (*emphasis added*)

*I say unto you be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.*

—D&C 38:27

*This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

—Matthew 13: 7

In this essay I expand on a broad thesis derived from my reading of the words and revelations of Joseph Smith that eternal life for God and other everlasting souls is intentionally social in form. Sociality allows for infinite possibilities of collaborations and interpretations in procreative response to different desires. I base this thesis on five basic ideas I find in Joseph Smith that I assert here but do not argue explicitly for:

1. God has never been alone, nor have you or I. Existence is interpersonal experience.
2. We as human beings desire to emulate without envying our God who enjoys the social experiences of love. Love means to desire and act for the good of another, and that good is open to negotiation between those who love.
3. Love requires a social collaboration of different desires that create unique and enlivening relationships from a mixture of embracing and resisting each other's influence. This is so in grand councils, in friendships, and in marriages.
4. Unity or oneness is a social experience associated with love that is not attained through becoming identical, but rather through collaborative interaction of differences. *Zion* is a *social atonement* achieved by patient love in mutual persuasion among an infinite

numbers of souls with different desires worlds without end. Contests over “the best way” to collaborate in joy-yielding projects make eternal life interesting.<sup>1</sup>

5. The true church exists when its members love and edify each other socially, and apostasy occurs when members envy and despise each other—*not* because they disagree about their doctrinal interpretations. We lose any priesthood authority we suppose we have via ordination whenever we try to force others to follow our ways instead of their own conscience or heart.

These five ideas serve as slats in a platform undergirding my thesis that the Mormon grand narrative is one of social salvation—the establishment of Zion, a heavenly place, where love between diverse immortal inhabitants brings them to unite in creative undertakings that make their eternal lives joyous and interesting expansions, worlds without end. In contrast, the opposite of this celestial sociality is isolated damnation, a totalitarian unity that shrinks from the influential desires of others—away from the sociality of Zion toward lonely darkness. Given this understanding, one of my main arguments is that apostasy from the true church of God and the establishment of Zion is primarily a “social disease” in which acrimonious contention has led those who profess a love of God to remove their hearts far from him. Ecclesiastical failure due to confusion over doctrines, decrease in charismatic gifts and loss of formal keys of authority is merely a secondary, and derivative, result of apostasy. God, through unequivocal revelation or vision to every person could clear up these secondary problems in an instant, but not even God can force diverse people to truly love each other.

The Reality that Matters Most:  
Eternal Interpersonal Lives, Together in Love

Joseph Smith founded a radical Judeo-Christian religious tradition whose appeal is in large part based-in its vision of the everlasting distinctiveness of immortal persons (or Gods) in freely chosen social relations. Joseph Smith’s theology is *social* theology all the way back and forward. The ultimate good life is found in everlasting togetherness with loved ones making new worlds together.<sup>2</sup> Smith aspired to eventually include an infinite number of souls as his loved ones. He lived with an unusual awareness of the eternal nature of each person in relation to the infinitely large family of God. His way of describing human happiness in eternity focuses on persons in covenant friendship, marriage, and family groups—all uncreated souls yet always interrelated under the organizing influence of God’s love and form.<sup>3</sup> This, to him, is not speculative theology. Said he: “By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it.”<sup>4</sup>

For Joseph Smith, God is an eternal person in the eternal company of others who are less full of light and truth but are still not unlike him. The grand narratives of Mormonism show that God is worship-worthy because he loves and leads eternal persons toward more joyful social interactions—in both quantity and quality. While divine light or intelligence pervades space and influences all existing things, God’s most interesting work is expanding his friends and family. The unity of heaven is not in becoming ontologically one being, but one in interpersonal love, the mutual loyalty and affection of separate persons who edify each other through negotiated collaborations of their different desires. Note that collaborating in a society in which there is no scarcity of material resources entails a choice to absorb others’ unique creative influences, a choice for originality through more interpersonal pro-creativity not based in any *lack* of love or power.<sup>5</sup> Joseph Smith’s thought leads to broadening the creative scope and intensifying the enjoyment of love between exalted souls on an infinite scale that keeps eternal life forever original and interesting. The very organization of the Godhead, the singular atonement of Christ, and the organization of the earth were instrumental to expanding our capacity and desire for joyful interpersonal experiences—for loving sociality.

