




Theses and Dissertations

1995

"Yet I Must Submit": Mormon Women's Perspectives on Death and Dying 1847-1900

Julie Paige Hemming Savage
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>

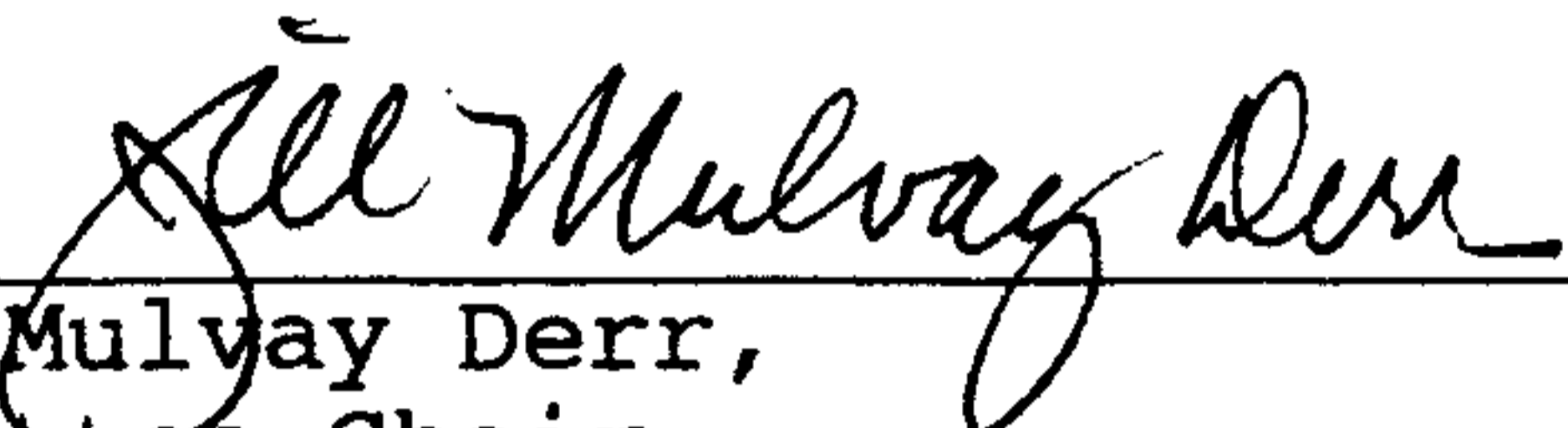
 Part of the [History Commons](#), [Mormon Studies Commons](#), [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation


Savage, Julie Paige Hemming, ""Yet I Must Submit": Mormon Women's Perspectives on Death and Dying 1847-1900" (1995). *Theses and Dissertations*. 5092.
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/5092>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.


This thesis by Julie Paige Hemming Savage is accepted in its present form by The David M. Kennedy Center for International and Area Studies of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.



Jill Mulvay Derr,
Committee Chair



Mary Stovall Richards,
Committee Member

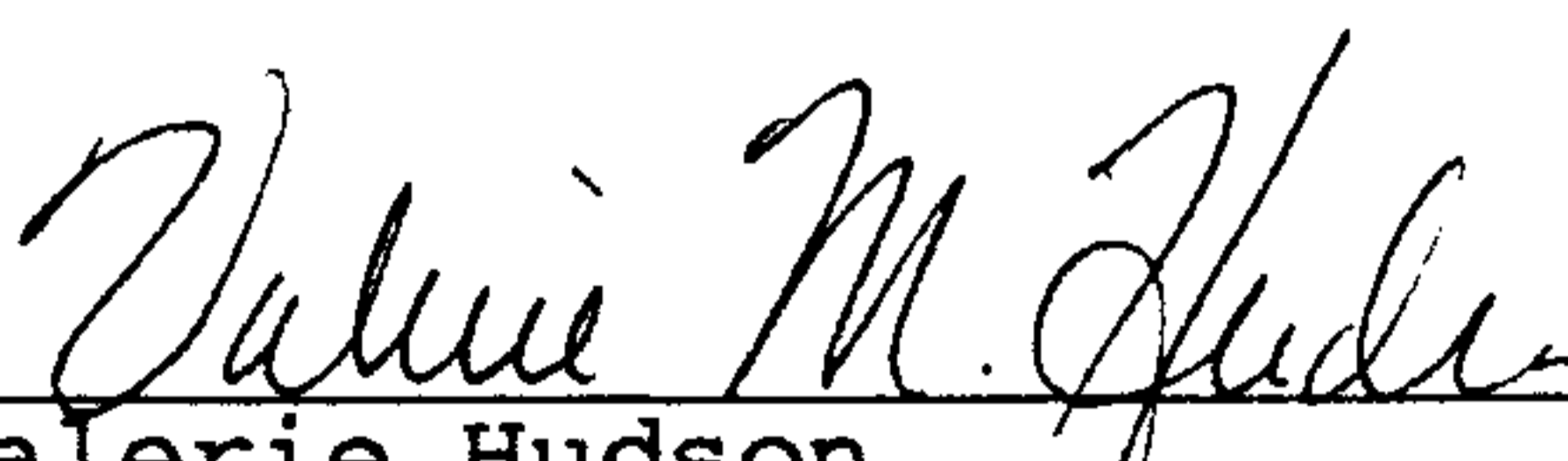


Maureen Ursenbach Beecher,
Committee Member



Neil York,
Graduate Subfield Coordinator

27 November 1995
Date



Valerie Hudson,
Director of Graduate Studies

Neil L York

Neil York,
Graduate Subfield Coordinator

Valerie M Hudson

Valerie Hudson,
Director of Graduate Studies

D
1.02
.524
1995

PZ

"Yet I Must Submit":

Mormon Women's Perspectives on Death and Dying

1847-1900

A Thesis

Presented to the

Kennedy Center For International and Area Studies

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Julie Paige Hemming Savage

December 1995

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. "IN THE MIDST OF LIFE WE ARE IN DEATH"	1
2. "TRUST IN GOD THOUGH HE SLAY YOU": THE POWER OF MORMON THEOLOGY OF DEATH	15
3. "THE FOLKS WENT TO WORK": THE COMMUNAL AND RITUALISTIC NATURE OF DEATH AND DYING IN MORMON SOCIETY	47
4. ELIZA MARIE PARTRIDGE LYMAN: A MORMON WOMAN'S "OPTIMISTIC SORROW"	82
5. "I HAVE OBTAINED COMFORT TO A REMARKABLE DEGREE"	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	118

CHAPTER ONE

"IN THE MIDST OF LIFE WE ARE IN DEATH"¹

Much has been written during the past twenty years about Mormon women's lives in the nineteenth century. Recent publications have not only "celebrated the history of the female portion of the human race," but they have also "provided a sense of identity and rootedness for women who had more or less suddenly discovered that history written in traditional language dealing with exclusively male exploits left them without a past of their own."² Research has focused on a variety of facets of Mormon women's experiences: polygamy, suffrage, domestic life, publications, to name only a few. Many women's historians have explored the hardships of life in Nauvoo, Illinois, and other early settlements, as well as the often treacherous conditions of the Mormon exodus to Utah. These studies have placed women within the existing Mormon historical narrative; yet because of the relatively late arrival of women's studies, many significant elements of women's lives have yet to be considered in depth. One aspect

¹Ellen Briggs Douglas to Family, 14 April 1844, in Carol Cornwall Madsen, In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1994), 118.

²Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., Sisters in Spirit (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), x.

of women's experience which was of paramount importance, but which has been noted largely in passing by historians, is women's confrontation with the realities of death and dying during the early years of Mormon western settlement.³

Nineteenth-century America as a whole "was not a healthful place."⁴ Historian Klaus Hansen has stated that "death was inescapable. People knew it by its existential proximity as well as by its actual prevalence."⁵ In her study of childbirth in America, Judith Walzer Leavitt has pointed out that prior to the twentieth century, the American woman who did not lose any children was rare; it was far more common for a woman to have one or several children die at birth or shortly thereafter. "For women, birth and death, life and loss, were intimately entwined in their daily

³"Widowhood among the Mormons" comes closest to filling this gap. See Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Widowhood among the Mormons: The Personal Accounts," in On Their Own: Widows and Widowhood in the American Southwest, 1848-1939, ed. Arlene Scadron (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 117-39. In addition, there are brief discussions of Mormon women and death contained in a number of other Mormon women's studies. Mormon women doctors and midwives have been studied fairly extensively. For example, see Christine Croft Waters, "Pioneering Women Physicians," in From Cottage to Market: The Professionalization of Women's Sphere, ed. John R. Sillito (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Women's History Association, 1983). See also, Chris Rigby Arrington, "Pioneer Midwives," in Mormon Sisters, ed. Claudia L. Bushman (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Emmeline Press Limited, 1976), 43-65.

⁴Mary E. Stovall, "'To Be, To Do, and To Suffer': Responses to Illness and Death in the Nineteenth-Century Central South," Journal of Mississippi History 52 (May 1990):95.

⁵Klaus J. Hansen, Mormonism and the American Experience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 88.

existence."⁶ One third of all children failed to reach adulthood.⁷ It wasn't until sometime between 1870 and 1880 that Americans' chances of living long and healthy lives began to increase significantly.⁸ Nineteenth century men and women, by nature of their very existence, were forced to deal on a regular basis with the issues of sickness and death.

Cholera, diphtheria, dysentery, gastroenteritis in infancy, malaria, measles, meningitis, pneumonia, scarlet fever and erysipelas, smallpox, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, whooping cough, and yellow fever were among "the most devastating" of the illnesses that plagued individuals and communities in the nineteenth-century. Though small in number, these diseases were responsible for the vast majority of sickness and death in America. In addition, parasitic and nutritional disorders contributed significantly to the risks associated with these maladies. Contaminated water supplies carried the bacteria that caused many dangerous diseases such as dysentery, gastroenteritis, and typhoid fever.⁹

Lester E. Bush, Jr.'s exploration of cemetery and sexton records in early Mormon Eastern and Western

⁶Judith Walzer Leavitt, Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 19.

⁷Lester E. Bush, "On Death and Dying," chap. in Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993), 41.

⁸Robert V. Wells, Revolutions in Americans' Lives: A Demographic Perspective on the History of Americans, Their Families, and Their Society (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 126.

⁹Bush, 42.

settlements indicates that "the early Mormon record was essentially indistinguishable from that of contemporaries in similar circumstances."¹⁰ Life in nineteenth-century Mormon western settlements was tenuous; sickness and death were all too common.¹¹ Fully two-thirds of total deaths for the entire population of Western Mormon settlements occurred among children under age twelve (as opposed to only 2-3 percent today), "with a preponderance coming during the hot months of summer and early fall (during which 75-85 percent of all community deaths were among the young)."¹² While mortality rates for children in their first year were kept relatively low, presumably because of breastfeeding, children who had been weaned were particularly vulnerable. As they began to depend on food and water full of disease organisms, children were exposed to illnesses such as dysentery, gastroenteritis, and typhoid fever. Subsequently, mortality rates increased considerably in one-to-five-year-olds.¹³

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹For further information regarding conditions in early Utah settlements, see Eugene E. Campbell, "Early Colonization Patterns," in Utah's History, ed. Richard D. Poll (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989), 133-152.

¹²Bush, 42. Warm weather hastens the growth of bacteria and the spread of some diseases. See Larry Morgan Logue, "Belief and Behavior in a Mormon Town: Nineteenth-Century St. George, Utah," Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1984, 162.

¹³Ibid., While these statistics were to be expected, some of Logue's findings are quite surprising. He observed that adult males in St. George were tremendously healthy, particularly compared to women in the community. Logue chooses to explain this phenomenon by citing the Church doctrine that taught that "a woman's salvation here and hereafter was completely dependent upon her being married to a man who held the

From 1848 to 1894, infantile diarrhea was the principal cause of death among immigrants in the intermountain region; more specifically, of 22,941 deaths in Salt Lake City, 2,715, or 11.8 percent, were due to diarrheas in children.¹⁴

Diphtheria, a highly infectious disease of childhood, was the the second greatest cause of death in Salt Lake, accounting for 1,240 deaths in the city from 1863 to 1894. These deaths occurred primarily in children under the age of ten. A conservative estimate of the deaths from typhoid fever (the third greatest cause of death in Salt Lake City) places the number of deaths from 1850 to 1894 at close to a thousand. If this figure is accurate, there could have been over 10,000 cases of typhoid in the city before 1904.¹⁵

When considered independently, the death totals from each disease might not appear particularly significant: 121 deaths in 1891 from diphtheria in a town of over 21,000 is perhaps not overwhelming. However, add to that figure 112

divine keys of admission to heaven," and concludes that women practiced nutritional self-denial in times of insufficient food in order to keep their husbands healthy enough to obtain those divine keys. He states, "Heavenly glory was the greatest good imaginable, and so women shaped conditions so that death would not easily rob them and their families of the best chance at salvation." Ibid., 180-2.

¹⁴Death from infantile diarrhea declined after this period. Many factors were at work to effect this change, including improvements in housing conditions, water supply, sewage disposal, preservation of foods, and inspection and sanitary control of all sources of foods. In addition, "More people were being educated and showed an increasing interest in matters of health." The single greatest factor in lessening the death rate was improvement in the quality of milk. Ralph Richards, Of Medicine, Hospitals, and Doctors (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1954), 140-5. See also Christine Croft Waters, "Pioneering Physicians in Utah, 1847-1900" (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1976), 13, 36-7.

¹⁵This estimate accounts only for the typhoid deaths recorded in cemetery books. Richards, 166-7.

6
deaths from diarrheal diseases, 67 deaths from typhoid, and a notable number of deaths from other diseases and injuries in that same year, and the death toll burgeons.¹⁶ In addition, acknowledge the aggregate consequences of the repetition of this process year after year, and the numbers become staggering. It then is easier to comprehend Ralph Richards' statement about life during one of Salt Lake's diphtheria epidemics in 1879: "Innumerable families lost two children the same day. Two to five deaths in a single family during one week were common."¹⁷

At times, frontier conditions exacerbated problems of ill health. The first generation of Mormons in Utah and surrounding areas faced difficult conditions which included, among other things, a dearth of sufficient food, shelter, and medical knowledge and resources. Interestingly, however, the location of Mormons in the intermountain West initially shielded them from a number of Eastern plagues, including cholera, malaria, and the most serious strains of smallpox. This protection lasted until the 1869 transcontinental railroad brought both immigrants and diseases. In addition, "more people simply led to greater contamination of water

¹⁶Death from injury was frequent; cemeteries recorded some of these deaths with notations such as, "run over by a wagon, killed in a snow-slide, bitten by a rattle snake, perished in a storm, shot by Indians." Ibid., 21.

¹⁷Ibid., 150-2. Compare this to national epidemics: the yellow fever epidemic of 1878 "took 16,000 lives in the South plus 4,000 elsewhere and afflicted upwards of one hundred thousand persons, approximately one-half of Memphis's 40,000 residents left for a more healthful clime. Of those who remained, one quarter died." Stovall, 96.

supplies and greater risk of contagious exposure." With population growth, Mormon death rates rose steadily from the low twenties per 1,000 in the earliest years of Western settlement, to the mid twenties in the 1880s. During this period, infant mortality increased from around 155 deaths per 1,000 to about 170 deaths per 1,000.¹⁸

Even these grim statistics tell but a small portion of the tale of sickness and death in the early Mormon Western settlements. For each death noted in cemetery and sextons reports, there were circumstances peculiar to that person and that time. Many of the stories have long been buried with those who could have told them. Others, however, have been preserved in journals, letters, and reminiscences; these reflect the ever-present threat of death. The juxtaposition of the bustling activities of life with the duties associated with death provides a stark reminder of the close proximity of death; as one woman recalled the conventional wisdom, "In the midst of life we are in death."¹⁹ Women wrote of visiting neighbors, washing clothing, caring for children, and attending church meetings, alongside their notations of tending the sick and dying, washing and dressing bodies for burial, sewing burial clothing, and attending funerals. Journal entries similar to Hannah Grover Hegsted's in 1898 were common: "I resumed my usual duties at my sister Eva's.

¹⁸Bush, 43-4.

¹⁹Ellen Briggs Douglas to Family, 14 April 1844, in In Their Own Words, 118.

I cared for her at the birth of little Clara, sewed a great deal, helped with sewing and helped lay away Brother Thomas West and two or three other friends."²⁰

It is striking what an enormous presence the state of people's health plays in women's journals. Martha Spence Heywood's journal from 1850-56 is representative of many women's writings, in that there is rarely an entry that does not contain a running commentary on everyone's health: her husband's, children's, friends', and her own. At times, sickness became so prevalent in Mormon communities that almost no one was exempt from being sick themselves, caring for others who were ill, or tending to the responsibilities accompanying death. Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood commented on one such period in the comparatively large town of Logan, Utah, in July 1881: "There have been three funerals. Grandy Raymond's wife, Richard Jardine's baby, and Edward Phillip's baby. . . . It is enough to frighten anyone. There are so many deaths."²¹ And again in December 1894, she noted,

John was sick all week. Archie and Myron are sick too. Maggie has been sick but was able to start to school yesterday. Levi Webster's wife was buried today, and Joseph Young's wife died this morning. There is scarcely a family but has someone sick.²²

²⁰Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 2 June 1898, 48, typescript in author's possession.

²¹Ivy Hooper Blood Hill, ed., Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood: Autobiography and Abridged Diary, 1845-98 (Logan, Ut: J.P. Smith Printing, Inc., 1966), 16 July 1881, 41.

²²Ibid., 5 December 1894, 110.

It is also clear from public records that women were terribly concerned with the ill-health of their friends and families as they sought training to help stave off the effects of various illnesses. The Saints had been settled in the Salt Lake valley for less than two years when the first health organization in Utah, the Council of Health, was organized. Here, herbal doctors and interested citizens joined together to discuss health matters and to advocate and explain various treatments. Soon, members of the Council of Health realized that some women did not join their organization because they were reluctant to discuss medical matters in mixed company, and so they formed the Female Council of Health. Members of this council "heard lectures by local physicians, discussed use of faith and herbs in healing, attempted to design more healthful female fashions, spoke and sang in tongues, and enjoyed a social and spiritual interchange."²³ After six years, the Council of Health and its sister organization declined in importance and eventually died out.²⁴

The interest in gaining knowledge of the healing arts, however, did not diminish. The Mormon women's publication of 1872-1914, the Woman's Exponent, contained a regular section on home remedies and nursing advice and often advertised health and nursing classes, evidencing that women continued

²³Richard Jensen, "Forgotten Relief Societies," Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983):106.

²⁴Waters, "Pioneering Physicians," 14-6.

to seek cures for family ailments. Other manifestations of a general concern with illness and death during this period include various other health ventures such as the founding of the Deseret Hospital in 1882, as well as women's participation in sacred healing ceremonies.²⁵

Women's descriptions of the deaths of loved ones in private writings receive passing mention in historical analyses, and yet, it is through these narratives that we gain access to the souls of women as they coped with personal tragedy. Their writings reflect a multitude of perspectives; and as Carol Cornwall Madsen has observed, "Somewhere within that range of experience and perception can be heard the silent voices of those who, for their own reasons, did not leave a written record."²⁶ The variations of women's experiences and reactions to death are as infinite and complex as were the women themselves; each death brought its own pain and, in most cases, its own solace. For example, the journal of Mary Ann Burnham Freeze fairly hums with the activities of an animated, zealous, articulate Mormon woman living in Salt Lake City; she engages the reader as she describes the details of her life. When she records her grief over the illness and death of her five-year-old son,

²⁵A number of historians have examined these efforts at improving health conditions. For example, see Cheryll Lynn May, "Charitable Sisters," in Mormon Sisters; Christine Croft Waters, "Pioneering Physicians in Utah, 1847-1900"; and Lester E. Bush, Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints. For further discussion of women's participation in healing rituals, see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

²⁶Madsen, In Their Own Words, x.

Lou, the tenor of her writing becomes even more fervent. It appears that she used her journal as a sounding board for her pain. Her entry of 14 November exhibits the terrible agony felt by one woman as she confronted the harsh realities of death. She wrote that her son had taken a fever and croup; subsequently, he began to cough up "yellow phlegm." She and her husband sat up with their boy day and night and called for both Doctors S. B. Young and Pratt. She also sent for the "Bishop who came and administered but apparently without much faith."

Lou continued to grow worse. Mary Ann recorded,

I never spent such a night of agony in my life, and would like to be spared ever suffering so again if it were agreeable to the will of God. The thought of having to give up that noble spirit in whom I had made myself such promises of future pride and happiness, seemed more than I could do. . . . During the night he asked me over and over to sing that same little song, "Old Robin is dead and in his grave," which I did although my heart was bursting with grief.²⁷

Regardless of these ministrations, Lou died. Just following his death, she wrote, "It stormed, as it did the day before, but that was nothing to me. If there had been two suns shining, it could not have made the earth cheerful to me, for was not my son, the light of my life, lying cold and still."²⁸

Her pain extended beyond the days immediately following. The Christmas after Lou's death, Mary Ann mourned that it was a sad day, "For my darling Lou, the loveliest of

²⁷Freeze, 14 November 1884.

