

FOREWORD

History is the record of the unpredictable. Old orders give way without perceiving their own passing. The religious world of early Christianity was just such an unstable age. Yet the most penetrating Roman historian, Tacitus, considered Christianity at the close of its apostolic ministry nothing but a disreputable superstition. This fact prompted today's leading private Bible translator of the Anglo-American world to ask whether the modern age might not have somewhere an unrecognized counterpart of the ancient ministry of inspired apostles. In his preface to his translation of Acts, J. B. Phillips considered, "It is perfectly possible that the unpublicised and almost unknown activities of the Spirit through His human agents to-day are of more permanent importance than all the news recorded in the whole of the popular Press."

The need of modern "activities of the spirit through His human agents" was hardly felt when Joseph Smith announced revelation to a Christian world firm in confident orthodoxy. Nearly a century and a half later, Christianity itself is in the crisis of a doctrinal revolution of such proportions that serious believers and leaders display the deepest anxiety. The president of Harvard University has recently challenged the lack of conviction of the teachers who train Christian ministers: "Men continue to scorn older formulations of belief . . . but now belief itself—professedly—is consciously eschewed. We have all become doubting Thomases." Now it is a question of what doctrines may survive when creeds are no longer valid statements of faith.

difficulties that human reflection frequently leads one to, are often resolved as by a "[sharp] . . . two-edged sword, . . . dividing asunder . . . both joints and marrow" (D&C 6:2; see also D&C 11:2; 12:2; 14:2; 33:1). The similarity between religious symbols and their referents is not quite analogic or ironic but rather reinactive. Yet none of these categories properly states the case, for Madsen notices that the flexibility of the religious symbol system in any given culture entails the possibility of context radically altering meaning, as when the biblical serpent serves as symbol for both evil and good.

As important as it is for religious symbols to convey sentiments and feelings, Madsen very properly points out the necessity of their being intelligible and having understandable content. Messages received from heaven are not devoid of content; they are not just sentiment and feeling. And while mortals may only partially grasp their content, what they do grasp should be intelligible as well as profoundly moving.

Seiji Katanuma provides an opportunity to experience a mode of organization, argument, and thought process from another culture. His thesis stresses the importance of a system of writing. Together with other influences, and to a degree we find hard to imagine, he believes this accounts for the emergence of a culture dependent upon sight and mental images derived from visual experience. The cultural tendency is toward an aesthetic emotional grasp of reality. If we nod agreement to the dictum "I think, therefore I am," the Japanese in Katanuma's homeland might find more convincing the statement "I see and realize beauty; therefore I and others are." Without disputing the common human heritage that all people share, Katanuma does present evidence for differences in connotations and expectations. But this is misstated, for it sounds argumentative and analytical, something that does not characterize his essay. Katanuma presents the thesis and some examples he finds illustrative of it, then turns to some specific recommendations for a more visual approach to teaching the gospel among the Japanese people. His discovery of scriptural parallels to the mode of thought he recommends as appropriate for presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ in Japan is striking. It is an instance of the ways in which diverse cultures can contribute depth of insight to our appreciation of God's word.

In Gordon C. Thomasson's essay, he strongly embraces one of Palmer's five explanations of similarity among religions, arguing against the proposition that Mormonism is explicable as a product or even a reflection, in its essentials, of Western culture and consciousness. At the same time, he is at pains to show that Mormonism is no more oriental than occidental. He claims that it bursts all the usual cultural categories and classifications. It seems to him uniquely acultural, even though it has the

characteristics of integration, pattern, symbolic transmission, and a specific value system—all the necessary and sufficient conditions of a culture. Indeed, it is the culture of heaven, adapted in some nonessential way, perhaps, to our stage of development and presented so that we may come to an understanding and to greater conformity with it; nevertheless, it is unique. What critics have regarded as evidence of incredible eclecticism and syncretism, Thomasson sees as convincing evidence of divine origin.

In Thomasson's view, the gospel's fullness fills out the gaps left in every culture, while also crowding out elements that are satanic or that fall short of the divine. Cultures have something to repent of as well as something to complete before they come up to the gospel standard. Thomasson's thesis argues for the assimilation of Saints from every culture into a common gospel culture where national origin provides only interesting variations on a common theme of allegiance to divinely ordained or revealed values, patterns, assumptions, and moral-spiritual realities.

Footnotes

1. Cited by Robert T. Oliver, *Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1971), pp. 4-5.
2. Cited by A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Luckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1952), pp. 333-34.

MORMON VIEWS OF RELIGIOUS RESEMBLANCES*

Spencer J. Palmer

In studying the religions of the world, scholars customarily make elaborate comparisons of the differences and similarities they find. Particularly has this been the case in comparisons of Christianity and the various faiths of Asia and the Middle East, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

As for the differences the scholars find, the most fundamental one, from one perspective at least, is between the great biblical religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and the religions of India (e.g., Hinduism). In comparing these religions, one sees a clash between biblical theism (belief in one God who is personal, worthy of adoration, and separate from the world but continuously active in it) and monism (be-

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belief that god, mind, and matter are undifferentiated). Christians thus appeal to a God who is Creator and Lord of all. Hindus, on the other hand, look for unity with an impersonal divine principle. This carries with it grave differences in the evaluation of the world and history. The biblical religions accept the world as real, as having a definite origin, and moving towards a definite termination at some future date; however, for the Hindus and other Monists the world is *maya*, illusory, the present phase being a beginningless and endless series of cycles. The biblical faiths take pride in the fact that they have a historical basis: the exodus from Egypt, the Crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, the Hegira. For the monists, general philosophical ideas replace historical events. Hence, the Hindu doctrine of man is metapsychological, a piece of subtle and—so it would seem to Latter-day Saints—unsubstantiated analysis.

For Latter-day Saints, perhaps the most acute conflict has still to be mentioned. Gotama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism (c. 530 B.C.), may say that the difference between his way and that of the Jew, Moslem, or Latter-day Saint is so great that he must deny that the word religion is really common to all. Gotama acknowledged no God at all, but only gods who, like men, are caught in the net of *karma*;⁷ no future life, but only the bliss—or extinction—of Nirvana;⁸ no soul, but only the legacy of one life bequeathed to another that falls heir to it; no prayer, but only meditation as a form of spiritual discipline; no grace, but only man's resolve to tread the Noble Eightfold Path to the end. The ultimate doctrines of Buddhism, like those of Hinduism from which it sprang, are negative and pessimistic in terms of their response to the worth of this mortal life and the individual as the locus of value. Since Buddhists believe that underlying reality is one inclusive mind or stream of consciousness, Christ and judgment are imaginary, irrelevant, or "untrue." Could there be more serious conflicts and discrepancies than these?