Enthroned in yonder heavens is the Man of Holiness, said Joseph, but we cannot imagine him just sitting still up there alone very long. Following the divine example, Joseph Smith says his own good work is to weld all humanity (past and future) into one affectionate family society. This society would allow for radical originality and continuous fecundity as infinite numbers of divine persons engaged in mutual persuasion and coming to collaborative social orders and common projects. Crucial to eternal social life is pluralism and originality that allows for a fusion of new desires that will make eternal relations infinitely interesting. Social welding, or sealing of souls in marriages family relations, is not a fusion or union that ends particularity. It is a fusion that expands particularity forever.

### Contention, Not Doctrinal Disagreements, Causes Apostasy

Joseph Smith did not directly address the topic of religious pluralism or conflicts between worldviews in a systematic way. However, the conflicts that plagued him and led to his early death derived from religious claims and social practices that were beyond acceptable limits of religious diversity in the communities where his people had enthusiastically intruded.<sup>6</sup> While it is true that near the end of his life Joseph Smith emphasized liberty of conscience and largesse with respect to other religions, it was not always so. For many years, he had told other Christians that their priesthoods were powerless because their words were holy while their hearts were not. As a result, he had to overcome deep resentments if he wanted sympathy from those he labeled fissiparous Christian apostates, hence his later emphases might be viewed in part as a strategy to obtain reciprocal respect from his critical religious adversaries.<sup>7</sup> But I don’t believe this tells the full story.

Joseph's respect for the religious liberty of others was *not* just a self-protective strategy for him and the beleaguered Saints. It was fundamental to his conception of God as the loving parent of humanity who desired to keep his family together in loyalty despite their multiple differences.

The venerable religious historian Richard Hughes compared Roger Williams and Joseph Smith with respect to their beliefs in an exclusive true church and liberty of conscience:

Williams found the church of his day a corrupt abomination and a gross departure from the primitive model precisely because it compelled and coerced the consciences of men and women. For Williams, therefore, the premise of religious freedom was essential to recovery of the apostolic church. Put another way, true religion, for Williams, was religion born of persuasion, not of coercion. Ironically, however, it was the prevalence of persuasion in the competitive free market of souls that convinced Joseph Smith and a host of other seekers in the new American nation that the true church had disappeared.”<sup>8</sup>

I disagree with Hughes's assessment with regard to Joseph Smith, who, like Williams, also exhibited a strong commitment to changing hearts through persuasion not coercion. For Smith it was the acrimoniousness of the contention, not the contestation itself, that marked the loss of true Christian authority.

Joseph initially took to his knees in the sacred grove out of a desire for personal forgiveness and for direction in joining a church. But there was also a third motive: He was so troubled by the contentious ill will between Christians that he wanted to find a way to stop it. Look carefully at his explanation of the problem he witnessed between religious groups:

Notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion . . . when the converts began to file off . . . it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued—priest contending against priest, convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions. . . in the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinion I often asked myself, What is to be done? (Joseph Smith—History 1:6–10)

He reports that when he finally ventured to ask God in prayer,

I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light which of all the sects was right (for at this time *it had never entered my heart* that all

were wrong) . . . I was answered [by Christ] that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; . . . that their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, that they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.”

Joseph continues that upon telling his story to ministers, he was told it was “all of the devil” and he was persecuted bitterly with great contempt and reviling by “those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored *in a proper and affectionate manner* to have reclaimed me” (Joseph Smith—History 1:6, 19, 21, 23, 28, *my emphases*). Joseph Smith’s tendency to show good will to other religions was influenced by his early observation of bad will among Christians. The sure sign of the true and living church was not so much in its doctrinal purity as in the way its members would treat people who disagreed with and opposed them.

In this third desire, one might be tempted to say that as Smith entered the grove, he was not so much seeking to know which church was “right,” so much as which one had the true spirit of affectionate love among its members and leaders and showed the same for its opponents. As Hughes notes elsewhere, the Saints’ restoration was one of revelation itself, not the correct form of organization.<sup>9</sup> In that same spirit Joseph Smith, might be said to have been seeking a revelation of the pure love of Christ that fills members of the true church. For Smith, the errors latent in all creeds of fallible men are excusable, but not the angry contentiousness over them. True Christians should love and respect their brothers and sisters who disagree with them about the truth. Joseph’s question, “What is to be done?” was an ancient one and is with us still whenever there is a deep religious disagreement that cannot be universally resolved.