²⁸Ibid., 17 November 1884.

12

them all was missing from among the childish throng. I could in fancy hear him now and again come to me and show me and tell in his own cute way what presents he had received from Santa Claus."²⁹ In Mary Ann's case, her loneliness was compounded by the fact that she was a plural wife. That Christmas day, her husband was sick and she noted that he didn't come by all day.

Lou's death was only one of many premature deaths in Salt Lake City that year; yet, because his mother's narrative was preserved, it makes personal and real the grief of women whose children died.

Women's journals provide valuable opportunities to explore their immediate reactions to personal tragedy. Reminiscences are also useful, for when women attempted to remember the events of their lives, births and deaths significantly marked their existence. Other events were also related, but the births and deaths provided the punctuation. It appears that some experiences associated with death are so profound and life-altering, that the memory and effects of those deaths are indelibly imprinted in the human consciousness. In her autobiography, Annie Clark Tanner recalled the death of one of her three-year-old twin daughters by stating simply, "I could grieve for that happy,

²⁹Ibid., 25 December 1884.

vivacious little girl now if I would, although she passed on thirty-six years ago."³⁰

Women found numerous ways to deal with the deaths that surrounded them. Chapter One of this thesis explores how Mormon doctrines colored women's writings when they confronted the reality of death. Some coping methods were similar to those employed by Americans in the larger culture, while others took on the peculiar nature of Mormonism. Mormon women, like many of their American counterparts, relied heavily on their faith and the tenets of their religion for strength and reassurance that everything was in the Lord's hands.

The importance of community and ritual in Mormon women's bereavement will be examined in Chapter Two. It is clear from women's records that existing social and family relationships provided support in times of need. This seems particularly true of women's relationships with other women. As Carol Madsen has noted, nineteenth-century Mormon women, like many American women, wrote of a "female world given cohesiveness by the common female rituals of birthing, nurturing, caring for, and supporting those 'others' who came within their circle of attachment."³¹ In addition to these social networks, there were special community-sanctioned

³⁰Annie Clark Tanner, A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Anne Clark Tanner (Salt Lake City, Utah: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1991), 169.

³¹Madsen, In Their Own Words, x.

customs and traditions associated with illness and death that provided solace in difficult times.

Chapter Three serves as a case study, exploring the manner in which the elements of doctrine, community, and ritual played out in the life of one woman, Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman, as she dealt with the deaths of her husband, children, grandchildren, and others. This chapter makes it possible to depart from generalities and attests that, in the end, each woman attempted to come to terms with death in her own manner--in some ways similar to, and in others quite different from her contemporaries, Mormon and non-Mormon.

A close examination of Mormon women's writings from 1847 to 1900 reveals that Mormonism equipped believers with powerful doctrines and rituals which helped women cope with the sorrow and profound sense of loss that accompanied the deaths of those they loved. In addition, members living in Mormon communities rendered invaluable physical, emotional, and spiritual support to each other as they cared for the sick and dying, prepared the dead for burial, and dealt with the lingering sense of loss brought on by death.

CHAPTER TWO

"TRUST IN GOD THOUGH HE SLAY YOU":¹

THE POWER OF MORMON THEOLOGY OF DEATH

There have been a number of studies that have examined early Mormon thought about death.² While these studies have done much to define nineteenth-century Mormon doctrines pertaining to death, they have not focused as fully on the personal reactions of Mormons to death and dying. It is essential to examine how Mormon doctrines played out in the lives of those confronted by death. Peter L. Berger has observed that the "power of religion depends, in the last resort, upon the credibility of the banners it puts in the hands of men [and women] as they stand before death, or more

¹Aurelia S. Rogers, Life Sketches of Orson Spencer and Others, and History of Primary Work (Geo. Q. Cannon and Sons Co.: Salt Lake City, Utah, 1898), 180, quoted in Ritchie Elizabeth Kohler, "Aurelia S. Rogers," in Sister Saints, ed. Vicky Burgess-Olson (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 231.

²The most significant of these studies include: Klaus Hansen, "The Mormon Rationalization of Death," chap. in Mormonism and the American Experience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 84-112; M. Guy Bishop, "To Overcome the 'Last Enemy': Early Mormon Perceptions of Death," Brigham Young University Studies 26 (Summer 1986):63-79; Mary Ann Myers, "Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and Practice," in Death in America, ed. David Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 112-35; and Lester E. Bush, "On Death and Dying," chap. in Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993), 9-39.

accurately as they walk, inevitably, toward it."³ An examination of Mormon women's personal writings of the period illuminates the meaning of Mormon theology in the lives of those dealing with the realities of death and dying; it fills in the gaps left by less personal, more theoretical explorations. It is evident that Mormon women's responses to death were profoundly affected by their faith in God and their belief in the theology of the Mormon Church. As Mary Ann Burnham Freeze, a devout Mormon, mused a few days after her son's death, "I have obtained comfort to a remarkable degree. I am a marvel to myself."⁴ The "banners" placed in the hands of women as they faced death themselves and dealt with the deaths of those they loved included powerful doctrines and rituals which reassured women that their family relationships would continue beyond the grave, and that God had the power to save their souls.

When her mother died, Emily Dow Partridge Young stated, "It is a satisfaction to know my dear good mother is at rest. It does not seem like death, but more like life."⁵ Mormonism stressed the "positive side of death, which [was]

³Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1969), 52, quoted in Bishop, 64.

⁴This and all subsequent entries copied exactly. Mary Ann Burnham Freeze, Journal, 20 November 1884, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL).

⁵Emily Dow Partridge Young, Journal, typescript, 10 June 1878, 36, HBLL.

characterized as both a rebirth and a victory."⁶ In M. Guy Bishop's recent study of early Mormon perceptions of death, he asserts that two fundamental aspects of budding Mormon theology were that the "bereaved would be reunited with the deceased at some future moment," and "the next life would be a place of rest for the righteous."⁷ These tenets were similar to those held by other nineteenth-century American Christians who believed in the "eternal bliss" of immortality shared with family and friends.⁸ These were not new concepts. Mormons, like many other Christians of the time, believed in the necessity of living a good Christian life in order to obtain this eternal rest; therefore, Mormon women's journals are replete with their desires for a righteous life for themselves and for their families, as well as the hope that this righteousness would bring about reunions with deceased family and friends.

But as time passed, Mormon theology developed into a more complex belief system. Bishop has noted that by the mid-1840s, Mormon theology had expanded from the traditional Christian belief in individual rewards for righteousness, to a belief in an "awe-inspiring . . . highly structured heaven in which mankind was rewarded in varying degrees based on

⁶Bush, 25.

⁷Bishop, 65.

⁸Ibid., 63.

worthiness displayed during the earthly sojourn."⁹ Joseph Smith had stated in 1832 that those who obtained the celestial kingdom would become "gods, even the sons of God . . . making them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion."¹⁰ For Mormons, the most valiant of God's children were those who, when given the opportunity, accepted the Mormon Church, and participated in its accompanying sacred rituals, including baptism and a series of other ordinances performed in Mormon temples. Probably the most difficult of the tasks facing would-be Saints was the direction, once baptized, to keep the commandments and endure to the end.¹¹

In order to become a member of the Church, the initiate was first baptized, for those who were not baptized by Mormon priesthood authority were damned.¹² With eternal promises reserved only for faithful members of the Mormon Church, members often felt driven to impart the news to those they loved. Theirs was a glorious message to share: God had again spoken "by the mouths of prophets" and was setting about to establish a holy people by restoring His Church.¹³

⁹Ibid., 75, 64.

¹⁰Doctrine and Covenants 76:58, 95.

¹¹"And if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God." Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

¹²"Verily, verily, I say unto you, they who believe not on your words, and are not baptized in water in my name, for the remission of their sins, that they may receive the Holy Ghost, shall be damned, and shall not come into my Father's kingdom where my Father and I am." Doctrine and Covenants 84:74.

¹³Ibid., 109:23-4.

Therefore, members of the Church wanted to make the blessings of the gospel available to all. One woman who was enormously concerned with the eternal welfare of her non-Mormon extended family was Irene Hascall, who wrote a series of letters to her family in the East attempting to convert them to Mormonism. Irene begged her family to "rend the thick bandage of tradition and prejudice that was so interwoven" around them and be baptized into the Church.¹⁴ Anticipating their irritation with her fervor, she wrote, "I must preach to you. Everything else seems of so little consequence. What is 70 or 80 years compared with eternity."¹⁵ And preach she did--continually; her letters are full of sermonizing.

In another letter, Irene stressed the necessity of Mormon baptism by sharing the details of her own son's baptism. She wrote,

Thales was baptised his last birthday. He had too much Hascall about him to be very pious but he knew Mormonism was true and if he wished to be saved in with the greatest glory possible for man to receive this was the first step into Mormonism.¹⁶

If the reward for baptism was great, the consequence of rejecting the ordinance was also weighty in Mormonism's multi-layered heaven. In 1853, Irene attempted to describe

¹⁴"Letters of a Proselyte: The Hascall-Pomeroy Correspondence," Utah Historical Quarterly 25 (October 1957):348.

¹⁵Ibid., 352,

¹⁶Ibid., 354.

her belief in heaven in scriptural terms to her non-Mormon family:

None other [but Mormons] will enter Celestial but their glory will [be] Teristrial and Celestial as differs the Moon and stars from the Sun. . . . If we prepare for eternity and make a ressurection to celestial glory sure[ly] the rest is small beside of that still it is our duties to make our selves as proficient as possible in every good and true principle.¹⁷

But, as she mentioned, baptism was only the "first step" into Mormonism; thereafter, it behooved members to exhibit an enduring commitment to the gospel and to living a Christian life. In addition to keeping the commandments, each person was expected to participate in other temporal ordinances which were necessary for salvation.

Most other ordinances beyond baptism were performed in temples built specifically for this purpose. The temple ordinances included the endowment ceremony wherein Mormons received instructions on how to "walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood."¹⁸ Mormons were here prepared for the events of the afterlife by making enduring commitments to live the principles and commandments of the gospel. Klaus Hansen has pointed out that the culmination of the symbolic drama of the endowment was the "passing through

¹⁷Ibid., 352. See also Doctrine and Covenants 76.

¹⁸Brigham Young, "Necessity of Building Temples--The Endowment," 6 April 1853, Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (Liverpool; F.D. Richards, 1855) 2:31-2.

the veil," which dramatized the "transition from earth life through death to eternal life."¹⁹

Once Mormons had received their own endowments, families could be eternally "sealed," or united husband to wife, and parents to children. In 1843, Joseph Smith gave the Saints a revelation regarding the binding nature of marriage covenants sealed in Mormon temples by Mormon priesthood authority. Speaking as the Lord, he wrote:

If a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power, then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me.²⁰

Inherent in these marriage covenants was the belief that children born to parents thus sealed by "everlasting covenants" were also bound or sealed to their parents. Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood recorded in her journal the words of Mormon Church President Wilford Woodruff, who stressed that "every man should be sealed to his father, right back until the chain was complete." Temple sealings would eventually join the entire human family all the way back to Adam and Eve.²¹ In addition, Woodruff preached that a woman could be vicariously sealed to her dead husband. He continued, "Any

¹⁹Hansen, 102.

²⁰Doctrine and Covenants 132:18.

²¹For information on new genealogy history, see James B. Allen, Jessie L. Embry, and Kahlile Mehr, "The Spirit of Elijah," BYU Studies 24 (1994-95):11-31.

man who will redeem his father's family will have a voice in the first resurrection. Let us labor with our children for we have none to lose."²²

While contemporary Christians envisioned reunions with loved ones, their official family ties were often considered earthly in nature; death was frequently seen as a reminder to the living that they should not become too attached to the things of the world, including their familial relationships.²³ Mary Stovall notes that while nineteenth-century Southerners might not have all "anticipated reunion in earthly family groups, most assumed that relatives would naturally gravitate to each other, much as they were accustomed to do in mortality."²⁴ For Mormons, these earthly ties would endure after death, having been formally sealed in Mormon temples--affections for family members were not viewed as worldly attachments, but as eternal bonds that would continue beyond the grave.

Thus, while Mormons had much in common with their American contemporaries who shared a belief in the "eternal bliss" of immortality shared with family and friends, Mormon perceptions of the eternities implied more than this eternal rest. Mormons were "endowed with power from on high" in the

²²Ivy Hooper Blood Hill, ed., Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood: Autobiography and Abridged Diary, 1845-98 (Logan, Ut: J.P. Smith Printing, Inc., 1966), 7 April 1894, 113.

²³Bishop, 76. See also, Lewis O. Saum, "Death in the Popular Mind of Pre-Civil War America," in Death in America, 40.

²⁴Stovall, 109.

temple where they were given instructions on how to progress to exaltation. Power to attain godhood was in their own hands. Historian Carol Cornwall Madsen has asserted, "The eternity of marriage and family relationships and the necessity of specific temporal works to insure such eternal relationships were new doctrines."²⁵

Those unable to receive these ordinances before their deaths could have them performed for them vicariously by Church members; family ties were sealed by living Saints who were baptized and performed temple rituals as proxies for their dead friends and family.²⁶ As Irene Hascall so aptly described in another 1853 letter to her family,

Tell [grandma that] Irene says If there is any Mormon that has authority to baptize if she will be baptized for the remission of sins while she yet lives if she has to be carried on a bed no matter if she will only obey the gospel thus far be baptized and confirmed a member of the church of latter day saints before she dies which is all she can do in that place, I will pass through all other ordinances for her (and save Grandfather for her in the resurrection) I expect it look[s] strange perhaps folly to you to hear us talk of preparing and passing through various ordinance[s] before we can enter a fulness of Glory. In the presence of father and the son all will have their just reward.²⁷

Her passion reflects the Mormon belief in the awesome consequences of neglecting or not accepting these ordinances.

²⁵Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Mormon Women and the Temple: Toward a New Understanding," in Sisters in Spirit, eds. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 97, 103.

²⁶This principle was fully developed by 1844 when Joseph Smith delivered "The King Follett Discourse." See Donald Q Cannon, "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective," Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Winter 1978):179-92.

²⁷Hascall, 352.

Hansen states that by taking part in these vicarious works for family members, Mormons actively participated in the "vast drama of existence they called 'eternal progression.'" This placed life on earth "under the aspect of eternity while at the same time diminishing the terrors of death through a life of constant work for their salvation and that of others."²⁸ Journal entries similar to Mary Ann Weston Maughan's in 1888 were common: "I was busy with my Temple records and working for my dead friends."²⁹ Another woman stated, "In '85 we went as a family to the endowment house in Salt Lake and were baptized for about 400 and since have been to the Logan Temple and completed the work for about 30."³⁰

Many women's patriarchal blessings reflected this belief in eternal family ties.³¹ One of Lucy Hannah White Flake's blessings pronounced, "Thy posterity will be united with thee and stand with thee in the great family union with

²⁸Hansen, 103.

²⁹Journal of Mary Ann Weston Maughan, in Our Pioneer Heritage, 20 vols., ed. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City Utah: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959), 1888, 2:409.

³⁰"Diary of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy: Incidents, Travels, and Life of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy, Including Many Important Events in Church History," 52, HBL.

³¹Patriarchal blessings contemplate "the life mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give for the accomplishment of such life's mission, it being always made clear that the realization of all promised blessings is conditioned upon faithfulness to the gospel of [the] Lord." LDS First Presidency [David O. McKay, Stephen L Richards, J. Reuben Clark, Jr.] statement to all stake presidencies, 28 June 1957, in Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1958), 504, quoted in Irene M. Bates, "Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma," Dialogue 26 (Fall 1993):1.

thousands upon thousands of thine ancestors in the resurrection of the just."³² According to one scholar, the promises delivered through patriarchal blessings must have given "hope and a welcome relief from the drudgery and privation that the women faced in frontier life."³³

Collectively the promises obtained in the temple offered tremendous "hope and reassurance to families rent asunder by untimely deaths and to all came the message that indeed even the most humbled and oppressed could achieve a personal station spectacularly beyond anything the world had to offer."³⁴ This sentiment was articulated in a memorial poem written by Eliza R. Snow to her sister Leonora A. Morley wherein she mused,

The ties of consanguinity, secured
By Sacred cov'nants which the Priesthood binds
On earth, and 'tis recorded in the heavens,
We shall perpetuate beyond the grave;
Eternal union with the cherished ones
Will crown the glory of immortal lives.³⁵

Bonds formally sealed in the temple would bring the Saints together in one great eternal family.

This belief in eternal ties was represented in a majority of the death poetry published in the Woman's Exponent. One particularly poignant expression of grief

³²Patriarchal blessing given by Patriarch Danuel Tular [Taylor], Lucy Hannah White Flake, Journal, typescript, 58, HBL.

³³Bates, 18.

³⁴Bush, 14.

³⁵Woman's Exponent 1 (1 August 1872):35.

mitigated by faith was penned by Lucinda Dalton in a poem entitled "Through Darkness, Light." She records that her "heart [was] almost too numb to ache" over the passing of her child, who was "A shining angel . . . A gift too rare for earth to hold." The closing stanzas of the poem reveal her reconciliation with death:

How empty now these arms which bore it;
 How bleak this world in which it smiled;
 How heavy now this heart which wore it-
 Oh, tender Christ, give back my child!

Nay, little one, I dare not murmur,
 That God loves you as well as I,
 But that he lent you one brief summer,
 I will give thanks until I die.

For, love, it made you mine forever-
 How great reward for little grief!
 Eternity all ours together?
 Rejoice, my heart, that time is brief!³⁶

Attending to temple ordinances brought peace to many when they encountered their own deaths, for they were reassured that they had performed one of the most fundamental tasks of mortality. This tranquility is reflected in women's journals as they wrote about family and friends calmly confronting their imminent deaths. In 1896, Jane Blood wrote of her daughter Margaret facing a life-threatening operation. A week previous, Margaret and her husband went to the Logan temple to have their children sealed to them. When the time for the operation arrived, "She was calm and so was everyone in the house. She had been to the Temple and finished up her

³⁶Lucinda Dalton, "Through Darkness, Light," Woman's Exponent 8 (30 August 1879):49.

work. She feels resigned to the will of the Lord."³⁷ When another young woman faced death in 1879, her mother recorded that she said she had "no fear of death." She spoke of the anticipated meeting with her previously deceased family members, never questioning that her family was eternally bound by covenants they had made in the temple.³⁸ On the other hand, lack of sealings to family members brought sorrow. On her deathbed, Susa Young Gates said she could "die happy" if only her daughter Leah was sealed to her.³⁹

This is not to say that all women willingly and cheerfully submitted to death, as Mary Ann Maughan's record of the events surrounding her aunt's death from typhoid fever in 1873 suggests: "She said she was going, but she did not want to die, and she would tell Bro. Maughan so when she got there."⁴⁰

Temple ordinances brought peace to many who had passed through the sacred rituals, but when fellow Saints failed to go to the temple, women worried about their eternal welfare. Jane Blood wrote, "Father came to visit us. He wanted to

³⁷Blood, 1896, 126.

³⁸Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman, Journal, 14 March 1879, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³⁹Susa Gates had received a "temple divorce" from her first husband, Leah's father, in 1890. While this ecclesiastical divorce also cancelled her sealings to her two children from that marriage, her husband's sealing to the children remained in force. Though she was close to her mother, Leah honored her father and was never sealed again to her mother. Rebecca Foster Cornwall, "Susa Y. Gates," in Sister Saints, 69.

⁴⁰Maughan, 16 November 1873, 400.

talk to me about working in the temple. I am pleased to see him interested in this work. He will not live many more years, and I have felt grieved to see him careless in this respect."⁴¹ Still, he never recognized the seriousness of receiving his own temple endowment. She stated later in her journal that she had never seen anyone "dread death as Father does."⁴² Jane clearly distinguished a correlation between her father's lack of preparation for the next life and his trepidation.

In addition to these saving ordinances, there was an added ritual available to the very most faithful of the Saints--"the second anointing." This ritual was conferred upon elite members of the Church, and whereas the endowment was considered preparatory to becoming clean in the sight of God, the second anointing assured this righteousness and the salvation of the initiate.⁴³ Jane Blood wrote of her own second anointing in 1895:

We went to the Temple and received our second anointings. it is a great privilege and I realize to some extent the great blessings we receive in this ordinance, but I do not think that mortal beings can fully comprehend the things of God, but by his Holy Spirit we get a glimpse of the world beyond, and that is

⁴¹Blood, 2 June 1891, 87.

⁴²Ibid., 29 September 1892, 97.