But the restored gospel does not contradict Buddhism on every hand. In fact there are between the two a number of remarkable resemblances. Both Christ and the Buddha believed that covetousness and lust were at the root of human suffering; that men must shake the dust (the cares of this world) from the mirror of their minds and seek to nourish the spirit of the inner man; both declared that freedom lies in following a way of life free from cruelty, falsehood, killing, stealing, and unlawful sexual relations.

Aside from those ethical teachings similar in Buddhism and Mormonism, parallels between the life stories and the reported sayings of Jesus and Gotama have intrigued the followers of these two religious leaders, as well as secular scholars at large, at least since the time of St. Je-

rome. Leaving aside for now the credibility of the narratives and comparing only commonly accepted beliefs, how should Latter-day Saints explain the following resemblances?⁹

1. Both Jesus and Gotama were foreordained in a preexistent spirit world to come forth at a particular time, after preliminary examination and selection of the most favorable family, country, race, and mother into which to be physically born.

2. Both entered the womb of their mother in a miraculous manner, having no mortal father.

3. Both were born into a world whose inhabitants' bodies had become coarse and gross and who had lost much of their original brilliance because a being of an inquisitive nature had commenced eating a debilitating food.

4. Both had births accompanied by special heavenly illuminations.

5. Both were recognized in infancy by respective religious leaders as persons of great promise, with special missions to perform among mankind.

6. Both visited holy temples in their youth and displayed unusual precocity and wisdom before their elders.

7. Both launched their ministries early in their thirtieth year following periods of fasting and solitude.

8. Both gained disciples under a fig tree.

9. Both were severely tempted by an Evil One (Mara and Satan).

10. Both selected a council of special disciples and joined with them in carrying out their religious ideals by way of example.

In addition to these historical agreements, further similarities in thought and phraseology between the gospels of the New Testament and the Dhammapada of Buddhism include the following:

1. From Christ: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?" (Luke 11:39, 40).

From the Buddha: "What is the use of platted hair, O fool? What of the raiment of goat-skins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean."¹⁵

2. Christ: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). [Elsewhere there are similar biblical analogies: "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped" (Psalm 124:7).]

Buddha: "This world is dark, few only can see here; a few only go to heaven, like birds escaped from a net."¹⁶

3. Christ: "Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).

Buddha: "As when a string of blind men are clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see, nor can the middle one see, nor can the hindmost see. Just so, methinks, Vasettha, is the talk of the Brahman's verse in the three Vedas."

4. Jesus told the woman of Samaria that his salvation is as "living water" (John 4:10-14), in *Saddharma pundarika* (the Lotus Sutra), Gotama compares salvation to "water for all."

In the face of such religious similarities and parallels, what explanations do Latter-day Saints have? Are these and other agreements imaginary? Are they only coincidences? Are they simply remarkable illustrations of poetic license, or of distortions of language and culture at the hands of faulty translators? Should they be explained by reference to the similarity of circumstances under which both Christ and Buddha taught? Have the Buddhist legends and teachings derived certain of their elements from Christian sources? Or must Christians accept the allegation that certain things in the Gospel records have either derived from the earlier Buddhist legends or from another common ancient source? For Latter-day Saints, who are eager to see their faith disseminated worldwide and to see it effectively implanted among all peoples, and yet who wish to accept and encourage anything that is "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy" (Article of Faith 13), questions of religious comparison between the cultures of man, East and West, are of great significance. Do religious elements that seem harmonious or even universal spring from a common source when once the pure gospel of Jesus Christ was known to our fathers? Are similarities to the gospel simply satanic substitutes, counterfeit attractions suggesting that all roads lead to heaven? Or are there other explanations possible? How do Mormons handle non-Mormon religious beliefs, values, rituals and symbols that seem to be not only compatible with true gospel principles but in some cases even appropriate manifestations of them? Are such resemblances an advantage or a disadvantage to those declaring a unique Latter-day Saint message?

Acting on the premise that religious similarities are indeed ubiquitous in the world, how have Mormons generally approached them? In this paper I shall examine five basic Mormon views of religious resemblances, the first two of which have been less argued and much less developed among members of the Church.

1. Primordial Images—Echoes of a Preexistent State.

In Mormon theology human predispositions of thought and feeling may be viewed as "echoes of eternity," since all men lived together un-

der common conditions with God in a premortal spirit world. After quoting Wordsworth's famous "Ode: Intimations of Immortality . . .", which suggests that the minds and spirits of mankind come to earth "Not in entire forgetfulness, . . . / But trailing clouds of glory do we come / From God, who is our home," Joseph Fielding Smith comments that "there may be times when flashes of remembrance of these former days come to us." Then he quotes Orson F. Whitney, a former member of the Council of the Twelve, who explained that more than once, upon hearing a noble sentiment expressed, though unable to recall that he had ever heard it until then, he found himself in sympathy with it, was thrilled by it, and felt as if he had always known it. Elder Whitney referred to the Savior's statement that "My sheep know my voice," concluding that those things that are true and instinctively beautiful appeal to men everywhere because we were all acquainted with the gospel in a previous life before we came here, and it is this that gives it a familiar sound.¹⁰ President Joseph F. Smith "heartily endorsed" Elder Whitney's observation that common experiences in the antemortal spiritual life predispose, influence, and guide human thoughts and preferences in this life, for "we often catch a spark from the awakened memories of the immortal soul, which lights up our whole being as with the glory of our former home."¹¹

Of course this is not the same as Carl Jung's view of the "collective unconscious," but there is much in that scholar's discussion of "basic archetypes" that nonetheless seems congruent with the Mormon view of preexistence and that might well help explain resemblances of thought and belief among mankind. Jung taught that a symbol can express itself among large masses of people simultaneously.¹² He saw parallels with mythological motifs among his patients. For example, a very young child would recite a dream to Jung which exactly paralleled some ancient Persian myth. The child could not have been taught the myth, for very few people who were not classical scholars even knew of it. After considerable study and deliberation, he found that general story outlines of myths were identical across cultural heritages that had no possible chance of contact. He concluded there is a common, almost instinctual disposition among all men—including civilized men—to symbolize identical themes in their religious myths. Why are the story lines of religious fantasy and experience so common among all men? In 1919 Jung developed the term *archetype* to account for these expressions of "collective psyche." He did not suggest universal symbolism, but he did suggest universal archetypes. He did not see these archetypes as conscious images of the mind, but they did stand in the deepest reaches of the unconscious. He called them "primordial images"—congenital preexistent

images, believing that the rami has inherited an *a priori* disposition to work in a certain way. The psyche is not passive; it is an active agent in the framing of meaning.