Here is my midrash on how Christ might have answered Joseph’s question about the right church were they to have more time to really discuss what is important to God when considering the pluralistic sea of religions: “Joseph, join with no church because they are all corrupted by thinking that getting creedal doctrine precisely correct is more important than loving and listening to each other with kindness and remaining open to more revelation from God.<sup>10</sup> They give lip service to true faith and Christian love, for they show how they really despise each other whenever they choose to take offense at their inevitable differences of religious viewpoint. When they take pleasure and status from condemning each others’ beliefs, they deny the loving power of Godliness and reveal just how far their hearts are from me. When they act like this. I am ashamed to be called their God. I began by giving people their agency and commanded them to love each other—but when I test their hearts by allowing their religions to call each other into question, they show they are without affection and they hate their own blood. Their creeds damn them not because they are erroneous—not even a righteous seer can take the full measure of God—but because they are used as harsh weapons to combat the power of loyalty

and love that I have asked them to show for each other. No power but loving persuasion can move any heart—yet they lose patience over their different beliefs about me and despise and coerce each other.”<sup>11</sup>

Neither Jesus nor the original apostles persuaded everyone to become Christians—nor for all those who became Christians to agree with each other. Even with the disagreements, however, apostasy did not arise until the early Saints failed to be patient with each other over their strong disagreements. The center failed to hold in the early church because they got angry with each other instead of loyally holding on in kindness and love unfeigned. Indeed, Jesus, the strange Prince of Peace who came not to bring peace but a sword of difference, prompted the Jewish-Christian argument over the true religious way; but he only raised his voice and hand to denounce the disdainful hypocrisy of the orthodox, not their doctrinal differences of the people. He only raised his voice and hand to denounce the disdainful hypocrisy of the orthodox. He denounced angry contention over doctrine and had little patience with dishonest questioners; but from a young age he engaged in respectful discussions of doctrine with those who saw things differently. He even allowed Lucifer to speak without contentiously silencing him. Joseph Smith himself said it was not a sign of evil when fallible men in good faith preach false doctrine. What was evil was to throw them out for advocating their honest opinion.<sup>12</sup> God does not compel us to believe or love him. After all, according to D&C 121, the authority of God is not manifest in coercive power that creates universes at will—that would be mere technology. God’s true authority and power is granted to him only by free hearts who lovingly respond to his love without compulsory means. As a boy, Joseph saw that Christians often did not love each other when they disagreed about Christianity—and perhaps even then he may have recognized that not kindly loving ones opponents immediately spells an “Amen” to that person’s or group’s pretensions of priesthood authority. Whatever the true church was, it had to be a living church that invited the spirit of loving persuasion to help mortal members face their inevitable disagreements over eternal truth. There will be offenses as we stand for what we believe, but, said Jesus, blessed are they who do not choose to take offense.

In the Book of Mormon we read that the resurrected Christ told the Nephite people:

[T]here shall be no disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine as there have hitherto been. I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and *he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. This is not my doctrine to stir up the hearts of men with anger; but that such things should be done away.* I declare unto you my doctrine . . . that the Father commandeth all men everywhere to repent and believe in me. And whoso believeth in me and is baptized shall be saved; . . . and whoso believeth not in me and is

not baptized, shall be damned . . . [and] can in no wise enter the kingdom of God. (3 Nephi 11:28–40)

We have here a text that seems to assume that we will disagree about points of doctrine but that tells us it is the attitude of disputatious contention that betrays our devilish spirit. Jesus lays out his doctrinal first principles and ordinances for all to follow. He does not mind using words with a hard edge; however, it is clear that he abhors contention and anger over his loving intentions. One might even imagine that God has provided the extensive scriptures themselves with different voices and stories as a way of helping us recognize that there is not just one way to speak of or to God, nor any way for just a few words or ideas to contain all of him—except, perhaps, the experience of love unfeigned.