⁴³Second anointings were first performed in 1843 in Nauvoo during Joseph Smith's lifetime. See David John Buerger, "'The Fullness of the Priesthood': The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice," Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983):10-44; see also David John Buerger, The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994). The latter contains extensive research of second anointings and other temple ceremonies throughout the history of the Church.

a comfort to us. . . . I know if I am faithful in the future my reward is sure.⁴⁴

Because of the importance attached to faithful Church membership and participation in vital ordinances, leaving the Church represented a most serious offence against God. Returning from a wedding where a Mormon girl married outside the Church, Jane Blood wrote, "I feel sorry to see a good girl like her marry out of the Church. I would sooner bury my girls than to see them marry out of this church."⁴⁵ In choosing to marry a non-Member against the commandment to be "sealed" to another devout member of the Church, this young woman had acted without faith and had therefore forfeited her chance to be eternally linked to her family. The sentiment of preferring death to any form of unrighteousness is reiterated in many women's journals of the time because death for the steadfast meant only temporary separation, whereas death for the unrighteous meant eternal severing of ties. The following year in 1881, Jane attended a Stake Conference where Joseph F. Smith, counselor in the Church's First Presidency, addressed the congregation. It is significant that her record of his comments echoes her own musings of five months previous: "[He] told us if we suffered ourselves to be cut off [from] the Church all the blessings would be

⁴⁴Blood, 3 May 1895, 119.

⁴⁵Ibid., 25 December 1880, 36.

cut off from us. . . . He said he would rather die a most cruel death than to be cut off [from] the Church."⁴⁶

At times, this attitude caused members to utter dire predictions of the deceased's eternal damnation; however, for the most part, members were slow to harshly condemn the dead. Jane Blood reported the death of an apostate who "was once thought a great deal of in this church." She continued that he had gone to be judged, but then acknowledged that perhaps it would be "better for him than we think."⁴⁷ Most often when death came, the Saints were optimistic and hopeful about the deceased's salvation.⁴⁸ But at times, even with nonapostates, there was concern about whether or not the loved one had lived in such a way as to warrant salvation. One woman, thus concerned about her son's eternal welfare, found comfort in the words of one of her Church leaders who spoke at his funeral. In her reminiscence, she recalled, "Pres. Thurber said, 'I should have him again and all my children,' which was what I wanted to know."⁴⁹

⁴⁶Ibid., 22 May 1881, 40.

⁴⁷Ibid., 24 October 1881, 43.

⁴⁸This is quite different from Lewis O. Saum's conclusions about Americans' reactions to death prior to the Civil War. He states, "A striking thing about the deathly reflections is the almost total absence of explicit references to otherworldly rewards or even to the assurance that, whatever they were, a particular person would enjoy them. To be sure, people died 'happy' in a prospect, or in the 'triumph' of the faith, or with the consolation of a Christian hope. But these people . . . possessed only 'trembling hope.'" Saum, 46.

⁴⁹"Eliza Shelton Keeler," in Our Pioneer Heritage, 20 vols., ed. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City, Utah: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959), 3:300.

For many women, their families, particularly their children, were the center of their lives. With husbands often absent serving missions for months and years at a time, actively participating as leaders in lay Church callings, or in cases of polygamous marriages, spending time with other wives and families, women's closest companionship came from their own children and other women. When young children died, solace could be found in the assurance that the child was automatically saved.⁵⁰ Saints were taught that Satan could not tempt their children until they had reached the age of accountability, the age of eight; therefore, children were considered incapable of sin. At eight, children became accountable to God for their sins and were baptized. Mary Ann Freeze noted a talk which focused on this doctrine. The speaker encouraged parents to teach their children at an early age, so as to "get a start [on] the adversary."⁵¹ When Mary Ann took a trip to Pennsylvania to visit her husband's family, she attended a number of other denominations' services. Commenting on one particular Episcopal meeting, she said that she witnessed some baptisms, "three infants among them. Something new to me. It gave me terrible

⁵⁰This doctrine can be found in a 1836 vision given to Joseph Smith wherein he saw the celestial kingdom and received knowledge of who would abide there: "All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry. . . . Children who die before they arrive at the age of accountability [eight] are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven." Doctrine and Covenants 137:7, 10. This later doctrine received "increased emphasis in the late 1830s when the migration from Kirtland to western Missouri brought a high mortality rate among children." See Bishop, 69-71.

⁵¹Freeze, 6 October 1884.

feelings realizing the darkness they were in."⁵² Mary Ann's view reflected the teaching in the Book of Mormon that infant baptism was unnecessary for children as they were without sin.⁵³

In addition, Mormon women focused on the belief that early death was a blessing (though an unwelcome blessing at best) in that children would be granted eternal rest and not be forced to endure the sorrows and trials of life. One woman wrote, "Mother earth takes the lambs to her bosom to shield them from the storms of life."⁵⁴ Mothers and fathers were encouraged to envision their children "dwelling in eternal light." "Would'st thou recall her from the realms of bliss?" queried a verse in the Woman's Exponent. The response was, "No, No! I hear you say, No, no, we would not."⁵⁵ This vision of the deceased inhabiting a better place, unfettered by the troubles and woes of the world, is an overwhelmingly prevalent image that is indispensable to a majority of Mormon and American death poetry of the period. As writer Amanda Weston noted, "Who could wish that frail bud

⁵²Ibid., January 1878.

⁵³See Moroni 8:8.

⁵⁴Louisa Barnes Pratt, Mormondom's First Woman Missionary: Life Story and Travels Told in Her own Words ed. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City, Utah: Privately printed), 307.

⁵⁵Hannah T. King, "Dedicated to Sister Alder: On the Death of Her Beloved Daughter Helen," Woman's Exponent, 11 (1 April 1883):163.

again exposed to the blighting frosts of a cold, selfish world?"⁵⁶

Interestingly, Mormon poetry differs from contemporary poetry by describing various aspects of the afterlife. Lewis O. Saum concludes that the imagery in American's personal writings about death focused, not on images of heaven, but on "death as a release from whatever had [or would] plague them. . . . Only in an occasional instance regarding children did such people conjure any specific rapturous images of the condition beyond the gates."⁵⁷

The Mormon spirit world would not be greatly different from that which was esteemed most blessed and delightful in earth life. Parents could rest assured of the happiness that awaited their children in the spirit world. There, children would be surrounded by other deceased family and friends who would welcome them. Martha Spence Heywood gained comfort from this teaching as it was preached by Apostle Erastus Snow at her daughter's funeral. She wrote,

⁵⁶See Michael McEachern McDowell's exploration of consolation literature as it applies to the deaths of infants and children in his "American Attitudes Towards Death, 1825-1865" (Doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University, 1977), 247.

⁵⁷Saum, 47. American Romantics such as William Cullen Bryant and Ralph Waldo Emerson viewed death as the "ultimate communion with the universe"; therefore, Romantics celebrated the immortality of the human soul and "encouraged people to consider death a natural occurrence, and to accept the coming of death as a friendly visit." James J. Farrell, Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 32-3. See also Ann Douglas' study of consolation literature in 19th century American culture. Ann Douglas, "Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1880," in Death in America, 49-68.

He drew such a plain comparison between the child being born into this world giving joy and satisfaction to its parents and friends, so in the spirit leaving its former abode and companions there was regret in departure. So in like manner when a spirit leaves us we sorrow at its departure but they rejoice.⁵⁸

Another doctrine which helped parents to cope with the death of a child were the beliefs, articulated by Church leaders, that "children [would] be enthroned in the presence of God and the Lamb with bodies of the same stature that were on earth" and that parents would be allowed to rear their children in the resurrection.⁵⁹ Lucy Flake wrote, "So we laid three little baby boys in Beaver Graveyard and hope to be worthy to raise them where there is no sin."⁶⁰

The cumulative effect of these doctrines which stressed the eternal nature of family ties was that though Mormon parents "grieved as much as other antebellum parents for their deceased children . . . they had no need to call their children 'little strangers,' or to withhold their affections from them as a means of self-protection." Consequently, "they were able to turn their hearts freely to their

⁵⁸Juanita Brooks, ed., Not By Bread Alone: The Journal of Martha Spence Heywood, 1850-56 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1978), 22 February 1856, 118.

⁵⁹Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898 Typescript, 9 vols. ed. Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-84), 19 March 1842, 2:163.

⁶⁰Flake, 1872, 18. This entry echoes the words written by Sally Randall in 1844 to her family in the East following the death of her fourteen-year-old son, George: "Oh, mother, if we are so happy as to have part in the first resurrection, we shall have our children just as we laid them down in their graves." Sally Carlisle Randall, letters, in Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900, eds. Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1982), 139.

children."⁶¹ In her study of death in the nineteenth-century South, Mary Stovall asserts that many Southerners, black and white, recognizing the precarious nature of newborn life, "delayed naming their children, especially if they were sickly." In addition, many expressed plans for children's adulthood in conditional terms.⁶² This kind of coping was rare among Mormons.

The spirit world, and those abiding in it, was thought to be close in spiritual and physical proximity. Brigham Young stressed this belief at Charles Little's funeral in January 1861: "Whare shall we go to find [the departed spirits]? In the spirit world but whare is that? Right here on the earth whare they lived and whare we live."⁶³ This belief was reiterated by many Church leaders such as President Wilford Woodruff who in leaving instructions for his funeral noted, "If the laws and customs of the spirit world will permit, I should wish to attend my funeral myself, but I shall be governed by the counsel I receive in the spirit world."⁶⁴ At Zina Young's birthday party in 1888, one woman spoke in tongues and declared that the departed spirits

⁶¹Hansen, 105.

⁶²Stovall, 102-3. This practice was common throughout America. Lewis Saum also comments on this phenomenon in the North by citing census files of the period (pre-Civil War) which frequently listed children as "anonymous," "not named," or "unnamed." Often these children were several months old and sometimes over a year of age. Saum, 38.

⁶³Wilford Woodruff's Journal, January 1861, 5:544.

⁶⁴Bush, 29.

of their friends were "very near," and some were there, "for the vail seemed thinner than ever before."⁶⁵

This belief that departed spirits were nearby brought some relief from pain of separation because of death. In her musings about her five-year-old son's funeral, Mary Ann Freeze wrote about singing her son's favorite hymn. She continued, "I wondered that I could hear it without my heart being wrung with anguish, but I believe he was near me and rejoiced so much in his deliverance and rest, that I was not permitted to grieve while hearing it."⁶⁶ At times, however, the spirit world's close proximity was a poor substitute indeed for the actual physical presence of the departed. One particularly lonely day, Emmeline B. Wells wrote that she was "very low-spirited indeed." Longing to see her husband who was dead, she queried, "Why can we not call them to us in our grief and sorrow, why cannot our dead come back to us if only for one sweet hour."⁶⁷

There was a strong belief in Mormonism, as in other American Christian denominations, that individuals would not be taken "before their time," before their missions were fulfilled.⁶⁸ This mission began as Saints took on physical

⁶⁵Freeze, 31 January 1888.

⁶⁶Ibid., November 1884.

⁶⁷Excerpts from Emmeline Wells diary in Women's Voices, September 1874, 298.

⁶⁸Henry Ward Beecher articulated the belief that people would not die before their appointed time by comparing death to leaves which fall only in autumn: "It is hard to die when the time is not ripe." Farrell, 81.

bodies at birth and eventually progressed to participate in Mormon ordinances. For many, it also entailed performing further life's work which varied from person to person, as in raising a righteous family, doing temple work for deceased family members, caring for the sick, serving in a specific Church calling, or simply living righteously and enduring to the end. In 1871, Lucy Flake almost died. She wrote, "My suffering was great but the work that I came to do was not finished and God in his murcy spared my life. . . . I hope to do my work honerably and good and gain the reward of the faithfull."⁶⁹ Women, men, and children were "called home" only when their personal, spiritual missions on earth were completed, though children's missions were admittedly brief and less easily defined. The belief in a life's work completed was often expressed in death poetry of the time. In a poem written for Isabel Hamilton by Margaret A. White, the author expressed the following:

Sister give thy baby up
 It is thy Father's will;
 This little time he stayed with you
 A mission 'twas to fill

He was a little angel sent,
 From fairer world on high,
 To take a body here on earth
 The laws of life to try

But now it is the Savior calls
 The little sufferer home;
 Why should we mourn to lay him down
 When he his work hath done?

Our Father we now dedicate

⁶⁹Flake, 1871, 19.

This baby unto Thee;
 May we be worthy still to claim
 Him in eternity.⁷⁰

Without this reassurance, death was much harder to bear. Lucinda Dalton sought to "pierce the mystery" of her son's death on a "ghostly night," when the "dreary, sobbing rain drip[ped] slowly from the eaves." She wondered if he had been called away, or if her "hand through some weakness let him go." This "one doubt" made it difficult for her to find strength in her despair:

If I could know God took my child, of free and gracious
 will,
 The widow's son I could give up and bid my grief *Be*
 Still!
 But oh, the doubt! the rending doubt that he untimely
 went
 Because the earth was sick and foul and deadly
 breathings sent,
 Which, ent'ring in his house of life, drove his pure
 spirit out;--
 Ah me! 'twixt faith and fear the strife around this
 dreadful doubt!

If I could know, if I could know that he was called away
 About his Father's work to go, and had no need to stay,
 I do believe that I could bless the hand that holds the
 rod
 O'er me, while in his loveliness he goes to dwell with
 God,
 And there fulfill the wondrous plan he here so fondly
 laid,
 To build a better house for me, with trees for fruit and
 shade.⁷¹

⁷⁰Margaret A. White, "Lines Written for Isabel Hamilton," Woman's Exponent 1 (15 October 1872):78.

⁷¹Lucinda Dalton, "The One Doubt," Woman's Exponent 22 (1 July 1893):1.

Death did try women's faith. Lucy Flake reminisced about the first death to occur among her children; when her two-month-old son died, she stated,

I can say his death was the first trial of my faith it seemed my prairs had always been answered before but in his sickness it seemed like my prairs did no good but still I kept trying to get my Heavenly Father to here me kept praying but it seemed he could not here me.⁷²

It seems that when women attempted to trust in the providence of God, they often became ever more reconciled to God's will. After losing yet another child in infancy, Aurelia S. Rogers wrote in her diary, "I almost lost faith. For once in my life I even doubted the existence of a Supreme Being." At this point, she recalled the words of her father, "Trust in God though he slay you." She repented and continued to pray: "I felt that perhaps all the people of God would have to pass through certain ordeals to prove whether they would trust in Him to the end."⁷³ Thus, while subsequent deaths were still enormously difficult to deal with, many women were able to maintain their faith in God and in His will. Mormonism gave women tools to aid in coping; how women used these tools was highly individualized. In Lucy Flake's case, she remarked that with the death of her second baby she was "not so much

⁷²Flake, 20 March 1861, 10.

⁷³Ritchie Elizabeth Kohler, "Aurelia S. Rogers," in Sister Saints, 231.

shaken," though she felt that her "troubles was more than [those of] almost anyone else."⁷⁴

Clearly, belief in an eternal continuum did not entirely assuage women's feelings of grief and powerlessness over death, nor the resulting emptiness in their lives. Emily Young articulated this void when she commiserated with others who had just lost a child.

It is needless to say that Josephine and Burt felt bad for who that has lost their darlings don't know that it is like tearing the heart out by the roots, yet their sufferings make us willing to let them go, but oh the vacueum they leave in our hearts.⁷⁵

It was those left behind who had the difficult task of continuing to live a godly life without the presence of the departed. Lucy Flake stated simply, "Our sorrow is not for him but for those left behind."⁷⁶ And in another entry, "She is called to a better world She is all right She has done her work and done it well but the poor Husband and nine Motherless children it seems so pitifull[.]"⁷⁷

However intense the grief, it was vital to yield to the will of God in all things. The Saints were commanded to be "willing to submit to all things which the Lord [saw] fit to inflict upon [them], even as a child doth submit to his

⁷⁴Flake, 1863, 13.

⁷⁵Young, 15 December 1882, 72.

⁷⁶Flake, 1892, 50.

⁷⁷Ibid., 101.

father."⁷⁸ At times there was social and ecclesiastical pressure to submit. Lorena Washburn Larsen recalled a time when her child was close to death; she told her bishop that she loved her baby so much that "if he should die the light of the whole earth would go out, there would be nothing to live for." To this, the bishop unfeelingly replied, "Foolish woman don't talk that way. We have to be resigned to the will of the Lord which ever way things turn."⁷⁹ Referring to the teaching that "in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things," Annie Clark Tanner wrote, "Such a teaching has the advantage of reconciling one with adversity."⁸⁰

Reconciliation with God's will was often enormously difficult and could only be accomplished with a great deal of faith accompanied by the healing balm of time. When Eliza Keeler was attempting to come to terms with the death of her son, she wrote, "I tried to acknowledge the hand of God, but it does seem hard. But Jesus said, the worst sin we could commit was not to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in all

⁷⁸Mosiah 3:19.

⁷⁹Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larsen, Autobiography of Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larsen (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1962), 49.

⁸⁰Doctrine and Covenants 59:21; Annie Clark Tanner, A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Anne Clark Tanner (Salt Lake City, Utah: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1991), 169-70.

things."⁸¹ After her grown son's murder in 1892, Lucy Flake wrote, "We had no Christmas dinner this time but feel to try and reconcile ourselves to the will of god it was lonely for us all we tried to comfort each other."⁸² Mary Ann Freeze stated it most simply when writing of her son's death, "It seemed so hard to have to put anything so lively in the earth, out of sight, to decay. That lovely boy that had been the joy of my life since ever he was born, yet I must submit."⁸³

Not only did women face the daunting challenge of coming to terms with their own grief, but they also had the responsibility of aiding and tutoring their children in the methods of righteous grieving and submission to God's will. Martha Cragun Cox, Annie Clark Tanner, Sarah Rich, Eliza Partridge Lyman, and others sought to raise their children "in the fear of the Lord."⁸⁴ It was their sacred duty as mothers to teach their children what it meant to be a Latter-day Saint. And as the Lord had commanded them to yield to His will in all things, it was their responsibility to influence by example. Annie Tanner was well aware of this as she coped with the death of her three-year-old daughter: "When one of my little boys saw the tears rolling down my

⁸¹Keeler, 300.

⁸²Flake, December 1892, 52.

⁸³Freeze, November 1884.

⁸⁴Lyman, 47.

face as I did my housework, he said, 'I don't like the Lord for taking our little sister.' I saw that I must give the children no cause to turn against the Lord."⁸⁵

Rare near death experiences also provided the Saints with consolation that the next world was a glorious place. Hansen has observed that "because for Mormons existence consisted of a progressive continuum, the next life [had] many of the characteristics of this."⁸⁶ When Hannah Adeline Savage passed through two surgical operations in 1901, the Lord "touched the eyes of [her] understanding and [she] beheld many things in the spirit world." Her visions of the spirit world reflected and confirmed many Mormon beliefs about death. Hannah explained that she had a guide who showed her very busy spirits "as real as we are." This observation of the spirit world being populated by "busy spirits" is seemingly incongruous with the images of the afterlife being a place of rest; but for most Saints, they could discuss these visions in terms of rest and work without contradiction, as other-worldly labors would be joyful in nature.

Continuing, Hannah wrote,

I was extremely happy while in the spirit world and asked my guide that I might remain but my guide told me my family and friends were praying for my return and I must come back. . . . I also saw while their how the

⁸⁵Tanner, 169-70.

⁸⁶Hansen, 109. See also Craig R. Lundahl, "The Perceived Other World in Mormon Near-death Experiences: A Social and Physical Depiction," *Omega* 12, 4 (1981-82): 319-27.

true order of prayer was exceptabl while the prayers of the Catholics was a confusion and not in order with the mind of our Heavenly Father. I also saw as it were a sea of glass and an exceeding straight road and a very narrow place where none could pass only those who had been valiant for the testimony of Jeausus only those who had proven them selves faithfull through the trials and sacrifices which they were called upon to pass through while in the flesh.⁸⁷

This vision affirms her belief in the necessity of membership in the Mormon Church to be acceptable in God's eyes. There was one path to the presence of God, and the Mormons had found it. It then behoved the Saints to faithfully perform the vital ordinances and live valiantly so as to obtain eternal rest.

Mormon theologies of death combined to promote great desires for personal righteousness in women. Voicing aspirations similar to those in many women's writings, Eliza Lyman wrote, "May I with the rest of my family be prepared to enter into the same rest with her and my mother and friends who have gone before us is my prayer both morning and evening."⁸⁸ Another woman, in her reminiscence stated,

O, my soul, awake to the realization of what is required at your hands to prepare you for the great day when all must stand before the bar of God to be judged. . . . Let us be wise and shape our lives according to the laws of God and obey them, for this is what we are here for; to work out our salvation.⁸⁹

⁸⁷Hannah Adeline Hatch Savage, Journal, 9 September 1901, 3-4, HBLL.

⁸⁸Lyman, 19 April 1880.