From a Mormon point of view, similar ways of thinking and acting can easily be interpreted as deriving from our existence with God; and perhaps the so-called "psychic unity" of man that has been argued by so many may indeed go back to our preexistence, to our primordial, native intelligence. President Smith, Elder Whitney, and so many others of us in the Church from time to time have talked about "glimmers" and the "thin veil." We say that thoughts rise in our minds to make us feel we have experienced this, felt that, or believed something else. And such "echoes of eternity" seem to be the common experience of mankind. Having common beginnings in the spirit world, naturally we should expect, if only at times in faint and wistful ways, common manifestations of those beginnings with God. In his 1973 Commissioner's Lecture, Truman Madsen concluded that only something of such magnitude can account for conscience and the full phenomenon of other powers inherent in man:

Though presently a veil is drawn over specific images of that realm—we do not now recall our name, rank, and serial number—there is built in us and not quite hidden a "collective unconscious" that is superracial in character, a pool of such vivid effect, such residual power in us, that our finite learnings and recoveries are at best a tiny aftermath.'

And it is in this that one should be able to find explanations of resemblances in the beliefs and religious experiences of man.

2. The Devil Invention Theory

Milton R. Hunter draws attention to the devil theory in his book, *The Gospel through the Ages*. Many of the pagan practices were so similar to those of early Christianity, says Hunter, that many Christian apologists have concluded all this had to be the work of the devil. Elder Hunter points out that in about A.D. 150 Justin Martyr, after describing the Lord's Supper as given in the Gospels, reportedly remarked: "The wicked devils have imitated [it] in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done." Tertullian, another Christian teacher (A.D. 160-220), claimed that "the devil, by the mysteries of his idols, imitates even the main part of the divine Mysteries.... He baptizes his worshipers in water and makes them believe that this purifies them from their crimes." And 1300 years later, "Las Casas (A.D. 1474-1566), A Spanish Catholic missionary, observing that the ceremonies of the [American] Indians closely resembled those of the Christians, concluded

that the devil had arrived in America ahead of the Christians and implanted in the minds of the natives many teachings closely akin to Christianity."¹⁴

In this view, the devil has exerted a powerful influence upon men in counterfeiting the true principles and ordinances of the gospel. Lucifer has fostered many clever imitations in an effort to lull mankind into satisfaction with partial truths and to weaken the appeal of divinely authorized teachers. In the words of Jacob, the Book of Mormon prophet, men can become angels to a devil, for Satan, who beguiled our first parents, is capable of stirring up the children of men with dreadful works of darkness by transforming himself "nigh unto an angel of light" (2 Ne. 9:9).

Thus, similarities to the gospel are considered Satanic substitutes—counterfeit attractions suggesting, among other possibilities, that all roads lead to heaven.

3. Diffusion

Among Latter-day Saints, by far the most popular and compelling explanation of religious resemblances is the belief that religious elements appearing to be harmonious or even universal sprang from a common source after the pure gospel of Jesus Christ was known to all our fathers. Adam, the first man, was taught the fullness of the gospel. In turn he taught it to others. But men, yielding to the temptations of the evil one, sinned and departed from the truth. The original, true doctrines were changed and warped to suit the appetites of evil, ambitious men. Thus the principles of the gospel have appeared in more or less perverted form in the religious beliefs of mankind. The gospel was again taught to the world in its purity in the days of Jesus Christ. Again, willful men changed the doctrine, and a host of Christian parties came into being. The many religions among the human race are an evidence of the magnitude of apostasies from the simple, easily understood revelations of God.¹⁵

The pioneer Mormon study of Mormonism in a world religious setting was Thomas C. Romney's. Consistent with his diffusionist approach, he suggested that doctrines of trinity as applied to Deity reach back into the remotest past and are universally espoused. The numerous examples of trinitarian belief among ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Babylonians, and Sumerians are all reflections of an original authentic model—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.¹⁶ Romney argued that both blood and bloodless sacrificial offerings of the Vedic gods of India (Indra, Ganesha, Varuna, Visnu), the libations to Confucius in the traditional ceremonies of the state cult of China, the sacrificial offerings to the gods of

the ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as those many Jewish and Christian sacrifices for the purpose of placating the wrath of the deities or of placing the worshippers in happy accord with unseen and ineffable powers are all evidences of "common bonds of union" - universal religious patterns - that in the main at least "sprang originally from a common source."¹⁷ Anciently men offered sacrifices without really knowing the historical roots of their own practices. These roots are found in the original sacrifices of Adam and his posterity, which were in similitude of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, even Jesus Christ. The scripture explains:

And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, I know not, save the Lord commanded me.

And then the angel spake, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth (Moses 5:6-7).

In like manner, the diffusionist view holds that the doctrine of reincarnation, transmigration, and rebirth in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism is actually a modified and "strange type of immortality." Romney points out that the early Rig Veda, the earliest book of the Indo-Aryans, makes no mention of reincarnation. This belief developed much later. Only after the people were forced to face the enervating climate of the region of the Ganges, the myriads of insects and other forms of animal life, and the difficulty of extracting a decent living from the soil did a new drab outlook upon man's present existence develop.¹⁸ And this new negativism vitally affected the Indian view of immortality. Life was no longer an experience to be thankful for, another step in the process of eternal development which, if rightly lived, would lead toward God. In a widening disparity, the ultimate goal of Nirvana in Hinduism and Buddhism is a form of annihilation to be reached only after countless incarnations during which the soul gradually attains the power to negate the desire to live. This is not eternal individualized progress.