Offensive, exclusive religious claims—“Believe in Christ our way or you will be damned”—although possibly true as doctrine, actually provide a test of our true feelings as Christians. Do we take offense and harbor resentful anger when we are criticized or called to repent? Joseph Smith condemned disloyal traitors but thought the true Christians who received the love of God would pass that love on liberally. Under this view, we are members of the true and living church whenever we show we love God by persuasively engaging our opponents not railing on them in contempt. We tempt apostasy ourselves when we live the form but deny the spirit. As Smith states:

We ought always to be aware of those prejudices which sometimes strangely present themselves, and are so congenial to human nature, against our friends, neighbors and brethren of the world who choose to differ from us in opinion and in matters of faith. Our religion is between us and our God. Their religion is between them and their God. There is a love *from* God that should be exercised toward those of our faith . . . without prejudice; it also gives scope to the mind, which enables us to conduct ourselves with greater liberality towards all that are not of our faith, *than what they exercise towards one another*. These principles approximate nearer the mind of God or are Godlike.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to my argument here, Richard Hughes, who is amplifying Marvin Hill’s earlier thinking, sees Joseph’s desire to heal the fractious Christian contentiousness as a rejection of pluralism by Joseph Smith.<sup>14</sup> After all, Mormonism was a restoration movement seeking to return unified oneness to Christianity—and indeed, according to Parley Pratt, to bring the entire world into one peaceful political and religious empire.<sup>15</sup> Under this view, Mormonism, if it could not inspire all nations to unity before the Second Coming, would at least manage this during Christ’s millennial reign. While I see how Hughes, Hill, and others might draw these conclusions, I am arguing that the real unity Smith saw as needed in religion and politics was the accomplishment of loyalty between

people who show brotherly love even without agreement over doctrines or practices.

Looping back in some of the ideas presented in early sections of this essay, we can see that Joseph Smith certainly came to understand God's power as social influence centered in loving persuasion. He rejected the idea that God had power to make an eternal intelligence act against its will or believe against its conscience. To move a human heart or conscience by force of coercion was impossible. God might make universes all day long, but God is impotent to force a fellow intelligence to become anything.

Smith's idea of unity was pluralistic. My reading of Smith implies that in eternity, we will all exist as persons-in-relation who will still possibly disagree about truth, beauty and the best way to love in a given situation, yet will nevertheless find this disagreement an engaging source for creative exploration and potential originary collaboration. Mutual loyalty, not agreement, is the requirement for loving fellowship. In this same way, inside today's church, we are expected to sustain the Brethren, not always agree with them. The law of common consent, though trivial in some of its applications, stands with the other covenant ordinances of Mormonism as evidence of authority granted by the community—whether here in our congregations or in the eternities in relation with God. And, furthermore, outside the church, there is also no place for disrespect or anger in reaction to those who sincerely express their beliefs that we are wrong.

### Sociality Welding Souls Together in Love

Joseph Smith believed that human persons were unique, eternal, uncreated intelligences who have become part of God's family. Each distinctive soul shares with others a similarity of eternal agelessness and interrelatedness, but each has a different history based on different intentions leading to different experiences over eons. The form of human persons and relations seems to change over time as our decisions lead to different genetic and environmental influences that bear on our becoming.

Because of this vision of an eternal journey of souls, Joseph Smith knew that personal uniqueness and liberty of conscience will always be integral as prior conditions for divine and human love, that love itself will always be an experience of and decision for the good of another who is related to us but nevertheless different. And these differences are different enough to be a kind of pluralistic experience of interaction without convergence. In this sense, male-female procreative marriage, the central rite of Mormonism, reflects an embrace of this kind of radical difference. The pluralism inherent in marriage creates new life that is not identical to either of the unique persons. To be of one heart and one mind means to mutually desire and act to love each other as God loves us—in our utter uniqueness. If there is a social life in the heavens, there will be an everlasting

healthy tension of differences among the inhabitants. Mormons do not look forward to ontological unity and loss of individual identity in the One. Sociality describes the form of divine eternal life (D&C 130:2). The form of existence that God enjoys is a group of souls living eternal lives together (D&C 132:20–24).