⁸⁹Tracy, 1898, 60.

The addresses delivered at Eliza R. Snow's funeral in 1887 reflect many of the Mormon doctrines and attitudes discussed above. The church leaders who eulogized the prominent women's leader embraced the opportunity both to "bear testimony to her life" and to the truthfulness of the gospel.⁹⁰ Apostle Heber J. Grant declared that it was a day, not for mourning, but to "rejoice that one that has labored so long, so energetically, and so faithfully, has gone home to receive the great reward she is entitled to."⁹¹ Those who felt to mourn, particularly the women who had "prized her instructions," were reminded by Elder Milo Andrus that she had "merely gone to sleep; it is a death here and birth there."⁹² Bishop O. F. Whitney stressed that she had simply taken the next step in her eternal progression; she had been chosen before the world "to be honored of God and of man."⁹³ She had nobly completed her life's mission and had gone to receive her reward: "the highest exaltation in the eternal worlds."⁹⁴ Elder Abraham O. Smoot echoed many others' comments with his closing remarks:

Let us so endeavor to live that we may enjoy her society behind the vail--meet her with Joseph and Hyrum, and

⁹⁰The Life and Labors of Eliza R. Snow Smith; With a Full Account of Her Funeral Services (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), 20.

⁹¹Ibid., 32.

⁹²Ibid., 26.

⁹³Ibid., 30.

⁹⁴Ibid., 25.

with David Patten and with other[s]. . . . That we may be able to follow her example, and secure the same glory, which is eternal, is my prayer.⁹⁵

Mormon theology armed women with powerful doctrines and rituals which provided solace as they grappled with the sometimes overwhelming realities of death. Beyond the heavenly rest and informal family ties offered by many contemporary religions, Mormon theology included myriad other doctrines which reassured Mormon women of the eternal nature of their familial ties, and more particularly, their relationships with their children. In the end, if Mormons had lived righteously, and had participated in saving ordinances, they could look forward to a glorious eternity surrounded by those they loved.

⁹⁵Ibid., 27-8.

CHAPTER THREE

"THE FOLKS WENT TO WORK":¹

THE COMMUNAL AND RITUALISTIC NATURE OF DEATH AND DYING IN MORMON SOCIETY

Religious dogma was not all Mormonism had to offer the bereaved and the dying. The early Saints were involved in a holy experiment; they were a community intent on building Zion.² Living primarily in small settlement communities populated by other Mormons, their lives were intertwined and marked by complex ties.³ The community was not only crucial to spiritual and physical survival, but it also assisted in times of sickness and death. People came together to help heal the sick, and when death struck, the community joined to help the bereaved in preparations for burial. This often took the form of community sanctioned or personal ritual.

¹"Eliza Shelton Keeler," in Our Pioneer Heritage, 20 vols., ed. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City Utah: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959), February 1887, 3:300.

²See Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1976).

³During the period from 1847-74, Brigham Young established 348 colonies, sixty of them outside Utah. In the winter of 1847, the population of Salt Lake City was 1,800. By 1850, the population of Salt Lake was 10,000, with 1,400 residing in the colonies. In 1870, 18,000 people resided in Salt Lake, and 66,000 lived in the colonies. Ralph Richards, Of Medicine, Hospitals, and Doctors (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1953), 3.

Some of these rituals were peculiar to the Mormon people, while others closely resembled those performed in the larger American society.

An examination of Mormon women's personal writings reveals that women played a particularly large role in the rituals pertaining to both the dying and the dead. Journals, letters, and reminiscences reflect the physical, emotional, and spiritual support they rendered to one another as they sat up with the ill and combined their faith and skill in behalf of the sick. When it became clear that death was imminent, they participated in a number of sacred and loving rites that prepared both the living and the dying for the loss at hand. Following death, women noted their active role in preparing the body for burial; the extant records show women sitting up with the deceased, sewing sacred burial clothing, washing and laying out bodies, and walking in funeral processions. The activities from which they were excluded, such as speaking at funerals and dedicating graves, also receive mention in their writings. It is women's recollections of their involvement in these communal, and often sacred, rites and rituals which form the focus of this chapter.

In the absence of professional help, the role of nurse and undertaker fell primarily to women who trained under other women. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg in her study of nineteenth-century female relationships states,

The roles of daughter and mother shaded imperceptibly and ineluctably into each other, while the biological realities of frequent pregnancies, childbirth, nursing and menopause bound women together in physical and emotional intimacy. . . . These supportive networks were institutionalized in social conventions or rituals which accompanied virtually every important event in a woman's life, from birth to death.⁴

She also explains that mothers and daughters practiced a sort of "apprenticeship system" wherein mothers trained their daughters in "the arts of housewifery and motherhood."⁵ In addition, this system included tutelage in nursing skills and traditional methods of preparing the deceased for burial.

While apprenticeship systems and supportive networks were important to women in mainstream American culture, they became absolutely vital to women in Mormon communities where men were often absent tending to Church business, serving missions, participating in colonization efforts, or caring for the needs of other wives and children. In her study of Mormon sisterhood, historian Jill Mulvay Derr concludes,

All the means of female bonding normally available to women in the broader American culture were open to Mormon women: intense attachment to their sisters, mothers, and cousins; acceptance of the distinctiveness of the woman's world; concentration on nurturing of children, and expertise in tasks acknowledged as exclusively the province of women. The religious dimension afforded by Mormonism--and particularly the institution of plural marriage--had the potential of intensifying all of these common "womanly" elements.⁶

⁴Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (Autumn 1975):9.

⁵Ibid., 16.

⁶Jill Mulvay Derr, "'Strength in Our Union': The Making of Mormon Sisterhood," in Sisters in Spirit, eds. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher

Women's sustaining bonds, as well as established social conventions and rituals, were put to the test during times of sickness and death. When illness was prolonged, community and family support systems were set into motion long before death occurred. Attending the sick night and day for extended periods of time was emotionally and physically taxing, particularly for women who were often left alone to care for their children without the help of a husband. Emma Mecham Nielson wrote in her journal of the difficulty of having her husband far away with another wife, "My little Libbie is sick and I have no husband to comfort me, and how often I am left alone with my little sick children."⁷ In situations such as this, it was requisite to obtain some assistance from those outside the immediate family. In Mormon settlements, this kind of aid was often made available by other members of the Church. Frequently, other women helped by sitting up with the ill, relieving those who had become exhausted from interminable hours and days of nursing. In typical fashion, one woman noted that "myself and another Sister set up with Sister Johnson all night and she is doing nicely. I feel dreadfull bad without any sleep."⁸

and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 168.

⁷This and all subsequent entries copied exactly. Emma Watstill Mecham Nielson, Journal, 7 December 1887, 30, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLI).

⁸Lucy Hannah White Flake, Journal, typescript, 23 January 1895, 88, HBLI.

While members of Mormon communities often sustained each other in times of sickness, there were certainly occasions when neighbors and family did not help. When this kind of service was not offered, those left to care for their own often felt justifiably bitter. Annie Tanner Clark recalled a conversation she had at the funeral of her three-year-old daughter where her aunt commented, "Annie, you have such fine control. You made it easy for us." To this, Annie responded, "Yes, you didn't know that I could have screamed and blamed the neighbors for their indifference when they knew I had three sick children in the house; and the child's father, too, should have known I needed help."⁹

Prior to the discovery of the so-called "germ theory" of disease and the ensuing bacteriological revolution of the late nineteenth-century, epidemic and endemic diseases were as "inexplicable and mysterious" to medical practitioners as they were to anyone.¹⁰ Consequently, Mormons, like many Americans, were distrustful of the medical profession. Medical historian Ronald L. Numbers has asserted that by the 1850s medicine for many Americans was "little more than a trade, open to all who wished to try their hand at healing." As one contemporary observed, "Any one, male or female,

⁹Annie Clark Tanner, A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Anne Clark Tanner (Salt Lake City, Utah: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1991), 168.

¹⁰John Duffy, "Social Impact of Disease in the Late 19th Century," in Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health, eds. Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 414.

learned or ignorant, an honest man or a knave, can assume the name of a physician, and 'practice' upon any one, to cure or kill, as either may happen, without accountability."¹¹

Therefore, in Mormon communities, primarily during the first decades of Utah's settlement, trained doctors played a minor role in caring for the sick.¹² Instead, families relied, in part, on traditional home remedies and herbs such as sagebrush and Brigham tea, as well as on chemical and botanical products such as camphor, castor oil, flaxseed oil, ginger, horehound, alcohol, ammonia, and carbolic acid.¹³

¹¹Ronald L. Numbers, "The Fall and Rise of the American Medical Profession," in Sickness and Health, 185. See also, Richard Harrison Shryock, "The American Physician in 1846 and in 1946: A Study in Professional Contrasts," chap. in Medicine in America: Historical Essays (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 149-76; and William G. Rothstein, American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972).

¹²Over time, this suspicion of doctors lessened; Brigham Young, a great doubter of the medical profession, "employed doctors with increasing frequency to treat himself and members of his family, and provided funds for the medical education of several young men and women." In his study of medicine in Utah, Ralph Richards divided Utah's history into four periods; the title of each tells much about medical conditions during that period: 1847-71 "Premedical Period"; 1872-97 "Beginning of Hospitals"; 1899-1923 "Introduction of Scientific Medicine"; 1924-50 "Salt Lake as a Medical Center." Ralph Richards, Of Medicine, Hospitals, and Doctors, 15, 13.

¹³The Saints had been commanded, "Whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food." Doctrine and Covenants 42:43. See Austin E. Fife, "Pioneer Mormon Remedies," Western Folklore 16 (1957):153-162; Valerie Florence, "Healing and the Home: Home Medicine in Pioneer Utah," in From Cottage to Market: The Professionalization of Women's Sphere, ed. John R. Sillito (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Women's History Association, 1983); and Lester E. Bush, "On Healing," chap. in Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993), 69-107.

Beyond this, women frequently wrote of their labors to make the dying as comfortable as possible.

Even when a trained doctor was available for treatment of sickness, women often did not place much stock in the medical care that was rendered. Many accounts show that women believed that doctors often made the situation worse; this reinforced the belief that women would do better to follow their own instincts and the traditions established by previous generations. Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood recorded the events following a doctor's treatment of her son's broken leg during which the doctor inadvertently took the skin off his leg by wrapping it in camphor and alcohol: "The poor boy has come very near losing his leg if not his life through the treatment of the doctor. I know it has been through his faith, and the prayers of all of us that the Lord has preserved him."¹⁴

Because of the many problems associated with medical care and home remedies, treatments were almost always accompanied by spiritual blessings for healing during which the sick were anointed with oil and blessed by laying on of hands.¹⁵ Lucy Hannah White Flake commented on a marriage of the physical and the spiritual when she noted, "I did all I

¹⁴Ivy Hooper Blood Hill, ed., Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood: Autobiography and Abridged Diary, 1845-98 (Logan, Ut: J.P. Smith Printing, Inc., 1966), 28 July 1890, 82.

¹⁵The Saints were commanded that when there was sickness, "the elders of the church, two or more, shall be called, and shall pray for and lay their hands upon them in my name; and if they die they shall die unto me, and if they live they shall live unto me." Doctrine and Covenants 42:44.

could with medicen and also with faith."¹⁶ Most commonly, men holding the priesthood were called in to administer healing ordinances; however, many women also participated in laying on of hands to heal their families and friends.¹⁷ Joseph Smith had voiced approval of women's participation in healing: "There could be no devil in it," the prophet declared. "If God gave his sanction by healing . . . there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick than in wetting the face with water." He continued, "If the sisters should have faith to heal the sick, let all hold their tongues."¹⁸ Eliza R. Snow seconded his pronouncement when she stated, "Any and all sisters who honor their holy endowments, not only have the right, but should feel a duty,

¹⁶Flake, November 1877, 25. In Lucinda Dalton's poem, "The One Doubt," she wrote of her own desperate prayers for her son's recovery, "When we can only wring our hands, and only wildly pray, Our hearts break while we helpless stand and see them borne away." Woman's Exponent 22 (1 July 1893):1.

¹⁷President Daniel H. Wells, a leader of the Church, described the priesthood in the following words: "It is the same authority as exists in the heavens. Through the authority of the everlasting Priesthood, channels have been opened up between the heavens and the earth, by which we may seal upon earth and it is sealed in heaven. This is the same authority that has always existed in the Church and kingdom of God when it has been upon the earth. . . . It has been conferred from time to time upon the servants of God in the flesh, to enable them to perform the ordinances which pertain to this state of existence, and reach back again within the veil." Address delivered in the "New Tabernacle," 6 October 1873, Journal of Discourses, (Liverpool: Joseph F. Smith, 1874), 16:240.

¹⁸"A Record of the Organization, and Proceedings of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo," 28 April 1842, 36, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah as quoted in Linda King Newell, "Gifts of the Spirit: Women's Share," in Sisters in Spirit, 117.

whenever called upon to administer to our sisters in these ordinances."¹⁹

Linda King Newell has noted that the rituals of washing and anointing and blessing the sick were commonly performed by both men and women.²⁰ Her conclusions are substantiated by numerous accounts of women's healing activities. In one such instance, Lucy Meserve Smith, along with three other women, blessed her sister wife who was dying. Lucy wrote of the experience to her husband George:

Bathsheba [W. Smith] said when she and Zina [D. H. Young] and Hannah [Smith] and I layed our hands on her [Sarah] she felt as though she was praying over an infant we prayed with our right hand uplifted to the most high and we all felt the blessing of the holy spirit Zina said there was a union of faith.²¹

Women typically exercised their gifts of healing by washing and anointing and pronouncing blessings on the afflicted portions of other women's bodies. In addition, women typically blessed one another in preparation for childbirth.²²

¹⁹Ibid., 123.

²⁰Ibid., 118.

²¹Lucy Meserve Smith to George A Smith, holograph, George A. Smith papers, 19 April 1851, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, quoted in Jill Mulvay Derr, "Strength of Our Union," 167.

²²A portion of an undated blessing from the Oakley (Idaho) Second Ward Relief Society states, "We anoint your back, your spinal column that you might be strong and healthy no disease fasten upon it no accident belaff [befall] you, Your kidneys that they might be active and healthy and preform [perform] their proper functions, your bladder that it might be strong and protected from accident, your Hips that your system might relax and give way for the birth of your child, your sides that your liver, your lungs, and spleen that they might be strong and preform their proper function . . . your breasts that your milk may come freely and you need not be afflicted with sore nipples as many are, your heart that it might be comforted." Newell, 130. See also, Maureen

Through these rituals of blessing one another, the ties that bound women to one another and to their God were ever strengthened.

After the Relief Society was resurrected in Utah in 1866, women within this organization played a great role in caring for those in need.²³ Louisa Barnes Pratt recalled,

Great good was done in relieving the wants of the poor, the visitation of the sick, in fasting and prayer for the unfortunate. When one of our members was sick it was, and still is our custom, to fast and pray for their recovery. To wash and anoint them, lay our hands upon them and rebuke the disease.²⁴

As women were grouped into Relief Societies, many informal supportive networks were formalized. Subsequently, women were actually assigned to care for one another's families. In addition, local Relief Society presidents assumed many of the responsibilities of making sure the needs of the Relief Society members were met.

As long as it seemed possible for the ill person to recover, prayers and ministrations focused on the continuation of life. However, when suffering became too

Ursenbach Beecher, "Birthing," in Mormon Women Speak, ed. Mary Lythgoe Bradford (Salt Lake City, Utah: Olympus Publishing Company, 1982), 45-55.

²³The Relief Society is the official women's organization of the Church; it was founded on 17 March 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois. It continued for two years. The Relief Society was then reorganized in Utah in 1866 with Eliza Roxcy Snow as its president. One of its primary purposes is to care for the temporal and spiritual welfare of members of the Church. See Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1992). See also Richard Jensen, "Forgotten Relief Societies," Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983):105-25.

²⁴Louisa Barnes Pratt, Mormondom's First Woman Missionary: Life Story and Travels Told in Her own Words, ed. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City, Utah: Privately printed), 380.

acute and too prolonged, the tenor of the prayers and blessings often changed to a pleading for release from the pain associated with dying. Lucy Flake recorded the events following a friend's tragic accident in which her friend was severely burned:

Made her as comfortable as we could then we formed a surkle around her bed and prayed. . . . [S]he would say dont pray for me to live and be a cripple for I would be if I live. . . . [S]he was prayed for all the time she did live and perhaps if she had not been praid for so much she might have suffered for days the Lord was kind in releasing her.²⁵

In times of such dire need, the importance of devout women performing powerful rituals and exercising their faith in each other's behalf should not be underestimated. Similarly, when the agony experienced by Mary Ann Burnham Freeze's son seemed too great, she and her loved ones "plead[ed] with [her] Father, to let him die in peace if he must go." She wrote later that she was grateful that God had answered her prayers and "let him die so sweetly."²⁶ Many women held a profound belief in the power of their combined faith.

Dying in a Mormon community was a communal process as family and friends assembled to participate in the last acts of spiritual and physical comfort; in this, Mormons had much in common with their non-Mormon American counterparts who also gathered at the time of death. Mary Ann Weston

²⁵Flake, 35.

²⁶Mary Ann Burnham Freeze, Journal, November 1884, HBLL.

Maughan's ruminations upon the death of her adult son Hyrum illustrate the importance of being present at a crucial time:

All that love or affection could suggest was done for him, but he continued to fail; I was with them most of the time. This was a satisfaction to us; as when his son died June 7, 1892, with diphtheria, they were quarantined, no one allowed to go and help them. All we could do was to drive up to the house and take them anything they wanted.²⁷

These moments just preceding and just following death were filled with intense emotion. Rhoda Ann Dykes Burgess noted that when her mother died, "Eliza sat by the bed with her arm under Mas head as if she would hold her here if she only could it seemed too hard to bear for a while."²⁸

When loved ones were deprived of these last opportunities to care for the dying, they felt it keenly.²⁹ At the death of Mary Jane Mount Tanner's father in distant California, she mourned that he had "died suddenly among strangers." She was "deeply grieved and many a sad thought

²⁷Mary Ann Weston Maughan, Journal, in Our Pioneer Heritage, 2:412.

²⁸Rhoda Ann Dykes Burgess, Journal, 17 December 1881, typescript in possession of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.

²⁹Lewis O. Saum has noted that in America, "Not to be able to attend the deathbed was almost routinely set down as a striking deprivation." Commenting on how a Wisconsin couple responded to the death of their mother, he writes, "The sense of loss involved more than the death itself." One of them wrote, "If I could have had the privilege of being with her in her sickness & have felt her loss, it would have been a great satisfaction." Elizabeth and James Olin to Alfonso R. Peck, 28 July 1850, Peck Family Papers, Collection of Regional History, Cornell University, as quoted in Lewis O. Saum, "Death in the Popular Mind of Pre-Civil War America," in Death in America, ed. David Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 44.

was awakened by the circumstances of his death."³⁰ As another woman simply stated, "I felt if only I could get to him [her son] he might yet live with the help of the Lord."³¹ There was power and strength in union.

Being present for the passing of the loved one was even more significant because it permitted the bereaved to participate in the customary rites and rituals that prepared the dying person and the attending loved ones for the separation at hand. To be absent from these rituals created a profound sense of loss and a difficulty in accepting the reality of the death.³² One observance which brought great solace to both the dying and the bereaved, was the Mormon custom of dedicating the terminally ill just prior to their passing.³³ Noting the impending death of her aunt, Mary Ann

³⁰Mary Jane Mount Tanner, Journal, in Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900, eds. Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1982), 316.

³¹Keeler, 299.

³²Ever improving transportation systems facilitated travel to participate in the last rites of the dying. Conversely, however, as travel became easier, some families were more likely to be separated by greater distances. In 1869, Jean Rio Pearce recorded the events surrounding the death of a fellow traveler, a Mr. West, in California. Mr. West and his wife had traveled to California hoping that the climate would help to improve his health. Jean wrote, "Mrs West feels very lonely, being a total stranger in California." Because of Mr. West's illness, Jean stayed with the couple to help out: "It seemed to him that he had his mother by his side." Unfortunately, he died; being so far from Utah, Mr. West died without his family around him. Jean Rio Pearce, Journal, 26 December 1869-11 January 1870, 62-3, HBLL.