Elder Alvin R. Dyer, another exponent of the diffusion view, concludes that religious confusion in the world has resulted from deviations from established principles, from mutations of original truth. Items: The Hindu worship of Dyaus Pitar, a nature god of the sky or heaven, can be thought of as "a legendary perversion of the teachings of Abraham and Moses concerning preexistence and of God our Eternal Heavenly Father."¹⁹ Despite the original illustriousness of the teachings of Confucius and Lao-Tzu²⁰ and the mystical and ornate rituals of earlier Buddhism, all of which seized the instincts of the Chinese race, there have been

long periods of transition that have resulted in a "universal apathy" among that people. All life and vitality in the religious thought and sentiments of the Chinese have now disappeared;²¹ so also have they from Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, and Islam, they having fallen under "the lash of departure" from their own original doctrines. Modern Taoism is quite different from the high theories of its founder. It presents a pathetic history. It started with some admirable features of truth, but it has degraded fearfully into polytheism, demonolatry, witchcraft, and occultism. Shinto has become so vague as to be undefinable in the minds of either priests or philosophers.²² Originally a pure and righteous "law of the birthright" existed among the families of the ancients. This patriarchal order was established by God. It was a call to responsibility. Through a long process of mutated developments, this great principle was later expressed in southern Asia as the Hindu caste system. And in like manner, the Moslem belief in *jihad*, or holy war against the unbelieving infidels, and the sense of superiority associated with state Shinto in Japan--by which the Yamato race claimed an inherent right to rule over others by force and bloodshed if necessary--are all decadent expressions of the ancient law of the birthright.²³

By far the most influential and effective Mormon spokesman of a diffusionist view is Hugh Nibley of Brigham Young University. In all his prodigious scholarship, there is an underlying view of an unchanging God who in his dealing with man follows a constant pattern. God repeatedly reveals his will, his unchanging truth, to selected peoples of the earth. Resemblances and ties that seem to exist among all the religions of antiquity reappear in history primarily because of a pattern of divine restorations and human apostasies. And since the teachings and powers of God to chosen peoples have often been deliberately imitated in every age of the world, and in other ways disseminated among men, a diffusion of truth from a single center has continued to recur. What has been done in one dispensation has often been foreshadowed in another. In Nibley we have an eschatological pattern of history which is also prominent in Jewish and Christian scriptures and in apocryphal writings as well: "the periodic repetition of certain characteristic events—a 'visitation,' as it was called, from heaven; the making of a covenant; the corruption and wickedness of men, leading to the breaking of the covenant; the bondage of sin, then the coming of a prophet with a call to repentance; the making of a new covenant; and so around the cycle."²⁴ God is at the helm of history. Thus, at the base, religious parallels are rooted in the mind and will of God, in repeated revelations. Parallels between the history of the restored Church and the doings of the ancients are not consciously contrived imitations; the analogies that can be drawn

between the sufferings, wanderings, and spiritual aspirations of the Mormon pioneers and those of the people of ancient Israel cannot be drawn because the former wanted it so. The Mormons were pushed around entirely against their own will. All along, the whole history of the Church has been the will of God. Resemblances to earlier beliefs and experiences have an extraordinary force among Latter-day Saints because they have not been intentional and they actually are the fulfillment of prophecy."

In a recent book, faced with resemblances between the LDS temple endowment ceremony and ancient Egyptian endowment rites, Nibley sees these as an example of countless parallels, many of them instructive, among the customs and religions of mankind. But they are imitations of earlier gospel models, and little more. The Egyptian rites "are a parody, an imitation, but as such not to be despised. For all the great age and consistency of their rites and teachings, which certainly command respect, the Egyptians did not have the real thing, and they knew it."²⁷

4. *The Common Human Predicament*

There are Mormons who believe that the diffusion theory explains religious parallels only in a limited way. They readily agree that God revealed original principles and ordinances of the gospel and bestowed the authority and power of the priesthood to Adam, and that in the course of time, as populations expanded and as peoples moved away from one another and became independent, they took with them some of their original features and applied them in new settings. But to these Latter-day Saints this is a handy explanation that fails to cover much of the ground. At best such a view explains common religious forms only within limited geographical areas.

William A. Wilson, the Mormon folklorist, observed that if all stories develop out of the original story in the Garden of Eden, then we should be able to find in the Bible account all the materials that have generated other stories as they fragmented and broke into parts. But this cannot be done. Moreover, folklore studies indicate that certain kinds of stories and beliefs are limited to particular peoples. They do not circulate worldwide. In a study of folk beliefs among peoples of the Indo-European languages, that is, from Ireland to India, one can find common themes. Wherever Indo-Europeans have traveled, parallel beliefs have been widely diffused. Similar ideas can be found in North America, South America, and other parts of the world by travelers who have taken them there. But such diffusion is limited; elements of Indo-European folk tales, for example, are not found in Southeast Asia. Dif-

fusion from a single source answers only part of the problem of religious parallels worldwide.

The view here is that certain things are fundamental to all human beings--arising out of the common human predicament--and explain many of the similarities of thought and practice so widely experienced here on earth. All men face problems of birth, life, sex, disease, death, joy, disappointment, and grief. All men ask, Why must we die? Why must we be sick? Why must we grow old? Why must we suffer? What happens after death? Common beliefs and practices arise from the common predicament of man in responding to his circumstances. Parallels to the experience of Job in the Old Testament are everywhere.

This polygenetic view that religious beliefs and rituals have arisen spontaneously and independently in various countries but have generally followed uniform patterns of development offers special insights into the use of religious symbols, rituals, and ordinances among mankind. Mircea Eliade, the great professor of comparative religion at the University of Chicago, says that human actions have no intrinsic value. Human actions become valuable only insofar as they unfold according to divine patterns. If human life is to have any ultimate meaning it must somehow transcend this human predicament. It must somehow become identified with the transcendental, the divine. If things remain earthly, they have only limited earthly value. Eliade concludes that human beings all over the world carry out festivals, rituals, and ordinances as an aid and an effort to transcend the ordinary human predicament.²⁸ Victor Turner and others speak of these as "periods of timeless time," wherein men, through the language of ritual, transcend the arbitrary human world and connect themselves, their relationships, their institutions, and their social order with something beyond this life.²⁹ Thus, religious symbols are the means by which they establish contact with the divine. And without such ordinances and rituals the provisional and arbitrary arrangements of this world have no ultimate value. If life is to have intrinsic value, it must be derived from some external transcendental source. People all over the world realize this. And this common realization brings about similarities in religious belief and practice.