Though not developed as a full doctrine, sociality, or social relations (humans interrelated with divine entities) seem to be inextricable from personal identity, even for God. Relations of love are a matter of free choice, ending if coercion is injected. Smith's vision for heavenly exaltation was social and inter-personal in form, so he talked about the welding principal of love while allowing for a plurality of unique loving relations. Families, after all, are perfect examples of similarities and diversities under a principle of mutual love or desire for each other's well being. It is impossible to *absolutely* assure a healthy family or a permanent friendship or marriage if love is the basis because love has to be free to end as well as to continue. Trust and loyalty are social virtues based on the freedom that either party might betray or be unfaithful to the other—even God.<sup>16</sup>

When family members disagree over ultimate purposes and ways to proceed with life, conflict occurs. This, of course, is the pluralistic condition in which we all find ourselves on this planet. But unlike many visions that seek for undifferentiated unity, Joseph Smith did not desire to end such differences but to lovingly “weld” them together in creative expansion. In his system, coercion is never an option, but this was coupled with a firm belief that real collaboration could take place. God and humanity ultimately have the power to influence eternal souls for good through long-suffering, patient, kind, knowledgeable, and careful persuasion (D&C 121).

Let's look at the welding metaphor a bit more carefully. Here is perhaps Joseph Smith's clearest statement about his role as “welder”:

If as a skillful mechanic I can take a welding heat to borax and aluminum and succeed in welding you all together shall I not have attained a good object? If I believe mankind to be in error shall I deride and bear them down? No! I will lift them up—and in their own way if I cannot persuade them my way is better! I will ask no man to simply believe as I do. . . . *Friendship is the grand fundamental principle of Mormonism and by that principle I intend to revolutionize and civilize the world.*

In two 1843 speeches, from one of which the above quotation was drawn, Joseph Smith compares himself to a religious blacksmith who would weld together —“seal” in friendship—the diverse members of the human family, and at the same time, weld together all the truthful knowledge-experience from times past, present and future.<sup>17</sup> This welding of interpersonal love was the centripetal force that held in balance the centrifugal force of persons' and Gods' infinitely expanding desires for more diverse experiences, interpretations, and originalities. The New Testament had made individual salvation more important than family ties (e.g., Matthew 3:6–19; Matthew 10:34–39). Smith saw, however, that the

individual saved by Christ's atoning sacrifice could never be happy alone. Smith's full "restoration" restored the family into soteriology. He balanced his radical revelation that each person was a unique, uncreated soul with another radical revelation that saw that only by inseparably connecting these unique souls—sealing or welding them in loyal social/psychological/physical/voluntary relations of love—could they find ultimate joy and eternal expansion.

Joseph Smith revealed that the great founding story of this world included a war in heaven, where envy and angry contention divided the family of God. This was not a doctrinal schism over the nature of God, for all were standing in His presence. It occurred because the spirits could not disagree without prideful reproach and contempt. So Smith learned it is on earth as it is in heaven: the evil one incites contentious blood and horror whenever a disagreement is given a chance. When Cain envied and killed Abel over the form of sacrifice acceptable to God, the fall of man was realized in the first conflict over "religion." Joseph Smith saw that the falls in heaven and on earth were the same: a rejection of love, and an envious anger and contemptuous disrespect for another. Such a radical breach between us required a radical welding power. This is what Smith was called to reveal. Jesus lived and died and rose again to inspire a *social atonement* for all mankind. The keys of the last dispensation would provide Joseph Smith and his followers the means to seal or weld *all* people who truly desired back together in a single family to be presented to the Father at the end of the world. Christ cleared the way for the soul to be one with God. Joseph Smith's role was to point toward and set up the kind of social relations that would entice unique eternal souls to desire to live forever with each other.

Smith recognized that the foundation of the sociality of eternal life consists of three social organizations—family (genetic), friendship (elective), and marriage (a combination of the two). These three organizations allow for the oneness of heart, mind, and means for infinite originality and creative love in eternal society. The Prophet's use of the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage is especially apt. The new is the original that corresponds with variety, and the everlasting is the continuous that corresponds with loyalty. In eternal friendship and marriage, love will expand through continual experiences of conflict over differences of perspectives and interpretations and desires. More than any other religion, Christianity emphasizes that God loves mankind as a divine parent and friend and spouse. God desires to share a social life with us all in worlds without end. No Christian church makes this clearer than the one re-established by Joseph Smith. At the cost of dethroning that Being that is beyond all desire for something more, Joseph Smith revealed a divine Man of Holiness (and we trust a Woman of Holiness to come) who desired to enrich his social life and ours *ad infinitum*.