³³This practice continued among members of the Church until 1922 when the First Presidency issued a statement which declared, "The custom which is growing in the Church to dedicate those who appear to be beyond recovery, to the Lord, has no place among the ordinances of the Church. . . . No possible advantage can result from dedicating faithful members of the Church prior to their death. Their membership in the Church,

Maughan wrote that her uncle had sent for men in the church to "come and dedicate her to the Lord. They came and done so, and she soon afterwards breathed her last."³⁴

Another prevalent practice was the formal deathbed gathering--the calling of family and friends to the bedside to bid them farewell and to bestow last words of comfort and love. In some cases this also included bequeathal of possessions to family and friends. Historian Lewis O. Saum, in his study of death in pre-Civil War America, observes that participation in the ritual of death "centered more directly on the deathbed than on the grave. Indeed, to an almost unnerving degree, the imagination, emotion and memory of humble America hovered about that sacrosanct place."³⁵ When it became apparent that Carlie Lyman Callister would die, she sent for her siblings and husband. Her mother recorded the event: "She talked to all the family separately, giving them good counsel." She used these last moments to reassure her family of her willingness to die. When her husband tried to make her think she would recover, she told him "it was of no use to think of her getting well, and she wanted him to give her up."³⁶

their devotion to the faith which they have espoused, are sufficient guarantee, so far as their future welfare is concerned." See Bush, 37.

³⁴Maughan, 16 November 1872, 400. Likewise, many Americans of diverse faiths participated in rituals associated with impending death.

³⁵Saum, 30-48.

³⁶Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman, Journal, 14 March 1879, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

This leavetaking gave the dying an opportunity to comfort the bereaved. One woman used her last moments to reassure the midwife that she was "well satisfied" with the care she had been given and did not blame her for her impending death. She said, "I can meet you before the Lord, and hail you with joy."³⁷ That these farewells were formal, solemn occasions, somehow separated from other conversations with the dying, is reflected in one woman's statement: "He lived some days after bidding us good-bye, and passed quietly away surrounded by his family and friends."³⁸

There is much evidence that family and friends were generally cognizant of the depth of the grief experienced by those closest to the deceased. Following her son's death, Mary Ann Freeze was visited by Robert Ford who attempted to comfort her by relating "some experiences in the lives of some of the elders who had buried children."³⁹ When Martha Spence Heywood's daughter died, she visited her sister wives and described the meeting as "rather a sad one." She said, "I felt a chord of sympathy vibrate in the bosom of Sister Vary."⁴⁰ In addition to these more informal acts of support, publications such as the Woman's Exponent (founded in 1872)

³⁷Claire Noall, Guardians of the Hearth: Utah's Pioneer Midwives and Women Doctors (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1974), 49.

³⁸Maughan, September 1892, 412.

³⁹Freeze, 20 November 1884.

⁴⁰Juanita Brooks, ed., Not By Bread Alone: The Journal of Martha Spence Heywood 1850-56 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1978), 1856, 120.

provided opportunities for public expressions of regret. When Mary A. Young's husband, Joseph, died, Margaret F. C. Morrison published a "Letter of Condolence" to her friend. In it she wrote, "His death has cast a gloom over every one here and all deeply sympathize with you and every member of his family."⁴¹

Following death, the deceased was observed overnight "in a traditional 'wake' to insure that no sign of life was missed."⁴² In an era of primitive medical knowledge, such a precaution was necessary to avert an even greater tragedy. Once death was fully established, burial preparations began in earnest. During this time, the community, particularly members of the Relief Society, played a large role in helping the bereaved; as one woman remarked so succinctly, "The folks went to work preparing him for burial."⁴³ When Elizabeth Bartlett heard of the death of a young man in her community, she went that evening "to Bro Brandleys to see if [she] could do anything to assist him in his great berivement."⁴⁴ There was much to be done to prepare for a burial, and so the

⁴¹Margaret F. C. Morrison, "Letter of Condolence," Woman's Exponent 4 (15 August 1875):45.

⁴²Bush, 27.

⁴³Keeler, February 1887, 300. Mary Layton remembered that "part of her task as president of [the Relief Society] was to sit up with the sick, and, after preparing the body for burial, with the dead." Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "Mormon "Women in Southern Alberta: The Pioneer Years," in The Mormon Presence in Canada, eds. Brigham Y. Card and others (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1990), 221.

⁴⁴Elizabeth Ramsay Fraser Bartlett, Journal, 16 January 1895, typescript in possession of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.

community and extended family usually offered to help, both with physical and emotional support. When Eliza Partridge Lyman's grandson Alton died in January 1877, she noted some of the preparations which needed to be made:

Fred, Joseph, Eddie, and Peter Anderson sat up with the corpse; . . . Carlie and Martha made the clothes. Bro Snow made the coffin, Bro John Dutson attended to the digging of the grave and whatever was to be done; . . . Ida washed the clothes that had been used about Alton.⁴⁵

Often, it was the local Relief Society sisters who came to prepare the corpse for burial, sew burial clothes, sit up with the corpse, and provide food for the family.⁴⁶ This aid was crucial at a time when those closest to the deceased were struggling with the death itself. It appears from the extant primary sources that the community usually reacted appropriately by offering help and words of solace to the grieving.

Such comfort seemed to aid in the healing process of the bereaved; when it was absent, coping with the death was more difficult. The events following the death of Eliza Lyman's aged mother in June 1878 illustrate this point. After many months of severe illness, her mother "passed away without a struggle." There was much to be done to prepare to take her mother from the small settlement of Oak Creek, Utah,

⁴⁵Lyman, 10 January 1877.

⁴⁶Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Widowhood among the Mormons: The Personal Accounts," in On Their Own: Widows and Widowhood in the American Southwest, 1848-1939, ed. Arlene Scadron (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 123.

to be buried about thirty miles away in the larger community of Fillmore. Eliza's sons and brother-in-law completed many of the necessary funeral preparations. She complained that their neighbors had shown them

no kindness at all with the exception of Bro John Lovell who offered us the use of a horse and wagon which we did not need. Sister Rebecca Dutson Jacobson was the only woman who offered to assist us and she staid with us till we started and then staid with those who were left as they were very lonesome.

Arriving in Fillmore, Eliza observed that members of the community "were very kind and seemed ready on every hand to assist us which was very different to the treatment we received at Oak Creek." She wrote of her bitterness that not only had she and her immediate family had to care for their mother in her sickness without outside help, but they also had to wash and dress her themselves "as not a person offered their assistance." She continued, "It was not a very agreeable task for us her children but I thank the Lord for the strength he gave us to help us through so that our Dear Mother never suffered for the want of care."⁴⁷ Eliza's tone clearly reveals her resentment towards the Oak Creek community which had not responded to the family's needs in what she believed to be an appropriate manner.

In the absence of embalming techniques, timely burial was crucial, as the following entry makes quite clear.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Lyman, 9 June 1878.

⁴⁸Ice was used to preserve bodies for greater amounts of time, as noted by Mary Ann Weston Maughan in September 1893: "Soon [Jane's] brothers came and they packed ice around her, as the weather was very warm." See Maughan, September 1893, 412. Eliza Keeler also mentioned

After an examination of the corpse the brethren and sisters concluded that the funeral might be put off till the next day. We found very soon after dark that we had made a mistake in putting it off and had to go very early the next morning to the grave.⁴⁹

The speed with which burial needed to be accomplished necessitated the participation of many in the burial preparations, the first of which involved washing and laying out the body.

Women washed and laid out the bodies of their husbands, other women, and children; however, these rites were most often performed by persons outside the immediate family, many times by practicing midwives, such as Mary Ann Maughan, who noted in her journal in the summer of 1870 that "I laid two children in their coffins one day, and attended four funerals in one week."⁵⁰ Susanna P. Nielson of Franklin remembered that her mother's work in the Franklin Relief Society involved caring for the dead. "She would wash the body, place cold cloths over the face and fifty-cent pieces on the eyes, keeping the cloths cold and damp continually until burial."⁵¹ As previously noted, if this help was not offered,

another preservation method when she stated, "He was natural to look at, as they had carbolic on him." See Keeler, 300.

⁴⁹Lyman, 10 June 1878.

⁵⁰Maughan, Summer 1870, 393.

⁵¹Susanna Smart Parkinson Nielson, Oral History, 25, Interview by William G. Hartley, 1973, Oral History Program, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. James J. Farrell, in his monograph on death in America, details nineteenth-century American traditions of laying out the dead: "A member of the family or a neighbor began to prepare the body for burial. He--or she, for often these last rites were performed by women--placed a board between two chairs, draped it

there seemed to be warranted bitterness by those left to care for their own.

When death took a small child, women were more apt to perform the last rites; many women wrote of washing the little bodies of their babies. For them, this was a solitary service to be performed without the help of outsiders. When Mary Ann Freeze's five-year-old son died, she recorded the following: "After he died he looked as if he were only sleeping. I washed his precious little body myself feeling that I could not give up that last sacred right to another."⁵² Washing her son's body provided Mary Ann with an opportunity to offer one final act of love for her child.

For many who mourned the loss of a loved child, husband, mother, father, or friend, these final rituals played a vital role in the grieving process. When Martha Spence Heywood's little daughter Sarepta died, she wrote, "I washed her little body myself in my lap and dressed her in her own clothes and the last sewing I did for her was to make her a pair of shoes of white cloth."⁵³ Years following the death of her infant son, Lucy Flake recorded the last rites she performed for him with the words, "[H]e breathed a few

with a sheet, laid the body upon it, and washed the corpse. . . . To close the mouth, people used a forked stick between the breast bone and the chin, fastened with a string around the neck. To close the eyes, they placed a coin on the eyelids. Then they dressed the body for burial, either in a winding sheet or a shroud. In warm weather, they put a large block of ice in a tub beneath the board, with smaller chunks about the body." See James J. Farrell Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 147.

⁵²Freeze, November 1884.

⁵³Heywood, 22 February 1856, 117.

times and passed away so sweetly my own hands made his clothes dressed him fixed some paint and painted his coffin."⁵⁴ Eliza Lyman noted that her daughters went to fix up her grandson's grave just following his burial. The next day, the child's father went to the graveyard and "made a fence" around the little boy's grave.⁵⁵ Observances such as these gave mourners physical outlets for their grief; they served as outward manifestations of dedication and love.

The laying out of the corpse was governed by distinct traditions. Rhoda Burgess noted that just prior to her mother's funeral, she "stood by the Dear form taking a last look noticing that everything was complete."⁵⁶ This completeness was crucial to proper burial and is often noted in journals. There was a definite sense of what constituted a proper laying out. One woman even summoned the midwife, Mary Ann Maughan, to her deathbed to show her "how [she] was to lay her out."⁵⁷ Patty Sessions, another midwife, recorded that when a mother and baby died in childbirth, "they washed and dressed [the child], and buried it in the arms of the mother."⁵⁸ While the Saints had little control over the deaths of those they loved, the manner in which those loved

⁵⁴Flake, 6 June 1878, 25.

⁵⁵Lyman, 10 and 12 March 1877.

⁵⁶Burgess, 19 December 1881.

⁵⁷Maughan, 16 November 1872, 400.

⁵⁸Noall, 49.

ones were buried was something which they could control. It was in their power to bury the deceased with dignity and order; consequently, burial rituals were of primary importance.

A crucial element in laying out the corpse involved the proper dressing of the body. As time went on, it became increasingly important for the deceased to be buried in white, the primary color of all Mormon ritual: "No black for me, dear love when I am dead," stated a verse in the Woman's Exponent in 1894. It continued, "Shroud not that precious face in funeral fold, But wear a soft white veil upon your head." In the article which followed, Lillie Freeze summoned Mormon women to be "remodelers of society" by shunning morbid funeral traditions. She recalled the funeral of a bishop where the Assembly Hall was draped in black. In response to this show of mourning, the author remembered that Sarah M. Kimball

remarked that [the black shrouds] had a gloomy and chilling effect upon the spirits of those present, and she said in earnest appeal; "When my worn and weary spirit has entered its rest there will be no occasion to mourn for me, and please let the drapery at my funeral be WHITE.⁵⁹

The fabric used was also important. Zina D. H. Young, the General President of the Relief Society, told the Cache

⁵⁹Lillie T. Freeze "No Black for Me," Woman's Exponent 22 (1 June 1894):137.

Valley Relief Society that "we must bury our dead in Cotton or linen as they were products of the earth."⁶⁰

But, whatever the material used, the burial clothing often had to be sewn at the time of death; as frequent journal entries illustrate, this usually required more hands than one, thus representing another aspect of the supportive networks utilized by women. Rhoda Burgess wrote, "Bup Thomas has gone to Pinto for muslin for a wrapper it was all she [her mother] lacked to complete her suit." The next day, she noted that "we made Dear Mothers wrapper to day."⁶¹ When making new clothing was not an option, women had to do the best they could with whatever clothing was available. Here again, women often came to each other's aid. Catharine Cottam Romney wrote of such an instance in a letter to her mother:

Sister Oakley asked me to tell you when I wrote that she should never forget your kindness to her when her children died and shall ever feel grateful. she says she had nothing but an old muslin dress to bury her baby in and she thought that would'nt do, but Mother said, "it will do very well Sr Oakley. I will take it and do it up for you." And she says when mother brought it back, it looked beautiful just as nice as if it had just come out of the store. Which I dont doubt if Mother washed and ironed it.⁶²

⁶⁰Cache Valley Stake Relief Society Minutes, Book B, 20 April 1896, copy in possession of Carol Cornwall Madsen.

⁶¹Burgess, 19 December 1881.

⁶²Jennifer Moulton Hansen, ed., Letters of Catharine Cottam Romney, Plural Wife (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 28 August 1884, 92.

Clearly, one woman's act of kindness, though seemingly small, was enormously significant to a grieving mother.

It appears that at times, burial preparations were financially taxing to families. Eliza Keeler noted that "We had to trade or sell some of the best calves to pay for the burial clothes, etc."⁶³ Following the burial of her husband, Nancy Tracy stated, "Eli returned home and gave me a little money. He gave me ten dollars to help me pay the expenses of his father's burial."⁶⁴

One of the most important and the most peculiarly Mormon of all the ritual elements of burial included dressing deceased faithful adult members of the church in temple robes or "the robes of the holy priesthood." This sacred clothing included a robe, a sash, and an apron for all, a veil for women, and a cap for men. Such apparel was worn during the temple's endowment ceremony where initiates made covenants with God, receiving a promise from Him that if they kept their covenants, they would become gods and goddesses in the hereafter. Lester Bush has asserted that through their use of this "unique burial attire, Mormon families symbolically impl[ied] the eternal commitment of the loved one to the exalting temple ritual . . . and to the continuation of their

⁶³Keeler, February 1887, 301.

⁶⁴"Diary of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy: Incidents, Travels, and Life of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy, Including Many Important Events in Church History," 1858, 49, HBL.

family unit into the eternities."⁶⁵ Seeing a deceased loved one in this clothing surely reassured the living that they would be reunited with their loved ones in the resurrection.

The importance of properly clothing the deceased in the "robes of the priesthood" is reflected in a dream noted in the journal of Elizabeth Bartlett. This journal entry is significantly longer than any other in her journal, thus accentuating the importance of the dream to Elizabeth. She began by saying that she "had the blues on account of a dream" that she had the night before. In the dream, members of the community were moving a number of graves from one site to another. At Elizabeth's request, one coffin lid was lifted. She recalled,

I seen the body as perfect as in life asleep the head was bent a little forward. . . . I thought I smoothed my hand over her forehead and hair and found that she was warm and had no vail nor apron on I run to town and got a vail and apron from Martha Horne and put them on her and We had such a time to get the coffin lid to stay on after we had taken it off and when it was shoved off to eather side I could see [the] Robe and under clothing all drawn up and seen her bare feet and legs and I fixed them several times before I could get them to lay all right but I replaced with new what was lacking and left her laying in peace and in good order . . . and then I awoke much troubled and worried about the dreem I told it to Mother and Sarah they both thought it strange but said no more.⁶⁶

It was vital that Elizabeth left the woman wearing the proper attire and "laying in peace and good order."⁶⁷

⁶⁵Bush, 28.

⁶⁶Bartlett, 23 August 1887.

⁶⁷In addition to her fears of improper burial, Elizabeth also seemed concerned about the possibility of burying someone who was not

There appears to have been little attempt to keep these sacred dressings covered or hidden from public view until the latter part of the century when a greater number of "gentiles" resided in Utah. Jane Blood, who was involved in sewing burial clothing for many Church members in Logan, Utah, noted a significant conversation with the president of the Logan temple in an 1892 entry. He told her that when the deceased were "clothed in temple clothing they should not be exposed to the public, unless the clothing was covered, for these things [were] too sacred." He then instructed her to spread the word "everywhere for it must be stopped. We will be held accountable for it."⁶⁸

Funerals were also governed by a particular set of community traditions and rituals which applied to viewings, funeral services, funeral processions, and grave dedications. While women played an important role in caring for the sick and preparing the dead for burial, they were specifically excluded from the other, more public, aspects of burial. Once the private caretaking was completed, social and religious tradition dictated that women turn many of the remaining duties and rituals over to the men of the community. A portion of men's involvement was most closely associated with the physically arduous tasks of making the coffin and digging the grave. In addition, they participated

yet dead; this is evidenced by the warm body, the coffin lid that refused to stay down, and the disarranged clothing.

⁶⁸Blood, 18 November 1892, 123.

in washing the bodies of other men, primarily for reasons of modesty. Beyond these more temporal duties, they performed the last public religious rites such as speaking at funerals and dedicating graves. In excluding women from these latter occupations, they followed the larger American tradition which dictated the woman's role to be private and the man's to be public. But in addition to this separation of the sexes by custom, the Mormons believed these last sacred rites, particularly the dedication of the grave, should be performed by someone holding priesthood power; only men possessed this power.⁶⁹

Mormon funeral services were similar to contemporary Protestant funerals where the community gathered at the church, home, or graveside to sing hymns, pray, and listen to sermons.⁷⁰ Mormons, like many Christians of the period, utilized funeral sermons to prompt members to live godly

⁶⁹In other Christian denominations, ministers usually led the songs and prayers at the gravesite. For an example of a Protestant Episcopal graveside service, see George Duffield and Samuel W. Duffield, The Burial of the Dead (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1882), 49-58. An undated, unofficial Mormon booklet (apparently from the early part of the twentieth century) entitled Instructions in Ordinance Work contains "suggested forms for the Priesthood to use in performing the various ordinances" of the gospel. The suggested dedication for a grave states, "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, we a few of Thy children surround the open grave of one of Thy (sons or daughters) and we humbly pray that Thou wilt bless and consecrate this plot of ground as the last resting place of this Thy servant, that this grave, the casket, and that the remains may be undisturbed by the convulsions of nature or the hand of man until the morning of the resurrection when the trumpet of God will sound, calling forth the dead who sleep in the Lord. As a servant of God holding the Holy Priesthood, I dedicate this plot of ground unto this end in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen." Instructions in Ordinance Work, HBLL.

⁷⁰Bush, 27.

lives so that they also might go "home"; lives of the deceased were used as object lessons for the living.⁷¹ Even so, sermons were often used primarily to give comfort to those grieving. Heber C. Kimball reminded mourners at Mary Smith's funeral that "Sister Mary has departed in peace; she has gone home."⁷² Mary Ann Freeze wrote the following about her son's funeral:

The funeral took place at 2 p.m. Bro J. E. Taylor delivered one of the most beautiful and comforting sermons it was ever my lot to hear. The Bishop, and Con's J. H. Fell and R. Morris each made a few kind and comforting remarks. I did feel comforted to a great degree, and felt that I would be sinning to nurse my grief after the things of God had been so beautifully portrayed. There was a large number of sympathizing friends in attendance, and the choir sang beautifully. The last hymn, "There is sweet rest in heaven," was one that was always a great favorite with him.⁷³

This funeral is quite representative of others noted in women's journals. One tradition was certain: women did not

⁷¹For example, the Presbyterians stated, "When the season for the funeral comes . . . let all who attend conduct themselves with becoming gravity; and apply themselves to serious meditation and discourse; and the minister, if present, may exhort them to consider the frailty of life, and the importance of being prepared for death and eternity." The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1842), 516-17, quoted in Farrell, 40. The authors of a Protestant Episcopal burial manual exhorted ministers to remember that "the true object of funeral addresses is not so much to eulogize the dead, as to instruct, comfort, and benefit the living." See Duffield, Burial of the Dead, 98. Religious liberals like Henry Ward Beecher, on the other hand, tried to "structure funeral services to stress the beauty and beneficence of death" and objected to using the funeral sermon as an object lesson for the living. Ibid., 214.

⁷²Funeral address delivered by Heber C. Kimball, 23 September 1852, Journal of Discourses, 1:246.

⁷³Freeze, November 1884.

74 speak at funerals.⁷⁴ But though they did not participate in this public function, they frequently recorded the contents of the funeral addresses, often commenting, like Mary Ann Freeze, that the talks, music, and community support were comforting.

When this community support was not present, the bereaved were often acutely aware. When Nancy Abigail Clement Williams' sister died during their journey to Mexico in 1890, she mused, "Only 5 teams to the funeral; no friends to mourn with us. No one to speak of her good qualities as they had known her in life."⁷⁵ The community's gathering to pay their last respects and to grieve together gave solace to those closest to the deceased.