Since our mundane world has no ultimate meaning until it is connected with something beyond this, frustration and pain are relieved primarily through extraordinary rituals and symbolic expressions. And in this, God is not a God of one point in time or of one people or even of one genetic line.

Latter-day Saints may be exclusive in ways they are not aware of all the time. Other peoples have basic operating principles in their religious systems that find expression in terms of their own cultural idiom. We

differ from these people culturally; the vehicles of our expression are different. But when we deal with others at similar levels of meaning or seek to communicate according to similar principles rather than expect to use similar cultural idioms, we reach common ground. We find similarity. Thus Merlin Myers has observed that it may well be that for the celestial kingdom the symbolic vehicles and the underlying principles must be adapted to each other in ways that preclude variation there.

No doubt there are cultural vehicles that are peculiarly adapted to the celestial order of things. Truth can be given expression in a variety of cultural and symbolic vehicles, and can provide valid functions and services for those who receive them, but the cultural symbols of man can also be regarded as vehicles to aid people in reaching higher means of expression in the celestial kingdom. Within the Church there are instrumentalities by which such levels of insight are encouraged and achieved."

In the 84th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord explains that the greater priesthood holds the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom and that "without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh" (D&C 84:21).

John A. Widtsoe repeatedly emphasized that man lives in a world of symbols, some not so beautiful and pleasing, but that their forms are of relatively little consequence. In the end, it is what they suggest and teach that counts: "No man or woman can come out of the temple endowed as he should be, unless he has seen, beyond the symbol, the mighty realities for which the symbols stand."

Those Mormons who give credence to "the common human predicament" view find superiority in the rites and ordinances of the priesthood, but at the same time peoples all over the world are trying to accomplish similar goals within the framework of their own world view. They have their symbols and ordinances, too, and through these symbols they seek to transcend their earthly predicament. These people seek to break through this mundane realm and realize the supernatural by means of them. In other words, all men bear the stamp of the entire human condition; the similarities of their concern and their response to the needs and conditions of this life are not essentially questions of either divine or nefarious forces emanating from another world but of the harsh realities of this one.

5. *The Light and Spirit of Christ*

In Mormon theology the spiritual influence emanating from God is not confined to selected nations, races, or groups. All men share an in-

heritance of divine light. Christ himself is the light of the world; even those who have never heard of Christ are granted the spirit and light of Christ. In the Book of Mormon Christ told the brother of Jared, "In me shall all mankind have light" (Eth. 3:14). In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord explained:

Whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit (D&C 84:45-46).

And in the "Olive Leaf" revelation of 1832 we are told that this Light of Christ

proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—

... [It is the light] by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things (D&C 88:12-13).

If any man acts according to this inspiration, he progresses from grace to grace, learning precept upon precept, until he receives full enlightenment.³² That every man ever born enjoys the light of Christ was reiterated by Brigham Young, who taught that there has never been "a man or woman upon the face of the earth, from the days of Adam to this day, who has not been enlightened, instructed, and taught by the revelations of Jesus Christ."³³ This allows each individual to recognize truth, and the associated results often lift men to new and higher insights than were traditionally known among a given people.

Since God has thus inspired men of all cultures and creeds, the possibilities are staggering. Such religious reformers as Martin Luther and John Wesley—despite their personal frailties and errors—may be looked upon as instruments of God's will. Likewise, a whole continuum of Christian mystics in medieval European history, some of whose ideas seem at times closely to resemble Mormon teachings today, show the extent to which they separated themselves from the "orthodox" thought of the Catholic Church. These include St. Francis of Assisi and St. Bernard de Clairvaux, to name only two. Also, Christian devotionalism represented by Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* (1426), on the way in which a true Christian should behave, and the development of Christian art and architecture in Russia beautifully express a diffusion of inspiration and light among the peoples of Europe.

Among Hispanic people living in Europe as well as in the Western Hemisphere, contributions to civilization are monumental and countless.

In the hours of recreation, studying the works of Diego Rivera and Rufino Tamayo, as well as of Francisco Goya and Diego Velázquez are celebrated worldwide for their illuminations and beauty. From Spain, Miguel de Cervantes' classic, *Don Quixote*, has provided inspiring insights that have encouraged and sustained men of all lands to seek for betterment in life. Mexican achievements in establishing the first university in North America and in publishing the first book in the Western Hemisphere (in 1539 by Juan Pablos) have been a great blessing to all those who have been able to come under their influence.

Columbus and the Pilgrims were moved upon by the "Spirit of God" to sail to the New World. The founding fathers of the United States were also moved upon by the Spirit. Great western scientists and poets were likewise inspired."

It follows, then, that God inspires not only non-Mormons but also non-Christians as well, including "heathen" philosophers, religious leaders, and peoples. God has raised up inspired teachers and great reformers in various cultures throughout history—not only Jewish and Christian spokesmen. In the Mormon view, all peoples and even all religions possess elements of truth. To illustrate, all of the following religions or philosophies profess a statement of moral principle in essentially the same wording as the Christian golden rule: Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Shinto, Socratic Philosophy, Confucianism, Taoism, and Jainism. John Taylor affirmed: "The Catholics have many pieces of truth; so have the Protestants, the Mahometans, and Heathens." George Albert Smith reiterated this theme," and Brigham Young observed:

"Do you suppose the Hindoos have the light of the Spirit of Christ?" I know they have; and so have the Hottentots, and so has every nation and kingdom upon the face of the earth, even though some of them may be cannibals."

Latter-day Saints believe that America was divinely prepared as a haven for the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that Columbus was inspired to discover this promised land, and that the Constitution of the United States was instituted of God. But they also teach that the Omnipresent Spirit moved upon the thinkers of Greece and Rome and upon the Protestant reformers of European history. Likewise artists and thinkers in Asia have been moved upon by inspiration from God: Ferdosi of Persia; Kalidasa, Asoka, and Gandhi of India; Mencius, Tu Fu, and Po Chiu-I of China; Sejong of Chong Mong-ju of Korea; Bashō and Chikamatsu of Japan; and José Rizal of the Philippines, to name only a few at random. God's Spirit has rested upon

other inquiring and imaginative men who have produced incomparable Shang bronzes, Tang pottery, Sung landscapes, Koryo celadons, magnificent buildings, mosaics, paintings, and sculptures in India and in the Middle East; it has also led to the invention of Arabic numerals and the Indian zero, and in China, Korea, and Japan to the spinning wheel, paper, the first ironclad ships, the foundations of modern chemistry, and the first printing presses with moveable type.