No prophet or thinker has made the possibility of a parental God, a friendly God, a God of interpersonal love, more conceivable and trustworthy than has Joseph Smith.

*Charles Randall Paul is founder and president of the Foundation for Religious Diplomacy*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> While mystical experience allows a comparative understanding of existential pluralism, Joseph Smith's thought does not elevate mystical unity or oneness above pluralistic togetherness. For Mormons, mystical experience seems to be an alternative form of experience that can provide clarity and potency to eternal particularity. It is not a revelation of the *highest* order, only of another order. It clarifies alternative possibilities for existence, but it does not prove the ultimate worthlessness of illusory particularity. Freedom would allow some souls to dwell in mystical heavenly experience, while Mormons enjoy everlasting social lives.

<sup>2</sup> John Rawls developed an ethical system of justice using the notion of a pre-mortal society planning an earthly society. In the pre-mortal world, no one knew in advance the position they would hold on earth in which there would be an uneven distribution of limited resources and talents. In contrast, Joseph Smith sketched out a kind of eternal ethics of love (not justice) based on a society that lacked no resources or talent but instead promoted originality, variety, and joy in an everlasting social life.

<sup>3</sup> To speak in Whiteheadian terms of nested actual entities, the interpersonal level of social life exhibited more interesting relations of love than the subatomic or intergalactic levels of complexity.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Joseph Fielding Smith, ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1938), 296.

<sup>5</sup> In his *Fallible Man* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986, 121–27), Paul Ricoeur discusses the valuing achieved by interpersonal relationships that are beyond “having” (economics), and “power” (politics). It is in mutual esteem and love that the deepest enjoyment occurs. The value of interpersonal love is the intrinsic joy of experiencing something good that one has never yet experienced.

<sup>6</sup> Mormons were intolerable misfits that became tolerable misfits in the early twentieth century after discontinuing polygamy and quasi theocracy. In the twenty-first century, Mormons are an acceptable religious minority, though not widely trusted (at least if the polls are right). It is in the historical context of a persecuted minority that we must read Joseph Smith's 1840s views on religious freedom and respect.

<sup>7</sup> This matter is still with the Saints today as they want to be called fellow Christians among those they have claimed to be unauthorized, hypocritical, blind, or ignorant apostates.

<sup>8</sup> Richard T. Hughes, “Soaring with the Gods: Early Mormonism and the Eclipse of Religious Pluralism,” in *Mormons and Mormonism: An Introduction to an American World Religion*, Eric A. Eliason, ed. (Urbana-Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Richard T. Hughes, “Mormonism,” *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, Douglas Foster, Paul Blowers, Anthony Dunnivant, and Newell Williams, eds. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004), 545.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Smith said all creeds had some truth and some falsity, but the main problem arose when men held so tightly to a creed that they allow the creed to stake out a barrier against further revelation from God. See Smith, *Teachings*, 327.

<sup>11</sup> In Moses 7:33, God weeps because his children, who were commanded to love each other, are without affection and hate their own blood.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, *Teachings*, 288–89.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>14</sup> Marvin S. Hill, in his book *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989) took the view that Mormonism was an attempt to bring unity to the diverse and contentious religious and socio-economic forces in America.

<sup>15</sup> Parley P. Pratt, “*The Millennium*,” in *Millennial Star*, reprinted in *Writings of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parker Pratt Robinson (Salt Lake City: Parker Pratt Robinson, 1952), 259–60.

<sup>16</sup> Protestant theologian and careful reader of Mormon intellectual history, Carl Mosser, has recognized the radical nature of Mormon claims about voluntaristic love, and he has criticized it as not necessarily true but has not (yet) refuted it. See his “Exaltation and Gods Who Can Fall: Some Problems for Mormon Theodicies” in *Element: The Journal of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology* 3, nos. 1 & 2 (Spring and Fall, 2007): 57, 65 (footnote 34).

<sup>17</sup> This quotation is extracted from the Willard Richards diary of Joseph Smith in Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994), 234.