Funeral processions were an integral part of funeral proceedings. They appear to have often involved large numbers of people; Lucy Flake wrote about one such procession: "[T]he Relief society young Ladys young men and the morners primary and others Marched to the grave twenty wagons and carrages all followed the remains to the grave."⁷⁶ Once they reached the grave, it was dedicated "until the

⁷⁴Towards the close of the century, women were permitted to speak at funerals with ever increasing frequency.

⁷⁵Nancy Abigail Clement Williams, *Reminiscence and Journal*, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, as quoted in *Women's Voices*, 369.

⁷⁶Flake, 10 February 1896, 162.

resurrection day."⁷⁷ In some communities, processions were made up of members of the Church organization with which the deceased had been most involved. Jane Blood of Logan, Utah, described a procession honoring her Primary counselor. The entourage was made up of Primary children carrying flowers and walking ahead of the corpse.⁷⁸ In another instance, she stated that the "Sunday School followed the remains from [Brother Payne's] home to the meeting house."⁷⁹ It became a common practice to bury the dead facing east, "apparently in anticipation of their rising to meet Christ at his second coming" who presumably would descend in the eastern skies.⁸⁰

In instances where infants and small children died, the grandeur of the funeral proceedings was greatly modified. These events were often more intimate and were attended only by family and close friends. As one woman wrote of her infant son's funeral, "Our little baby's funeral. A number of friends gathered to pay their last respects to him."⁸¹

⁷⁷Keeler, February 1887, 300.

⁷⁸Blood, 2 June 1891, 87.

⁷⁹Ibid., 25 December 1892, 99. In "Tribute, To the Memory of Eliza A. Felt," Mrs. G. A. Alder reported the events surrounding the burial of her friend: "Her funeral was largely attended, and many hearts were wrung by her loss. . . . According to the request of our president, the officers of the [Relief] Society, namely, Sisters Hyde, Heywood, Reese, myself and Mother, accompanied her friends to the cemetery, and each of us threw a bouquet upon her coffin, that as tokens of our love they might mingle with her dust." Woman's Exponent 4 (15 September 1875):61.

⁸⁰Bush, 27.

⁸¹Freeze, 22 February 1877.

While many funeral customs were widely accepted, others were open for discussion and disagreement within the community. The wearing of mourning clothing by the bereaved was initially one of these debatable customs. Many frowned upon such a display as not in keeping with faith in the joyful resurrection of the deceased. Brigham Young's funeral in 1877 solidified the community's rejection of mourning clothing. In the directions he wrote for his own funeral, he requested the "male members to wear no crepe on their hats or their coats, the females to buy no black bonnets, nor black dresses, nor black veils; but if they have them they are at liberty to wear them." Accordingly, none of the four thousand "who marched to his grave was dressed in mourning clothes."⁸² This movement away from lugubrious mourning traditions paralleled that of liberal Protestants of the same period. As Henry Beecher stated, "Draw not over yourselves the black tokens of pollution. Do not blaspheme by naming that despair which is triumph and eternal life."⁸³

Funerals were traditionally held at the church meetinghouse, but some were also held at home. In Snowflake, Arizona, there was some argument about where the corpse was

⁸²Bush, 28-9. According to George H. Schoemaker, 19th century tombstones were made "primarily of sandstone and marble; sandstone was easy to obtain in Utah, but marble had to be imported from Vermont, Missouri, and as far away as Italy. . . . In Utah's arid climate sandstone tended to erode after many years. Soon consumers were demanding granite because of its enduring qualities." George H. Schoemaker, "Symbolic Consideration in Nineteenth Century Tombstone Art in Utah," Material Culture 20 (Summer 1988):19.

⁸³Farrell, 81.

supposed to be during the funeral. Lucy Flake noted the following:

We was permitted to take the dead to the meeting House for nearly five years the dead have been left at home while the people all went to the funeral. When Apostle Lyman was here in November I asked him if it was right for our dead to be left at home while the friends went to the meeting house he said no take them to the meeting house every time.⁸⁴

This particular disagreement was settled by an appeal to a higher authority within the Mormon community. The final word was apparently much to Lucy's liking.

When a public figure died, funeral preparations were more expansive and involved greater numbers of people. When Eliza R. Snow, the President of the Relief Society, died on 5 December 1887, her funeral was a "state occasion." Services were held in Salt Lake City in the Temple Square Assembly Hall, which was "draped in cream white mull, with white roses and green sprays."⁸⁵ In his funeral address, Bishop O. F. Whitney commented on the "appropriateness of these emblems, this white drapery, these beautiful flowers, these sprigs of green, which whisper not of death, but of white." He continued, "White is God's mourning color. Winter is typical of death and when it binds the earth in icy fetters, God

⁸⁴Flake, 10 February 1896, 61

⁸⁵Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 128.

sends the snow, an emblem of purity and hope, to speak of coming Spring and life beyond."⁸⁶

Interestingly, even though Eliza had spent the majority of her life laboring among the women of the Church, including her tenure as president of the Relief Society, not a single woman spoke at her funeral; all the addresses were delivered by male leaders of the Church. After the funeral, the mourners participated in the funeral procession; following the casket were Eliza's relatives, her sister wives, and close friends, "following these were the members of the relief and other societies." The "general assemblage" brought up the rear.⁸⁷

Funerals did not mark the end of the practical duties associated with death. Often there still remained the task of washing the deceased's clothing and putting away his or her possessions. Following her mother's death, Rhoda Burgess noted that "Eliza Geo and I have been putting Mas things away today what a sad task it has been."⁸⁸

⁸⁶The Life and Labors of Eliza R. Snow Smith; With a Full Account of Her Funeral Services (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), 31. Compare this to James Farrell's description of Henry Ward Beecher's funeral in the East the same year: "Instead of hanging crepe on the door to signify the incursion of death, they festooned the entrance with a wreath of white and red roses and lilies of the valley, bound with white satin. . . . One observer pointed out that 'no emblem of sorrow or parting was there, but the symbols of love, and faith, and hope, the glad tokens of eternal reward, such as befitted his life, his death, and his fame.'" See Farrell, 81-2.

⁸⁷Life and Labors of Eliza R. Snow Smith, 36.

⁸⁸Burgess, 20 December 1881.

At times, Utah's frontier conditions significantly altered the conventional order of events. This was particularly true when families journeyed to begin new settlements away from the more established settlements along the Wasatch front. Lucy Flake and her family were traveling to settle what would become Snowflake, Arizona, in November 1877, when she experienced the following: "[T]here was a child about 11 years old died in the company they called on me to wash it the watter would freeze as quick as it touched the child it was the first time I washed the dead."⁸⁹ These burials were similar in many ways to those performed on the Mormons' exodus to Utah, in that they were devoid of many of the rituals which were utilized in more settled areas. In addition, though Utah became ever more "civilized," there continued to be travelers passing through already established portions of the country on their way to other destinations. These settlers brought a peculiar set of problems with them, as Eliza Lyman's 1878 entry reveals:

A man by the name of Lammerdon stopped with his family at Platte's, said one of his children had just died and he wanted to stop here and bury it. Platte and his wife showed them all the kindness in their power and they buried their child the next day in the Oak Creek Cemetary.⁹⁰

In the absence of this family's established community, Platte and his family assumed many of the duties usually performed

⁸⁹Flake, November 1877, 23.

⁹⁰Lyman, 22 May 1878.

by family and friends. Thus, because of its placement on the Western trail, some frontier conditions continued to exist in the ever more settled Utah.

Mormon women's personal writings from 1847-1900 reflect the vast amounts of time and caring spent in activities associated with death and dying. Women actively participated in caring for the dying and in performing last loving, sacred rites for the dead. These customs were often rich in ritual meaning which reminded the living of the eternal nature of their relationships. In addition, by preparing deceased family and friends for complete and orderly burial, they were able to translate their devotion and respect for their loved ones into concrete, tangible forms.

CHAPTER FOUR

ELIZA MARIE PARTRIDGE LYMAN:

A MORMON WOMAN'S "OPTIMISTIC SORROW"¹

One woman living in the precarious world of nineteenth-century America was Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman. Eliza left behind a reminiscence of her early years and a journal which spans the years 1846 to 1885. Because of the comprehensive nature of her journal, it offers rich insights into the experiences of a Mormon woman during this period. Eliza's belief in Mormon theology and her familial and community relationships sustained her during times of tremendous adversity and produced in her an ever-strengthened sense of "optimistic sorrow."² She felt her losses acutely, but in addition, she found great hope in the promises of the resurrection. Her story is only one of thousands, yet by examining her life and struggles with illness and death, one can understand an important component of life in nineteenth-century Utah. Moreover, her story is significant in itself as it reveals a powerful history of spirituality in a harsh and lonely environment.

¹M. Guy Bishop, "To Overcome the 'Last Enemy': Early Mormon Perceptions of Death," Brigham Young University Studies 26 (Summer 1986):66.

²Ibid.

Eliza was born on 20 April 1820 in Painesville, Geauga County, Ohio, to Edward and Lydia Clisbee Partridge. She was the first of five children--four girls and one boy. At an early age, her parents sent her to school where she "acquired a very good common education."³ Her parents converted to Mormonism in 1830. Prior to her father's conversion, he had "accumulated a handsome property." When he was ordained as the first bishop of the Church and called away on church business, he "could not be there to attend to it," so it sold for very little when the family followed the Saints to Independence, Missouri. Consequently, they were "much reduced in circumstances (having moved so much, and [Eliza's] father having poor health)."⁴

Her reminiscence details the persecutions and travels of the Saints through Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, noting the accompanying miserable conditions, such as her father's tarring and feathering, and the abundance of sickness in Nauvoo: "The saints were nearly all sick with ague and fever, and our family had to have a share. My two sisters, Harriet and Emily[,] had the ague about a year. I did not have it as I had worn it out when we lived in Ohio."⁵ In May 1840, while her family was living in Nauvoo, her father had

³This and all subsequent entries copied exactly. Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman, Journal, Holograph, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1.

⁴Ibid., 8.

⁵Ibid., 11.

to "take to his bed." He had been sick about ten days when he died and "left us most uncomfortably situated."⁶ Shortly after this, she and her sister Emily went to live with Joseph Smith's family, and in 1843, they were sealed to him as plural wives. Subsequent to Smith's martyrdom, Eliza became the third wife of Apostle Amasa Mason Lyman.⁷ The following years were filled with continued persecution of the Saints and the Mormons' consequent withdrawal from Nauvoo to the West in February 1846. Following two exacting winters in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, Eliza finally arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on 17 October 1849. She resided first in Salt Lake City for a number of years and later in the communities of Oak City and Fillmore, settlements in Millard County on the "Mormon Corridor to the Pacific" which were established in 1851.⁸

Eliza's husband, Amasa Lyman, had eight wives, two of whom were Eliza's sisters, Caroline and Lydia. Eliza rarely lived with him as a result of polygamy and because he was often away taking care of church business and serving various missions. Poverty compounded her loneliness as she was often left to fend for herself and her children without any financial support from her husband. As a result of his

⁶Ibid., 12.

⁷Frank Esshom, Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Pioneer Book Publishing Company, 1913), 1015.

⁸Richard D. Poll, ed., Utah's History (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989), 140-41.

involvement with spiritualism--the New Movement--and the "false doctrines" and seances associated with it, Amasa was excommunicated from the Church on 12 May 1870. While five of Amasa's wives reconciled with him following his excommunication, Eliza and her two sisters decided to divorce him.⁹ Eliza never remarried.

Both in and out of marriage, Eliza's life seemed to revolve around her mother, her sisters, and her five children: Don Carlos, Platte DeAlton, Caroline (Carlie), Joseph, and Lucy--two of whom died before she did. Through her later years, Eliza nursed her ailing mother and cared for her children and grandchildren. When Eliza died at the age of sixty-six on 2 March 1886, her son Platte wrote a fitting benediction for Eliza's life in his journal:

She was a kind and affectionate mother, very solicitous for the welfare of her children and esteeming nothing she could do for their comfort or happiness, a hardship or sacrifice. May she rest in peace until the Saints of God are called forth in the morning of the first resurrection in which she will surely have a part.¹⁰

Platte's sentiments echo Eliza's as her writings are replete with the desire to join her family and friends in the glorious resurrection.

Eliza's sixty-six years were marked by great difficulties. Her recurring references to the hardships of life begin early in her reminiscence, which summarizes her

⁹Loretta L. Hefner, "From Apostle to Apostate: The Personal Struggle of Amasa Mason Lyman," Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983):101-2.

¹⁰Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman, Journal, typescript, 82, in possession of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.

life's experiences until her departure from Nauvoo in February 1846. Her journal entries begin at this point when she was four months pregnant with her first child. The conditions of the Mormon mass exodus were grim. For those camped on the Missouri River, death rates rose three to four times higher than any other time in Mormon history, with perhaps one-third of children born at Winter Quarters dying before their first birthdays.¹¹ Throughout this period, Eliza wrote of the suffering and death she saw around her. But her experience with death became intensely personal during the time of the birth and death of her son near Winter Quarters, Nebraska. Her journal entries reveal the pathos of her response to these difficulties and are representative of her reactions to death.

My first child was born here, in a wagon. I have named him Don Carlos. I am very uncomfortably situated for a sick woman. The scorching sun shining upon the wagon through the day and the cool air at night is almost too much of a change to be healthy [14 July 1846].

Since I last wrote [15 July] I have been very sick with child bed fever. For many days my life seemed near its end. I am now like a skeleton so much so that those who have not been with me do not know me till told who I am. It is a fearful place to be sick with fever in a wagon with no shade over except the cover and a July sun shining every day. All the comfort I had was the pure cold water from a spring near by. But the Lord preserved my life for some purpose for which I thank Him. My babe, in consequence of my sickness is very poor but as I get better I hope to see him improve [9 August 1846].

Don Carlos ten weeks old today and as bright a little fellow as ever was [22 August 1846].

¹¹Lester E. Bush, Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993), 43.

Don Carlos is three months old today and weighs eleven pounds [14 October 1846].

We have taken possession of our log house today, the first house my babe was ever in [15 October 1846].

Don Carlos weighs 13 lbs, having gained 2 lbs during the last month. He is a great comfort to me [14 November 1846].

My baby sick and getting worse. Has cried all day but I cannot see what ails him [6 December 1846].

The baby is dead and I mourn his loss. We have done the best we knew how for him, but nothing has done any good, he continued to fail from the time he was taken sick. My sister Caroline and I sat up every night with him, and tried to save him from death for we could not bear to part with him, but we were powerless. The Lord took him and I will try to be reconciled and think that all is for the best. He was my greatest comfort and was nearly always in my arms. But he is gone and I cannot recall him, so I must prepare to meet him in another and I hope happier world than this. I still have friends who are dear to me, if I had not I should wish to bid this world farewell, for it is full of disappointments and sorrow, but I believe there is a power that watches over us and does all things right. He was buried on the west side of the Missouri on the second ridge back, the eleventh grave on the second row counting from right to left, the first row being fartherest from the river. This will be no guide as the place cannot be found in a few years [12 December 1846].¹²

This sequence of events illustrates some of the ways in which Eliza coped with sickness and death during her life. It is evident early in her writings that her responses to these adversities were profoundly affected by her faith in God and belief in the theology of the Mormon Church, which emphasized the sanctifying purpose of trials that prepared the Saints for a glorious resurrection. Eliza clearly believed that

¹²Lyman, Holograph, 32-35.

death was both a rebirth and a victory wherein she would rest from the trials of this world in a more glorious place where she would be surrounded by her loved ones who had preceded her in death.¹³

Eliza espoused the Mormon conception of eternal family relationships sealed by temple rituals and confirmed by righteous living.¹⁴ She found comfort in her conviction that she would one day coexist with her deceased friends and family. When her mother died in 1878, she confided: "Her sufferings are over and I hope ere long to meet her where pain and sorrow have no power over us, and parting from our friends is unknown."¹⁵ She longed optimistically for the day when she would be reunited with her loved ones and was strengthened in her aspirations to live a righteous life to ensure that end.

In spite of her belief in an eternal continuum, at times, Eliza's loneliness was profound, and her grief bitter. At the age of twenty-six, she was still attempting to reconcile herself to God's will and "think that all [was] for

¹³This conclusion is corroborated in a letter from Eliza's father to her mother. Edward Partridge concluded the letter with the following words: "I hope that you and I may so conduct ourselves as to at last land our souls in the haven of eternal rest. Pray for me that I may not fall." See Andrew Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 1:230. For a detailing of this belief, see Bush, 25.

¹⁴For further discussion of this doctrine of eternal families, see Chapter One of this thesis.

¹⁵Lyman, 9 June 1878.

the best."¹⁶ Mormon teachings produced in her a sort of "optimistic sorrow" which entailed mourning mingled with the reassurance of the blessed state of the righteous in the other, better world in which families would be reunited.¹⁷ Her musings about these events also reveal the crucial role played by Eliza's family and friends during her time of sorrow. She gained strength from her sister Caroline and other friends without whose support, she would "wish to bid this world farewell." Both Eliza's acceptance of Mormonism's theology concerning death and the support of family and friends provided her with a degree of relief from the profound grief and the loneliness associated with death.¹⁸

Like many other second-generation members of the Church, Eliza's firm and ever-growing conviction was a family legacy; her parents had set a strong example by approaching hardships with faith and commitment to the Mormon Church. Just following her father's conversion, he was called to leave his family and business in Ohio to "go to the Missouri to attend to the business of the Church."¹⁹ Eliza noted that

¹⁶Ibid., 12 December 1846.

¹⁷Bishop, 66.

¹⁸Lyman, 35.

¹⁹Ibid., 8. Edward Partridge's call is detailed in the Doctrine and Covenants 41: 9-12: "And again, I have called my servant Edward Partridge; and I give a commandment, that he should be appointed by the voice of the church, and ordained a Bishop unto the church, to leave his merchandise and spend all his time in the labors of the church; to see to all things as it shall be appointed unto him, in my laws in the day that I shall give them. And this because his heart is pure before me, for he is like Nathaniel of old, in whom there is no guile. These words are given unto you, and they are pure before me; wherefore, beware how

"I was at that time very sick, and he had no expectation of seeing me again, but the Lord had called, and he must obey. He showed his faith by his works, and the Lord spared my life and the lives of the rest of the family for many years."²⁰ Her parents' examples reinforced Eliza's own experiences and observations.

When Eliza's father died at the age of 47, she and many others concluded that his death was brought on by the constant persecutions of the Church's enemies. Significantly, she noted that "he was firm and steadfast in his religion and tried to the very best of his ability to attend to every known duty as Bishop in the church of Latter Day Saints."²¹ Her father's unflinching faith in God and his diligence in the Church set an example of commitment that Eliza followed throughout her life. In 1868, Eliza wrote that "although my lot through life has many times been anything but pleasant, yet the Lord has led me better than I could have planned for myself, and I thank him for it."²²

Eliza's faithfulness to the Mormon Church was reflected in her major life decisions, including her acceptance of a plural marriage proposal from Joseph Smith. When he approached her with the "plan of celestial marriage," it was

you hold them, for they are to be answered upon your souls in the day of judgment."

²⁰Lyman, 8.

²¹Ibid., 12.

²²Ibid., May 1868.

a "great trial" to her, but she reacted with characteristic allegiance: "I had the most implicit confidence in him as a Prophet of the Lord and [could] not but believe his words and as a matter of course accept the privilege of being sealed to him as a wife for time and all eternity."²³

Because Eliza believed that righteousness was a prerequisite for eternal glory, she had a strong desire to prepare spiritually to meet her friends and family in heaven. Hers was the "highly structured heaven" of the Saints wherein humanity was "rewarded in varying degrees based on worthiness displayed during the earthly sojourn."²⁴ Consequently, Eliza's writings are quite similar to other Mormon women's in that she seemed more concerned about the faithfulness of herself and her children than with the possibility that her loved ones could be taken away from her at any time by premature death. She had come to Utah with the other Saints to raise her children "in the fear of the Lord," where they would "never suffer by the hands of [their] enemies" as the early Saints had done.²⁵ In her journal the references to the possibility that her children might not grow to adulthood are

²³Ibid., 13. Eliza continued: "Nothing but a firm desire to keep the commandments of the Lord could have induced a girl to marry in that way. I thought my trials were very severe in this line, and I am often led to wonder how it was that a person of my temperament could get along with it and not rebel, but I know it was the Lord who kept me from opposing His plans although in my heart I felt I could not submit to them, but I did, and I am thankful to my Heavenly Father for the care he had over me in those troublous times."

²⁴Bishop, 64.

²⁵Lyman, 44.

few. This is significant particularly in light of her abundant references to the sickness and death surrounding her.