Although some Latter-day Saints may believe that God's operations are confined to their Church, according to the teachings of the Church leaders this belief is a mistake, for God operates among his children in all nations.³⁸ The living prophet and president of the Church communicates God's will to those within the Church and to all men who are prepared and able to listen; for those outside the Church God often employs other spokesmen. Brigham H. Roberts explains, "It is nowhere held that this man [the living prophet] is the only instrumentality through which God may communicate his mind and will to the world."³⁹ All who seek God are entitled to further light and knowledge, regardless of historical or cultural setting. Thus, John A. Widtsoe's view helps explain the impetus for various religious developments:

Spiritual outreachings are not peculiar to one country. Instead, in every land men have sought the gifts of the spirit. . . . Men have arisen in every land, who have tried to formulate the way to happiness, for the benefit of themselves and their fellow men. . . . The religions of Egypt, China, India, and Persia, are examples.⁴⁰

Brigham Young believed that even idolatry arises from the actions of men of faith.⁴¹

Orson F. Whitney taught that Zoroaster, Mahavira, Gotama Buddha, and Confucius "were servants of the Lord in a lesser sense, and were sent to those pagan or heathen nations to give them the measure of truth that a wise Providence had allotted to them" and that they, along with others, "have been used from the beginning to help along the Lord's work—mighty auxiliaries in the hands of an Almighty God, carrying out his purposes, consciously or unconsciously."⁴² Brigham H. Roberts summarizes:

While the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is established for the instruction of men; and is one of God's instrumentalities for making known the truth, yet he is not limited to that institution for such purposes, neither in time nor place. God raises up wise men . . . of their own tongue and nationality, speaking to them through means that they can comprehend; not always giving a fulness of truth such as may be found in the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ; but always giving that

measure of truth that the people are prepared to receive. Mormonism holds, then, that all the great teachers are servants of God, among all nations and in all ages. They are inspired men, appointed to instruct God's children according to the conditions in the midst of which he finds them. Hence it is not obnoxious to Mormonism to regard Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher and moralist, as a servant of God, inspired to a certain degree by him to teach those great moral maxims which have governed those millions of God's children for lo! these many centuries. It is willing to regard Gautama Buddha as an inspired servant of God, teaching a measure of the truth, at least giving to these people that twilight of truth by which they may somewhat see their way. So with the Arabian prophet, that wild spirit that turned the Arabians from worshiping idols to a conception of the Creator of heaven and earth that was more excellent than their previous conception of Deity. And so the sages of Greece and of Rome. So the reformers of early Protestant times. Wherever God finds a soul sufficiently enlightened and pure; one with whom his Spirit can communicate, lo! he makes of him a teacher of men. While the path of sensuality and darkness may be that which most men tread, a few, to paraphrase the words of a moral philosopher of high standing, have been led along the upward path; a few in all countries and generations have been wisdom seekers, or seekers of God. They have been so because the Divine Word or Wisdom has looked upon them, choosing them for the knowledge and service of himself."

George A. Smith believed that Mohammed "was no doubt raised up by God on purpose to scourge the world for their idolatry."⁴⁸ Parley P. Pratt, in a general conference address, declared:

With all my prejudices of early youth, and habits of thought and reading, my rational faculties would compel me to admit that the Mahometan history and Mahometan doctrine was a standard raised against the most corrupt and abominable idolatry that ever perverted our earth, found in the creeds and worship of Christians, falsely so named."

Moses Thatcher, another member of the Council of the Twelve of the Church, was "struck by the profound philosophy, pure morality, and comprehensiveness exhibited in the writings of Confucius and Mencius [and] the Chinese sages" as divinely inspired, far-reaching, and heavenly doctrines.⁴⁹ Likewise, in a KSL radio address in 1927, Elder Matthew Cowley expressed his belief that "Confucius understood the doctrine of repentance" and that on the basis of his teachings on purity and virtue "one would almost believe that the gospel was borrowed from Confucius."⁵⁰

Thus, in this Mormon view, God has inspired men to think and write according to the conditions in the midst of which he finds them; Islam,

Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism have within them inspired and inspirational principles, and the peoples of these lands will be judged by God in accordance with their individual willingness to abide by them, as they are not totally subversive of gospel values, but are striking evidence that God has spoken "to all nations of the earth" and that mankind will ultimately be judged by that which they have been inspired to receive, at least until a fullness of the gospel has been provided.⁵¹ For in the words of Alma, the Book of Mormon prophet, the Lord grants "unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word," and counsels in wisdom to provide them with all that he feels is appropriate "according to that which is just and true" (Alma 29:8).

James E. Talmage saw authentic comparisons between Mormonism and Buddhism, believing that the latter provided a constructive path that could consistently lead upward to the fullness of the restored gospel:

We believe that man may advance in righteousness and become more nearly perfect; even as the followers of Buddha teach, that by the "Holy Path" [Hināyāna] or by the "Pure Path" [Mahāyāna] men may walk in the light and become Buddha.

We believe as you do, my beloved readers in Japan, that some will follow the path of Hinayana, and others the higher road of Mahayana—each choosing for himself, according to inclination and capacity; and, sad to say, yet others use that God-given freedom of choice and follow the path of sin that leadeth downward to perdition.⁵²

The distinction thus made is significant and impressive, and it is in effect the difference between the Mosaic law and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Better to live by Hināyāna—in obedience to the stern commands, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not"—better to do good through hope of reward and eschew evil through fear of punishment than to do evil and reject good. But better still, far better is it to absorb the spirit of righteous law—to walk by Mahāyāna—to make right living the natural mode of life, and through inspiration and divine love, rather than because of the law's demands, rise to exalted rank.

Conclusion

Each of the five Mormon views elaborated here provide useful and meaningful insights into questions of religious resemblances. But none of them covers the whole ground alone, and all of them together fall short of explaining all such parallels. My own feeling is that only inspiration from the Lord can provide the answers as to which of these five possibilities should be dominant in a particular case. Regardless of

the relative importance of each of the five in a particular setting, we must decide from a tactical point of view whether the work of the Church will be more effective if we emphasize the diabolic nature of the similarities between the gospel and the native faiths or if we emphasize the heritage of the pre-earth life or of the light of Christ or of a partially accurate deposit of a faith and truth from ancient times or of whatever else. But this much is certain: the view one takes has important implications for the future of the Church.