Eliza's entries concerning her second child, Platte, reflect her preoccupation with his spiritual rather than his physical welfare. Only on the occasion of his first birthday in 1849 when she made a dinner in his honor did she comment on his mortal life. She noted that there was "not a man there, but one who will be a man if he lives a few years."²⁶ More typical were her musings on Platte's fifth birthday when she wrote of her intense spiritual desires for her son's life:

Platte DeAlton Lyman is five years old today, and he has had some of his little friends to eat dinner with him. I fixed a low table for them so that they could sit in their little chairs, and they were indeed a lovely sight and caused me many reflections as to what might be their lot in the future. They were now so innocent and had yet to learn the follies and wickedness that is practiced in this world. Would they be able to withstand the evil influence that they will surely meet as they pass on to manhood and also to womanhood. Can it be said of them when they shall have reached the end of this mortal life, that they have filled the measure of their creation and accomplished that that they were sent here to do? Will they be able to bear the ills and sorrows of this life? May the Lord surround them by guardian angels who shall have especial care over them that they may never go astray from the paths of rectitude but may be prepared when they are called to leave this earth to return to their Father pure and unspotted and enter into exaltation and glory.²⁷

Again, when Platte was called on his first mission to England at only eighteen years of age, the fears she noted in her

²⁶Ibid., 20 August 1849.

²⁷Ibid., 20 August 1853.

journal were not fears for his physical life, but for his spiritual one. Her entries centered around sending a young, inexperienced, honest boy out into a "wicked world to meet temptation in every form." Her prayers were that "the Lord would preserve him from every evil influence and make him a useful man in his kingdom."²⁸ These sentiments echo the words of many women as they wrote of their belief that "there [were] worse trials than death."²⁹

In Eliza's case, this primary concern with the righteousness of her children may have been accentuated by the apostasy of her husband, Amasa Lyman, in 1870. A July 1863 entry shows her concern about his spiritual and emotional well being:

Bro. Lyman seemed to feel uncomfortable in his mind, and I thought many times did not enjoy that portion of the spirit of the Lord that a man in his position should, he being one of the twelve apostles. I did not know what was wrong with him, but I could see that he was very unhappy. He left his family mostly to their fate, or to get along as best they could, although he was with them.³⁰

For some time previous to 1863, Amasa Lyman had been intrigued with spiritualism and consequently began to publicly question the relevance of the atonement of Jesus Christ to salvation. This questioning was in direct contradiction to Mormon doctrine, which stated that the

²⁸Ibid., 11 May 1867.

²⁹Emma Wartstill Mecham Neilson, Journal, photocopy of holograph, 30 November 1896, 68, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

³⁰Lyman, July 1863.

blessings of immortality were available only to the righteous through the atonement of Christ. Following multiple reprimands from his fellow Church leaders, Lyman was disfellowshipped and eventually excommunicated.³¹

Excommunication for Mormons was very serious, because it symbolized a spiritual death far worse than the death of one's body. Joseph Smith had given the Church a revelation which stated that "thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection . . . wo unto them; for their death is bitter."³² Brigham Young also preached that it was an unforgivable sin to receive "the truth" and then reject it. In an 1860 sermon on this topic, he declared that "All will be saved, except the sons of perdition."³³ Apostasy from the Church was incontestably more tragic than death, for death among the righteous meant only a temporary parting, whereas spiritual death meant a permanent separation. Eliza's faith in Mormonism included belief in the doctrine of spiritual death, and thus Eliza's journal entry concerning Amasa's physical death is the sole example of death in which Eliza has no hope for a happy reunion following the resurrection.

³¹Hefner, 98-101.

³²Doctrine and Covenants 42: 45,47.

³³Sons of perdition are those who have received Mormonism's truth in its fulness and then reject it. Sermon delivered 5 April 1860 by Brigham Young, published in the Deseret News, 16 May 1860, p. 10, as quoted in Mary Ann Myers, "Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and Practice," in Death in America, ed. David Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 117.

Amasa Lyman died on 3 February 1877. This was Eliza's reaction:

I shall not attempt to describe my feelings that I had when I saw the father of my children sleeping the sleep of death. He who had been an Apostle of the Lord and one of the leading men of the Church, proclaiming the everlasting Gospel to the nations of the earth, and being once a great and good man. But how is it now? I could only say in my heart "How are the mighty fallen." He had denied his religion, the doctrine he had taught to others for many years, and during his last days suffered himself to be severed from the Church of Christ, and to associate with apostates and spiritualists and disaffected persons. Instead of being buried in the robes of the Priesthood, he requested to be buried in the black coat and pants. It was grievous to think of the change a few short years had brought about in his case, and how easily it is to be overcome with evil if we are not continually on our guard.³⁴

That Amasa was not buried in "the robes of the priesthood" seemed to Eliza the ultimate sign of the rejection of his faith and, therefore, the breaking of his eternal ties to his family. She could not find the reassurance offered those who buried their dead in the heavily symbolic ritual clothing. Interestingly, Amasa's son Francis Marion Lyman mirrored Eliza's feelings when his father had announced his decision to join the spiritualist New Movement and subsequently to be permanently separated from the Church. He wrote in his journal: "Father's death would have been a pleasure compared with what we suffered at this terrible announcement."³⁵ Clearly, for these devout Mormons, like their fellow Saints,

³⁴Lyman, 5 February 1877.

³⁵Francis Marion Lyman, Journal, 1853, quoted in Hefner, 102.

spiritual death was infinitely more tragic than physical death.

Eliza joined other Mormon women in firmly believing that she would be reunited with her righteous loved ones after death. This trust in the afterlife did not, however, save her from feelings of enormous personal loss when someone close to her died. Here again, there is precedent in her family for this reaction to death with mingled sadness and faith. When her sister Harriet died in 1840, she observed:

My parents took this trouble to heart very much and my Father said she was his pet child but no one knew it till then and I do not think now that he knew any difference in his children, but I believe when a child or friend is taken from us we are to think we loved them more than others.³⁶

When Eliza was robbed of intimate companionship by an untimely death, she felt the loss intensely. Of all her children, she seemed to have a particularly close relationship with her daughter Carlie (Caroline). The depth of their friendship made Carlie's death as a result of childbirth particularly painful for Eliza. Many entries reveal a mutual affection between mother and daughter. One Christmas Eve, Eliza wrote about leaving a party early because she wanted to spend the evening at home with Carlie.³⁷ When Carlie married Thomas Callister in 1878, she still clearly preferred being at home with her mother in Oak Creek to living with her husband eighteen miles away in Deseret.

³⁶Eliza Lyman, 12.

³⁷Ibid., 24 December 1878.

Eliza often mentioned that Callister brought Carlie to stay with her. She was grateful for Carlie's company and wrote that it was "hard for me to be parted with her."³⁸ When Carlie was away, they corresponded frequently. When Eliza was sick, it was Carlie who cared for her and cleaned her kitchen while Eliza lay in bed. Eliza recorded that Carlie "worked too hard and took cold which settled all over her making her quite sick."³⁹ On another occasion, Eliza, her daughter Lucy, and Eliza's sister Caroline, set off for Deseret to visit Carlie. They had travelled about eight miles when they met Carlie coming to visit them. Eliza wrote, "She and a little boy were alone but she was so homesick to see me that she was willing to run some risks rather than stay there any longer without me."⁴⁰

On 7 March 1879, when Carlie delivered her first child, Eliza said that Carlie was "very sick indeed. . . . [Her] sufferings during this day were past description. No mortal but a woman can suffer so and live." They "sent to Fillmore" for the midwife, Ann Green Dutson Carling, "as the woman we had said she had done all she could."⁴¹ Eliza wrote that

³⁸Ibid., 9 March 1878.

³⁹Ibid., 21 June 1878.

⁴⁰Ibid., 12 October 1878.

⁴¹Ann Carling had been set apart as a midwife by Joseph Smith who told her she would be successful "if she used herbs exclusively in her work." She was the only midwife available in that part of Utah (Millard County); neither were there any practicing doctors there. See Kate B. Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1963), 429-30.

"Platte stood by her like a brother, and his wife Adelia did all she could, also Sister Caroline and others but no one could do any good till Sister Carling came and she soon brought relief." At half past eight in the evening, Carlie bore an eight-pound son. Relieved, Eliza noted that "the best sound I ever heard was when I heard the baby cry."⁴²

However, following the birth, Carlie's condition continued to deteriorate. Four days after the birth, Carlie's care was left to her mother, who wrote with some bitterness that "Bro Callister has gone to Fillmore leaving his wife Carlie very sick and not able to move and no man here now to help lift her. His back was getting lame and he thought he had better get home."⁴³

After a week Carlie gave up all hope of getting well. She called her siblings and husband to her bedside and sought to comfort them. She gave them "good counsel" and told them she was "perfectly willing to go. . . . Said she should meet her brother Platte's children [who had died recently] that she loved as if they were her own." At Carlie's request, her sister wife, Helen Callister, washed and anointed her, and her husband and brother Platte "laid their hands on her and blessed her and blessed the baby in her hearing."⁴⁴ Following

⁴²Lyman, 7 March 1879.

⁴³Ibid., 11 March 1879.

⁴⁴Linda King Newell has noted that "the ritual washing and anointing combined with the blessing of the sick became a common practice among church members, particularly women." See Linda King Newell, "Gifts of the Spirit: Women's Share," in Sisters in Spirit, 118. See also Chapter Three of this thesis.

the blessing she rested and "seemed a little better."⁴⁵ In a time of dire need, Eliza and her family knew what to do; they participated in the accepted rituals of blessing the sick and bidding family and friends farewell until they would meet again in a better place.

Still, Eliza grieved deeply at the thought of her daughter dying: "Oh, she little knows the anguish that fills my heart, when I think of parting with her." Carlie charged everyone to "be kind to her mother." Eliza wrote that she "never saw a child so careful of their mother as she was."⁴⁶ She did all she could to alleviate Carlie's sufferings, but on 20 March, "the Lord took her." Eliza responded with characteristic faith, believing that Carlie would "rest in peace till the morning of the resurrection when she will come forth clothed in glory prepared to enter into her exaltation with the sanctified ones."⁴⁷

Regardless of her faith in the afterlife, Eliza had to cope with the void left by her daughter's death. She often noted the loneliness she felt following Carlie's passing. As with many other women, anniversaries of death and holidays seemed to bring on especially acute sorrow. On one particularly dreary night, she wrote, "How changed is my situation now from what it was last Christmas when the baby's

⁴⁵Lyman, 14 March 1879.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., 19-20 March 1879.

mother and I were alone while all the rest of the household were gone to the party. Now she sleeps in the grave, and her baby is left to keep me company."⁴⁸ Almost a year and a half passed before Eliza could bring herself to visit Carlie's grave. Her ruminations on that visit reflect the combination of her continued faith and pain, her "optimistic sorrow." She confided in her journal that "it was hard to bear but it is undoubtedly right. We must all go sooner or later and those who are left are the ones who mourn. I think of her both day and night and hope to be prepared to meet her."⁴⁹ These simple words resemble those of myriad other women of the time who struggled to accept God's will. Significantly, they also reflect Eliza's ever-increasing reconciliation to God's will and the sanctifying purposes of suffering.

Adding to the complexity of coping with death were the practical considerations brought on by the death. When Carlie died, she left behind a son, Joseph Platte, less than three weeks old. Before her death, she requested that her mother raise him. And so, at 59 years of age, Eliza became the sole provider for an infant. During the ensuing year and a half, Eliza found various family members to breast-feed the infant. As soon as one woman's milk was not sufficient for both her own baby and Joseph Platte, Eliza had to find someone else to feed him. In one weary entry she wrote, "I

⁴⁸Ibid., 26 December 1879.

⁴⁹Ibid., 7 August 1880.

have traveled about so much since the baby was born." Continuing, she said, "[T]he baby has always slept with me, and when he wanted to nurse I had to get up and take him to another's bed, and then get up again and go and get him, which took me out of bed from six to ten times almost every night."⁵⁰ Many women played wet nurse to this child. Without the aid of women inside and outside of Eliza's family, the needs of this infant could not be met. In Mormon settlements, as in other parts of the country, "the most essential effective support came to women, not from their husbands, but from their female relatives and friends."⁵¹

Female friends and family were particularly essential in a community in which many husbands were often away on missions or with other wives.⁵² This reality is evident in Eliza's journal as demonstrated in 1860 when Eliza bore her fifth child, Lucy. At this time, Caroline, who was also married to Amasa, and Caroline's newborn child had been ill

⁵⁰Compare this to Annie Clark Tanner's account of caring for her grandson following the death of her daughter-in-law in 1928: "It was a great care to prepare his bottle and wash out his things every morning. Sometimes it occurred to me that I was starting all over again, although I was then 63 years of age." Annie Clark Tanner, A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Annie Clark Tanner (Salt Lake City, Utah: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1991), 317.

⁵¹Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Widowhood among the Mormons: The Personal Accounts," in On Their Own: Widows and Widowhood in the American Southwest, 1848-1939, ed. Arlene Scadron (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 122.

⁵²For further discussion of this, see Chapter Two of this thesis, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (Autumn 1975):9.

for two months. Caroline was so sick that she could not nurse her baby, and so Eliza attempted to nurse both her own baby and Caroline's. Eventually she had to give it up because she could not "attend to both." They had "watchers" every night to sit up with them, girls in to do the work, and "not even flour in the house to eat, nor soap to wash our clothes with." They finally called on the missionary fund for help. Eliza noted that "to ask for help is far from being pleasant to me, and I do hope if ever I do leave this state of existence that I shall find myself a little changed from what I have had them here."⁵³ Eliza, like many of her contemporary Mormons, found hope and relief from the drudgeries of this life, and the sorrows brought on by death, in the expectations of a better world to come.

In times of death, the community played a particularly large role in helping the bereaved. Eliza benefitted not only from the physical aid rendered by members of her Church community, but also from the emotional and spiritual support individuals had to offer. Eliza often noted the kindness done by others during times of trouble. When Eliza's first baby, Don Carlos, died, Eliza R. Snow composed a poem for her; this is an especially poignant example of such kindness. She recorded it in her journal:

Beloved Eliza do not weep
Your baby sleeps a quiet sleep.
Although in dust its body lies,
Its spirit soars above the skies.

⁵³Lyman, 26 August 1860.

No more upon your throbbing breast
 It lays its little head to rest,
 From all the pains of nature freed
 Your fond caress he does not need.

Sweet was its visit, but its stay
 On earth was short, 'twas called away
 By kindred spirits to fulfill
 Its calling and Jehovah's will.

Then soothe your feelings, do not mourn,
 Your noble offspring will return
 With all its loveliness again
 And with its friends on earth remain.⁵⁴

This poem offered support by acknowledging the loss of Eliza's baby and provided solace by reinforcing the belief that death is a temporary parting of ways--that the righteous will be reunited after death.

Eliza spent considerable amounts of time in her later years taking part in this community by caring for others in their times of trouble, including expending much energy mothering her grown children and grandchildren. When Platte was called on another mission to England in 1875, he left his wife, Adelia, and his two children with Eliza in Fillmore for the winter. Eliza wrote that the children were very sick with whooping cough and that Platte's wife was also not well. Two months after his departure Adelia gave birth to their third child, Evelyn. In March 1876, when Adelia returned to her home in Oak Creek, Eliza wrote that she had done everything she could for Adelia and her children. She continued: "Have taken care of her during her confinement,

⁵⁴Ibid., 29 December 1847.

tended the baby, took care of the other children night and day while they had the cough, washed, ironed, cleaned and did all that could be done for them."⁵⁵

Though Eliza became increasingly reconciled to death and God's will, she struggled as she watched her own children learning the same difficult lessons. When Eliza's children sorrowed, she sorrowed with them. In January 1877, Platte's four-year-old son Alton became "very sick indeed." Eliza, her sister Caroline, her daughter Carlie, and others stayed with Platte's family "to assist in taking care of him." Following a six-day illness, Alton "died in his father's arms." Eliza wrote:

His spirit passed away quietly, not even a struggle to show when it departed. His father and mother and friends mourn for him, but not without hope of meeting him in that better world where parting will be no more, and where we will enjoy the society of our friends forever and ever. His father was greatly rejoiced at his birth, and was always laying plans for him in the future, and prayed the Lord to give him wisdom to bring him up to be a good man and an honor to those with whom he was connected, but the Lord saw fit to take him from this world, which was a great sorrow to his parents. I have never seen a man sorrow for a child as his father has over this, although he acknowledges the hand of the Lord in this as in other things. If we could see why things are as they are, the trials would not be so severe. We have to walk by faith, and not by sight.⁵⁶

Eliza's own mourning over the death of her grandson was compounded by the sorrow she felt watching her son's pain. After Alton's death, Eliza stayed with her bereaved children

⁵⁵Ibid., March 1876.

⁵⁶Ibid., 10 January 1877.

"because they [were] lonesome."⁵⁷ On 10 August 1877, Eliza noted that it had been "five years today since Alton was born, and seven months since he died."⁵⁸

On Eliza's sixtieth birthday, she took a few moments to reflect on the events of her life:

I am 60 years old today, and have like the rest of the world, passed through a great many changes some for the better and many for the worse. It may be that many things that cause us great sorrow here may prove to be a great blessing to us, when we know more of the Lord's dealing with us. I have no desire to live my life over, thinking to better it, for with the knowledge I then had I have always desired to do right; I pray my Heavenly Father in the name of his Son Jesus, to help me to live so that I can be saved and exalted with the sanctified in his kingdom and be crowned with glory and everlasting lives. And I also pray that this blessing may be extended unto my children and their posterity that we may rejoice together to the endless ages of eternity.⁵⁹

Eliza's life was filled with tremendous difficulties. These troubles could have caused her to become bitter; instead, they appear to have strengthened her. Over the years, she became increasingly reconciled to the vicissitudes of life. When her son Don Carlos died, she said that she would "try to be reconciled and think it is all for the best." By the end of her life, she seemed to have, in large measure, accomplished this. This acceptance of God's will is reflected in many of her later entries including her response to Carlie's death: "It was hard to bear but it is

⁵⁷Ibid., 6 February 1877.

⁵⁸Ibid., 10 August 1877.

⁵⁹Ibid., 20 April 1880.

undoubtedly right." Her reactions to death progressively became more founded in her faith which allowed her to comfort and empathize with others, including her own children, as they struggled to come to terms with death.

As stated previously, Peter Berger posits that "the power of religion depends in the last resort, upon the credibility of the banners it puts in the hands of men as they stand before death, or more accurately as they walk, inevitably, toward it."⁶⁰ Mormonism succeeded in providing for Eliza doctrines, rituals, and a community for which helped her to cope. Her belief in Mormon doctrines concerning death did not take away the pain associated with death, but it gave purpose to her suffering and delivered hope that death was but a temporary parting. Through trust in Mormon theology and with help from her family and community, Eliza lived with dignity and faith in spite of the multitude of sorrows she faced.

⁶⁰Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1969), 52, quoted in Bishop, 64.

CHAPTER FIVE

"I HAVE OBTAINED COMFORT TO A REMARKABLE DEGREE"¹

Historian Carol Ruth Berkin, in her essay "Clio in Search of Her Daughters/ Women in Search of Their Past," outlines a number of goals that women's historians have traditionally pursued through their research. One goal she mentions involves an effort to "deconstruct error and banish falsehood." Another seeks "to add knowledge about women for the enlightenment of our profession, ourselves, our students, and our children."² By exploring nineteenth-century Mormon women's writings of their experiences with death and dying, this thesis both remedies misconceptions and provides insights into a previously little-examined topic.

Mary Ann Myers' study of death in Mormon thought suggests that "in modern America we are removed from the reality of death to a degree unimaginable in frontier communities."³ With professionalized undertaking and improved

¹Mary Ann Burnham Freeze, Journal, 20 November 1884, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL).

²Carol Ruth Berkin, "Clio in Search of Her Daughters/ Women in Search of Their Past," Liberal Education 71 (Fall 1985):206.

³Mary Ann Myers, "Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and Practice," in Death in America, ed. David Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 112.

medical practices, most Americans have little immediate contact with death's physical imperatives and rituals. This separation has made it possible for historians to misconstrue previous generations' experiences with death.

Myers states that "seldom in the [nineteenth-century] writings of Mormons does one find even the suggestion that death is the enemy."⁴ She continues, "Death itself was, for the Saints, a minor event."⁵ This interpretation of Mormon history is enormously, and tragically flawed; it reflects Myers' own critique of modern America's unfamiliarity with death. To dismiss death as an insignificant event in the lives of nineteenth-century Saints is to ignore a vast body of personal narratives that testify to the contrary. Though pain caused by the death of intimates was often mitigated by profound faith and community support, the suffering was real. While Mary Ann Burnham Freeze's entry following the death of her son stated, "Yet I must submit," her next entry began with words of consummate sorrow: "If there were two suns shining, it could not have made the earth cheerful to me for was not my son, the light of my life, lying cold and still."⁶ Read the words of Lucinda Dalton who recorded her own grief as "sobbing rain, like healing tears which my eyes cannot shed, I'll hear through all the coming years, still weeping

⁴Ibid., 124.

⁵Ibid., 133.