Our reactions to religious similarities not only influence our perceptions of the religions of Asia but also our feelings for missionary work in that part of the world. With even a little familiarity with other religions, we can be much impressed by what seem to be duplications of elements usually assumed to be totally unique to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. To come upon these parallels in the remains of cultures long dead (Assyrian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Ugaritic, and others) is one thing. To come upon them in the scriptures of living world faiths that compete with us for the hearts and minds of men—Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam—or in Confucian and Taoism teachings honored among the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese—may be more difficult to handle. A little such familiarity with non-Christian religions can breed confusion and concern. And some may be tempted to turn to sheer relativism, to believe that one faith is as good as another, or that all faiths express the same truth in variant cultural trappings.

This is one of the pitfalls often associated with polygenetic “human predicament” and “Light of Christ” approaches to the whole problem of religious resemblances. Some men have seized upon the resemblances of Christ to other men of his age and to other so-called hero figures of all time and upon resemblances between Joseph Smith and Mohammed or some other religious leaders to prove that these two are simply two of many. That makes the Savior and the Prophet much easier to explain. Hugh Nibley has warned us that by diligent research one can match all the Christian teachings with the teachings of others; and these have been pointed to repeatedly by students of comparative religion in order to bring Christ and his prophets down to the level of everyday experience and supplant the miraculous and unsettling by the commonplace and reassuring. As to the process of gaining a sure knowledge of the Lord and his Prophet, I heartily agree with Nibley’s colorful and cryptic statement:

One does not compose music with a sliderule, and the divinity and truthfulness of Christ were never meant to be proved by history, since we are told from the beginning that that knowledge comes to one only by direct revelation from the Father in heaven.⁵⁰

I find one aspect of the diffusionist approach particularly challenging to Mormon students of comparative religion: Diffusionists tend to think in terms of dispensation patterns as a framework for understanding the religious experience of mankind. At least by implication we are told that the human story is a conflict between two states of mind, between those who have been rebellious, indifferent, or hostile to God and those who have been custodians of truth—the lovers of God. This is the yardstick by which the various religions may be measured. Therefore, in each case we must ask ourselves how much a religion has preserved of the primitive, original revelation—and what its known historical links are. After Israel (Judaism), how should the great religions be ranked? Should first place be assigned to Zoroastrianism, because it hands on and recasts a tradition of remote antiquity, of severe truth and high morality? Should Zoroaster be followed by the *rishis* of the *Vedas*, Brahmans by birth, who spring from Seth’s descendants by one line, a class of men chosen by God who, though somewhat crippled or degenerated, are still devoted to God’s service, as E. L. Allen has contended?⁵¹ Or, on the other hand, shall we agree that among the nations of antiquity who stood nearest to or at least very near to the source of primitive revelations from God, the Chinese must hold a distinguished place? Among the Chinese are there not many remarkable vestiges of eternal truth to be found in their classical works and in their time-honored religious traditions?⁵² As Latter-day Saints begin seriously to investigate the source of Japanese religion and lay claims of finding extraordinary links between them and the peoples of the Old Testament and Book of Mormon, does this require a significant revision of our perceptions of that people’s place in the unfolding of God’s work in the latter days, as so many of our students have suggested in recent years?⁵³

Among those Latter-day Saints who underscore the manifestations of God’s influence among all men on an independent and personal basis—either through his Spirit or in response to common needs and problems in the human condition—the universality of God is stressed. The whole race of man—in every land, of every color, and in every stage of culture—is not only the offspring of God, but in the vast compass of his providence all are being supported by his love to reach within the limits of their powers a knowledge of the Supreme. Not only in this is God thought of as having a more universal and direct involvement in the lives of all his children on an individual basis, but also the sense of community among human beings is enhanced. On the other hand, diffusionists tend to stress the eternal struggle between truth and error, between eternal truth and local culture, between God’s chosen people and those who are not so chosen, between the revelations of God and the

ways of the world, implicitly this calls for a primary focus on the ways in which Latter-day Saints are different from others, rather than upon their common humanity or their dependence on a common Father. Among diffusionists there is always the temptation to construe a narrow, exclusive, and arrogant view of themselves and of the Church that militates against true brotherhood—the pure Love of Christ—the expansion of Zion in the “nethermost” places of the earth, the full acceptance of gospel values in alien heathen cultures, and full recognition that the God of Israel is also the God of the whole earth.

For those of us who seem ready to see God’s handiwork throughout the world and even in the lives of wise teachers, poets, philosophers, and scientists and who are happy to believe that they all have a work and mission under an overruling Providence, there are two final cautions I should like to make. First, although the Spirit and power of Christ is manifest worldwide, this is not to suggest that the founders and teachers of the great religions of man have a full endowment of either light or power. They have not. They did not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost or the keys and authority of the Holy Priesthood, and without these they could not receive revelation and authority to perform more than preparatory principles and ordinances for their people. Gotama Buddha has been a light for Asia, but he could not be the light of the world. He was not appointed or empowered to that position. I believe that Mohammed was an inspired man, a prophet without priesthood, who performed a particular mission at a special time among a people with special needs. But God has a living prophet who heads up his universal kingdom in the earth—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The President of the Church is God’s mouthpiece—a universal mouthpiece, endowed with the keys of presidency over all affairs dealing with a fullness of God’s power and authority throughout the earth.

As Latter-day Saints we cannot dismiss Buddhism out of hand simply as a false religion. The light of Christ shines in it, too. But there is danger here. A friendly and appreciative approach to non-Mormon religions in Asia carries with it an intrinsic temptation to think that in places like Thailand we must at least symbolically, if not literally, dress the Mormon missionaries as Buddhist monks. But recognition of religious parallels does not imply the need for advisability of such a course. In seeking for that which is “virtuous, lovely, and praiseworthy” within the native faiths, we are not seeking accommodation or compromise. Others have tried this with no effective benefit. There is no value to the Church or to the people of Asia in allowing Jehovah to be accepted into the Buddhist pantheon; and there is no gospel benefit in having Jesus Christ identified as an avatar of a Hindu god, as an incarnation of the Buddha, or

in any way less than the Son of God, “the only name given among men” whereby we must be saved. But despite the prospect of this negative result, the positive implications of using good things in Asia as building blocks for bringing people into a fuller realization of their own spiritual possibilities must not be ignored.