⁶This and all subsequent entries copied exactly. Freeze, November 1884.

o'er my dead." Through her despondency, she hoped for comfort: "Perhaps tomorrow I can weep through this wide-eyed dismay."⁷ Though journal writers and poets may not have referred to death specifically as an enemy, they did write of their attempts to stay its hand and of their anguish when they lost a loved one. Death was a formidable foe.

A careful reading of Mormon women's personal writings from 1847 to 1900 attests that death was anything but a minor event. Thus, while Myers' conclusion that death was merely a "logical step in the individual's march to godhood,"⁸ is true in abstract theological terms, the leap to positing death as insignificant overlooks the practical experience of dogma. In addition, it ignores the extraordinary value placed by Mormons on rites of passage. Transitions such as birth and marriage assumed heightened spiritual meaning through the rituals that marked them. Because passing from this world was the next "logical step" in eternal progression, death's importance was acknowledged by Saints through ritual

Interestingly, the most telling portions of women's narratives are often the most seemingly mundane, which may be the cause of Myers' (and others') misreadings of their experiences. The everyday tasks performed and recorded by women, though traditionally devalued and ignored in historical research, are invaluable to an exploration of

⁷Lucinda Dalton, "The One Doubt," Woman's Exponent 22 (1 July 1893):1.

⁸Myers, 133.

women's relationship to death. The faults of overlooking the quotidian aspects of women's lives are well illustrated in the transcription of Eliza Partridge Lyman's journal. When the transcriber ran out of time and stamina in his work, he decided to copy only the portions which appeared to "have the most value historically."⁹ In excluding the "trivial," he left out Eliza's accounts of women's confinements, her continual caring for the sick, as well as many of the events surrounding the death of her daughter Carlie, including Carlie's washing and anointing at the hands of her sister wife. It was Eliza's daily tending to the sick and constant watching over her family that made up much of the content of her life; these are the details of apparently little historical value. Yet, it is often in these seemingly minor events that Eliza's livelihood as well as the depths of her soul are illuminated.

In the same way that a careful reading of women's writings shows the prominence of death and its importance in individual lives, it also reveals how women managed to cope with its sometimes overwhelming challenges. This thesis maintains that women strove to overcome suffering through the channels prescribed both by Mormon theology and through personal spiritual experiences. One particularly profound record of reconciliation is found in the reminiscences of Martha Cragun Cox who wrote of her own spiritual journey.

⁹Eliza Marie Partridge Lyman, *Journal*, typescript, 55, in possession of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.

She had been grappling with a number of misfortunes that burdened her soul. During this time, she had a dream that guided her "to see the conditions into which [she] was falling."

I thought I stood with a chain around my neck. This chain reached to the ground and was heavy with many bundles that were fastened to it, so heavy that I could not raise my head to look upward. Someone said to me, If you must look at these all the time put them on this rod over your fire place and don't hang them on a chain about your neck or you will never see the sun and stars, and you should look up towards the heavens and not down. I then began to examine the parcels one by one and hang them on the rod. One a little box I had in my trunk containing some little clothing with a darling pair of little shoes and stockings. I had been in the habit of taking these out and spreading them on my bed on lonely stormy nights where there were no one there to see or hear me weep over them.

She took off this bundle, as well as each of the other bundles, until the chain was gone. When she awoke, she "resolved [she] would be free." Still, the actual unbinding process was not without its own struggles.

One day when an Indian woman came to my door with an almost naked child held under her fur robe I got out the box and a feeling of shame came upon me as I gave the little flannel dress and other things to put upon the child--a shame for the tears I had shed over it. I told her to tell the others who had babes to come and get the rest of the things--all but the little shoes--I felt I must keep them. But when I saw the blue feet and legs of one of the little babes I said "That bundle must come, all of it, from my chain." I had not dreamed of the sourness that was creeping into my soul until I had that dream.¹⁰

¹⁰Martha Cragun Cox, *Reminiscence*, 181-2, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Martha recorded that on 11 January 1871, "I received from Heaven the gift of a daughter, a mite of a creature weighing 7 lbs and 11 oz. As I looked at the waxen figure beside me on the bed I felt I had all I needed in this life to make up my sum of happiness. Two short days she adorned my life. Two short days of

It was crucial for Martha to become reconciled with the loss of her small child in order to live happily. Death was anything but a minor event in her life, but as Martha was armed with powerful doctrines and experiences, she was able to work through her grief.

The rites and rituals in which women participated also bespeak the importance of death to the community. As women banded together to tenderly lay out bodies, as they carefully sewed temple clothing for burial, and as they gathered to sing and pray at funeral and graveside services of the deceased, they rendered and received physical, spiritual, and emotional strength at a crucial time. Indeed, as individuals performed last acts of devotion for their loved ones, they discovered outlets for their internal pain. Women's writings about these rituals do not support Myers' conclusion that death lacked import in the lives of nineteenth-century Saints.

Each woman who lost a loved one found her own way to manage her pain, but as varied as individual responses were, most women framed their sorrow in Mormonism's theological terms; they found hope in doctrines that reassured them of the eternal nature of their relationships and peace in the promises of a better world to come. The belief in Mormonism's power to seal families in eternal bonds was vital

unmeasured bliss. . . . This was my first real sorrow and the bitterest disappointment I had ever known."

to their healing. Women's writings teach us of the hope they received as they decided to continue trusting in God.

James Farrell has stated, "Death is a cultural event and societies as well as individuals reveal themselves in their treatment of death."¹¹ Through their personal writings, Mormon women of the nineteenth century, individually and collectively, reveal themselves to be seekers of righteousness and of God. Christ told his followers that through him they could obtain peace: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."¹² Many Mormon women sought and obtained solace in their religious convictions, through which they were reminded of the remarkable rewards for faithful living and reassured of the eternal nature of their family ties. As Mary Ann Freeze remarked after her son's death, "I have obtained comfort to a remarkable degree."¹³

This study illuminates not only women's involvement in death's rites and their deep faith in Mormon doctrines, but it also reveals much about the women themselves. It is often in the moments surrounding death that the women's inner-lives are articulated as they write to make sense of their existence. Even narratives that are primarily brief, practical, and nonemotional give us glimpses into the

¹¹James J. Farrell, Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 3.

¹²John 16:33.

¹³Freeze, 20 November 1884.

writers' souls; through their musings, we are able to observe women's mingled faith and questioning, their sorrow and hope. These are not iron-hearted, superhuman, pioneer women, but real women grappling with their own humanity. Annie Clark Tanner's ruminations over the unexpected death of her brother disclose the workings of her heart:

Only those who have buried a son or brother in the mission field in a foreign land can realize the depth of our sorrow. It is poor comfort to be told that they have gone to a better world. We need the bright intelligent ones here. We want their companionship. When out in our back yard with my little children, I pulled my sunbonnet down to hide my face, wet with tears, and it seemed that John would try to comfort me. "We must be reconciled to His will," I imagined him saying, and then I wondered why His will required us to make such a great sacrifice.¹⁴

Writings such as this make personal and accessible the grief and trials associated with death; exposure to these thoughts and feelings lessens the risk of reducing women's sorrow to something of little significance--instead, we must face their agony and acknowledge their humanity. Consequently, this study teaches us something of what it means to be human and what it means to grieve.

This thesis also seeks "to add knowledge about women for the enlightenment of our profession, ourselves, our students, and our children."¹⁵ Examining previous generations' experiences with death and dying brings to the

¹⁴Annie Clark Tanner, A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Anne Clark Tanner (Salt Lake City, Utah: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1991), 149-50.

¹⁵Berkin, 206.

fore aspects of our modern system that might be altered to facilitate greater healing. As noted in Chapter Three, historians have remarked that nineteenth-century women were bound together in "supportive networks" that were "institutionalized in social conventions or rituals which accompanied virtually every important event in a woman's life, from birth to death."¹⁶ Women often bore the responsibility not only of administering in childbirth, but they also provided invaluable services to the dying and the deceased.

Over the last century, obstetricians and undertakers have relieved women of most of these duties. Interestingly, women have recently made great strides in reclaiming the birthing experience by more actively participating in their own birthings. Twilight sleep, a process in which births occurred while anesthetized women floated in painless oblivion, is a thing of the past.¹⁷ In addition, the hospice movement has helped to make dying more gentle, more human, and less sterile. These advances have reintroduced families and communities to greater involvement in the natural courses of life.

It is time to reexamine the role of the bereaved in preparing the dead for burial. In modern America we are far

¹⁶Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (Autumn 1975):9.

¹⁷Judith Walzer Leavitt, Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950 (New York: Oxford Press, 1986), 180-81.

"removed from the reality of death" not only because of decreased mortality rates, but because we are carefully shielded from close association with the dead.¹⁸ As morticians care for details of death, we separate ourselves from the very acts which could bring us comfort.

Dressing a loved one for burial is one of these intimate acts that possesses potentially healing powers. Terry Tempest Williams in her novel Refuge writes in reverent tones of dressing her mother for burial:

I thought of the Mormon rituals that surround our dead: the care Mimi and I took in preparing Mother's body with essential oils and perfumes, the way we dressed her in the burial dress Ann had made of white French cotton. . . . I recalled the silk stockings; the satin slippers; and the green satin apron, embroidered with leaves, symbolic of Eve and associated with sacred covenants made in the Mormon temple, that we had tied around her waist--how it had been hand-sewn by my great-grandmother's sister at the turn of the century. . . . And then I remembered the white veil which framed Mother's face.

Contrast the warmth of this narrative with Terry's description of her experience with mortuary practices wherein she remembers her mother's body lying "naked, cold, and stiff, on a stainless steel table. Her face had been painted orange."¹⁹ She writes, "I cannot escape [the] flashbacks. Some haunt. Some heal."²⁰ For Terry Tempest Williams, the healing flashbacks are similar to those that renewed

¹⁸Myers, 112.

¹⁹Terry Tempest Williams, Refuge (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 234-35.

²⁰Ibid., 236

nineteenth-century Mormon women; among these were caring for the dying, gathering family and friends at the deathbed, and dressing the dead.

Rituals performed in connection with birth and death are central to our lives. It is often through ritual that theology is internalized. By abandoning active participation in the rites that mark death as a passage, Mormons lose an important link to their theology. This thesis is a call to examine the events surrounding death to discover how we might alter behavior and attitudes to make our experiences with life's ending more whole, more personal, and less sterile. We have reclaimed many of the healing, life-affirming rites of birthing and dying; it is now expedient to search the past for instruction in the rituals of death, discarding present practices that haunt and embracing those that heal.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Bartlett, Elizabeth Ramsay Fraser. Journal, 1887-95. Typescript in possession of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.
- Brooks, Juanita, ed. Not by Bread Alone: The Journal of Martha Spence Heywood, 1850-56. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1978.
- Bullock, Martha. Diary, 1868-9. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Burgess, Rhoda Ann Dykes. Journal, 1887-95. Typescript in possession of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.
- Cache Valley Relief Society Minutes, Book B, 1896. Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Duffield, George, and Samuel W. Duffield. The Burial of the Dead: A Pastor's Complete Hand-book For Funeral Services, and For the Consolation and Comfort of the Afflicted. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1882.
- Flake, Lucy Hannah White. Journal, 1842-1900. Typescript. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Freeze, Mary Ann Burnham. Journal, 1874-99. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Gardner, Barnella E. Notebook, 1882. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Hansen, Jennifer Moulton, ed. Letters of Catharine Cottam Romney, Plural Wife. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- Hegsted, Hannah Grover. Journal, 1896-1933. Typescript in author's possession.

- Hill, Ivy Hooper Blood, ed. Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood: Autobiography and Abridged Diary, 1845-98. Logan, Utah: J.P. Smith Printing, Inc., 1966
- Instructions in Ordinance Work. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Journal of Discourses. 26 Vols. Liverpool: F.D. Richards, 1854-86.
- Keeler, Eliza Shelton. Journal. In Kate B. Carter, ed., Our Pioneer Heritage. 20 Vols. Salt Lake City, UT: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959, 3:285-304.
- Kenney, Scott G., ed. Wilford Woodruff's Journal. 9 Vols. Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-84.
- Larsen, Lorena Eugenia Washburn. Autobiography of Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larsen. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1962.
- "Letters of a Proselyte: The Hascall-Pomeroy Correspondence." Utah Historical Quarterly 25 (October 1957):339-357.
- The Life and Labors of Eliza R. Snow Smith; With a Full Account of Her Funeral Services. Salt Lake City, Utah: The Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888.
- Lightner, Mary Elizabeth Rollins. Reminiscence, 1818-1913. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Lyman, Eliza Marie Partridge. Journal, 1820-86. Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Lyman, Eliza Marie Partridge. Journal, 1820-86. Typescript in possession of Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.
- Maughan, Mary Ann Weston. Journal. In Kate B. Carter, ed., Our Pioneer Heritage. 20 Vols. Salt Lake City, UT: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959, 2:345-421.
- Nielson, Emma Wartstill Meham. Journal, 1887-1915. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
- Nielson, Susanna Smart Parkinson. Oral History. Interview by William G. Hartley, 1973, Oral History Program, Archives Division, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Pearce, Jean Reo. Journal, 1851-77. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Pratt, Louisa Barnes. Mormondom's First Woman Missionary: Life Story and Travels Told in Her own Words. ed. Kate B. Carter, Privately published.

Pulsipher, Mary Brown. Journal and Reminiscence, 1799-1879. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Rich, Sarah D. Reminiscence. Typescript. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Savage, Hannah Adeline Hatch. Journal, 1867-1916. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Stewart, Eunice P. Journal. Typescript, 1855-58. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Tanner, Annie Clark. A Mormon Mother. Salt Lake City, Utah: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1983.

Tracy, Nancy Naomi Alexander. "Diary of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy: Incidents, Travels, and Life of Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy, Including Many Important Events in Church History." Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Williams, Terry Tempest. Refuge. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.

Woman's Exponent. 1872-1914. Salt Lake City, Utah.

Young, Emily Dow Partridge. Journal. Typescript. Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Arrington, Leonard J., and Davis Bitton. The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979.

Arrington, Leonard J., Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May. Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation

Among the Mormons. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1976.

Bates, Irene M. "Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma." Dialogue 26 (Fall 1993):1-29.

Beecher, Maureen Ursenbach. "Birthing." In Mormon Women Speak, ed. Mary Lythgoe Bradford. Salt Lake City, Utah: Olympus Publishing Company, 1982.

_____. "Mormon Women in Southern Alberta: The Pioneer Years." In The Mormon Presence in Canada, eds. Brigham Y. Card, Herbert C. Northcott, John E. Foster, Howard Palmer, and George Jarvis. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1990.

Beecher, Maureen Ursenbach, and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds. Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

Beecher, Maureen Ursenbach, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and Lavina Fielding Anderson. "Widowhood among the Mormons: The Personal Accounts." In On their Own: Widows and Widowhood in the American Southwest, 1848-1939, ed. Arlene Scadron, 117-39. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Berkin, Carol Ruth. "Clio in Search of Her Daughters/ Women in Search of Their Past." Liberal Education 71 (Fall 1985):205-15.

Bishop, M. Guy. "To Overcome the 'Last Enemy': Early Mormon Perceptions of Death." Brigham Young University Studies. 26 (Summer 1986):63-79.

Buerger, David John. "'The Fullness of the Priesthood': The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice." Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983):10-44.

Buerger, David John. The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship. San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994.

Burgess-Olson, Vicky. "Family Structure and Dynamics in Early Utah Mormon Families, 1847-1885." Doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1975.

_____, ed. Sister Saints. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978.

- Bush, Lester E. Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993.
- Bushman, Claudia L., ed. Mormon Sisters. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Emmeline Press Limited, 1976.
- Campbell, Eugene E. "Early Colonization Patterns." In Utah's History. ed. Richard D. Poll, 133-152. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989.
- Cannon, Donald Q. "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective." Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Winter 1978):179-192.
- Corless, Inge B., Barbara B. Germino, and Mary A. Pittman, eds. A Challenge for Living: Dying, Death, and Bereavement. Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1995.
- Cott, Nancy F. The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Crowther, Duane S. Life Everlasting. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1967.
- Derr, Jill Mulvay, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher. Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1992.
- Douglas, Ann. "Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1880." In Death in America, ed. David Stannard. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975.
- Esshom, Frank. Pioneers and Prominent Men in Utah. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Pioneer Book Publishing Company, 1913.
- Farrell, James J. Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.
- Fife, Austin E. "Pioneer Mormon Remedies" Western Folklore 16 (1957):153-162.
- Florence, Valerie. "Healing and the Home: Home Medicine in Pioneer Utah." In From Cottage to Market: The Professionalization of Women's Sphere, ed. John R. Sillito. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Women's History Association, 1983.

- Godfrey, Kenneth W., Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr. Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1982.
- Hansen, Klaus J. Mormonism and the American Experience. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Hefner, Loretta L. "From Apostle to Apostate: The Personal Struggle of Amasa Mason Lyman." Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983):90-104.
- Jackson, Charles O. "Death Shall Have No Dominion: The Passing of the World of the Dead in America." In Death and Dying: Views from Many Cultures, ed. Richard A. Kalish. Farmingdale, New York: Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., 1977.
- Jenson, Andrew. Biographical Encyclopedia Vol. 1. Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901.
- Jensen, Richard. "Forgotten Relief Societies." Dialogue 16 (Spring 1983):105-25.
- Leavitt, Judith Walzer. Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Leavitt, Judith Walzer, and Ronald L. Numbers eds. Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Logue, Larry Morgan. "Belief and Behavior in a Mormon Town: Nineteenth-Century St. George, Utah." Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1984.
- Lundahl, Craig R. "The Perceived Other World in Mormon Near-death Experiences: A Social and Physical Depiction." Omega 12, 4(1981-82):319-27.
- Madsen, Carol Cornwall. In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1994.
- McDowell, Michael McEachern. "American Attitudes Towards Death, 1825-1865." Doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University, 1977.
- Mitford, Jessica. The American Way of Death. New York: Fawcett World Library, Crest Books, 1963.

- Morley, John. Death, Heaven, and the Victorians. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971.
- Myers, Mary Ann. "Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and Practice." In Death in America, ed. David E. Stannard. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975.
- Noall, Claire. Guardians of the Hearth: Utah's Pioneer Midwives and Mormon Doctors. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1974.
- Palmer, Spencer J. Diety and Death: Selected Symposium Papers. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978.
- Poll, Richard D., ed. Utah's History. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989.
- Richards, Ralph. Of Medicine, Hospitals, and Doctors. Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1953.
- Rothstein, William G. American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972.
- Saum, Lewis O. "Death in the Popular Mind of Pre-Civil War America." In Death in America, ed. David Stannard. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975.
- Schoemaker, George H. "Symbolic Consideration in Nineteenth Century Tombstone Art in Utah." Material Culture 20 (Summer 1988):19-26.
- Shryock, Richard Harrison. "The American Physician in 1846 and in 1946: A Study in Professional Contrasts." Chap. in Medicine in America: Historical Essays. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966.
- Sillito, John R., ed. From Cottage to Market: The Professionalization of Women's Sphere. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Women's History Association, 1983.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (Autumn 1975):1-29.
- Stovall, Mary E. "'To Be, To Do, and To Suffer': Responses to Illness and Death in the Nineteenth-Century Central South." The Journal of Mississippi History 52 (May 1990):95-109.

Vogel, Morris J. and Charles E. Rosenberg, eds. The Therapeutic Revolution: Essays in the Social History of American Medicine. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979.

Waters, Christine Croft. "Pioneering Physicians in Utah, 1847-1900." Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1976.

_____. "Pioneering Women Physicians." From Cottage to Market: The Professionalization of Women's Sphere, ed. John R. Sillito. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Women's History Association, 1983.

Wells, Robert V. Revolutions in Americans' Lives: A Demographic Perspective on the History of Americans, Their Families, and Their Society. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982.

Wertz, Richard W. Lying-in: A History of Childbirth in America. New York: Free Press, 1977.

"Yet I Must Submit":

Mormon Women's Perspectives on Death and Dying

1847-1900

Julie Paige Hemming Savage


The Kennedy Center for International and Area Studies

M.A. Degree, December 1995


ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Mormon women's experiences with death as revealed in their personal writings from 1847-1900. The study includes an examination of women's involvement in caring for the sick and tending to the dead, as well as an exploration of women's personal reactions to death. A careful reading of Mormon women's writings from this period reveals that Mormonism equipped believers with powerful doctrines and rituals which helped women cope with the sorrow and profound grief that accompanied the deaths of those they loved. In addition, members living in Mormon communities rendered invaluable physical, emotional, and spiritual support to each other as they cared for the sick and dying, prepared the dead for burial, and dealt with the lingering sense of loss brought on by death. Significantly, special community-sanctioned customs and traditions associated with illness and death provided solace in difficult times.


COMMITTEE APPROVAL:



Jill Mulvay Derr,
Committee Chair



Mary Stovall Richards,
Committee Member



Maureen Ursenbach Beecher,
Committee Member