Footnotes

1. In Islam the flight of Mohammed from Mecca in A.D. 622 is known as the Hegira.
2. *Karma*, in Hinduism and Buddhism, is the force generated by a person’s actions that determine his future spiritual condition, both in this life and in succeeding ones. Good deeds lead toward liberation—Nirvana—and bad ones to a continuation of an individual’s transmigration but in progressively inferior states of existence and worse conditions of pain and suffering.
3. Nirvana is the term used primarily to refer to the state of release or salvation in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Literally the word means “extinguishing” a flame. Although Gotama Buddha rejected the idea of the existence of gods and individual souls, he did believe in *karma*. Therefore, related to the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth and *karma*, an individual’s series of lives is compared to the lighting of successive lamps, one lamp after another. The “re-lighting” goes on as long as the individual has desire and individual consciousness and is subject to care, pain, and external reality. The state of Nirvana is reached when desire and individual consciousness are extinguished and a state of oblivion—and therefore bliss—has been achieved. From this state the individual, or the stream of consciousness, will be reborn no more. An individual’s movement towards Nirvana is typically attained by treading the Noble Eightfold Path, which includes not merely ethical self-training but also techniques of contemplative mysticism such as yoga.
4. These are drawn from W. Woodville Rockhill, trans., *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of his Order* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1884), which is derived from Tibetan works in the Bkah-Hgyur and Bstan-Hgyur, the Tibetan Tripitaka.
5. Dhammapada, 394, in *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. and trans. F. Max Muller, 14 vols. (New York: Scribner’s, 1901), 12:90. Hereafter cited as *SBE*.
6. Dhammapada, 174, *SBE* 12:48 (pt. 2).
7. *Tevijja Sutta* 1:15, quoted in S. H. Kellogg, *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1885), p. 136.
8. *Saddharma pundarika*, trans. H. Kern, *SBE* 10:118–141.
9. Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection: Short Discourses on Gospel Themes* (Independence, Mo.: Zion’s Printing and Publishing Company, 1943), p. 30.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
11. Orson F. Whitney, “The Undiscovered Country: A Dissertation on Spiritual Themes,” *Improvement Era* 23 (December 1919):101.
12. J. F. Rychlak, *Introduction to Personality and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1973), pp. 143–47; see also C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, 17 vols., ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953–73); see particularly volume 9, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959), and volume 11, *Psychology and Religion: West and East* (1958).
13. Truman G. Madsen, *Conscience and Consciousness*, Commissioner’s Lecture (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1973), p. 5.
14. Justin Martyr, *Apologia*, as cited in Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages* (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1945), p. 40.

15. Which is the theme of John A. Widtsoe's introduction to Thomas Cottam Romney, *World Religions in the Light of Mormonism* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1946).
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 217-26.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 78.
19. Alvin R. Dyer, *This Age of Confusion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964), p. 15, footnote.
20. Lao Tzu was the founder of Taoism, i.e., followers of the way of nature.
21. Dyer, *Age of Confusion*, p. 98.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-10.
23. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
24. Hugh Nibley, *The World and the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954), pp. 213-14.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15.
26. Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papers: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975), p. vii.
27. Tape recorded interview with William A. Wilson, March 1976.
28. See Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1959).
29. Victor Witter Turner, *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes among Ndemba of Zambia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). See especially p. 5ff.
30. I am indebted to Professor Myers, not simply for his insight—but for the insights he has stimulated within me in our taped discussions.
31. John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 12 (April 1921):62.
32. See Charles W. Penrose in Brigham Young et al., *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 22:85. Hereafter cited as *JD*.
33. Brigham Young in *JD*, 2:139.
34. This is elaborately emphasized by Charles W. Penrose in *JD*, 23:346.
35. *JD*, 1:155.
36. George Albert Smith, an address in *One Hundred and Second Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2-4 October 1931 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 120.
37. *JD*, 2:140.
38. *JD*, 24:61.
39. In B. H. Roberts, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1907), 1:514.
40. John A. Widtsoe, "Is There a Master Race?" *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1947), vol. 2, *Gospel Interpretations* (1947), p. 216.
41. *JD*, 6:194.
42. Orson F. Whitney, an address in *Ninety-First Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 3-6 April 1921 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 33. See also Forace Green, comp., *Cowley and Whitney on Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963), pp. 292ff.

43. Roberts, *Defense of Faith and Saints*, 1:512-13.
44. *JD*, 3:32.
45. *JD*, 3:40.
46. Moses Thatcher, "Chinese Classics," *The Contributor* 8 (1887):301.
47. Matthew Cowley, "The Gospel of Repentance," KSL Radio address, Sunday evening, 31 July 1927.
48. Cf. 2 Ne. 29:7-12.
49. James E. Talmage, "In the Lineage of the Gods," *Improvement Era*, 8 August 1905:726-27.
50. Nibley, *The World and the Prophets*, pp. 16-17.
51. F. L. Allen, *Christianity among the Religions* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 61-62.
52. One delightful example of this proposition is Gerrit Gong's, "We Are Waiting the Impact of Chinese Ancestor Worship," a typescript with slide illustrations, which argues that the Chinese have enjoyed the spirit of Elijah (i.e., a great tradition of salvation for the dead) from times of remote antiquity.
53. This is a popular theme among some Japanese Latter-day Saints, and particularly among *nisei* Japanese and missionaries returned from Japanese fields of labor. Some of the ramifications are suggested in my article, "Did Christ Visit Japan?" *Brigham Young University Studies* 10 (Winter 1970):135-58; see also "The Japanese Search for Identity," in my forthcoming book, *Every Nation, Kindred, Tongue, and People*.

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM: EAST AND WEST

Truman G. Madsen

Q. What are we to understand by the four beasts, spoken of in the same verse? [Revelation 4:6.]

A. They are figurative expressions, used by the Revelator, John, in describing heaven, the paradise of God, the happiness of man, and of beasts, and of creeping things, and of the fowls of the air; that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual; the spirit of man in the likeness of his person, as also the spirit of the beast, and every other creature which God has created (D&C 77:2).

And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me (Moses 6:63).

It is widely held today that religious symbols have a unique power. Their influence transcends symbols that are mainly social, political, or literary, as, for example, the black belt, the flag, or the father-motif in